Mid-Term Evaluation of the "Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe" Project
Request for Proposals (RFP)

Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe (IFAD SKIM Project)

IFAD — Investing in rural people

ICARDA — Science for resilient livelihoods in dry areas

CIHEAM IAM BARI

Procasur

VT

Mid-Term Evaluation of the "Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe" Project

Request for Proposals

20 December 2019

Project

Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe (SKIM)

Funded by

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Prepared by

International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)

Suggested citation

ICARDA (20/12/2019). Mid-Term Evaluation of the "Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe" Project - Request for Proposals (RFP). International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA): Beirut, Lebanon.

Keywords

Knowledge, Knowledge Management, Management, KM, MGMT, Knowledge Sharing, Sharing, Knowledge Creation, Creation, Knowledge Discovery, Discovery, Knowledge Storage, Storage, Knowledge Curation, Curation, Information, Data, Data Curation, Capacity Development, Capacity, Development, Research for Development, R4D

Type: Working Paper

Working Papers are one of ICARDA's global public goods; they capture and share knowledge and learning from projects and research partnerships. Each paper is internally reviewed as part of the Center's publishing process.

About SKIM

The Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe project is a grant project led by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project also works with international partners Virginia Tech, CIHEAM-Bari, PROCASUR as well as National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), governments, and agricultural extension services in Moldova, Morocco and Sudan.

Initiated in June 2018, the project facilitates and supports KM and capacity development activities in the three selected countries (with the possibility of extending to a further two) and will provide practical examples of KM best practices that will be analyzed and adopted by participating institutions. Increasing the capacities of participating public institutions in this work, by providing necessary structures and systems at the country and regional levels, will ensure that knowledge being developed can be effectively managed for long-term growth and development.

Project website is created with related information at https://mel.cgiar.org/projects/SKIM .This website describes background information, project team in more details, partners and stakeholders engaged, key documents and proposal, goals and objectives, impact pathway, focus countries, resources uploaded on website, news and events calendar.

About IFAD

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency of the United Nations, was one of the major outcomes of the 1974 World Food Conference. IFAD was set up as an international financial institution in 1977. Since then, IFAD-supported projects have reached millions of people. IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 sets out how IFAD works over the decade in order to play a crucial role in the inclusive and sustainable transformation of rural areas. It articulates our contribution to the 2030 Agenda, including the larger role IFAD will play in supporting countries to fulfil their priorities relative to the Agenda. For more details: www.ifad.org

About ICARDA

Established in 1977, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) is a non-profit, CGIAR Research Center that focusses on delivering innovative solutions for sustainable agricultural development in the non-tropical dry areas of the developing world.

We provide innovative, science-based solutions to improve the livelihoods and resilience of resource-poor smallholder farmers. We do this through strategic partnerships, linking research to development, and capacity development, and by taking into account gender equality and the role of youth in transforming the non-tropical dry areas.

Address: Dalia Building, Second Floor, Bashir El Kasser St, Verdun, Beirut, Lebanon 1108-2010.

www.icarda.org

Glossary

CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
CIHEAM-Bari	Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes – Bari
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
InnovATE	Innovation for Agricultural Training and Education
KM	Knowledge Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MIP	Mediterranean Innovation Partnership
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PROCASUR	Corporation for Regional Rural Development Training (PROCASUR)
QA	Quality Assurance
RFP	Request for Proposal
SKIM	Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe
ToR	Terms of Reference

Table of Contents

1. Project Background

Knowledge sharing (KS) and management for public institutions, as well as NGOs, community-based organizations and the private sector, is a key element to ensuring appropriate dissemination and maintenance of knowledge, and to building capacities and development effectiveness in rural areas. Lessons learned and results in the field of knowledge management (KM) must be scaled-out for enhanced impact in agricultural development and to ensure that knowledge gaps are identified, and then filled, so that public institutions and organizations in-country can benefit.

The Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe project is a grant project led by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project also works with international partners Virginia Tech, CIHEAM-Bari, PROCASUR as well as National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), governments, and agricultural extension services in Moldova, Morocco and Sudan.

Initiated in June 2018, the project facilitates and supports KM and capacity development activities in the three selected countries (with the possibility of extending to a further two) and will provide practical examples of KM best practices that will be analyzed and adopted by participating institutions. Increasing the capacities of participating public institutions in this work, by providing necessary structures and systems at the country and regional levels, will ensure that knowledge being developed can be effectively managed for long-term growth and development.

The Project's strategic approach is to develop and sustain knowledge management processes that include co-learning partnership activities with target groups and main stakeholders. The Project focuses on three thematic areas:

1. Financial inclusion of rural woman and youth,
2. Natural resource management and climate resilience; and
3. Productive agricultural technologies (e.g. water management technologies, conservation agriculture and drought-resilient crops).

