KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE TOOLBOX

Group methods for sharing, discovery and co-creation

Volume 2

unicef

knowledgexchange

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTENTS - VOLUME 2

A quick guide to choosing a tool

This short overview of tools covers both Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the [Toolbox](), and is organized according to what kind of knowledge exchange process the tools support. Select your desired process from the table below, then check out the suggested tools. For more detailed information, see 'How to use this toolbox' in the Introduction to Volume 1 of the Toolbox: [https://www.unicef.org/knowledge-exchange/index_82053.html]() .

Tool types		In which volume?	
👥 in-person	📶 online	**v1** Volume 1	**v2** Volume 2

Process	Suggested tools		Choose this tool when you want to:
1. Planning knowledge activities for a project	👥	Project-level Knowledge Management Action Plans (guidance) **v2**	• Together with your project team, create and implement a comprehensive plan to identify, acquire, create, share, and use the critical knowledge needed for project success
2. Stimulating creativity, generating new ideas	👥	Brainstorming **v1**	• Expand a group's creativity using a versatile, familiar, and powerful tool
	👥	Topsy Turvy **v1**	• Take an innovative approach to brainstorming
	👥	VIPP Card Collection and Clustering **v1**	• Gather diverse creative inputs and organize them as a group
	👥	World Café **v1**	• Apply the power of small-group conversations to gather input on multiple issues
	👥	Buzz Groups **v1**	• Add quick, easy creative conversations to any plenary meeting
	📶	Online Jam **v1**	• Convene a group online at a fixed time • Brainstorm (text-based)
3. Learning and sharing lessons within groups	👥	VIPP Card Collection and Clustering **v1**	• Classify and prioritize learnings together
	👥	World Café **v1**	• Learn in small groups that allow conversations, questions and answers
	👥	Buzz Groups **v1**	• Complement standard presentations by adding short conversations and sharing among participants
	📶	E-discussion **v1**	• Conduct an online discussion over days/weeks, with participants contributing on their own schedules • Help develop answers to key policy or implementation questions

(Learning and sharing lessons within groups, continued)			• Explore core issues and topics for team learning
4. Learning from experts	👥	Lightning Talk v1	• Encourage focused, dynamic presentations • Accommodate several presenters in a limited time
	👥	Expert Interview (with audience) v1	• Offer a dynamic, engaging alternative to traditional expert presentations • Participants take the lead in asking questions; experts remain the main speakers throughout
	👥	Fishbowl v1	• Offer a spontaneous, conversational alternative to traditional expert presentations • Participants take the lead in asking questions and can replace experts as speakers
	👥	Chat Show v1	• Hold a learning conversation with several experts at once • Facilitator takes the lead in asking questions and animating the discussion
	👥	Buzz groups v1	• Complement standard presentations by adding short conversations and sharing among participants
	👥	Brown Bag Lunch v2	• Offer an easy-to-organize informal learning opportunity with an external expert or a colleague sharing her experience
	👥	Individual Expert Interview v2	• Capture knowledge from an expert through a focused conversation (without an audience present) • Knowledge is disseminated after the interview through other channels
	📶	Webinar v1	• Convene a group online at a fixed time • Experts share audio-visual presentations • Disseminate new guidance to key audiences • Conduct training on important new tools, methods or procedures
	📶	Online Jam (Ask Me Anything version) v1	• Convene a group online at a fixed time • Offer text-based online Q & A with experts or others with unique, relevant experiences to share
5. Learning BEFORE a project/ initiative	👥	SWOT v1	• Plan effectively for any type of project/ initiative, either quickly or in depth • Analyze important decisions, proposals or problems
	👥	VIPP Card Collection and Clustering v1	• Quickly identify and prioritize relevant issues

(Learning BEFORE a project/ initiative, continued)	Timeline **v1**	• Build a shared understanding among your team of current opportunities and challenges in a project/ initiative
	Study Visit **v2**	• Learn from a similar project done by another organization or team before planning yours
	Online Communities **v1**	• Learn from others who have tackled similar challenges • Build a strong foundation of practical knowledge over time, which can be applied as needed in different activities
	Virtual Peer Assist **v1**	• Learn from others who have tackled similar challenges • Hold a single focused learning event online
	Surveys **v1**	• Efficiently identify priorities and issues for later action
6. Learning DURING a project/ initiative	After Action Review **v1**	• Continuously improve team effectiveness and results during a project/ initiative
	VIPP Card Collection and Clustering **v1**	• Quickly identify and prioritize relevant issues
	Timeline **v1**	• Build a shared understanding among your team of current opportunities and challenges in a project/ initiative
	Online Communities **v1**	• Create a community that can provide ongoing answers and advice during any relevant activity
	Virtual Peer Assist **v1**	• Get help on particularly challenging issues that you have encountered
7. Learning AFTER a project/ initiative, or at major moments of reflection	Retrospect **v1**	• Carry out in-depth team reflection in order to capture and prioritize lessons, and improve results
	Debrief (one-on-one) **v1**	• Capture lessons on potentially sensitive topics from individuals in a confidential setting
	Timeline **v1**	• Understand the how and why of project results
	Writeshop **v2**	• Document learnings from a project through an intensive workshop, producing a collaboratively written knowledge product quickly
	Lessons Learned (template) **v1**	• Write up lessons for future use
	Surveys **v1**	• Efficiently capture a selection of lessons from large numbers of individuals

8. Developing and improving a shared practice or area of work	Writeshop **V2**	• Advance a shared area of work by bringing together subject matter experts to collaboratively draft a knowledge product
	Online Communities **V1**	• Leverage the power of networking for building capacity over time, solving problems and answering key questions as they arise
9. Disseminating knowledge	Brown Bag Lunch **V2**	• Gather a group of relevant people to informally present your work in person
	Lightning Talk **V1**	• Share knowledge from your work in a short dynamic presentation.
	E-newsletter **V2**	• Share knowledge and other relevant content to an audience you want to reach out to on a regular basis
	Webinar **V1**	• Convene a relevant group online at a fixed time to share your work through an audio-visual presentation • Disseminate new guidance to key audiences • Conduct training on important new tools, methods or procedures

Tools and skills for planning, opening, running and evaluating meetings and events
*Use these **together** with any other knowledge exchange tools*

9. Running effective in-person knowledge events	Icebreakers **V1**	• 'Break the ice' in order to build trust, promote connecting and sharing among participants
	Real-Time Meeting Evaluation Tools **V1**	• Evaluate the success of an event/ workshop while it is happening, so you can make needed changes and maximize the event's impact
	Meeting Facilitation (*a skill, not a tool*) **V1**	• Promote participation, avoid or resolve meeting-related problems and maximize results, during any and all in-person knowledge events
	Effective Meetings (*skill*) **V2**	• Determine whether you need a face-to-face meeting and design it to maximize its effectiveness for knowledge sharing and collaboration.
	Global Meetings (*skill)* **V2**	• Decide whether to bring together staff from multiple offices and, if so, do it effectively in order to make good use of their time
	Online Tools for Face-to-Face Meetings **V2**	• Engage meeting participants through their phones, tablets, and laptops, getting their inputs and feedback in real time

FOREWORD

The Editors, Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, UNICEF

The Knowledge Exchange Toolbox was conceived as a resource for UNICEF staff and partners to support a range of essential knowledge exchange activities in development work for children. The flexibility, relevance and accessibility of the tools have inspired us to share it publicly in order to maximize its impact and potential benefit.

The Toolbox is a convenient reference for any practitioner in search of a guide for the selection and application of proven knowledge exchange methods. It has an important role in promoting the uptake and use of powerful tools that, although long known in various forms, remain underused. It will empower decision-makers to choose from a variety of methods that can be applied individually or in combination, to capture and apply knowledge to help make progress on the biggest priorities and toughest development challenges for children, families and countries around the world.

In addition to providing simple tools for efficient **knowledge sharing**, the Toolbox also offers a wide array of other methods for **learning from experience** in order to improve practice and results; for effective and context-appropriate **planning and decision-making**; and for **co-creation of solutions**, in which the knowledge of diverse participants is brought to bear in order to devise solutions that no individual could have produced alone.

Because these tools are applied in group contexts, they also offer a major collateral benefit: They serve to **bring teams, groups and networks 'onto the same page'**, by establishing a common understanding of challenges and perspectives on potential actions, and building the connections necessary for effective teamwork. Development challenges for children can only be solved collaboratively, through the efforts of multiple contributors working together. These tools have a natural and significant role in strengthening that process.

The Toolbox is a living knowledge resource. This Second Volume adds nine new tools, and we expect to add more over time, along with relevant examples of their application and use in practice. It should be consulted together with the First Volume. In particular, we recommend reading the Introduction chapter, where we explain how to use the Toolbox. This is also the last edition that will be shared as a publication: We have begun work on a website to host the tools as wiki-style pages. This will allow us to update them more easily, adding new tools and improving and revising the existing ones from time to time based on feedback and experience in using them. We hope you will enjoy applying these tools and will share them with others.

TOOLS - VOLUME 2

BROWN BAG LUNCH

/ An easy and informal way to foster learning and sharing /

WHAT IS A BROWN BAG LUNCH?

A brown bag lunch is a lunchtime gathering for sharing new ideas or recent developments (e.g. new research, significant events or experiences) on a topic of interest. It can also be an occasion for getting feedback on a new idea or proposal.

The presenter may be a colleague or an external expert. Participation is usually open to anyone within an organization, and attendance is optional. Brown bag lunch presentations are usually informal, though they may use slides. Attendees bring their own lunch (hence the 'brown bag').

Brown bag lunches cost virtually nothing to organize. They are popular among both presenters and participants because of their informal and non-hierarchical approach to learning. Brown bag lunches help start relevant conversations, offer networking opportunities, and are particularly useful for participants who can't spare much time from their daily work. They are a good complement to (not a substitute for) official information channels and required training.

REQUIREMENTS:

- *Presenter*
- *Projector and laptop (optional, depending on presenter and content)*
- *Room with chairs and table(s) for participants*
- *45 minutes - 1 hour*
- *Up to 25 participants (keeping it fairly limited in numbers encourages informality)*

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

Brown bag lunches can be used to:

▲ **Build awareness** among staff of the business of the organization and its various units, and share major developments, new initiatives or project findings, in an interesting and accessible way.

▲ **Impart learning** by inviting visitors from elsewhere in the organization or from outside to informally share insights, successes and lessons.

▲ **Gather feedback** on new ideas or initiatives under development, leverage the expertise of the audience and collect useful comments and suggestions. This type of brown bag lunch is similar to a simplified Peer Assist, and is probably most useful for non-complex issues (use a true Peer Assist for complex ones).

▲ **Cut costs** when budgets are tight, rather than providing a more formal working lunch for all.

Junior staff and those new to the organization often find brown bag lunches to be particularly useful: Not only do they learn about the activities of others in the organization, they also get to meet people and find out who's who in a relaxed social setting. This may mean that they

feel less intimidated and more willing to interact and ask questions. By volunteering to run a brown bag lunch, new staff gain the opportunity to highlight their skills and relevant experiences. The regular or systematic use of brown bag lunches can contribute over time towards an organizational culture of sharing and learning.
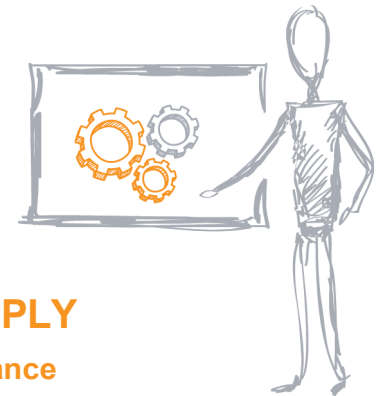
HOW TO APPLY

Prepare in advance

Organizers:

1. **Choose an appropriately informal and interesting topic, identify a potential presenter, and define the date of the event.** In most cases you will want the topic to be work-related but also light and easy to absorb. Good topics include an account of a recent field visit or mission, highlights from new research, reflections on recent training, or a new idea or proposal for which comments and feedback are desired. Simple training could also be offered, e.g. 'A beginner's guide to Twitter.'

▲ However, be careful to avoid topics that should be covered in mandatory training, important organizational information, or work-related issues or presentations in which staff attendance should be recorded. Bear in mind that the brown bag lunch format is voluntary and informal.

2. **Book a meeting room with space for at least 20 - 25 people around a table.** Make sure it will be OK for participants to have food and drinks. If the table is small, line up some chairs near the

walls for people to sit. Avoid noisy cafeterias or lounges; conversation is a vital part of a brown bag lunch and it must be audible to everyone.

3. **Send email invitations to staff at least one week before the event.** Provide a one-paragraph summary of the topic and indicate when and where the event will be held. If you are inviting an external speaker, include a short bio. Explain the brown bag concept briefly and indicate that participants are welcome to bring their own lunches. Follow up with a reminder message on the day of the event.

◢ Optional: You can ask participants to RSVP their attendance in advance, especially if there are many people interested in attending.

Presenters:

4. **Choose a format and prepare your presentation.** Since there is no formal structure, any of these simple formats would work (but confirm your choice with the organizer):

◢ Slideshow: prepare 5-10 slides with plenty of images and photos, and relatively few words. Aim to spend no more than 30 minutes on the slides, leaving the final 15-30 minutes for Q&A and discussion. If appropriate, make use of humour to keep the tone light and get your message across effectively.

◢ Handout: prepare a 1-2 page handout with some background information on the topic; include relevant illustrations and statistics. The handout will be for participants to refer to as you speak.

◢ Moderated discussion: this is good for exploring new ideas. Prepare a short 5-10-minute introduction to your topic (with slides or a handout if desired), then plan to engage participants in a discussion.

When you are ready to start
Presenters:

5. If using a handout, distribute it to participants when they arrive and give them a few minutes to read it.

6. **Introduce yourself (or be introduced).** If you (the presenter) are a visitor from another office/organization, it is best to have the organizer or another moderator open the session, introduce you and also help moderate the Q&A. Otherwise, introduce yourself and the topic.

7. **Do your presentation.** A brown bag lunch is quite informal, so some presenters eat lunch with the participants. Others prefer to wait until the Q&A before eating, or to have a quick bite before or after the session. However, sharing a meal with the participants has its advantages in that it gives participants the feeling that they're having a lunchtime chat with colleagues.

8. **Open the floor for Q&A and discussion.** Allocate at least 15 - 30 minutes, or longer if you have time. If people are slow to participate, get the conversation started by asking them what they think of the topic, what stands out, or what they liked or disliked. Take notes for your reference as needed.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

▲ Keep your presentation brief, and ensure adequate time for Q&A and discussion. Most of the value of a brown bag lunch is delivered through the discussion. It allows participants to learn from each other, to gather important contextual information in the form of anecdotes and stories that rarely make it into official documentation, and to hear about different perspectives on major issues or problems.

▲ A brown bag lunch session should be simple: The less structured, the better, unless you have specific learning objectives (see variation 'Lunch and Learn' below). Just book a room, email invitations and prepare a brief presentation.

▲ Ensure that the room and meeting structure is conducive for people (including the presenter) to eat their lunch if they want to. This contributes to informality and promotes attendance.

▲ Choose fun, interesting topics that will encourage voluntary attendance.

▲ The best presenters are those who not only have interesting knowledge/experiences to share, but also who enjoy sharing what they know.

VARIATIONS

▲ **Lunch and Learn:** This is a training event conducted during the lunch hour. The main difference between Lunch and Learn and a standard brown bag is that the presenter at a Lunch and Learn should prepare a lesson plan and should aim to achieve specific, albeit simple, learning objectives.

- A Lunch and Learn is best used to impart soft skills such as time management, networking, effective work habits, etc. Don't use this format for extensive technical or mandatory training.
- Choose learning objectives that can realistically be achieved within a 30 - 45 minute presentation.
- Prepare effectively. Lunch and Learn presentations need to be quite sharp and focused on the learning objectives in order to succeed in the limited available time.
- Leave some time for Q&A and discussion. A Lunch and Learn session typically has less discussion time than a brown bag, but do allow at least 15 minutes.
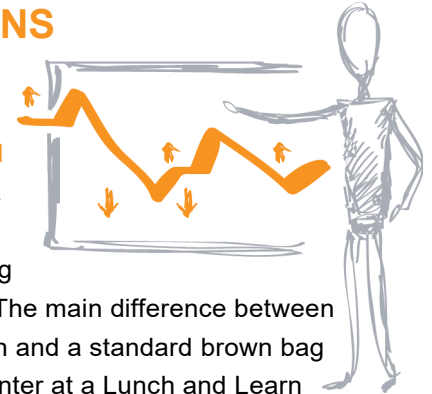
▲ **Brown bag lunch series:** If there is sufficient interest you can organize a series of brown bags. Line up your presenters several weeks in advance, match them with appropriate topics, and pre-announce the series, following up with timely invitations to specific events. You can also request nominations for topics/presenters from colleagues.

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CREDITS

E-NEWSLETTER

/ A focused periodical publication for a subscriber audience /

## WHAT IS AN E-NEWSLETTER?

An E-Newsletter is an electronic periodical publication for sharing content such as news updates, survey results, emerging research findings, event reminders and other resources, with interested readers. It is distributed by email. A good E-Newsletter is concise and offers its readers value in the form of knowledge and contact information on a field or issue. The audience is usually self-selected (they choose to subscribe to the e-newsletter) and may include any number of people.

An E-Newsletter is a familiar and cost-effective means of sharing knowledge. It can be distributed easily to anyone with an email account, regardless of where they are located. An E-Newsletter lets readers keep in touch regularly with people who share a common interest without being too intrusive. Previous editions are often archived on a website for interest and easy reference.

REQUIREMENTS:

- ◼ *Editor (responsible for newsletter content)*
- ◼ *Writers (contributors to the newsletter).*
- ◼ *Optional but recommended: E-Newsletter software platform (providing more powerful layout and subscription management features than standard email clients)*
- ◼ *Optional: News compiler (compiles news resources from various sources)*

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

The E-Newsletter is regaining popularity. Subscribers value the control they have over what they receive and can easily unsubscribe if the content is no longer of interest. Another reason for the resurgence of E-newsletters is familiarity with the format and distribution channel. Virtually everyone uses email, and e-newsletters are easy to read and file per the recipient's own preferences.

E-newsletters can be targeted to communities or networks large or small, including staff within an organization, or staff plus partners from other organizations, or even members of the public.

The main reason for subscribing to an E-Newsletter is, of course, the content. A well-curated newsletter can highlight blogs, articles and other resources that contain valuable information by presenting them in a concise, relevant and timely manner. Given the constant pressure of information overload, there is increasing recognition of the value of synthesized reviews, alerts and recommendations.

Content can be compiled from websites, blogs and various social media sites, or it can be created specifically for an e-newsletter. By regularly providing quality, relevant content, the producers of a newsletter can cultivate credibility and trust in their product, their brand and themselves.

E-newsletters can have an important role in sustaining engagement among members of a community: Regular updates inject energy into the community and remind participants of their reasons for connecting with the community in the first place.

HOW TO APPLY

1. **Define the purpose** of the E-newsletter. Why create it? What would you like to achieve? How might you measure the impact?

2. **Consider your target audience:** Are they colleagues in your office, or are they from other offices/organizational units, and/or from partner organizations? Are they part of a community of practice or a network of practitioners? If so, is it a closed network or will new subscribers be allowed?

3. **Next, develop a content plan**. Consider the topic(s) and content. Knowing the purpose and the audience will help you understand the topic(s) to be covered and the type of content that would be most useful and interesting. Identify a list of likely external/internal content sources (e.g. websites, blogs, social media sources, etc.)

4. **Assemble a team.** Putting out a regular newsletter requires a dedicated team with sufficient time to contribute as needed.

▲ Select an editor to coordinate the entire process. This person may also take on the role of writer.

▲ If fresh content is prepared for each issue, then assign writers as needed.

▲ If appropriate, assign persons to compile news items from various sources, including from relevant websites, social networking sites like Twitter, or directly from experts.

5. **Decide on your platform.** For small newsletters you can simply use your email client, but for audiences of more than 30-50, or if you want to track usage, then opt for an email platform such as MailChimp or Campaign Monitor. Dedicated platforms often have free versions with limitations on the number of subscribers and the types of features available; if your newsletter is a success, it may make sense to consider paying for the full version of a platform.

6. **Develop your first issue.** You will need to develop both content and design. Content commonly used in newsletters includes:

▲ Summaries of news or other updates from your own website or blog, with a link to the full content.

▲ Links to online news and content from external websites, blogs or social media. Add a short blurb that highlights the key message and value for the subscribers.

▲ Brief content (news, reviews, announcements, new ideas, highlights of staff achievements, conferences, jobs, etc.) written especially for the newsletter. Keep such content short – one or two paragraphs, covering the full story or at least the most important points you want to convey.

▲ Event listings. These usually appear close to some relevant event.

▲ Calls to action. If/when appropriate, invite or request readers to do something, such as taking a poll, signing up for an event, sharing newsletter content with others, etc.

Other content tips:

▲ To help in organizing the content, create an outline for the e-newsletter: table of contents, news highlights, events, etc.

▲ Optionally, you can choose a theme for each issue within your main topic, and select/create content accordingly. Organizing newsletters by theme can enhance their appeal and impact.

▲ See *Tips for success: Content development* below for more suggestions.

7. **Create a design for your first issue**. After testing and refinement, the same design (with minor variations) can work for subsequent issues as well as people begin to recognize your brand.

