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**FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK  
PILLAR 2: LEARNING AND DATA HUB**

**Annual Plan for Revisions to the  
FEWS NET Knowledge and Learning  
Platform:  
Vision and Work Plan for Year Two**

**October 15, 2020 to October 14, 2021**

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FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK  
PILLAR 2: LEARNING AND DATA HUB

# **Annual Plan for Revisions to the FEWS NET Knowledge and Learning Platform**

**October 15, 2020 to October 14, 2021**

The Hub Task Order 1

## **DISCLAIMER**

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ADS	Automated Directive System
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
CoP	Communities of Practice
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CWG	Communications Working Group
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DMP	Data Management Platform
EW	Early Warning
FDE	FEWS NET Data Explorer
FDW	FEWS NET Data Warehouse
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System Network
GSuite	Google Suite
Hub	FEWS NET Learning and Data Hub
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity
KfD	Knowledge for Development
K&L	Knowledge & Learning
KM	Knowledge Management
LMS	Learning Management System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ND&R	Network Development and Representation
P1	Pillar 1
P3	Pillar 3
POC	Point-of-Contact
TO	Task Order
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
Y1	Year One
Y2	Year Two

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2019, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) created the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) Pillar 2: Learning and Data Hub (the Hub) IDIQ contract to centrally store and manage Project data and knowledge products. The Hub's Task Order (TO) 1 organizes work through three workstreams: data, the website, and knowledge and learning (K&L).

Of the three workstreams, K&L coordinates collaboration across implementing partners and increases the global food security community's awareness of FEWS NET's vast knowledge products. The K&L workstream provides learning platforms and practices supporting the analytical activities of both the Hub and larger FEWS NET Project.

During Year One (Y1) of the Hub TO 1, the Hub team introduced K&L as a critical component to help integrate the Project using platforms and collaborative processes. In Y1, the K&L team created the following platforms to support the FEWS NET Project: a Dependencies Tracker to identify areas of shared responsibility; a Document Archive for access to the core Project analytical and training materials; and the FEWS NET Exchange intranet. K&L practices included facilitating and reporting on the monthly Project Collaboration Meetings; and managing official FEWS NET Project email communications and social media platforms.

The foundational activities in Y1 led to the development of the K&L's future vision: **seamless collaboration between Project team members** and positioning **FEWS NET as a thought leader in the global food insecurity community**. To achieve this vision, the Hub recommends carrying out the following activities and sub activities as defined in the work plan during Year Two (Y2):

- *Manage, Maintain, and Improve K&L Platforms*, including:
  - Greater internal use of GSuite, chat, and FEWS NET Exchange;
  - Improved data documentation and training;
  - Clarified areas of shared work and reuse of knowledge products through Dependencies and knowledge product Trackers, respectively; and
  - Development of an electronic document management system;
- *Manage, Maintain, and Improve K&L Practices*, including:
  - Launch of FEWS NET Communities of Practices and FEWS NET Forums as well as a standing Communications Working Group;
  - Expanded use of Adaptive Management approaches;
  - Continued facilitation of the monthly Collaboration Meeting;
  - Delivery of a FEWS NET Outreach Strategy;
  - Coordination of the FEWS NET Brand Identity; and
  - Support to social media and email communications platforms; and
- *Project Management and Strategic Planning* by developing a Performance Monitoring Strategy.

In addition to these activities, a unique opportunity exists to develop a learning management system to host online courses and enable "on demand" learning. Such a platform would significantly promote FEWS NET's K&L objectives, but is not funded at present.

## BACKGROUND

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) Learning and Data Hub (the Hub) Task Order (TO) 1, under the FEWS NET Pillar 2 indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract implemented by Kimetrica LLC,<sup>1</sup> has the specific objective to manage, share, and facilitate the application of FEWS NET data, information, and knowledge to help achieve FEWS NET’s vision to sustainably prevent food insecurity and famine. The Hub captures, documents and shares the wealth of FEWS NET analytical products, datasets, methodologies and learning through three technical workstreams:

- The Data Management Platform (DMP);
- The Website Platform; and
- The Knowledge and Learning (K&L) Workstream.