1.1 Partners

(i) Corporation for Regional Rural Development Training (PROCASUR) as an implementing partner for the components related to capacity assessment and "learning routes". PROCASUR is specialized in identifying and scaling up home-grown innovations, and has had well documented success in carrying out knowledge-sharing activities via several IFAD-funded programmes throughout the world. You may read more at: http://www.procasur.org/

(ii) The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: Virginia Tech through their Innovation for Agricultural Training and Education (InnovATE) project contribute towards agricultural training and education across youth, gender, and workforce development, at the primary, vocational/technical, university and post-graduate levels. You may read more at: https://innovate.cired.vt.edu/.

(iii) International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM-Bari): CIHEAM-Bari is active in providing significant support for business incubation and innovations platforms for agro-food entrepreneurship. Through the Mediterranean Innovation Partnership (MIP), CIHEAM-Bari established an international network of public institutions of 10 Mediterranean countries including Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia and the countries of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe. This network includes training, knowledge sharing and cooperation to support the growth of an entrepreneurship culture among young people, entrepreneurship creation and innovation. You may read more at: https://www.ciheam.org/.

1.2 Participating Institutions

Country	Institutions
Morocco	1. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests; 2. French National Institute for Agricultural Research; 3. *Caisse Nationale de Crédit Agricole* (National Agricultural Credit Bank); 4. *Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire* Hassan II (Hassan II Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine); 5. *Fondation pour le Développement Local et le Partenariat* (Foundation for Local Development and Partnership)
Republic of Moldova	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry; 2. National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; 3. State Agrarian University of Moldova; 4. *Institutul pentru Dezvoltare şi Iniţiative Sociale "Viitorul"* (Institute for Development and Social Initiatives – IDIS Viitorul);
Sudan	1. Ministry of Agricult and Natural Resources ; rectorate of Technology Transfer and Knowledge Mangement, Agricultural Research Corporation; 2. National Information Center, Ministry of Science and Communications; 3. College of Agricultural Studies, Sudan University of Science and Technology; 4. University of Khartoum; 5. Ahfad University for Women; 6. University of Gezira; 7. Sudanese Knowledge Society; 8. Sudan Federal Food Security Technical Secretariat.

2. Purpose of the Request for Proposals

By making reference to the project's results-based logical framework (Annex 1), impact pathways (Annex 2), the IFAD Knowledge Management Strategy and other credible frameworks that relate to the mandate of the project, the evaluator(s) shall:

(i) Appraise the activities and outputs achieved by ICARDA and partners,
(ii) Identify and assess outcomes of the project,
(iii) Identify the enablers and/or constraints to the attainment of project results and lessons learned,
(iv) Make practical recommendations for corrective action required to achieve the envisioned project results within the remaining period of the project.

3. Evaluation Questions

The evaluator(s) will make reference to the OECD/DAC Evaluation criteria prescribed in the IFAD Evaluation Manual. The selected evaluator(s) will make reference, but not be limited, to the following evaluation questions:

3.1 Relevance

(i) Was the project design appropriate to meet the intervention's objectives?
(ii) Was the project adjusted during implementation to any changes in context to retain continued relevance? Was the adjustment necessary?

3.2 Effectiveness

(iii) To what extent have the objectives of the project and its components been attained in quantitative and in qualitative terms?
(iv) What changes in the overall context (e.g. policy framework, political situation, institutional set-up, economic shocks, civil unrest) have affected or are likely to affect project implementation and overall results?

3.3 Efficiency

(v) How does the project expenditure compare to the budget- whole budget and per deliverable?
(vi) Have any re-allocations been done? What was the rationale? What are the implications of the reallocations to the budget structure and cost-effectiveness?

3.4 Sustainability

(vii) Do project activities benefit from the engagement, participation and ownership of local communities, grass-roots organizations and the rural poor, and are adopted approaches technically viable?
(viii) Is there a clear indication of government commitment after the project closing date, for example, in terms of provision of funds for selected activities, human resources availability,

continuity of pro- poor policies and participatory development approaches, and institutional support?

3.5 Innovation and Scaling Up

(ix)   What innovative knowledge management tools and platforms have been promoted by the project? How should the innovative tools be contextualized (i.e never used before vs. new to the country or project area)?

(x)   Are the innovative knowledge management tools and platforms consistent with the IFAD KM Strategy?

(xi)   How are the innovative KM tools and platforms being scaled by the project? What are the opportunities and the threats to the scaling? How can the project cease the opportunities and avoid the threats?

