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27 January 2025

Report on the activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit

Summary

This document provides a report of the key activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) for the period of 1 September to 31 December 2024. It reports on the IEU's outputs and achievements in line with the Board-approved work plan for 2024.

I. Introduction

1. This report outlines the key activities and outcomes of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) between 1 September and 31 December 2024. In line with the Board decision B.37/09,¹ the primary objectives and work plan activities of the IEU are presented in the "Independent Evaluation Unit 2024 Work Plan and Budget and Update of its Three-year Objectives and Work Plan".

2. With this submission of the third report on activities of the Unit, the IEU will also produce and publish an annual report of the activities in 2024. The annual report will be made available on the IEU website in February 2025.

3. This activity report is organized as follows:

- (a) Section I: Introduction
- (b) Section II: Overview
- (c) Section III: Report on key activities
- (d) Supporting annexes
 - (i) Annex I: Budget and expenditure report
 - (ii) Annex II: 2024 synthesis report of the Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) Programme
 - (iii) Annex III: List of IEU publications and communications materials that were published in the reporting period
 - (iv) Annex IV: List of IEU events and engagements with stakeholders and partners in the reporting period

II. Overview

4. Following decision B.37/09,² the GCF Board approved an overall work plan and budget allocation of USD 7,649,286 for the IEU for 2024, at its thirty-seventh meeting held in October 2023. However, this later became USD 7,734,904 to reflect the increase approved by the Board for the adjustment of the GCF salary scales. The information about the adjustment for the GCF salary scales can be found in GCF/B.40/Inf.13/Add.01.³

5. The Unit's main activities undertaken during the reporting period of 1 September and 31 December 2024 are structured around its work plan objectives as the following:

- (a) Objective 1: Undertake and deliver high-quality evaluations to the GCF Board
- (b) Objective 2: Build and deliver an evaluation-based learning, advisory, and capacity-strengthening programme
- (c) Objective 3: Engage strategically to learn, share, and adopt best practices in the climate change evaluation space

¹ Decision B.37/09, < <https://www.greenclimate.fund/decision/b37-09> >

² Ibid.

³ GCF/B.40/Inf.13/Add.01. Report on the execution of the 2024 administrative budget of GCF, < <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-b40-inf13-add01> >

- (d) Objective 4: Strengthen and position the IEU

III. Report on key activities

3.1 Objective 1: Undertake and deliver high-quality evaluations to the GCF Board

6. As derived from the GCF Governing Instrument, the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the IEU⁴ mandates the IEU to conduct periodic independent evaluations of the GCF's activities to provide objective assessments of the Fund's results, effectiveness, and efficiency. The types of independent evaluations include performance evaluations, thematic evaluations, portfolio evaluations, country portfolio evaluations, programmatic and project approach evaluations, and impact evaluations. The overall criteria used in independent evaluations are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability of projects and programmes, coherence in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities, gender equity, country ownership of projects and programmes, innovativeness in result areas, replication and scalability, and lastly, unexpected results, both positive and negative.

7. Within the reporting period, a few evaluations concluded fully, and progress was made with the ongoing and new evaluations as described below.

3.1.1. Completed evaluations.

8. **Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Approach to and Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses.**⁵ This evaluation was launched in January 2024 in line with the Board-approved 2024 work plan of the IEU, and was completed in June, ahead of B.39. The evaluation assessed the effectiveness, relevance, coherence, and sustainability of the GCF Policy on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses (PPWW). The evaluation team engaged fully with the Secretariat and the Independent Units on the finalization of the evaluation report, and held a series of meetings and feedback sessions with them. While the evaluation report was submitted to the Board in time for B.39, this evaluation was included in the B.40 agenda. Subsequently, decision B.40/19 was adopted on it during the proceedings. The main report of the evaluation is available on the IEU website.

9. **Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the GCF's Investments in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) States.**⁶ This evaluation was launched in 2024 in line with the 2024 IEU work plan and was submitted to the Board at B.40 held in October 2024. This evaluation assessed the relevance and effectiveness of the GCF's investments in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) States. In the reporting period, the IEU solicited the Secretariat's comments on the draft report and finalized the evaluation report. The IEU also held three webinars for the Secretariat, the Board, and the CSOs, PSOs, and the AEs, respectively, to disseminate and socialize the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation. The evaluation was included in the B.40 agenda and discussed at this Board meeting. Subsequently, decision B.40/18 was adopted on it. The main report of the evaluation is

⁴ Annex I, Decision B.BM-2021/15 <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/updated-tor-ieu.pdf>>

⁵ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/PWW2024>>

⁶ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/LAC2024>>

available on the IEU website. In the reporting period, the IEU also shared the draft country case studies with the NDAs and finalized them based on the comments received. The second LabReport of the evaluation was published in December, which analysed implementation challenges and risk assessments for the GCF-funded activities in the LAC region.

10. **Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Energy Sector Portfolio and Approach.**⁷ Launched in 2023, this evaluation assessed the relevance, efficiency, suitability, effectiveness, and innovativeness of GCF's portfolio in the energy sector in achieving climate goals alongside the lessons learned from the GCF's energy investments. According to the Board-approved 2023 IEU work plan, the evaluation report was finalized at the end of 2023 and was submitted to the Board in time for B.38 held in March 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda. While the evaluation was included in the B.38 agenda, the agenda item was not opened at the Board meeting. However, the evaluation was tabled during B.39, and the Board adopted decision B.39/16 on it.

3.1.2. Ongoing and new evaluations.

11. **Independent Evaluation of the GCF's 'Health and Well-being, and Food and Water Security' Result Area.**⁸ This evaluation was launched in 2024 in line with the Board-approved 2024 work plan of the IEU. In decision B.29/01, the Board approved the integrated results management framework (IRMF), which identifies eight results areas that originate from the GCF mitigation and adaptation logic models of the initial results management framework. One of the adaptation results areas of the Fund is 'Health and well-being, and food, and water security (HWWF)'. The evaluation examined the HWWF result area, its portfolio, and the GCF's result area approach. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the Board in time for B.41.

12. The IEU prepared a factual draft of the evaluation report in mid-October and shared it with the GCF Secretariat for the Secretariat colleagues' comments and feedback. In addition to sharing the factual draft with the Secretariat for their written comments, the evaluation team organized informal debriefing meetings with the GCF's Specialists for the HWWF-result area corresponding sectors – water, agriculture/food security, and health and wellbeing. The Secretariat colleagues' comments were received by 22 November, as well as comments from the peer reviewers from within the IEU. The evaluation team then had a period of addressing comments from the Secretariat and the peer reviewers, and produced a draft report that contains evaluation conclusions and recommendations. The draft report will be further finetuned and revised so that the final report can be submitted in time for B.41 to be held in February 2025. In the first week of December 2024, the IEU organized webinars for the GCF Board, Secretariat, CSOs/PSOs and the accredited entities to disseminate and inform the stakeholders of the key conclusions and emerging recommendation areas of the HWWF result area evaluation.

13. In the reporting period, the evaluation team also made further progress on the six country case studies. Five case study visits were undertaken in Senegal, Tajikistan, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, and Namibia. Moreover, one virtual case study was conducted in Grenada. These countries were identified based on several criteria and considerations such as the maturity of HWWF result area-marked projects in the country, representation and distribution of the health and wellbeing, food (agriculture), and water security projects in the sample, and the inclusion of countries with low resilience. In addition to these, the evaluation

⁷ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/ES2023>>

⁸ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/HWWF2024>>

team was able to collect evaluation-relevant data and input on the margins of the GCF Regional Dialogue for the MENA region held in June 2024 in Morocco.

14. **Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Indigenous Peoples.**⁹ This evaluation was launched in 2024 in line with the Board-approved 2024 work plan of the IEU. The evaluation assessed the relevance and effectiveness of the GCF's approach to and consideration of Indigenous Peoples in GCF programming. The evaluation aims to provide inputs to the review of the GCF's Indigenous Peoples Policy and other relevant policy reviews. The evaluation is expected to contribute to an accountability, learning, and dialogue function focusing on the IPs. The primary audience of the evaluation will be the GCF Board and the Secretariat. The other key stakeholders include the GCF beneficiaries and Indigenous Peoples groups, the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG), along with the NDAs, AEs, active observers, civil society organisations, and other entities of the GCF ecosystem.

15. By October, the evaluation team completed the factual draft and shared it with the Secretariat, other Independent Units, the IPAG, and the evaluation advisory group. The factual draft also underwent an internal quality assurance and review process within the IEU. With the Secretariat comments received by 29 November, the team incorporated new evidence and addressed factual inconsistencies and gaps. In the reporting period, the evaluation's country case study reports of Colombia, Paraguay, Botswana, the Philippines, and Vanuatu were finalized.

16. At the beginning of December, the evaluation team held three webinars targeting the GCF Board, Secretariat, and the CSOs and PSOs to present key findings and emerging areas of recommendations. To deepen the engagement and follow a utilization approach, the team also met with the Fund's former Office of Sustainability and Inclusion (OSI) to discuss trends and preliminary findings. The team is now finalizing the evaluation report, including its supporting annexes and country case studies. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the Board in time for the first Board meeting of 2025 (B.41).

17. **Third Performance Review (TPR) of the Green Climate Fund.**¹⁰ The third performance review of the GCF was launched following decision B.40/14 of the GCF Board.¹¹ The review aims to independently assess the GCF's performance during GCF-2 and to inform the Fund's strategy. The performance review will assess the GCF's progress in delivering its mandate as set out in the Governing Instrument during GCF-2 and will be informed by a synthesis of previous IEU evaluations and global evidence reviews. Following the budget approval by the GCF Board at B.40 in October 2024, the IEU commenced the preparation for the review and its official inception in 2025.

18. The IEU has undertaken a period of drafting the proposed Term of Reference to seek the services of any external expertise required. The terms of reference were drafted in a way that allows the IEU to undertake consultations with and seek advice from Board members on the strategic questions that the review should include. Therefore, a detailed discussion on the scope of the performance review will be undertaken with Board members. The IEU has also commenced informal discussions with parts of the Secretariat, to seek any emerging questions of interest. Further, the developed terms of reference will take into account the schedule of the review noted by the Board in decision B.40/14. The final report of the third performance review will be made available by the first Board meeting of 2027.

⁹ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/IP2024>>

¹⁰ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/tpr2025>>

¹¹ <<https://www.greenclimate.fund/decision/b40-14>>

19. The budget for TPR is a total of USD 1,122,000 to cover the period of 2025 to 2027. At B.40, the budget for 2025 was approved, and the budget for 2026 and 2027 were provisionally approved in accordance with the Administrative Budget and Accounting Framework approved by decision B.38/07. The execution of the TPR budget will begin in 2025 when the external consultancy firm that will support TPR is procured.
20. **Preparatory work for 2025 evaluations.** In the reporting period, preparatory work was undertaken for the 2025 IEU evaluations as the following:
- (a) **Independent evaluation of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process:**¹² This evaluation will be the first 2025 IEU evaluation to be delivered to the GCF Board. The IEU team has completed initial exploratory interviews with key Secretariat staff members. Further, the team drafted an approach paper and completed the procurement of an individual consultant to support the delivery of this evaluation by B.42.
 - (b) **Independent evaluation of the GCF's approach to country ownership:**¹³ In November 2024, the IEU initiated the preparatory desk review work for the evaluation. The process of issuing a Request for Proposal was initiated with a target timeline of awarding a contract to a selected firm by early March 2025. This evaluation is expected to feed directly into the updated country ownership guidelines of GCF, which will be drafted in parallel. To that extent, this evaluation will be a developmental evaluation. Developmental evaluation involves long-term relationships between evaluators and project or programme staff with an iterative feedback process between the evaluation and the relevant programme. Furthermore, developmental evaluation is primarily designed to support learning and management decision-making. As an initial deliverable, the evaluation team is expected to produce a synthesis of previous IEU evaluations and relevant literature on country ownership to serve as a baseline for the main evaluation report and analysis. At B.41, the IEU plans to present initial reflections at the IEU's Board side event. The side event will provide results of the synthesis of previous evaluations, reviews, and relevant literature. The main evaluation report is expected to be submitted to the 43rd meeting of the Board in 2025.
 - (c) **Independent evaluation of the GCF's approach to and portfolio of climate information and early warning systems interventions:**¹⁴ In line with the IEU work plan and budget approved at B.40, preparatory work for this evaluation is currently underway. A request for proposals for the evaluation was launched in November 2024, with the target timeline of awarding a contract to a selected firm by February 2025. The scope of this evaluation includes, among other things, assessing and establishing rigorous evidence of the realized and potential impacts and effectiveness from a sample of climate information and early warning system (CIEWS) projects, including leveraging findings from the IEU's LORTA impact evaluation programme. It will also evaluate the extent to which the GCF collaborates with other climate funds and international organizations at the fund-, intervention-, and country levels to enhance complementarity and coherence on CIEWS. The IEU has participated in workshops and meetings of the evaluation offices/units of the four climate funds, including the GCF, GEF, AF and CIFs in 2024. This evaluation is expected to be presented to the Board at the first Board meeting of 2026.

