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Unit



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE GCF'S READINESS AND PREPARATORY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Final report

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GREEN CLIMATE FUND
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION UNIT

Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme

FINAL REPORT

09/2023

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PREFACE

Even as I am writing this preface, reports reach us of uncharacteristically high temperatures, floods and severe droughts around the globe. Unpredicted heat waves and food shortages in Africa and Asia are causing climate migrants to abandon lands they have for centuries called home. In midst this, I am reminded of the voices of climate youth activists. “Climate change is more than statistics, it’s more than data points. It’s more than net-zero targets” as Vanessa Nakate, a Ugandan climate activist and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador said. “It’s about the people, it’s about the people who are being impacted right now and in the future.” Practitioners and scientists agree that calls for transformative adaptation to climate change require attention to the type of capacity building that can support it. Beyond a project-by-project focus, community-level capacity building has been seen as a key to ensure ownership, legitimacy, and sustainability of climate change interventions. A question that remained is how and when are communities ready.

The Independent Evaluation Unit assessed the Green Climate Fund’s capacity building programme, the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, first in 2018, and concluded that the Fund should urgently consider addressing three questions: **First, ready for what?** The GCF should consider if it is getting countries ready for global climate finance or only for access to GCF finance. Neither of those are necessarily wrong choices but it needs to identify. **Secondly, when are countries ready?** How will the GCF assess and know when countries are ready for climate interventions. **And, lastly, how ready are countries?** This speaks to the question of engaging with the countries and recipients and measuring GCF’s success.

Since then, the Fund has undertaken an incredible journey, graduating from a newly established to a well-equipped climate fund, with more than 228 approved projects (equating to a total value of USD 48.2 billion) and more 717 readiness grants (equating to USD 534 million) (Green Climate Fund, 2023k). This time around, we asked ourselves these questions again, how well are countries prepared to manage climate action? And if they are, what are common factors that one would have to address to prepare local communities for a much-needed paradigm shift in low emission and climate resilient development pathways across sectors, countries and regions.

The engagement with country partners face-to-face in eight countries and more than 150 interviews have shown us that while contexts vary across regions, countries and communities, these common factors exist. The engagement with country stakeholders gave me a first glimpse at what might be needed: First, being technically ready and acquired technical expertise across a wide range of stakeholders is imperative to comprehensively manage climate action and finance. Second, local knowledge, shared information and training are central components for longevity and sustainability in climate action. Third, active engagement with a multitude of local actors, inclusiveness, and equity for those that can’t have their voice heard, are crucial in building capacity and ownership. Lastly, leadership in climate action is key to not only ensure the execution of climate interventions and projects but provide a vision for a local climate movement. The GCF is unique as it does not only have the means financially and technically, together with its implementing entities and partners, but it has also the convening power to do so.

This report is bringing to light considerations, trade-offs, and opportunities for the Fund. Besides, effectiveness and efficiency, it discusses the relevance, coherence, and complementarity both internationally and outside the Fund. In conclusion, while progress in the operationalization and development of tools is observed, the value add of the GCF’s readiness programme needs to be discussed and clarified and clearly communicated. The GCF should reach diverse actors and

cultivate national climate finance ecosystems. I would like to thank all stakeholders, accredited entities, partners, the GCF Secretariat and my team for all their effort and support. I hope you enjoy reading this report - and are galvanized into action as a consequence.

Andreas Reumann

Head of the Independent Evaluation Unit

Green Climate Fund

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This evaluation was launched by Mr. Prashanth Kotturi, Evaluation Specialist, together with co-lead Dr. Anastasia Aladysheva, with an evaluation team consisting of Mr. Peter Mwandri, Ms. Yeonji Kim and Ms. Elangtlhoko Mokgano from the IEU. Ms. Zulfiya Khazina assisted in the preparation of the approach paper. The evaluation was completed under the guidance of Mr. Andreas Reumann, Head of the IEU. Dr. Martin Prowse and Dr. Junior Abdul Wahab were instrumental in undertaking research which was crucial for preparing the synthesis of evaluation findings from previous IEU evaluations. The RPSP team is also grateful for Dr. Martin Prowse's inputs into the evaluation from his pilot mission to Uganda.

The evaluation has been jointly written and is co-owned by a team of external experts, including Dr. Eric Abitbol, Mr. Philip Cox, Ms. Aurelie Ieroncig, Ms. Rennie Jordan, Ms. Shaida Mahmoud, Dr. Amanda Woome, Dr. Marie-Eve Yergeau, Ms. Esther Rouleau and Ms. Kat Harrison. Dr. Ansgar Eussner rendered invaluable feedback through quality assurance of the numerous deliverables of this evaluation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Adaptation Committee
AE	Accredited Entity
AF	Adaptation Fund
AML	Anti-Money-Laundering
APAC	Asia-Pacific
B.36	The thirty-sixth meeting of the Board
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean
CCCCC	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CMA	The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
CN	Concept note
COP	Conference of the Parties
CP	Country Programme
CPDAE	Community of Practice for Direct Access Entities
CR	Completion Report
CSO	Civil society organization
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
DAE	Direct Access Entity
DCP	Division of Country Programming
DGDD	<i>Département Genre et Développement Durable</i>
DLCC	<i>Direction de la Lutte Contre les Changements Climatiques, Côte d'Ivoire</i>
DMA	Division of Mitigation and Adaptation
DOE_ATG	Department of Environment, Ministry of Health and Environment, Government of Antigua and Barbuda
DP	Delivery partner
DPM	Division of Portfolio Management
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EPF	Environment Protection Fund
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
ESS	Environment and Social Safeguards
EVs	Electric vehicles
FA	Funded activity

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMCA	Financial Management Capacity Assessment
FP	Funding proposal
FWA	Framework Agreement
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GGA	General Grant Agreement
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GI	Governing Instrument
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
IAE	International accredited entity
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
IPAG	Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDCF	Least Developed Country Fund
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MRV	Measurement, reporting and verification
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Plans for Action
NDA	National Designated Authority
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NOL	No-Objection-Letter
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORMC	Office of Risk Management and Compliance
OSI	Office of Sustainability and Inclusion
PDR	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
PMC	Project management cost
PPF	Project Preparation Facility
PPMS	Portfolio Performance Management System
PSF	Private Sector Facility
PSO	Private sector organization

REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
RKB	Readiness Knowledge Bank
RPSP	Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme
RRMF	Readiness Results Management Framework
RSPN	Royal Society for the Protection of Nature
RWG	Readiness Working Group
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SRI	States Resilience Index
TA	Technical assistance
ToC	Theory of change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USD	United States dollar
USP	Updated Strategic Plan
VC	Vulnerable country
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Green Climate Fund's (GCF) Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) aims to provide resources for strengthening the institutional capacities of national designated authorities (NDAs) or focal points and direct access entities (DAEs) to efficiently engage with the Fund. Under its second phase (RPSP 2.0), the Programme was guided by the following objectives: (i) capacity-building for climate finance coordination; (ii) strategies for climate finance implementation; (iii) national adaptation plans and/or adaptation planning processes; (iv) paradigm-shifting pipeline development; and (v) knowledge sharing and learning.

In 2023, the GCF's Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) undertook the "Independent Evaluation of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme". The evaluation assesses RPSP support to GCF eligible recipient countries delivered under the Readiness programme strategy 2019–2021 (hereafter, 'readiness strategy') and the GCF Updated Strategic Plan 2020–2023. It examines progress since the IEU's 2018 RPSP evaluation and looks at the Programme's relevance, coherence and complementarity, effectiveness, as well as its results measurement and oversight mechanisms while feeding lessons into the preparation of new readiness operations. The evaluation was finalized in October 2023 and presented to the last meeting of the Board of 2023.

METHODOLOGY

The IEU followed a utilization-focused, participatory evaluation methodology framed in a theory-based, systems oriented, mixed methods approach. The mixed methods approach adopted for this evaluation entailed a synthesis of IEU evaluations on readiness, a literature review, document review, portfolio analysis, online stakeholder surveys, key informant semi-structured interviews, as well as country case studies and a low-readiness deep-dive. Country case studies included Armenia, Belize, Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Panama, and Tanzania. The low-readiness deep-dive explored RPSP support in countries classified as having low-readiness as per the ND-GAIN and States Resilience Index and drew on data from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Mali and Yemen.

MAINSTREAMING OF 2018 RPSP EVALUATION

Overall, the GCF has made good progress implementing the recommendations set out for the RPSP towards the end of its initial phase of operation. It has revised or introduced operational and delivery modalities and underpinned them with a much-needed readiness strategy which, among other things, introduces a new focus on partnering, knowledge management, and on the tracking of readiness results.

Regarding the operational and delivery modalities, some variability exists in the extent to which recommendations have been operationalized, and in a few critical areas, most notably the development of the results tracking and knowledge management functions, it is too soon to see added value.

While helpful in describing the RPSP offering, the 2019–2021 readiness strategy has come up short in establishing the Programme's value proposition in the GCF's value chain. This has

simultaneously hampered RPSP performance against its objectives and undermined its “enabling” contribution to the GCF.

RELEVANCE

The RPSP 2.0’s programme offering aligns well to national circumstances, for the most part. On a global scale, the GCF is targeting vulnerable countries, as intended, though scope for improved access is noted for the most vulnerable in the cohort. At a country level, the RPSP was found to stand out for its size and scope.

Albeit with variances, the distribution of readiness activities identified by NDAs and delivery partners (DPs) indicates comprehensive coverage of RPSP objectives and in similar proportions between RPSP 1.0 and 2.0. There is clearly a continuing concentration of activities in RPSP 2.0 associated with country capacity development (objective 1).

The evaluation identified several drivers nudging country decision-makers to embark on low-carbon, climate-resilient development pathways, which include the deepening climate change impacts on populations that include their own citizens, and second, country commitments made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other related multilateral agreements. On the other hand, the “business-as-usual” tendencies in government and the private sector have in other instances held the country decision-makers back from embarking on those same pathways. The scope of activities contained under the 2019–2021 readiness strategy positions the GCF to engage with all three drivers in pursuit of its climate ambitions.

COHERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

Internal coherence

Although better defined in RPSP 2.0 than in its previous phase, the work on “readiness” at the GCF remains insufficiently anchored to the GCF’s organization and strategy and is under-supported by policy. Its value proposition to the GCF remains divergent, under-recognized and under-explored.

In general, GCF’s organization of RPSP 2.0 and its choice of delivery modalities are consistent with Programme objectives and in keeping with country circumstances and expectations, as divergent as those are country to country. At the same time, a methodology gap around the identification of country readiness needs has hindered NDA potential to assert country leadership on readiness investments. As well, the strategic importance, yet sheer fragility, of the country coordination mechanism beckons closer attention from a programme design perspective.

Moreover, there has been little harmonization between the release of the RPSP strategy and tools for the operationalization and implementation of the Readiness programme. As numerous tools and frameworks have been released over the period of RPSP 2.0 to operationalize the strategy, this has left a perception of constant change in the RPSP among stakeholders and also necessitated ex-post adjustments and retrofitting of operations.