3.6 Partnerships

(xii)   To what extent has the project management unit developed partnerships with the entities highlighted in the proposal and other relevant entities?

(xiii)   To what extent is the project facilitating KM and KS activities within these established partnerships?

4. Methodology

The evaluator(s) is/are required to propose methods that provide an objective and holistic understanding of the achievements made (or lack thereof). The approaches could include the use of both secondary data/literature and primary data collection through field visits. The evaluators must demonstrate that the study sites are representative of the project locations such that the resultant findings are deemed representative too.

5. Governance of the Evaluation

The evaluator(s) will report to the ICARDA Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Team led by the ICARDA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Leader

6. Technical Bid Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria and sub-criteria will be the basis of the selection of the successful bidder:

6.1 Academic Qualifications

(i)   The lead consultant or team leader must possess an advanced degree (Masters' or PhD) in Knowledge Management (KM), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Project/Program Management, or Agricultural Economics.

(ii)   The rest of the evaluation team, if any, should possess academic qualification that complement the qualifications of the lead consultant or team leader, such that ultimately

the team comprises a mix of technical expertise required to deliver on the scope of the evaluation.

6.2 Experience

(i)   Experience implementing baseline, mid-term and endline evaluations
(ii)   Experience in Knowledge Management;
(iii)   Experience working in or conducting evaluations in the in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe;
(iv)   Experience leading or co-leading evaluation teams that have develop recommendations that have been adopted by clients;
(v)   Demonstrated experience incorporating ethical considerations that arise with conducting research on human subjects;
(vi)   Experience developing fit-for-purpose data collection tools;
(vii)   Track record of writing detailed and yet concise evaluation reports.

6.3 Skills Sets

(i)   Strong data management and analysis skills;
(ii)   Proficiency in the use of technological aids for enhancing the collection of quality data, analysis and presentation;
(iii)   Fluency in written and spoken English language is required.
(iv)   Fluency in written and spoken French language will be an added advantage.

6.4 Methodology

(i)   Clear, practical, robust, logical and complementary methodological approaches are desired.
(ii)   Clear and justifiable selection of field visit sites and respondents.
(iii)   Strong alignment to and interpretation of the RFP.
(iv)   Added insight by the consultant(s) by commenting objectively on the ToR/RFP.
(v)   Elaborate suggestions on tools to be used for capturing/recording data, data transmission, data monitoring, data analysis, and visual aids development for purposes of communicating the findings.
(vi)   Clear work plan in line with the RFP, and justification of deviations

7. Financial Bid Evaluation Considerations

The best financial bids will be those that demonstrate value-for-money and whose budget in closely tied to the rationally determined methodological approach and plausible remuneration rates. Thus, ICARDA will not be obliged to give the highest rating to the lowest priced bid.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Party	Responsibilities
ICARDA and Project Implementation Partners	ICARDA and the project implementation partners will: i) Make available all the pertinent documents required by the consultant(s); ii) Through the MEL Leader, promptly discuss/provide input at all stages of the assessment. iii) Support evaluator(s) field visits and facilitate the interaction with beneficiaries.
ICARDA MEL Unit	Under the leadership of the ICARDA MEL Lead, the M&E Unit will: (i) Evaluate both the technical and financial proposals and select the best bid; (ii) Review the evaluation methodology proposed by the consultant(s) at the proposal stage and during the inception phase, making objective feedback based on best practice; (iii) Coordinate with the ICARDA Finance and Procurement teams for all contractual requirements of the evaluation; (iv) Ensure adherence to the agreed methodology during the implementation phase; (v) Provide feedback to the draft report, and consolidate the project team's response to the evaluation findings; (vi) Facilitate the communication of the evaluation finds to all stakeholders. (vii) Work with the project staff and implementation partners to assemble the initial documents for the desk review and support field visits (viii) Adhere to and ensure adherence to the CGIAR Evaluation Quality Assurance (QA) framework
Consultant(s)	(i) Review project documents and reports available from the ICARDA project team and project implementation partners; (ii) Preparation of a detailed inception report that presents the evaluation design building on the technical proposal; (iii) Undertake a participatory evaluation process, involving all relevant stakeholders and incorporating their evaluation information requirements; (iv) Design a sufficiently robust study methodology within the limits of existing data, institutional arrangements, and budget; (v) Demonstrate clear complementarity between/amongst the methods of choice; (vi) Carryout high quality data collection, and data analyses that ensure data validity, consistency and accuracy; (vii) Succinctly author the evaluation report, while incorporating feedback from stakeholders in a timely, objective and transparent manner. (viii) Identify lessons learned and develop practical recommendations for project stakeholders;

(ix)	Present the evaluation findings to key stakeholders.