¹² <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/sap2025>>

¹³ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/co2025>>

¹⁴ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/ews2025>>

- (d) **Synthesis note informing a prospective independent evaluation of the GCF's approach to gender:**¹⁵ In line with the 2025 IEU workplan and budget approved at B.40, the IEU is undertaking preparatory work on synthesizing the existing evaluative evidence generated from previous independent evaluations, assessments, reviews, and studies. This formative synthesis will inform the future independent evaluation of the GCF's approach to gender, subject to approval by the Board. During the reporting period, the preparation of the procurement of the firm that provides technical support to this exercise was advanced. The synthesis note will be made available in time for the last Board meeting in 2025, while the evaluation of the GCF's approach to gender will be made available in time for the third Board meeting in 2026, subject to Board approval. If approved, this evaluation will be part of the 2026 Workplan and Budget of the IEU.

21. **UNEG Peer review of the evaluation function of the GCF.** In the reporting period, the IEU continued to engage with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) regarding a peer review of the evaluation function of the GCF. The UNEG accepted the IEU's request to do this peer review and the activity was included in the UNEG work plan for 2023. However, this peer review was put on hold and was delayed due to capacity limitations in 2023. In 2024, the IEU started with the preparations for the peer review, which will conclude in 2025. This is the first peer review of the evaluation function of the GCF since its establishment. It will provide the IEU with inputs to make the Unit, its operations, evaluations, and methodology more robust and rigorous. A strengthened IEU will positively contribute to the results, accountability mechanisms, and the learning architecture of the GCF. This peer review will allow the IEU Head to review and adjust the vision and operations of the Unit as part of the evaluation function of the GCF.

22. **Quality assessment.** In line with the 2024 IEU Workplan and the Evaluation Policy for the GCF, the IEU has launched the quality assessment of AE-led/self-evaluations. As outlined in the Monitoring and Accountability Framework, AEs are required to submit project interim and final evaluations for all approved GCF projects and programmes. To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat's implementation of the evaluation policy and standards for evaluations, the IEU is responsible for a quality assessment, in accordance with the Evaluation Policy. The IEU plans to release its first assessment report in 2025.

23. During the reporting period, the IEU team developed a quality assessment framework. This draft framework includes: (1) assessment criteria and rating scales for reviewing and rating the reports of AE-led evaluations; and (2) step-by-step guidance on implementing this quality assurance system within the IEU. In 2025, the IEU will finalize this framework and conduct an initial assessment of the quality of AE-led evaluation reports that are available within the GCF to test and refine the draft framework. By implementing this system, the IEU aims to enhance the credibility, consistency, and overall quality of AE-led/self-evaluations, ensuring that they meet the high evaluation standards expected by the GCF. The IEU also plans to publish an annual summary report from the quality assessment reviews. The summary report will highlight key observations, strengths, and areas for improvement in the evaluation practices of AEs and provide recommendations to further enhance the quality of AE-led/self-evaluations.

3.1.3. Impact evaluations.¹⁶

¹⁵ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/ga2025>>

¹⁶ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluations/lorta>>

24. The IEU continues to support impact evaluations of GCF projects, through its Learning-Orientated Real-time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme. This work is important as it enables the GCF to access data on the quality of project implementation and impact. LORTA enhances learning through advisory services and capacity-building in the area of impact evaluation and contributes to the global evidence in the climate space by collaborating with practitioners, academia, policymakers, and other stakeholders of the GCF ecosystem.

25. In October 2024, the IEU's LORTA team organized its annual impact evaluation design workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, in collaboration with Development Research Strategies (DRS), as well as researchers from the KDI School and Monash University. The four-day annual workshop aimed to build the capacity of selected Accredited Entities (AEs), including project managers and monitoring and evaluation specialists, in designing and conducting high-quality impact evaluations. This year's workshop focused on the Asia-Pacific region, with a total of seven GCF project teams participating in the workshop (six Asia-Pacific projects and one LAC project). The interactive workshop provided participants with an opportunity to learn about climate interventions and methodologies for measuring their impact across a diverse range of topics and geographical areas.

26. **Preparation of impact evaluation reports:** In the reporting period, further progress was made with the existing GCF projects in the LORTA portfolio. By the end of November 2024, nine GCF projects in the LORTA portfolio were in the engagement and design stage, seven in baseline, and eight in the post-baseline stages for impact evaluations (see Table 1 for more).

Table 1: Status of GCF projects in the LORTA impact evaluation portfolio

	FP/COUNTRY/REGION	ENGAGEMENT/DESIGN	BASELINE	POST-BASELINE STAGE	RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION
1 ST COHORT (ENTERED IN 2018)	FP002 Malawi				X
	FP035 Vanuatu		X		
	FP026 Madagascar			X	
	FP062 Paraguay		X		
	FP034 Uganda			X	
	FP068 Georgia			X	
	FP072 Zambia			X	
2 ND COHORT (ENTERED IN 2019)	FP096 DRC	X			
	FP069 Bangladesh				X
	FP073 Rwanda			X	
	FP087 Guatemala			X	
	FP097 Central America	X			
	FP098 Southern Africa	X			
3 RD COHORT (ENTERED IN 2020)	FP101 Belize			X	
	FP110 Ecuador		X		
	FP116 Kyrgyzstan	X			
4 TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2021)	FP172 Nepal		X		
	SAP023 Mexico		X		
	FP138 Senegal	X			
	FP060 Barbados			X	
5 TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2022)	CN Armenia	X			
	SAP031 Brazil	X			

	FP/COUNTRY/REGION	ENGAGEMENT/DESIGN	BASELINE	POST-BASELINE STAGE	RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION
6 th cohort (Entered in 2023)	FP179 Tanzania		X		
	FP187 Benin	X			
	FP192 Barbados	X			
	SAP021 Timor-Leste		X		

27. **Impact evaluation country visits.** The IEU LORTA team enabled and supported the development of a comprehensive impact evaluation framework and the necessary data collection for the projects, through field visits and regular consultations with local stakeholders. In the reporting period, the following impact evaluation visits were undertaken.

- (a) **Timor-Leste:** From 19 to 27 September, the IEU team traveled to Dili, Timor-Leste to support a baseline data collection for the project ‘Community-based Landscape Management for Enhanced Climate Resilience and Deforestation in Critical Watersheds (SAP021)’. The team conducted comprehensive preparation work for baseline data collection, starting with a field pre-test of the survey instruments to refine both household- and village surveys. This was followed by enumerator training in Dili, where the LORTA team collaborated with the survey firm FCOTI to ensure strict adherence to data collection protocols and maintain data quality standards. Additionally, the LORTA team engaged with local stakeholders to secure their support for the impact evaluation, while working with the JICA HQ team to coordinate logistical arrangements and reaffirm JICA’s pivotal role in project execution and monitoring during the data collection phase. Data from 1,052 sample households were successfully collected, and the baseline report is scheduled to be finalized in the first quarter of 2025.

28. **WFP Climate Evidence Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand:** From 7 to 9 October, the IEU participated in a workshop organized by the World Food Programme’s Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, contributing to a session titled “Driving Climate Action: A Funders’ Perspective on Evidence in the Asia Pacific.” During the session, the team presented the LORTA programme and shared key insights from a LORTA Bangladesh project case study (FP069), highlighting the impact of adopting climate-resilient livelihoods. This sparked a discussion on measuring long-term climate resilience and effectively engaging the end users of evaluation results. The IEU emphasized the importance of local context and continued efforts to ensure that impact evaluation findings inform a wide range of stakeholders. More information about the impact evaluation work done by the LORTA team in 2024 can be found in the 2024 LORTA Synthesis Report, contained in Annex II of this report.

3.2 Objective 2: Build and deliver an evaluation-based learning, advisory, and capacity-building programme

3.2.1 Evidence reviews and syntheses.

29. The Evaluation Policy for the GCF requires the IEU to promote learning and dialogue by disseminating knowledge and lessons learned. To fulfil this mandate, the IEU consolidates and summarizes existing global evidence on climate-related topics that are relevant to the GCF. Evidence reviews are based on a structured literature search. They appraise the quality of evidence and illustrate the evidence base and gaps in a comprehensive manner. Alongside global evidence reviews, the IEU also produces syntheses and learning papers to disseminate and communicate lessons from evaluations and learnings on climate-relevant topics.

30. **Evidence reviews.** During the reporting period, the IEU completed the procurement of a firm to support the global evidence review on forest conservation. The forest conservation evidence review is back on track with both the evidence gap map and systematic review to be completed in the first half of 2025. The IEU has also established an advisory group for this systematic review, consisting of subject matter experts and Senior Specialists of the GCF Secretariat. In the reporting period, the IEU also continued its discussion on just transition in climate, and completed the procurement for additional analytical work. The IEU plans to produce a learning paper which builds on the successful 2024 evidence review on the same topic, published in May 2024. The analytical work uses the same dataset to better understand the combinations of barriers and enablers that increase the likelihood of a just transition in energy, agriculture and food, infrastructure, and ecosystem services.

31. **Syntheses.** In the reporting period, the IEU team produced an internal synthesis of existing IEU evaluative evidence on Indigenous Peoples, which informed and fed into the ongoing Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Indigenous Peoples. A similar synthesis was prepared as a part of the 2024 Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the GCF's Investments in LAC States, and this synthesis was published as a LabReport on the IEU website.

32. As a part of the 2025 Independent Evaluation of GCF's Country Ownership Approach, the IEU also began the drafting of a synthesis which analyses the existing GCF decisions, policies and documents relevant to country ownership and the existing IEU evaluations and country case studies. The synthesis report will help the IEU identify the existing literature and evidence on country ownership and also provide it with a basis for undertaking targeted data collection for the evaluation, moving forward. In addition, the synthesis report will feed timely and iterative evidence to the Secretariat for the process of drafting the revised country ownership guidelines. The IEU has commenced its engagement with the Secretariat in the reporting period, to ensure sequencing of the evidence provided through this evaluation and the Board engagement on the revised country ownership guidelines.

33. **Other collaborative synthesis work.** The Unit continues to contribute to the ongoing work of the Global SDG Synthesis Coalition as a Co-Chair of the Planet Pillar management group¹⁷. In this capacity, the IEU contributes towards assessing and synthesizing evidence on the implementation of five Planet health-related SDGs, namely: clean water and sanitation; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; and life on land. In this reporting period, the IEU facilitated a survey of the management group and supported the completion of scoping work for the Planet Pillar synthesis. This work continues to look into how the SDGs and the GCF's Updated Strategic Plan targets are linked and identify opportunities for synergies and complementarity.

34. **Evaluability study.** The IEU has continued to analyse the data for the Unit's third evaluability assessments of the GCF's funding proposals. This ongoing series, a cornerstone of the Unit's work, assesses periodically the quality of the GCF's funding proposals at entry. In particular, the study aims to assess the extent to which the approved GCF projects are likely to credibly measure and report on the results they claim and prepare for self-evaluations as part of the AE's mandate. The assessment employs the following four lenses to investigate the potential for internal validity of funding proposals: comprehensive Theory of Change (TOC), potential for measuring and reporting causal change and implementation fidelity, performance against investment criteria, and data collection and reporting credibility. The third evaluability study, in

¹⁷ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/events/ieu-at-sdg-synthesis-coalition>>

particular, assesses the risk ratings of the four main assessment areas between the Initial Resource Mobilization period (2015-2019) and the GCF-1 period (2019-2023). The finalization of the third study is being delayed due to capacity constraints. The IEU plans to publish the next report in the first quarter of 2025. A more comprehensive study, which includes GCF-funded projects in 2024, will be published as early as the third quarter of 2025. The evaluability study will also inform the ongoing Third Performance Review of the GCF.

