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Implementing Process Oriented Knowledge Management: Lessons learned from an application in the OPCW

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The views expressed on this poster are those of the author and do not necessary reflect the view of the OPCW

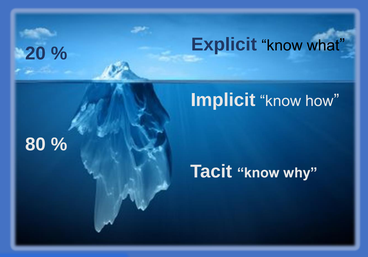
Knowledge Management

What is **Knowledge Management** (KM)?

The literature presents hundreds of definitions for knowledge management; so any definition needs to be adapted to the actual process or organization where the knowledge management initiative is going to be implemented.

KM is about making **the right knowledge available to the right people at the right time** and over all to ensure that the organization can learn and will be able to retrieve and use its knowledge when needed.

"KM is about creating value from your knowledge to improve performance at the individual, team and organization level to drive mission success"



Why manage knowledge?

- Staff and teams are continually '**reinventing the wheel**'. Work is redone; staff are not aware of project and activities from the past.
- **Mistakes are duplicated** because earlier ones where not analyzed, corrected, and/or documented.
- **Good ideas** or good practices are **not shared** and **not re-used.**
- **Small number of staff hold large portion of crucial knowledge.**
- **Speed of response is low** because knowledge resources are not easily available, staff frustration increases.
- **The organization does not learn.**

Knowledge Management in the OPCW

Why KM in OPCW?

- **OPCW is a global repository of chemical weapon knowledge and expertise** (disarmament, verification of non-possession and non-use, and destruction).
- Specific **areas of chemical weapons expertise are getting rare**, while retention is needed. OPCW is the likely custodian for this knowledge.
- As Member States are finalising the destruction of their chemical weapons**, opportunities to learn on the job are reducing;**
- **The emerging threats of non-state actors** increases the need to review knowledge profiles of staff;
- **High job mobility and the application of the tenure policy** makes knowledge retention a challenge.

OPCW Mandate for KM

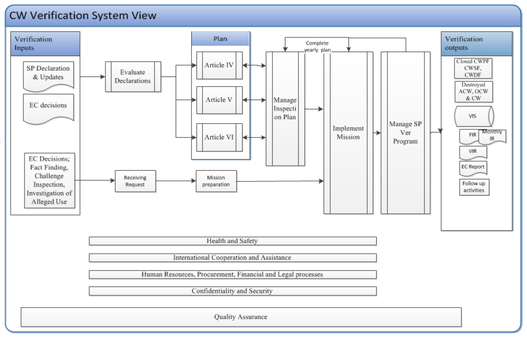
- States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) expressed their "Commitment that the **OPCW remain the global repository of knowledge and expertise on the implementation of the Convention**" and provided the Technical Secretariat with a mandate to "present proposals for ensuring continuity in its knowledge base and expertise" (paragraph 9.14 of RC-3/3*, dated 19 April 2013)

- Stressed that the OPCW should remain the **global repository of knowledge and expertise with regard to Chemical Weapons (CW) disarmament, the verification of their non-possession and non-use, and their destruction, and requested the Secretariat to continue ensuring continuity in its knowledge base and expertise in these areas**(subparagraph 9.155(h)).

Process Oriented Knowledge Management

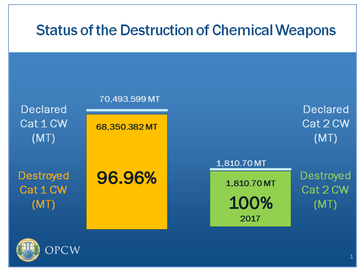
Review organizational management business processes

- Developing process-oriented knowledge management requires that each knowledge intervention is implemented around an organizational process. The organizational processes are reviewed to ensure the mission, rationale and objectives of the process define the scope of the knowledge project



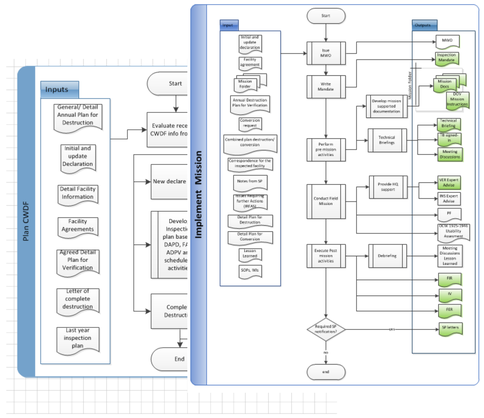
Identify organizational critical knowledge areas

