

LITERATURE REVIEW

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the added value of a literature review as part of the ISS Operational Model
- Understand what type of knowledge is involved
- Understand how to do a literature review in the context of the ISS Operational Model

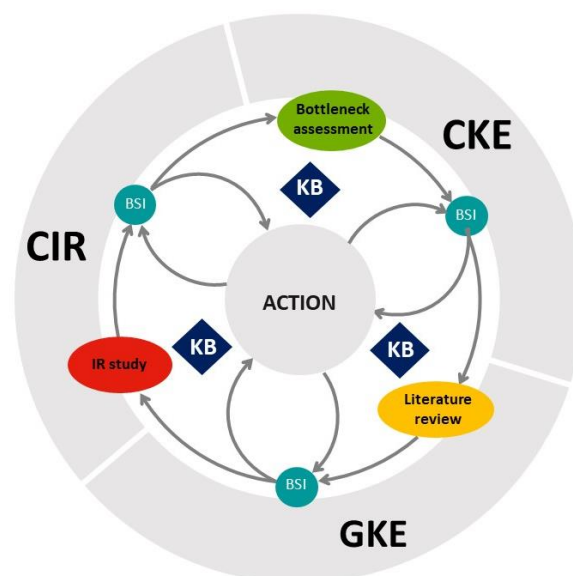
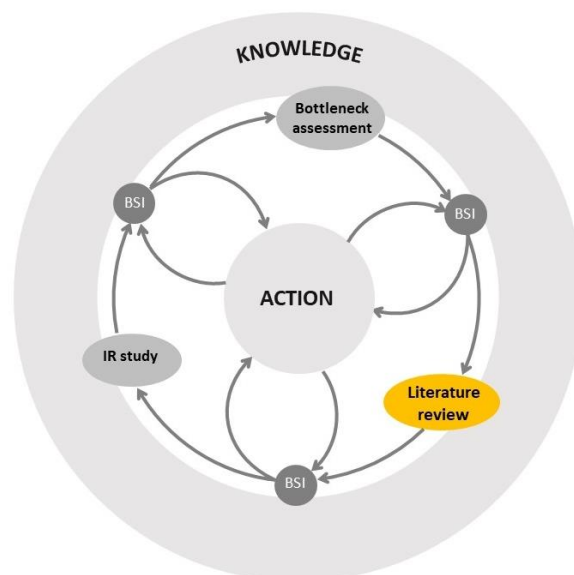
Why doing a literature review as part of the ISS Operational Model?

- The identification and prioritization of bottlenecks provides direction on areas that are in need of further examination.
- The integrated framework for ISN underlies that first existing knowledge needs to be used before undertaking new IR studies. This is not easily done as existing knowledge is not always readily accessible and usable, which explains a critical gap in knowledge utilization.
- This literature review allows you to tap into existing knowledge and make it usable in order to address the prioritized bottlenecks in a timely manner.
- The literature review will lead you to: 1) take immediate action, and/or 2) the development of IR studies that will later lead to action.

What knowledge to look for?

There is a wide range of decisions and processes involved in program implementation and diverse forms of knowledge need to inform them. Three forms of implementation knowledge are identified in SISN framework and can be used to inform practice:

1. **Contextual Knowledge and Experience (CKE)** refers to the often-tacit knowledge and experience of planners, implementers, and others who possess intimate knowledge of contextual features that can have profound implications on the performance and prospects for a policy, program, intervention, or innovation.
2. **Global Knowledge and Experience (GKE)** refers to knowledge that is often packaged into



frameworks, tools, and guidelines but is typically underutilized because it is widely dispersed, and planners and implementers typically do not have the time, means, or incentive to locate, adapt, and apply it. GKE also includes the often-tacit knowledge and experience of practitioners who have confronted similar implementation challenges in other settings and have often found practical solutions.

