

**Proposed Criteria for Evaluating Knowledge Transfer in Consultancy Projects at the Holy Makkah Municipality: An Analytical Study****Yaser A. Attar**[yaserattar@gmail.com](mailto:yaserattar@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**

This study aimed to develop a publishable analytical framework for evaluating knowledge transfer in consultancy projects at the Holy Makkah Municipality. The study addresses the growing need for structured criteria that enable organizations to assess the quality and effectiveness of knowledge transfer plans submitted within consultancy project proposals. Using an analytical research approach, the study reviewed relevant literature on knowledge management, knowledge transfer, consultancy projects, and institutional learning. The analysis revealed that merely including a knowledge transfer clause in project contracts does not guarantee effective organizational learning unless supported by clear, measurable, and sustainable evaluation criteria.

The study proposes a multidimensional framework consisting of four major dimensions: structural and organizational criteria, knowledge and content criteria, behavioral and cultural criteria, and measurement and continuous improvement criteria. These dimensions collectively address issues related to governance, documentation, organizational readiness, transfer channels, leadership support, knowledge-sharing culture, sustainability, and performance measurement.

The findings indicate that successful knowledge transfer in consultancy projects requires integration between organizational structure, knowledge design, employee engagement, and continuous evaluation mechanisms. The study contributes theoretically by transforming knowledge transfer from a contractual requirement into an analyzable institutional process. Practically, the framework may support technical proposal evaluation committees in distinguishing between superficial knowledge transfer plans and strategically integrated plans capable of generating sustainable institutional knowledge.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Transfer; Consultancy Projects; Knowledge Management; Evaluation Criteria; Municipal Governance; Organizational Learning

**Introduction**

Organizations increasingly rely on consultancy projects to obtain specialized expertise, improve institutional performance, and support strategic transformation initiatives. However, the value of consultancy projects is no longer measured solely by technical deliverables or final reports, but rather by the extent to which knowledge generated during the project is successfully transferred and institutionalized within the beneficiary organization. Effective knowledge transfer enables organizations to sustain learning, improve operational capabilities, and reduce dependency on external consultants (Arundel & Wunsch-Vincent, 2021).

Knowledge transfer represents one of the most critical dimensions of knowledge management, particularly in project-based environments where expertise is often temporary and highly specialized. Consultancy projects involve intensive interaction between consultants and organizational employees, creating opportunities for transferring methodologies, technical expertise, operational practices, and decision-making approaches. Nevertheless, many organizations experience knowledge loss after project completion because transferred knowledge remains undocumented, poorly communicated, or dependent on individuals rather than institutional systems (Zhou et al., 2020). In municipal and governmental environments, consultancy projects play a vital role in urban planning, infrastructure development, governance enhancement, and service improvement. Within the context of the Holy Makkah Municipality, consultancy projects operate in a highly sensitive urban and service environment characterized by continuous developmental demands and large-scale operational complexity. Consequently, ensuring sustainable knowledge transfer becomes essential for preserving institutional memory and strengthening organizational capabilities.

Although consultancy contracts frequently include clauses related to knowledge transfer, these clauses are often general and lack measurable standards for evaluation. As a result, technical proposal evaluation committees may struggle to distinguish between superficial transfer plans and comprehensive strategies capable of producing sustainable institutional learning. Existing literature extensively discusses the importance of knowledge transfer, knowledge-sharing culture, and organizational learning; however, limited attention has been given to developing operational criteria for evaluating consultancy knowledge transfer plans, particularly in municipal settings.

Therefore, this study aims to propose analytical criteria for evaluating knowledge transfer in consultancy projects at the Holy Makkah Municipality. The proposed framework seeks to provide practical guidance for evaluating the comprehensiveness, feasibility, sustainability, and institutional impact of knowledge transfer activities within consultancy projects.

**Research Problem.** Despite the inclusion of knowledge transfer clauses in consultancy project contracts, there remains a lack of clear evaluation standards that can determine whether consultancy firms provide effective and sustainable knowledge transfer mechanisms. In many cases, evaluation processes rely on general impressions rather than systematic assessment criteria. Consequently, organizations may receive technical deliverables without acquiring the associated institutional knowledge necessary for long-term sustainability.