Solid headway has been made putting in place a means to tell the GCF’s readiness results story. Where there was little ability to understand impact beyond that created by single grants, groundwork has been laid to understand the RPSP at a programme level. The presence of a Readiness Results Management Framework (RRMF) moves GCF and RPSP stakeholders one step closer to

understanding readiness contributions and potential at a country level. Tools for periodic measurement of results and quality of grant implementation are, however, yet to be fully developed.

External coherence

Evidence of external coherence and complementarity between the GCF and other readiness and capacity-building support is variable across comparator organizations and is highly context dependent and specific. At fund level, collaboration is often ad hoc and opportunistic, and fund-level agreements have only limited effects on the GCF's country-level engagements. At national level, mechanisms for country programming and focal point coordination facilitate coherence and complementarity, in some settings.

Several RPSP comparative advantages were identified, namely its focus on capacity and institution-building, its support to climate finance planning and strategies (including the underlying information for these), and its connection to the GCF's role as a convenor. Key limitations are also noted, including a perceived lack of clarity on requirements and the absence of a regional presence.

EFFECTIVENESS

RPSP grants and technical assistance address RPSP objectives to varying degrees and show variability in effectiveness. Higher effectiveness is noted for objectives 1 and 3, while effectiveness appears more limited for objectives 2, 4 and 5. While capacity-building and national adaptation plan (NAP) support have been highly valued, a need to broaden and increase capacity-building support (e.g. secure accreditation), mitigate impacts of staff turnover, and support NAP and climate finance investment implementation are noted. Challenges related to pipeline developed have hampered the achievement of objectives 2 and 4, while the capturing of lessons learned and provisions for knowledge sharing need to be further systematized.

A range of factors have enabled and hindered the achievement of RPSP results across its portfolio. Above all, political shuffles and changes in government are identified as hindering factors to the success of the RPSP. Additionally, the location of the NDA, the country's socio-political context, and the DAE and DP landscape were also found to have implications for the effectiveness of the RPSP. Challenges with regard to RPSP accessibility and grant implementation timelines are also flagged for the risks they pose to the delivery of RPSP outputs. Country case studies highlight both the merit of having a strong DP with extensive knowledge of GCF processes and the in-country context, and the merits of continuity of support which can be fostered by DPs implementing multiple RPSP grants in a country.

GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

With regard to advancing the GCF's gender and social inclusion ambitions, GCF policy and strategy level expectations on the RPSP to deliver and demonstrate contribution-to-impact are considerable when considered in relation to available in-house resources. The modestly sized Office of Sustainability and Inclusion has corporate-wide responsibilities and covers the readiness programming terrain selectively, reliant on Division of Country Programming (DCP) regional teams and the Division of Portfolio Management (DPM) to incorporate environmental and social safeguards and inclusion policy requirements into their respective lead roles. It is not clear that this arrangement is sufficient to "mainstream" gender and enhance engagement with indigenous peoples as required by policy.

By virtue of the central role the RPSP plays in preparing countries to accept GCF (and to a lesser extent, international) climate finance, the Fund's championship of gender and social inclusion is strategic. But its approach to the work is not unlike that of analogous organizations (global/regional/national) including those with longer track records and deeper roots at a country level. In view of observed delivery constraints at the Secretariat, country-level communities of practice that in some settings generate local expertise represent a resource to be tapped for greater programming "reach" and "impact" on gender and social dimensions.

At the country level, the ease with which gender and social inclusion dimensions are incorporated in planning processes varies for myriad reasons which are unique to individual countries. This requires a nuanced (localized, culturally attuned) approach from those in facilitation roles (notably DCP, accredited entities (AEs)/DP, and technical assistance consultants). It also poses a challenge when setting global expectations, particularly on indicator and target setting.

COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

Country ownership over climate action and finance is highly context dependent, and so its prevalence varies considerably across GCF eligible countries. RPSP has supported some factors that contribute to ownership, most notably: institutional capacities, Country Programme (CP) development and use, and the accreditation of national entities. GCF requirements and capacities also play a role in the level of country ownership, with a key challenge being how to balance providing sufficient guidance and resources, on the one hand, while leaving space for countries to take the lead on the other.

NDA leadership resulting from capacity-building activities has so far been variable, despite achievements under objective 1 of the RPSP Strategy. Key limiting factors include high NDA turnover, political complexities, a lack of clear country strategies for readiness, and GCF capacity constraints. RPSP has also had limited results thus far for increasing widespread stakeholder capacity for engagement, and there are differences in how stakeholder engagement is seen across countries and stakeholder groups. Most readiness support has been used for informational or training purposes.

IMPACT AND PARADIGM SHIFT

There are limited concrete impacts where the RPSP has led to the mobilization of climate finance from the GCF or other resources, although isolated success stories are identified. The persistent barriers to climate financing and the need to shift towards an outcome-oriented approach have limited the extent to which the Programme has led to impacts in this regard.

While transformative change and paradigm shift are critical elements in the architecture that links GCF investment to its goals, at the country level the concepts remain largely abstract to stakeholders. For some GCF staff and country stakeholders, the paradigm shift concept is associated with the later stage results of climate investments to be teased out when developing project theories of change (potentially with readiness support); for others paradigm shift is associated with a mind shift that develops in a population at a country level over time (also potentially with readiness support). Underpinned by such ambiguity and divergence, RPSP's role in fostering paradigm shift remains vastly under-explored.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of RPSP results has been mixed though promising. The RPSP contributed to organizational structures and policies for climate financing that will likely be sustained, although high turnover of government staff represents a continued challenge to sustaining national capacities. This, combined with the lack of knowledge of GCF procedures and “language” among national stakeholders, suggests that the GCF’s “phased-out approach” to capacity-building is inadequate. Furthermore, CPs developed with RPSP support contribute to a long-term vision for GCF investments, but difficulties in moving from concept note (CN) development to GCF funding proposal (FP) approval pose sustainability concerns.

Moreover, the RPSP is contributing to building an ecosystem for climate financing in countries. However, multisectoral coordination varies across countries. Despite recent improvements, engagement with non-State actors remains a work in progress.

EFFICIENCY

Overall, communication frequency from the GCF to country partners continues to be perceived as inadequate, with detrimental effects on the implementation of RPSP grant activities. Key contributing factors include the lack of a GCF institutional presence or at least a routine of country visits by GCF staff, the time difference between many stakeholders and GCF headquarters, and persistent language constraints. In addition, GCF communication efforts are insufficient for socializing knowledge, and are inefficient.

Improvements in the different stages of the RPSP grant cycle have nonetheless been noted during consultations with NDAs, DPs, and GCF stakeholders, as well as by survey respondents. The average number of days from proposal submission to approval has decreased, though still it remains too long. The application process is viewed by some as requiring a level of detail and provision of types of information that seem to them irrelevant, time-consuming, costly, and disproportionate to the size of support provided by grants with a duration of one year. Africa remains the region where the average number of days from proposal submission to approval is the highest, which is concerning for a GCF priority country group.

Several challenges impact the implementation of readiness grants. Disbursement is slow, which negatively affects implementation timelines. An over-reliance on consultants for technical assistance is also challenging, with DPs reporting difficulties in their search for suitable consultants, both national and international. NDAs and DPs describe a lack of flexibility in implementation from the GCF, in ways that do not align with adaptive management principles. That said, while the COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected RPSP delivery, the GCF is recognized for having pursued a flexible approach for reducing the impact of pandemic-related disruptions on implementation.

Taking a closer look at GCF priority countries (i.e. least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States, and African States), access to the RPSP remains challenging, particularly for LDCs and African States, and is further exacerbated in African LDCs. GCF processes and requirements and low disbursements were considered as particular hindrances to GCF’s readiness ambitions in these countries. Heterogeneity is particularly noted in small island developing States resulting in important variation in accessibility to RPSP resources.

Finally, the GCF has integrated different internal risk management mechanisms into its processes. However, several of these mechanisms embedded in the RPSP grant cycle impact efficiency by

creating long delays and burdensome bureaucracy. At the organizational level, the GCF portfolio risk management comprises two distinct levels of due diligence and appraisal, one undertaken by the NDA/DP and the other by the GCF Secretariat, independent units, and panels. At the country level, the GCF accreditation and financial disbursement practices are themselves key components of a risk management and mitigation system. In delivering readiness support, the GCF works with DPs with whom it has framework agreements, or with United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to manage resources with national and regional entities, ensuring that risks are minimized.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. The RPSP is the key GCF programme designed to meet the climate finance needs of developing countries, but its value proposition remains insufficiently developed and universally shared within the GCF and by its stakeholders to substantiate its strategic importance.

While the RPSP has undergone significant changes since its inception, it remains a “work in progress” on account of iterations informed by evaluations, reviews and deliberations. GCF has put in place two RPSP strategies and numerous processes, guidelines and frameworks to increase the relevance and effectiveness of the RPSP and provide readiness support in a timely manner. However, the full potential of the RPSP’s value to countries and its contribution to GCF’s overall goals and operations has not been fully understood and elaborated among different stakeholders within and outside the GCF. Being one of the world’s key leading readiness programmes in the climate space, its role in the global climate finance architecture is insufficiently articulated and communicated.

Conclusion 2. The RPSP’s effectiveness and efficiency are challenged by GCF’s known operational constraints. These constraints include, inter alia, lack of sufficient staff capacity to meet its institutional ambitions, insufficient appreciation of operating contexts, lack of flexibility in its processes, the long review times of RPSP proposals, and lack of integration between different processes in the GCF (including the discord between RPSP and Project Preparation Facility (PPF) support). These constraints also impact timely access to the RPSP by countries. There have been some improvements since the first RPSP programme, with country stakeholders able to access readiness resources more quickly and transaction times across grant cycles having somewhat improved, albeit with persistent variances associated with levels of country vulnerability.

Conclusion 3. The fragmentation of GCF’s internal structure affects the level of integrated engagement with country-level stakeholders and the degree of continuity in the transition from RPSP-related offerings to downstream initiatives related to funding activities. GCF’s ability to provide integrated support to meet country needs is constrained by the lack of internal coherence between GCF’s divisions (i.e. DCP, DMA¹, PSF², DPM). The Secretariat’s championship of the RPSP is not entirely clear, with RPSP responsibilities spread across numerous divisions. Discrepancies in data information and availability across the Secretariat’s data structure also speaks to this fragmentation. Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence that the CNs lead to the project proposals, as well as that the funded activities can be attributed solely to the RPSP. These different layers of fragmentation also affect the active integration of gender and indigenous people’s issues into the RPSP.

¹ Division of Mitigation and Adaptation.

² Private Sector Facility.

Conclusion 4. The success of the RPSP at country level is predicated upon contextual factors which are not fully acknowledged and addressed in the delivery of the RPSP. The Programme is delivered as a collection of individual grants; the success of individual grants depends on yet-unaccounted for contextual factors while the grant-specific approach prevents country-level or portfolio results. GCF as an institution is still in the process of enhancing its accessibility and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including civil society organizations, private sector organizations (PSOs), DPs, and DAEs among others. There is still a nascent but evolving understanding in countries of GCF and its requirements and vice versa. The “different languages” spoken by country stakeholders – including national DPs – and GCF create higher transaction costs for countries in accessing the RPSP. The GCF has attempted to bring down the transaction costs through the release of documented knowledge products, guidelines and modalities. Their reception and success are yet to be assessed.