3.2.2 Capacity building.

35. **IEU supports the development of evaluation capacity.** The IEU's TOR¹⁸ provides the Unit's mandate to support the strengthening of the evaluation capacities of the GCF's implementing entities. The Evaluation Policy for the GCF also provides that the IEU will support the development of evaluation capacities, particularly that of direct access entities (DAEs).

36. In the reporting period, the IEU continued to refine the evaluation capacity-building training modules for AEs, based on the evaluation capacity needs assessment conducted earlier. The training modules focus on the GCF Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Standards and the basics of evaluations. In detail, four training packages, with the aim of building the capacity of AEs, were developed on the topics of: Basics of Evaluation; Basics of Data Collection and Analysis; Preparation of Evaluation Terms of Reference; and Undertaking Quality Assurance of Evaluation Reports, respectively.

37. **IEU's capacity for data management.** The IEU's in-house DataLab is closely monitoring improvements in internal systems and processes at the GCF Secretariat, which the team anticipates will translate into further automation of data work. In the reporting period, a draft data dashboard was launched and tested internally. This dashboard provides access to evaluation-relevant datasets, using both internal and external data of the GCF, and is scheduled for an official launch in the first quarter of 2025. For the data dashboard and transparency around the data, metadata information papers were prepared. These papers provide details and clarity around the structure and accessibility of the data and will be published in the first quarter of 2025.

3.2.3 Partnerships.

38. The TOR of the IEU provides that it will establish closer relationships with the independent evaluation units of the implementing entities and relevant stakeholders and that it will seek to involve them in its activities wherever feasible and appropriate. Partnerships and collaboration are critical to ensure that the IEU delivers effective evaluations, contributes to its own and the GCF's learning, and builds the capacity of in-country agencies. Partners also provide the opportunity, depending on the stakeholders in question, to extend greater understanding, outreach, and uptake of IEU recommendations and to better their perceptions and understanding of the IEU.

39. The IEU actively participated in the 3rd Integrity Forum organized by the GCF's Independent Integrity Unit (IIU), which engaged over 80 participants from more than 55 DAEs. The team introduced the IEU mandate, the Evaluation Policy for the GCF, and the LORTA programme, emphasizing its integration into project pipelines to streamline impact evaluations. Key engagements included a consulting session with the Nepal Investment Mega Bank and

¹⁸ Annex I, Decision B.BM-2021/15 <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/updated-tor-ieu.pdf>>

discussions with the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation, exploring opportunities for collaboration at the pipeline stage. These interactions strengthened partnerships and communicated the IEU's commitment to supporting robust evaluation practices among DAEs.

40. To date, the IEU has memoranda of understanding (MoU) and agreements with 28 AEs, NDAs, universities, research institutes, government ministries, civil society organizations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the independent evaluation offices of AEs.

3.3 Objective 3: Engage strategically to learn, share, and adopt best practices in the climate change evaluation sphere

41. The IEU engages strategically to learn and share knowledge and adopt best practices in the climate change evaluation sphere. It participates in various external and internal events, produces a wide range of publications and outreach materials, regularly updates its microsite, and shares content on social media, among others.

42. Further partnerships and collaboration are critical to ensure that the IEU delivers effective evaluations, contributes to its own and the GCF's learning, and builds the capacity of in-country stakeholders. Also, IEU partners provide the opportunity to extend greater understanding, outreach, and uptake of IEU recommendations.

3.3.1 Communications and Board reporting.

43. **A Board meeting side event.** In October, the IEU organized a highly engaging Board side event on insights from its LORTA programme and shared findings from a recent impact evaluation in Bangladesh, focusing on climate resilience in coastal communities, including other ongoing and future projects from the LORTA programme. The event, held on the margins of B.40 in Songdo, was well attended by participants representing the GCF Secretariat, Board Members, Accredited Entities, and GCF partner organizations. This sparked important discussions with GCF Board members and partners, emphasizing the value of evidence-based approaches in climate finance. The discussion emphasized the importance of collaborative and participatory impact evaluations with local entities. These evaluations are crucial for understanding the baseline and context of climate interventions and typically involve long-term partnerships. While these evaluations are costly and can only cover a small sample of projects, they are essential for accountability, learning, and creating dialogue. The findings from these evaluations aim to inform the decision-making processes of various stakeholders within the GCF ecosystem.

44. Prior to B.40 held in October, the IEU also published and disseminated a Board-facing newsletter, informing the Board and other key stakeholders of the recent work and milestones achieved by the Unit in evaluation, learning, capacity-building, and other areas.¹⁹

45. **Evaluation webinars for the Board members and advisors.** In early December, the IEU organized and delivered webinars to inform the Board of the key conclusions and emerging recommendation areas of two ongoing evaluations: namely, the evaluation of the GCF's result area 'Health and wellbeing, and food and water security', and the evaluation of the GCF's approach to indigenous peoples. These webinars aimed to engage the Board members and

¹⁹ IEU newsletter, Issue 23. <<https://mailchi.mp/96c4ec923708/ieu-newsletter-issue-14173593>>

advisors early on and actively seek their feedback and comments before the evaluation teams finalize conclusions and recommendations.

3.3.2 Outreach and uptake.

46. **Overview of major communications and uptake products.** The IEU produces a wide range of communications and knowledge products tailored to the needs of its broad spectrum of stakeholders. Such products include print and online publications, newsletters, and promotional materials for internal and external engagement. The IEU continues to update its microsite daily and maintain a solid presence on social media. These outreach activities and materials disseminate the IEU's evaluations, support their uptake, and serve the IEU's broader learning and advisory function. Annex III contains a list of IEU publications and communications products that were published during the reporting period.

47. **IEU microsite analytics.** During the reporting period from September to December 2024, the IEU microsite (ieu.greenclimate.fund) continued to serve as an essential resource for disseminating insights on climate evaluation and impact studies. During the reporting period, the microsite recorded 6,900 active users, reflecting an 8.8 per cent increase compared to the previous reporting period. Users engaged with the microsite from regions such as the United States, South Korea, and Italy, with notable growth observed in the United States (+34.6 per cent).

48. Key updates to the microsite included the revamp of the LORTA page, which now highlights the impact evaluations on GCF projects conducted under the IEU's Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment programme. The page enhances visibility and accessibility of these evaluations, supporting stakeholders in understanding the evidence of climate interventions that do work and where improvements can be made further. The launch of a new evidence reviews page on the microsite provided access to detailed resources, including evidence gap maps and systematic reviews, which synthesize global research on topics relevant to the GCF. These resources inform decisionmakers by presenting actionable insights in an accessible format. The IEU also began developing a website revamp plan for 2025. This plan includes a redesign of the navigation structure to improve access to evaluation reports and other key resources and a review of existing pages to align with stakeholder needs. These updates aim to optimize the usability of IEU resources, increase visitors' retention, and strengthen the microsite's role as a hub for climate evaluation resources.

49. The IEU continues to refine its digital presence and enhance the accessibility and functionality of its microsite and social media channels to better serve the needs of its diverse global stakeholders. These efforts ensure that the IEU evaluations and reports are not only accessible but also engaging. They also ensure that the IEU publications are able to facilitate a broader understanding in climate and that the evaluation findings are actively utilized.

50. **Social media analytics.** The IEU's presence on different social media platforms enables the Unit to reach a wider range of stakeholders, including members of global evaluation networks and associations, other climate funds and international organizations, the evaluation offices of United Nations agencies, and GCF accredited entities, NGOs, and academia. Social media continues to serve as an important driver of downloads of IEU evaluation reports and knowledge products.

- (a) **LinkedIn.**²⁰ During the reporting period, the IEU continued enhancing its LinkedIn strategy by transitioning from longer, text-heavy posts to visually oriented formats such as infographics and carousel posts. These formats aligned with current social media trends, allowing key evaluation insights to be curated, summarized concisely, and presented in an accessible way. This strategic shift aimed to enhance the shareability of contents and the engagement within professional networks while driving traffic to linked resources on the IEU microsite. Prior to this transition, IEU's LinkedIn posts attracted around 50 clicks per post on average and their click-through rates (CTR) consistently remained below 10 per cent. CTR, which measures the percentage of users who clicked on links within posts after viewing the posts, increased significantly during this reporting period, averaging nearly 18 per cent. Posts during this period achieved clicks in the hundreds consistently, with top-performing posts exceeding 1,200 clicks. These metrics highlight a clear improvement in directing audiences to IEU's linked evaluation materials and other knowledge products on the IEU website. The number of reposts grew by 40 per cent, reflecting the success of IEU's strategy to design content that facilitates knowledge sharing and highlights key evaluation insights. By adopting formats that are both visually engaging and tailored for easier sharing, the IEU leveraged LinkedIn as a critical platform for amplifying the reach of its evaluations and connecting stakeholders with valuable resources.
- (b) **X/Twitter.**²¹ The IEU's X account continues to serve as a supplementary platform for sharing the Unit's work. The platform supports the Unit's efforts by providing links to key IEU publications and updates on other digital channels, including the IEU microsite and LinkedIn. During this reporting period, the IEU's X account maintained a steady presence with 1,557 followers, serving as a channel to amplify IEU content and drive traffic to other IEU platforms such as the microsite.

3.3.3 Learning and knowledge.

51. In a continued effort to enable and promote the uptake of evaluative evidence, foster a culture of learning, and build capacity within the GCF ecosystem, the IEU organized several learning events and exchanges as the following.

- (a) Four monthly IEU learning talks were held in the reporting period as follows, to better engage the GCF Secretariat and other independent units in an open discussion relating to IEU's work.
- (i) Learning talk '**Market-based Approaches**' in September 2024: This talk was initially planned to take place in August 2024 but was rescheduled for early September because several GCF staff were on leave in August. The talk focused on market-based approaches for climate change adaptation and mitigation, emphasizing the role of index-based insurance and the factors influencing willingness to pay for such products. Panelists shared insights through case studies from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, highlighting the importance of private sector involvement, innovative financial mechanisms, and the need for strong policy and data infrastructure. The discussion underscored both the opportunities and challenges in scaling these market-based approaches, especially for smallholder farmers and renewable energy projects.

²⁰ <<https://www.linkedin.com/company/gcf-eval>>

²¹ <https://twitter.com/GCF_Eval>

- (ii) Learning talk '**REDD+ and Social Safeguards**' in October 2024:²² The talk focused on the REDD+ Results-Based Payment (RBP) mechanism under the GCF. Colleagues from the IEU and Secretariat discussed the IEU's special study on REDD+ RBP projects in Latin America and the GCF's approach to REDD+ RBP, the challenges, and the role of environmental and social safeguards, particularly in indigenous communities. The panellists emphasized the importance of equitable and sustainable forest conservation strategies and addressed the potential impact of mainstreaming REDD+ within GCF's broader financing structure.
- (iii) Learning talk '**What Works in GCF Agriculture Projects**' in November 2024:²³ The session explored evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of components of GCF-supported agricultural projects, highlighting findings from IEU's LORTA programme. Panellists identified capacity building, particularly tailored to women, as a critical enabler for the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. A systems approach, including soil restoration and market linkages, is necessary to create resilient agricultural landscapes.
- (iv) Learning talk '**Carbon Markets and Safeguards**' in December 2024: This session focused on the GCF's commitment to advancing the goals of UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement by fostering low-emissions and climate-resilient development in carbon markets and safeguards, following up on the progress made at COP29 on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Challenges faced by developing countries, such as establishing national registries, were discussed, with suggestions for readiness programmes and blockchain technology to possibly prevent double counting. Panelists highlighted the potential for carbon markets to drive a paradigm shift, the distinctions between market types, lessons from past mechanisms, and the GCF's role in supporting developing countries' engagement with carbon markets to achieve their nationally determined contributions.

52. Each learning talk attracted a sizable gathering of GCF personnel representing the Secretariat and the Independent Units. Guest speakers and discussants included colleagues from across the Secretariat regional desks, programming divisions, and the executive leadership including the GCF's Deputy Executive Director.

3.3.4 Engagement at evaluation and climate conferences.

53. In the reporting period, the IEU engaged in global evaluation and climate conferences as the following:

- (i) **Evidence to Action Round Table Panel Discussion (Webinar) in September 2024:** The IEU participated in a panel discussion highlighting its work on evaluating GCF adaptation projects in Africa and presented key findings from systematic reviews on women's empowerment, water management, and behavioural science, with an emphasis on their potential to improve adaptation programming.

