# COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
## AUDIT REPORT

**2024**

## 1.1 Background

The Council of Governors (CoG) is a statutory body established under Section 19 of the Intergovernmental Relations Act (IGRA 2012). In executing its mandate, CoG generates a lot of knowledge which it manages and shares with internal and external stakeholders as appropriate. It also acquires knowledge from its many stakeholders.

To improve its ability to generate, use and share the best available devolution knowledge, the CoG, in line with its institutional development pillar under its Strategic Plan 2022-2027, seeks to strengthen knowledge management, learning, innovation, and research at the Council. The CoG is therefore in the process of developing a Knowledge Management (KM) Strategy to streamline the creation, use and sharing of information and knowledge among internal actors as well as with CoG's stakeholders, and to enhance collaboration and communication among employees and with stakeholders, facilitate informed decision-making, reduce duplications, and foster innovation and learning across the organization.

As a first step, a knowledge audit was conducted between January and February 2024 to assess the current state of KM in CoG (what knowledge exists, its location, how it is used) and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement as expressed by key stakeholders.

Specifically, the KM audit sought to understand the core information and knowledge CoG staff needed for work; the knowledge available and used, and how easy or difficult it is to find that knowledge, missing knowledge (gaps), and the factors that support or hinder the flow of knowledge. This is thus a report of its results and findings, which will inform the development of the strategy.

## 1.2 Methodology

The methodology employed for the knowledge audit of CoG involved the use of interviews and surveys administered through Kobo Collect, a digital data collection platform. The detailed survey instrument was designed and customized to gather insights from a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders, resulting in 63 respondents, including 5 respondents from CoG Management, 13 Heads of Departments (HoDs) and Committee Technical Leads, 17 CoG Staff, 24 County Knowledge Management Champions, and 4 CoG development partners.  A unique survey link was shared with respondents and ample time to respond, alongside regular reminders given. Respondents' concerns during the exercise were duly addressed. To gain deeper insight into the vision and challenges of institutionalizing KM in CoG and solutions thereof, the Head of the Planning, Knowledge & M&E Department under whose docket the KM function resides, was interviewed.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data provided useful insights into the current status of KM within the CoG, and the identification of key areas for improvement besides the development of informed recommendations for a well-defined knowledge management strategy.

## 1.3 Results and Findings

### A. Knowledge needs and priorities of CoG & its stakeholders

To identify the knowledge needs of CoG and their stakeholders, the audit identified what knowledge was available to them, and what knowledge they might require in the future to better achieve organizational goals.

*CoG staff knowledge needs*

To support strategic planning, policy development and decision-making processes at the County level, CoG staff need up-to-date knowledge on all Acts relating to devolution, real-time County data, County policy and planning documents, sector plans, technical reports and statistical data on devolved functions, County innovations and best practices that address common and/or cross-cutting issues, as well as best practices and case studies from international jurisdictions with devolved government systems. They also need the latest devolution-related news highlights and breaking news, daily updates on CoG activities and international events where County participation is key, the latest information related to the CoG mandate and functions, leadership, Governors' details, and committee projects and initiatives across sectors and their respective technical leads, and CoG best practices in improving work processes.

Reference materials such as significant speeches, press statements, communiqués, stories about CoG activities, and other archival content that can provide historical context and inform decision-making are considered useful.

*County knowledge needs*

The knowledge needs of Counties revolve around customer service improvement initiatives and policy development to enhance governance effectiveness and responsiveness to citizen needs. Other needs include devolution knowledge co-creation and sharing, and capacity enhancement. As such, CoG devolution knowledge products and events that are most useful to Counties include success stories published on the Maarifa platform and in the compendiums, CoG meetings/linkages with County officers and devolution conferences. Going forward County priorities requiring CoG support include capacity building for Counties in establishing knowledge management (KM) structures and initiatives, resource mobilization, and benchmarking; participation of Counties in CoG events such as devolution conferences, exhibitions, and peer-to-peer learning forums; documentation and sharing of success stories, best practices, and model initiatives; collaboration and linkages with varied stakeholders.

Counties have had their devolution success stories in initiatives from healthcare to agriculture, education, infrastructure and other areas published on the CoG Maarifa website which other Counties learn from, though there is currently no established mechanism of tracking the reuse of such knowledge.

*Knowledge needs of CoG partners*

The audit established that the key devolution knowledge interests of CoG's development partners include local government/County peer review knowledge; science, technology and innovation (STI) mainstreaming with County Governments; knowledge management

and learning, service delivery, and bridging the knowledge gap between knowledge providers (think tanks) and knowledge users (policy makers).