▲ Create a simple, attractive layout that is easy to view on a web browser and that is mobile-friendly as well.

• Use either HTML or PDF for the e-newsletter. HTML is perhaps preferable: It does not require any attachments and can be read immediately within the subscriber's email client. (Please see References below for additional guidance on HTML email design.)

• If you are using an email platform, then you may be able to choose and customize an existing template offered with the platform. Otherwise you will need to create your own layout.

• In either case, keep the design of the newsletter simple, and the graphics minimal, to reduce bandwidth requirements. Give the newsletter a clean look and feel with enough white space so that copy does not appear cluttered. Retaining a white background can also save on ink for those choosing to print off the newsletter!

• The layout should include a header with a banner, a body and a footer.

• **The banner** at the head of the newsletter should include a name and logo (small graphic or coloured text) representing the sponsoring organization or programme; the name of the newsletter; possibly a tagline (short phrase or keywords to describe the newsletter and its purpose); and the newsletter issue number and volume or date.

• **The body** should include section headings and bulleted lists to divide the content into

manageable chunks. This enables readers to scan quickly to items of interest, and makes reading the newsletter a more appealing experience. Align content left and be consistent throughout. Use different fonts (no more than 3) and colours to divide the sections and enable scanning.

• Each section should start with the highest priority/most important item first.

• **The footer** should include a link to subscribe, pointing to a landing page that describes exactly what is in the newsletter and how often it is published, and offers a preview of a sample newsletter so that visitors can decide whether to subscribe.

• The footer should also include a link to unsubscribe (as easily as possible), a contact email address for feedback (be sure to monitor this address!), and any relevant privacy statements on how readers' information is used and protected, and whom the content of the newsletter is for.

• If your newsletter is public, you can include links to share the content with others (social media buttons for Twitter, Facebook, etc.)

• Once the layout has been customized, save and re-use it for every issue to maintain uniformity and develop a brand.

• See *Tips for success: Newsletter design* below for more.

◢ Once the newsletter has been designed, test the design with a sample of your audience. Do they like it? Do they find it easy to read? Check it in several different browsers, including mobile view, to see if the layout is preserved.

◢ Also test all the links and ensure they open in separate browser windows.

8. Once all content, design and testing is complete, **send out the e-newsletter to people in your distribution list**. Make sure the email goes out from a person and not a generic email address. People tend to open emails from respected individuals or organizations that represent a leading authority.

9. **Save all issues of the e-newsletter** by posting them on a website: Store them as a PDF file or as webpages. An archive enables readers to find previous issues without having to search their inboxes. It also enables wider sharing of content and thus promotes subscriptions.

10. Once you have sent your first e-newsletter, it is recommended to **prepare an editorial calendar**. Consider the frequency of sending that works best and allocate responsibilities accordingly among the members of your team. Choose themes and topics for several upcoming newsletter issues to make sure there is enough content worth exploring for several months.

11. **Keep an eye on impact.**

◢ Based on the newsletter's purpose, set some goals that can be monitored through standard metrics. If you are using an email newsletter platform such as MailChimp or Campaign Monitor, you will have access to statistical reports that can help you analyze the performance of your newsletter. These reports can indicate how many persons open/read the newsletter, which links are clicked, how many persons subscribed or unsubscribed every time a new issue was published, etc.

◢ Periodically survey your subscribers to get feedback on how the contents are used; how they contribute to your objectives like internal communication, knowledge sharing or strengthening capacities; and to obtain content suggestions.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Your newsletter will be vying for attention with other newsletters and emails. Readers must dedicate time – probably work time – to reading your outputs. Hence, you should maximize both content value and design effectiveness.

Content development:

◢ **The writing style for a newsletter** should be informal and conversational. Content should be in the active voice. Avoid jargon unless you are sure your readers understand it; in general, keep the language simple. Always check for spelling and grammatical errors.

◢ **Email subject lines** for your newsletter should contain the newsletter's name and the issue number. They may also contain keywords to describe the content. Keep subject lines to a maximum of 50 characters. Avoid using promotional words like "reminder", "help", "free"; these may cause your newsletter to be automatically marked as spam.

◢ **When selecting content for your newsletter, remember to focus on value for your readers.** Value comes from the relevance, timeliness, conciseness and 'actionability' of your content, for your particular audience.

◢ **Conciseness is particularly important.** Content should provide the key message in the first three lines, and should run to no more than two paragraphs total, on average. For longer content, create a short blurb for your newsletter that summarizes the content, and post a longer article on a web/Intranet site, linked from the newsletter. Sometimes you can divide longer content into multiple sub-headings within one newsletter (adhering still to a two-paragraph limit per subheading).

◢ **Keep headlines succinct and include key words.** Here are some tips:

- Describe the key point of the copy in less than 10 words.

- Use numbers, e.g., "The 5 best…"; "3 Tips to help you…".

- Use questions to capture interest.

- If the news highlights an expert, use the person's name in the headline.

- Avoid jargon or jokes in headlines.

◢ **Include graphics when appropriate.** Photos and illustrations can help to increase visual appeal but may also take up valuable bandwidth. Use in moderation and keep the potential restrictions of

your target audience in mind – among them, the needs of mobile phone users who may have difficulty viewing larger-sized images.

◢ **Consider inviting respected experts to contribute** an editorial or leading article for each edition.

◢ **More sophisticated newsletters may be able to offer subscribers personalized, automated content** – in effect an *à la carte* menu which allows readers to choose which content they receive from among several relevant themes/options.

Newsletter design:

◢ **The overall look and feel of a newsletter should be inviting and easy to read.** The simpler the design, the easier it is for readers to share the content with others without losing the formatting.

◢ **Maintain brand consistency:** Ensure the newsletter design is based on the organizational brand and any relevant sub-brands.

◢ **Include anywhere from three to five top stories,** in addition to other regular content.

◢ **Place the two most relevant, interesting stories at the top of the page** to maximize the impact of the newsletter in the

email client's preview pane. This will help increase the open rate.

◢ **Include a table of contents for newsletters with five or more sections.** Place it at the top of the email to allow for quick scanning.

◢ **Make sure the format is mobile-friendly.** An ever-increasing proportion of emails, including newsletters, are read on mobile phones.

Interacting with your readers

◢ Establish an email address – again, preferably a person, not a generic one – for submitting content ideas and comments, and include it in your emails.

◢ When promoting a newsletter (for example, on your Intranet/website), provide a clear description of the content and frequency, and share a preview, if possible.

◢ If people are automatically signed up for a newsletter (for example, when they join a work team), then send a welcome message explaining why they are receiving it.

◢ Include a link to subscribe (in case a reader forwards your newsletter to others) and one to unsubscribe in every newsletter. Allow readers to unsubscribe easily with one click. This will ensure that only interested people are on the subscriber

list. Invite readers to suggest or contribute content for the next edition of the newsletter or to suggest a new topic if a thematic focus is chosen. This gives the benefit of useful feedback, cuts down on your workload and strengthens relationships.

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▲   Take advantage of social media – such as internal enterprise social platforms like Yammer, or external social media – to promote your newsletter. (Always adhere to any applicable social media guidelines when doing so.)

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Distribution

▲   Send out the newsletter at the start of the business day for most of your audience. It is suggested to send newsletters on a Tuesday or Thursday; avoid Mondays since your email may get buried under other urgent messages.

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EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

/ Know what meetings you really need, and get the most from them /

Meetings play a large role in any organization, and represent a substantial investment of time by all staff. Improvements to meeting effectiveness, if applied widely, can therefore offer very significant organizational audience.

CONTENTS

I. SHOULD YOU ORGANIZE A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING?

Answering a few simple questions can help you decide whether you really need to call a meeting, or whether an alternative would be equally or more effective. **To confirm that you need a face-to-face meeting** (where all participants are physically together in one location), **each of the questions in the following figure requires a 'yes' answer**. Otherwise, proceed with one of the alternatives suggested below.

SHOULD I HOLD A MEETING?
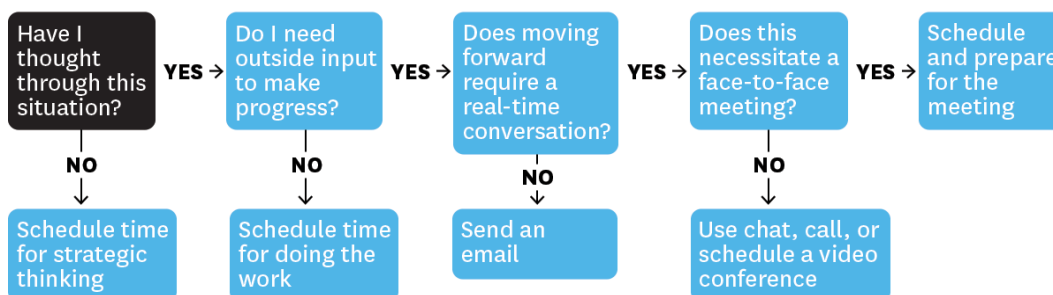
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Image from "Do You Really Need to Hold That Meeting?", by Elizabeth Grace Saunders, Harvard Business Review (online), 20 March 2015; image copyright © Harvard Business Publishing, used with permission.

The following discussion unpacks and restates each of the four questions in the figure above and suggests meeting alternatives.

◢ Question 1. Have you thought carefully about the context and issues, so that you know what is needed next?

A meeting cannot substitute for doing your own thinking about an issue, so your first step is always setting aside time for your own reflection and analysis. This will help you decide what you really want, and thus will provide the **clarity of purpose that all meetings, and indeed all projects, require** if they are to be successful. Only after due reflection should you proceed.

◢ Question 2. Do you need contributions from others at this time, or can you take effective action yourself?

Through analysis you may discover **effective ways other than meetings to obtain desired results**, making a meeting unnecessary. For example, upon reflection you may decide you are sufficiently well-informed to make a decision without a meeting. Or you may

discover research – such as technical papers, or documented lessons learned from others who have tackled the same issue in the past – which offers promising solutions to the issues you are facing.

At this stage, even if you decide that contributions from others are required, you should also consider **whose** input might be helpful. If you cannot identify specific individuals whose input you need to make progress, then a meeting may not be appropriate, or may be premature.

◢ Question 3. Is a real-time conversation the best way to get needed inputs or take the next step?

A real-time conversation is one in which participants can respond immediately to inputs from others; it is different from non-real-time conversations such as email exchanges, where participants have to wait, for a short or long time, for one another's responses. Even if you have decided you need inputs from others, you may not need a real-time conversation to get them. There are alternatives, and at this stage they should be considered:

- **Use official networking platforms** (like Yammer) to request inputs from communities of experts, to share your ideas and experiences widely, to raise organizational awareness of key developments, or to find colleagues who may know more about an issue.
- **Use collaboration platforms** (like a team site or discussion channel) to post drafts for comment and review, or to share project updates with a team.
- **Send emails** to pose specific questions to specific individuals, or to circulate draft documents, guidance or proposals (which preferably reside in a repository, with only the link shared via email).
- **Post on professional mailing lists or external online groups** to tap expertise beyond the organization.

Often, these alternatives can be both more efficient (i.e. they cost less) and more effective than a meeting. You can be very **directive** in what inputs you are requesting, you can **target specific individuals** or groups/teams, and you will automatically have a **written record** of any feedback received. These alternatives can also be **complementary to subsequent meetings**: efficiently accomplishing preliminary or related tasks outside a meeting can allow the meeting to be shorter, or can allow the meeting time to be used more profitably.

Status update meetings (meetings held to update members of a team on status of various activities within a project/initiative) **can often be partially replaced with use of a collaboration platform**. Team leaders can check status of items online; team members can coordinate activities; and individual queries can be made to clarify specific issues.

Nevertheless, you may decide that you do need a real-time conversation, because it can confirm or clarify a common understanding of complex issues among a group, and allow for

rapid feedback, brainstorming and iteration on ideas.

◢ **Question 4. If you need real-time interaction, does it have to be via a face-to-face meeting?**

A face-to-face group meeting is not your only choice: Telephone or Skype calls, one-on-one conversations in person, and online meetings are all real-time options that can often replace face-to-face meeting.

Don't assume that a single meeting is necessarily more efficient than a series of small conversations. Meetings that are too large may often be unproductive, and people may be more willing to offer complete, relevant information in **individual conversations.** You will also save other people's time by having shorter individual conversations with several persons instead of requiring all of them to sit in a longer meeting.

If you do decide that a meeting with multiple participants is needed, consider whether it should be an **online meeting.** Refer to the section below on 'Succeeding with online meetings' for additional tips. Online meetings are sometimes preferable to face-to-face gatherings even when all participants are nominally in the same location – for example, when some staff are working from home.

Face-to-face meetings involving multiple participants may be the best alternative if your objectives include rapid decision-making on complex topics, or innovation through collaborative work. They are also effective for establishing strong personal connections between key participants. They can also be useful for status updates, but this requires sustaining meeting discipline over time to keep participants involved and ensure the meeting is paying off in terms of results for time invested.

Sometimes a face-to-face meeting is good for information-sharing, especially when you have a visit from an expert, or want to highlight the success of colleagues in a particularly interesting or challenging initiative. **As alternatives to the routine format of a**

long presentation followed by Q&A, and to make the most of these meetings, use knowledge exchange methods such as Expert Interview with an Audience, or Fishbowl, or Chat Show. If there are several experts/colleagues to accommodate within a short time, use the Lightning Talks format. Or run a Brown Bag Lunch if this is appropriate.

When meeting face-to-face would require travel from at least some participants, then even closer scrutiny is needed. **Meetings requiring travel can be very costly in budget and time**, and will also have environmental impacts as compared to non-travel alternatives. Refer to the Global Meetings Guide in this Toolbox for a more in-depth look at deciding on, and succeeding with, such meetings.

If you do decide in the end that a face-to-face meeting is the best alternative, and is justifiable in terms of costs (including both time and money), then be sure to approach it in a disciplined way: apply the core principles for succeeding with all types of meetings, which are summarized in the next section.

II. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR RUNNING MEETINGS

Applying the following principles will improve the effectiveness of nearly all meetings, whether in-person or online.

Before the meeting

◢ **Take responsibility:** If you are organizing a meeting, then you are also responsible for the successful completion of all the meeting requirements. Even if you delegate some of this work to others, for example by having a dedicated facilitator for a long meeting, you as the organizer remain responsible for the outcome.

◢ **Define objectives:** Based on your experience, set realistic and specific meeting goals that contribute to the strategy of the team or the organization, and define specific desired outputs: decisions, plans of action, solutions, or innovations.

◢ **Choose participants:** These should correspond to the goals and outputs you want.
- Many meetings are more effective with fewer participants. Meetings that aim for decision-making, problem solving, or innovation often work best with a maximum of 5-6 participants.
- Limiting participant numbers is not always possible. In some organizations there is a strong culture of 'inclusivity', and limiting meeting participation can be perceived as un-collegial. In such cases, consider whether you can invite some people as optional, rather than required, participants. They may appreciate the extra time if they do not attend, and not attending will be their choice, not yours.
- If you need to have meetings with larger numbers of participants, consider including breakout sessions in the agenda, especially if the meeting runs for more than one hour.

◢ **Draft the agenda.** It should be clear and specific (e.g, write 'Update on the WASH in Schools program in X municipality, instead of just 'update'), with a logical structure and sufficient detail to make the desired goals/outputs achievable within the meeting, and with appropriate sequencing and timings on individual items.
- If appropriate, ask meeting invitees to review and contribute to the agenda, via email or (better) on an internal social channel. This will enhance meeting relevance and boost participant buy-in. This works best for small meetings rather than large ones.
- You as the organizer remain responsible for the final agenda. If you decide not to include suggested items, explain your decision to those who made the suggestions.

- Phrasing agenda items as questions, to be answered by the participants at the meeting, may promote understanding and engagement.

▲ **Consider whether you need an online meeting page/site** to share meeting materials including goals and objectives, agenda, meeting admin note, session flows, presentations, videos, background readings, etc. A meeting page/site should in most cases be open (visible to all staff, not just to participants). An existing team site can be used for this purpose.

▲ **Schedule the meeting,** picking the time and venue to support the outputs you want, and invite participants. Share the final agenda and any other information (preferably as links to online materials) which they will require to be effective at the meeting, but don't share more than is useful or than can be assimilated.

- If certain participants are indispensable, follow up to ensure they will attend.

▲ **Assign meeting roles,** in particular the note-taker(s). If your meeting is long or requires special room configurations or supplies, it may also be helpful to assign a logistics focal point.

▲ Consider what **facilitation skills** may be required to make the most of the meeting, and whether you need a dedicated facilitator; refer to the section below on 'Meeting facilitation.'

During the meeting

▲ **Arrive early to prepare the venue,** including projector and screens, flip charts and pens, presentations and documents, etc. If your meeting will take place online, then take this time to upload presentations, adjust meeting room permissions if needed, set a welcome message, etc.

▲ **Start on time.** Begin by stating the desired outcome of the meeting clearly: "The purpose of our meeting today is …".

- Consider opening with an Icebreaker, if your meeting will take longer than 2 hours, or will include several persons who may not know each other well.

▲ **Announce/agree on simple ground rules,** e.g. one person speaks at a time; be respectful and concise in all contributions; stay on topic; set mobile phones to silent mode. If you have online participants, make sure they are muted to avoid external noises.

▲ **For every meeting segment,** aim for a **clear decision**, **clear actions** with accountability and timeline identified, **or both**.

- During the discussions, **aim to create a climate of trust, sharing and active participation**. Try to allow all who want to contribute to be heard, within the time limits of the meeting. Confirm participant understanding and agreement of any decisions/actions proposed. Control/minimize the political component (where participants have agendas other than the one set for the meeting).
- **Stay on track,** adhere to the time allotted for meeting segments, and park any questions (using a 'parking lot' list) which are not directly related to the desired outcomes.
- You have the option to gather feedback during the meeting, using Real-Time Meeting Evaluation Tools. This may help you adjust the session to maximize impact and results.

▲ Near the end of the meeting, leave at least a couple of minutes to consider **any other business (AOB**), for participants to raise important or urgent issues that would have been on the agenda, if you had known about them.

▲ **Finish on time.** Close the meeting, or close major segments of a long meeting, by summarizing the decisions, key take-aways, any agreed action points, and persons accountable for each. Review

any parked issues, and agree on whether and how to address them.

▲ **Confirm date of the next meeting**. Identify any topics/issues that should already be added to its agenda.

▲ If you want **participant feedback,** share a short evaluation form and ask them to complete it before leaving. Collecting participant feedback is strongly recommended for major or global meetings: Feedback will help you understand whether participants share your opinion of how well the meeting succeeded, and will provide a basis for planning future meetings. Using an online form, such as Microsoft Forms, will allow you to collect and process feedback data more efficiently.

After the meeting

▲ **Finalize and share any meeting notes/minutes**, within 3 days for short meetings and within 1-2 weeks for longer meetings.

- **Ensure clarity** of meeting results, especially regarding what was decided and follow-up actions (what, who, by when).
- If appropriate, include **discussion summaries and reference links** in notes/minutes.
- Adhere to any **customary/required formats**.
- Share notes/minutes directly with participants, and/or post them on your organization's social network. Posting the notes will enable better retrieval of key information and decisions, and improved follow-up over time.

▲ If you have a meeting page/site, update it with all final materials (presentations, notes, etc.)

▲ Major meetings that yield significant decisions/actions may also require **follow-up reports** to participants and others, shared electronically or presented at a subsequent meeting.

- If you collected participant feedback, include a summary and analysis in the report.
- Ongoing/major follow-up actions may require additional periodic reports.

▲ If additional meetings are part of the agreed outcomes, or are required as part of a series, schedule and plan them.

III. Self-assessment of the meetings you organize

If you are a meeting organizer, take time to **periodically review your meetings**, including any major one-off meetings and regularly scheduled recurring meetings. Ask yourself questions about how your meetings went, and explore how you could have achieved your objectives if such meetings were not held:

▲ To what extent did you achieve your meeting objectives?

▲ What aspects of the meeting (participants, time allocation, design and facilitation) could you have changed in order to deliver better results?

▲ What would happen if these meetings had not been held? How would the participants react, taking into account any feedback you have received?

▲ What were the costs of the meetings, in money and time?

▲ Are there ways to accomplish the same objectives without a meeting?

Your analysis may suggest areas of improvement. Moreover, **replacement or elimination of meetings that have not yielded any significant progress or outcomes, or that don't justify the resources invested, will improve your overall effectiveness.**

The purpose is NOT to eliminate all your face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face communication has power and immediacy not matched by any other channel, and offers benefits – like reinforcement of shared purpose among team members, opportunity for spontaneous but very valuable connections and conversations, and (hopefully) undisturbed time to focus on mission critical decisions and outputs – which can't easily be replicated in any other way. **Just be sure to keep the face-to-face meetings for when they are really justified**.

IV. Meeting facilitation

Facilitation is the art of supporting a group at a meeting, workshop or event to effectively solve problems, make decisions, learn together and achieve its objectives. It complements and goes beyond the simple rules provided above, and draws upon the facilitator's experience and interpersonal skills to help participants feel comfortable, empowered and focused on achieving a meeting goal, and reducing or removing obstacles.