- 3. Contextual Implementation Research (CIR)** refers to various forms of practical, timely, empirical inquiries and assessments in a specific country or programmatic context to identify or clarify the weaknesses, strengths, and bottlenecks in various domains and phases, and to adapt interventions to local contexts during the planning phase.

While the BNA provides a mechanism to tap into contextual and experience knowledge (CKE), the literature review helps to ensure that global knowledge and experience (GKE) are used to address implementation bottlenecks. It refers to published or unpublished findings, frameworks, tools and guidelines from IR in other countries and implementation experience in other countries.

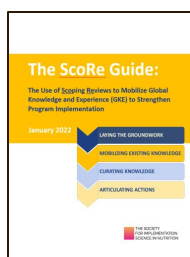
How to do a literature review in the context of an IS initiative?

There is a variety of types of reviews from which to choose when doing a literature review. However, undertaking a literature review in the context of ISN requires using a type of review that allows for limiting the scope and breadth to something manageable and to have results accessible to stakeholders in a timely manner. While comprehensive systematic reviews of the literature are not always possible or desirable, it is still possible to use systematic approaches that will be more cost-effective and lead to the gathering of meaningful insights.

In the context of ISN, the process of undertaking a literature review is tied to the engagement of key actors in a change process to make sure that the knowledge retrieved can lead to specific actions—that the knowledge becomes actionable. This needs to happen in a timely manner so the literature review can inform the decision-making of implementers. The choice between literature review methods is driven by the purpose of the review as well as the time and resources available. It may also be necessary to adapt a chosen method to further fit the method to the particular context, purpose and resource constraints.

Box 4: Potential literature review methods

- Integrative review
- Mixed methods review
- Introductory review
- Mapping review (or descriptive review)
- Narrative review
- Rapid review
- Realist review
- Scoping review



The Scoping review methodology appears particularly relevant and an adaptation of this type of review was used in Kenya and Uganda as part of the Implementation Science Initiative (ISI). The experience led to the development of a guide to assist users in adapting and applying a scoping review in the context of ISN: [The ScoRe Guide](#). It proposes a staged approach to guide the search and review of scientific and grey literature to strengthen the utilization of existing knowledge in a timely manner.

In brief, to carry out this literature review, you will need:

- To create a team who can shape the objectives and desired products from a literature review, and make sense of the data;
- To undertake the literature search per se, adapting the search strategy to the time and resources available;
- To curate the knowledge to make it usable;
- To tie the findings to action by using the BSI and identifying appropriate programmatic changes based on the findings.

Conclusion

Within the ISS Operational Model, the literature review is an effort to see if existing global knowledge and experience might be adapted and used to address some of the bottlenecks. It also may help the design of IR studies to better understand certain bottlenecks or explore the feasibility of various solutions.

Case study: Literature review

In ISI, at first, and because it was a learning initiative, the efforts of the country teams were particularly concentrated towards the undertaking of IR studies. It is not until the COVID-19 pandemic forced them to pause that the process of literature review could take place and that the countries fully understood its added value.

The Kenya and Uganda teams had decided to use the focused ethnographic study (FES) approach for one of their IR studies, to help them investigate the barriers to antenatal (ANC) attendance and the use of iron and folic acid supplementation (IFAS), including early disclosure of pregnancy, and male engagement. An FES facilitates the investigation of cultural and behavioral patterns from the perspective of users/community members. The first step in an FES is to develop an interview guide tailored to the topic at hand and a literature review can assist in that process. The work began with the creation of a group of researchers and implementers from various organizations. Three subgroups were formed to work on three specific bottleneck-related topics: ANC attendance and IFAS adherence; male involvement; and pregnancy disclosure. The team created a Program Impact Pathway (PIP) to help them classify the various factors that would be retrieved. The work continued with the search for literature and the coding of the papers. A conceptual framework was then developed to better understand how these factors relate to each other and the findings were summarized. This literature review allowed the two countries to create and/or adapt interview guides to the context of ANC attendance and IFAS adherence. Importantly, it also led to the development of recommendations for immediate actions and guided actions for the next steps.