To satisfy these needs, the partners find that the most useful CoG knowledge products and events include the Compendiums of County best practices, success stories on the CoG Maarifa website, the Devolution Conference as well as meetings/linkages with County officers and with National Government officers.

The main areas of partnership with CoG are in knowledge co-creation and sharing, and resource mobilization and funding knowledge initiatives. Others are in project implementation, joint research, capacity enhancement, and leveraging CoG's County mobilization power. Additionally, the partners would like to engage with CoG in webinars sharing County best practices; collaboration on research, science, technology and innovation, County peer-to-peer learning activities /exchange visits, joint papers, and support for resource and technical capacity.

### B. CoG knowledge assets and where they are stored (location)

The knowledge audit established that CoG's existing knowledge assets include technical reports, speeches, press statements, CoG news updates, policy documents, research data, expert databases, MoUs/contracts, external documents, and departmental and citizen participation minutes, most of which are stored in shared databases in departments, while some are stored in the Maarifa Centre. A few are also in the Records, Legal and HR departments while some are secured in cloud and offline backup. County success stories are largely stored in Maarifa Centre while a few can be found in the shared databases in departments.

According to the audit, CoG knowledge assets are easily accessible, possibly because there are storage duplications where staff prefer to keep copies for easy access. There is a need to assess the stored content to reveal and eliminate duplications, errors and obsolete knowledge.

CoG staff create and refer to the CoG knowledge base (technical reports, policy documents, research data, external documents MoUs/contracts, departmental and citizen participation minutes, records and success stories) in accomplishing their work activities. External sources of information specifically mentioned include LinkedIn, other institutions' websites of interest such as KenyaLaw.org, national ministries and agencies, development partners, mainstream media, and the internet in general.

### C. Existing Knowledge Gaps in CoG

1. Lack of FAQs, how-to guides, and troubleshooting instructions, to assist with understanding and navigating the Maarifa platform.
2. Some information is inadequate or outdated, meaning the CoG and Maarifa platforms are not regularly updated and obsolete information weeded out. The reasons include:
   a. Lack of real-time County data.

b. Lack of updated information on committee works and activities, as well as details about technical leads involved in various projects and initiatives.

c. Limited documented case studies and best practices on successful initiatives undertaken by CoG.

d. Limited devolution research data.

e. No impact assessment reports of success stories on the Maarifa website.

f. Lack of simple KM skills modules on CoG and Maarifa websites for self-paced skill enhancement and constant reference.

### D. How CoG information and knowledge is shared within and without

The audit established how CoG staff primarily access information and how they share information with one another and with other stakeholders.

Emails are the most popular knowledge-sharing means with internal and external CoG stakeholders. Other preferred options are the Maarifa website, CoG WhatsApp Groups, SharePoint, and to some extent, the CoG website. Suggestions were made on the introduction of more knowledge-sharing means such as Confluence, LinkedIn, and Google Workspace as these platforms offer opportunities for real-time knowledge sharing, professional networking and collaboration. They also requested for the activation of the CoG YouTube, blogs and podcasts to be used for knowledge dissemination in appealing form.

### E. Major obstacles to effective knowledge sharing and collaboration in CoG

The obstacles are grouped in terms of people, processes, content, culture, and technology

*People*

1. For CoG staff, the major obstacles include low awareness of the importance/need to share due to limited/lack of KM capacity-building for staff.

2. Limited collaboration on work and non-work projects to facilitate the tapping of knowledge and experiences of departmental/Committee members in core business processes.

*Processes*

3. For CoG staff, the major obstacles to do with processes include limited resource allocation (funds & staff time) to KM activities, Committees/departments not prioritizing KM & not having staff assigned KM roles, limited, lack of tangible incentives for knowledge sharing, lack of policy guidance on knowledge generation, storage and sharing, few opportunities for knowledge exchange programs, brainstorming sessions, and informal setups for faceto-face interaction, collaboration,and idea generation, among others.

4. Counties are willing to sponsor their staff to CoG KM events, but face financial constraints, and require additional financial support to facilitate participation in such initiatives.

### *Content*

5.  For staff, the major obstacles here include the lack of diverse and appealing content formats, e.g. blogs, podcasts, and mainstream media documentaries for engaging content to facilitate learning and information dissemination, and lack of up-to-date information and knowledge.

6.  Lack of County Maarifa portals for wider sharing of devolution success stories.

### *Culture*

7.  For CoG staff, the major cultural obstacles include Committees/departments not prioritizing KM, low awareness of the importance/need to share, and inadequate teamwork and a knowledge-sharing culture (silo mentality).