Facilitation is needed for all meetings, and **skilled facilitation is very important for strategically significant meetings**, i.e. those that aim to solve important problems, make significant decisions, or foster innovation in an important new area. Refer to the UNICEF Toolbox article on Meeting Facilitation for more details on facilitation skills. Take note that facilitation begins before the meeting, and takes place through any interactions you have in the lead-up to it, and also in any post-

meeting exchanges. Facilitation can involve choosing a specific methodology (such as any of the ones described in this Toolbox) maximize constructive interaction and benefits during the meeting, depending on the objectives, the participants, and the facilitation skills available to support the meeting.

Even if you have strong facilitation skills, you may decide it is worthwhile, for significant meetings, to have a **dedicated facilitator** – someone whose only role in the meeting is to help guide it to a successful conclusion. This will free you up from having to play a double role.

V. Succeeding with Online meetings

Online meetings can offer major savings in cost, time and environmental impacts if participants are located far apart. Many or even most of the objectives of an in-person meeting (where all participants are physically present) can usually be achieved, at much lower cost, through an online meeting. Online meetings also offer some outright advantages over in-person meetings, notably the ability to **easily record the entire meeting**, for later reference or to share with others who could not attend. (In fairness, there are also disadvantages to online meetings, including reduced opportunity for networking and human interaction as compared to in-person meetings, and greater difficulty in establishing rapport among participants who may not know each other well.)

If bandwidth permits, **video online meetings are much better than audio-only meetings or conference calls:**

◣   Video meetings give a much stronger sense of being present with all participants and allow participants to see at least some of each other's body language.

They also encourage participants to remain focused on the meeting (it is much easier to "multitask" when a meeting is audio only, leading to lower quality of participation).

There is more incentive in a video meeting to get to the point. Hence, they also tend to be shorter than audio-only meetings.

As an essential first step, **become familiar with the basic controls of your online meeting platform** (e.g. Skype for Business), and encourage your participants to do the same, so that meeting will run smoothly. Learn how to ensure your microphone and camera are working. The Toolbox article on Webinars includes many additional tips for success in online meetings, which are also applicable to general online meetings.

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GLOBAL MEETINGS

/ Deciding whether, and how, to organize a global meeting /

WHAT IS A GLOBAL MEETING?

Meetings are important means for any organization's staff and partners to stay connected, exchange ideas, learn, and generate solutions to advance the organization's work. The norm should be that they are well planned, make good use of staff time and expertise, are efficient and conducted well. This guide aims to help better coordinate and rationalize global meetings.

The definition of a global meeting for the purposes of this guide is: A special, periodic or large face-to-face meeting that involves staff from multiple offices and requires travel by at least some participants. Examples may include workshops, network meetings, functional meetings, consultations, meetings involving external parties, and other face-to-face meetings involving staff from multiple offices.
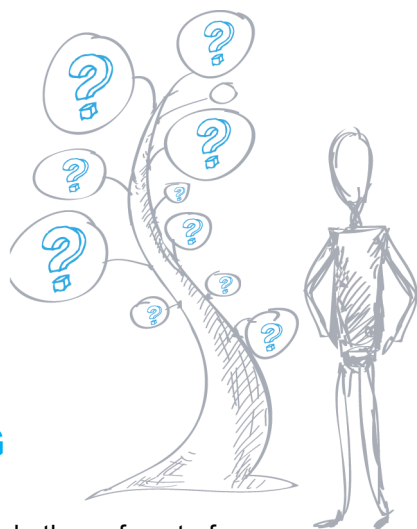
PLANNING

▲ Question whether a face-to-face meeting is needed. Is the need more for one-way information dissemination, or for two-way information sharing and collaboration? The latter can be a sound basis for a meeting. (For additional decision-making criteria, see also 'Requirements for an effective global meeting' below.)

▲ Set objectives for the meeting before planning the agenda. Consider whether the meeting will contribute to key strategic results.

▲ Manage costs by limiting meeting frequency: For example, you may decide that global technical/functional networks should meet maximum once per year, while technical/functional networks that meet regionally can consider meeting globally every other year.

▲ Different global technical/functional networks with topics that are linked and/or complementary, and that require the same participants, could hold combined meetings.

▲ The timing of meetings should take into consideration peak workload periods for the organization. Preferably, meetings should not be held during such periods.

▲ Meetings should be costed and budgeted in office workplans, and approved by the respective Head of Office/senior manager. Meeting venues should take into account cost-effectiveness factors.

◢ Save the date notices with meeting objectives should be issued well in advance, e.g. 3 months prior to a global meeting. Save the date notices should also include nominations for participants. Heads of Office or staff coordinating the work of multiple offices are often best positioned to nominate participants.

◢ Meeting agenda, session flows, names of facilitators, and other key details should be sent to participants perhaps 6 weeks prior to the meeting.

◢ For meetings involving multiple organizational units, an overall coordinator should be designated with authority to keep things on track.

◢ Pay close attention to any organizational guidance on increasing efficiencies in spending on travel and meetings.
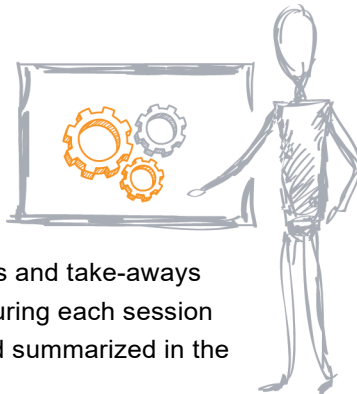
EXECUTION

◢ Key action points and take-aways should be discussed during each session of a global meeting and summarized in the closing session.

◢ Meeting feedback/evaluation forms should be completed by participants in the closing session and the analysis included in the meeting final report.

◢ Meeting minutes/reports should be shared preferably within 2 weeks after the meeting.

◢ Follow-up actions should be addressed and a status report issued periodically, or presented in the next meeting of a recurring series.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE GLOBAL MEETING

Global meetings can be effective when **all** of the following are true:

◢ The organizers have reflected carefully on the issues, and know clearly the purposes a meeting will serve.

◢ The purposes relate directly to accomplishment of the organization's strategic plan and corporate priorities. Issues of lesser importance do not usually justify a global meeting.

◢ The expected outcomes require the skills of many prospective participants, and cannot be accomplished in other ways (for example through email or online discussions).

◢ The meeting is well structured. It is not simply an 'information sharing' session but rather is systematically organized to accomplish one or more of the following expected outcomes:

- Some form of **dynamic co-creation, rapid ideation, or other creative group work**. An example might be creating the outline of a strategy in a major new area of work.
- **Well-designed tacit knowledge sharing** (i.e. sharing of knowledge from experience, using one or more knowledge exchange methods such as those in this Toolbox) **or community building**, with a suitably skilled facilitator, for specialists in a shared thematic area of work. For strategic priorities, face-to-face knowledge exchange can justify the time and expense needed, because it leads to more targeted and in-depth sharing, and promotes adaptation of knowledge to new contexts.
- **Project kick-off for major new organizational initiatives** (those spanning multiple countries/regions or with significant global strategic implications). Ideally, project kick-off meetings are combined with ideation

and co-creation, knowledge sharing, and/or reflection on past experiences, to ensure the best possible results.

- **Systematic reflection on completed major organizational initiatives,** to review actions and results and to formulate recommendations for more effective future action.

For more detailed guidance on how to run effective meetings of all kinds, refer to 'Effective Meetings' in this Toolbox.

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CREDITS

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INDIVIDUAL EXPERT INTERVIEW

/ In-depth learning from those with special knowledge or experience /

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EXPERT INTERVIEW?

An Individual Expert Interview is a focused conversation for capturing knowledge from an 'expert', who may be any person with deep knowledge or relevant experience in a topic/issue of interest. Because there is no audience, the knowledge gathered during the interview is usually disseminated via an article, blog post, transcript, book chapter, or recording (partial or complete) of the interview. Sometimes expert interviews are held only to support effective decision-making and action, without any published product.

A good interviewer uses a combination of pre-set and spontaneous questions, adapting them to suit each interview to elicit the most usable knowledge.

The Expert Interview is non-confidential: information obtained from the interview can be shared widely. This tool is different from the Debrief tool described elsewhere in this Toolbox (used when confidentiality is critical to enable people to share their experiences without repercussions, and typically focused on one specific project or experience) and from the Expert Interview with an audience (which disseminates knowledge more quickly, but is usually more limited, both in duration, and in the degree to which complex or sensitive issues can be probed).

REQUIREMENTS:

- *Interviewer (with good interviewing skills)*
- *Interviewee - Expert/ Practitioner/ Staff/ other person with deep knowledge or interesting experience in a relevant*
- *Interview Guide, to be prepared by the interviewer, with key topics possibly shared with the interviewee before the interview*
- *Audio recording device/app (strongly recommended)*
- *Video recording device/app (optional)*
- *Interview room (or café conducive for audio recording conversations)*
- *Note-taker (optional)*
- *If interview will be conducted remotely: phone or suitable web conferencing app for both parties*
- *20 - 60 minutes (depending on expert's availability)*
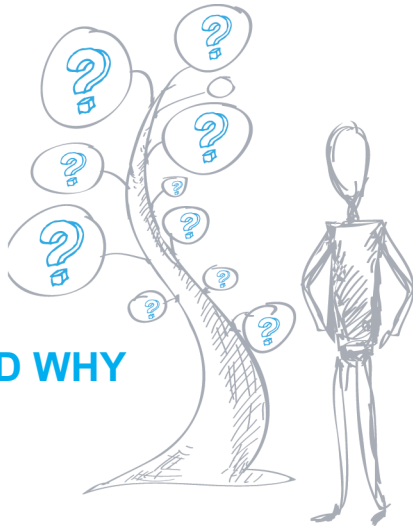
WHEN AND WHY TO USE

Consider organizing an Individual Expert Interview when you have, or expect to get, access to a person with deep knowledge and extensive or unique experiences in a topic or issue relevant for the work of your team or your organization. An expert may be a well-known figure or academic, a colleague who has just returned from a visit or tour of duty elsewhere, someone who has just completed a major project on a relevant issue, or indeed anyone with unique or valuable knowledge or experiences that are important for your objectives. An opportunity for an interview may arise fortuitously during a visit by/to the expert, or it may be arranged.

The conversational format can elicit knowledge from the interviewee which may not otherwise be shared, even if the interviewee writes an article on the topic or participates in other knowledge exchange processes. This is due both to the efforts of a skilled interviewer in asking probing questions, and to the fact that the interviewee will likely speak more freely during a one-on-one interview than in a large group setting (e.g. panel discussion).

The Interview format is useful for:

◢ Capturing tacit knowledge: knowledge from experience, including relevant anecdotes and stories, problems and challenges, insights and lessons learned, success stories, facts and analysis from the expert's point of view.

◢ Obtaining and incorporating an expert's perspective and recommendations when embarking on a new project or activity, to avoid re-inventing the wheel, to maximize the chances of success and the results, and to build credibility.[1]

◢ Tapping into valuable knowledge in a simple, low-cost way. You might choose to organize a series of expert interviews around a specific topic to take advantage of a range of individual experiences and expertise.
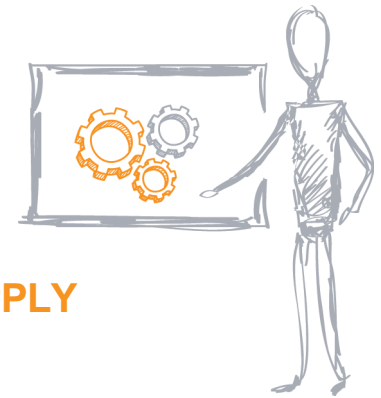
HOW TO APPLY

Before the interview

1. **Make an appointment.**

◢ Ask the expert for an interview in writing, preferably at least a few days in advance. Describe briefly but clearly the purpose of the interview, how and why their input would be valuable, focusing on the issue/topic of interest and their credentials or experience.

◢ Agree the date, time (anywhere from 20 minutes to one hour) and location.

◢ Arrange a venue that is reasonably quiet, with comfortable seating and minimal distractions. Refreshments are optional, but it's a good idea to have drinking water available, especially for interviews longer than 30 minutes.

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[1] Another tool suitable for use at the start of a project is the Virtual Peer Assist, described elsewhere in this Toolbox.

◤ Explain the interview process and expected outputs. Ensure they understand that the purpose of the interview is knowledge sharing – hence it is by necessity 'on the record' – and that they know who the audience is, and how the knowledge from the interview will be shared (article, newsletter, internal site, external site, etc.) or applied.

◤ If you plan to record the interview, request permission from the expert, and explain what use will be made of the recording.

2. Prepare for the interview.

◤ **Do some research** on the person being interviewed, their background and professional interests, work history, any publications, etc. Presumably you already know something about them (hence your request for an interview), but it helps to be familiar with basic details before you sit down to talk with them.

• The interview process may be more formal for dignitaries and VIPs, so do bear in mind the expected protocol.

◤ For interviews with individuals who speak a different language, employ the services of a translator who is fluent in both your language and the language of the interviewee. However, do bear in mind that the need for translation will reduce the potential knowledge gain from the conversation, and that you must work closely with the translator to ensure questions and responses are delivered accurately.

◤ How will the interview be used? Who is the target audience? These questions will

help define the interview tone, focus and the outputs required.

• For internal target audiences, the tone of the interview can be conversational and informal, and may address organization-specific questions and issues.
• For external target audiences, it may be more helpful to stick to the facts and issues 'on the ground'.
• If there are different audience bases, you can conduct an in-depth interview and re-package the information by preparing several outputs, e.g. articles, with varying degrees of detail that can be shared appropriately.

◤ How will the interview be captured? It is often useful to supplement note-taking with an audio recording that you can go back to when consolidating and processing your notes.

◤ **Prepare an interview guide** – an outline to help you keep track of the interview. It should include the main topic, issues to be discussed, and questions for each issue. The approach outlined below is semi-structured: it combines the power of pre-planned questions with the flexibility of spontaneous follow-ups. Don't overdo the detail or make it too structured; keep flexibility so that you have room to adapt and add specific follow-up questions on the spot as you conduct the interview. Key topics from the interview guide can be shared with the interviewee to help them gather their thoughts around the specific topics.

• **Based on the required outputs, think about how to frame the questions to elicit the most learning.** If possible, do a little research to help create good questions: Speak to practitioners in the same field and ask them what they think are important questions they would like answered. Consider asking new staff as well, to take advantage of their fresh perspective.
• **Make your first questions simple** to elicit basic background for the topic of the interview

and get the conversation flowing.

• **Next, proceed with questions to establish key factual details:** what, where, when, who, and so forth.

• **Consider asking how specific problems/challenges were identified,** how they were solved/addressed, why certain actions were taken or not taken, and what they would do differently given the opportunity.

• **Thereafter, incorporate sufficient open-ended questions** to allow for wider discussion and discovery. For example, "How has this project changed the lives of children in this village?" is an open-ended question inviting a detailed, rich response. It is preferable to "Has this project changed the lives of children…?", which is simple and closed.

• **Include also a few questions on the interviewee's opinions and interpretations.** These must be asked with sensitivity, and not too early; ask them once the facts are established and the discussion is flowing. You can't pre-plan all such questions, so be prepared to add some such questions spontaneously (but with sensitivity).

• Refer to the Expert Interview Guide (Appendix 1) for a suggested format.

Conducting the interview:

3. Open with an introduction.

• When you meet, first take a couple of minutes for **informal conversation** to put everyone at ease.

• Next, **introduce** the format and structure for the interview.

• If you plan to record the session, remind the interviewee and **obtain consent** before beginning.

• Should the interviewee request a review of the interview draft before it is shared with others, agree (and follow through) to

allay their concerns.

• Confirm that you will respect the interviewee's wishes for **confidentiality** should they request it at any point during the interview.

• Most importantly make the interviewee feel and know that you are **genuinely interested** in what they want to share which will make them reveal comfortably.

• Then **begin with your background questions**, to get the conversation flowing. These should be light and easy to answer.

4. Conduct the interview

⏢ Once the background questions are complete, launch into the main body of the interview, per the interview guide which you prepared. Begin with questions on the facts, and on specific problems and challenges. Then proceed – with due sensitivity – to ask questions about the interviewee's opinions and interpretations, and even feelings about the meaning of the facts and what can be learned from them.

⏢ As appropriate during the interview, follow up preplanned questions with spontaneous ones, to obtain additional details on things of interest, stories and anecdotes, clarifications or insights. Knowing when and how to ask spontaneous questions is more of an art than a science, but be guided by your instincts and your sense of what your audience would be really interested in. For example, when opinions are shared, it can often be a good idea to clarify what the interviewee means rather than presume or assume what he/she refers to, and to gently ask why the expert believes this, to help elicit additional relevant evidence and experience.

⏢ Do not be rigid about following the guide to the letter. Depending on the conversation flow, you may choose to swap the order of

questions; to ask for examples or stories, e.g. "Can you give me an example of…?"; or to probe (with sensitivity – this is not a job interview) regarding the Who, What, When, Why, and How of situations or actions described by the interviewee.

◢ Do not ask more than one question at a time.

◢ Always give the interviewee time for reflection if needed.

◢ Listen actively. Focus on what is being said and how the person says it. Pay attention to the tone of voice, facial expressions and body language too. This helps you understand the full context of responses.

◢ Let the interviewee take the lead sometimes. Allow them to follow their train of thought, which may reveal important facts or view that may not be covered in your questions. As the interviewer, you should be able to catch these moments and explore them further.

◢ At the the same time, do ensure that the conversation does not veer off topic.

◢ Maintain an even and welcoming demeanour, be open-minded and non-critical. People are less likely to be candid if they suspect their opinions are being judged.

Capturing the interview

◢ Either take notes during the interview, or record it with permission of the interviewee.

◢ If taking notes: in addition to capturing important points, pay attention to the facts and themes emerging from the interviewee's remarks, and clarify

inconsistencies quickly. User a notepad or write notes in your Interview Guide. Consider using a second note-taker if possible, especially for interviews with eminent persons.

◢ If recording the interview: use a device or app (audio or video) that you are familiar with and that is reliable and simple to operate. Mobile phones are readily accessible recording devices; ensure that your phone is muted or in airplane mode, has sufficient memory to store the recording and has adequate charge or is plugged in.

5. **Close the interview.**

◢ When you have 5-10 minutes left in your allotted time, ask the interviewee if they have any final thoughts or overarching messages on the topics you have discussed.

◢ Ask for feedback on the interview, how they felt, and what they thought of it.

◢ If needed, ask if they can suggest relevant knowledge resources – articles, books, websites, etc. – that can supplement and enrich your interview content, particularly as you develop your intended outputs or knowledge products.

◢ Once the interview is completed, thank the interviewee and let them know of the next steps:

• **Notes** to be reviewed and summarized.
• **Facts** to be checked against sources.
• **Sharing the interview draft** with the interviewee prior to publishing. While this is at the discretion of the interviewer, sharing the interview notes will help establish trust. If you committed to do so at the beginning of the interview, then you must follow through.
• Format for **dissemination** of interview or its

content/knowledge.
• Any **decisions or actions expected** which will make use of the interview or its content/knowledge.
• **Timeline**, if known.

After the Interview:

6. **Review your notes as soon as possible** while the interview is still fresh in your memory. If you recorded the interview or had a second note taker, do cross-checks to make sure you have a complete record of the important information. If there is still any confusion, call or email the interviewee for clarification.

7. **Once the notes are in order, prepare the desired knowledge product:** article, blog post, book chapter, briefing note, etc. This draft can then be shared with the interviewee if this was agreed. They may have some suggestions and comments that can be incorporated."

8. **Publish/ disseminate the interview, or its relevant portions, among your target audience according to your plan.** Or proceed with the decision/action which the interview was intended to support, if this was the objective.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Preparation:
◢ If the interviewee asks to see the questions before the interview, use your discretion:

- For **very important people and dignitaries**, seeing the questions may be a pre-requisite before they agree to be interviewed.
- For **most interviews**, it may be worthwhile sharing a broad overview of objectives and high level questions from your Interview Guide, so that the interviewee has time to reflect. But usually it is best not to share detailed questions, and similarly to let the interviewee know that they don't need to prepare detailed responses in advance. This approach allows both for preparation and for spontaneity and a genuinely conversational approach to the interview.

Interviewer Qualities:
Good interviewers are:

◢ **Friendly, open-minded and non-judgemental**. Although interviewers may also be specialists, they can put their thinking and perspectives aside while interviewing.

◢ **Intuitive** and able to think on their feet.

◢ **Structured but also comfortable with natural flows of conversation,** and able to gently bring conversations back to the topic when needed to ensure that all key topics of the interview are covered.

◢ **Flexible** when dealing with different personality types and social styles, able to gauge

differences and tailor the interview to suit the interviewee's personality.

◢ **Curious**. Interviews are a human exchange requiring some enthusiasm. Curiosity and enthusiasm will be more likely to elicit more and better responses, because people like to share what they know with someone who is genuinely interested.

◢ **Skilled listeners.** Once you have asked a question, give the interviewee time to respond. Allow them to articulate their thoughts and ideas completely. Recap or paraphrase responses to make sure you have captured their meaning clearly. This also helps the interviewee keep track of the conversation.

◢ **Able to understand non-verbal communication.** Facial expressions and body language speak volumes. The way someone speaks and the tone of voice convey the excitement they may feel about a topic or issue. Conversational energy can guide you in choosing whether to pursue the topic at hand, or begin a new line of questioning.