At country level, factors such as lack of NDA capacity or interest, staff turnover in NDAs, and low understanding of GCF procedures and processes affect the RPSP and thus give rise to ongoing capacity challenges which contradict possible assumptions of capacity-building as a static and largely one-time activity. Capacity needs are neither linear nor definitive as country needs evolve. Both the role of the RPSP in assisting in the preparation of CPs, and the usage of CPs for setting national climate priorities remain context specific. The readiness programme does not always account for this country-specificity. It is more prominently directed towards the DPs rather than the countries and, therefore, country readiness needs are still not fully understood. The GCF has been able to achieve an understanding of promoting complementarity with other climate funds at the corporate level but the same has not been uniformly realized at the country level.

Conclusion 5. Lack of clarity around key concepts in its theory of change is an impediment for the RPSP. This is especially true for paradigm shift and country ownership. The RPSP has demonstrated the potential of achieving a paradigm shift in countries that have a developed understanding of paradigm shift. Building clarity on the concept of paradigm shift within the Secretariat and elaborating a country-specific view of the concept are requirements that remain to be achieved for GCF to realize the full potential of the RPSP’s key goal. Similarly, the RPSP has enabled GCF to set up policies and processes and to invest in building capacities at the country level. Some essential dimensions of country ownership however are still missing. Country ownership is deemed solely to be government ownership. However, technical capacity, leadership, strategic stakeholder engagement, and a strong climate movement are also elements of country ownership. To this extent, conceptual clarity is missing vis-a-vis the RPSP’s role in promoting paradigm shift and country ownership.

Conclusion 6. The RRMF provides a framework for measuring results. The fund has no means to periodically assess the quality of implementation and the final results of the RPSP. The RRMF was introduced in the middle of the implementation of the 2019 RPSP strategy and provides a framework for measuring the past and current results of the RPSP. The current data available to the Secretariat and the IEU is insufficient for assessing the outcomes, impacts and risk pertaining to the RPSP at portfolio level. GCF also lacks mechanisms for measuring the quality of implementation.

Conclusion 7. There is little harmonization and coherence between the RPSP strategy and the tools for its operationalization. There has been a time lag between the release of the RPSP strategy and various tools such as the RRMF, readiness handbooks, and the Standard Operating Procedures. The time lag has extended nearly to the end of the current cycle of the RPSP strategy with the release of a revised handbook and Readiness Knowledge Bank (RKB) in 2023. The extended

operationalization of the RPSP strategy creates an impression of constant change during the RPSP programme and also requires a retrofitting of RPSP grants. This imposes transaction costs upon countries and DPs.

Progress on RPSP objectives

Given the time that has elapsed since the start of the RPSP there is an expectation for the Programme to demonstrate results, and such results are variable across objectives. Results are more prominent in the domain of institutional capacity-building and NAP support while they remain less prominent in supporting the preparation of strategic frameworks and policies at the country level, and in pipeline development and knowledge management. Conclusions by objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Country capacity

The RPSP has been successful in supporting the development of country NDAs/focal points and in aiding their related national systems to integrate climate finance (e.g. their coordination mechanisms). Establishing this country capacity is a foundational achievement, though it requires continued attention in the face of complex national dynamics and contexts. While country ownership over climate action and finance is sought, NDAs/focal points often have been less stable than anticipated, subject as they are to internal political divisions, idiosyncratic institutional arrangements, frequent changes in leadership and staff, heavy workloads and competing demands, any of which can undermine the delivery and sustainability of results.

Overall, RPSP engagement for capacity strengthening at a country level has remained concentrated around NDAs/focal points and DPs. Relatively little has been offered to the private sector, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic and other national actors, though this varies with the NDAs/focal points of some countries taking very deliberate actions to expand their stakeholder reach. Also, while the RPSP is meant to advance GCF's gender and social inclusion ambitions, it has only partially been able to do so, given the substantial needs when considered against available in-house resources.

The successes and shortcomings in the sustainability of the RPSP's results substantially draw upon the institutional capacity-building undertaken with NDAs, DAEs and other institutions in a country. The high level of focus on institutional capacity development is a recognized comparative advantage of GCF's readiness operations.

Objective 2: Strategies

The Programme's second objective has focused on the implementation of ambitious strategies to guide GCF investments, done in a manner that is complementary to the methods of other climate financiers. Important progress has been made in this respect, as evidenced by the increasing presence of CPs in GCF eligible countries along with the elaboration of strategic frameworks, policies, regulations and plans. Determining the best use of readiness resources in a country context remains a "work in progress", however. The needs are great, the resources are finite, and the clamour for readiness support from many quarters is fuelled by a range of motives.

The development of strategies for integrating international climate finance and attracting country-level private sector investment remains formative. RPSP successes with the private sector largely have been confined to early-stage exposure and engagement. GCF – and particularly RPSP – processes are widely perceived to be ill-suited to the private sector, and also to intermediary organizations.

Objective 3: Adaptation planning

Adaptation planning over the evaluation period has seen much success that can be attributed to a matching of country government motivation, on the one hand, and the presence in the RPSP of an

adequately sized resource envelope, on the other. The Programme has produced a strengthening in adaptation planning, governance and institutional coordination, though some challenges are still noted among the more vulnerable countries. As with the RPSP under objective 1, however, the complexity of operating contexts warrants an iterative programming approach that in at least some countries would benefit from more extensive and protracted support than one NAP funding cycle could provide to establish a skills base, embedded practice and results.

While adaptation planning has advanced significantly, there is no evidence as yet that readiness activities have led to increases in adaptation financing. The Programme appears short on the mechanisms and means to significantly catalyse private sector participation and meaningful civil society engagement in adaptation.

Objective 4: Pipeline development

The Readiness programme has been least effective in realizing its pipeline development objectives, based on current, quite limited available evidence. RPSP grant closure has often preceded the submission of CNs where they have indeed materialized, so tracking this indicator is particularly challenging. The extent of handoff from RPSP-supported CNs to PPF-supported FPs cannot be ascertained with any measure of certainty. Significant barriers persist in tracking the achievement of such outcomes across the portfolio.

NDAs/focal points and steering committees have had relatively little oversight in the development of CNs by DPs or DAEs, which has seen heavy reliance on the use of consultants.

Challenges in the development of CNs, particularly in meeting quality standards are also noted. The length of RPSP support is perceived as inadequate to span from ideation to approval. Larger GCF processes are also observed to impede the extent to which CNs are approved in a timely manner and moved through the subsequent phase until they reach approval as a funded project. These include an adjudication approach centred on climate rationale, a finite institutional capacity at GCF to process projects for Board approval, and the presence within GCF of drivers that favour the deployment of international AEs, impact investment funds and the packaging of multi-country financing initiatives.

Objective 5: Knowledge sharing and learning

The most recent objective of the Programme has focused on knowledge sharing and learning. Even before this objective was formulated, the Programme was supporting knowledge sharing and learning activities through such events as regional and structured dialogues. These have been widely appreciated by a broad range of stakeholders when they take place (noting that the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily curtailed in-person participation). Knowledge sharing is widely perceived as valuable and needed, both by the GCF and a broader range of stakeholders. While there has been very good participation in the range of dialogues organized by the GCF, with RPSP support, the Readiness Guidebook has seen only variable use – despite it providing highly pertinent information – for want of targeted outreach and training on its use.

GCF's commitment to knowledge sharing and learning has thus far only modestly translated into practice. The extent to which partnerships have been established and operationalized to foster the development and dissemination of methods, frameworks, and information systems for enhanced climate finance programming has also been limited to date, and more ad hoc than planned. This now appears to be changing with systemic investments being made using readiness resources (e.g. by DPs). Increased attention to this objective is reflected in the recent development of the RKB, which has started to document approaches, successes, and lessons learned across the Programme. The socialization of the RKB however remains a work in progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation proposes a set of seven high-level recommendations and associated explanatory details for each. Taken as a whole, these recommendations speak to the strategic and operational issues discussed, intent on informing the next phase of the RPSP of the GCF. Implementing these recommendations would result in a more strategic, impactful, larger and more streamlined Programme, adapted to the challenges, priorities and capacities of GCF-eligible countries, stakeholders and recipients. These recommendations acknowledge and build upon a Programme that has improved over the past 5 years. They do not aim to bring only minor adjustments to the Programme, but to build ambitiously on its increasingly solid foundations, to recognize and catalyse its greater potential.

Recommendation 1. The GCF should sharpen its strategic intent and orientation for the RPSP at corporate level. The GCF should rationalize its capacity to resource the Readiness programme.

1.1. The GCF should clarify the value proposition and business case of its Readiness programme as one of its central offerings. Its role needs to be anchored within the strategic directions and modalities of the Fund overall (including the PPF, PSF, accreditation and others). GCF needs to be much clearer on what the Programme is trying to achieve for the Fund, for climate finance and for countries needing climate finance to address urgent climate change circumstances. It bears revisiting the following questions in planning forward: “Readiness for what? Readiness for whom? Readiness by when?”. The new strategy should clarify the value proposition and business case of the RPSP. Greater strategic clarity will help focus the actions of actors both internal and external to the GCF, ensuring that knowledge is purposefully shared across divisions and readily available to those who need it.

1.2. To effectively mobilize its strategic intent for the Readiness programme, the GCF should provide for formal, “strategic” programme leadership. Within the GCF, the fact that the Programme straddles multiple divisions – and particularly the DCP and DPM that are themselves responsive to two distinct stakeholder groups (i.e. countries and their CPs on the one hand, and DPs on the other) – has contributed to the ambiguity regarding programme purpose and priorities; an ambiguity which demands attention. The RPSP needs championship at a senior management level to make the most of its cross-cutting service orientation, and to provide a strategic perspective on the various divisional inputs.

1.3. While clarifying its value proposition in the new RPSP strategy, the GCF should rationalize its capacity to resource the Readiness programme. The experience of country stakeholders and GCF Secretariat staff engaged with the RPSP is that demands on the Programme exceed the resources available at the Secretariat to address them in a timely way. This manifests most obviously in delays across the grant cycle including for co-development, revision and approval, legal agreement, disbursement, and grant closure.

Layered on this experience, felt at an administrative level, is the experience of indeterminacy in addressing the larger GCF decision-making processes associated with the accreditation and project development pipelines. This manifests for country stakeholders in long waits, multiple iterations and requests that, from a country standpoint, often seem unreasonable.

Underpinning this picture of a programme hampered by resource constraints is a deeper calibration issue. In the absence of a strong, unified strategic vision for readiness, on the one hand, and the relative paucity of data to show outcome-based value-for-money for readiness investments to date, on the other, there is an insufficient basis to match the Programme’s purpose, demand, programming

and results with required resources and capacities. Taking on the task of rationalizing resources to programming, requires first and foremost attention to sharpening the strategic intent of the Readiness programme. It also requires that GCF utilize its RRMF and any future mechanisms to understand how best to match resources for the readiness impacts sought.

Recommendation 2. The RPSP should adopt a country-centred approach to its operations.