8.  For Counties, there is insufficient understanding of the importance of KM to Counties and inadequate support for KM activities among the leaders.
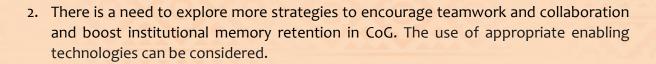
### *Technology*

9.  For CoG staff, the major technological obstacles to knowledge sharing and collaboration include limited digital collaboration tools for real-time exchange of knowledge and easy access to devolution news, updates, and knowledge-sharing resources.

10. Counties have no budget for KM activities, including the sourcing of appropriate IT infrastructure to support knowledge documentation and sharing.

11. County KM champions recognized the importance of KM as a powerful tool for institutional memory and development, but not County leaders who are yet to be convinced.

## F. Conclusions

The knowledge audit revealed that CoG is an important source of devolution knowledge within Kenya and beyond. The knowledge needs of CoG and its stakeholders are largely similar, in that, they all want access to devolution-related knowledge to inform planning and decision-making processes and enhance capacity and service delivery to citizens. There is a need to intensify resource mobilization efforts to enable the allocation of more resources for KM capacity-building forums and trainings, acquiring appropriate infrastructure and knowledge resources, and implementation of KM activities. Below is a summary of the findings.

### *People*

1.  Continuous sensitization on the importance of knowledge sharing is needed, as well as regular structured trainings on documenting best practices and lessons learnt as part of program implementation. Give staff equal opportunities for training.

2. There is a need to explore more strategies to encourage teamwork and collaboration and boost institutional memory retention in CoG. The use of appropriate enabling technologies can be considered.

### Processes

1. There is a need to incentivize knowledge creation and sharing as well as collaboration in work and non-work projects to institutionalize KM in CoG and Counties — provide platforms for knowledge exchange programs, brainstorming sessions, and informal setups for face-to-face interaction, collaboration, and idea generation, among others.

2. CoG needs to more systematically embed KM in the core business processes of its departments and committees, so that it can better access, use and re-use both the tacit and documented knowledge it has at its disposal, especially the knowledge and know-how of its staff, consultants and partners. Harnessing practice-based knowledge is crucial. Technical staff should use Communities of Practice (CoPs) and learning networks and documentation of key lessons learnt as a standard working modality to support learning, knowledge creation and sharing, as a way of harnessing tacit knowledge.

3. There is a need for the development of policies for information handling, records management, web publishing and any other policies related to KM that act as enablers or barriers to good knowledge practice.

4. Counties should set up KM units for KM institutionalization to enable them to tell their success stories in devolution implementation.

### Content

1. Revive Open County data portal to enhance the availability of real-time County data.

2. A more comprehensive approach to managing CoG's knowledge base is necessary to ensure that existing knowledge is easy to locate and is maintained and updated regularly to remain valuable.

3. There is a need to expand the devolution content offered by CoG to include more visually appealing and engaging content such as blogs, podcasts, and mainstream media documentaries to facilitate learning and information dissemination.

4. Counties need CoG support to sensitize County leaders to embrace and institutionalize KM practices to leverage best practices and improve service delivery.

5. Valuable knowledge is generated and used by CoG committees and departments and in Counties, that does not necessarily find its way onto the Maarifa platform. This implies the need for greater attention to KM by the departments and committees to support existing efforts by the Maarifa Centre.

6. Counties need CoG support to establish County Maarifa portals for wider and comprehensive sharing of devolution success stories for peer learning and adaptation and to contribute to the body of devolution research. Through an inclusive selection process, CoG can then feature the cream of the success stories on the Maarifa Centre e-platform and the devolution conference.

### Culture

1. CoG to increase awareness creation about KM and its benefits to Counties, such as intercounty learning and adaptation, to help entrench a culture of knowledge sharing in Counties and ensure that KM becomes an inherent part of County governance. There is a need for more compelling incentives for learning and sharing.

2. There is still a need to build County capacity in order to generate devolution success stories and lessons learnt and set up KM departments/units.

3. CoG to propose a training calendar to top County officials to help them understand the significance of KM in improving service delivery, and take the opportunity to advocate for the establishment of KM units in Counties, and allocating sufficient human and fiscal resources to enable them to effectively carry out their functions.

### Technology

1. CoG to subscribe to more digital collaboration tools to enable staff and stakeholders to engage in real-time exchange of knowledge and easy access to devolution news, updates, and knowledge-sharing resources.

2. Counties to plan and budget for KM IT infrastructure which is an enabler for modern knowledge documentation and sharing.

### References

Data Analysis and Interpretation Report of the CoG January-February 2024 Knowledge Audit Survey.