∙∙

Question Design:

◢ Ask **clear, direct questions** that are unambiguous and jargon-free. Make them interesting, provocative but non-threatening. Test them out on colleagues or a sample audience.

◢ Encourage the interviewee to be **specific**. Ask for step-by-step descriptions, examples and stories.

◢ **Avoid 'leading' questions** that force a person to answer in a biased manner. Here's an example of a leading question: "Do you not think that the response of the organization to the situation was valid?" Instead, ask "What do you think about the response of the

organization to the situation?"

◢ Include sufficient **open questions** to allow for rich responses.

∙∙

Conducting the Interview:

◢ Wherever possible, **prefer face-to-face** over remote/phone interviews. Face-to-face conversations are usually more genuine and spontaneous. They will enable you, the interviewer, to gauge more easily the interviewee's emotions behind their responses, and thus to be more effective in posing spontaneous questions and choosing what responses to follow up.

◢ Pay attention to where the interviewee places **emphasis**. These are areas for potential follow up.

◢ **Manage time carefully**. Allocate sufficient time for people to answer all the important questions.

◢ Before asking sensitive questions, make sure that you have **established rapport** with the interviewee. Probe gently; use your intuition to gauge their comfort level with an issue. Abandon the question track if you find that the interviewee becomes defensive or closes down.

◢ Keep an **eye out for discrepancies** and unintentionally misleading responses. Ask for clarification, repeating your question if necessary.

∙∙

Tips for online/remote interviews:

Interviews conducted over the phone or via Skype or another web conferencing application can make it more difficult to create rapport with the interviewee. You will likely have less time available for an online interview than for an in-person interview of the same duration, due to the need to connect to the platform, adjust volumes, etc. Also, be mindful that a poor audio and video connection

will ruin a fantastic interview, and you may not have a second opportunity to interview the same person.

Nevertheless, sometimes an online/remote interview may be the only way to speak to an expert.

If you need to conduct an online/remote interview, the following tips will be helpful.

◢ Choose a **reliable technology**. Phone can still sometimes be a good option.

◢ If you choose to conduct the interview over the internet, ensure that your **internet connection is reliable**. Be cautious about using Wi-Fi; hardwired internet connections are preferred. Ensure that your microphone and camera are working correctly, and that you know the software platform (e.g. Skype, Skype for Business) you will use. If needed, test beforehand with a friend.

◢ Decide whether you want to **record** the interview ahead of time. If so, be sure to get the interviewee's agreement in advance (not at the start of the interview).

◢ **Video** can enhance rapport between yourself and the interviewee, especially if you don't know each other already, or are only slightly acquainted. Prefer a video interview, but only if the internet connection is robust for both parties. If either or both of you are working in low-bandwidth conditions, choose an audio interview to avoid software delays and dropouts.

◢ Propose a time (be mindful of different time zones and daylight/standard time differences) and format (video or audio), and **get email confirmation** from the interviewee.

◢ Conduct the interview from a location with **minimum noise and distractions**. Unless you're conducting a panel interview, use a

headset to maintain the privacy of the conversation (you don't want others overhearing and interjecting suggestions or comments). Don't check your cell phone or email during any interview!

◢ Show up at least **5 minutes before the scheduled start** (10 minutes for VIPs). Have your questions ready.

◢ Have an **alternate contact method** available if needed, e.g. the email address or phone number of the interviewee.

◢ Non-verbal cues are harder to catch in an online video interview, and even more so in an audio-only interview. Pay close attention to the interviewee's **tone of voice** (and to their gestures and demeanour if using video), to help you understand more fully what they are thinking and feeling, and to know when and how to use spontaneous or probing questions appropriately.

VARIATIONS

◢ **Appreciative Inquiry:** This is a systematic method for asking questions that focus entirely on positive accounts and experiences, achievements, strengths, opportunities and insights. The idea is to understand what worked well and why, so that it can be amplified.
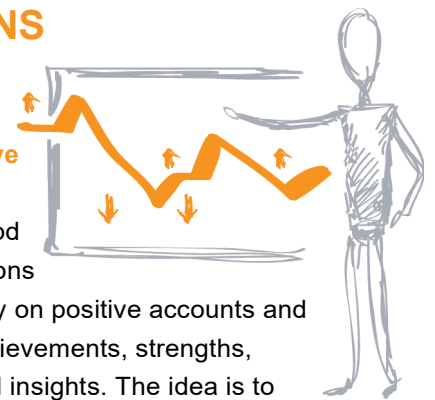
With this approach, focus your interview questions on:

- What worked well in a given project or situation.
- Stories that highlight strengths or describe real breakthroughs and significant achievements.

- Exploring the elements present during occasions of success.
- Innovation and future-oriented thinking.

For more details refer to Center for Appreciative Inquiry, "Generic Processes of Appreciative Inquiry", under References below.

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CREDITS

Appendix 1: Expert Interview Guide

Date:

Interviewer:

Introduction
Interviewee: <Name of expert/ staff>
Title: <Role>
Background: < Expertise; Context; Relevance; Reason for Interview>

Expected Outputs:
1.
2.
3.

Interview Flow (Select from or combine 3 common areas of knowledge capture; add more as needed)
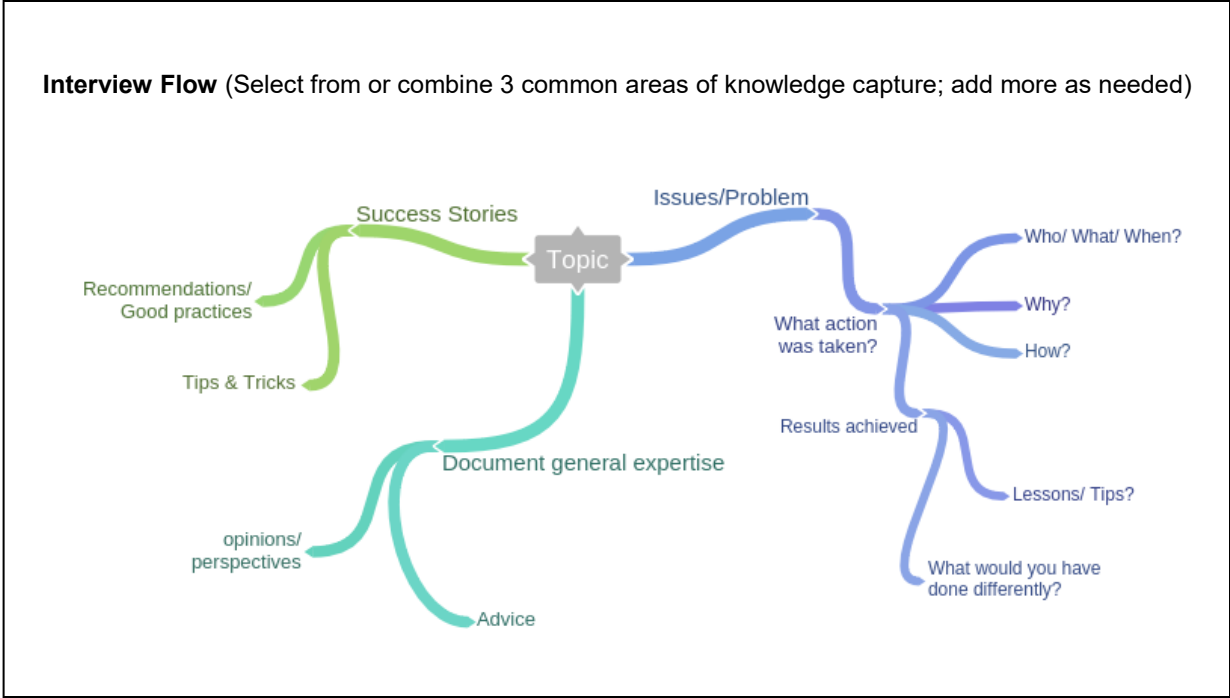
Question Type	Examples
Introduction/ Background Information	What is your role in the organization? How long have you been working in this area of work? How did you get into this field of study?

	What do you find most fascinating about this area of work?
Factual	Who was involved? What were the key factors…? What steps did you take…? What were the results?
Opinions/ Perspectives	What surprised you? How did it affect you? What did you learn from the experience? What do you think was the real reason it worked? What challenges or risks should we anticipate in…? What insights can you share about the experience? What would you have done differently? Why? (as a follow-up to questions above) What advice would you have for…..?
Wrap Up	What are the 3 most important things to remember? Do you have any important points to share that we did not talk about?

ONLINE TOOLS FOR FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

/ Empowering participation using technology /

WHAT ARE ONLINE TOOLS[1] FOR MEETINGS?

Online tools for use during face-to-face meetings have added a new dimension to the meeting experience. They are usually easy to use, offer quick results, and provide an element of fun. As most meeting participants already have mobile devices (and may use them during meetings/conferences), why not acknowledge their utility and apply them for the purposes of the meeting? Use these tools to find out how participants feel at various intervals during a meeting, gauge their interest levels, collect feedback and ideas, evaluate their understanding, and ensure your message is getting across.

Online tools enable meeting organizers both to empower participants and to give them some measure of accountability for the success of a conference or meeting. Using their mobile phones, laptop computers or tablets, participants can vote on questions, give inputs quickly at a moment's notice at any point during a meeting, or take part in learning games. These tools can significantly increase participant engagement, because everyone can respond at once, no one needs to be individually called upon, and in some cases participation can be anonymous if required. Results can be shown to the participants in real time. Large meetings (workshops and conferences) especially benefit from the power of these tools.

In addition to enabling participant feedback, most meeting tools incorporate analytics that offer useful insights to organizers.

This article describes six of the main functions (purposes) for which online meeting tools are used:

1. Instant voting/polling.

2. Gathering inputs or questions from participants during a meeting.

3. Using a social media wall to "turn up the volume" on your event and build engagement among participants or external observers.
(continues…)

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[1] Tools (software) listed in this article are suggestions only, and should always be used in line with the organization's policies and recommendations. Such tools are frequently updated, and new tools appear from time to time, hence the list included here is not comprehensive and may change with future releases of this Toolbox. See Appendix 1 for an overview of the tools and their main features.

4. Event planner and response tool for conference participants (e.g., adding agenda items of the meeting/conference to their schedules and facilitating instant messaging among participants).

5. Learning games.

6. Analytics for assessing meeting impact.

The outline of each function is accompanied by a list of suggested tools. See Appendix 1 for an overview of all the tools mentioned in this article.

REQUIREMENTS:

■ *Meeting, workshop or conference event (more than 30 participants, each with mobile device/ tablet/ laptop)*
■ *Organizer or Speaker/ Presenter (with knowledge of virtual/online tool)*
■ *Online tool, selected according to needs*
■ *Reliable Wi-Fi connection with enough capacity for all participants (very important)*

Function 1: Instant voting/ polling

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

Online tools for instant voting/polling (via multiple choice or rating scale/quantitative questions) are most useful for large meetings – those with more than 30 participants – where they can be great time-savers, avoiding the need to count hands or paper ballots, listen to individual responses, etc. Instant voting is a great way to encourage interaction in meetings where people have not had time to get to know each other, and they are especially useful when you need quick answers. Participants can take an online poll and have their responses registered in real-time. The online feedback activity complements the offline presentation seamlessly.

Instant voting/polling uses purely quantitative question types. The value is that the quantitative response data can be quickly captured, tabulated and even shown to participants at the meeting, or conveniently embedded as a table/graph in a subsequent document. Various response types are available: yes/no, multiple choice, or numerical scale.
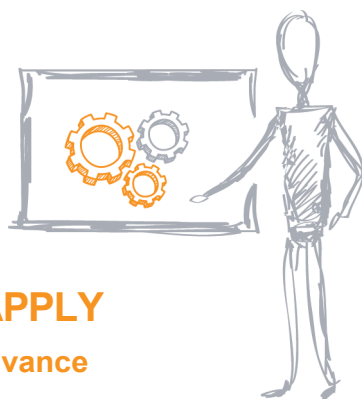
HOW TO APPLY

Prepare in advance

1. Choose an online tool for polling/ voting (see the list of suggested tools below), and sign up/register.

2. Follow the tool's instructions to create your poll questions online. This is almost always easy and intuitive. If you need help, every tool offers online instructions and/or FAQs. When formulating questions, consider the type of response you expect people to vote on:

- ◢ Yes/ No
- ◢ Multiple choice
- ◢ Numerical scale
- ◢ 'Like' button

It is best to stick to a few critical questions; don't overuse the tool.

3. At an appropriate place in your presentation, insert slide(s) with your poll questions. Also include brief instructions on how to vote; if participants are viewing your presentation on their device, they can click on the embedded links to begin voting. Depending on the tool chosen, participants may need a mobile phone (smart or not), a tablet or a

laptop computer. The voting process may require sending a text message to a designated number; visiting a specific web URL and typing a response; or sending a response via Twitter.

When you are ready to start

4. When the moment for your poll arrives, display the questions, invite participants to vote and be prepared to assist any who have difficulties. Display the results as votes tabulated in real-time and shown on-screen as a graph.

Suggested tools

There are a wide range of tools available that offer basic features for free on a trial basis. You can opt for a subscription, which will also enable more features such as provisions for larger audiences and for greater complexity in polling.

- ◢ Poll Everywhere: instant voting via SMS, web browser or twitter.

- ◢ Meeting Pulse: easy web/ SMS polling; other features include collecting questions from the audience.

- ◢ IQ Polls: easy web/SMS polling, with response types ranging from multiple choice, numerical scale and 'Like' button.

- ◢ Direct Poll: simple tool for live polling; completely free for use.

- ◢ Wisembly: polling tool with multiple choice and 'Like' button; available by subscription only.

- ◢ Kahoot: interactive learning game with polling/ voting feature included.

- ◢ Slido: real-time polling and Q/A tool.

Function 2: Gathering inputs or questions from participants during a meeting

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

Most of the virtual tools described above for (quantitative) instant voting / polling also allow you to obtain qualitative (i.e. text-based) input from participants, such as feedback, questions or comments. For large groups, this can mean the difference between a marginally responsive audience and a strongly responsive one. Tools for gathering inputs/questions are a boon for effective time management, and add variety to a speaker's repertoire. They are best used for:

◢ Broadening the scope for participants to interact and give feedback. In large meetings, normally only a few people can speak up due to time constraints.

◢ Getting instant feedback that helps presenters understand their audience better and tweak their presentations to maximize impact.

◢ Gathering opinions discreetly on sensitive questions; this is easier to obtain when participants don't have to speak their views in front of everyone.

◢ Obtaining one-word comments which are captured within an online 'cloud'. You can

embed the results in your presentation so that everyone can view them in real-time.

◢ Getting questions from the audience. Some tools allow you to invite participants to propose questions for presenters to answer, and also allow participants to see questions proposed by others and vote for their preferred ones. Questions with the most votes rise to the top of the list.

◢ Collecting any unanswered questions so they can be addressed after the meeting.

◢ Gathering instant feedback/evaluations at the end of the event meeting.
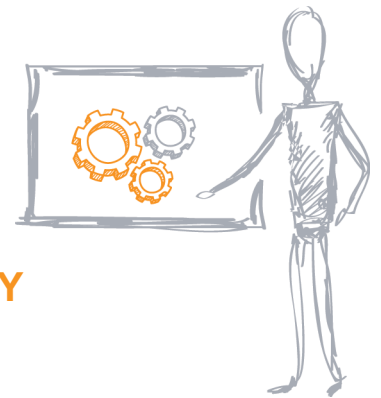
HOW TO APPLY

1. Choose a virtual/ online tool that suits your needs, such as one of the suggested tools below.

2. Sign up and follow the instructions to create your questions online. Remember to consider the type of responses you expect:

◢ Answers to multiple choice questions that you pose to the audience

◢ Comments from the audience

◢ Questions from the audience

3. Add your questions at an appropriate place during your presentation, or at the end if you are gathering concluding feedback. Include brief instructions on how to vote, and embed relevant links.

If you want to invite participants' questions for you or another presenter: Include instructions on how participants can propose questions, early on in your presentation, so that they will be able to enter questions anonymously at any time during the presentation. Then set aside a little time at a later point to review them, conclude the upvoting (of participants' preferred questions), and finally to answer the most upvoted questions.

Suggested tools

▲ Poll Everywhere : Gather comments via SMS or web browser

▲ Meeting Pulse : Collect questions from the audience; allow participants to up-vote desired questions

▲ IQ Polls : Gather comments via SMS or web browser

▲ Wisembly : Gather comments via SMS or web browser; also provides features to support information sharing and collaboration, before and during meetings; available by subscription only.

▲ Kahoot : interactive learning game to gather feedback via quizzes and surveys.

▲ Slido: real-time polling and Q/A tool.

Function 3: Using a social media wall to 'turn up the volume' on your event and build engagement among participants or external persons.

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

Social media updates (on Twitter, Yammer, Facebook, etc.) can be filtered by topics, using convenient hashtags. There are several virtual tools that allow you to capture relevant social chatter or social reporting (i.e. social media postings about an event by its participants, while the event is in progress, using an event-specific hashtag) on an issue or topic, compile it into an entertaining dashboard with ongoing updates – called a 'wall' – that can be shared with larger audiences including those participating remotely. This is most effective in conferences, symposia, virtual town hall meetings and other large events, in part because it is easier to generate sufficient social reporting if the number of participants is large.

A social media wall is best used to:

▲ **Raise awareness at your event of issues or topics** by displaying a stream of relevant social media posts (including comments and insights, highlights, photos, videos, etc.). The stream can be projected as a social media wall in a strategic location at your event, shown on a large screen or shared online by setting up a dedicated page in your website. This is also a great way to showcase the power of social media for participants.

◤ **Engage external audiences** by highlighting social media posts that talk about your specific event. External audiences include any interested people who could not attend the event. The most effective way to engage externals is by displaying the stream on a web page. The same stream can also be projected or displayed on a screen at the event. (Naturally, you will need some of your participants to be active on social media for this to be effective.)

◤ **Foster networking.** People get to know other social media users from the posts they see on a wall. This helps them follow people online and create networks, both virtual and in-person if they are attending the same event.
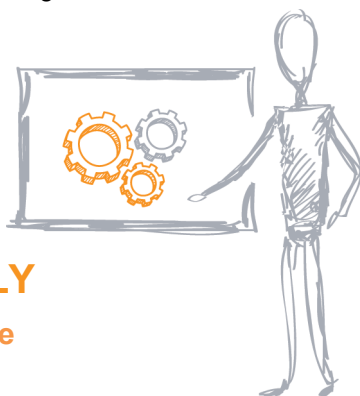
HOW TO APPLY
Prepare in advance

1. Select a tool to create a virtual social media wall – for example, one of the suggested tools below.

2. Decide what social media content you would like to display on the wall. Then choose appropriate filters and hashtags. These will depend on the topic(s) of your event. You may need to research what filters/hashtags are currently being used for your topic(s) in relevant social media (Twitter, Yammer, Facebook, etc.), or else introduce one or more hashtags for use at your event. It is common to create an event hashtag with the name and year of the event, e.g. #DREAM2017. Include the hashtag(s) in the event materials.

3. Assign specific persons in advance to post specific content with the right hashtags so it will appear on your wall, including especially photos and videos of event activities.

4. Decide how you want participants to see the wall (e.g. projected in a location with heavy foot traffic, or on the event website, or on a screen in the main room during breaks, etc.) and make appropriate arrangements.

When you are ready to start
5. Announce the specific hashtags at the opening of your event and ask people to use them whenever they post relevant content on any social media platform.

6. Ensure the wall is visible wherever you planned it to be (projected, on a screen, or online on the event website). Draw participants' attention to it just before taking any breaks. Keep an eye on the wall, and if anything particularly noteworthy is posted, mention it briefly during a plenary session. It is often worth nominating a specific individual to monitor the wall for noteworthy comments or feedback or to ensure that questions posed reach the relevant speaker.

Suggested tools
Depending on the purpose, you may be able to opt for a free offer or sign up for a subscription with more features.

◤ [Yammer "Streaming it out loud":](#) Social media wall with social chatter on display at

events (requires use of Yammer)

▲ Livewall: Social media wall with inputs from various social media sites on display at events

Function 4: Event planner and response tool for conference participants (for large and complex events)

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

Event planning tools (which usually consist of a web portal coupled with a mobile app) are best used for large scale events with extensive logistical demands, such as conferences, exhibitions and symposia. The event planning tool acts as a go-to guide and resource center for the event. It is useful for organizers, for presenters, and especially for enhancing the experience of event participants. Normally these tools are available for all devices including mobile phones, tablets and computers.

Specific features of an event planner can include:

▲ Event information available from phones or laptop computers, making it easy for participants to view the agenda and decide on

the meetings/sessions to attend. This reduces paper waste as well.

▲ Personalized participant profiles, offering also the option to save notes, mark favourite sessions and place reminders in planning event days.

▲ Networking options such as instant messaging and private chats, and sending meeting requests.

▲ As an all-in-one system, the event app also supports in-meeting functions such as voting/polling, asking/collecting questions and social reporting with a social media wall. Participants don't have to download different apps or tools to interact during meetings. All functions are embedded in the event planning app.

▲ A notification system: Organizers can update meeting details and coordinate changes efficiently via the event app.