With the RPSP, as with all GCF programmatic offerings, continued tension persists between the needs of countries, the project modality of DPs (and AEs), and the aspirations for the impact of the GCF itself. Situated amidst the tensions of this tripartite relationship, country needs and thus country readiness have remained an underdeveloped aspect of the Programme. This has been detrimental to country ownership.

2.1. The GCF should adopt a country-centred approach, to:

- Develop a country-specific approach to understanding the paradigm shift to be facilitated by the RPSP.
- Integrate country context into RPSP operations.
- Move away from a grant-by-grant and DP-centric view of readiness to a country-level view of readiness.
- Get a better understanding of country-level climate finance needs and readiness needs.

The GCF should consider using existing forums (such as regional structural dialogues) to deliver this for the short and medium term, and where not possible, develop alternative modes of developing these approaches.

2.2. The GCF should update the guidance and reinforce support to countries on key considerations for the set-up and operation of country coordination mechanisms. While some countries have managed to do very well in this respect, others would welcome additional guidance and soft parameters for doing so. Given the historical role of the RPSP in establishing country coordination mechanisms and NDAs, GCF should support and enable lesson learning for: considerations for location within government administrations; NDA leadership, composition, and capacity requirements; mechanisms for stakeholder participation; and more. Guidance could further be complemented by peer-to-peer, South-South learning processes, and through structured or regional dialogue processes. Doing so would address some of the challenges, costs and investments involved in the current approach, bringing greater efficiencies for those who seek them.

2.3. In re-orienting the RPSP, GCF should consider the interplay of objectives and the differentiated country needs. The complexities inherent in managing multiple stakeholder groups with distinct and often competing interests are enormous. Overall, the RPSP must be understood as a strategic “enabler” that does not operate in a linear fashion (i.e. sequencing from an original focus on objectives 1 towards 2 and then later on objectives 3 and 4, with 5 at the end). It should be re-imagined as a strategic, flexible and dynamic instrument that is responsive to country needs. Indeed, in an enabling role, it may be more effective in certain instances to move beyond its traditional pipeline development role, to direct readiness resources towards funded projects (e.g. as a way to prepare the terrain for scaling up components of funded projects) and, in so doing, be drawn back into new institutional capacity-building roles to manage forward movement in the CP.

Recommendation 3. In socializing the RPSP, the GCF should be more intentional and targeted in communicating programmatic offerings and enabling learning.

Country-level stakeholders do not share an adequate baseline understanding of readiness and its programmatic offerings. The addition of objective 5 on knowledge and learning has been welcome

and is expected to generate much-valued information that can be acted upon. Nevertheless, this evaluation period found that this objective has received the least attention among all readiness objectives, and the uptake of tools has been limited.

The RPSP Guidebook, while replete with very valuable information (and now available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic), needs to be complemented with learning-oriented sessions about how to use it effectively. And, while the multi-year grant modality has been available for many years, additional efforts need to be made to ensure widespread NDA and DAE awareness of its existence, its merits, and the means to use it. The GCF should ensure that accredited DAEs and DAEs at stage I or II of accreditation are aware of the RPSP support for which they are eligible. Further, it is not widely known that RPSP-funded capacity support from consultants could be offered for CNs destined for other climate financiers. Private sector actors at the country level have widely indicated they lack information and awareness on how to engage with and benefit from the Readiness programme, and by extension the GCF more broadly.

3.1. The GCF should curate the value proposition of the RPSP to different categories of stakeholders and consider tailoring the communication of such offerings through dedicated channels and forums. The GCF should better communicate the RPSP's specialized offerings for different types of stakeholders. To that end, the GCF needs to increase the effectiveness of current communication and make efforts to find more effective means. Increasing effectiveness may require adapting and tailoring current practices (including frequency and sequence of webinars, visits, and structured dialogues), while the latter may require finding newer means of communication.

3.2. The GCF should continue integrating and operationalizing tools for knowledge management such as the RKB, to link knowledge to investment opportunities in locally relevant ways. The newly created RKB should contribute to the extent that the GCF is successful in mobilizing NDA, DP and GCF Secretariat utilization.

Recommendation 4. The GCF should invest in solidifying the newly created RRMF as a learning and accountability tool.

The newly established RRMF fills a large void in establishing a basis to understand the RPSP's contribution to GCF's mandate. For the first time, a complete theory of change – linking actions to results with a disciplined referencing to results nomenclature – serves as a singular point of reference for all Readiness grants. Its accompanying measurement framework makes possible the aggregation of individual project achievements. However, certain improvements are required to build upon the RRMF and close the results measurement loop.

4.1. The GCF should develop additional mechanisms to enable periodic elaboration and measurement of outcome and impact-level results of the RPSP at the portfolio level. Such mechanisms should have special considerations for data quality and credibility. These mechanisms should faithfully represent GCF's strategic intent for the RPSP and provide useful data externally and internally to support communications and learning, and service programme accountability needs.

4.2 The GCF should also develop mechanisms to enable rigorous, periodic assessment of the quality of RPSP grant implementation. Such mechanisms will also enable GCF to better identify and manage emerging RPSP portfolio risks. This would also address the serious challenge of lack of data for the accountability mechanisms of the GCF, to assure against the risks pertaining to RPSP grants.

Recommendation 5. GCF should operationalize the new RPSP strategy in a time-bound and timely manner.

Under the current RPSP strategy, the GCF did not have the benefit of referring to an overarching strategic plan. Similarly, GCF did not have the suite of tools, frameworks and mechanisms to fully operationalize the strategy in a time-bound and timely manner. With the prospective introduction of the new RPSP strategy, GCF has the opportunity to sequence and align tools, modalities and mechanisms.

5.1. The GCF should introduce the tools, frameworks, and Standard Operating Procedures for operationalizing the new RPSP strategy in a time-bound and timely manner. This will ensure internal and external stakeholders are able to understand, internalize and operationalize the priorities and modalities set by the strategy and integrate the same into individual RPSP proposals and the portfolio at large. It will also minimize the perception held by numerous stakeholders of constant change in the Readiness programme and minimize the need to retrofit existing grants.

Recommendation 6. With a view to enhance the sustainability of RPSP results, the GCF should reach diverse actors and cultivate national climate finance ecosystems.

6.1 To favour an optimized and sustained impact of the Programme, particularly at country level, the RPSP should continue to invest in strengthening the capacities of NDAs and (aspiring/nominated) DAEs. This will include yet greater attention paid to contextual challenges, notably for the most vulnerable among GCF eligible countries. To assist this, support should be encouraged for the development of national policies, strategies, plans and programmes to guide GCF investments, and in complementarity with other climate finance sources.

6.2 The Programme should be understood as playing an enabling role in building national climate finance ecosystems. The RPSP should further its orientation towards medium-term outcomes over short-term gains. In addition to supporting NDAs and DAEs, the Programme should more intentionally support the private sector, civil society and academia in particular, intent on harnessing their localized insight and expertise for climate action. Further, GCF should provide guidance on climate finance partnerships across the ecosystem and provide accessible financing through the Readiness programme for such partnership development and consolidation. Coordination at national level through multi-stakeholder and multisectoral approaches may enhance the sustainability of RPSP results.

Recommendation 7. The GCF should increase the overall accessibility and cost-effectiveness of the RPSP, particularly for vulnerable countries, by adjusting its strategic orientation, processes and mechanisms.

Engaging in the RPSP has been a challenging prospect for some vulnerable countries. Adjustments to some RPSP processes and mechanisms would greatly facilitate improved accessibility and cost-effectiveness.

7.1. The GCF should orient the new RPSP strategy to the needs of vulnerable countries. This would allow the GCF to promote greater coverage and access for these countries. It will also provide for strategic guidance from which RPSP processes and mechanisms suited to vulnerable countries can be developed.

7.2. The GCF should explore the possibility of creating RPSP requirements and processes that are adapted to vulnerable countries, where capacity challenges in developing Readiness proposals and implementing grants hinder the GCF's readiness ambitions in these countries. These adaptations could be in the processes pertaining to RPSP grant review and approval as well as greater flexibility in implementation depending on the conditions on the ground (e.g. no-cost extensions and cost reallocations).

MAIN REPORT

Chapter 1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

A. THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND AND READINESS PROGRAMME

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Administered by the GCF, the RPSP aims to provide resources for strengthening the institutional capacities of NDAs or focal points and DAEs to efficiently engage with the Fund. Resources may be provided in the form of grants or technical assistance. All developing countries can access the RPSP, and the Fund aims for a floor of 50 per cent of readiness support allocation to particularly vulnerable countries, which include LDCs, SIDS and African States, and are considered as priority countries by the GCF (Green Climate Fund, 2014b).³
2. The RPSP provides the following support:
 - Up to USD 1 million per country per year. Of this amount, NDAs or focal points may request up to USD 300,000 per year to help establish or strengthen an NDA or focal points to deliver on the Fund's requirements.
 - Up to USD 3 million per country for formulating adaptation plans.
3. Within these funding caps, countries may submit multiple proposals over multiple years. Multiple proposals (including for adaptation planning) may be implemented within a country by DPs. Guidance to countries requires that proposals requesting readiness support must be aligned with the Fund's ESS and its gender policy. All readiness funding requests must be initiated by developing country NDAs or focal points, although funding itself may be managed by a DP.
4. Some of the guidance on readiness by governing bodies are as follows:

The Governing Instrument (GI) (Green Climate Fund, 2011) of the GCF states:

The Fund will provide resources for Readiness and Preparatory activities and technical assistance, such as the preparation or strengthening of low-emission development strategies or plans, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Plans (NAMAs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Adaptation Plans for Action (NAPAs) and for in-country institutional strengthening, including the strengthening of capacities for country coordination and to meet fiduciary principles and standards and ESS, in order to enable countries to directly access the Fund.

In approving the "Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme: Work Programme and Budget for 2022–2023" (Green Climate Fund, 2022d), the Board of the GCF emphatically reaffirmed:

Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme is a strategic priority for GCF to enhance country ownership, encourage direct access to GCF resources, and strengthen strategic programming during the first replenishment period of the GCF.

³ See decision B.08/11 of Green Climate Fund (2014b).