The research problem can therefore be summarized in the following question:

**What are the proposed criteria for evaluating knowledge transfer in consultancy projects at the Holy Makkah Municipality?**

**Research Objectives**

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Analyze the conceptual foundations of knowledge transfer in consultancy projects.
2. Review previous studies related to knowledge management and knowledge transfer in governmental and project-based environments.
3. Identify the most appropriate criteria for evaluating knowledge transfer plans within consultancy proposals.
4. Classify the proposed criteria into analytical dimensions suitable for institutional evaluation.

**Methodology**

The study adopted an analytical research methodology based on reviewing and synthesizing relevant literature related to knowledge management, knowledge transfer, consultancy projects, and institutional learning. The analytical approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to derive conceptual and operational criteria rather than measure empirical relationships statistically.

The methodology involved three sequential analytical stages. First, recurring concepts and indicators related to successful knowledge transfer were extracted from international standards and academic literature. Second, these indicators were categorized into coherent analytical dimensions reflecting the organizational, behavioral, technical, and evaluative aspects of knowledge transfer. Third, the study linked each criterion to practical indicators that could support technical proposal evaluation committees in assessing consultancy knowledge transfer plans.

The study acknowledges that knowledge transfer standards are context-dependent and influenced by organizational culture, project type, communication channels, and institutional maturity. Therefore, the proposed framework is not presented as a universal model but as a context-sensitive analytical foundation adaptable to municipal consultancy environments.

**Literature Review**

Knowledge transfer refers to the process through which knowledge, expertise, methodologies, and practices move from one entity to another in a way that enables understanding, adaptation, and reuse. In consultancy projects, knowledge transfer extends beyond training sessions or document delivery to include organizational learning, tacit knowledge exchange, and capability development (El Dine & Taher, 2020).

Arundel and Wunsch-Vincent (2021) emphasized that effective knowledge transfer requires alignment between transfer channels and the nature of knowledge itself. Explicit knowledge may be transferred through documentation and technical manuals, while tacit knowledge requires interaction, collaboration, mentoring, and practical engagement.

Governmental institutions increasingly recognize knowledge management as a strategic resource for improving decision-making and institutional performance. Govender and Mothamaha (2014) found that knowledge management contributes significantly to improving service operations in municipalities by preserving institutional expertise and supporting continuous improvement.

Similarly, Ncoyini and Cilliers (2020) demonstrated that organizational barriers, bureaucracy, and weak technological infrastructure may reduce the effectiveness of knowledge transfer systems in local government institutions.

Campbell et al. (2020, 2022) argued that evaluating knowledge transfer requires multidimensional indicators rather than reliance on a single metric. Effective evaluation frameworks should measure inputs, activities, outputs, and institutional impact simultaneously.

ISO 30401:2018 further highlights the importance of governance, communication, documentation, awareness, and continuous improvement mechanisms as essential components of effective knowledge management systems.

Despite these contributions, previous studies rarely provide operational criteria specifically designed for evaluating consultancy project knowledge transfer plans. This gap highlights the significance of the current study.

**Knowledge Transfer Standards**

Knowledge transfer standards represent a critical foundation for ensuring that organizational knowledge generated through consultancy projects becomes sustainable institutional capability rather than temporary expertise associated with external consultants. Contemporary organizations increasingly recognize that consultancy projects should not merely deliver technical outputs or operational recommendations, but should also contribute to building long-term institutional learning and internal competencies. Consequently, knowledge transfer standards have emerged as analytical and operational mechanisms used to assess the quality, effectiveness, sustainability, and institutional value of knowledge transfer activities within organizations.