▲ Business intelligence on participant preferences. By finding out who's attending what kind of sessions, what they're interested in and who they connect with, the organizers can analyse participant interaction and engagement, make useful recommendations and report more effectively after the event.
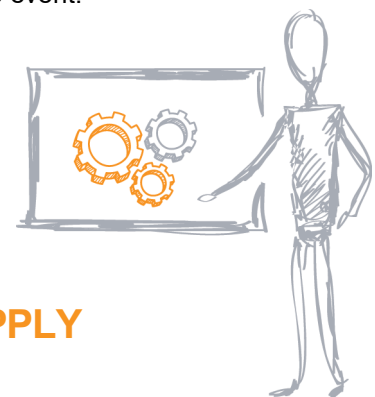
HOW TO APPLY

1. Choose a tool and provider. The cost of building a mobile app for your event is highly dependent on the services needed. Some providers will build an event portal and a mobile app for you from scratch. Others let you build your own app, no technical skills required.

2. Once the web portal and mobile app is ready, include the relevant information in your event announcements and materials. Participants and other stakeholders can register to gain access and build their profiles even before they attend the event. Participants can access the web portal on their computers and continue on their mobile phones by downloading the mobile app for portable access.

Suggested tools

◢ CrowdCompass: event app for organizers, speakers, exhibitors and participants to plan their activities during an event effectively and efficiently. (Formerly Genie Connect.)

◢ Eventmobi: event app for organizers, speakers, exhibitors and participants to plan their activities during an event effectively and efficiently.

Function 5: Learning games

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

If the focus of your meeting/event is educational, consider using a learning game to enhance group learning and creative collaboration among people of all ages, and to help make the learning experience fun. Learning games foster engagement, enhance instructional impact, and help start conversations among event participants, and also with external audiences if needed.
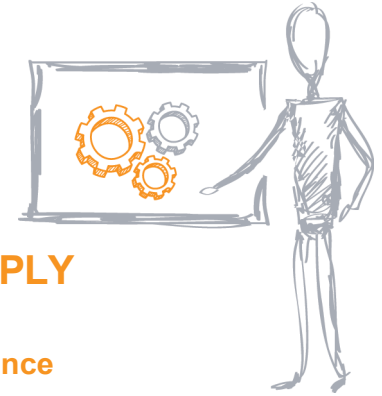
HOW TO APPLY

Prepare in advance

1. Explore the available options in your chosen software tool, then create a survey or quiz game based on the learning objectives. Plan your questions carefully: choose questions that target likely learning gaps among your participants. Make sure you have plausible wrong answers for multiple choice questions, to increase the challenge. Arrange your questions in a logical order, so that the correct answer to any question prepares the participants for the next one. Add illustrations, images or even videos to enhance the experience. The idea is to have fun while learning. Learning game apps may have their own instructional materials suggesting ways to take full advantage of the tool; be sure to make use of these.

When you are ready to start

2. At an appropriate moment during your event, share the game with participants using a web link and ask them to join online using their mobile devices or laptops. This link can also be shared with external participants simultaneously. All participants ideally answer the questions at the same time.

3. Share the results screen (from your laptop) by projecting it on a wall for everyone to see. The summary of responses is updated in real time as the answers come in. Participants can then see if their responses are similar to those of others at the event. This often leads to interesting discussions and insights. Online participants from other locations also get to view the results on their computer screen.

Suggested tools

Depending on the purpose, you may be able to opt for a free offer or sign up for a subscription with more features.

⏷ Kahoot: A popular tool for creating games to promote social learning among participants.

Function 6: Analytics for assessing meeting impact

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

Most of the virtual tools discussed in this article have some capacity to capture event data, which can be analyzed to inform organizers and moderators/ speakers on participant

interaction and engagement. The tools for polling, gathering inputs, social media walls and learning games offer analytics based on the functions they support, while the event apps offer more complete analytical reports based on participant activity during an entire event.

Using the analytics features of online meeting tools is a great way to report on, and derive insights about, the impact of a meeting, workshop or large-scale event. Tool analytics can effectively complement the traditional process of asking participants to fill out survey forms at the end of a meeting or event. Participant feedback is obtained objectively (i.e. from their actual activities, which are tracked by the analytics functions of the tools) as well as from any subjective assessments which you gather via online forms or questions.

Using tools enables you to gather feedback and assessment data gradually during the various sessions of an event. This can be more accurate than traditional evaluations alone – provided all your participants use the tools – and can help an organizer make better decisions for future meetings.

The analytics collected can also demonstrate the value of incorporating social media or online tools for improving participant engagement in meetings.

Analytics are available quickly, and hence can also assist organizers in making decisions during the event, for example, by adding additional sessions/activities that are particularly popular or by changing the tone or focus of a subsequent session/activity if feedback suggests change is needed.

HOW TO APPLY

When choosing a tool for any of the above functions – polling, gathering inputs, creating a social media wall, learning games or creating an event portal/app – **make a point of investigating the tool's analytics and reporting features.** The details will vary from tool to tool; the point is to become aware of what data is available and to make plans to use that data, either during the event or afterwards as a part of your meeting evaluation and follow-up. The quantitative data available from online tools can form a good basis for decision-making about future event content and organization.

Suggested tools

◢   All the tools discussed in this article offer some form of analytics.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

◢   Online meeting tools will generally demonstrate their value quickly to both participants and organizers – provided participants are comfortable with using them. This may require some support, clear and simple instructions, and encouragement.

◢   As with any new technology, there is a learning curve involved in using online tools for meeting feedback. Know your tool and be prepared to help. Consider having a help desk at the event (for large gatherings) beside the registration area, to help participants sign in into the online tool and build their profiles. This will facilitate their access and use during the event.

◢   In your written and verbal communications with participants, reframe the role of mobile devices and laptops: Instead of distracting participants from the event, devices will now support and enhance their participation in key activities. Underline the benefits to be had for all.

◢   Emphasize the fun and enjoyable aspects of the use of online tools, not only if you use learning games, but also with regard to the transparency and greater voice and empowerment of participants, particularly from those not able to be present in the room, as well as the power of real-time evaluation and feedback.

◢   For audiences unfamiliar with online meeting tools, maintain some aspects of the traditional feedback process (such as written evaluation forms at the end of sessions, occasional voting by show of hands, etc.) so that the transition is gradual and there is complementarity between online and traditional tools.

REFERENCES

Refer to links in Appendix 1 for provider information.

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Appendix 1: Overview of online tools for face-to-face meetings

Tools (software) listed in this article are suggestions only, and should always be used in line with the organization's policies and recommendations. Such tools are frequently updated, and new tools appear from time to time, hence the list included here is not comprehensive and may change with future releases of this Toolbox.

Virtual Tool	Description	Polling	Ask questions, gather inputs (internal)	Ask questions, gather input, share externally/social reporting	Event planner, response tool for participants	Meeting impact (analytics)	Costs
Poll Everywhere	Instant participant feedback	Yes (web/ SMS/ Twitter)	Yes	no	no	Analytics (with subscription)	Free or subscription
Direct Poll	Instant participant feedback	yes	Ask quick questions only	no	no	no	Currently free
IQ Polls	Instant participant feedback	yes (web/ SMS)	Gather opinions via multiple choice/ numerical scale/ 'like' button	no	no	Export and analysis of data (with subscription)	Free for basic functions; Subscription enables SMS voting, PPT integration
Wisembly	Collaborative support for meetings/ events	yes	Comment during meeting; gather opinions via multiple choice/ 'like' button	no	Collaborative space	Export and analysis of data	Subscription only (free trial possible)
"Streaming it out loud" (Yammer)	Create a social media stream/ wall	no	no	Share with large audience; Social reporting	Part of event to display social media chatter	no	Subscription to Yammer account (Community edition users- free)
Livewall	Create social media wall	no	no	Share with large audience; Social reporting	Part of event to display social media chatter	Analysis of social media engagement	Free and subscription
Meeting Pulse	Instant participant feedback; collect questions and up-vote	yes	Source questions from participants and up-vote them	no	no	Take quick pulse of audience (their moods)	Free for basic functions, or subscription (various levels)
CrowdCompass	Cross platform event mobile app for organizers, participants, exhibitors, and speakers.	yes	Source questions from participants and up-vote them	yes	Event planner for all, access information, find people, send meeting requests using web/ mobile app	Analytics to track behaviour of attendees (who's attending, their interests and who they connect with)	Cost by event
Eventmobi	Cross platform event mobile app for organizers, participants, exhibitors, and speakers.	yes	Source questions from participants and up-vote them	yes	Event planner for all; participants manage a simple profile and interact with others	Real-time analytics to see how attendees interact (measure engagement)	Cost by event
Kahoot	Interactive learning games; scores calculated in real time	yes	Fun type quizzes/ surveys	Social learning: create, collaborate among participants in-meeting or elsewhere	no	no	Free for basic features; subscription for advanced features
Slido	Real-time polling and Q/A tool	yes	Source questions from participants and upvote them. Run simple polls.	Yes	no	Simple analytics on participation	Cost by event or corporate subscription

PROJECT-LEVEL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

/ Overcoming knowledge gaps to succeed with challenging projects /

WHAT IS A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN?

Are you leading or working on a project that is new or innovative in some way? Are you tackling particularly challenging programming issues, or are you trying to solve problems for which the answers are far from clear? Is your project the first (or among the first) of many expected future projects in a new area? In projects like these, the right knowledge can make the difference between success and failure. To obtain and apply this knowledge, and thereby achieve success, a project-level knowledge management action plan is essential.

A knowledge management (KM) action plan identifies and describes all the knowledge management-related activities that will be undertaken as part of a broader project or programme. A KM action plan is not about knowledge for its own sake – rather, it a systematic approach that helps your team identify, acquire or create, and share the critical knowledge needed for a project. It also helps ensure that such knowledge is effectively applied for improving project results, including through ongoing adjustments during project implementation. And it supports the capture of new knowledge from the project as inputs to similar projects in the future.

Project managers, technical specialists, key stakeholders and KM experts need to work together to create and apply a KM action plan. KM experts can facilitate the process of creating and using a KM plan, by following the steps outlined in this guide, gathering inputs, drafting the plan, helping choose the tools for acquiring knowledge, and facilitating or supporting knowledge-related activities before, during and after the project.

Other project staff including managers, specialists and key stakeholders are responsible for identifying the critical knowledge gaps; seeking out knowledge actively by participating in knowledge activities; adapting knowledge for the project context; and in general, applying and following up on the use of the knowledge, as appropriate for their roles in the project.
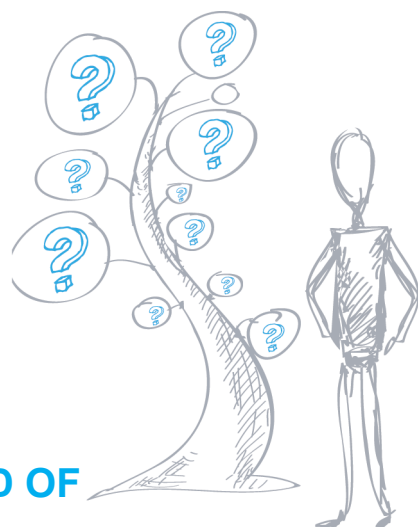
WHAT KIND OF KNOWLEDGE IS NEEDED IN A PROJECT?

A project's knowledge needs include any knowledge required to support effective decision-making and action by any of the project actors: staff, implementing partners, consultants, beneficiaries, or indeed anyone with an active role in achieving the project's desired results. This knowledge can be of many different kinds, e.g. knowledge giving an understanding of the situation, challenge or context; technical knowledge of what works well to create specific outputs; knowledge of emerging trends relevant to the project; knowledge of specific project actors, their agenda and capabilities; etc.

Some of this knowledge can come in the form of evidence from research, monitoring or evaluation reports, or statistical data. But succeeding in a challenging project often requires much more than just the latest research. It also requires **'know-how' – the knowledge of how to apply research in practice, manage activities and actors, and maximize your chances of success in complex environments by choosing proven or promising good practices and avoiding bad ones**.

Such know-how is often not documented. Sometimes you can find important knowledge just by searching for it, but in complex, difficult or

novel projects, you will usually need to connect with persons who have appropriate experience and can directly share their know-how. You will also find it useful to build know-how during the project and use it to make adjustments during implementation. Good project managers accumulate know-how with experience, but challenging projects can always benefit from additional know-how acquired during the project itself.

This guide provides an overview of the types of methods, tools and approaches for acquiring, adapting and sharing knowledge which can be helpful at each stage of a project. It focuses in more detail on tools for accessing know-how. Further information on tools and approaches for programme monitoring, research, evaluation and data collection can be found elsewhere.[1]

THE VALUE OF A KM PLAN

A well-crafted KM action plan is an extremely powerful enabler for project success. Creating and implementing a KM plan allows you to:

◢ **Identify the critical knowledge gaps before you start, and work proactively, both before and during the project, to ensure these gaps are closed.** By identifying knowledge gaps, the KM plan enables you to understand what kind of knowledge input is needed to empower stakeholders to take effective action, and therefore also enables you to set learning objectives. This is obviously most important in projects that aim to innovate or to solve particularly tough challenges**.**

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[1] UNICEF guidance on programme monitoring is available from the Division of Data, Analysis, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM) and from the Programme Division (PD); for UNICEF-led research refer to the Office of Research – Innocenti; evaluation information is provided by the Office of Evaluation, who also maintain an online Evaluation Database; UNICEF data is available online.

◢ **Ensure the project is informed by the latest knowledge,** including both evidence (research, data, etc.) and know-how. This will save time, increase the chances of success, and help achieve the desired results on schedule and within budget. Both evidence and know-how will enable project managers, specialists and stakeholders to be more effective in their project roles.

◢ **Adapt and scale up solutions from other locations/contexts.** While solutions that worked in one context cannot simply be transplanted, having a KM plan enables adaptation of solutions to different contexts. Most solutions don't have to be created from scratch, and KM helps avoid reinventing the wheel**.**

◢ **Support project/programme innovation.** Research indicates that KM is essential for three processes which are the foundations of innovation: sharing of documented knowledge, sharing of experiences and insights (know-how), and fostering of collaboration. A collaborative, informally networked environment is often the context in which innovation takes place.[2]

◢ **Make adjustments during implementation**, based on monitoring and reflection in real time, tapping into expertise from outside the project to help deal with emerging issues**.**

◢ **Lay a foundation for the success of future related projects**, by capturing important lessons upon the conclusion of the project and sharing them or using them to improve guidance. This helps build the capacity of the organization, its staff, and its partners**.**

[2] Marina du Plessis, "The role of knowledge management in innovation", Journal of Knowledge Management, Vol. 11 Issue 4 (2007), pp.20 - 29

A well-crafted KM plan will enable you to select simple, practical tools and methods to achieve the foregoing objectives, and will help you decide when (i.e., at what stage of the project) to apply these tools. It will enable you to 'target' knowledge effectively to empower specific project actors, and it will also help to identify needed resources. It will help you tailor KM activities so that they directly contribute to project goals and objectives, and avoid the problems associated with piece-meal knowledge sharing activities that take place too late or in an untargeted way.

A project KM plan will also enable you to monitor how knowledge is being applied within the project. Accountability is determined ahead of the project implementation, making it easy to follow up and to track and evaluate the efficacy of KM-related activities in ensuring the project's success. This will help demonstrate the impact of KM for senior management.
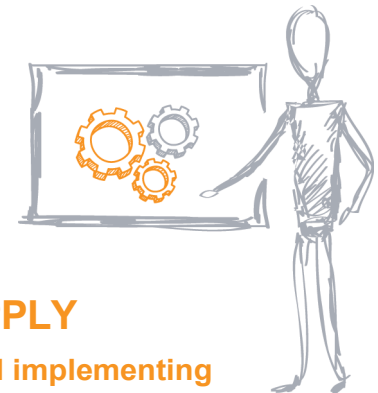
HOW TO APPLY
Developing and implementing your KM action plan

Projects usually have four phases:
1. Inception – project is being conceptualized.
2. Planning – detailed plans are made and resources assigned.
3. Implementation.
4. Closure – final wrap-up.

Creating a KM plan is best done during the inception phase, when the project goals are being conceptualized, but before the resources have been allocated. This will enable the KM plan to influence, and be included in, the overall project plan. KM planning can also be introduced in later phases, but

this is less desirable: later introduction diminishes the potential positive impact of KM planning, and normally requires adjustments in processes and resources which may be hard to accommodate when the project is already running.

There are three steps to project-level KM planning (designated A, B and C to avoid confusion with the project phases).

Step A: Gather inputs for your KM plan and define your knowledge objectives.

Step B: Create your KM plan document: define the KM activities which will support your knowledge objectives, iterate the plan

with colleagues and stakeholders, and get the necessary approvals. Both steps A and B ideally occur during project inception.

Step C: Implement the plan in the context of your project, by carrying out appropriate KM activities at all subsequent stages of the project: project planning, project implementation and monitoring, and project closure.

The steps are summarized in Diagram 1, and described in more detail below.

Diagram 1.
Steps in developing and implementing your KM action plan

STEP A. Gather inputs for your KM plan and define knowledge objectives

- Organize a KM planning meeting or workshop
- At the planning meeting, conduct four activities as follows:
  - Discuss the project overview.
  - Plan for learning before the project
  - Plan for learning during the project
  - Plan for learning after the project

STEP B. Create your KM plan document

- Start identifying your KM activities
- Flesh out your draft plan
- Iterate it with your project team and stakeholders and seek approval
- Integrate it seamlessly with the project work plan

STEP C. Implement your KM plan

- Help the team in implementing
- Be flexible
- Monitor and hold people accountable
- Capture knowledge and make it available
- Include KM in project reporting

STEP A. Gather inputs for your KM plan and define knowledge objectives

During this phase, focus on determining what knowledge is needed to meet project goals.

1. **Organize a KM planning meeting or workshop**, as a part of the project inception process. Involve the whole project team, any technical experts who will play a key role, KM staff, and if possible representatives of other stakeholders. The meeting may be conducted as a half-day or full day session, or as a series of shorter workshops, depending on how complex the project is.

Consider engaging an external facilitator to run the meeting so that everyone in the team can participate. A skilled facilitator can engage the team and help them make the best of their collective expertise to obtain fresh insights. (If facilitating yourself, see the overview of Facilitation in this Toolbox.)

2. **At the planning meeting, conduct four activities as follows:**

- Discuss the project overview.
- Plan for learning before the project (during the project planning phase).
- Plan for learning during the project (during project implementation).
- Plan for learning after the project (during project closure).

These four activities are detailed below:

◢ **2.a. Conduct a brief overview analysis of the project** to ensure there is clarity on the following questions. Your facilitator, if you have one, will lead this and the subsequent activities at the planning meeting. This part of the meeting should not take much time. The project overview includes answering the following questions:

- The purpose of the project: What are the expected outcomes?
- The results chain: What is the sequence of events and actions required to achieve the desired outcomes? Don't go into too much detail; just ensure all participants have a clear overview of the results chain.
- Key actors: Who are the persons (individuals/roles, or groups/categories of people) who must make decisions or act, as a part of the results chain? Note that such actors may include staff, partners, beneficiaries or other stakeholders. **All these actors should be distinctly identified**, to enable moving on to the next step.

◢ **2.b. Plan for learning before the project** by analyzing, one by one, each of the key actors' knowledge needs. Use a document such as the one shown in Table 1 below (KM planning template) to record this information. Have the meeting participants consider the following issues for each actor:

- **What is the actor's role in the project,** and what are the main decisions/actions expected from them? Note this information briefly but clearly

- **Identify areas of critical knowledge: What types of knowledge do they need to have to support their decisions/actions and achieve the best results?** Give special consideration to any knowledge required that is new, not generally available, or that responds to specific challenges and concerns in the project. Get inputs on this question from the project leader(s), the best available technical experts, and if possible directly from the stakeholders as well. Relevant types of knowledge might include:
- Knowledge about the situation of children and women.
- Knowledge about the underlying causes/drivers of the situation of children.

- Knowledge about effective interventions to address the situation of children.
- Knowledge about how to implement interventions successfully.

- **Identify the gaps: Of the areas of critical knowledge, are there any that the actor does not, or may not, have?** This question is at the heart of planning effective KM for a project: it helps you focus on acquiring the knowledge you really need for success.

Knowledge gaps may occur for many reasons: insufficient experience or training in an area; new research that has not yet been disseminated or absorbed into practice; new technology requiring guidance or procedures to be used successfully; lack of know-how; or new challenges that as yet have no simple, clear solutions (the most difficult of these are called 'wicked problems' or 'complex adaptive challenges').

- **Obtain suggestions from participants that will help to fill the gaps** by supporting the actors in acquiring the needed knowledge. The suggestions gathered during the planning meeting will subsequently be fleshed out while drafting the actual plan. Suggestions can be clustered as follows: Simple procedural knowledge (e.g. SOPs or simple guidance); complicated technical knowledge and evidence (research, data, technical manuals); or know-how (from persons who have implemented similar projects successfully).

◢ **2.c. Plan for learning during the project**, by identifying the knowledge opportunities and needs that will arise as the project is being implemented. Learning happens in all phases of the project cycle, and especially during project implementation. Learning during the project can be applied to improve the implementation of the current project or captured as lessons for future projects. At the meeting, get your participants' inputs and suggestions for all the following types of learning activities:

- **Monitoring of your project with a view to making needed adjustments during implementation.**
Adjustments may be needed to bring the project on track, particularly when there are deviations between targets and actual performance. Make plans to assess new/changed knowledge needs during the project and try to leave some resources (both time and money) available to address these needs, especially during projects tackling particularly tough or uncertain challenges. The needed adjustments may be relatively small ones, i.e. 'tweaks' to the way the project is being run. However, if you are addressing a new or particularly difficult challenge, the needed adjustments may be larger, or may even include adopting new directions or new project methods, based on the knowledge you acquire during the project. KM tools can be particularly useful for making adjustments 'on the go'; the most important (and simplest) of these tools is the After Action Review. See Table 2 below for additional suggestions.

