



LEARNING-ORIENTED REAL-TIME IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LORTA) PROGRAMME: PHASE 1 - FORMATIVE ENGAGEMENT AND DESIGN

BACKGROUND

The multi-year Learning-Oriented Real-time Impact Assessment programme of the IEU started in 2018. This Note summarizes lessons learnt from implementing Phase 1 of this programme in 2018.

LORTA aims to help GCF investments measure their change, credibly and in a high-quality manner, by providing technical assistance both at the systems level and at the human resource level. The programme does this through a range of activities. These include engagement, clarifying theories of change, co-building, and helping projects incorporate theory-based experimental and quasi-experimental designs, using qualitative approaches, undertaking analyses, and assisting with the set-up of real-time measurement and tracking systems and regular (but less frequent) surveys. The overall aim of LORTA is to measure the causal change of GCF investments and their results, while understanding their effectiveness and efficiency.

LORTA'S OBJECTIVES

LORTA: In GCF investments, what works? How much? For whom? Why? Under what circumstances? How will we know?

- Measuring the overall change (outcome or impact) of GCF investments;
- Building measurement and tracking systems and enhancing in-project learning;
- Understanding and measuring results at different points during implementation;
- Measuring GCF's overall contribution to catalysing a paradigm shift and achieving impacts at scale.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PHASE 1

- 1. Budgets are key:** GCF-funded projects and investments need to budget early for the cost of undertaking impact evaluations. This facilitates high-quality designs for building real-time measurement systems and credible measurement.
- 2. Early planning and co-ownership of designs for impact assessments and measurement systems:** Consultation and co-ownership of the design and implementation of measurement systems between the LORTA team and the project team is essential. This means project teams should come on board as early as feasible. Ideally, project teams should engage with LORTA before they start planning implementation (and after Board approval).
- 3. In-country formative work is a *sine qua non*:** It is imperative that in-person country missions engage the full programme team (especially its senior staff) and have hands-on sessions where project staff can work through the implications of theories of change, measurement systems, surveys and analyses plans. These country missions should also include context analyses and engagement with the ultimate beneficiaries of GCF investments. Thorough engagement of relevant accreditation entity (AE) staff cannot be over emphasised.
- 4. Developing a deep understanding of evaluation designs and measurement methods among project team staff is essential:** Project staff need to have a good understanding of theories of change survey design, sample sizes and implementation fidelity tracking systems. However, with IEU LORTA team providing technical assistance, they don't need to become experts.

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5. Engagement from key stakeholders is required, particularly Nationally Designated Authorities, AEs, implementing partners, GCF project managers, and potential beneficiaries. LORTA team work closely with key stakeholders of selected projects before, during and after field missions.

6. Co-designing measurement systems and impact evaluation designs: IEU LORTA team members along with project staff developed measurement systems and impact evaluation designs. Formative work should include analysing the field and context, discussing theory of change, and examining project capacities for tracking implementation fidelity. It may also include setting up time-bound systems and targets for tracking progress and appropriate counterfactuals, and assessing administrative and secondary data sources, including Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data.

7. Real-world considerations and the implementation goals of the GCF project team should inform designs. These should be balanced with analytical rigour and the need of key stakeholders in-country. In many cases, project teams are capable of developing these systems and measurements provided they can take on board sample size calculations, and understand the need for credible measurement.

8. Integrated timelines are important: Teams should distinguish between implementation tracking systems that measure the progress of short-term changes and those that measure longer term changes (through ex. surveys). They should build an integrated timeline showing implementation, tracking and surveys. GIS data can help reduce data requirements.

9. Persistence and rigour is key: Most teams initially plan to collect too much data. They often exhaust their funds and lose their impetus before the project's end. However, with some re-jigging and re-planning, they can undertake high-quality measurement. Sticking to the plan for rolling out impact evaluations and implementation is critical.

PHASE 1

In 2018, preparation started on eight selected GCF-funded projects, including formative work and design. The IEU LORTA team assisted with technical needs and evaluation capacity building.

- Eligibility criteria for participation in LORTA included innovativeness and/or importance, resource need and/or scalability, portfolio representativeness, capacity of the project team, flexibility, engagement and inclination for co-ownership, and readiness for measuring results credibly.
- Thematic areas: In Phase 1, eligible GCF investments focused on climate information services, REDD+ and livelihoods.

The LORTA team consisted of IEU staff and consultants and staff at the Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED) associated with the University of Mannheim, Germany.


Project teams and the IEU LORTA team can together add immeasurably to understanding what works in climate change.


WHAT NEXT? PHASE 2 (2019-2020)


In Phase 2, selected teams will roll out measurement systems and implement impact evaluation designs. The IEU will also work with a new set of projects to help build these systems in 2019.

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