**Table 1. Main Dimensions of Knowledge Transfer Standards**

Dimension	Primary Focus	Key Organizational Objective
Structural and Organizational	Governance, documentation, roles, platforms	Institutional integration of knowledge transfer
Knowledge and Content	Knowledge quality, classification, transferability	Sustainable reuse and accessibility
Behavioral and Cultural	Trust, leadership, collaboration, incentives	Encouraging organizational learning
Measurement and Improvement	Evaluation, benchmarking, sustainability	Continuous improvement and institutional impact

Despite the growing importance of knowledge transfer, the literature does not provide a universally standardized framework applicable to all organizational contexts. Instead, knowledge transfer standards vary according to the nature of the institution, the type of knowledge involved, the transfer channels used, and the relationship between knowledge providers and recipients. Arundel and Wunsch-Vincent (2021) emphasized that knowledge transfer occurs through both formal channels, such as documentation, licensing, and structured training, and informal channels, including mentoring, collaboration, consultation, and professional interaction. Therefore, evaluating knowledge transfer effectiveness requires standards capable of addressing the diversity of communication mechanisms and their alignment with organizational and operational contexts.

The international standard ISO 30401:2018 does not provide explicit operational criteria for knowledge transfer; however, it establishes institutional requirements that indirectly function as knowledge transfer standards. These requirements include governance structures, communication processes, documentation quality, competency development, awareness creation, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement mechanisms. The ISO framework views knowledge management as an integrated organizational system rather than isolated knowledge-sharing activities. Consequently, effective knowledge transfer depends on the existence of supportive organizational infrastructure capable of facilitating knowledge creation, accessibility, preservation, dissemination, and reuse across institutional units.

Similarly, Campbell et al. (2020, 2022) argued that knowledge transfer should not be evaluated using a single performance indicator because knowledge transfer outcomes are multidimensional and involve organizational, behavioral, technical, and institutional aspects. They proposed that effective evaluation frameworks should integrate multiple indicators covering inputs, activities, outputs, and institutional impact. Such multidimensional evaluation allows organizations to measure not only whether knowledge transfer activities occurred, but also whether transferred knowledge was effectively adopted, reused, and integrated into organizational operations.

Within consultancy projects, Government Consulting Hub (2022) emphasized that knowledge transfer standards should be embedded within procurement processes, project governance mechanisms, technical proposals, and contractual obligations. According to this perspective, consultancy firms should clearly identify the knowledge to be transferred, the mechanisms and channels of transfer, the responsibilities of involved stakeholders, and the expected institutional outcomes after project completion. These requirements transform knowledge transfer from a symbolic contractual clause into a measurable organizational process subject to monitoring and evaluation.



**Figure 1. Integrated Framework of Knowledge Transfer Standards**

The analytical review conducted in this study classified knowledge transfer standards into four integrated dimensions: structural and organizational standards, knowledge and content standards, behavioral and cultural standards, and measurement and continuous improvement standards. These dimensions collectively provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating consultancy project knowledge transfer activities. The structural and organizational dimension focuses on governance, institutional alignment, documentation systems, communication structures, and operational integration throughout the project life cycle. Effective structural standards require the existence of documented knowledge transfer plans, clearly defined responsibilities, institutional repositories, and governance procedures capable of sustaining organizational learning beyond project completion.

The knowledge and content dimension addresses the quality, structure, accessibility, and applicability of transferred knowledge. Not all forms of knowledge can be transferred using identical mechanisms because explicit knowledge differs substantially from tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge may be codified into manuals, templates, and procedures, whereas tacit knowledge often requires interactive communication, observation, mentoring, and practical engagement. Consequently,

effective knowledge transfer standards require organizations to align transfer channels with the nature of the knowledge itself while ensuring that transferred content remains reusable, searchable, and institutionally relevant. Classification systems, semantic structures, and standardized documentation practices become essential components within this dimension.

**Table 2. Knowledge and Content Standards for Knowledge Transfer**

Criterion	Scientific Support Strength	Measurement Category	Measurable Indicators	Key References
Alignment of transfer channels with tacit and explicit knowledge	Single source	Activities	Ratio of mentoring and shadowing sessions compared with manuals and templates; adoption rates for each transfer channel; beneficiary satisfaction with transfer methods	Arundel & Wunsch-Vincent (2021)
Quality of classification and semantic structure	Single source	Outputs	Percentage of content described using tags and classification identifiers; classification depth; retrieval time efficiency	ISO (2018)
Comprehensive and reusable transferable content	Single source	Outputs	Number of reusable knowledge packages per project; percentage of standardized templates accompanying deliverables; frequency of reuse in subsequent projects	Government Consulting Hub (2022)

The behavioral and cultural dimension recognizes that knowledge transfer is fundamentally influenced by organizational culture, leadership behavior, trust, collaboration, and employee engagement. Even highly sophisticated technical systems may fail if employees are unwilling to share expertise or if organizational environments discourage experimentation and communication. Successful knowledge transfer standards therefore require supportive leadership, collaborative practices, institutional incentives, and psychologically safe environments that encourage employees to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and document lessons learned. Organizational culture transforms knowledge transfer from a formal requirement into a continuous institutional practice embedded within daily operations.