The Hub designed the K&L workstream to realize USAID’s goal for greater internal collaboration and external awareness of the newly restructured FEWS NET Project (the “Project”). The K&L team facilitates effective problem solving and achievement of organizational goals by connecting people to new and existing knowledge resources. In Y1, for the first time in FEWS NET’s history, USAID began integrating K&L approaches into the Project’s analytical activities. The Hub is responsible for implementing a FEWS NET-wide approach to capture, organize, share, and apply knowledge assets, requiring a defined strategy for both platforms and practices (see [Annex 1](#) for detailed definitions of these terms). Throughout Y1, K&L enhanced knowledge sharing across the Project in support of both the Hub’s other workstreams and implementing partners, which include the Early Warning (EW) and Science teams.<sup>2</sup>

The K&L workstream supports all five of the Hub’s principal activities, but focuses on making “FEWS NET food security-related data and knowledge products more accessible for FEWS NET 7 Team members” (C.2.1) and “FEWS NET Data and Learning Accessible to Non-FEWS NET Users and Uses Outside of the FEWS NET 7 Team” (C.2.2). Knowledge capture, Adaptive Management approaches, and dissemination activities will facilitate access to FEWS NET data and information to both internal and external audiences.

Although not a Hub TO 1 contract deliverable like the *Annual Plan for Revisions (APR)* for the DMP and Web Platform, the Hub prepared this *APR to the FEWS NET Knowledge and Learning Platform* to ensure the K&L workstream is synchronized with the larger vision of the FEWS NET Project. This document includes the entire potential scope of planned K&L activities in Y2, which USAID may reduce, expand, or adjust during the joint work planning process—scheduled for September 2020. It aligns with the

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<sup>1</sup> Task Order No. 7200AA19F0006 awarded effective June 24, 2019 under the FEWS NET Pillar 2 Learning and Data Hub, IDIQ Contract No. 7200AA19D00005.

<sup>2</sup> Chemonics International Inc. is the implementer of the FEWS NET Pillar 1 Early Warning Task Order. The Science team includes Interagency Agreements and Cooperative Agreements between USAID and the United States Geological Survey, University of California, Santa Barbara Climate Hazards Center, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Hub's Y2 work plan (October 15, 2020 to October 14, 2021<sup>3,4</sup>) and is one of three documents being submitted to USAID in support of the joint work planning process that will harmonize anticipated Y2 work across the Hub, EW, and Science teams.

## METHODOLOGY

The Hub developed this K&L-focused APR using an approach that was outlined during the Hub team's January 2020 strategic planning retreat. Critically, the steps of this approach included:

- A kick-off meeting and a scoping exercise with USAID;
- An inventory and review of current FEWS NET Project knowledge assets and practices;
- Stakeholder interviews focusing on all phases of generating, capturing, sharing and applying FEWS NET knowledge;
- An analysis of assets, practices and stakeholder input;
- A draft plan for USAID's review and use in work planning;
- A review of Y1 Hub implementation experience and lessons learned, as summarized in the Hub TO 1's Y1 *Annual Performance Report*; and
- An adjustment of work plan activities and tasks to implement approved activities.

Follow-up discussions to this process identified the K&L team's key role in developing core information platforms and collaboration practices during the EW team's startup throughout Y1. Later in Y1, the K&L team identified the EW team's Communications Advisor as a point-of-contact (POC) for cross-cutting communications issues. Regular meetings with the EW POC further informed the Hub's proposed Y2 activities and clarified existing Project communications processes that nuanced the future vision of the K&L workstream, as stated below.

## VISION FOR KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

In Y1, the Hub established the K&L workstream and developed initial learning platforms and practices, ultimately identifying the need to continue embedding the K&L team's approaches more fully across the FEWS NET Project in Y2 and beyond. During Y2, the Hub will leverage K&L platforms and practices to support greater collaboration between FEWS NET's multiple implementing partners. A comprehensive suite of K&L platforms and practices, used by all team members, facilitates greater capacity for FEWS NET to continue serving as a thought leader in the changing humanitarian field.