- **Acquiring and sharing additional knowledge with project actors/stakeholders, during implementation.** This may become necessary if your project monitoring indicates that stakeholders still lack essential knowledge. Once again, knowledge may be simple, procedural knowledge, available from manuals, implementation guides and other standard reference materials; complex, technical knowledge, perhaps acquired through commissioning additional research; or know-how, acquired from persons with the right kind of experience, or by collecting tacit knowledge from project participants through self-reflection and peer review throughout the project. Because the needs are only identified during the project, you will need to be flexible in making allowances for this kind of knowledge acquisition.

• **Monitoring of your KM plan.** This includes answering the following questions during implementation: Are the planned knowledge acquisition/sharing activities taking place? Are they successful, according to the key actors who are supposed to benefit from the knowledge? If not successful, what action is needed and by whom? Ensure there are feedback mechanisms in place to obtain input from the key actors and stakeholders regarding their key knowledge gaps and how they are being addressed, and ensure clear accountabilities for taking action as needed.

◢ **2.d. Plan for learning after the project (at project closure).** This is your last activity during the meeting/process to gather inputs. Highlight for the team the need to identify and document lessons learned, and to share the results with those who can benefit from them, within your organization and outside. Propose KM activities that will enable you to assess the project as a whole. While these activities will be done upon project completion, it is necessary to sensitize the group regarding the need for them, and to have a shared understanding of the process and the benefits even before the project starts. The classic method for learning after the project is the Retrospect; see below for other suggestions on KM tools for learning after the project, during project closure.

Note that KM activities for learning during project closure are complementary to (not a replacement for) an evaluation. KM activities during project closure take advantage, while memories are still fresh, of the experiences of the implementing team, who are the ones most familiar with the project and with the factors that critically affected its success.

STEP B. Create your KM plan document

1. **Start identifying your KM activities based on all the inputs gathered during the planning sessions.** If you used Table 1 below to gather these inputs, then complete the last two columns (the KM actions, and the responsibility, deadline and costs) of the Table now, to help you draft the text of the document. You can include the full Table as an annex to your KM plan.

Take note of the following as you work on the last two columns:

◢ **If the needed knowledge is simple, procedural knowledge** that is well known, then look for standard operating procedures, simple guidance, basic training materials, etc.

◢ **If the needed knowledge is technical**, then look for relevant evidence such as research, studies, evaluations, technical manuals, data, etc. In addition, you might need technical experts to summarize, adapt or combine this knowledge, in order to effectively fill the gaps you have identified. If gaps yet remain after compiling evidence and consulting experts, you may need to commission your own technical research or data collection.

◢ **If the needed knowledge is know-how about how to succeed in a particular implementation context, or about how to apply approaches/methods which your team is lacking in practical experience with,** then look to identify people with the right know-how, and plan to tap their knowledge via collaborative methods such as Peer Assist or Communities of Practice. (See suggested methods below in Table 2.) People with know-how may be in your organization, or outside. If know-how is critical to success, then you will need to find a way to get their inputs; luckily, most people who have essential experience, and who can trust those who ask for their help, will respond positively to reasonable requests for help.

● Another option is to look for case studies or other documentation of similar initiatives from other countries or projects which might include relevant knowledge. Once these are identified you can reach out to those who implemented the project to learn more about their experience.

⏴ **If the challenge is the technical skills of stakeholders to apply knowledge or know-how**, then consider whether training or other learning activities might be appropriate. If so, try to locate relevant learning opportunities; start with your organization's official learning system (for UNICEF, this is Agora) and continue with other means. Note that learning activities can help develop generic technical skills, but they will need to be complemented with the other approaches mentioned here to support the application of learning in specific contexts.

⏴ **Consider how best to transfer each type of knowledge to the project actors who need it, and how to ensure they can use it for the intended purposes.** Key considerations for transfer include the format and means of dissemination (documents on websites, printed material, multimedia, in-person presentations, conversations, peer learning, etc.) and the skills and preferences of the actors. Key considerations for knowledge use include language and technical skills of the actors; the culture and organizational environment they operate in; and their incentives, including both individual and institutional incentives.

⏴ **By contrast, if you are dealing with a challenge where the path to success is not completely clear – because it is a new challenge, or it is different in important ways from similar situations in the past – then you may have to discover the needed knowledge during the project implementation by trial and iteration.** An example would be a project that seeks to overcome bottlenecks to scale up high-impact interventions: the interventions have succeeded on a small scale, but scaling

up presents unique challenges that will require knowledge to overcome, and this knowledge is unlikely to be fully available before the project begins. In situations where the path to success is not clear, you may not be able to fully learn before the project. Instead you may need to maximize your learning **during** the project.

● In this case, as an initial step during the planning phase, you might want to identify some simple assumptions based on the available evidence, and design your project to achieve its goal accordingly. Then, during the project implementation phase, you can use reflective tools such as After Action Review to identify lessons and make course corrections. You might even try more than one approach in parallel to compare them. If you take this more adaptive approach it is important to document your experience throughout to identify the lessons identified, and the course corrections you apply, as they occur.

⏴ **This phase – step B, drafting of the plan – is when expertise and knowledge of KM will be required to select the right activities or tools**: the ones that will help meet the most important knowledge needs that you identified during the gathering of inputs, for all phases of the project cycle. Activities must also be ones that you and your team can successfully apply.

● For basic guidance, refer to Table 2 (below), which suggests some appropriate KM methods and tools from this Toolbox.[3] Select cost-effective methods and tools that enable the access, use and sharing of knowledge. Use existing KM resources, systems and tools (including national systems and agency-specific tools), and build on them. Ensure that lessons and insights (including both successes and failures) from your KM work

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[3] For more detailed guidance, use the Quick Guide to Choosing a Tool, found on the first pages of the full UNICEF Knowledge Exchange Toolbox, Volume 2. There are many more methods and tools that can be adapted for use in a KM plan.

and project monitoring exercise are captured in a manner that is consistent and useful for the rest of the organization even after the project concludes. This will ensure that future projects can benefit from your experiences.

• When selecting KM activities for use during project **implementation**, be sure to build in some flexibility. You may need to implement additional knowledge gathering efforts during the project, some of which may be collaborative/direct knowledge sharing, e.g. via expert interviews or peer assists.

• When selecting activities for use during project **closure**, in addition to capturing and sharing learnings with your own organization, plan (if the nature of your project permits) to share beyond your organization as well. Sharing externally will help provide a 'global public good' in the form of knowledge relevant to the type of project you have undertaken. Such sharing events also normally provide a good opportunity to learn from lessons learned by other organizations, which can then be taken back to your organization.

2. **Once you have selected appropriate activities, flesh out your draft plan.** Use the detailed checklist in Annex 1 as a guide for what your plan should include. Decide who will be responsible for the various KM-related activities proposed. Establish timelines, fix deadlines and create benchmarks/ milestones for monitoring purposes. Take account of what resources (time, money, knowledge resources, systems/ platforms, etc.) will be made available.

Remember, small projects benefit the most from simple, straightforward KM plans; don't overdo the planning effort, and focus most on meeting the most important knowledge objectives. Large, complex projects may require a correspondingly more sophisticated KM plan.

3. **Once you have created a complete draft, iterate it with your project team and stakeholders and seek approval**. Share it transparently with them, allow them all to see each other's comments and revise the draft until it is clear, practical, as simple as possible (but no simpler), and has both their buy-in and any needed approvals from the project owner and senior managers.

4. **Once approved, your KM plan document should be integrated seamlessly with the project work plan**, to embed the needed KM activities, with appropriate resourcing and accountabilities. In this way, your leadership and team will make appropriate commitments, which are necessary for ensuring that KM activities are carried out.

STEP C. Implement your KM plan

Implement KM-related activities throughout the project as defined by your KM plan. Keep the following in mind during implementation:

◢ KM plan implementation should normally begin even while the project itself is still in the planning phase. During the project planning phase, your KM activities will likely focus on acquisition of key knowledge required to empower specific actors, as identified during your KM planning process.

◢ Identify quick wins that can show results and help the team get started on implementing the plan.

◢ Be flexible, as there may be times when a method or tool you have selected in advance

does not fit, and it may need to be dropped or replaced. Don't stick rigidly to the plan.

◢ Let the longer-term KM plan unfold progressively. Do not be overwhelmed by the bigger picture; focus on each step at a time.

◢ During project implementation, your focus will likely shift to monitoring of the KM plan, and to use of KM tools (e.g. regular After Action Reviews or other feedback loops) to help monitor the project as a whole. Review your goals, track inputs and outputs, and hold people accountable.

◢ Ensure that lessons are documented and stored in proper systems that both your project team and succeeding project teams can access.

◢ If it becomes clear that adjustments are needed, either to the KM activities or the project implementation, you may need to revise your KM processes on the fly, choosing appropriate methods to discover, and fill, any additional knowledge gaps.

◢ During project closure, you will likely have structured reviews (one or several, probably including a Retrospect) to create written products for capturing and sharing project lessons. Once these reviews are complete, ensure that captured knowledge from the project is shared appropriately, by posting it online (perhaps in several locations, such as repositories, knowledge bases, communities of practice, and websites), sharing it via email, webinar or brown bag lunch sessions, and/or using it as inputs for a publication.

◢ Regarding project reporting, both during implementation and at closure: Include knowledge management in your reporting as appropriate. Report on what was done, and how it helped achieve results. Seek out the views of project managers and stakeholders, in the form of descriptions, brief stories and personal assessments: often, it may be difficult to

numerically 'measure' the impact of knowledge management, but project managers can often themselves identify and describe what impact it had, and how they saw that KM enabled the achievement of results.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS
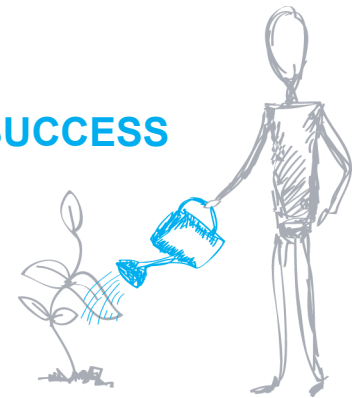
◢ Keep the focus of all project KM activities on the most important knowledge you need for project success.

◢ Do not get distracted by terminology and definitions. People tend to have differing views on KM terms and definitions. Focus instead on the activity and results.

◢ There is no 'one approach' to represent the best in KM planning. There are many good examples of KM plans available (reports, case studies, statistical analyses, feedback from experts and personal experiences):

- Select what fits your needs.
- Adapt and re-use.
- Build on it as needed.

◢ While the KM plan provides structure and guidance, it should be implemented flexibly. Be

ready to drop activities that don't work and to replace them with something better-suited.

. . . .

◢ KM is a team effort. Cooperation with other departments and partners in sharing, adapting, disseminating and applying knowledge will yield greater benefits.

. . . .

◢ KM is most successful if the entire project team understands it and appreciates its benefits right from the beginning. Each project actor should also know what is expected of them at every stage of the project cycle, not just from a project management, but also from a knowledge management perspective. For example, they should know that it is their responsibility to participate in After Action Reviews, if that is a selected KM activity during project implementation.

. . . .

◢ Develop the capabilities of staff and partners in managing knowledge effectively. Help them improve their skills in capturing, sharing and using knowledge to achieve project goals, while building on team relations and partner goodwill.

. . . .

◢ The UN can be a powerful positive influence in KM, especially with external partners and stakeholders. A leading actor, the UN plays many roles and these can be used to advantage when developing the KM plan:

- Knowledge provider: imparting expertise and relevant research; acting as guardian of universal standards (human rights, health, etc.).
- Knowledge broker: connecting partners with

relevant expertise from within the UN and externally thanks to its universal presence; a neutral body that can bring governments, civil society, private sector, academia and other parts of society together.

- Capacity developer: enabling partners to access, create, manage and use knowledge effectively.

. . . .

◢ KM planning is a moderately challenging activity. You will be most successful once you have become familiar with a range of KM tools and how they can be applied in different contexts.

. . . .

VARIATIONS

◢ **Use additional tools to gather inputs during the KM planning phase.** In addition to the specific process described above in steps 1-5 for gathering inputs and determining knowledge objectives, you can use complementary tools to collect additional inputs. These tools will also strengthen your project planning process in other ways not specifically related to KM. Tools included in this Toolbox which may be useful in this context include:
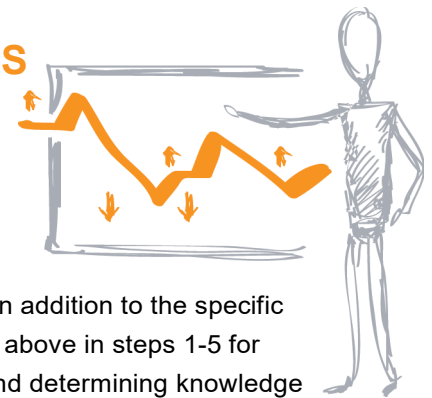
- **SWOT and PESTEL.** This planning tool will help discover a wide range of issues related to your project.
- **World Café.** This tool will allow you to focus on a few critical questions/aspects of your project and quickly gather inputs from a range of participants.
- **VIPP Card Clustering and Collection.** This flexible tool will support brainstorming on approaches and needs, collaborative ranking of project issues,

and consideration of specific questions including those related to KM in the project. Examples of questions you can tackle via the VIPP Card method, for purposes of creating a KM plan, include:

- What approach has been most successful in other similar projects.
- What are the key success factors for the project.
- What related projects/initiatives should ideally be linked to the given project, to maximize synergies and results.
- Who needs to be included as a stakeholder.
- What kind of analysis should be done before the project.
- What measures are most useful to monitor during the project.
- If advocacy is required: what kind of advocacy (format, messaging, evidence, etc.) has been most successful in related contexts.
- How quickly can success be expected.
- What kinds of 'surprises' – whether positive or not – could be anticipated. This is especially important with projects that seek to innovate, regarding objectives, methods, or scope/scale.
- How can sustainability be ensured. Again, this is particularly critical for innovative projects.

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CREDITS

Table 1: KM Planning template[4]

Table key:

Green cells: to be completed during gathering of inputs phase, with the inputs from the project team and stakeholders (Step A above)	*Blue cells: to be completed during drafting of KM plan (Step B above)*

Project Phase	Key actors	Needed actions: What do the actors need to do?	Critical knowledge: What knowledge is essential to enable the actors to take needed actions?	Gaps: Are the actors missing any critical knowledge?	KM actions: What activities, methods and/or products will be applied to fill critical knowledge gaps?	Responsibility, deadlines, cost of KM actions
Planning	1. 2. 3.					
Implementation	1. 2.					
Closure	1. 2. …					

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[4] Adapted from UNICEF PFP KM Work Plan worksheet; see References.

Table 2: Selected KM activities for various phases in the project cycle

This table will assist you in identifying KM activities to meet various needs during the project cycle. For more detailed guidance, use the Quick Guide to Choosing a Tool, found on the first pages of the full UNICEF Knowledge Exchange Toolbox.

Table Key

Items in regular typeface are described in detail elsewhere in this Toolbox. *Items in italics represent important/ common knowledge tools and processes for which guidance is available elsewhere.*

Knowledge needs	Example KM activities (tools, products)	Description/ Criteria
Inception Phase (Learning before a project)		
Knowledge inputs needed from stakeholders and beneficiaries for senior management or new project team leader	Surveys	Efficiently identify priorities and issues for action during the project.
	Stakeholder interviews	Zero in on specific stakeholder knowledge needs.
Planning Phase (Learning before a project)		
Evidence needed for project planning	*Research, evaluations, statistical data, policy briefs, etc.*	*Gather relevant evidence. For information on how to find and apply these products, refer to research, data and evaluation-specific guidance and repositories.[5]*
Know-how from past projects and/ or peers with relevant experience, to improve chances of successful implementation or overcome challenges. Valuable for the project team (staff and partners) or other key actors.	Lessons learned, After Action Review reports, Retrospect reports from previous projects	Review existing lessons learned/AAR/Retrospect reports, documents and articles from repositories, shared folders, case studies.

[5] For UNICEF, such guidance and inputs are available from the Office of Research; the Division of Data, Analysis, Planning and Monitoring; and the Evaluation Office.

	Virtual Peer Assists	Get help on challenging issues from others who have tackled similar projects.
	SWOT/PESTEL Analysis; VIPP Card Collection and Clustering	Plan effectively for any type of project/ initiative, either quickly or in depth; analyse important decisions, proposals or problems.
	Timeline	Build a shared understanding among your team of current opportunities and challenges in a project/ initiative.
	Brainstorming	To generate ideas (among the project team members); expand a group's creativity using a versatile, familiar, and powerful tool.
	Online Communities	Look for existing Communities (or enterprise social network/Yammer groups) that are actively discussing issues related to your project. Join them, explore relevant resources and ask for the advice/suggestions of community members concerning the challenges in your project and the specific knowledge you need. Or, for large projects, create a community that can provide ongoing answers and advice during any relevant activity.
Equipping specific actors with critical knowledge to fill gaps	*Workshops; Training courses; communication products, including also communication for development (C4D) products and methodologies.*	*Select the appropriate activity/tool based on the characteristics of the actors: who they are, what communication and learning channels they use, etc. Refer to guidance on developing learning/training courses, managing websites and sharing information online, or applying C4D methodologies.*
Implementation Phase (Learning during a project)		
Monitoring of project using KM tools; monitoring of KM plan	After Action Review	Periodic review of activities: Continuously improve team effectiveness and results by identifying and

		making needed adjustments during a project (feedback mechanism).
	Fishbowl	Elicit issues and concerns from stakeholders.
	VIPP Card Collection & Clustering	Quickly identify and prioritize relevant issues arising during implementation.
	Project/programme management methodologies.	*Refer to project/programme management guidance.*
	Field visits	*Interact directly with stakeholders and beneficiaries 'on the ground'.*
Making flexible adjustments to address needs identified during implementation, and/or to support changes in the project plan (refer also to steps 3, 4 and 7 under 'How to Apply', above)	Brainstorming.	Generate new ideas from within the project, for making appropriate adjustments and course corrections. May be done with project team, or with actors/stakeholders outside the team.
	Lessons learned, After Action Review reports, Retrospect reports from previous projects. Virtual Peer Assists, Online Communities. *Research, evaluations, statistical data, policy briefs, etc.* *Workshops; Training courses; communication products, including also communication for development (C4D) products and methodologies.*	Application is similar to planning phase (above), but during implementation the focus is on newly discovered knowledge needs or necessary course corrections to the project.

Project Closure Phase (Learning After)		
Knowledge inputs needed for reporting, for demonstrating value, for expanding the organization's stock of relevant knowledge for future projects, and for sharing lessons internally and externally.	Timeline	Understand the how and why of project results.
	Retrospect	Carry out in-depth team reflection to capture and prioritize lessons (perhaps using the Lessons Learned template included in this Toolbox), and improve results.
	Surveys	Efficiently capture a selection of lessons from large numbers of individuals.
	Interviews	Gather inputs and assessments from specific/representative actors and stakeholders.
	Evaluations	*Refer to formal evaluation guidance.*

Annex 1: Checklist - what a KM plan should cover

This checklist will be most useful during the phase of drafting the KM plan (step B above under 'How to Apply').

1. Scope: Is the scope of the KM plan (sectoral, geographic, and/or organizational scope) clearly and succinctly stated? Example: 'This KM plan supports all sanitation work in the country of _____, and applies to UNICEF, all UNICEF partners and beneficiaries.'

2. Governance: Who is the owner/sponsor of the KM plan? Is appropriate senior management support clearly established? Is it clear how important decisions on the project will be made and by whom?

3. Accountabilities: Does the plan outline clear roles and responsibilities of the staff and partners engaged for relevant KM activities in the project?

4. Audience: Who are the main audience (beneficiaries) for the plan? (Audience/beneficiaries for a KM plan are those persons who will be supported by the plan in making more effective decisions, taking more effective action, and achieving better results.)

5. What are the audience's priority knowledge needs to enable effective decisions and action? Most KM plans should identify and focus only on a few very important ones. The needs may relate to specific thematic issues, or to types of resources or skills.

6. Have the needs been identified via a user-focused research process, enabling the audience/beneficiaries to give feedback, clarify and prioritize their needs?

7. Have the priority needs been translated into specific, clear and realistic knowledge objectives? Objectives should make clear who will obtain what type of knowledge, from whom, and how.

8. Does the plan outline the people, processes and technology that will be used or developed?

9. Are there clear, practical processes (e.g. lessons learned processes, community discussions/activities, etc.) already in place to achieve your goals, or do you need to develop or introduce new ones?

10. Have you fully assessed the potential of communities of practice in supporting the priority needs? Communities already exist in nearly every sector and location, and empowering and focusing them can be one of the most powerful knowledge methods.

11. Are there KM platforms (software systems) and tools/methods that are in place and being used by the team, or do you need to promote their use and do training, or create new/additional platforms and tools?