²² <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/event/learning-talk-redd-and-social-safeguards>>

²³ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/node/1919>>

- (ii) **Asian Evaluation Week 2024 in September 2024:** At the Asian Evaluation Week 2024 in Shanghai, the IEU highlighted the critical role of evidence-based evaluations in climate interventions. From discussions on water, climate, and communities to navigating uncertainties in a rapidly changing world, the IEU's contributions showcased the value of partnerships and robust evidence in driving sustainable impact. In particular, the IEU hosted a session discussing impact evidence for climate solutions in vulnerable contexts. This session uniquely focused on climate change and drew significant interest from the participants eager to learn about measuring the impact of climate interventions to improve programming. Presenters discussed the importance of building robust evidence for climate adaptation efforts, especially in vulnerable regions like Bangladesh and the Cook Islands. They highlighted how evidence can drive effective and sustainable climate interventions, drawing from the IEU's impact evaluation of livelihood support on vulnerable groups, particularly women in Bangladesh, and other case studies.²⁴
- (iii) **Lessons on Financing Forest Management (Webinar) in September 2024:** The IEU participated in a joint webinar on forest management with representatives from the evaluation units of four multilateral climate funds. In this webinar, the IEU shared findings from recent IEU evaluations to emphasize the importance of inclusiveness and equity for sustainable impact as well as that of engaging the private sector to scale up and encourage more innovative approaches to forest conservation.
- (iv) **Exploring Current and Emerging Frontiers of Climate Evaluation and Learning in September 2024:** The IEU took part in this seminar organized by the Rockefeller Foundation, which took place in Bellagio, Italy, on enhancing the strategic relevance and impact of evaluation and learning in addressing the climate crisis. Key themes included transformational change, understanding causal pathways, promoting inclusive and equitable approaches, and decolonizing evaluation to empower local communities. Discussions highlighted the important role of networks and communities of practice in fostering innovation and collaboration.
- (v) **The 15th European Evaluation Biennial Conference in October 2024:** The IEU actively participated in the 15th European Evaluation Biennial Conference held in Rimini, Italy, engaging with other evaluation professionals. The IEU presented key takeaways from the recent climate finance Access Synthesis report in a larger panel discussion, which included representatives from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the New Development Bank (NDB). The IEU also led a session on the capacity for climate action, showcasing lessons from its Access Synthesis report and the evaluations on the GCF's readiness and preparatory support programme (RPSP). In another joint session with other climate funds, the IEU contributed to a thought-provoking dialogue on limitations of traditional binaries such as climate and development, and adaption and mitigation.
- (vi) **UNFCCC COP29 in November 2024:** The IEU's virtual and in-person engagements at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan were focused on its 2024 evaluations

²⁴ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/news/ieu-showcases-gcfs-climate-impact-evidence-asian-evaluation-week-2024>>

and outputs, and covered the themes of access to climate finance, vulnerable countries, and accountability. In considering cost-effectiveness, the IEU adjusted its in-person participation in the UNFCCC COP29. Only one staff, Dr Martin Prowse, participated in Pavilion events and an official side event in Baku in November 2024. He was further supported by two colleagues and the Head virtually from Songdo. The Unit's participation in COP29 was aimed at supporting the uptake of evaluation reports in the UNFCCC discourse, engaging with the evaluation offices/units of the four climate funds, and serving the three functions of evaluations: learning, accountability, and dialogue.²⁵ In total, the IEU hosted and participated in eight events at the Pavilions of the Republic of Korea, the Climate Funds, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Namibia, and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. Some highlights are provided below.

- (1) Notably, the IEU took part in an official COP29 side event called "The Role of Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems in Climate Action", organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the governments of Namibia and Seychelles.
- (2) The IEU contributed to several panels at the Korean Pavilion including on REDD+ and the importance of carbon markets.
- (3) The IEU participated in two panels at the joint Climate Funds Pavilion. The first focused on "Accessing Funds and Ensuring Accountability" alongside the GCF's Independent Integrity Unit and Independent Redress Mechanism. For the second event, the IEU took part in a panel discussion on the potential uses and opportunities of artificial intelligence in evaluation, with representatives of the evaluation functions of other multilateral climate funds: the Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility, and Climate Investment Funds.
- (4) The IEU hosted an event at the Namibia Pavilion, which centred on lessons from its Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme. The event showcased causal evidence and lessons from climate impact evaluations in Bangladesh, Madagascar, Rwanda, Malawi, and Tanzania.

54. **UN Evaluation Group and evaluation networks:** Together with other evaluation offices/units, the IEU was a part of the organizing committee of the annual general meeting of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in 2025. In early 2025, the IEU will participate in the UNEG Evaluation Week conference in Tokyo, Japan, organizing a half-day professional development seminar on impact evaluation. The IEU will also join the Multi-Dimensional Evaluation (IDEAS Conference) taking place in Rome, Italy, and potentially present at several joint sessions with other climate funds. Annex IV contains a list of IEU events and engagements with partners and stakeholders during the reporting period.

3.4 Objective 4: Strengthen and position the IEU

²⁵ <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/node/1915>>

55. Based on the Evaluation Policy for the GCF, the IEU is expected to be a global leader in climate evaluation. Consequently, the Unit places considerable emphasis on hiring global talent and further strengthening its internal capacity through a wide range of training and learning opportunities.

56. **Staffing.** In the reporting period, one Principal Evaluation Officer, one Operations and Administration Assistant, and one Policy Researcher, and one Evaluation Uptake Specialist joined the IEU. The hiring process for two Principal Evaluation Officers concluded in the previous reporting period, and Ms. Aiko Ward joined the Unit as the new Principal Evaluation Officer in September 2024, while Savi Mull, another finalist as the Principal Evaluation Officer, after initially accepting, withdrew her acceptance of the offer due to personal reasons. In November 2024, Ms. Tatiana Kan joined the Unit as the Operations and Administration Assistant. In December 2024, Ms. Yeonji Kim joined the team as the new Evaluation Uptake Specialist, Ms. Younsoo Park as the new Policy Researcher, and Mr. Rishabh Moudgill as the new Evaluation and Policy Specialist. The hiring process for one Principal Evaluation Officer is still underway, and this is expected to be concluded in the year 2025.

57. At the end of December 2024, the IEU had 21 staff. During the onboarding period of new staff, the IEU continued to apply an approach of modularity, allowing existing staff members to take on required roles where and when needed. In the reporting period, the Head provided one ad interim arrangement to an Evaluation Specialist to ensure an efficient and effective management of a workstream, until the position of Principal Evaluation Officer is filled. The Unit also strategically used consultants to bridge human resource capacity gaps and to provide specialized services in the most cost-effective manner.

58. **Internship programme.** As a part of the larger GCF internship programme, the IEU internship provides recent graduates and young professionals with an opportunity to learn about international organizations and gain exposure to evaluations in the climate space. All interns are contracted to join the Unit for six months, with the option to extend. In addition to a final report at the end of the internship, IEU interns are responsible for drafting and distributing a weekly internal report that provides an update on the tasks assigned to them in the previous week.

59. Moreover, the IEU arranges a monthly “Interns’ Day” programme that allows the interns to put aside their usual day-to-day tasks, to explore and learn about other areas of the IEU’s work, the GCF, or climate change. In September 2024, as part of the IEU Interns’ Day Programme, the IEU interns visited Namdong Reservoir, a birdwatching hotspot in Incheon, South Korea. Organized by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Secretariat, the event focused on conservation efforts for the black-faced spoonbill, an endangered migratory bird species. The interns toured the Black-faced Spoonbill Eco Center, gaining insights into critical conservation measures such as habitat monitoring and protected breeding areas. This initiative emphasized the intersection of biodiversity conservation and climate action, fostering a deeper understanding of environmental challenges.

60. In the reporting period, and with the support of the Unit, one intern was successful in securing a position at an international organization. In December, the IEU launched a recruitment process for the new cohort of interns who will join the team in July 2025.

61. **Team Training.** In October 2024, the IEU held a two-day team training in Suwon, Republic of Korea, to develop ways for the IEU team to better adapt to and manage change using a resilience framework and concepts such as foresight, agility, robustness, and rebound. The training was designed to better prepare the IEU team members for changes in structure and operations at the Fund, such as the restructuring of the GCF Secretariat, changes to the GCF

business model and processes including those introduced by the Efficient GCF initiative, as well as the unknowns and likely changes in the international climate space. Through the training, the individual IEU team members and the workstreams had a chance to objectively assess their change readiness and to identify ways to boost their foresight, agility, and resilience. This training aims to allow the IEU team to think ahead and map possible change scenarios that are likely to affect its work and evaluations. The training also discussed mechanisms for coping with and responding effectively to such changes. The training session also focused on fostering a strong team culture through deeper conversations, while integrating new team members who joined the Unit in 2024.

62. Additionally, there were a few internal learning moments that were organized as segments within the weekly IEU team meetings. These learning moments covered topics such as ‘Writing for impact’, ‘Elevating the IEU’s engagement in 2024’, ‘How to shine on camera: Tips for presenting in webinars,’ and ‘IEU-Style Writing, Editing, and Formatting.’ Moreover, monthly debrief sessions for the IEU’s evaluation country visits were organized, allowing the entire IEU team to come together to catalogue the country visits undertaken, and discuss the lessons learned and the input and insights gathered from these visits.

Annex I: Budget and expenditure report

1. The table below shows the IEU's 2024 budget and the expenditure report as of 30 November 2024 in USD.

Table 1: IEU's budget and expenditure in January – November 2024

Category	2024 Board approved budget, in USD	Disbursed, in USD	Disbursed, in % of the approved budget	Remaining budget, in USD
Staff costs (a)	4,943,403	3,503,824	71%	1,439,579
Full-time staff ¹	4,556,289	3,134,291	69%	1,421,998
Consultants and interns ²	387,114	369,533	95%	17,581
Travel³ (b)	307,832	281,470	91%	26,362
Contractual services (c)	1,728,500	941,265	54%	787,235
Legal and professional services	1,687,000	878,866	52%	808,134
Operating costs ⁴	41,500	62,399	150%	-20,899
Total (a+b+c)	6,979,735	4,726,559	68%	2,253,176
Shared cost allocation	755,169	692,230	92%	62,939
Grand Total	7,734,904	5,418,789	70%	2,316,115

Note: ¹ Staff costs include staff salaries, benefits, staff training, and development costs. It includes an allocation of USD 132,131 for the salary scale adjustments allocated using planned staff numbers. For the IEU budget concerned specifically, the amount increased to adjust for the GCF salary scales was USD 85,618.

² Consultants costs include the fees, benefits, and travel costs of consultants and interns.

³ Travel costs only include travel fees and daily allowances of staff-related travel in the execution of tasks and deliverables.

⁴ The IEU includes general operating costs, as well as the communications, outreach, and ICT costs as other operating costs, for its reporting and planning.

2. The IEU's forecast budget expenditure for the end of year 2024 is expected to reach USD 6.27 million, or 81 per cent, against the approved 2024 annual budget of USD 7.73 million. Its actual overall budget expenditure as of 30 November was 70 per cent, with USD 5.42 million. The remaining budget was disbursed in December but is not reflected in Table 1 above, due to changes in the administrative system of the GCF.

3. **Staff costs:** Staff costs include salaries, benefits, staff training, and professional development costs. Facilitated workshops and professional training for staff were conducted in 2024. A total of ten hiring processes were completed in 2024, and these include the following: three Evaluation Data Associates, one Researcher, one Principal Evaluation Officer, one Impact Evaluation Officer, one Operations and Administration Assistant, one Policy Researcher, one Evaluation Uptake Specialist, and one Policy and Evaluation Specialist. Of the ten hiring processes, five positions were replacements due to staff fluctuation. Only one staff was hired in the first half of the year 2024, and the remaining nine staff were onboarded in the second half of the year. This led to a relatively modest expenditure rate of staff costs, despite completing

several hiring processes successfully. The Unit also supported two staff members who took parental leave in 2024.

4. Some of these hiring processes faced difficulties, resulting in delays in the onboarding of new staff. One Principal Evaluation Officer, after initially accepting, withdrew the offer for personal and health reasons. Hence, the position had to be re-advertised and is expected to be filled within 2025. The hiring process for a Knowledge Management and Uptake Specialist was completed without hiring a candidate. Due to these delays, the Unit still faced challenges to complete all planned activities and deliverables of the 2024 work plan.