In the future life of the Project, the Hub envisions accomplishing the following *internal* FEWS NET goals:

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<sup>3</sup> The original Hub TO 1 Y1 work plan spanned from June 24, 2019 through June 23, 2020. To better synchronize work plans within the FEWS NET Project, USAID, in May 2020, extended the Hub's Y1 work planning period through October 14, 2020. As a result, Y2 spans October 15, 2020 to October 14, 2021, with subsequent work plans following that same cycle. This first *Annual Revision Plan* therefore identifies priorities and activities for the second, revised year of the project, namely from October 15, 2020 to October 14, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> If Option Year 1 (Y3) of the Hub TO 1 is not exercised by USAID, then this and the Hub's other Annual Plans for Revision are applicable only from October 15, 2020 to June 23, 2021.

- **The FEWS NET Exchange is a robust and actively used intranet.** The site will be available to all team members and provides access to documents, guidance, and templates;
- **The DMP contains clear system and data documentation.** Users will easily access and understand FEWS NET’s data and the data systems’ unique analytical capabilities;
- **FEWS NET’s knowledge products are accessible via an electronic document management system (EDMS).** The EDMS will capture, organize, and allow innovative application of FEWS NET knowledge products; and
- **FEWS NET routinely uses Adaptive Management approaches.** FEWS NET will adjust to any unexpected challenges and strengthen Project performance and technical quality.

In addition, the Hub expects to achieve the following *external* goals:

- **Strengthened professional networks will allow FEWS NET team members to share with and learn from external partners.** FEWS NET’s Communities of Practice (CoP) and Forums will expand the Project’s access to insights on food security from resources around the world, actively expanding FEWS NET’s presence in expert global food security communities; and
- **Modernized communications platforms and practices including email and social media platforms, enhance access to Project data and knowledge products.** Regular external communications, along with improved documentation associated with these materials, will further build FEWS NET’s relationships with external partners in the field.

In Y2, the Hub will work to capitalize on the “network” inherent to FEWS NET. The Project’s nearly four decades have created a unique asset—the social network of team members and partner institutions representing a range of perspectives and technical expertise related to food security and early warning analysis. A strong network enhances the connections between people working on related tasks, improving the quality of work produced and further growing the network.

While the diverse organizations supporting the network represent a collective strength, they also present complexities for collaboration. The Hub’s K&L team aims to provide the platforms that ease communication, while instituting practices that facilitate collaboration and learning. The K&L team envisions seamless workflows across the internal network that produce higher quality outputs, streamlined performance, and reduced duplicative efforts, as described below.

In Y2, the Hub’s *Outreach Strategy* will help integrate networks through K&L support to identify the Project’s primary audiences, key touch points, and opportunities for extending the reach of FEWS NET into other external fora.

## PROPOSED YEAR TWO ACTIVITIES

The Hub drafted the K&L workstream’s proposed Y2 work plan to make progress on the goals above. The sections below are organized using the following workplan structure:

- Manage, Maintain, and Improve K&L Applications;
- Manage, Maintain, and Improve K&L Practices; and



- Project Management and Strategic Planning.<sup>5</sup>

Note that several key findings and lessons learned from Y1 are integrated into the proposed Y2 activities. One significant lesson learned from Y1 applicable to the entirety of the K&L Y2 work plan is that there are vast opportunities for collaboration between the Hub and other implementing partners, including the EW and Science teams, all subject to the direction and prioritization of tasks by USAID.

## **MANAGE, MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE K&L APPLICATIONS (3.1)**

***Enhance GSuite use across the Project.*** In Y1, the Hub invested in Google Suite (GSuite) to manage the fews.net email domain. GSuite offers a range of collaboration tools in addition to email management including chat, file management, calendaring and shared document creation. In Y2, the Hub will consult with interested FEWS NET teams to clarify requirements for use of GSuite applications and pilot small scale efforts to assess the fit with the Project's collaboration needs. Following these consultations and pilots, and informed by the Hub's experience during Y1, the Hub will draft GSuite recommendations for USAID's review in consideration of the current Project structure and all future TOs. Issues of immediate interest are i) streamlined file sharing and ii) improved internal communication tools. Pending USAID's acceptance of these recommendations, the Hub will support cross-Project adoption and onboarding to the system through guides, helpdesk support, and online demonstrations.