12. Is the choice of approaches, tools and platforms appropriate to address the needs? (For suggestions on specific tools/approaches and when to use them, refer to the quick guide to choosing a tool in this Toolbox.)

13. Are there core policies and guidance in place to support the application of your required KM processes and establish accountabilities, or do you need new/additional policies and/or guidance?

14. Do you have the resources needed: time, money, and staff/support team? If not, how will you get them (business case)?

15. Does your support team have the required skills, for example community management, facilitation, or other KM skills, to support the plan?

16. Does the plan include communication/promotion and approaches to engage and motivate stakeholders in using the platforms and approaches to be used, and to put into practice the knowledge shared?

17. Do you have an enabling environment (culture, habit and incentives) for exchange, collaboration and re-use of knowledge? Are the beneficiaries motivated to use knowledge? If not, what will you do?

18. Monitoring: have you clearly identified appropriate ways to monitor and measure progress and determine whether you are succeeding? You will need both subjective feedback (i.e. value assessments from participants via feedback loops), and objective/quantitative indicators, to monitor effectively.

19. How will you ensure continual improvement over time? Does the plan include provisions to review and adapt during implementation based on experience?

20. Validating your plan: Did you develop it in a collaborative way with stakeholders? Is it simple and practical, avoiding the desire to create a 'comprehensive' plan?

STUDY VISIT

/ Learning about programme experiences by seeing them up close /

WHAT IS A STUDY VISIT?

A study visit involves a team of participants from one country (the visiting country) travelling to another country (the host country) to observe and learn from the implementation of a programme or policy. Participants get access to knowledge and firsthand experience from the host country on how to overcome a development challenge or implement a solution. This approach is often used to support South-South knowledge exchange. It may also be used to share knowledge between project sites within a country.

For a study visit to be successful, visitors and hosts should plan it together, to agree on the objectives of the visit and to ensure a good understanding of each other's expectations. Selection of the appropriate activities during the study visit – e.g. technical assistance or policy dialogue through interviews, workshops or site visits – will depend on the scope and type of the knowledge required by the visiting country to support the identified capacity development goal.

REQUIREMENTS:

There are several pre-conditions or requirements which must be in place in order to successfully apply this tool:

- *Identification of the development challenge you want to address, and the specific gaps in programme development and implementation capacity, which the study visit will help overcome.*
- *Identification of potential host country (or more than one) which has achieved success in the same or similar development goals, and which may be open to a study visit.*
- *Clear commitment and active leadership from the visiting country partners.*
- *At least one organizer from the visiting country who can dedicate time to detailed and in-depth planning of the study visit.*
- *For UNICEF-supported study visits: Support from the Country Offices in the visiting and the potential host countries.*

The outcome of a successful study visit is to enable participants to adapt and apply newly acquired insights, skills and capabilities through action in their home countries. It is therefore important that the visiting participants include relevant stakeholders (who are usually technical development officials) with appropriate background knowledge in the programme or policy area which is the subject of the visit.

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

After identifying the development challenge to be addressed and the gaps in programme development and implementation capacity, the next step is to decide whether a study visit is the best way to fill them. Study visits can be costly and time consuming to organize, so it is important that they are well planned to maximize their benefit. From a South-South cooperation perspective, reviewing the various available modalities and tools for supporting learning and networking is an essential part of the planning process, to ensure that a study visit is the most appropriate modality to use.

The value of a study visit is that it enables the visiting country to address an identified development challenge using insights, good practices and lessons learned from a host country that has successfully tackled similar challenges in the past or is currently addressing similar challenges. A study visit provides opportunities for mutual learning. It fosters face-to-face interaction and deep exploration of issues among visitors and hosts, which helps give decision-makers and technical officials a detailed understanding of the programme or policy solutions for a given development challenge. It transmits lessons from the host country on what has worked and what has not, and on advocacy, key political decisions taken and necessary budget allocations. It offers visiting participants first-hand practical demonstrations 'on the ground'.

The participants in a study visit can include government officials, parliamentarians, policy-makers and technical specialists. Participating personally in learning events and demonstrations can have much more impact than reading about them. Getting practitioners involved in listening, talking and doing will likely result in a better understanding of how to tackle a challenge, and may offer new or potentially innovative solutions arising from interaction and exploration of similarities and differences. The visitors are thereafter better able to customize, replicate and scale up solutions when applying them to their own circumstances.

The visitors will also become more aware of their own skills and capabilities as they learn about how the specific issue was tackled, or how the solution was implemented. This will enable them to share their own experiences for the potential benefit of the host country. The sense that others are wrestling with the same issues, trying to realize some of the same ideas, and seeking to move in a similar direction, can dramatically strengthen optimism, enthusiasm and political commitment.

Study visits enable knowledge transfer among governments that have gone through, or are going through, similar development challenges. In the context of South-South and horizontal cooperation, country-to-country knowledge exchange among two or more countries is part of global development efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Governments in the South drive this process by seeking to identify, share and adapt solutions based on firsthand knowledge at the national/institutional, state/provincial and local levels. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, the opportunity for mutual learning is always emphasized.

A key principle of study visits is that they involve horizontal cooperation and problem solving among equals. The value emerges from a two-way flow of communication, sharing knowledge back and forth directly among all participants; this is much more effective than either one-way communication or

communication channeled through an intermediary. Bringing hosts and visitors with similar roles together, under conditions of openness and mutual trust, will promote mutual learning and two-way sharing of experiences, ideas and both formal and tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge encompasses the knowledge that a person calls upon when carrying out a particular task or solving a problem; some of this knowledge is so 'embedded' in the process that it is usually not well communicated until the person with the knowledge is asked to solve problems similar to those that they have solved in the past.
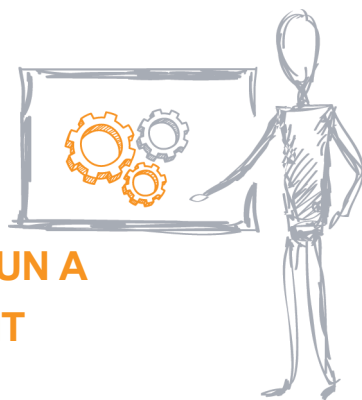
HOW TO RUN A STUDY VISIT

Assessing available options

Study visits can be very valuable if well prepared and wisely conducted, but all development modalities have their limitations, and study visits are no exception. For example, there is no assurance that the ideas encountered in the host country are all suitable for application in the visiting country under different conditions.

There may be alternatives which could better meet the objectives. For example, if the goal is to acquire information already available in published form, then there may be no need to travel. If specific knowledge and skills are required, then training or workshops could also be as good as, or better than, a study visit. An overview of some available options is provided by the 'Quick Guide to Choosing a Tool' in this

Toolbox; the article on Project-Specific Knowledge Management Plans offers details on planning for learning before, during and after any development project. In most cases, a study visit in the context of South-South cooperation needs to be complemented by other modalities to ensure sustainability and impact.

Next steps after deciding on a study visit

Study visits require clear objectives and careful planning to ensure effective learning results. With a clear objective, visiting participants are more likely to take an active and structured approach to gathering information and analyzing what they learn.

Study visits have three phases: A) planning, B) implementation, and C) follow-up. All three are equally important for ensuring that the visit remains a focused learning opportunity, not a tourist excursion. The planning phase includes defining the objectives and participants. Implementation covers the visit itself. The follow-up phase is for giving feedback, documenting what was learned, applying lessons, and evaluating the results to understand the impact of the study visit.

A. Planning

1) Identification

The visiting participants should understand the broader development priorities which the visit will support, identify the knowledge gaps and learning needs and define the programme challenges the study visit will help resolve. It is also necessary to identify the potential counterparts (host countries) with relevant knowledge, and to consider what long-term changes are expected after the visit. In addition to programme design, other factors that

might influence the choice of host country include similarities between the countries in terms of size, government system, language and culture, as well political relations between the countries, and a potential host country's willingness and capacity to receive visitors.

Visitor and host participants should also be identified in the planning phase by selecting people whose qualities, roles and functions match the objective of the visit, who have willingness to play an active role in the discussions and observations during the trip, and who have commitment to acquire and share knowledge once they return from the visit. Visiting participants should also have the authority and ability to take follow up action on their return. Asking questions about their motivation, expectations and future commitments will help make these decisions.

2) Formulation and Approval

Effective study visits are based on a detailed Terms of Reference that is prepared and agreed upon by the visitors and hosts in advance, to ensure that planned activities are well selected and relevant issues addressed. Depending on the objectives of the study visit, different activities should be planned to bring the participants together around the knowledge gaps and learning needs, and to capture and document the information, milestones and highlights of the visit. Pre-visit discussions should explore the options and clarify what activities visitors and hosts think might be the most worthwhile and feasible to cover the institutional, technical and operational objectives. Once agreed, the Terms of Reference should serve as a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of the host and the visitors.

The Terms of Reference should address the following points related to logistics and technical and content preparations:

⬩ Sharing roles and responsibilities between host and visitors.
⬩ Timing and duration of visit.
⬩ Preparations for travel and administrative formalities.
⬩ Compiling/creating relevant background materials for the visit.
⬩ Costs and allowance for participation, including who will pay for what.
⬩ Identification of relevant activities for the specific issue addressed (theoretical and/or practical information).

Where appropriate, study visits should be formulated as part of a long-term capacity development plan rather than as one-off initiatives.

For a more detailed description and an example of a Terms of Reference for a study visit, see 'Guidelines for Trilateral South-South Cooperation Initiatives' by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of External Relations and UNICEF (2017), http://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/community-practice-ssc-children-cop-ssc4c/documents/guidelines-trilateral-south.

For a more detailed explanation of study visit design, see 'The Art of Designing and Implementing Study Tours' by the World Bank (2017), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28405.

The role of UNICEF

Study visits supported by UNICEF should be brokered and organized through focal points in the UNICEF Country Offices in both the visiting and the host countries.

The role of the focal point in the visiting Country Office is to help organize as well as formulate the Terms of Reference and to be part of the selection of the relevant participants.

The role of the focal point in the host Country Office is to follow up with the government and other local partners to ensure that the activities are suitable and well planned (including local logistics) to support the objective of the study visit.

B. Implementation

During the Study Visit, close engagement between hosts and visitors, in accordance with the Terms of Reference, is fundamental to applying the chosen activities and succeeding with the visit. It is important to:

◢ Respect the established calendar and programme.

◢ Ensure discipline and respect for differences (values and customs) throughout the visit.

◢ Stimulate a willingness to listen and communicate among participants, both visitors and hosts, and to encourage all participants to take an active role in discussions and debates.

◢ Document the entire process in order to enable opportunities for daily feedback. In particular it is necessary to take notes and photos, to record interviews and to take samples if possible.

There should be daily wrap-up meetings for visiting participants to take turns in giving their impressions, explaining what they have learned and asking questions. This is essential to support the learning process and to help assess the results of each day. Visiting participants should complete evaluation forms both during important activities and at the end of the study visit, to help monitor the visit, and to identify and record preliminary evidence of learning results. The evaluation forms should focus on relevance and quality of the activities, of the knowledge sharing tools and methods, and of the learning resources.

The role of UNICEF

During the implementation phase the UNICEF Country Offices, in both the visiting country and the host country, can play the role of brokers, and can provide complementary technical advice and inputs on the strengths and weaknesses of the national programmes or policies, as well as recommendations on how to improve them.

C. Follow Up

After the study visit it is important for the visitors to prepare a feedback report for the hosts, to share information on their experience and to provide recommendations for any future visits. The hosts probably spent considerable time receiving and supporting the visitors, so it is important to thank them and give them useful feedback on what was learned and how this will be put into practice. All of this will help assure the hosts that their time was well spent.

Visitors should also prepare a final report and evaluation of the visit. The report offers an opportunity for visitors to plan how to put the acquired knowledge into practice in concrete terms. It will also help share the knowledge with others in the visiting country: Study visits should benefit not only those who travel but also those who stay home.

The final report should summarize the objective of the study visit, the key learnings, the highlights during the visit, and any next steps, including follow up on any additional activities needed, e.g. additional visits, teleconferences, requests for supplementary materials, etc. The report should be clear and instructive, to make it easy for others to understand the information gathered and the knowledge, skills and lessons

acquired. It should serve as a long-term reference. To kick off preparation of the final report, all visitor participants should join in a one-day session held soon after the visit, at which they will wrap up their experiences and contribute to the content and organization of the report.

The following questions are helpful to guide the preparation of the report and evaluation:

- ⏶ What worked well and why?
- ⏶ What did not work well and why?
- ⏶ What should be done differently next time?
- ⏶ What recommendations can be made for the future visits?

A successful study visit should lead to positive changes in the visiting country, as the knowledge acquired is put into practice, and as new practices based on the study visit learnings are discovered, validated and applied. It is therefore equally important to monitor and evaluate the long-term impact of a study visit in the visiting country. A short follow-up report, prepared six months or one year after a study visit, can summarize the impact and evolving results of the visit. According to the World Bank[1] the participants may want to answer

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[1] World Bank, 2017, 'The Art of Designing and Implementing Study Tours': https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28405

the following questions:

⊿ Since the study visit, how have you been able to apply what you learned?

⊿ What specific changes (new policy, revised processes etc.) have been realized since the visit?

⊿ What barriers have you encountered in applying what you learned during the study visit?

⊿ What else could you have learned on the study visit that would be useful?

For more detailed description and an example of how to follow up and provide feedback after a study visit, see 'Guidelines for Trilateral South-South Cooperation Initiatives' by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of External Relations and UNICEF (2017), http://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/community-practice-ssc-children-cop-ssc4c/documents/guidelines-trilateral-south.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS
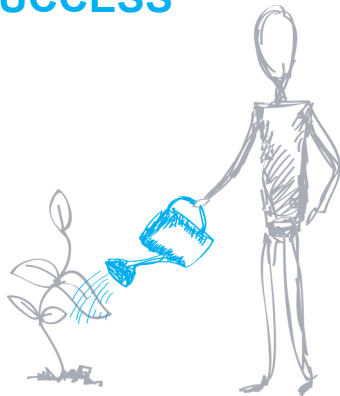
A few tips will help pave the way for a successful study visit:

⊿ **Planning:** Ensure enough time is spent in the planning phase to prepare thoroughly for the visit. A well-planned study visit will result in a better knowledge exchange experience, since all participants will be better informed, more prepared and focused on the objective of the visit.

⊿ **Communication**: It is important to not make any assumptions during a study visit; instead, ask plenty of 'how' and 'why' questions, to better understand the contexts and perspectives around the specific solutions in the host country.

⊿ **Language barriers:** In cases where the hosts and visitors do not share a native tongue or are not fluent in a common language, translation/interpretation services will be necessary. This will result in the communication taking up to twice as long. Schedules should accommodate this accordingly.

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CREDITS

Annex 1: Checklist for running a Study Visit

Planning

- ✓ Define objectives.
- ✓ Decide if study visit is the best choice.
- ✓ Identify a host country and choose counterparts.
- ✓ Choose members of the visiting team.
- ✓ Define how they are expected to benefit from the visit.
- ✓ Consider language skills: is translation necessary?
- ✓ Consider facilitation skills: do you need additional team members for meeting/process facilitation?
- ✓ Confirm budget availability.
- ✓ Create a draft TOR and timetable, and discuss with host.
- ✓ Ensure lead time for permissions and travel documents.
- ✓ Choose relevant activities and learning processes.
- ✓ Build in time for informal discussions, reflections and rest.

Logistics (part of planning phase)

- ✓ Documents: tickets, passports, visas, health insurance, security clearances (if needed).
- ✓ Accommodation: reservations, special equipment and other needs.
- ✓ Vehicles: size, mix of visitors and hosts.
- ✓ Food: identify dietary restrictions.

Implementation

- ✓ Ensure you bring key materials, including phrasebooks, dictionaries, and materials for presentations.
- ✓ Adhere to the plan and schedule.
- ✓ Make provisions for ongoing monitoring.

Follow up

- ✓ Hold a one-day reporting session to kick off the final report.
- ✓ Send out any materials promised to hosts.
- ✓ Send thank you letters.
- ✓ Finalize all written reports.
- ✓ Follow up after six months or one year

WRITESHOP

/ An intensive workshop for creating a complete publication or written knowledge product /

WHAT IS A WRITESHOP?

A Writeshop is an intensive workshop that brings writers, editors and subject matter experts together to develop a written knowledge product, such as a publication manuscript or a case study, in a relatively short time – from a couple of days to a week or longer, depending on the length and complexity of the product. By concentrating writing efforts within a fixed time, and by providing focused support (editing, peer/expert reviews, and access to resource materials), a well-run Writeshop can enable quality written products to be produced very quickly – in days, rather than weeks/months. It can also reduce the total amount of time required from the individual contributors. A Writeshop does require a significant chunk of dedicated time with few or no distractions, as well as appropriate facilitation and organization of logistics.

A Writeshop takes the solitary process of writing into a hyper-collaborative environment where several writers work simultaneously, each one developing selected sections of a publication from a proposed outline. The resulting drafts are then shared with everyone in the Writeshop for comment and critique using a facilitated process that is inclusive and respectful. Based on the feedback, the writers then revise their drafts over several iterations with the help of editors and subject matter experts to produce near-finished coherent final drafts that can be collated to create a seamless manuscript, ready for online or print publishing.

An effective way to document learnings from field experience, project results, and research findings, a Writeshop is also good for producing case studies, brochures, information briefs, training manuals, books or even websites.

REQUIREMENTS:

- **Required participants:** *Organizer, facilitator (who may also be the organizer), writers (who may also be subject matter experts), editor(s) (number depends on number of writers).*
- **Additional participants (depending on the scope and requirements of the desired end product):** *Content reviewers (who can be subject-matter experts or other stakeholders depending on the content to be reviewed), logistics manager (if different from the organizer), production manager and graphic design/layout specialists, IT support.*
- *Total number of participants: normally 10 – 30.*

(continues…)

- **Facilities:** *A venue preferably away from participants' everyday offices (to encourage focusing on writing rather than routine tasks). Venue should be equipped with a large meeting room for plenary sessions, with projector and screen, tables and chairs; and several smaller breakout spaces for small group discussions/reviews or individual writing, each with a projector and screen, table(s) and chairs.*

- **Materials:** *Reference materials (preferably online/digital) as appropriate for the topic(s). Laptop computers (participants' own, or provided by organizer), stationery (USB memory sticks, paper, pens, staplers, highlighters, marker pens, post-it notes, etc.), shared online document workspace (e.g. SharePoint document library), pin boards with flipchart paper, projector and screen, printer, photocopier, scanner (optional), and editing style guide.*

- **Optional but desirable:** *Approved outline of the publication/product. For urgent or challenging projects, consider voluntary suspension of email access by all participants, to further increase focus and productivity.*

- **Time**: *normally 2 - 5 days for the Writeshop itself, depending on the scope of the desired product and the available resources, plus time before (for preparation, which may take up to a month or two) and after (for finalization of the written product).*

- **Budget plan and resources**: *to cover facilities rental (if needed), refreshments, materials and production costs.*

WHEN AND WHY TO USE

The typical use case for application of a Writeshop is to capture a focused body of knowledge that is not yet written down (i.e. it is still tacit knowledge) from a group of people, each of whom has only part of the complete knowledge. Thus, a Writeshop can effectively support staff to capture and distil knowledge from recent experiences in meeting a challenge on the ground or during a shared project – resulting in authentic documents based on real-life observations and challenges. The Writeshop provides an opportunity for the group to discuss and work out any areas of disagreement, fill gaps and capture the complete body of knowledge for subsequent use elsewhere.

The Writeshop process is also an effective approach for combining knowledge from experience with existing scientific literature and other sources. It is also suitable for many other contexts where knowledge is required from a diverse group of contributors, and the objective is producing a high-quality, rich and coherently written product. It can be a useful device for carving out time from the busy schedules of essential contributors, potentially accelerating the creation of publications and key documents, and improving the efficiency of the writing process (but see also the paragraph on challenges and limitations below).

The Writeshop process is flexible. It can accommodate different numbers of participants with varying levels and types of expertise, allowing them to write, to review and provide expert commentary on others' drafts, to participate in group discussions, to support pre-tests of content with end users (if appropriate), or all of the above.

A Writeshop can offer a very efficient means of pre-testing a written product with members of its intended audience – for example, potential trainees can review content for training manuals, or beneficiaries such as children and/or families can respond to drafts of programme communications materials. By holding such reviews in the context of a Writeshop, the content creators are empowered to very quickly revise and strengthen their content according to audience requirements.

A collateral benefit of the Writeshop process is strengthening of networks or communities of practice. Participants in a Writeshop work together intensively and thus tend to forge or reinforce professional relationships that continue after the event. Community is also bolstered by the shared sense of accomplishment at the end of a Writeshop, when participants have completed their task of creating an important output together.

The Writeshop is most effective when a strong outline of the publication/product already exists which has all its needed approvals from the product's owner (the executive editor or the steering committee); when the various topic sections making up the final product can be worked on in parallel (i.e. all at the same time); and when the organizer or the coordinator (see below for role definitions) is also the head of the team to which most/all Writeshop participants belong.

The Writeshop method does have challenges and limitations, which you should be aware of before you decide to use it:

▲　　To reap the benefits of a Writeshop – chief among which are capture of a coherent body of knowledge from multiple contributors, and rapid production of a high-quality written product – you will need to invest logistical effort, and potentially some resources, into booking venues, preparing invitations, securing time from participants, and finding an appropriately skilled coordinator/facilitator.

