Knowledge Management Fund
Knowledge Uptake Guidance

The Knowledge Management Fund (KMF) is the Knowledge Platform's fund to support activities arising from its network. The small-scale grants awarded by the Fund offer a low barrier to entry for pioneering, agile and experimental proposals. The aim of the Fund is to improve policies and programs, particularly in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings (FCAS), by diversifying thinking and evidence in the Security & Rule of Law (SRoL) field.

In order to achieve this, the Secretariat evaluates proposals partially on their plans for knowledge uptake and impact.[1] It is important that each KMF project, even those that concern internal processes or institutional learning and change, come to broader lessons for the benefit of the whole KPSRL network, and that each proposal pays some attention to how it will try to maximize the potential for the network to learn from their project. This document is intended to inform (potential) applicants on what the Platform Secretariat understands as 'knowledge uptake' and provide concrete guidelines on how to develop a solid proposal for uptake and impact.

Knowledge and uptake

According to the KPSRL Theory of Change, 'knowledge uptake' happens when new insights are connected with existing knowledge within organizations, underlining resulting in a change in practice, rationales or assumptions. This can be seen as the impact of knowledge. While knowledge uptake is a fundamental factor in causing change, it is also determined by the political context, the links between different actors and communities, and external influences.[2] Therefore, it is important to understand this context and, where possible, take this into account in your uptake plan.

Impact can be instrumental (impacts on changes in policy and practice); conceptual (impacts on understanding and attitudes); contribute to capacity building (impacts on the ability of stakeholders to generate and absorb knowledge in future); and can contribute to enduring connectivity (impacts on the existence and strength of networks of people and organizations who understand and can make use of the knowledge)[3].

Considering the complex and non-linear nature of knowledge uptake and impact, it is insufficient for knowledge to simply be made available. The Secretariat encourages projects to not just be an information intermediary (making information available), but rather to act as knowledge translators (translating their findings for non-specialists; writing policy briefs tailored to specific audiences) and more proactive knowledge brokers (actively engaging in policy and practice debates, matchmaking, convening, networking). Applicants and grantees should be aware that knowledge uptake happens by design, rather than by chance.

The following questions are to help you develop your plan.[4] They should help stimulate your thinking and give due consideration to knowledge uptake. In your proposal, it will not be necessary to answer each individual question. Rather, it should be clear to the reviewers that you have thought about these, resulting in a *well-considered and promising knowledge uptake plan to inform SRoL ideas, actions or policies* and that you *clearly define the change sought and strategy to effect that change*.

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[1] Two criteria explicitly relate to uptake: '*Well-considered and promising knowledge uptake plan to inform SRoL ideas, actions or policies*' and '*Clearly defines the change sought and strategy to effect that change*'.
[2] See '[Knowledge Policy and Power](#)' (2009) and '[Tools for Bridging Research and Policy](#)' (2014) by the Overseas Development Institute.
[3] See [ESRC´s preferred definitions of impact](#).
[4] Adapted from ODI´s Research Excellence Framework (REF) Impact Toolkit, based on Outcome Mapping (OM) principles. These guidelines have been adapted and expanded to provide an approach for knowledge uptake and impact for KMF activities.

1. Understanding impact and identifying your knowledge impact objective

- Have you given thought to what knowledge impact would look like for your proposed project?
- What role can you realistically play in achieving this impact?

Goal: Try to define the change sought, and consider whether it is attainable within the scope of your project.

2. Identifying your stakeholders and the context

- Who are the key stakeholders that could benefit from the knowledge your project is dealing with? Who will your proposed project seek to inform?
- What is the policy environment? Are there any opportunities for knowledge-based input into formal or informal processes that shape this environment? Are there any barriers to this, specific to the context, that you should take into account?

Goal: Identify as much as possible direct and specific end users as well as additional relevant stakeholders. Having a good understanding of the wider policy and/or programming context is helpful for formulating your impact objectives.

3. Developing an engagement plan

- What are the current ideas, interest groups and processes for which your proposed project could be relevant? How do these influence policy and/or practice?
- What are the changes you would:
  a. expect to see, to indicate initial engagement with the knowledge
  b. like to see, to indicate that the messages are being taken on board
  c. love to see, to indicate that the messages have been deeply internalized

Goal: Develop a plan for engagement of these end users. Consider how the uptake plan will take into account the needs of these end users throughout the project. Evaluate the capacity of the end users to make use of and absorb new knowledge and factor this into your engagement plan.

4. Planning your knowledge communication activities

- What is your (specific) audience and how do you plan to reach them?[5]
- How does your audience absorb (new) information? Are your outputs (written outputs, digital tools, events and meetings[6], multimedia) tailored to your envisioned audience?

Goal: Give consideration to who you want to reach, what you want to do and how you want to reach them. Identify specific people if you can. Engagement with audiences early on in the process can help a great deal when it comes to eventually communicating your findings. Consider your own internal capacity to communicate and translate the knowledge.

5. Follow up

- Have you given thought to how you will know if your project does eventually have an impact?

Goal: Predict beforehand where you may or hope to have an impact , and make a plan to follow up and monitor uptake after the project has finished.

Again, your proposal will not need an answer to each of the questions above. However, thinking through these questions sequentially will help you formulate a better uptake plan, on which each KMF proposal will be assessed.

If you have any additional questions on this, please get in touch with kmf@kpsrl.org.

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[5] The Platform Secretariat can help identifying and reaching your audience.
[6] For tips on presentations and data visualization, please have a look at 'Research and Excellence Framework (REF) impact toolkit', Overseas Development Institute, 2009: p30-32.