***Facilitate and increase use of cross-Project chat.*** In Y1, Google Chat (GChat) facilitated effective group discussions among the Hub and EW team members, moving tasks like the COVID-19 webpage development and other data and website tasks forward. Chat platforms allow team members to discuss issues in real time, while also creating a record of the conversation for the Project team. FEWS NET implementing partners use a variety of communication tools, including GChat, Skype and Slack, and some have restrictions on what platforms are permissible. In Y2, the Hub will work with USAID to identify an acceptable set of chat platforms for use by federal and contract staff. The Hub will also collect and share examples from across the project of successful use of Chat to help build awareness of the value of streamlining e communications across the Project.

***Build out the FEWS NET Exchange.*** In Y1, the Hub used the GSuite Sites application to create the Project's intranet site, the FEWS NET Exchange. The Hub provided access to the Exchange to all Hub, Science, and USAID team members, as well as technical EW staff. The Exchange's structure allows the Hub to efficiently organize and share content across the fews.net domain. In Y2, the Hub will refine the site's navigation, populate the site with additional content, establish routine work flows, and promote internal communications on the value and functions of the site to advance knowledge sharing across the Project. The Hub will also establish a governance structure, including a standing Communications Working Group composed of representatives across all FEWS NET teams, that will enable individual teams to post content to the site and to monitor the current platform's capabilities to meet each

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<sup>5</sup> Note that number in parenthesis following the heading text refers to the corresponding number in the Hub's Y2 work plan.

team’s respective needs (see “Communications Working Group” below). Finally, the Hub will collaborate with other implementing partners (i.e., Science and EW teams) to identify their use of intranet applications and explore options to link across sites.

**Enhance documentation of data and data systems as well as training.** Historically, the primary users of the DMP—the FEWS NET Data Warehouse (FDW) and FEWS NET Data Explorer (FDE)—were Project team members who received internal training on the data systems from the EW team. Users were familiar with the data, methods, and structure of the system. As USAID moves to make FEWS NET data more widely accessible as a public good, FDE and FDW users will require higher quality documentation for the system, the types, attributes, and limitations of its data, and its analytical and visualization capabilities. Improved documentation will also support training materials to help ensure appropriate use of data supported by FEWS NET. In Y2, the K&L team will recruit an additional team member, a Data Documentation Specialist, to develop the following knowledge-related DMP outputs:

- Data and metadata documentation for the FDW’s data domains;
- Platform-level help systems;
- Online tutorials and users guides; and
- A comprehensive training package of materials for the FDW and FDE.

**Maintain a Dependencies Tracker.** In Y1, the Hub also developed a Dependencies Tracker to document areas of shared work that depend on USAID’s direction or require input from other implementing partners. The Hub developed a prototype in GSuite and then transferred tasks into Jira, which now generates a monthly email to USAID summarizing outstanding dependencies. Work in Y2 will focus on aligning the Hub’s Jira-based Dependencies Tracker with their respective tasks to better coordinate responses and improve the tracking of solutions.

**Develop a Knowledge Product Tracker.** In Y1, the Hub developed a Deliverables Tracker at USAID’s request to move beyond simply tracking key project outputs toward facilitating the reuse and scale up of those key technical outputs. In Y2, the Hub will further this effort by identifying and implementing a cross-Project software platform to identify and document the variety of knowledge products produced by the greater FEWS NET team as well as to ensure the results are captured and follow-up activities — such as appropriate communications and outreach — are defined and implemented.

**Develop an electronic document management system (EDMS).** At the start of Y1, the Hub developed an archive of documentation which included 219 files related to reporting, analytical methods, and training materials from the prior phase of the FEWS NET Project. Subsequently, the Hub began receiving quarterly installments of the EW team’s required deliverables via Google Drive, as required by their TO. To make this content and new documents from the knowledge product tracker accessible across the Project, the Hub plans to conduct a comprehensive inventory of the Project’s knowledge products in Y2. In collaboration with USAID, the EW team and Science team, the Hub will also develop an EDMS to catalogue final products and provide appropriate access to USAID and all Project team members.