In the same decision, the Board also requested the Secretariat to:

... continue to report on the implementation of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme at the midyear Board meeting of each year; and update and revise the strategy for the Readiness and Preparatory Support.⁴

The Conference of the Parties (COP) has also noted the importance of the RPSP and has requested the GCF Secretariat to provide updates on several topics, as it:

Takes note of the progress achieved to date in the implementation of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme of the Green Climate Fund and stresses the importance of improving the approval process and timely disbursement of readiness resources to facilitate Readiness programme implementation pursuant to Green Climate Fund Board decision B.11/04.⁵

5. Over the years, numerous COPs serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) have issued several other decisions and directions relating to the GCF's Readiness programme. The detailed list of such decisions is noted in Annex 3 of this report.
6. Readiness is a key element of country ownership. In this regard, the Board adopted guidelines for enhanced country ownership and country drivenness (Green Climate Fund, 2017) that describe the central role of NDAs in the project cycle. This coordinating role includes the preparation and submission of proposals for readiness support, as well as the development of CPs to drive investment planning. As such, CPs have been slated to play a key role in the investment decision-making process of the Fund as per the proposal approval process revised through decision B.17/09. The process of developing or updating a CP may be used for prioritizing the most impactful projects or programmes to be funded by the GCF, aligned with the priorities identified in a country's national climate plans or strategies. It has been situated as the cornerstone of each country's pipeline development with the GCF (Green Climate Fund, 2021a).

a. Readiness strategy, objectives and programme

7. The GCF's Readiness programme is guided by the Readiness programme strategy 2019–2021 (hereafter, 'readiness strategy' or 'RPSP strategy') prepared by the GCF (Green Climate Fund, 2019a). The initial set of objectives of the Readiness programme was laid out in 2014 (decision B.08/11). Since the decision, the GCF Secretariat undertook reviews of the Readiness programme, an external review by Dalberg (Green Climate Fund, 2018a), a review by the Secretariat (Green Climate Fund, 2018b) an independent evaluation of readiness by the IEU of the GCF (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2018) (hereafter, '2018 RPSP evaluation') and an internal audit of the Readiness programme in 2022. Based on these reviews as well as the IEU evaluation, the GCF undertook the preparation of a strategy to guide the RPSP for the period 2019–2021, colloquially known as Readiness 2.0, extended to 2022–2023 through decision B.33/04 (Green Climate Fund, 2022d).
8. **Objectives of readiness.** The current Readiness programme is guided by the readiness strategy, which contains the following five objectives:

⁴ See Green Climate Fund (2022d).

⁵ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015, decision 7/CP.21, para. 17); linked with United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2014, decision 7/CP.20, para. 12).

- **Capacity-building for climate finance coordination:** The RPSP supports country NDAs or focal points and country systems to enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and to ensure that policy requirements are operational and effective. In addition, this objective supports direct access applicants and accredited entities (AEs), that is, DAEs to enhance their capacity to meet and maintain the GCF's accreditation standards, and to strengthen the capacity of DAEs to develop a pipeline of projects and effectively implement GCF-funded activities.
 - **Strategies for climate finance implementation:** The RPSP supports GCF recipient countries to develop CPs; develops or enhances strategic frameworks to address policy gaps, improve sectoral expertise, and enhance enabling environments for GCF programming; supports the preparation of entity work programmes; and supports the development of strategies for transforming and attracting private sector investment for low emissions and resilience.
 - **NAPs and/or adaptation planning processes:** The RPSP supports NDAs to play a convening role to help govern adaptation planning and strengthen institutional coordination. This objective supports the development of evidence to help design adaptation solutions for maximum impact, including the facilitation of private sector engagement. Overall, the objective is to increase the flow of adaptation finance.
 - **Paradigm-shifting pipeline development:** The RPSP aims to contribute to an increase in the number of quality project CNs and FPs developed and submitted, especially from DAEs, with a focus on SIDS, LDCs and African States.
 - **Knowledge sharing and learning:** This fifth objective is cross-cutting across the four objectives mentioned above, aiming to ensure that best practices with respect to institutional capacity-building, direct access, and pipeline development are adopted and disseminated to strengthen engagement by NDAs, DAEs, and DPs with the GCF.
9. The priorities of the initial Readiness programme before 2019 and the revised Readiness Strategy for 2019–2021 have commonalities as set out in Table 1–1 below. Of note, the revised readiness strategy places explicit emphasis on knowledge sharing and learning as a fifth cross-cutting objective, which was itself only implicit previously.

Table 1–1. Similarity of priorities

INITIAL READINESS PROGRAMME	READINESS PROGRAMME STRATEGY 2019–2021 (2.0)
NDA capacity for engagement with the GCF	Capacity-building for climate finance coordination
Direct access to climate finance	
Country programming process	Strategic frameworks for low-emission investment
Formulation of NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes	Strengthened adaptation planning
Climate finance accessed	Paradigm-shifting pipeline development

Source: IEU elaboration.

10. Thus, the Readiness programme intends to build an enabling environment, including increased institutional capacity and robust country strategies, to implement transformational projects and programmes in line with national climate change priorities and GCF result areas.⁶

b. Readiness-related work in the GCF Secretariat

11. As a follow-up to the release of the readiness strategy, the GCF took forward a number of important changes and improvements to the Readiness programme.
12. The GCF developed a Readiness Guidebook published in March 2020 (Green Climate Fund, 2020a). The guidebook contains an overview of the Readiness programme. In addition, it contains guidance for NDAs and DPs on preparing Readiness proposals. The guidebook includes an explanation of Readiness proposal approval processes and a Readiness proposal user guide. In addition, it contains brief guidance for NDAs and DPs on desirable elements and best practices that GCF staff look for when reviewing proposals. Lastly, it contains guidance for NDAs and DPs on different processes to be followed during the implementation of RPSP grants. During the period when the current Readiness programme evaluation was being undertaken, a revised Readiness Guidebook was released (Green Climate Fund, 2023b).
13. In February 2022, the GCF released the Readiness Results Measurement Framework (RRMF) (see Annex 4) to provide a framework for measuring the results of readiness. The RRMF reflects the five objectives and 18 outcomes of the RPSP as delineated in the readiness strategy. It also lists 50 outputs under each of the 18 outcome result statements. Since the release of the RRMF, the GCF has undertaken an exercise to map the results of the Readiness grants at output level using the RRMF grant output-level indicators for all Readiness grants effective as of 31 December 2021. Accordingly, it is structured around the five objectives and related 18 outcomes, 50 outputs, and 71 grant output-level indicators which are directly used in Readiness proposals and Readiness grant implementation monitoring and reporting. All active grants (588) have been retrofitted by the GCF to allow for standardized reporting against the RRMF (while budgets associated with these grants have been left alone). All readiness proposals submitted to GCF (after completeness has been checked) on or after 5 May 2023 are required to be complied with the RRMF (narrative and budget).
14. In 2022, the GCF Secretariat prepared a Readiness Standards Handbook to serve as a guide for ensuring that appropriate review and appraisal is conducted on each Readiness proposal in a consistent manner, laying out the process of review at the Secretariat. This is available in annex 1 of the new Readiness Guidebook (Green Climate Fund, 2023b). Similarly, the GCF Secretariat has updated its Readiness Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with the objective of ensuring Secretariat compliance and consistency with its internal legal framework, and relevant Board decisions and policies. It also aims to streamline internal processes and improve overall operational efficiencies for each stage of the RPSP grant cycle. The SOPs have not been released as of the time of writing of this evaluation report.

c. Readiness lifecycle management process and DP model

15. The lifecycle of an RPSP grant changed somewhat with the new guidebook.⁷ However, given the bounded and retrospective nature of this evaluation, with a cut-off date of the thirty-sixth meeting of

⁶ See Green Climate Fund (2022f).

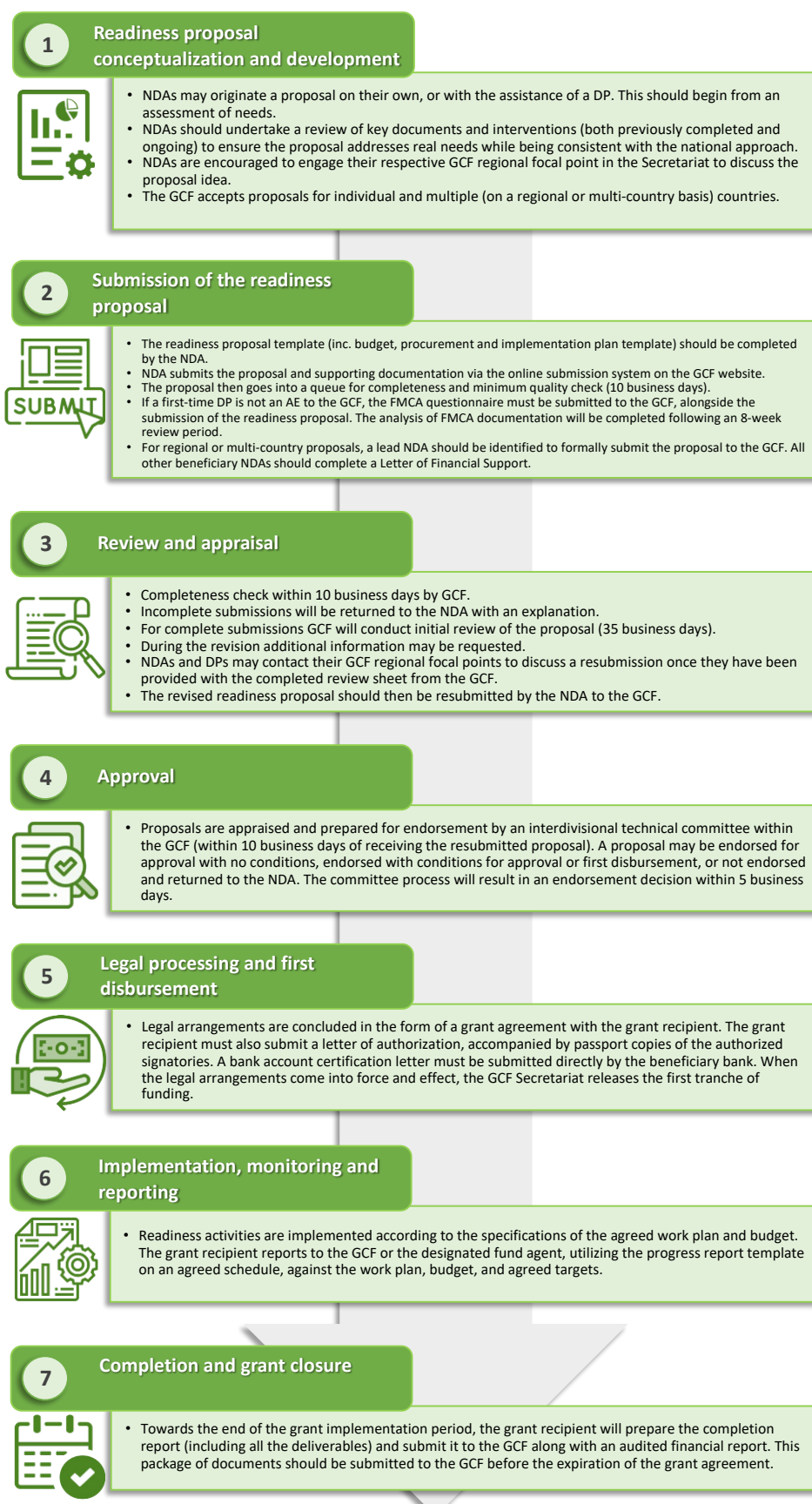
⁷ Updates in the new guidebook include the first disbursement request being submitted by the NDA/DP within 30 days of legal effectiveness of the RPSP grant and the processing of the first disbursement within 30 days of receiving the disbursement request.

the Board (B.36) for all data collected and analysed, the specific, previously described seven steps of the Readiness programme have been outlined below (Green Climate Fund, 2020a):

- Readiness proposal conceptualization and development
- Submission of the readiness proposal
- Review and appraisal by the GCF Secretariat
- Approval of readiness proposal
- Legal processing and first disbursement
- Implementation, monitoring and reporting
- Completion and grant closure

16. These are outlined and summarized in Figure 1–1 below.

Figure 1–1. Summary of the RPSP approval process



Source: Green Climate Fund (2020b).

