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Report of the Independent Evaluation Unit for 2018

Summary

This document provides a report of the Independent Evaluation Unit's (IEU) key activities over a five-month period (January – May 2019). It reports IEU's outputs and achievements in line with its work plan for 2018, presented in its work plan for 2018 (GCF/B.19/07).

I. Introduction

1. This document is a report of the key activities and outcomes of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) over a five-month period (January – May 2018). The objectives and key workplan activities of the IEU are presented in its annual and three-year workplan (see document GCF/B.19/07). This document is organized as follows:

- (a) Introduction;
- (b) Overview;
- (c) Report on key achievements; and
- (d) Budget and expenditure report.

II. Overview

2. At its nineteenth meeting, the Board, by decision B.19/21, approved an overall amount of USD 2,953,867 for the IEU for 2018.

3. Key activities taken by the IEU during January – May 2018 were:

- (a) Strengthening the IEU;
- (b) Evaluations in 2018: a preview of progress; and
- (c) Building awareness around standards and strengthening capacity for evaluations among GCF stakeholders.

III. Report of activities and outcomes

4. This section provides an update on the key activities and achievements of the IEU over a five-month period (January – May 2018). The IEU accomplished all its key promised activities and objectives for this period.

3.1 Strengthening the Independent Evaluation Unit

5. **Staffing:** the IEU hired three IEU staff members and one more is in the process of being hired. Three additional staff members will be hired this year; job descriptions for these positions will be posted in June 2018.

6. **GCF evaluation policy:** a key task of the IEU in 2018 was to develop the evaluation policy of GCF and to recommend policies that can improve the effectiveness of the IEU as it operationalizes its three-year rolling workplan. As discussed in previous information documents, the IEU shared a draft of a document titled “Policies and procedures for ensuring the independence and effective functioning of the IEU” in July 2017. This has since been updated and will be shared with the current Co-Chairs in July 2018. Additionally, the IEU prepared an outline of the evaluation policy for the eighteenth meeting of the Board (GCF/B.18/16) as requested in its terms of reference (see decision B.06/06). The IEU hired one associate evaluation consultant and a senior consultant to provide support for this task. Initial consultations have been undertaken through phone interviews, webinars and consultations during and around the nineteenth meeting of the Board (B.19).

7. At the twentieth meeting of the Board, the IEU will lead further consultations and organize a side event for the development of the GCF evaluation policy. So far, the IEU has consulted with a variety of stakeholders, including members of civil society organizations

(CSOs), staff at the Secretariat (including at the Office of the Executive Director), the heads and staff of Secretariat divisions and offices (including the Division of Mitigation and Adaptation, Private Sector Facility, Office of Portfolio Management, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Risk Management and Compliance, and Office of the Internal Audit), and the heads of the two other independent units of GCF. The IEU also led webinar consultations with staff of accredited entities (AEs) and national designated authorities (NDAs), and organized consultations on the evaluation policy at structured dialogues hosted by the Secretariat in Mali, Viet Nam and Songdo. The IEU will continue to host these consultations at forthcoming structured dialogues in the Federated States of Micronesia and small island developing States in the Caribbean. The Head of IEU also led discussions on this topic, along with discussions on credibility and independence, at an invitation-only event held at Wilton Park in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (which was jointly hosted by the United Nations Development Programme and Wilton Park) and at the annual meeting of the United Nations Evaluation Group in May 2018, where she led two panels that focused on the objectivity, credibility and independence of evaluation.

8. To ensure that the GCF evaluation policy reflects best practice in the field, the IEU has also set up a reference group. This consists of the heads of evaluation from the independent offices of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Separate and bilateral conversations were also held with heads of evaluation and staff of the independent offices of WFP and FAO as well as with other adviser team members, including the head of strategy and knowledge management at IFAD. The IEU is also reviewing policies and experiences with implementing evaluation policies of ten other agencies, including FAO, the GEF, IFAD, UNDP, WFP and the World Bank.

9. The GCF evaluation policy approach paper has been finalized and is available on the IEU website.¹ It has also been shared with advisers to the Head of IEU. A draft of the policy will be shared with GCF partners on 10 August 2018. These will include the Secretariat, Independent Units, Board members and alternates, advisers, AEs, NDAs, CSOs and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat. The paper will be finalized in September and presented to the Board for a decision at its twenty-first meeting (B.21).