## **MANAGE, MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE K&L PRACTICES (3.2)**

**Launch FEWS NET CoPs.** In Y1, to enhance the use of the FEWS NET Project’s data resources, the Hub piloted a Data Users CoP to support knowledge sharing among DMP users by hosting email-based discussions using Google Groups alongside the FEWS NET Exchange intranet page. The Hub’s early work from Y1 will continue into Y2 and will include the following steps:

- Design a Charter that defines the CoP;
- Create a CoP manual;
- Refresh the platform for online dialogue; and
- Formalize a membership list, subject to USAID approval;

In Y2, the Hub anticipates launching the CoP with targeted outreach to support access and engagement by current DMP users, including members from the EW and Science teams.

In addition, the Hub anticipates identifying project-wide interest in expanding the CoP concept to other subsets of FEWS NET data and information users, such as new CoPs around food security data collection, data management, data analysis and decision-support to strengthen national early warning systems and other national and regional partner institutions.

**Host FEWS NET Forums.** The FEWS NET Project has an opportunity to use its well-regarded position in the international food security community as a basis to host technical events designed to share best practices and explore new methodologies with others in the international food security analysis community. These events, termed “FEWS NET Forums” by the Hub, will not only strengthen best practices within the Project but will contribute to the larger food security community. Forums can also serve as catalysts for innovation as described under Pillar 4. In Y2, the Hub anticipates designing and delivering an initial set of FEWS NET Forum events planned with support from FEWS NET leadership. The Hub’s K&L team will host virtual events through Google Hangouts until in-person events, such as workshops and roundtable discussions, are viable. The Hub would collaborate with other FEWS NET team members to test new channels (e.g., FEWS NET-hosted webinars; podcasts; and TEDx-style speakers) to engage and promote interactions between FEWS NET experts and the wider food security community. Potential topics for FEWS NET Forums include remote monitoring, data sharing, and analytic requirements to integrate conflict and resilience forecasting into EW analyses.

### ***Establish a standing Communications Working Group to support efficient decision-making.***

Following discussions at multiple Y1 Collaboration Meetings, the Hub identified the need to create a forum for FEWS NET team members to discuss and resolve cross-cutting communications and technical platform issues. At the end of Y1, the Hub proposed a Project-wide Communications Working Group (CWG) to facilitate the co-creation of website, social media, and platform policies and content. The concept will be further discussed during Collaboration Meetings during the interim work plan period. The Hub envisions the CWG as being composed of representatives from each Project team, including USAID, the Science team, and all active TO holders. Meeting regularly, the CWG would

coordinate communications, expedite tasks, and provide guidance to appropriate decision-makers. In Y2, for example, the CWG would convene to address any issues related to branding, social media, possible website redesign, and the FEWS NET Exchange.

**Expand Adaptive Management for Project learning.** As defined in [Annex 1](#), Adaptive Management refers to an approach to decision-making that adjusts programmatic or operational activities on an as-needed basis in response to new information and changes in context. During Y1, the Hub applied Adaptive Management techniques to improve its delivery of services to USAID. Through Retrospectives within the Agile Sprint process and After Action Reviews (AAR), such as the one on the Project's COVID-19 webpage development process, FEWS NET has been able to capture lessons learned and, subsequently, adjust its approaches accordingly. These early learning efforts underscore the importance of building FEWS NET's own agility in responding to changes in the complex environment where USAID operates.

In Y2, the Hub will consult with FEWS NET teams to benchmark current practices and build out an initial set of tools and methods to help assess past activities and plan for change in line with USAID Automated Directive System guidance on Collaborate, Learn, Adapt (CLA) methods. The Hub also proposes to work through the agenda-setting process for monthly Collaboration Meetings to flag potential activities where Adaptive Management techniques can be applied. The Hub will use a Training-of-Trainers approach in an effort to build capacity across the Project for practices such as AARs and action planning to enable teams to better meet their own needs for Adaptive Management.