17. NDAs may initiate readiness proposal processes on their own or with the assistance of DPs, in response to identified needs and priorities. DPs are institutions selected by the NDA or focal point to implement activities approved under the RPSP. They may provide services such as the development of readiness request proposals in cooperation with NDAs; implementation and supervision; fiduciary management; progress reporting; and project completion and evaluation.
18. Among DPs, some have undertaken a large amount of programming. Table 1–2 below shows that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) account for over USD 285 million of readiness funding since the Programme’s beginning. The GCF establishes framework agreements (FWA) with selected DPs and AEs that are seen as strategic partners. Such DPs do not need to sign a separate grant agreement with the GCF. These DPs include UNEP, UNDP, FAO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, GGGI, Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*.

Table 1–2. Top 10 DPs by total volume of RPSP finance

DP	# GRANTS (RPSP 1.0)	# GRANTS (RPSP 2.0)	# GRANTS WITH MISSING DATE	TOTAL # GRANTS	VOL. OF FINANCE IN RPSP 1.0 (\$M)	VOL. OF FINANCE IN RPSP 2.0 (\$M)	VOL. OF FINANCE FOR MISSING DATE GRANTS	TOTAL VOL. OF FINANCE (\$M)
UNDP	36	34	1	71	36.5	68.9		105.4
UNEP	26	28		54	29.9	52.7		82.6
FAO	16	62		78	9.1	47.1		56.2
GGGI	11	49		60	5.7	35.8		41.5
CCCCC	9	18	1	28	4.5	15.1	0.2	19.8
SPREP	4	8		12	1.6	11.4		13
GIZ	9	11	1	21	2.9	7.1	0.4	10.4
DOE_ATG	5	4		9	7.7	1.5		9.2
UNEP-CTCN	5	18		23	1.4	7		8.4
Ernst & Young GmbH	0	1		1	0	6.9		6.9

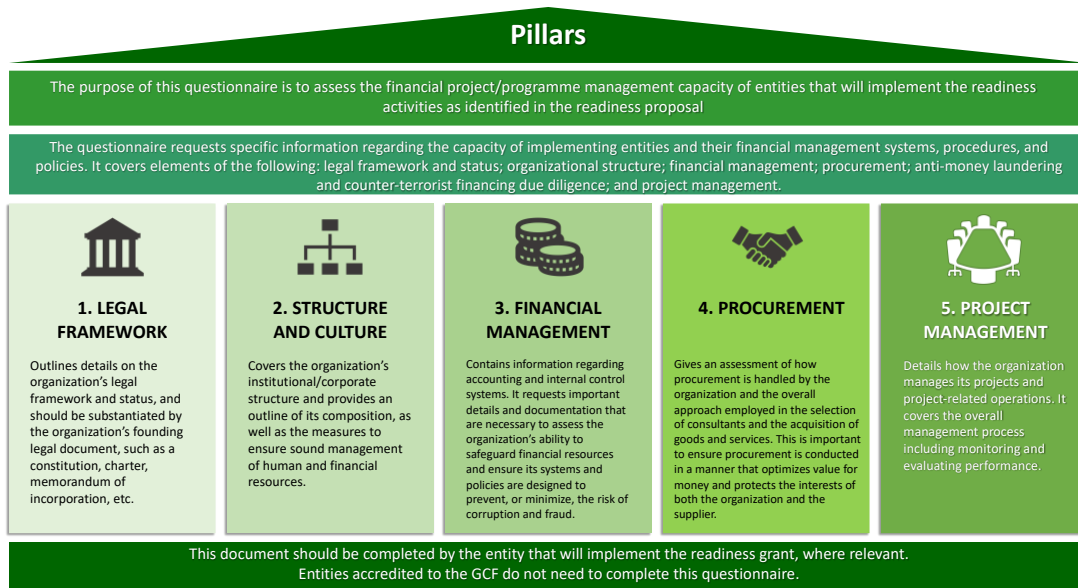
Source: GCF Fluxx disbursement data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Abbreviations: CTCN (Climate Technology Centre and Network); SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme); DOE_ATG (Department of Environment, Ministry of Health and Environment, Government of Antigua and Barbuda).

19. DPs may be AEs or other institutions that meet the financial management capacity requirements of the Fund. DPs that are not AEs must undertake a Financial Management Capacity Assessment (FMCA) (see Figure 1–2 below) to be approved for implementing readiness support in developing countries (Green Climate Fund, 2020a). NDAs may also undergo an FMCA to implement readiness support in their own countries. As shown, the FMCA consists of assessment on five pillars, namely legal framework, structure and culture, financial management, procurement, and project

management. It also includes capacity assessment for Anti-Money-Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) – effectively a sixth pillar. In a manner similar to the accreditation process, all non-AE DPs are specifically evaluated for their ability to mitigate AML/CFT risks. Thus, any organization that wishes to implement readiness support must be either an AE or pass the FMCA, to thus become a (non-AE) DP (Green Climate Fund, 2020a).

Figure 1–2. Summary of the criteria used in the financial management capacity assessment



Source: Green Climate Fund (2020b)

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

a. Objectives and scope of the evaluation

20. **Four objectives.** Given the importance of the RPSP to the GCF, its upcoming new strategy, and the Programme's priorities in the wider landscape of support, this evaluation had four primary objectives:
 - Assess progress since the IEU's 2018 RPSP evaluation.
 - Assess the relevance, coherence and complementarity, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Readiness programme, including fulfilment of RPSP objectives under Readiness 2.0 and its progress in creating enabling environments and paradigm shifts in GCF eligible countries.
 - Assess results measurement and oversight mechanisms for readiness.
 - Feed lessons into the preparation of new readiness operations.
21. **Scope of the evaluation.** The evaluation assessed RPSP support to GCF eligible recipient countries delivered under the Readiness programme strategy 2019–2021 and the GCF Updated Strategic Plan 2019–2023. Given the similarities of objectives of the initial Readiness programme and the revised Readiness programme (2019–2021), this evaluation also looked at readiness operations before 2019 to examine the respective priorities and focus areas of the Readiness programme over the two time periods and to understand the significant changes between the two periods. In addition, given that many of the readiness grants approved under the initial Readiness programme are implemented

under the Readiness programme strategy 2019–2021, the evaluation looked at all the RPSP operations being implemented in the period of the Readiness programme strategy 2019–2021.

22. **Operations, governance, results.** The scope of the evaluation was inclusive of operational, governance and results aspects of the RPSP. It focused on the evolving role and function of this facet of the GCF across the programming landscape. As such, the lines of inquiry were sensitive to widening spheres of control and influence that start well within the GCF ecosystem, affect overall GCF performance directly, and contribute to the transformative changes that GCF seeks at its goal level.

b. Evaluation methodology

23. **Criteria and questions.** This independent evaluation used criteria established by the Board of the GCF for the IEU (Green Climate Fund, 2021b).⁸ These included:
- Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and 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 (the extent to which interventions may lead to a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways)
 - Replication and scalability – the extent to which the activities can be scaled up in other locations within the country or replicated in other countries
 - Unexpected results, both positive and negative
24. It also reviewed progress made since the 2018 RPSP evaluation.
25. The evaluation was based on an evaluation matrix, which lists the key evaluation criteria selected for this evaluation and the associated evaluation questions, as well as information about what type of data (quantitative or qualitative) was used for the evaluation and the sources of these data.
26. **Method and approach.** The IEU followed a utilization-focused, participatory evaluation methodology framed in a theory-based, systems oriented, mixed methods approach. The lines of inquiry set out in the evaluation matrix sought to understand the extent to which RPSP delivery and results correspond to the GCF's undergirding theory of change (ToC) that links RPSP resources to large-scale systems change consistent with GCF's climate mandate (see Box 1–1). Using a systems lens, the evaluation considered how the RPSP interacts with other systems, including the general international development and climate finance systems operating globally, regionally and nationally, the readiness programmes of other institutions, and the national systems of governments and their diverse partners. A mixed methods approach was employed to ensure a diversity of stakeholder perspectives and a balance of “breadth” and “depth” perspectives (i.e. an optimal blending of insight derived from systems-level performance data versus that derived from an examination of particular examples of programme implementation). To this end, the evaluation used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. These included a synthesis of IEU evaluations on readiness, literature review, document review, portfolio analysis, online stakeholder surveys, key informant semi-structured interviews, as well as country case studies and a low-readiness deep-dive. Country case studies included Armenia, Belize, Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Mexico, Panama, and Tanzania. The low-readiness deep-dive explored RPSP support in

⁸ Also see Green Climate Fund (2014a).

countries classified as having low-readiness as per the ND-GAIN and States Resilience Index (SRI), and drew on data from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Haiti, Iraq, Mali, and Yemen.

27. **Timeline.** The evaluation was finalized in September 2023 and presented to the Board at its last meeting of 2023.
28. The full objectives, scope, methodology and methods of the evaluation can be seen in the RPSP approach paper (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023b).

Box 1–1. A ToC to serve as a point of reference for the evaluation of RPSP

GCF's Readiness programme strategy for 2019–2021 sets out a ToC that links the use of readiness resources to transformative change aligned with the vision that, "By 2025, all GCF recipient countries have developed the necessary enabling environment, including increased institutional capacity and robust country strategies, to implement transformative projects and programmes in line with national climate change priorities and GCF results areas including as elaborated in updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and NAPs." The ToC has been adapted to be a critical point of reference in this evaluation of the RPSP.

Five readiness strategy objectives are introduced in section 1.a of this chapter. These highlight areas of systems change that lie in the sphere of influence of the Programme that can be brought about within the time frame of the strategy. The readiness strategy features specific, instrumental outcomes associated with each objective and, moving forward along a results trajectory, sets out four programmatic outcomes observable at the country level that represent changes over which the readiness programming has only indirect (i.e. contributory) influence; in short:

- Institutional capacities for climate-responsive planning and development
- Systemic changes in stakeholder perceptions, knowledge, behaviour and attitudes vis-a-vis climate change
- Enhanced country ownership and oversight of programmatic responses to climate change
- Enabling environments (e.g. policy/legislative, market, technology-related) for stakeholders to address climate change)

The latter part of the results trajectory specifies sought-after changes to the GCF portfolio – a pipeline of projects with a strong climate rationale, increasing levels of finance, and scaling with complementarity and coherence. Ultimately, change is to become transformative wherein the momentum generated through the portfolio catalyses a widespread shift to low-emission, climate-resilient development increasingly underpinned by a generalized shift in the way of thinking – a paradigm shift. The results trajectory in the ToC hinges on a set of assumptions – some operational, some related to changes within the programme's sphere of influence, and some related to a range of national/regional/global patterns.

The ToC agreed upon for use in this evaluation can be found in Annex 5.

c. Limitations

29. The data available for this evaluation has been extensive, which favours a robust analysis and the development of grounded and actionable recommendations. However, data collection for this evaluation was challenging on a number of fronts. The evaluation was carried out in a tight timeline, with the evaluation team aligning deliverables with key dates for policy and strategic discussions as pertains to the RPSP, all happening in the background. This was especially the case with the ongoing discussions and uncertainty surrounding the approval of the new RPSP strategy. This induced uncertainty relating to the orientation of the evaluation towards its feeding into the strategy, vis-a-vis the strategy's operationalization. To address this, the evaluation has ensured that it covers aspects of salience and relevance to the new readiness strategy and its operationalization.