**Table 3. Behavioral and Cultural Standards for Knowledge Transfer**

Criterion	Scientific Support Strength	Measurement Category	Measurable Indicators	Key References
Supportive knowledge-sharing culture and continuous learning	Multiple sources	Activities	Results of organizational knowledge-sharing culture surveys; frequency of lessons learned publications; percentage of voluntary participation in communities of practice	ISO (2018); Carlucci et al. (2022)
Leadership support, incentives, and organizational trust	Multiple sources	Activities	Availability of incentive systems linked to knowledge transfer outcomes; percentage of managers facilitating transfer sessions; organizational trust index results; documented motivational decisions	ISO (2018); Carlucci et al. (2022)

The measurement and continuous improvement dimension focuses on monitoring, evaluation, benchmarking, and sustainability assessment. Effective knowledge transfer cannot be assumed solely because workshops were delivered or documents were submitted. Instead, organizations must assess whether transferred knowledge was adopted, institutionalized, reused, and integrated into operational systems. Continuous review cycles, internal audits, benchmarking activities, and institutional performance indicators provide organizations with mechanisms for identifying weaknesses, improving transfer practices, and ensuring long-term sustainability of institutional learning. This dimension also emphasizes that evaluation should extend beyond project closure to monitor whether knowledge continues to generate organizational value after consultancy activities have ended.

The proposed framework ultimately demonstrates that knowledge transfer standards should be viewed as integrated organizational mechanisms rather than isolated technical procedures. Effective knowledge transfer requires coordination between governance systems, communication channels, documentation practices, organizational culture, and evaluation processes. The absence of any of these dimensions may significantly reduce the effectiveness of consultancy project outcomes and increase the risk of institutional knowledge loss.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study demonstrate that evaluating knowledge transfer in consultancy projects requires a multidimensional perspective that extends beyond the traditional assumption that training sessions or document delivery alone are sufficient indicators of successful transfer. The analysis revealed that knowledge transfer is an integrated organizational process influenced by structural, technical, behavioral, and evaluative dimensions operating simultaneously within consultancy environments. This conclusion aligns with previous literature emphasizing that effective knowledge transfer depends not only on the existence of transfer activities but also on organizational readiness, governance quality, institutional culture, and sustainability mechanisms (Arundel & Wunsch-Vincent, 2021; Zhou et al., 2020).

The structural and organizational dimension highlighted the importance of integrating knowledge transfer activities throughout the consultancy project life cycle rather than treating them as isolated end-of-project tasks. The proposed standards emphasize the necessity of establishing formal knowledge transfer plans, clearly defining responsibilities, organizing communication channels, and integrating documentation systems within institutional operations. This finding supports the argument presented by Government Consulting Hub (2022), which stressed that knowledge transfer should be embedded within procurement procedures, project governance, and contractual frameworks to ensure accountability and continuity. In practice, consultancy projects frequently prioritize technical deliverables while postponing transfer activities until the final project stages, which often results in fragmented or unsustainable learning outcomes. The proposed framework therefore contributes by positioning knowledge transfer as a continuous operational process integrated into project governance structures from initiation to closure.

The study further demonstrated that the knowledge and content dimension represents the operational core of effective knowledge transfer. The findings showed that transferred knowledge must be designed in forms that are understandable, accessible, reusable, and contextually aligned with organizational needs. This result is particularly significant because consultancy projects typically generate both explicit knowledge, such as manuals and procedures, and tacit knowledge embedded within professional experience, problem-solving approaches, and decision-making practices. The literature consistently emphasizes that tacit knowledge requires interactive and experiential transfer mechanisms rather than reliance solely on documentation (El Dine & Taher, 2020). Consequently, the proposed standards advocate aligning transfer channels with the nature of the knowledge itself, ensuring that organizations do not lose critical experiential expertise during project completion. Moreover, the inclusion of classification systems, semantic structures, and reusable templates supports long-term institutional memory and reduces the risk of knowledge fragmentation across departments.