**Facilitate monthly Collaboration Meetings.** The Hub will continue managing the design, facilitation, reporting, and follow-up of monthly Collaboration Meetings that convene USAID, the Science team, and FEWS NET Project IDIQ holders with active TOs. While the process and schedule for these meetings established during Y1 will continue, the specific topics will adapt to the FEWS NET Project's need to coordinate information and data flows across the Project. In Y2, the Hub anticipates meetings will focus on active shared issues with ongoing work and include time for sharing recent accomplishments, discussing upcoming deliverables, and following-up on issues raised in past meetings.

**Design and deliver a FEWS NET Data and Knowledge Outreach Strategy.** In Y2, the Hub will work across the FEWS NET team to design the FEWS NET *Data and Knowledge Outreach Strategy* (a Hub TO 1 deliverable). The Strategy will identify and propose appropriate external engagement opportunities for the Project over the next four years, including outreach to other Offices and Missions within USAID; engagement with FEWS NET partners in international forums; and support for national and local early warning systems and related partners, among other possible channels of interaction. The *Outreach Strategy* is an important opportunity to integrate the Project's existing knowledge sharing channels and communications practices to share FEWS NET's technical depth with a wider variety of audiences.

To obtain an objective understanding of the Project's outreach needs, the Hub team plans to work with a resource partner to complete the strategy.

**Coordinate standardization of the FEWS NET Brand Identity.** In Y2, the Hub anticipates that the overall FEWS NET brand will be updated to ensure compliance with USAID branding guidelines.<sup>6</sup> The K&L team will coordinate the rollout of the new brand across implementing partners. The Brand Identity work includes modernizing the brand as part of the website redesign, updating the Project’s social media presence, enhancing the design of DMP visualizations for use on the FEWS NET website, and standardizing the style of print media, including reporting templates and presentations. The Hub will also provide guidance for maintaining the brand’s identity over time, and will advise team members on how to adapt it for new media and/or platforms. Beyond Y2, the K&L team plans to conduct periodic brand reviews to strengthen compliance and troubleshoot any problems that arise across the FEWS NET Project.

**Support social media platforms.** Historically, the Project used its official social media channels, including Twitter and Facebook, as tools to announce new reporting on the website. Messages were posted verbatim on each platform, with little engagement with existing audiences (e.g., retweets on Twitter or responses to comments on Facebook). In Y2, as the Project begins to engage wider audiences on a larger set of topics, the Hub will begin to craft messages that target audiences specific to each platform, a step that will be critical to the Project’s efforts to publicize its reporting.

In Y1, the Hub procured Hootsuite, a social media management application, to manage user accounts for each of the Project’s POC representatives. In Y2, the Hub will set targets for growth with respect to audience and content engagement (see the “Develop long-term Performance Monitoring Strategy” section below). During Y2, the Hub will refresh the FEWS NET Project’s Twitter and Facebook profiles to comply with USAID’s social media guidelines, in addition to creating a comprehensive *FEWS NET Social Media Guidance* policy. To inform this policy, the K&L team will conduct a landscape analysis that evaluates how current audiences typically engage with FEWS NET on each platform and identify any opportunities to better serve their needs. Results of this analysis may include:

- Suggestions for language and style per audience;
- Consistent approaches to engage users on each platform; and
- Mechanisms to improve coordination in scheduling posts across the Project.

**Manage email communication platforms.** Historically, the upload of a new report onto the *fews.net* website triggered an alert to users who subscribed to various FEWS NET national, regional and global mailing lists. In Y1, the Hub reimagined this approach after it took over the management of the Mailchimp and Mandrill email applications. In addition to the automated email alerts, the Hub onboarded one of the EW team’s regional offices onto Mailchimp, allowing that team to streamline and reduce significant manual effort to arrange regular email communications within its network.

During Y2, the Hub’s K&L team will continue its work to standardize the Project’s email communications system by onboarding additional regional teams’ email lists, developing guidance for Mailchimp and Mandrill use by other implementing partners across the Project, and creating FEWS

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<sup>6</sup> In June 2020, the Hub submitted a *Recommendation to Update the FEWS NET Brand Identity* surge funding application for consideration by USAID.