5. Moreover, some hiring processes required a longer period until completion, which included the processes for an Evaluation Uptake Specialist, a Principal Evaluation Officer, and three Evaluation Data Associates. The IEU successfully completed the hiring of three Evaluation Data Associates in 2024, after originally initiating the process in November 2022. This translated into a hiring process of some 19 months. The resulting capacity gaps had to be complemented by individual consultants to ensure an effective and efficient functioning of the IEU.

6. **Individual consultants:** HQ-based and remote consultants were utilized to deliver on the work plan and fill temporary gaps in the staff pool. HQ-based consultants were hired to temporarily replace employees on parental leave and to ensure business continuity. The IEU also utilized several remote consultants. For instance, a remote consultant took relevant tasks of the former team assistant position.

7. **Travel:** In 2024, the IEU conducted and completed 15 country case studies. The IEU also engaged in global evaluation and climate conferences to promote the uptake of evaluative evidence and foster a culture of learning. Associated travel expenses were reflected as they got completed and reported.

8. **Professional/Contractual Services:** Moreover, the IEU has committed 79 per cent of its professional services budget through contracts with vendors. A significant portion of these commitments, amounting to 467,000 dollars, is scheduled for disbursement in December 2024, due to the concentration of defined milestones in the latter part of the year. Professional services have been engaged not only to provide technical expertise for the evaluation scope but also to supplement the team in executing key activities, such as conducting country case studies and benchmarking analyses. These services have further supported critical evaluation processes, including synthesizing global evidence and conducting literature reviews on relevant topics. Some deliverables have experienced delays due to reduced human resource capacity, underscoring the essential role of professional services in ensuring timely and comprehensive delivery of the evaluations. Some of the planned tasks were also not implemented as a result of several hiring delays, resulting in an underspending on professional services.

9. **Other operating costs:** In addition to professional services, other operating costs have been allocated to printing, communication materials and office supplies, subscriptions to specialized software (such as statistical tools not covered by the GCF as a whole), team retreats, and various sundry expenses. It also included the spending on organizing and delivering the 2024 LORTA impact evaluation design workshop in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop brought together AEs, university researchers, and experts to build capacity in designing and conducting high-quality impact evaluations, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region. The workshop received overwhelmingly positive feedback for its value and practical relevance.

10. The IEU wishes to underscore that, for budget reporting and planning, it includes general operating costs as well as the communications, outreach and ICT costs as other operating costs, unlike the other IUs. Nevertheless, the IEU's operating costs are the smallest among all IUs of the GCF. The IEU efficiently utilized the budget, despite the various challenges including the Secretariat's decision to cease a software subscription in the middle of the year, the increased venue-related expenses, and the changed guidance about team retreat costs to be

covered by other operating costs rather than staff costs. It should also be noted that these were the reasons why the IEU ended up overspending the other operating costs in 2024. In 2025, these expenses will be carefully monitored to avoid going over budget and to ensure alignment with the operational priorities of the Unit.

Annex II: 2024 Synthesis Report of the Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) Programme

Green Climate Fund

Independent Evaluation Unit

LORTA Synthesis Report 2024

GCF/B.41/Inf.09 Annex II

February 2025



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Abbreviations

AE	Accredited Entity
AEPC	Alternative Energy Promotion Centre
Avina	Fundacion Avina
BOAD	West African Development Bank
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CCCCC	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CI	Conservation International Foundation
CN	Concept note
CRA	Climate Resilient Agriculture
CRDB Bank	Cooperative Rural Development Bank
DAE	Direct access entity
DBSA	Development Bank for Southern Africa
DPM	Division of Portfolio Management
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRS	Development Research Strategies
EE	Executing entity
EPIU	Environmental Project Implementation Unit, State Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection, Armenia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMCN	Fondo Mexicano Para La Conservación De La Naturaleza A.C.
FP	Funding proposal
GCF	Green Climate Fund
IAE	International Accredited Entity
IE	Impact evaluation
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ISDC	International Security and Development Center
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
J-Pal	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
LORTA	Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment
MoE	Ministry of Environment of Rwanda
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MSME	Micro, small- and medium-sized enterprise
SLEM	Sustainable Landscapes in Eastern Madagascar
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



I. Background

1. The GCF aims to support a paradigm shift towards low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathways. To understand whether the GCF is succeeding in fulfilling this objective it is essential to evaluate if a paradigm shift is occurring and to what extent the GCF is driving it. This evaluation requires its investments in climate action to credibly measure if they achieve their stated goals and intended outcomes. Since 2018, the IEU has investigated the extent to which GCF-supported programmes and projects can verifiably report their impacts, efficiency and effectiveness in an evidence-based and robust manner as part of its evaluability study.

2. The IEU's 2022 evaluability study found that most GCF proposals, whether explicitly or implicitly, present their programme logic and provide a reasonable basis for the credibility of their claims regarding causal pathways. Some 36 per cent of approved proposals even cite good evidence supporting their causal claims. However, only 34 per cent of proposals satisfactorily considered the potential for any unintended consequences of their GCF funding, and 28 per cent ignored the issue. Thirty-six per cent of proposals indicated they already had or intended to collect baseline data for evaluative purposes. However, only 27 per cent of proposals adequately identified the frequency and level of data collection and reporting necessary to ensure monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities continue unhindered. Thus, the results of the evaluability assessment are alarming, and in this context, the IEU's Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme can serve as one of the countermeasures to change such limitations of GCF proposals and address relevant capacity concerns.

3. The LORTA programme uses best practices in theory-based impact evaluations to build feedback loops and measurements into GCF projects and programmes. LORTA has supported a range of project and programme teams to acquire skills and competencies that can be applied to project design, implementation and evaluation.

4. LORTA's primary objectives are threefold:

- (a) Strengthening the capacity of accredited entities (AEs) for impact assessments
- (b) Building an evidence base for the GCF about the impact and improving quality at entry for GCF investments
- (c) Disseminating lessons learned in real-time to the GCF ecosystem

5. LORTA delivers the following activities:

- (a) Building capacity: The IEU builds the capacity of the AEs in impact evaluations and helps project teams embed impact evaluations in their measurement systems. This ensures project teams can access high-quality data on implementation effectiveness and enables them to measure the causal impact of their projects or programmes (hereafter referred to as "projects").
- (b) Providing evaluation advisory services: The IEU advises project teams on conducting or managing impact evaluations and impact measurement systems through state-of-the-art, theory-based, counterfactual methods that measure the causal changes attributable to GCF investments.
- (c) Measuring impacts: The IEU measures the impact of GCF projects through a causal analysis of what works and to what extent. In particular, impact assessment is used to evaluate



innovations, test causal pathways and drivers for delivery, guide decisions on scaling or replicating, and expand the global evidence base of what works and what does not.

- (d) Disseminating learning: The IEU employs impact evaluation designs using theory-based counterfactuals to assess the results of the GCF-funded projects and to report on the implementation challenges and opportunities for these projects and the LORTA programme. LORTA serves as a valuable learning mechanism for the GCF by offering learnings to improve the design and implementation of GCF-funded activities and their M&E.

II. PROGRESS AND MILESTONES IN 2024

2.1 Designing impact evaluations

6. **Workshops:** *Annual Impact Evaluation Design Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand* (October 2024):

7. In October 2024, the LORTA team held its annual impact evaluation design workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, collaborating with Development Research Strategies (DRS) and researchers from the KDI School of Public Policy and Management and Monash University. The annual workshop aims to build the capacity of selected AEs by training their project managers and M&E specialists in designing and conducting high-quality impact evaluations. This year's workshop focused primarily on the Asia-Pacific region, with teams representing seven projects participating—six from the Asia-Pacific and one from Latin America and the Caribbean—as listed in Table 1. The interactive workshop allowed participants to learn about climate interventions and methodologies for measuring their impacts across a diverse range of topics and geographical areas.

8. One notable aspect of this year's workshop was the involvement of university professors, who shared their recent research on climate interventions. Their presentations supported the workshop's goal of promoting rigorous impact evaluation design for climate interventions and provided valuable insights into applying these techniques to project evaluations. Additionally, project teams shared potential challenges they may face in implementing impact evaluations, leading to collaborative discussions on possible solutions.

9. Of the 19 workshop participants, 16 completed the exit survey, providing overwhelmingly positive feedback. Every respondent rated the workshop positively, with 75 per cent rating it as either “useful” or “extremely useful.” Participants' comments highlighted the workshop's value, describing it as an “excellent initiative that helps me think differently to design and evaluate projects,” “extremely useful and informative,” and “most definitely useful in a range of ways.” Similarly, individual sessions were highly rated, with the majority of attendees finding them either “useful” or “extremely useful.”

10. Participants expressed strong interest in applying impact evaluation methods, giving an average score of 8.5 out of 10 when asked about their willingness to use these approaches in current projects. While many acknowledged budget constraints as a practical challenge to implementation, this did not diminish their enthusiasm for the methodology. Notably, over 80 per cent of participants expressed a willingness to include impact evaluation components in future projects. Additionally, participants highlighted a desire for more in-depth exploration of geospatial techniques for impact evaluation, offering valuable suggestions for improving future workshops.



Table 2: Project teams participating in the 2024 Annual Impact Evaluation Design Workshop

PROJECT	COUNTRY	ACCREDITED ENTITY
SAP034	Cook Islands	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management – Cook Islands
FP214	Thailand	GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)
FP154	Mongolia	Asian Development Bank
SAP030	Lao PDR	Save the Children Australia
FP206	Bangladesh	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation
SAP038	Bhutan	Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation
SAP031	Brazil	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management – Cook Islands

2.2 Evaluation advisory services

11. LORTA's technical advisory work focuses on supporting approved GCF projects to develop high-quality and practical measurement and data management systems and conduct impact evaluations. This support includes guidance on impact evaluation methodologies, data collection techniques, statistical analyses, report writing, and dissemination.
12. The LORTA programme has supported AEs embedding interventions with impact evaluation designs while ensuring they retain full ownership of their designs and reports. Moreover, the programme supports AEs in analysing collected data for the impact evaluation, including technical support for data analysis and producing baseline, midline or endline reports.
13. The LORTA programme made substantial progress in designing and implementing impact assessments in 2024, including designing four impact assessments, collecting six rounds of household data, finalizing two endline and two midline reports, and completing one baseline impact evaluation.



Table 3: List of 2024 LORTA evaluation advisory services

DESIGN	DATA COLLECTION	ANALYSIS AND REPORTS
FP179 Tanzania (CRDB) SAP021 Timor-Leste (JICA) SAP031 Brazil (Avina) FP192 Barbados (CCCCC)	Baseline Data SAP021 Timor Leste (JICA) ²⁶ FP068 Georgia (UNDP) ²⁷ Midline Data FP087 Guatemala (IUCN) ²⁸ Endline Data FP101 Belize - BYG (IFAD) FP026 Madagascar (CI) ²⁹ FP034 Uganda (UNDP) ³⁰	Baseline Report SAP023 Mexico (FMCN) Midline Report FP073 Rwanda (MoE, Rwanda) FP026 Madagascar (CI) Endline Report FP060 Barbados (CCCCC) FP101 Belize-BYG (IFAD)

Source: IEU LORTA database, as of November 2024.

Note: Letters in parentheses represent the project AEs.

2.3 Uptake and Learning

14. LORTA is committed to ensuring its dissemination efforts drive meaningful uptake and learning within the GCF and the broader international community. By sharing LORTA findings through diverse platforms, including international conferences, internal learning talks and workshops, LORTA engages a wide range of stakeholders, fosters collaboration, and reinforces the GCF's position as a leader in evidence-based climate finance. These efforts also aim to integrate LORTA's insights into decision-making processes, strengthen feedback loops, and catalyse dialogue to advance the global climate agenda.