- The destruction of declared stockpiled CW is entering in the final phase; almost 97% of chemical weapons have been destroyed, and all of the declared CW Production Facilities (CWPF) have been either destroyed or converted. Once the destruction of the declared CW is completed, the Organization will not have the capability to monitor destruction and therefore maintain this specific knowledge.
- Knowledge on verification of CW destruction is critical; e.g. offering assistance to new States joining the CWC



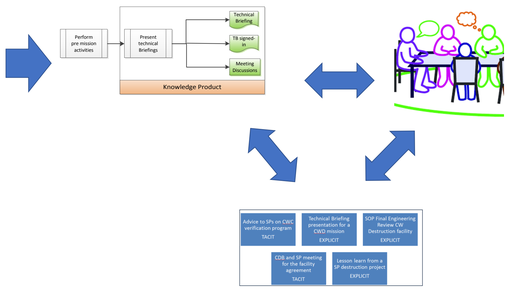
Map CDB processes; prioritize the knowledge management intervention

- Chemical Demilitarization Branch (CDB) with the facilitation of the KM function have mapped their verification processes
- Processes are selected; e.g. "**Plan CWDF**", "**Implementing a mission**" to study their stakeholders' relationships and the transfer of knowledge required in their verification activities



Identify knowledge intensive tasks; analyse knowledge products, recommend actions

- Complex tasks or tasks with large number of interdependencies are identified within the processes
- Each task requires specific "Knowledge Products" to be performed effectively and efficienciently
- Stakeholders rate the knowledge products, and through the analysis identify the opportunities for improvement of the knowledge products, such as; codify content, maintain it, make stakeholders aware the products exist, specify where, train.



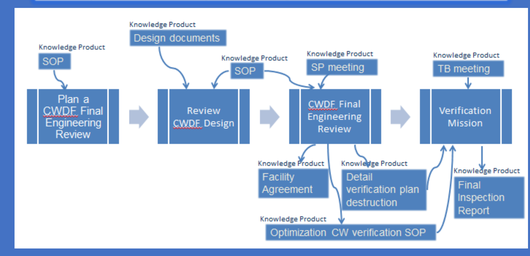
Example of critical Knowledge Product

Technical Briefing

QDOC/VER/WI/CDB2

Knowledge Product	Description	How to access the product?	For which product is used
Briefing Presentation	Electronic version of the presentation if one was used during the briefing	No rules for storage. Some stored at the CDB common drives.	To perform the actual mission To build on SP VER programme
Briefing discussion	Information verbally communicated during the briefing or de-briefing	Information accessible to staff in the meeting. No minutes	To perform the actual mission

Example of necessary Knowledge Products per action



Opportunities and Achievements

Opportunities for improvement in knowledge products are identified where knowledge products are not easily available to perform specific actions effectively and efficiently. The reasons could vary from non-developed to low quality knowledge, or knowledge products which are difficult to retrieve or unknown to the user.

Examples of opportunities, interventions and achievements

- CWDF Final Engineering Review has been identified as a critical knowledge task which requires the guidance of a formal SOP to ensure all steps are followed on the base of good practices and lessons learned. It is recommended to formally include this SOP as part of the quality management system.

- SOPs on the optimization for CW verification have not been implemented for several years and were unknown to new substantive officers. A project to review the optimization of the verification measures in the CW destruction operations is in progress.

- In some cases, discrepancies were found between what the substantive officers know tacitly about the agreed verification plan between a possessor State Party and the Secretariat and the explicitly documented information on the decision making process. A project to codify this information is in progress.

- The technical briefing process is under review to ensure its accuracy and accessibility, and that there is a constant feedback process to incorporate lesson learned for future verification missions

Observation & Lessons Learned

- Process Oriented KM helps to **identify critical knowledge** and propose initiatives to preserve the knowledge in a contextualized manner.
- Stakeholder involvement on the knowledge products definition and evaluation, and the identification of knowledge improvement opportunities, introduces an **exercise of reflection and empowerment** which increase the possibility of success in the follow up recommendations.
- The **knowledge can be offered in a targeted** way, avoiding overload of knowledge. This is an ultimate goal of knowledge management to ensure the right knowledge is available to the right people at the right time.
- The acquired knowledge includes knowledge about the process, knowledge derived from the implementation of the process and knowledge from reflection on the process.
- The **impact of the knowledge intervention can be measured** based on the defined Key Performance Indicators of the business process.
- This methodology can be expanded to any organizational process or to any Organization process oriented.