9. Evaluation Timeline and Deliverables

The evaluation assignment is to be completed within 5 months, from the date of contracting. The tentative schedule for the evaluation with estimated time duration is presented below.

| Phase	Description	Deliverable	Due date
Bid submission	The technical and financial bids must be submitted together, in a format provided in Annex 3.	Technical and financial bids	1/03/2020
Evaluation of submitted bids	Review and evaluation of both the technical and financial proposals	Letter of intent to award contract	1/04/2020
		Signed contract	15/04/2020
Inception	Includes desk review, briefing, consultation with stakeholders, inception report drafting (revision of evaluation matrix, methodology and development of data collection tools), and fieldwork plan	Draft Inception Report	15/05/2020
		Final Inception Report	01/06/2020
Field work	Includes continuation of desk review, field visits, and debriefing.	N/A	01/07/2020
Reporting	It includes the preparation of the evaluation report, QA review and finalization	First Draft Evaluation Report	01/09/2020
		Final Evaluation Report	15/10/2020
Results dissemination	The evaluation report and the management responses will be presented to the Stakeholders and posted publicly on the ICARDA website and on the MEL Platform.	Knowledge products from the evaluation report	15/11/2020

10. Additional Information

Please send applications, complete with technical and financial proposals, to e.bonaiuti@cgiar.org and emilie.vansant@cgmel.org. For more information and details on the expected proposal contents, see Annex 3.

Annex 1. Project's Results-based Logical Framework

Level	Objectives-hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal	Develop effective and long-term knowledge management-related capacities in target countries (#5)	• Increased budgetary commitment for KM-related activities (target >= 60% of participating rural institutions)	• Final independent evaluation report • National institutions budget plan for the 3-5-10 year plan after the closure of the project and if not available survey of key stakeholders on their commitments to KM activities.	Institutional commitment to KM-related investments
Objectives	1. Assess capacity and enhance knowledge management skills of key rural institutions and other stakeholders in Moldova, Morocco, Sudan (with possibility to add two other countries) 2. Foster and promote knowledge exchange across in-country, cross-country and trans-regional partners to foster knowledge management and transfer	• Enhanced knowledge management skills of target institutions (target >= 80% of participating rural institutions) • Increased knowledge sharing capacity of target institutions among each other and across countries (target >= 80% of participating rural institutions)	• Project mid-term external evaluation • Completion survey	National governments, particularly the ministries of agriculture and other relevant institutions, are willing to improve their KM systems, instruments and processes. Commitments to upscale and replicate by development partners.
Outcomes	1. Improved understanding of KM capacities of the key rural institutions in 3 (+2) target countries in NEN region 2. Effective learning systems established and embedded across organizational processes with strengthened human and institutional capacities to manage	• Number of participants adopting improved KM approaches and practices in their particular function (target >= 60%) • Frequency of use of knowledge products (target = 600 downloads per year and 3,000 visits per year) • Number of innovation platforms, learning alliances, CoPs or other multi-stakeholder	• Project KM assessments (method: systems analysis disaggregated by theme, gender and country) • Project evaluations • Online tracking tools • Survey on adaptation patterns/behavioral changes among target groups	High commitment and sense of ownership from relevant rural institutions, as well as individual officers, particularly, those in strategic positions, to engage in the process.

Level	Objectives-hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
	the systematization of good practices 3. Improved knowledge exchanges among stakeholders based on increased adoption of good practices and knowledge transfer for increased SSTC, replication and scaling up.	platforms established (target = 3)		International development partners are supportive and acknowledge the progress and updates.
Outputs	Components: 1. KM capacity assessment for enhanced formulation of learning needs 2. Capacity development and knowledge systematization 3. Enhanced regional knowledge exchange	• Number of KM capacity & learning needs assessments (gap analysis) conducted (Target: at least 5 pre-selected institutions per country) • Approach Paper developed • Number of KM training courses organized (target = 8; at least 160 participants; >=80% satisfaction/effectiveness rate) • Number of learning routes organized (target=3; at least 75 participants, >=80% satisfaction/ effectiveness rate) • Number of symposia rolled-out at country level (target = 5, >= 80% satisfaction/effectiveness rate) • Number of knowledge products generated (target = minimum of 30 produced and disseminated to 5,000 people) • Online interoperable repository and portal established	• Project KM assessments • Peer-reviewed papers submitted and accepted for publication • Attendance records and online surveys and key informant interviews to assess the level of satisfaction and effectiveness of training, learning routes, symposia and knowledge products	Commitment and participation of target group and effective collaboration with strategic partners.