Another important finding concerns the behavioral and cultural dimension of knowledge transfer. The study confirmed that organizational culture significantly influences employees' willingness to exchange knowledge, participate in collaborative learning, and engage in consultancy-related learning activities. This observation is consistent with Carlucci et al. (2022), who argued that successful knowledge management systems depend heavily on supportive organizational culture, leadership commitment, and institutional trust. The analysis revealed that knowledge transfer initiatives often fail not because of technical deficiencies but because organizational environments discourage openness, experimentation, or collaborative interaction. In consultancy projects, employees may perceive external consultants as temporary actors rather than long-term learning partners, limiting the depth of engagement and reducing opportunities for genuine knowledge absorption. Therefore, leadership support, incentive mechanisms, and psychologically safe communication environments become essential conditions for successful knowledge transfer implementation.

The measurement and continuous improvement dimension emerged as a particularly critical aspect of the proposed framework because it transforms knowledge transfer from a symbolic organizational requirement into a measurable institutional process. The findings demonstrated that many organizations continue to evaluate knowledge transfer using simplistic indicators such as the number of workshops delivered or documents submitted. However, these indicators rarely capture whether transferred knowledge was understood, applied, reused, or institutionalized after project completion. Campbell et al. (2020, 2022) similarly emphasized the importance of multidimensional measurement frameworks incorporating inputs, activities, outputs, and organizational impact indicators. The proposed framework therefore advocates using balanced measurement systems that include both quantitative and qualitative indicators capable of assessing sustainability, institutional integration, and long-term operational impact. This multidimensional evaluation approach also supports benchmarking, continuous improvement, and organizational learning across multiple consultancy projects.

The findings additionally revealed that sustainability represents one of the most overlooked dimensions within consultancy project knowledge transfer practices. Many consultancy projects generate valuable expertise during implementation; however, this expertise often disappears after project closure because organizations lack mechanisms for preserving, updating, and reusing transferred knowledge. The proposed standards therefore emphasize the importance of post-project monitoring, institutional repositories, continuous accessibility, and maintenance procedures for transferred knowledge assets. This perspective extends the concept of knowledge transfer beyond project completion toward long-term organizational capability development and institutional resilience.

From a practical perspective, the proposed framework contributes to improving technical proposal evaluation processes within consultancy procurement environments. The framework enables evaluation committees to distinguish between superficial knowledge transfer plans that rely on general statements and mature transfer strategies supported by governance mechanisms, measurable outcomes, structured methodologies, and sustainability practices. This distinction is particularly important in municipal institutions such as the Holy Makkah Municipality, where consultancy projects contribute directly to strategic urban development, governance improvement, and service enhancement. Effective knowledge transfer therefore becomes essential not only for operational continuity but also for preserving institutional expertise and supporting evidence-based decision-making.

Despite the theoretical and practical contributions of the study, several limitations should be acknowledged. The proposed standards were developed analytically through literature synthesis and were not empirically validated within actual consultancy projects. Consequently, the framework should currently be viewed as an analytical and conceptual foundation rather than a finalized operational evaluation instrument. Future research may therefore focus on empirically testing the proposed standards, assigning relative weights to evaluation dimensions, and examining their applicability across different governmental and consultancy environments.

### Conclusion

The study concluded that evaluating knowledge transfer in consultancy projects requires comprehensive analytical criteria extending beyond contractual compliance. Effective knowledge transfer depends on organizational readiness, knowledge structure, collaborative culture, and continuous performance evaluation. The proposed framework contributes to transforming knowledge transfer from a general contractual requirement into an operational institutional process that can be analyzed, measured, and improved. The framework also provides practical guidance for evaluating consultancy technical proposals and supporting sustainable organizational learning within municipal institutions.

Although the proposed framework provides a strong analytical foundation, further empirical validation remains necessary. Future studies may test the framework within real consultancy projects, assign relative weights to the criteria, and develop standardized institutional evaluation tools.

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