NET-branded templates. The Hub will also integrate Google Analytics with Mailchimp’s existing reporting functionality to measure engagement (see “Develop long-term Performance Monitoring Strategy” section below). Another Hub priority is to grow FEWS NET’s subscriber list by messaging its subscribers about other themes that are relevant to the international food security and early warning communities, a key component of the *Outreach Strategy* discussed above.

## **WORKSTREAM MANAGEMENT (3.3)**

***Provide Performance and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Indicators.*** In Y1, the Hub invested in the infrastructure required for the Hub TO 1’s M&E, including industry-standard tools such as Mailchimp for email campaigns, Hootsuite for social media platforms, and Google Analytics to monitor use of the FEWS NET website and Exchange. In Y2, as platforms mature and practices become routine, the K&L team will develop specific metrics to track performance of knowledge products and activities. Indicators might include:

- The number and reach of the Project’s social media posts and other digital engagement activities (e.g., link clicks in email campaigns, etc).
- The use and performance of Adaptive Management practices by documenting interventions and capturing directional changes in pivot logs.
- Performance of CoPs, including membership, engagement in particular topics and generation of solutions.
- Performance of FEWS NET Forums, including participant surveys on the utility of events.
- Accessibility of data and knowledge products, based on development of an aggregate metric for total FEWS NET data and knowledge shared as a benchmark and estimated total.

***Produce an Annual Plan for Revisions.*** As stated in the Background [section](#), the Hub created this document to ensure alignment between the Hub’s three workstreams. Similarly, near the end of Y2, the Hub will develop and submit the *Annual Plan for Revisions*, a document that describes anticipated Year Three K&L activities.

## **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR K&L SUPPORT**

Through Y1 stakeholder consultations, the Hub identified an opportunity to develop and implement a new approach to training field staff via a Learning Management System, described below. While not funded at present, nor part of the K&L draft Y2 work plan described above, the recommendation is provided for consideration and is intended to ground discussions with other implementing partners during the joint work planning process.

### **DEVELOP A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

A Learning Management System (LMS) is a platform that hosts online courses and enables “on demand” learning, in addition to tracking both learner performance and course completion.

## **PROBLEM. IN-PERSON TRAINING METHODS REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES**

Historically, the FEWS NET Project has relied on face-to-face, instructor-led training to provide staff with both a foundational and in-depth understanding of the DMP and the overall FEWS NET methodology. In-person and/or classroom-based training requires considerable repeated investments. When in-person sessions are not possible, training has been delayed or provided in a simplified fashion. As a result, new hires may be delayed in receiving sufficient training and need to rely on tenured staff to mentor them. With the emphasis for the new Project on broader knowledge sharing, there is also an opportunity to better support internal USAID users of FEWS NET reporting and analysis through access to training on FEWS NET tools and methods. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted plans for in-person training during the summer of 2020, highlighting vulnerabilities of this approach to training.

## **SOLUTION. AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT CAN FACILITATE ON-DEMAND TRAINING**

With additional resources, the Hub could adapt FEWS NET EW team's training into online, e-learning formats, with an LMS to track course completion and integrate curricula. Given the complex technical nature of FEWS NET analysis, the importance of effectively onboarding new staff, and the need for ongoing professional development by the EW team in particular to maintain analytical quality, it may be worthwhile for the Hub to explore the potential start-up costs of platforms that could be used to facilitate learning via an LMS in Y2. Should USAID be interested, the Hub's K&L team would consult with the Agency and the EW team to better understand the need for e-learning and an LMS, identifying high-priority areas for which training can be adapted to an online platform.

The output of these consultations can inform USAID's planning for additional investments to improve the reach and efficiency of knowledge capture across the FEWS NET Project. This would also support capacity building efforts for other international and national partners, including country-level early warning systems.

## **CROSS-TEAM COORDINATION**

In addition to the activities identified above, the Hub will work with FEWS NET team members during the joint planning process to identify additional opportunities for collaboration that advance FEWS NET's overall objectives. Synthesizing the description of the K&L workstream's high-level Y2 activities in this document, the Hub will submit a Y2 work plan with associated tasks, a timeline, and relevant dependencies. The scope and scale of specific tasks will be refined during the joint work planning process.