30. There were also limitations regarding the extent to which the Readiness programme's achievement of outcomes and efficiency could be assessed at a portfolio level given the readiness data that was available and the output-focused nature of readiness monitoring. For one, objectives are set by NDAs and DPs, and their realization is self-reported. While an objective may be achieved, the extent to which this achievement rate speaks to the effectiveness (e.g. in terms of the quality of implementation and the output) of the RPSP cannot be determined on this alone. This limitation was mitigated to some extent through a thorough analysis of critical success factors under each objective by using other methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and theory-based analysis.
31. Further, it is a time-consuming and challenging exercise to determine a proxy for the quality of readiness proposals and CNs. It is similarly complex to determine whether Readiness grants lead to CNs and FPs, given this information is only available in the CNs and FPs. To assess these and other indicators, a significant amount of detailed, manual work was required. Overall, the current monitoring tools, combined with the constrained timeline, limited the ability of the team to explore certain pathways of change. The evaluation team used the ToC to mitigate this limitation to some extent.
32. The management of GCF's Readiness programme is spread over several divisions of the GCF depending on the stage of the grant lifecycle. This implies that different divisions produce data on the RPSP. However, in the course of this evaluation it was found that often the data emanating from these numerous sources was inconsistent. The evaluation team somewhat mitigated this by referring to and validating with, wherever possible, data sets created and quality assured by IEU's DataLab itself and by using IEU-generated data where such figures could not be completely validated.

B. ROAD MAP OF THIS REPORT

33. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to this evaluation, exploring the RPSP, presenting the scope and objectives of the evaluation as well as the road map to the report.
34. Chapter 2 assesses the extent to which the design and delivery of the second phase of the RPSP has responded to recommendations emanating from reviews of the first 4 years of activity.
35. Chapter 3 assesses the RPSP's relevance. More specifically, it examines the Programme's continued relevance to country and beneficiary needs, and its alignment to the Programme objectives contained in the 2019–2021 RPSP Strategic Plan.
36. Chapter 4 assesses the RPSP's coherence and complementarity. The chapter first examines internal coherence, taking a closer look at the extent to which the delivery of the GCF's Readiness programme occurs in a way that makes best use of the resources available to support countries in accessing the GCF and climate finance more generally. The chapter then examines external complementarity, taking a closer look at how the RPSP complements the readiness support of other climate finance institutions and assessing the degree of collaboration and coherence at both the institutional and country levels. Finally, this chapter identifies the niche role and primary contributions of the GCF as compared to other climate finance and readiness support mechanisms.
37. Chapter 5 assesses the effectiveness of the RPSP. It first assesses the extent to which each RPSP objective has been achieved, to date. This assessment is followed by an analysis of key factors that have enabled or hindered the achievement of these objectives. Special considerations are given to priority countries (i.e. LDCs, SIDS and African States) throughout the chapter.

38. Chapter 6 explores gender and inclusion considerations. More specifically, it assesses the extent to which the GCF has addressed gender-related and social inclusion dimensions of its mandate through the RPSP.
39. Chapter 7 explores the question on country ownership, assessing the ways the RPSP has fostered country ownership on climate action, particularly the extent to which it has strengthened stakeholder capacities to engage in country programming with NDA leadership.
40. Chapter 8 assesses the RPSP's impact and paradigm shift potential. More specifically, the chapter explores the extent to which countries are enhancing their enabling environments for low-carbon, climate-resilient development, and are obtaining more climate finance (GCF, other-sourced) as a consequence of GCF's readiness investments. It also explores the extent to which those readiness investments are supporting country stakeholders to integrate concepts of transformational change and paradigm shift in ways favourable to GCF goals.
41. Chapter 9 assesses the sustainability of RPSP activities. It first assesses the extent to which capacities built with RPSP projects are likely to be sustained in time, and whether these projects have contributed to the development of an enabling environment that promotes long-term thinking for climate financing. It also assesses the extent to which the RPSP has contributed to building enduring relationships for climate financing across sectors and beyond ministries of environment, as well as across constituencies.
42. Chapter 10 assesses the efficiency of the RPSP. First, it assesses the extent to which the Readiness programme grant cycle is operating as expected in relation to stakeholder outreach, grant approval processes, and grant implementation. Second, it discusses key challenges in accessing RPSP resources for priority countries. Third, it assesses risk management in the context of the Readiness programme.
43. Chapter 11 sets out the evaluation conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 2. MAINSTREAMING OF 2018 RPSP EVALUATION

44. This chapter assesses the extent to which the design and delivery of the second phase of the RPSP has responded to recommendations emanating from reviews of the first four years of activity, including the 2018 RPSP evaluation. It presents discussion on both operational and strategic recommendations.

1. EVOLVING PROGRAMME FROM OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

45. **Finding: Overall, the GCF has made good progress implementing the recommendations set out for the RPSP towards the end of its initial phase of operation. It has revised or introduced operational and delivery modalities and underpinned them with a much-needed readiness strategy which, among other things, introduces a new focus on partnering, knowledge management, and on the tracking of readiness results. Regarding the operational and delivery modalities, some variability exists in the extent to which recommendations have been operationalized, and in a few critical areas, most notably the development of the results tracking and knowledge management functions, it is too soon to see added value.**
46. The 2018 RPSP evaluation produced a series of recommendations addressed primarily to the Secretariat. These included immediate or short-term recommendations “to ease access to GCF support, decrease financial costs and improve the efficiency of the RPSP” (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2018, pp. 87). In addition, the evaluation recommended the formulation of a programme vision, strategy, and specific targets.
47. Since then, the IEU has assessed the GCF’s progress against these recommendations on one occasion. Findings from the 2021 “Management action report on the independent evaluation of the GCF’s Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme” are summarized in Annex 1 along with updated insights for 2023. The current evaluation of the RPSP uses the same rubric as the Management Action Report to assess progress over the entire post-2018 evaluation time frame (i.e. 2018–2023). The rubric is set out below (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 24):

- (a) High: Recommendation is fully adopted and fully incorporated into policy, strategy or operations
- (b) Substantial: Recommendation largely adopted but not fully incorporated into policy, strategy or operations as yet
- (c) Medium: Recommendation is adopted in some operational and policy work, but not significantly in key areas
- (d) Low: No evidence or plan for adoption, or plan and actions for adoption are in a very preliminary stage
- (e) Not rated: ratings or verification will have to wait until more data is available or proposals have been further developed”

48. A summary of ratings is provided for the first group of recommendations in Table 2–1 below under three headings, with key observations following: capacity-building, outreach and support to countries; CPs and in-country support; and Secretariat level process changes.

Table 2–1. Integration of recommendations from the 2018 RPSP evaluation (first group)

RECOMMENDATION	IEU RATING (2018 - 2021)*	REVISED RATING (2018 - 2023)
1A. Capacity-building, outreach and support to countries		
Outreach to countries should be improved, by translating the Readiness Guidebook and associate templates at least into French and Spanish, regularly updating it (in all languages) and enabling opportunities for timely and continuous learning about changes to the Programme. Any such changes should be communicated to all stakeholders concerned.	High	High
Opportunities for peer learning should be encouraged. Peer-to-peer learning among countries and DAEs should be privileged more, in structured dialogues and also via sub-regional meetings.	Medium	Medium
<u>Post-accreditation support and capacity strengthening</u> : Provision should be made for strengthening the capacities of NDA/focal points and offering post-accreditation support for DAEs, in particular for the preparation of CNs with clear climate rationales.	Medium	High
<u>Capacity-building</u> : Countries should be provided with financial support plus advisory services (i.e. capacity-building and technical assistance) for meeting their needs and priorities; more long-term national consultants should be funded to provide support to weak NDA/focal points in LDCs, SIDS and in Africa; greater capacity-building support should be provided on gender and ESS to ensure that countries are able to develop RPSP and FPs in line with the gender, ESS and indigenous peoples policies of the GCF. With respect to gender, a concerted effort should be made in Africa.	Medium	Medium
1B. Country Programmes and in- country support		
<u>Country Programmes (CPs)</u> : Clear guidelines for CPs should be provided, with a focus on developing clear priorities and concrete CNs, taking into account fully the policies of the GCF regarding gender, ESS and Indigenous People, and strengthening climate rationales, while articulating the overall outcomes of CPs and their value- added and managing expectations.	Substantial	Substantial
<u>DAEs and country ownership</u> : Criteria should be developed to determine if some countries need several DAEs to pursue their objectives. If so, pre-accreditation support should be made available to all potential candidates recommended by NDA/focal points.	Low	Low
<u>Coordination and firewalls to prevent conflicts of interest</u> : Within countries, specific expectations and requirements for intragovernmental coordination and stakeholder consultations should be formulated, similar to the Country Coordination Mechanism of the Global Fund.	Medium	Medium
1C. Secretariat level process changes		
<u>Post-approval flexibility</u> : Greater flexibility should be allowed for project-level adjustments after approval, in response to changing conditions and circumstances on the ground.	Substantial	Substantial
<u>Roles and responsibilities</u> : The roles and responsibilities of RAs, Associate Professionals, Country Dialogue Specialists and other related staff and consultants should be articulated, developing synergies between them and making best use of expanded regional resources. In an effort to ensure a more efficient coordination and complementarity of different Secretariat divisions and units, the roles and responsibilities of each with respect to the RPSP (and its various component priorities) require greater definition.	Substantial	Substantial

RECOMMENDATION	IEU RATING (2018 - 2021)*	REVISED RATING (2018 - 2023)
SOPs for the Readiness programme need to be more clearly articulated (and in some cases developed), both with respect to the readiness value chain within the Secretariat (i.e. how different entities work together) and in terms of the relationship between the Secretariat, NDA/focal points, AEs, DAEs, DPs and others (e.g. on expected turnaround times).	Substantial	Substantial
Results-oriented planning and reporting for RPSP activities should be introduced and implemented, including also periodic evaluations.	Low	Substantial
The RPSP should have a database that is open to countries who can then view the status of their applications and grants. The information should be provided in a transparent and an inter-operable way and countries should be able to check status. The Secretariat should ensure that any further database development is harmonized, to avoid duplication, redundancy and inconsistencies.	Not rated	Low

Source: Green Climate Fund (2021c); IEU elaboration.

Note: * The 2021 “Management action report on the independent evaluation of the GCF’s Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme” provided comments and a rating for adoption of recommendations from the 2018 RPSP evaluation.