10. **Evidence benchmarking and learning:** the IEU will develop and lead three evidence maps for 2018. These include evidence maps related to forestry, transformational change and adaptation. The IEU has brought on board a highly qualified team to support the evidence map on transformational change. The terms of reference (TOR) for this evidence map are available in annex 1 to this document.² Early findings from this evidence map will be available by the end of 2018. Teams will also be invited to work with the IEU on the forestry map and the adaptation evidence map in June 2018, and the products will be available in early 2019. Additionally, the IEU is working on learning papers. It will produce a working paper titled “Complexity, climate change and evaluation”. A paper written by IEU staff titled “Transformational Change – the challenge of a brave new world” will also be published in 2018, including as an IEU working paper.³ In 2018, the IEU will also publish a learning paper titled “Becoming smarter, faster, better: How credible are GCF proposals in their claims?”.

¹ Available at

<https://ieugreenclimate.fund/documents/977793/985626/GCF_Evaluation_Policy_Approach_Paper_Summary.pdf/3f0d0c72-88c6-5720-197d-a5c8dd682d1a>.

² Available at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/470054/RFP_2017_C_025.docx/6c0e4fa9-14e8-42e6-b612-95c59c768afd>.

³ Puri J. 2018, forthcoming. Transformational change – the challenge of a brave new world. In: Schmidt M., Giovannucci D., Palekhov D. and Hansmann B. (Eds.) *Sustainable Global Value Chains. Natural Resource Management in Transition, Vol. 2*. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.

11. **Agreements and partnerships:** during this five-month period, the IEU actively liaised with the Secretariat to insert, negotiate and strengthen clauses related to evaluation and the Independent Evaluation Unit. It has worked closely with the Secretariat to ensure IEU-related clauses are adhered to and well recognized in all accreditation master agreements, and participated actively in discussions on the legal framework for GCF. Furthermore, given its purposefully ambitious agenda, the IEU recognizes that it cannot accomplish all its goals without leveraging the support and expertise of specialized agencies around the world. Till May 2018, the IEU signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and partnership agreements with the Global Development Network, the FAO Evaluation Office, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development and the Centre for International Forestry Research. Under these MOUs, IEU partners agreed to share and disseminate knowledge and experience, develop joint knowledge and learning products on impact evaluations, process evaluations, systematic reviews, quantitative and qualitative methods of measurement, and collaborate in other areas in evaluating climate action. In May 2018, the IEU hosted a joint two-day session on understanding approaches for evaluating capacity-building in the areas of disaster risk reduction and adaptation. This was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), and IEU took the lead technical role. A short report will be presented in the IEU quarterly newsletter in June 2018.
12. **2019 workplan for the IEU:** the IEU will present its 2019 workplan and budget to the Board at B.21. There are plans for awareness-raising, engagement webinars and consultations over the next four months before the 2019 workplan is presented to the Board.

3.2 Evaluations in 2018: a preview of progress

13. The IEU undertook several evaluation-related activities, that will serve as building blocks for other evaluations as well.
14. **Evaluability analyses:** the IEU is completing a study that assesses the credibility and evaluability of the GCF approved portfolio. This study informs the GCF evaluation policy and guidelines and provides information on potential improvements that may be made in measuring key indicators of impact and investment criteria. The study asks the question: “To what extent are approved GCF projects able to inform their results measurably and credibly?” A draft paper (see also paragraph 9) will be available for discussion in July 2018, and the IEU will publish a final version of its learning paper at the end of 2018.
15. **Readiness evaluation:** the GCF Board approved the TORs for the evaluation of the readiness and preparatory support programme at B.19.⁴ The IEU has moved rapidly in putting together a team to support the IEU in this task. The IEU has consulted with a range of stakeholders, including Secretariat staff, CSOs, Board members and advisers, and representatives of AEs and NDAs. The IEU also conducted consultations at the structured dialogues hosted in Mali, Viet Nam and Songdo, and others are planned for the near future. The IEU is currently preparing an inception paper, which will be available at the end of June 2018. The IEU evaluation team has also commenced country visits to inform this evaluation, prepared an extensive database for this purpose, and is carrying out analyses. Additionally, it is performing analyses of documents using qualitative key word techniques, developing protocols for analyses, preparing a survey instrument, performing process tracing, carrying out benchmarking against other institutions and preparing for field work. The factual evaluation report will be available mid-August and the full evaluation report will be presented to the Board in October 2018.
16. **Review of the results management framework:** as requested in the TOR of the IEU, it is undertaking a review of the GCF results management framework. A senior consultant has

⁴ Decision B.19/16.

been hired and the approach paper and protocol for the review of the results framework will be available on the IEU website by the end of June 2018. A database for this purpose has also been created by the IEU team and preparations for fieldwork are ongoing.

17. **Learning-oriented real-time impact assessment window:** the Board approved a multi-year pilot project for establishing a learning-oriented, real-time impact assessment window in 2018. This multi-year window will support learning in real time for a small subset of approved GCF projects. Projects will be selected based on their portfolio balance and representativeness, as well as their maturity in being able to inform the evidence base. Initial consultations with the Secretariat and with AEs on the choice of projects have been completed. The IEU has also produced a short brief on the approach.⁵ The IEU will also be hosting a “design workshop” for shortlisted projects and associated staff in Bangkok in July 2018.