## ANNEX 1. DEFINING KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

In Y1, the Hub developed the following definitions for the Project:

TERM	DEFINITION	
<b>KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT</b> <sup>7</sup>	The clear documentation of and efficient access to FEWS NET knowledge assets for analysis, dissemination, or further development.	
<b>ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT</b>	An intentional approach to decision-making that prioritizes adjusting programmatic or operational activities on an as-needed basis in response to new information and changes in context.	
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	Any asset (e.g., strategy, process, method, tool, or product) that enhances FEWS NET’s ability to generate or use: i) Improved insights, data, and information on the food security vulnerabilities of populations of interest; ii) earlier and more accurate measurements of food security shocks and changes in conditions; iii) better assessments of the effects of shocks and changes on food security outcomes; iv) a closer fit between FEWS NET products and decision-maker needs; and v) any other associated areas of work.	
TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
<b>KNOWLEDGE ASSETS</b>	<b>EXPLICIT</b> The data, methods, research, reporting and analysis for which FEWS NET is well known	Integrated food security analysis reports
	<b>TACIT</b> The expertise, skills, experiences that FEWS NET contains but are not formally codified	Early Warning application of “convergence of evidence”
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<b>INTERNAL</b> Information, data and resource flows between and amongst FEWS NET staff and team members (i.e., KM)	USAID management and other bureaus, EW and Science teams
	<b>EXTERNAL</b> Sharing data, reporting, methods, results, and insights to organizational partners and experts in the humanitarian and food security fields (e.g., knowledge exchange)	Decision and policy makers, analysts, and researchers in food security, humanitarian and related fields
<b>PLATFORMS</b>	The IT systems that store explicit assets and enable virtual practices	GSuite, fews.net website, FEWS NET Exchange, FDE/W
<b>PRACTICES</b>	The collaborative processes that support the “doing” of FEWS NET work - generating, sharing and applying expertise to data analysis, research, and reporting	Collaboration Meetings, Adaptive management, FEWS NET Forums, social media and email announcements

<sup>7</sup> Note that KM is generally reserved for describing practices and platforms internal to the FEWS NET project, while K&L is used to denote external knowledge sharing activities.



Below are supporting contextual details for the definitions provided in the table above as they relate to the Hub's K&L workstream.

**Platforms and practices.** In Y1, the Hub created a distinction between platforms and practices to help structure how to plan and implement K&L activities in relation to accepted KM and USAID approaches.

Platforms organize, share and connect people and knowledge assets for scalable solutions to learning challenges. As Information Technology-based tools, they have their own requirements for management, maintenance and improvement, as well as user requirements to support access and use.

For food security and early warning practitioners, practices can take the form of data management, analytical methods, reporting techniques, decision support and learning to refresh expertise. For FEWS NET, K&L procedures are designed to help improve business processes and analytical techniques employed by the Project through ongoing adaptive management practices such as communities, FEWS NET Forum knowledge exchanges, and FEWS NET-wide Collaboration m\Meetings.

**Knowledge asset types.** How one manages and shares knowledge assets depends on their basic type—either explicit or tacit. Explicit assets are captured and codified as data or documents and relatively easy to organize and share using online platforms. Tacit assets are more experiential, often less-well documented, and require different approaches for sharing and re-use. Frequently, tacit knowledge needs to first be identified through a discovery process before being shared more broadly for re-use.

As knowledge and knowledge management are defined for FEWS NET, both explicit and tacit assets are central to achieving the Project's goal to sustainably alleviate food insecurity.

**Audience types.** The FEWS NET Project as a whole is tasked with internally sharing data, information and knowledge across the Project as part of normal operations and in an accessible, appropriate format for external stakeholders. Understanding the needs of these two broad audiences helps shape the nature of the Hub's K&L support to each. As the Project continues to develop a systematized K&L approach, knowledge assets and target audiences will be adapted to meet new needs from either audience.