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LORTA Synthesis Report 2024

Summary

This document provides a report of the key activities of the Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) Programme of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) for 2024. It reports on the programme's outputs, achievements, and learnings from the year.

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.xx 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
1ST 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	
2ND COHORT (ENTERED IN 2019)	FP096 DRC	X			
	FP069 Bangladesh				X
	FP073 Rwanda			X	
	FP087 Guatemala			X	
	FP097 Central America	X			
	FP098 Southern Africa	X			
3RD COHORT (ENTERED IN 2020)	FP101 Belize			X	
	FP110 Ecuador		X		
	FP116 Kyrgyzstan	X			
4TH 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.

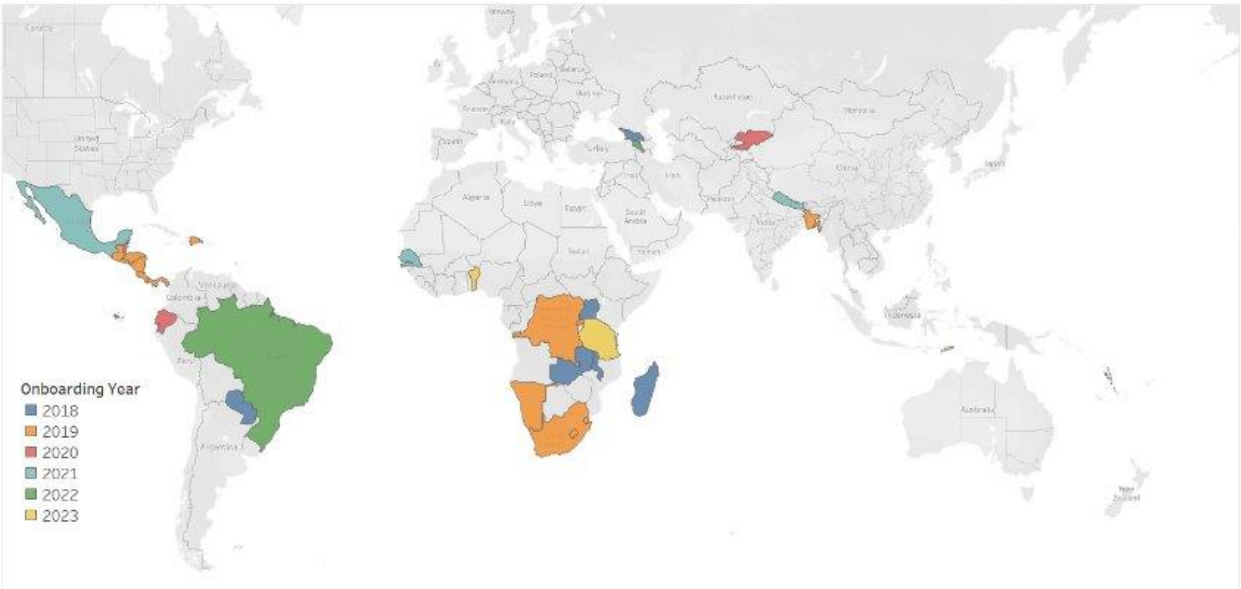
	Country/region	Engagement/design	Baseline	Post-baseline stage	Results and dissemination
5TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2022)	SAP031 Brazil	X			
6th cohort (entered in 2023)	FP179 Tanzania		X		
	FP187 Benin	X			
	FP192 Barbados	X			
	SAP021 Timor-Leste		X		