3.3 Building awareness around standards and strengthening capacity for evaluations among GCF stakeholders.

18. Evaluations are only important if they are used. An important role of the IEU is raising awareness on the uses of evaluations for learning as well as building capacities among its stakeholders, including staff of the Secretariat, AEs, implementing agencies and executing agencies. In this context, the two workstreams of the IEU are important: the first that focuses on building awareness and capacity, and the second that focuses on communicating evaluations’ uses and standards. To further this objective and to be cost-effective and efficient, the IEU is building partnerships with similar agencies globally so that IEU partners may help to further establish this understanding and awareness among country partners. We summarize key achievements in these areas below.

19. **Awareness of the mission of IEU and capacity-building:** the IEU led one workshop on learning and impact evaluations at a professional development event held during the May meetings of the United Nations Evaluation Group. Sixty people attended the day-long workshop, and the feedback on the quality and rigor of the event was excellent. Another training event was held at the structured dialogue in Viet Nam, which attracted 20 attendees. The Head of IEU also met with heads of the independent evaluation offices of the GEF and of the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) as well as the respective head and team at Development Impact Evaluation at the World Bank. The IEU has also been invited to serve on the advisory group for an evaluation of the “Disaster Management Strategy and Operational Guidelines” by the Caribbean Development Bank and on the expert advisory board for an agency-wide evaluation focused on resilience being led by WFP. The IEU has provided comments on both of these. These evaluations are being led by AEs and the participation of the IEU in the advisory groups will help enhance the capacities of AEs and inform subsequent evaluations of the IEU. As a member of the Transformative and Learning Partnership being led by CIF, the IEU team participated in discussions and a workshop in Washington, D.C. in May 2018. Further capacity-building for AE staff and members is planned for July and October 2018 (at the annual meeting of the International Centre for Evaluation and Development, meetings of the European Evaluation Society, and meetings of the Asian Evaluation Week in China). The IEU led focus groups and training workshops at the direct access entity event held in Songdo in May 2018. It will also participate similarly in the structured dialogue events scheduled for July 2018 in Jordan and the Federated States of Micronesia.

20. **Communicating uses and standards:** the *quality* of evaluations is keenly dependent on the capacity and data that programmes and projects build into them. The IEU is increasingly building awareness about the requirements of evaluations at the entity level. This capacity-

⁵ Available at <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/documents/977793/985626/IEU_Brief_LORTA.pdf/7266fb69-1aea-99c4-de51-86e690dc56fc>.

strengthening effort also requires building awareness around the vision, standards and uses of the IEU. To promote understanding of the importance, uses and possible tools for robust evaluations and evidence-building, the IEU has hosted five IEU lunch talks over the past five months. These very well attended talks featured Ms. Sara Castro-Hallgren from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; scientists from the Centre for International Forestry Research; Mr. Drazen Kucan from GCF; Mr. David Molden, Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development; and Mr. Nathan Fiala, assistant professor at the University of Connecticut. The IEU lunch talks have become a well-recognized arena for exchanging ideas on high-quality work.

21. The IEU has also developed its own website⁶ that went live in March 2018 and has published three quarterly newsletters⁷ to update AEs, NDAs and other stakeholders on its progress and work. It has also produced two briefs during this period: one communicating IEU's plans and objectives for 2018⁸ and the other communicating its work on "Learning-Oriented and Real-Time Impact Assessments".⁹

IV. Budget and expenditure report

22. Table 1 shows the IEU budget and expenditure report for January – April 2018.

Table 1: Independent Evaluation Unit budget utilization as at 30 April 2018 (in USD)

Items	2018 budget	Actual	Commitment	Subtotal	%
Salaries					
Staff	1,583,667	141,072	-	141,072	9%
Consultants	492,200	146,941	19,650	166,591	34%
Subtotal	2,075,867	288,014	19,650	307,664	15%
Travel					
General	183,000	12,769	2,395	15,164	8%
Contractual services					
Legal and professional services	630,000	74,420	237,679	312,099	50%
Operating costs	65,000	6,651	-	6,652	10%
Subtotal	695,000	81,071	237,680	318,751	46%
TOTAL	2,953,867	381,854	259,724	641,578	22%

⁶ Available at <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/home>>.

⁷ Available at <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/resources>>.

⁸ Available at <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/documents/977793/985626/IEU_Brief_Workplan2018.pdf/ae597e74-2efc-13bb-83e0-dbf43c3652a5>.

⁹ Available at <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/documents/977793/985626/IEU_Brief_LORTA.pdf/7266fb69-1aea-99c4-de51-86e690dc56fc>.