- 1) GEF-IEO Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development (March 2024, Washington DC, USA):** The IEU team presented its impact evaluation work and explored potential partnerships with GCF's international accredited entities. During the Mixed Methods Session, the team highlighted LORTA's approach to integrating qualitative and quantitative methods using "FP002: Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture" in Malawi, as an example. In the Quantitative Methods Session, the team showcased plans to use geospatial data to evaluate the long-term impacts of "FP026: Sustainable Landscapes in Eastern Madagascar (SLEM)" project. The conference fostered valuable interactions with existing and prospective partners, laying the groundwork for future collaboration.
- 2) Learning Talk on Early Warning for All (March 2024, Songdo, South Korea):** This session highlighted how behavioural science can enhance early warning systems and pre-emptive actions to save lives and reduce losses. The IEU team shared LORTA insights from FP002, where the project aimed to establish new social norms within communities by training lead farmers to adopt and disseminate climate-informed practices. The discussion emphasized the importance of people-centered messages tailored to local contexts, cultural sensitivity, and trust in messengers, suggesting that trusted figures like priests or schoolteachers could

²⁶ Finalized report available in Q1 2025

²⁷ Finalized report available in Q1 2025

²⁸ Finalized report available in Q1 2025

²⁹ Finalized report available in Q2 2025

³⁰ Finalized report available in Q1 2025



effectively reach diverse groups. The IEU team emphasized the importance of behavioural science in every step, from message design to dissemination.

- 3) **World Bank Africa LEADS Workshop (May 2024, Cape Town, South Africa):** The IEU team participated in this workshop to collaborate with the World Bank team on designing impact evaluations for GCF-funded energy projects. Specifically, the team engaged with the World Bank Development Impact Group and the Kenya GREEN project team to evaluate the project's impact, funded through the GCF's Sustainable Renewables Risk Mitigation Initiative. Together, they explored longstanding challenges in measuring the impact of energy projects and discussed innovative methodologies to effectively assess the impact of the Kenya GREEN project.
- 4) **Learning Talk on Trusted Evidence and Learning in the GCF (July 2024, Songdo, South Korea):** This session focused on how the GCF can use trusted evidence to inform policies, achieve portfolio targets, and, most importantly, achieve impact on the ground. The learning talk highlighted the importance of learning for the Executive Director's 50by30 vision and the Fund's Strategic Plan 2024-2027 and how the IEU uses trusted evidence from impact evaluations to enhance learning within the GCF. During this learning talk, the IEU team shared insights from FP069, a Bangladesh case study on the impacts of adopting climate-resilient livelihoods.
- 5) **Asian Evaluation Week 2024 (September 2024, Shanghai, China):** The IEU team took part in Asian Evaluation Week 2024, which brought together global experts from development organizations, governments, and the private sector to explore critical strategies for development and evaluation. During the event, the team emphasized the significance of generating robust evidence to support climate adaptation efforts, particularly in vulnerable regions. They underscored how evidence can inform effective and sustainable climate interventions, referencing the GCF's efforts to address evidence gaps in low- and middle-income countries and the impact evaluation of FP069, especially women, to cope with climate change induced salinity.
- 6) **WFP Climate Evidence Workshop (October 2024, Bangkok, Thailand):** The IEU joined this workshop hosted by the World Food Programme's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, presenting the LORTA programme during a session on "Driving Climate Action: A Funders' Perspective on Evidence in the Asia Pacific." The team shared insights from a Bangladesh case study (FP069) on the impacts of adopting climate-resilient livelihoods, opening up discussion on measuring long-term resilience and engaging end users of evaluation results. The IEU emphasized the importance of local context and continued efforts to ensure impact evaluation findings inform a wide range of stakeholders.
- 7) **B.40 LORTA side event (October 2024, Songdo, South Korea):** On the margins of B.40, the LORTA team delivered a side event, introducing the programme and lessons learned from the recent impact evaluation report on FP069 Bangladesh by UNDP. GCF Board members, advisers, Secretariat staff and observers representing civil society and the public sector participated in the side event, which offered insights into the impact of GCF's investment and the synthesis of learning throughout the year.
- 8) **Learning Talk on What Works in GCF Agriculture Portfolio (November 2024, Songdo, South Korea):** During this session, the IEU team presented impact evaluation findings from FP073, the Green Gicumbi Project in Rwanda. This session was followed by a synthesis of early insights from the LORTA agriculture and food security portfolio, emphasizing key



enablers and barriers to adopting new technologies. The presentations prompted engaging discussions on the role of the private sector within this portfolio and the potential synergies between traditional knowledge and modern agricultural practices in reaching last-mile households.

III. PORTFOLIO

15. Since 2018, the LORTA programme has onboarded 29 GCF projects, equivalent to around 10 per cent of all approved GCF projects. Of these, three projects were dropped due to implementation challenges. LORTA currently has nine projects at the engagement and design stage, seven at the baseline stage, eight at the post-baseline stage, and two results and dissemination. The status and phase of each project is summarized in Table 3.³¹

Table 4: LORTA project portfolio status and phase

	COUNTRY/REGION	ENGAGEMENT/DESIGN	BASELINE	POST-BASELINE STAGE	RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION
1 ST COHORT (ENTERED IN 2018)	FP002 Malawi				X
	FP035 Vanuatu		X		
	FP026 Madagascar			X	
	FP062 Paraguay		X		
	FP034 Uganda			X	
	FP068 Georgia			X	
	FP072 Zambia			X	
2 ND COHORT (ENTERED IN 2019)	FP096 DRC	X			
	FP069 Bangladesh				X
	FP073 Rwanda			X	
	FP087 Guatemala			X	
	FP097 Central America	X			
	FP098 Southern Africa	X			
3 RD COHORT (ENTERED IN 2020)	FP101 Belize			X	
	FP110 Ecuador		X		
	FP116 Kyrgyzstan	X			
4 TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2021)	FP172 Nepal		X		
	SAP023 Mexico		X		
	FP138 Senegal	X			
	FP060 Barbados			X	
	CN Armenia	X			

³¹ Additional information about the current portfolio can be found in Table 7. *Pls check. There are only three tables in the report.



	COUNTRY/REGION	ENGAGEMENT/DESIGN	BASELINE	POST-BASELINE STAGE	RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION
5 TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2022)	SAP031 Brazil	X			
6 th cohort (entered in 2023)	FP179 Tanzania		X		
	FP187 Benin	X			
	FP192 Barbados	X			
	SAP021 Timor-Leste		X		

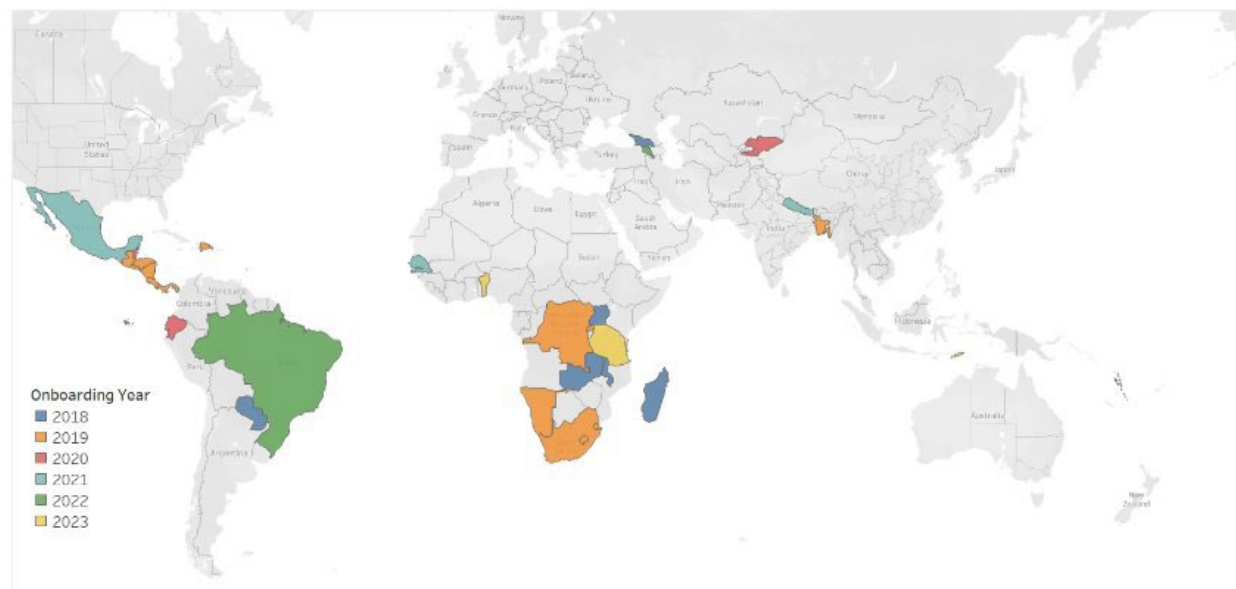
Source: IEU LORTA database, as of November 2024.

Note: While the LORTA programme initially included these projects, FP028 Mongolia (1st cohort in 2018), FP108 Pakistan and SAP010 Philippines (3rd cohort in 2020) are no longer considered under the LORTA programme due to implementation challenges.

3.1 Portfolio by LORTA cohort and project location

16. As of November 2024, the LORTA portfolio comprises 26 GCF-funded activities worldwide. Figure 1 lists the projects' geographical locations and the years that LORTA onboarded them. Since its inception in 2018, the LORTA programme has achieved a balanced regional distribution of projects. There are 10 projects in Africa, five in the Asia Pacific, nine in Latin America and the Caribbean, and two in Eastern Europe.

Figure 1: World overview of LORTA projects



Source: IEU LORTA database as of November 2024.

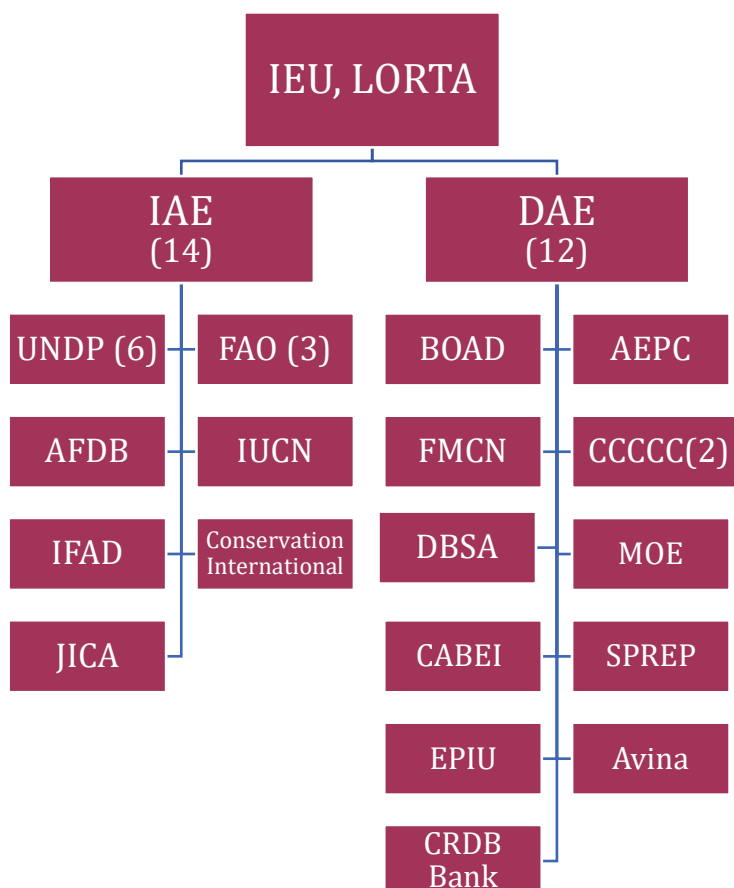
Note: The figure shows the geographic distribution of GCF-funded projects under the LORTA programme. The colour legend represents the year that LORTA onboarded these projects.



3.2 Portfolio by working partner

17. The LORTA portfolio has achieved a balanced representation of both IAEs and DAEs, as demonstrated in Figure 2. This balanced distribution ensures diverse perspectives and experiences, contributing to LORTA's success and effectiveness.

Figure 2: List of LORTA working partners



Source: LORTA Impact Evaluation Portfolio.