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

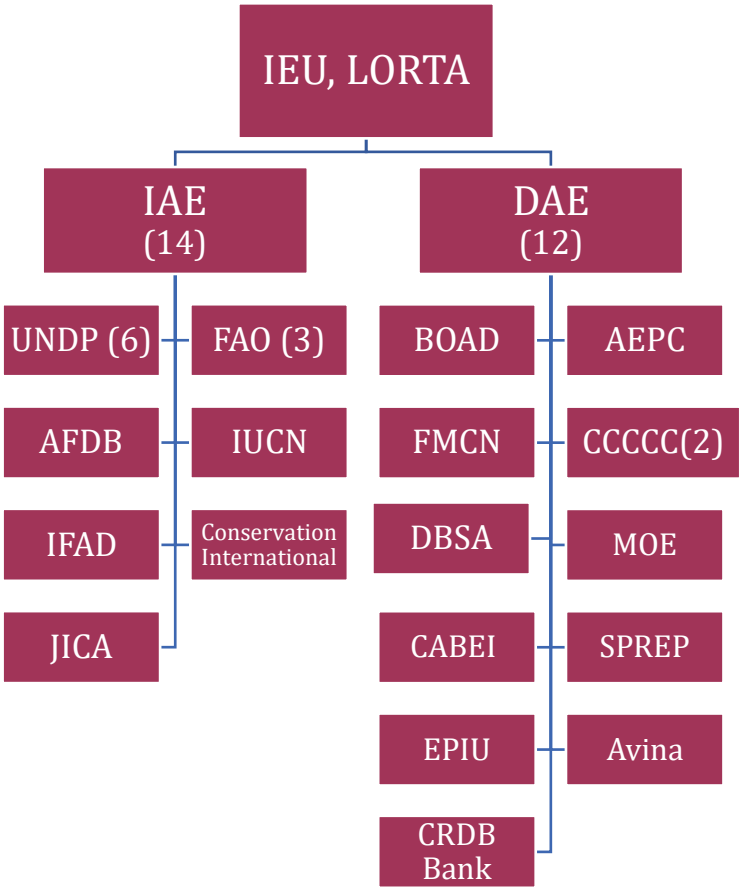


Source: IEU LORTA database as of November 2024.
Note: The figure shows the geographic distribution of GCF-funded projects under the LORTA programme. The colour legend represents the year that LORTA onboarded these projects.

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

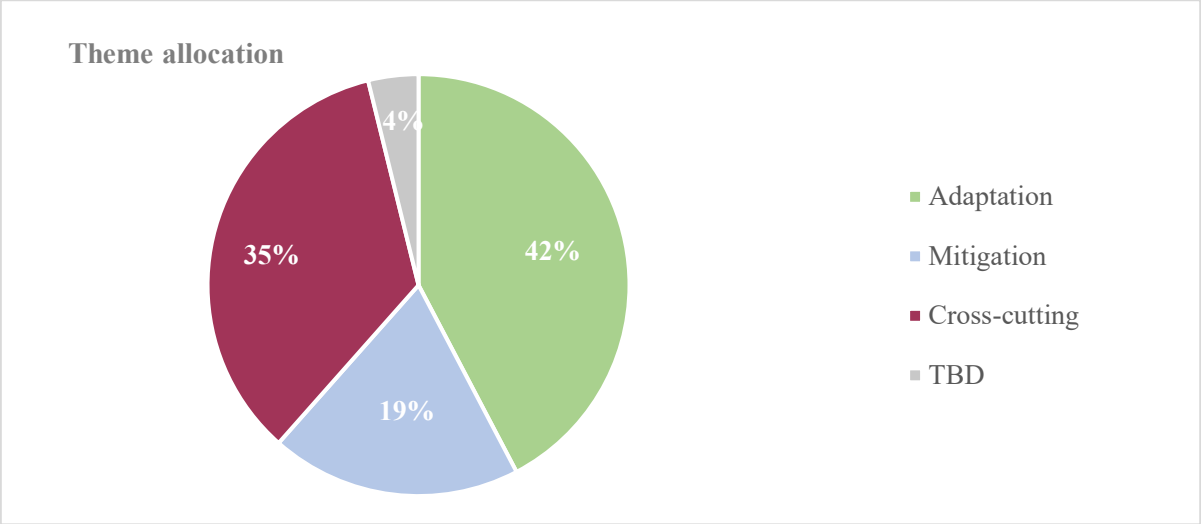


Source: LORTA Impact Evaluation Portfolio.
Note: (#) indicates the number of projects managed by each entity if the number is bigger than one. For example, UNDP has six projects with LORTA.

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	*Fundación Avina*	Inception	2022

Source: LORTA database.