▲　　The process is time-intensive, especially for the writers and editors, who will likely face tremendous pressure to complete their drafts and revisions within a short time. They will also need to commit several days of time, or even a week or more. Constraints in time or work schedules may prevent your best writers from participating in the Writeshop, which could mean you are better off using a more traditional approach.

▲　　Are there many stakeholders or partners who insist on having the final word on the written product? This may slow down the post-Writeshop phase considerably.

▲　　While Writeshops are good for many types of knowledge products, they may not be the best method to produce highly technical scientific papers or extensive literature reviews. Such publications are inherently more time-consuming, require exhaustive research, and are best left to dedicated writers, whether staff or external consultants, to produce in a more gradual, systematic way.

Participants and roles

All Writeshops require access to appropriate reference materials (reports, technical literature), online or printed. But more essential for the success of a Writeshop are the contributions of its participants. Every Writeshop needs the following types of participants:

▲　　**Writers** produce and iterate on drafts that together will make up the product of the

Writeshop. Writers may themselves be subject matter experts (provided they have adequate writing experience), or they may be full-time writers, with at least adequate background in the subject(s) to be written about. In the latter case the writers may require support from subject matter experts to review their drafts.

◢ **Editors** ensure consistency and quality among outputs from multiple writers, and meld these into a coherent whole according to the predetermined requirements. Editors should be able to work quickly. Experience in the topic(s) of interest is a strong asset.

◢ **The organizer** convenes the process before, during and after the Writeshop to ensure that the objective of producing a well-written output is met. The organizer also oversees/manages the logistics in the absence of a logistics manager.

◢ **The coordinator/facilitator** oversees and manages the Writeshop event, ensures that it is conducted in a participatory manner, facilitates respectful but robust discussions for the review and validation of drafts, and ensures participants' needs are met. Good facilitation skills and appropriate experience are important: Writeshops are time-intensive activities and need to be managed effectively so that everyone can give their best without feeling stressed or pressured, while at the same time adhering to the timeline. Subject matter knowledge is an asset for a coordinator, but is secondary to facilitation and coordination skills. The organizer, if appropriately skilled, can also act as coordinator.

Other types of participants

Writeshops can also benefit from, and may sometimes require, participation from the following at key points during the Writeshop:

◢ **Subject-matter experts** (as reviewers rather than writers): Experts can validate what is written from a technical and substantive viewpoint, and add important details and nuances.

◢ **Stakeholders**: These may be project beneficiaries, or persons from the target audience, or end users of a manual/instructional document, or other key stakeholders. These participants can review and react to drafts to validate the clarity and desired impact of the product, and can highlight any issues or gaps from their perspective.

◢ **Logistics manager**: In long/complex Writeshops, or ones in which the organizer also acts as facilitator, a logistics manager can be very helpful for taking care of details relating to facilities, materials and participants.

◢ **IT support**: This may be required during the preparations and initial setup, or for occasional troubleshooting during the event.

◢ **Production manager, graphic design/layout specialists**: These roles are required when a formal publication or external website is to be produced. They may be involved during the Writeshop, or (more commonly) afterwards, once a final manuscript is ready.

HOW TO APPLY

Prepare in advance
- Form a steering committee or core group
- Develop a draft outline of the written product
- Develop a draft agenda of the Writeshop
- Finalize contributors' list and obtain commitments to participate
- Obtain initial outputs from the writers
- Book a venue

Hold your Writeshop
- Convene the Writeshop with a plenary introduction session
- Share the outline and assignments of writers
- Ask writers to present their first drafts
- Ask for feedback and revise the first drafts
- Proceed with presentation, discussion and revision of subsequent drafts
- Conclude the writeshop

Finalize the product after the event
- Compile final drafts into one manuscript
- Review manuscipt and send to lead editor for final edits
- Send final manuscript to a production manager for any design requirements
- Publish the product
- Conduct a Retrospect exercise on the Writeshop

Prepare in advance:
Instructions for the organizer

The Writeshop process begins with identifying the need for a specific written product – a book, article, key document, or other product – and with a recognition of the potential benefits of the Writeshop (outlined above). Once the need is identified and a decision to use the Writeshop method has been taken, the planning process can begin. Effective planning is crucial because the Writeshop process is intensive and requires considerable coordination and commitment from a significant number of participants.

1. Form a steering committee or core group to guide the Writeshop process. The steering committee should include key writers for the desired written product, subject matter experts,

and senior management sponsor(s); it may also include stakeholders. If appropriate, the steering committee may be chaired by a team leader/manager acting as executive editor for the product/publication. The suggested size is 3 - 6 people. This number may vary with the size of the product/publication or with inclusion of stakeholder representatives (if any). Once established, the steering committee develops the concept for the product/publication at an appropriate level of detail, by fleshing out answers to the following questions:

◢ What are the objectives?

◢ Who is the target audience? (Including demographic information, location, whether internal or external, and other relevant characteristics.)

▲ What type of product/publication is envisaged? How will it achieve its desired impact on the audience?

2. Develop a draft outline of the written product. The steering committee takes stock of available relevant source materials and potential participants; identifies a theme and key content/messages to be included; and prepares an initial draft outline. The outline will guide the work of the writers at the Writeshop. It may be revised before, or even during, the Writeshop, with appropriate sign-off from the steering committee or executive editor.

3. Develop a draft agenda for the Writeshop. Based on the draft outline, the complexity of topics and the expected level of editing and content validation required, a draft agenda can be crafted. The agenda should allocate times for writing, peer review, editing, and content validation which can be done through a combination of individual work, paired work, parallel group discussions and plenary discussions. A draft of the agenda is important to give your Writeshop invitees an idea of how the Writeshop will unfold. However, it will have to be revisited as writers complete their initial outputs (see step 5), as these will give the organizer and steering committee a better idea of what parts of the Writeshop may need more time for writing, editing and validation work, as compared to others.

4. Finalize contributors' list and obtain commitments to participate. The steering committee identifies potential participants based on the type of product/publication desired, the thematic content, and (if relevant) requirements

for final document production and publishing. The number of participants will depend on how long/complex the written product will be, how much input is needed, availability of material resources and subject matter experts, etc.

Aim for between 10 and 30 participants depending on your requirements. Increasing the number of participants beyond 30 is possible, but this will require additional coordination and support, may result in a Writeshop that takes longer than 2 weeks to conclude, and is therefore not a feasible undertaking for first-time Writeshop organizers.

The composition of your group should consider the following:

▲ You should have one **coordinator/ facilitator** with strong facilitation skills who will oversee and manage the Writeshop. In this role, substantive knowledge of the topic is secondary to facilitation skills.

▲ The **writers** form the largest group in the Writeshop. Any writers who are members of the steering committee should assist in identifying other writers based on their knowledge and experience.

▲ The number of **editors** will depend on the number of writers in the Writeshop. Ideally, arrange for one editor for every five writers, as this will speed up the writing and editing process. No Writeshop should have fewer than two editors participating.

▲ The number and profile of **subject matter experts and other stakeholders** who will validate the content will depend on the topics to be covered, the expected quantity of text, and the audience of the final product. The draft agenda developed in #3 above should define at what point during the Writeshop the experts and/or stakeholders are needed, so that they can be invited to join only when they are expected to be needed, optimizing the

use of their time. In some cases their presence and participation may be required throughout the Writeshop.

▲ Depending on the number of participants at the Writeshop and the nature and extent of the desired final product, you may require a logistics manager, a production manager, graphic design/layout specialists, and/or IT support.

Make sure all participants are aware of what will happen in the Writeshop and what are expected of them. Do this by including the following information in your invitations:

▲ The objectives of the Writeshop and its importance.

▲ The roles you would like them to play, responsibilities that come with it, and clear indications of the expectations, especially regarding time commitment and workload during, and in case of writers, before the Writeshop.

▲ For writers and editors, the portions of the final product that you would like them to contribute to, and the relevant topic(s).

▲ If your participants have never experienced a Writeshop before, include an explanation of the process, the other roles they will interact with, and the intended outputs.

▲ The Writeshop agenda and production timeline from conception to publishing, so that they can see the big picture.

From each invitee, ask for a commitment on their participation. Once commitment is given, provide them with additional guidance needed for them to perform their function: For writers, assign their pre-work (see next step). For writers and editors, provide editorial guidance addressing writing style and format, to help maintain adequate uniformity in the final product. For other roles,

describe in more detail what is expected of them at the event.

5. **Obtain initial outputs from the writers.** Once participation of writers is confirmed, assign each to relevant topics/sections from the outline, taking into account their expertise and project/ programme experience, and the overall writing work required to deliver a viable end product.

Request the following two items of pre-Writeshop work from each writer, and assign appropriate deadlines.

First, ask each writer to prepare an abstract of their assigned topic/section(s), and send it to the steering committee. The committee will review the abstracts against the outline for context and relevance. Based on this screening, the outline can be revised to edit existing topics and add new ones, if needed.

Next, send feedback on the abstracts to the writers, and give them detailed instructions on how to develop the abstracts into initial draft texts, which they must prepare and share before the Writeshop begins (make the deadlines clear). Provide resources such as writing style guides and templates, to make it easy for first-time writers.

If you will ask participants to read drafts on their own laptops at the Writeshop (see 'Ask writers to present their first drafts' below), then either ask writers to send links of drafts to you for distribution, or create a shared online space where they can upload their drafts.

6. **Book a venue.** Use your draft agenda and list of contributors to determine the size of venue required, and the duration of the Writeshop. Book a suitable venue (see details under 'Facilities' in the **Requirements** section above).

When you are ready to start: Hold your Writeshop

Instructions for the event coordinator/facilitator

Participants, especially writers and editors, need to be aware of the time-intensive nature of Writeshops and be prepared to meet the daily goals. Coordinators/facilitators need to organize and manage these events effectively so that everyone can give their best without feeling stressed or pressured.

The time allocated for presentations, peer reviews, feedback and editing will vary based on the type of publication or written product, the length and complexity of the drafts, and the number of writers in the workshop, among other factors. The coordinator/facilitator should plan for the Writeshop keeping these factors in mind.

7. **Convene the Writeshop with a plenary introduction session** to ensure all participants have a shared understanding of:

⊿ The objectives and expected outcomes: to produce a final or near-final manuscript of a written knowledge product. Try to communicate an inspiring vision of the importance and impact the product is expected to have.

⊿ The agenda/schedule for the Writeshop (2 days to one week, or more).

⊿ The Writeshop process.

⊿ Who's Who (with roles clearly defined).

⊿ Resources and support made available to participants.

8. **Share in plenary the outline of the written product/publication, and the assignments of the writers by topic/section.** At this point, the outline has already been reviewed once by the steering committee. Ask participants for their comments and suggestions. The outline is flexible: if participants believe it is incomplete or lacks cohesion, they should have the opportunity to add or remove topics/ sections. It is important to stress that the outline and drafts are meant to enrich the final knowledge product and as such, are all subject to change, especially at this early point in the Writeshop process.

9. **Ask writers to present their first drafts.** The plenary session continues with presentation by writers of the first drafts developed before the Writeshop.

⊿ Writers present in order based on the sequence of the outline, for approximately 15 minutes each.

⊿ Each writer is given up to 5 minutes to introduce the concept and thinking that went into their draft. The remaining 10 minutes is for participants to read the draft 'as is', either from a projection on screen, or on their own laptops (if you arranged for upload of drafts by writers).

⊿ Ensure editors are assigned to each writer. This should be done in advance, but if there are any discrepancies, e.g. if assignments need to change due to changes in participation, then address these at this point.

⊿ Invite participants to give feedback on the draft (15 – 30 minutes). They may also share relevant experiences or suggest content. Depending on the scope of the expected final product and the number of sections, as well as the natural flow of the topic(s) to be covered, you may request feedback after

each draft, after a section composed of several drafts, or after all drafts have been presented. Ask participants to follow these guidelines for feedback:

• Pay attention to the context as you read the draft. Understand the intent and the message that the writer is trying to convey.

• When giving feedback, use a two-step critique: what you liked or thought worked well; what could be improved on.

   • **What you liked:** Look out for text that engages you as a reader, that reads well, is clear or particularly vivid, or contains especially useful information.

   • **What could be improved on:** Note what was unclear, wordy, or extraneous/ irrelevant. Be sure to maintain a constructive approach in your critique: Before making a comment, ask yourself if it is warranted and if it is truly beneficial to the process. Stick to the facts and provide, not just critique, but also suggestions for improvement.

• Discussion may be needed to address potentially unclear portions of text: these may simply be the result of unfamiliar writing style.

• Identify content – repeated terms or sentences, or concepts that recur in multiple sections – which need to be made consistent across drafts by different writers.

• Maintain a respectful, non-confrontational stance at all times.

▲ The writer listens to feedback and responds as needed. If needed, you (in your role as facilitator) may remind the writer that the critique is addressed to the draft, not to the writer. Try to ensure the discussion remains objective. You may ask questions to clarify vague suggestions, or you can prompt for additional concrete feedback to help build on the current draft. Keep an eye on your available time, and keep the discussion moving.

▲ The editor takes notes during the feedback discussion for later use when editing the draft.

▲ If there are many drafts to discuss, you may need to take occasional breaks.

10. **After all presentations and discussions are complete, move on to the revision of the first drafts:** The plenary session closes, and editors meet with writers, usually one at a time, to discuss the feedback received, and writers revise the draft accordingly.

▲ Depending on the amount of revisions required, this may take a few minutes or several hours.

▲ The workshop schedule should be flexible enough to accommodate some variations in editing time. On occasion, participants may need to work through the evenings to keep up with the schedule.

▲ Once edited, drafts will be ready for the next round of review.

11. **Proceed with presentation, discussion and revision of subsequent drafts:**

▲ **Second draft:** Introduce the second round of presentations for review in plenary. Writers present their second drafts and participants share their feedback per the guidelines in #9 above. This review session will likely be shorter than the first one, as the drafts begin to approach the desired result.

▲ Conclude the plenary and commence revision, as per #10 above, with editors working individually with writers.

▲ Optional: If desired and if resources are available, invite a graphics designer or artist to join the discussion among writers and editors, to provide suggestions on enhancing the draft with images, illustrations, or infographics. Such visual content can be included, in final or (more likely) draft or sketch form, to be discussed during the next review session.

▲ **Third draft:** Repeat the presentation and review process in plenary. By now, the draft will likely be polished, with content that has been validated for accuracy and messaging, and including relevant supporting data, case studies, and potentially graphical content. The review process may again take less time than the preceding round.

▲ This might be a good point to pre-test the drafts with potential end-users, if appropriate.

▲ **Additional reviews:** Decide with support from the group whether any additional rounds of review are required and are feasible given the available time. By this point in the Writeshop you will have a sense for how long a round of review would take. If yes, proceed as above. If no further review is needed, but there is time available, you may proceed to discussions of layout and production-related issues (printing, web site creation, or whatever is called for in your plans).

▲ Your output should be a text that is highly readable and coherent across different sections. Further commentary and revisions should be minimal and easily incorporated into the text by the editor(s).

12. **Conclude the Writeshop.** Thank the participants and inform them of the remaining steps and timeline for producing the final product. Distribute evaluation forms if you would like their feedback on the process.

Finalize the product after the event:
Instructions for the organizer and steering committee

13. **Compile final drafts into one manuscript** and share with the executive editor and/or the steering committee for final steps.

14. The executive editor and/or the steering committee reviews the manuscript to **identify any loose ends or gaps. Make provisions to fill these** and to add pages such as the Foreword, Acknowledgements, Introduction, Contents and References, as needed.

15. **Send the manuscript to a lead editor for a final edit**, which entails:

▲ Checking for inconsistencies and ambiguity, meaning, flow, and impact. The manuscript should read well and be fluid from start to finish. The language and writing style should be consistent, should accommodate house style, and each section should lead into the next seamlessly.

▲ Trimming the fat: reducing the word count to make the text leaner, more concise and more impactful.

▲ Fact checking, if required.

▲ Proofreading of the manuscript for spelling, grammar, sentence structure, paragraph structure, punctuation, formatting, etc.

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16. **Send the final manuscript to a production manager** to coordinate any needed design (including the cover, if needed) and layout.

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17. **Obtain final approval for publication** from the executive editor/steering committee, and ensure this is documented.

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18. The written product is **now ready to be published and/or distributed through appropriate channels**.

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19. **Conduct a brief Retrospect exercise** to learn lessons and become more effective with future iterations of the Writeshop.

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Summary of Writeshop roles and responsibilities

You may share the following with participants as a guide before the Writeshop begins

▲ **Organizer**: Responsible for preparing the Writeshop process, arranging participation and venue, and following up after the event. May be the same person as the coordinator.
- Form a steering committee.
- Work closely with the steering committee during the planning phase to coordinate the

agenda and selection of topics and writers.
- Create a draft Writeshop agenda, ideally with the coordinator/facilitator.
- Select other members of the Writeshop team (editors; optionally, logistics manager, production manager, support staff).
- Coordinate invitations with logistics manager.
- Follow up after the Writeshop to ensure production of final written product.

▲ **Steering committee:** Provides overall guidance and final approval for the product or publication to be developed.
- Develop the product/publication concept.
- Develop the draft outline.
- Review abstracts of writers and provides initial guidance so they can prepare first drafts.
- Review manuscript after the Writeshop, identifies any gaps to be filled.
- Approve final product/publication.

▲ **Coordinator/facilitator:** Responsible for management, coordination and facilitation of the Writeshop.
- Finalize the Writeshop agenda.
- Prepare guidelines for participant roles so everyone understands their part in the Writeshop.
- Develop workplan for the Writeshop; if required, coordinate with logistics manager and production manager to ensure all equipment and facilities are available.
- Moderate presentations, facilitate feedback/critique sessions.
- Ensure all activities adhere to the time allocations; processes are participatory, engaging and respectful; participants remain positive and productive; and objectives are met.

▲ **Writers:** Responsible for developing draft text on an assigned topic.
- Prepare an abstract and first draft before attending the Writeshop.

- Present draft to participants and take note of all feedback, asking questions for clarification.
- Discuss feedback and revise draft with an editor over several iterations until the draft is finalized.
- Be supportive of the process, and provide constructive critique of others' drafts.
- Liaise with graphics designer/artist should one be assigned.

▲ **Editors:** Responsible for editing of drafts assigned to them.
- Take note of feedback from participants during the presentation of the draft. Look for gaps and areas for improvement, language issues, writing style.
- Discuss the edits proposed and revise with the writer, until the draft is finalized.
- Liaise with artist/ graphics designer should one be assigned.

▲ **Subject matter experts and stakeholders:** Provides feedback and validation of content.
- Provide suggestions on how to improve clarity and comprehensibility of drafts.
- Highlight issues and gaps that need to be addressed from their perspective.
- Identify additional content based on expertise and/or experience.

▲ **Logistics manager:** For large Writeshops, responsible for overall coordination of logistics before, during and after. (For smaller events, these activities are performed by the organizer and the coordinator.)
- Coordinate invitations, guidelines and schedules for participants.
- Organize workshop venue, equipment, transport and catering for participants.
- Advise/assist as appropriate with participant travel and accommodations.
- Work closely with coordinator/facilitator to ensure all workshop requirements are met, resources are available and support staff know what to do.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

▲ All participants need to understand their roles and act accordingly. Inform all participants in advance so that they arrive prepared. The process is intensive, and participants must step into their roles quickly so that they can move fast.

▲ Using experienced writers will make success more likely, but sometimes you may want to include one or two first-time writers, because of their experiences or professional qualifications. First-time writers will need additional support:

- Share guidance materials on writing well, and examples of what you consider to be well-written content.
- Be clear on what is expected regarding the written product, length, tone, and style.
- Consider providing them with a set of questions as writing prompts: who, what, when, why, how.
- Ensure that you have experienced editors able to give them a little extra attention.

▲ Coordinators/facilitators who have appropriate facilitation skills, understand the subject matter at least to a degree, and know well the requirements of the desired written product, can make a huge difference by:

- Engaging and energizing participants, keeping discussions on track, and promoting a sense of learning, camaraderie and trust.
- Creating space for objective discussion and resolving conflicts quickly. Critical commentary on text is an essential part of the process, but it can be stressful both for

the person giving feedback as well as the writer whose text is being reviewed. A skilled facilitator will prevent discussions from getting personal and keep the focus on the text always.

- Tracking progress over the Writeshop and guiding participants towards the required product according to the schedule.

◤ Make sure there is sufficient time before the actual Writeshop for the preliminary steps: writers develop abstracts, the steering committee comments on them, and then writers develop first draft texts based on the abstracts and any comments. This process can easily take a month or two.

◤ Take a flexible approach to the outline: Be prepared to consider changes to it even during the Writeshop.

VARIATIONS

◤ **Engage consultants to lead the process with your team.** A few consulting firms have experience in leading Writeshops (sometimes under other names, such as 'book sprints').

◤ **Use other knowledge exchange techniques to enhance the process.** Hold a World Café or an Online Discussion before the Writeshop, involving the steering committee, and possibly some/all writers, to explore the issues around the publication/product and get everyone onto the same page. Use Brainstorming to help fill in key gaps at any point in the process, before or during the Writeshop. Use an Icebreaker at the

start of the Writeshop if participants don't already know each other. Hold After Action Reviews during multi-day Writeshops, to ensure you make needed adjustments to the process on the go.

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CREDITS