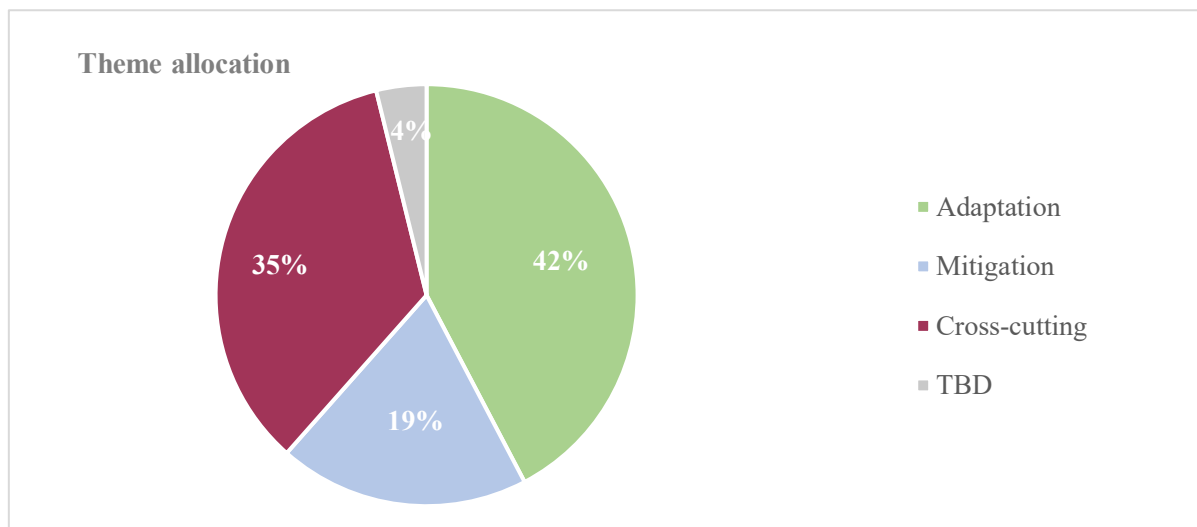
Note: (#) indicates the number of projects managed by each entity if the number is bigger than one. For example, UNDP has six projects with LORTA.

3.3 Portfolio by adaptation and mitigation

18. As illustrated in Figure 3, the LORTA portfolio comprises 26 projects: 11 adaptation, nine cross-cutting, five mitigation, and one still to be determined in the case of Armenia, as the project is at the concept note stage.



Figure 3: Theme allocation of onboarded projects



Source: IEU LORTA database, as of November 2024.

Note: The LORTA programme includes one project, CN Armenia, onboarded in 2022 after the 2022 Annual Impact Evaluation Design workshop. The Armenia project is still under consideration for Board approval, hence its thematic allocation has not yet been confirmed.

IV. LEARNINGS IN 2024

4.1 Fund-Wide Strategic Learnings

Learning 1. A clear and consistent definition of resilience is essential for effective climate interventions and impact measurement.

19. A clear and consistent definition of resilience is crucial for effective climate interventions and impact measurement. This definition must be context-specific, requiring close engagement with local partners to develop frameworks tailored to each project. While many GCF-funded adaptation projects aim to enhance resilience among vulnerable communities and populations, there is often insufficient clarity on how proposed interventions achieve these goals.

20. For instance, SAP031 aims to increase resilience by promoting and scaling up diversified agroforestry systems, enabling smallholder farmers to better withstand climate-related shocks. However, during field visits and discussions with stakeholders, the project team faced challenges articulating how specific activities contribute to the project's medium- and long-term resilience goals.

21. Resilience-building encompasses various dimensions, including the resilience of crops and natural resources through new technologies or agroforestry systems and household economic resilience through income diversification and adaptive capacity.

22. A consistent overarching definition of resilience must guide all projects and interventions that GCF and other actors undertake. However, the specific pillars and indicators of resilience must be contextualized. Resilience is shaped by:

- 1) **The Context of Negative Events:** The types of shocks or stressors that pose the greatest threats vary across projects.



- 2) **Fundamental Building Blocks:** The key elements underpinning a system's resilience differ between contexts.
- 3) **Temporal Dynamics:** Resilience is time-bound, depending on short-term and long-term conditions and outcomes.

23. To transform GCF investments into actionable and measurable impacts, the theory of change and logical frameworks of interventions must align with a robust resilience framework. Ensuring this alignment involves:

- 1) **Developing a conceptual framework** to classify and accommodate the diverse interventions.
- 2) **Establishing an analytical framework** to quantify the impacts effectively.

24. By bridging these gaps, GCF and LORTA can ensure that investments build resilience and generate measurable and actionable insights into their effectiveness. Ultimately, robust evidence on the impact and effectiveness of climate interventions can unlock opportunities to mobilize resources and scale up successful approaches.

Learning 2. Reliable and comprehensive data systems are essential for effective project monitoring and impact evaluation.

25. Reliable and comprehensive data systems are fundamental to effective project monitoring and impact evaluation. However, such systems are lacking in many contexts, and data availability remains limited. This challenge extends beyond data needed for impact assessments to encompass project monitoring and national statistics.

26. For example, during this year's country visit, weaknesses in the national monitoring system were apparent. While forest fires, illegal logging, and animal grazing were listed as the main causes of deforestation in SAP021, relevant data were not easily accessible. Through workshops and meetings with the project teams and senior government officials, LORTA team members emphasized the critical role of M&E at the project and national levels. LORTA-supported impact evaluations utilize data from various sources, including household and community surveys, GIS data, administrative data, and national census data. Through the impact assessment exercise, the LORTA team aimed to contribute to building data systems in these countries that can serve broader purposes beyond impact evaluation.

27. Data collection in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) presents unique challenges, including high logistical and transportation costs due to limited inter-island connectivity. While it is possible to evaluate the impact of projects in SIDS is feasible, the high costs often make it unviable to collect data from individual or community beneficiaries using traditional approaches. Alternative approaches or different financial mechanisms may be needed to address this challenge, such as allocating a separate budget or securing external funding.

28. Establishing a project monitoring and beneficiary tracking system early is crucial for effective project management. IUCN developed a comprehensive beneficiary monitoring and tracking system that visualizes beneficiaries by activity, geographic location, and time. LORTA's impact evaluation used this system to identify and match household data between treatment and control groups. As of October 2024, the system contained more than 30,000 direct beneficiaries across various components of the funded activities, including demonstration plots, technical assistance to producers, capacity-building training, and climate information dissemination. Despite the well-



developed and real-time monitoring system, the LORTA team encountered challenges with data entry. For example, the lack of a personal identification code made tracking which individual received specific interventions difficult. Spelling errors and incomplete entries of full names, such as multiple first and family names, required extra time and effort to review and verify the data in the system.

29. Additionally, the team faced challenges aligning evaluation data collection with project timelines. Delays in project completion or data collection due to project management or procurement issues can undermine the impact evaluation design. Such challenges highlight the need to consider what should be measured and evaluated and the time needed for an intervention's impact to materialize, given that impacts often extend beyond project timelines. For example, forestry projects require several years for trees to mature and their ecosystem impact to become evident.

4.2 Practical Learnings for Future Operation

Learning 3. Expanding Learning Beyond the Secretariat and Back to the Ground

30. Effective engagement with the GCF Secretariat has demonstrated how impact evaluation findings can potentially inform project design and strategic planning. While efforts such as multiple learning talks and dialogues with the Secretariat have laid the groundwork, there is still room to strengthen these feedback loops within the GCF and ensure insights are systematically integrated into GCF programming. Beyond the Secretariat, for lessons learned to drive meaningful change, they must also reach the ground, including local governments and stakeholders. While the team's current engagement focuses on AEs, creating opportunities to engage with national governments will be essential for greater impact.

- 1) **Opportunity for Learning Loops:** There is growing interest within the GCF Secretariat on how impact evaluation learnings could inform the GCF's work, particularly in reviewing pipeline projects. During the recent IEU Learning Talk on "Trusted Evidence and Learning in the GCF", it was noted that we are not yet fully utilizing "learning loops," feeding project insights back into new project design and strategic planning.
- 2) **Practical Engagement with Sector Specialists:** One way to bridge this gap is through closer engagement with sector specialists, who can play a crucial role in integrating LORTA lessons into GCF's overall strategy. Following its recent IEU Learning Talk on "What Works in GCF Agriculture Projects", LORTA representatives had an in-depth discussion with a gender specialist and an agriculture specialist from the Secretariat. They expressed particular interest in how LORTA's gender-related findings within agriculture and food security projects could inform the review and design of future pipeline projects. Based on this, proposed actions include synthesizing LORTA's gender-focused agricultural findings and exploring how they could contribute to the Secretariat's Sectoral Guide on Agriculture and Food Security.
- 3) **Impact on Pipeline Project Design:** Building on this engagement, sector specialists raised questions about ways to enhance agricultural and food security projects in the pipeline based on LORTA findings. For example, they asked which elements of current agricultural projects have proven effective, especially concerning gender and food security. Such discussions suggest that, going forward, sector specialists can provide insights on prioritizing learning themes for LORTA's onboarding of projects.
- 4) **Bringing lessons back to the ground:** While engaging with AEs remains central, there is also a need to bring findings and lessons learned to country governments and policymakers who directly implement and benefit from these projects. Disseminating such information



could help build the capacity of governments, strengthen country ownership, and ensure that impact evaluation findings inform decision-making at the local level. LORTA will continue to seek these opportunities to include national counterparts in dissemination activities and discussions.

- 5) **Adequate evaluation planning and budgeting during the pipeline stage:** During the Bangkok workshop, participants highlighted one key challenge: despite a strong interest in impact evaluation, many AEs had already allocated their M&E budgets to other evaluation activities, leaving little flexibility for impact evaluation. This highlights the importance of fostering a culture of proactive evaluation planning during the pipeline stage. Disseminating lessons from past impact evaluations can help AEs and the Secretariat recognize the value of integrating impact evaluations into project design. By encouraging early consideration of impact evaluation needs and ensuring adequate budget allocation, GCF-funded projects can leverage evidence-based insights to improve project outcomes and promote learning across the portfolio.

Learning 4. Adapting LORTA Approaches to Explore Learning Opportunities from Local Contexts.

31. This year, the Uganda FP034 wetland restoration project highlighted the need for flexibility and innovation in adapting impact evaluation design to local challenges. The project's original impact evaluation plan encountered significant obstacles, including the absence of baseline data due to project rollout prior to the baseline data collection and statistically significant demographic differences between treatment and control households. These issues limited the comparability of results between treatment and control households. Adjustments to the follow-up data collection were required to ensure the impact evaluation could still produce meaningful insights. With the follow-up data collection currently in progress in 2024, the LORTA team has refined its strategies to address these challenges and enhance the value of the ongoing impact assessment.

32. The team introduced alternative data sources and methods to strengthen the impact evaluation framework. Geospatial, normalized difference vegetation index and nightlight data are being utilized to improve matching between treatment and comparison villages. Community leader surveys are also underway to understand the pre-trend differences across 100 villages, helping to improve the comparability between the treatment and comparison households. Additionally, the team plans to incorporate qualitative insights from focus group discussions and key informant interviews into the impact evaluation findings and understand how implementation or project impact may vary by community and leadership characteristics.

33. A within-survey experiment is also being conducted to explore the role of communication in building community trust and support, a critical factor for project effectiveness identified in the project's interim evaluation. This experiment tests conservation messages emphasizing ecological benefits versus economic incentives to determine which resonates most with local households. The project team emphasized that the results will potentially inform communication strategies for a future payment for ecosystem services programmes and support the Ugandan government's efforts to improve outreach to rural communities with limited access to climate information. These adjustments reflect the LORTA team's efforts to ensure the impact evaluation findings remain relevant and actionable for improving project implementation and future designs.



4.3 Lessons learned from FP060 Barbados and SAP023 Mexico

Lessons Learned from the Impact Evaluation of the Personal Tank Programme in Barbados (FP060)

34. Key findings from LORTA

- 1) The FP060 Personal Tank Programme, implemented by CCCCC, aimed to enhance water resilience among vulnerable households in Barbados by providing water tanks and training on their use. The programme effectively identified households using vulnerability scores, but targeting could be improved by focusing on parishes at greater risk of water outages. While the uptake of water tanks had a 100 per cent acceptance rate, only 79.2 per cent were installed, and just 68.3 per cent were fully functional due to issues like unconnected water pumps.
- 2) Beneficiary households reported increased water storage capacity and perceived safety, improving resilience to water disruptions. However, poor maintenance practices and limited training participation posed risks to water quality and sustainability.

35. Challenges Faced

The impact evaluation faced several challenges that limited its rigour. Without baseline data, measuring changes directly caused by the programme was difficult. Data collection was also challenging, with data gathered from only 84 households – 82 beneficiaries and two non-beneficiary households – out of an anticipated sample of 261 households. Finally, the lack of a comparison group made it hard to confidently attribute improvements in water security to the programme.