Annex 2. Project Impact Pathway
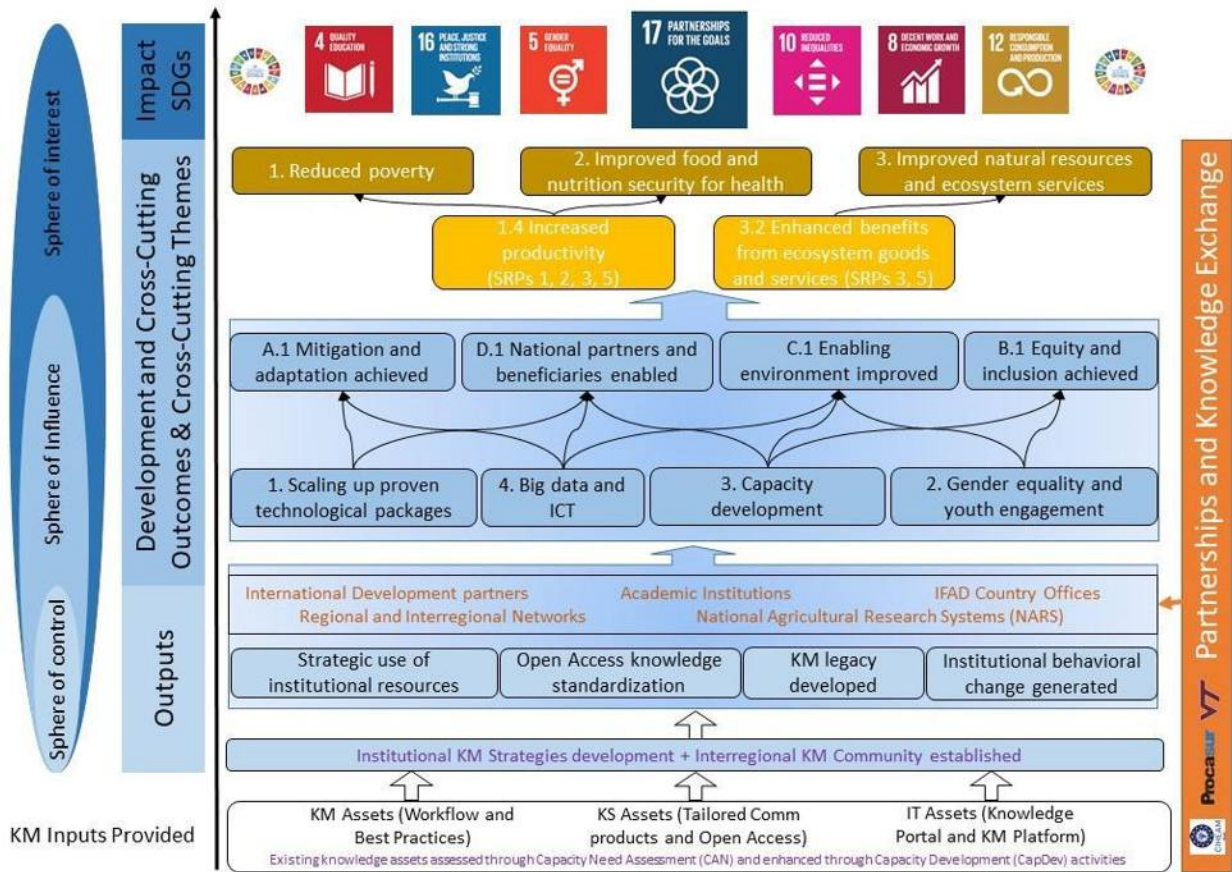
Annex 3. Format of the Proposal

All eligible candidates must submit the following as an application:

Part 1: Technical Proposal

      1.1 Interpretation and comments to the RFP (1 page max)

      1.2 Proposed Methodology (5 pages max)

      1.3 Work plan (1 page)

      1.4 Composition of team and tasks and time schedule of each team member (1 page)

      1.5 Firm's Profile and Relevant past experience (applicable only to a corporate entity) (3 page max)

Part 2: Financial Proposal

      Lump sum price (in USD)

      Breakdown of Lump Sum Price, showing all costs for the evaluation, broken down into fees and reimbursable.

Annex 1: Evaluation matrix

      The matrix must include: Evaluation question, sub-question and/or indicator, data collection method, data source, data collection instrument, method for data analysis

Annex 2: CVs of proposed team members

Annex 3: Reference letters and referee contact details

Strengthening Knowledge Management for Greater Development Effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe (IFAD SKIM Project)