36. Lessons Learned

- 1) Early engagement with AEs is essential for impact evaluation to establish clear objectives, robust evaluation frameworks, and alignment with M&E needs. Collecting baseline data should be prioritized in future projects to enable rigorous assessments of programme impact. Flexibility in evaluation design is also crucial to adapting to unforeseen challenges and ensuring meaningful insights are generated.
- 2) Promoting training participation is important for ensuring sustainability in similar programs and can be potentially improved by making training mandatory or offering incentives. Closer collaboration with stakeholders, including NGOs, community groups, and government agencies, can further strengthen implementation and increase community buy-in. Additionally, combining infrastructure provision with targeted behavioural campaigns, such as promoting maintenance practices, could help sustain project impact.

Lessons learned from River Restoration for Climate Change Adaptation (RIOS) in Mexico (SAP023)

37. Key findings from LORTA

- 1) **Baseline Data Findings:** The survey was conducted with 212 beneficiary households and revealed regional and gender disparities in climate vulnerabilities, including the following:
 - Extreme climate events such as droughts and floods are more frequently reported in Jalisco and Nayarit than in Veracruz.



- Female-headed households are particularly vulnerable, facing prolonged water shortages and economic challenges.
 - Eco-friendly technologies are commonly used, with wood-saving stoves prevalent in Jalisco and Nayarit, and rainwater harvesting systems in Veracruz.
- 2) **Socioeconomic Insights:** Agriculture is the primary income source across regions, with pensions being crucial for many. Male-headed households exhibit greater income diversification.
- 3) **Community Engagement:** Participation in social groups, such as climate advocacy groups and firefighting brigades, is more common in Jalisco due to specific local challenges like wildfires.

38. Challenges Faced

Data Collection:

- Mistrust and privacy concerns among respondents led to low participation rates, especially for secondary household surveys.
- Security issues and busy schedules in target regions further impeded data collection efforts.

39. Lessons Learned

- 1) **Localized Solutions:** Regional differences necessitate tailored interventions, such as focusing on water conservation in Veracruz and wildfire management in Jalisco.
- 2) **Strengthening Community Engagement:**
- Building trust and aligning with local social dynamics are critical for improving participation in evaluations and project activities.
 - Enhancing social group networks can amplify community resilience and project impact.
- 3) **Early Data System Development:** Establishing robust data systems at the project's outset can streamline future evaluations and provide actionable insights.
- 4) **Proactive Planning:** Considering gender-specific vulnerabilities and region-specific priorities is crucial for achieving equitable and sustainable outcomes.

40. The report underscores the importance of integrating localized approaches and robust monitoring systems into project design to enhance the adaptive capacity of vulnerable watersheds and communities in Mexico.

V. CONCLUSION

41. In 2024, the LORTA programme continued to guide and advise on impact assessment for GCF-funded projects. As of December 2024, the programme was supporting 26 ongoing GCF projects. Through the annual impact evaluation design workshop, the LORTA team is onboarding 3-4 new projects to the programme this year. The team also made substantial progress with its advisory services in 2024, including delivering four new designs, six sets of household-level beneficiary data and five finalized reports



42. The LORTA programme presents synthesized learnings in both strategic and operational aspects. The strategic element highlights efforts to contextualize resilience frameworks and align them with local realities, highlighting opportunities for innovation in project design and impact evaluation. While logistical and data challenges persist, these have prompted creative solutions, such as alternative data collection methods and enhanced alignment of project timelines with evaluation needs. The operational aspect emphasizes engagement with the Secretariat to generate learning opportunities and LORTA's adaptive approaches to ongoing impact evaluations to address challenges and ensure the impact evaluation findings remain relevant and actionable.

43. The LORTA team actively engaged in dissemination and outreach efforts throughout the year. A successful side event during B.40, a dedicated learning talk, external workshops and a conference highlighted the strong interest in assessing the attributional impacts of GCF-funded projects, underscoring LORTA's importance. The IEU's LORTA programme continues to play a vital role in enhancing the effectiveness and impact of GCF-funded projects and provides essential support, guidance, and critical insights.



ANNEX I: CURRENT LORTA PORTFOLIO

PROJECT ID	COUNTRY / REGION	RELATED SECTOR	CLIMATE TOPIC	AE	MILESTONE	ONBOARDING YEAR
CN	Armenia	TBD	TBD	EPIU	Pre-approval	2022
FP002	Malawi	Climate information and early warning system	Climate information and adaptive livelihoods	UNDP	Academic publication	2018
FP026	Madagascar	Agriculture and food security Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Smart agriculture, forest protection	Conservation International	Implementation	2018
FP034	Uganda	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Wetlands and sustainable livelihoods	UNDP	Implementation	2018
FP035	Vanuatu	Climate information and early warning system	Climate information	SPREP	Implementation at pause	2018
FP060	Barbados	Water security	Adaptive livelihoods, water security	CCCCC	Implementation	2021
FP062	Paraguay	Forest and land use	Reforestation	FAO	Implementation	2018
FP068	Georgia	Climate information and early warning system	Early warning system	UNDP	Implementation	2018
FP069	Bangladesh	Agriculture and food security Water security	Agricultural livelihoods, water security	UNDP	Implementation	2019
FP072	Zambia	Agriculture and food security	Agricultural livelihoods	UNDP	Implementation	2018



PROJECT ID	COUNTRY / REGION	RELATED SECTOR	CLIMATE TOPIC	AE	MILESTONE	ONBOARDING YEAR
FP073	Rwanda	Agriculture and food security	Watershed protection and adaptive livelihoods	MoE	Implementation	2019
FP087	Guatemala	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Watershed management, climate-smart agriculture	IUCN	Implementation	2019
FP096	DRC	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	African Development Bank	MoU	2019
FP097	Central America	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Biodiversity friendly MSMEs	CABEI	Inception at pause	2019
FP098	Southern Africa	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	DBSA	Implementation	2019
FP101	Belize	Agriculture and food security	Smart agriculture	IFAD	Implementation	2020
FP110	Ecuador	Forest and land use	REDD-plus reforestation	UNDP	Implementation at pause	2020
FP116	Kyrgyzstan	Energy access and power generation	Natural resources management	FAO	MoU delayed	2020
FP138	Senegal	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	BOAD	Inception at pause	2021
FP172	Nepal	Energy access and power generation	Clean cooking solutions	AEPC	FAA	2021
FP179	Tanzania	Agriculture and food security	Adaptive livelihoods, Agricultural livelihoods	CRDB Bank	Inception	2023



PROJECT ID	COUNTRY / REGION	RELATED SECTOR	CLIMATE TOPIC	AE	MILESTONE	ONBOARDING YEAR
FP187	Benin	Agriculture and food security	Adaptive livelihoods, Agricultural livelihoods	FAO	Inception	2023
FP192	Barbados	Water security	Water and energy management	CCCCC	Inception	2023
SAP021	Timor-Leste	Forest and land use	Land use planning, natural resource management	JICA	Inception	2023
SAP023	Mexico	Forest and land use	Ecosystem	FMCN	Implementation	2021
SAP031	Brazil	TBD	TBD	<i>Fundación Avina</i>	Inception	2022

Source: LORTA database.

Annex III: List of IEU publications and communications materials that were published in the reporting period (September - December 2024)

Document type	Topic
Board report	GCF/B.40/Inf.11: Report on the activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit
Board report	GCF/B.40/14: Independent Evaluation Unit 2025 work plan and budget and update of its three-year rolling objectives
Impact evaluation knowledge product	Impact Evaluation Midline Report for FP073: Strengthening Climate Resilience of Rural Communities in Northern Rwanda
Impact evaluation knowledge product brief	2-page brief of the Impact Evaluation Midline Report for FP073 – The Green Gicumbi Project (A LORTA Country Brief)
Evaluation report	[Final Report] Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of GCF's Investments in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) States
Evaluation product	[LabReport] An Analysis on Implementation Challenges and Risk Assessments for the GCF Projects In Latin America and the Caribbean Region
Evaluation product	[Approach Paper] Independent Evaluation of the GCF's 'Health and Well-being, and Food and Water Security' Result Area
Evaluation product	[Approach Paper] Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Indigenous Peoples
Evaluation brief	2-page approach brief of the Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Indigenous Peoples
Evaluation brief	2-page brief of the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of GCF's Investments in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) States. The Brief was translated and published also in Arabic, French, and Spanish languages.
Evaluation brief	4-page brief of the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of GCF's Investments in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) States.
Evaluation brief	2-page brief of the Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Approach to and Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses. The Brief was translated and published also in Arabic, French, and Spanish languages.
Management Action Reports (MAR)	Management Action Report of the Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (Annex II to the IEU B.40 Activities Report)

Document type	Topic
IEU Blog	B.40 Data Outlook: Empowering Climate Action through Evidence and Capacity Building
IEU Blog	Riding the Waves: Reflections from the 2024 IEU Team Training Session
IEU News	From Climate Finance to Impact Evaluation: The IEU at COP29
IEU News	The IEU Showcases GCF's Climate Impact Evidence at Asian Evaluation Week 2024
IEU News	REDD+ Results-Based Payment Pilot Projects: Enhancing Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean
IEU News	IEU Interns Join Conservation Efforts for Endangered Black-faced Spoonbill at Namdong Reservoir
IEU News	IEU Workplan 2025
Newsletter	IEU Newsletter Issue 23

Annex IV: List of IEU events and engagements with stakeholders and partners in the reporting period (September - December 2024)

Month	Event	Type
September	Evidence to Action Round Table Panel Discussion (Webinar)	External engagement
	[IEU Learning Talk] Market-based Approaches	Secretariat engagement
	2024 Asian Evaluation Week: Innovations for Influential Evaluations 1. Plenary Session: Engaging for Impact: Enhancing Country Partnerships 2. IEU-hosted Session: Water, Climate, and Communities: Generating Impact Evidence for Climate Solutions in Vulnerable Contexts at the Regional Level 3. Plenary Session: Evaluation Headlines Live: Evolving Role of Evaluation in Preparing for an Uncertain Future	External engagement
	15 th European Evaluation Society Biennial Conference	External engagement
	Joint Multilateral Climate Funds (MCF) Evidence Series: Lessons on Financing Forest Management	External engagement
	Exploring Current and Emerging Frontiers of Climate Evaluation and Learning	External engagement
	REDD+ Results-based Payments Workshop	GCF Secretariat
October	[IEU Learning Talk] REDD+ and Social Safeguards	Secretariat engagement
	LORTA Impact Evaluation Design Workshop	External engagement
	B.40 Side Event: Impact Evaluation	Engagement with the GCF Board
	IEU Webinar on PPWW and LAC Evaluations for GCF Secretariat	GCF Secretariat
	IEU Webinar on PPWW and LAC Evaluations for CSOs, PSOs, AEs	GCF Stakeholders/Partners
	IEU Webinar on PPWW and LAC Evaluations for GCF Board	GCF Board
November	[IEU Learning Talk] What Works in GCF Agriculture Projects	Secretariat engagement
	IEU at UNFCCC COP 29 Korea Pavilion:	External engagement

Month	Event	Type
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieving NDCs through Global Forest Cooperation based on PA Article 6: REDD+ and Tropical Carbon Sinks 2. REDD+ efforts of the GCF and the importance of carbon market 3. How much climate finance is provided, where does it go, and who can access it? Multilateral and bilateral perspectives <p>Namibia Pavilion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Evidence and Learning from an Impact Evaluation of a GCF-Funded Project in Bangladesh <p>Coalition For Disaster Resilient Infrastructure Pavilion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Mobilizing Private Finance for Gender-responsive Climate Resilient Infrastructure <p>Climate Funds Pavilion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Climate finance: Accessing Funds and Ensuring Accountability 7. Use of AI in Climate Change Evaluations 8. The Role of Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems in Climate Action: Delivering Together a Resilient Future for All (Official Side Event organized by the Commonwealth Secretariat) 	
	Evidence for Climate Action Webinar: How much climate finance is provided, where does it go, and who can access it?	External engagement
December	[IEU Learning Talk] Carbon Markets and Safeguards	Secretariat engagement
	Joint Multilateral Climate Funds (MCF) Evidence Series: Artificial intelligence (AI) in Evaluations	External engagement
	IEU Webinar on conclusions and emerging recommendation areas of the IPs and HWFW Evaluations for GCF Board	GCF Board
	IEU Webinar on conclusions and emerging recommendation areas of the IPs and HWFW Evaluations for GCF Secretariat	Secretariat engagement
	IEU Webinar on conclusions and emerging recommendation areas of the IPs and HWFW Evaluations for GCF CSOs, PSOs, and AEs	GCF Stakeholders/Partners