49. As shown in Table 2–1, action has been taken on all recommendations, albeit to varying degrees. Noteworthy efforts have been made to streamline processes to enhance flexibility, increase clarity around roles and responsibilities, and to strengthen monitoring and reporting processes. Areas where limited progress is identified include the development of criteria for optimizing the number of DAEs at a country level, and the development of a “dashboard” for sharing status reports on grant and grant applications. Additionally, while considerable efforts have been put towards capacity-building and there are examples of engagement of national consultants funded by the RPSP (e.g. in Panama), there is also some indication of an over-reliance on international consultants.
50. Overall, the scope of RPSP 2.0, embodied in its five objectives, signals commitment to focus readiness on the GCF and other financiers, extend capacity-building into the private sector and civil society for integrated climate action, and to focus not just on accreditation, but on capacity of DAEs, “to design and successfully implement GCF-funded projects” (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 24). In its formulation, the strategy is a response to several reviews of the RPSP’s first four years, including the 2018 RPSP evaluation (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 10).⁹
51. By design, the second phase of the RPSP (2020–2023) elaborates, expands, and adds structure to an initial framework (RPSP 1.0 – 2015–2019) that was foundational and exploratory in nature. The initial framework provided scope to assess country-level readiness needs and gaps; formulate CPs for engaging with the Fund; undertake stakeholder communications, outreach and knowledge sharing; and deliver training, mentorship and advisory services on the Fund’s fiduciary and ESS standards for NDAs and national entities seeking accreditation (Green Climate Fund, 2013). RPSP 2.0 has revised or introduced a number of operational and delivery modalities. Among the most important are the multi-year funding and standardized packages of readiness support; direct, predictable support to NDAs to build or reinforce institutional capacities and stakeholder engagement; good support to DAEs, both pre- and post- accreditation; and the introduction of

⁹ Reviews of RPSP 1.0 were carried out internally by the Secretariat, externally by Dalberg and the IEU with external support from Universalia, and by the Adaptation Committee of the UNFCCC. Findings and recommendations are summarized on page 10 of the strategy document (GCF/B.22/08) and elaborated upon in the annexes.

targeted sector-specified trainings and knowledge sharing clinics matched to pipeline development as determined in CPs. As well, the RPSP 2.0 Strategy introduces the country readiness assessment and country-specific readiness plan, partnership building in keeping with the GCF core principle of complementarity and coherence, improved operating procedures and policies for programme implementation, and a new focus on knowledge management and on results management built around a readiness ToC (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 32–39).

52. Among the recommendations taken up by GCF since 2018, the following brings to the fore the most salient, as identified by Secretariat staff:
- A restructuring at the Secretariat that permits the Fund a more engaged, country-level working arrangement (including for the co-development of grant applications) through the regional desks of the DCP drawing on a roster of consultants.
 - Elaboration of the RPSP's ToC and roll out of the RRMF (February 2022) designed to foster a Programme level understanding of RPSP merit and worth.
 - Introduction of the online Portfolio Performance Management System (PPMS) to support business processing (e.g. report submission, processing of disbursements, adaptive management requests, and knowledge sharing).
 - Creation of a new Readiness Guidebook (April 2023) which, in addition to providing foundational knowledge on the GCF and the RPSP, is replete with references to updated readiness SOPs and set of service standards, revisions associated with the readiness cap, and practical information for NDAs, DAEs/DPs, and other country stakeholders involved in Readiness proposals; and, most recently.
 - Launch of the GCF's Readiness Knowledge Bank (RKB) (May 2023), billed as an "online platform to share data, information, knowledge, and lessons learned from the Readiness programme".¹⁰
53. With little exposure to the newly minted RKB, Readiness Guidebook and RRMF, country stakeholder commentary on the evolution of the RPSP centres more on the opportunities they have had to engage in information and training forums (including South-South exchanges and country/regional structured dialogues), as well as on the availability of technical assistance (TA) on a variety of technical, management and organizational topics. National entities nominated for accreditation or already accredited comment on the presence of pre- and post-accreditation support provided through the RPSP. On administrative matters, NDAs describe positive interactions with the DCP, and DAEs describe a constructive working relationship with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), contracted since 2018 to provide grant management services to the GCF on the delivery of RPSP general grants.
54. RPSP 2.0 implementation has continued apace in the second phase with nearly as many grants approved to date as compared to RPSP 1.0, and financing that represents 56 per cent of the total outlay.¹¹ Grant approvals per year peaked in 2019 during the final year of the first phase (USD 97.7 million) and have ranged between USD 75 million and USD 88 million since then, excluding 2023.
55. While experiences are shaped by unique country circumstances, there is an overall acknowledgement that the design and implementation of RPSP is advancing as recommended. In the survey of Readiness stakeholders carried out for this evaluation, for example, 61 per cent of

¹⁰ The platform can be accessed at <https://knowledge.greenclimate.fund/readiness/about>.

¹¹ Since its beginning, the RPSP has approved USD 518.99 million, supporting 142 GCF eligible countries, excluding workshops.

respondents “somewhat agreed” (40 per cent) or “strongly agreed” (21 per cent) that RPSP processes have improved since 2018.

At the beginning, there was a lack of clarity on how to engage with GCF – lots of phone calls and emails were required to navigate our way; now there is much more information on the steps.

- Regional DAE

56. Importantly, in contrast, more than a third of respondents – those tending to be the slightly more distant civil society stakeholders or the DAEs – are ambivalent or contrary on the matter.

2. EVOLVING PROGRAMME FROM STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

57. **Finding: While helpful in describing the RPSP offering, the 2019–2021 readiness strategy has come up short in establishing the Programme’s value proposition in the GCF’s value chain. This has simultaneously hampered RPSP performance against its objectives and undermined its “enabling” contribution to the GCF.**
58. In a separate grouping of recommendations, the 2018 RPSP evaluation argued that the RPSP “must define its vision and strategy, what “readiness” means for the GCF and make choices with respect to this;” that it should address strategic questions like, “when is a country ‘ready’?” (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2018, pp. xiv–xv; 88–89). A summary of ratings for this second group of recommendations is provided in Table 2–2 below.

Table 2–2. Integration of recommendations from the 2018 RPSP evaluation (second group)

RECOMMENDATION	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
2. Build a vision and specific targets for the RPSP and manage for results		
<u>Define vision:</u> What does it mean for a country to be “ready” (i.e. to be ready to access GCF funding for a project, for accessing climate finance more broadly, for addressing climate change within countries)? This requires developing a clear vision and defining a niche for the RPSP; define strategy and targets. When is a country “ready”? This requires the development of readiness targets.	High	High
<u>Measure and manage:</u> How “ready” are countries, at any given time? This requires progress and results indicators. It is premature and beyond the scope of this evaluation to provide the details of such a strategy for the RPSP. Nonetheless, the evaluation has identified several choices that the Secretariat could consider.	Low	Medium
Establish complementarity and coherence with unfunded elements of Investment Plans under the CIFs (and potential others), in particular through the Project Preparation Facility (PPF) and NAP support windows, and report on this as well.	Medium	Medium
Identify and remove barriers to crowding-in private sector investments, while defining and supporting the creation of conducive policies for private sector participation.	Low	Low
Develop comprehensive strategies to catalyse investments to deploy and scale-up prioritized climate technology solutions.	Low	Low
Enable more flexible cooperation with the private sector, rooted in a strategy for engaging with the private sector that is based in greater alignment with its	Low	Low

RECOMMENDATION	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
sectoral practices.		
Engage with additional parts of governments (e.g. ministries of agriculture, forestry, and meteorology departments).	Medium	Medium

Source: Green Climate Fund (2021c); IEU elaboration.
Note: * The 2021 “Management action report on the independent evaluation of the GCF’s Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme” provided comments and a rating for adoption of recommendations from the 2018 RPSP evaluation.

59. The 2019–2021 RPSP readiness strategy goes some way in addressing these questions and in responding to the suite of recommendations presented in Table 2–2. It undertakes a scan of programmatic challenges, opportunities and possible solutions within the context of GCF operations and country contexts. It advances possible solutions to curb against occurrences like: “one-size-fits-all” programme management approaches and related barriers to countries looking to access funding; the funding of unlinked or short-lived initiatives; limited shared understanding of requirements for CNs and FPs; continued reliance on IAEs as DPs rather than looking to the development of national implementing entities; or of surface only engagements with the private sector. As well, the strategy document sets out a vision that links readiness activities to country-level strategies, institutional capacities and enabling environments; it provides the rudiments of a ToC for later elaboration; and it advances a value proposition that touches on, among other aspects, the potential of RPSP to add value across its various programmatic offerings, and to support the country ownership, long range country planning, and the development of paradigm-shifting pipelines. It is also worth noting that an updated strategy for 2024–2027 is under development as of the time of writing this report.
60. To date, however, the words on the page have not been sufficient to solidify RPSP’s place as a strategic instrument for the GCF. In part, this is because “readiness” has received relatively little attention at a higher, corporate level of strategic analysis and only comes into view with the development of the 2020–2023 Updated Strategic Plan (USP). In other words, impetus for RPSP’s development has been less a function of effective demand and more a function of a mandate sourced from Programme evaluation to develop its value proposition within the Fund.
61. In relation to the Programme’s high-level definition, ambiguity remains on the question of what should be considered “in scope” in the determination of readiness “need” – the extent to which the question should be driven more by a need to hasten global impact or by a need to support those countries most vulnerable and least prepared to address climate adaptation and mitigation challenges, for example. Ambiguity prevails among stakeholders along several critical programming axes, most notably: RPSP’s role as a country capacity builder for GCF versus for stakeholder engagement with the wider field of climate finance; its disposition towards country stakeholders (NDAs and DPs, private sector, civil society) as “responsive” versus “strategic”; and its focus on “upstream” (accreditation or project pipeline development only) versus “upstream and downstream CP implementation” (full cycle programme/project enabling). Internally, RPSP operates with minimal synchronicity to other programming components within the Secretariat and, to date, with little beyond output statistics and anecdotal accounts to demonstrate its contribution. And, in the absence of a sound evidence base to determine value-for-money for readiness programming, there is little in place to support a determination of appropriate levels of investment.

Chapter 3. RELEVANCE

62. This chapter examines the Readiness programme's continued relevance to country and beneficiary needs, and its alignment to the Programme objectives contained in the 2019–2021 RPSP strategic plan. In relation to the ToC (Annex 5), the chapter explores the extent to which the activities and results logic of the RPSP: (i) make sense given country and beneficiary needs, and (ii) properly align with RPSP strategy objectives.

A. ALIGNMENT OF READINESS WITH COUNTRY AND BENEFICIARY NEEDS

63. **Finding: RPSP 2.0's Programme offering aligns well to national circumstances, for the most part. On a global scale, the GCF is reaching the more vulnerable countries, as intended, though not necessarily the most vulnerable. At a country level, the RPSP stands out for its size and its scope.**
64. A global analysis of readiness allocations shows that as RPSP 2.0 draws to a close, Programme resources have been directed towards the more vulnerable among GCF eligible countries as per the Board's wishes.¹² As of B.36, 62 per cent of the USD 518.99 million used in readiness programming has gone to some of the most vulnerable countries, including those in African States (31 per cent), LDCs (29 per cent), and SIDS (26 per cent).¹³ At the same time, a closer look suggests that within this grouping of more vulnerable countries, allocations have favoured the ones with lesser degrees of vulnerability. This more detailed analysis further suggests the presence of factors inhibiting Readiness programming in those countries where readiness gaps are most prominent.¹⁴
65. At a country level, the relevance of Readiness programming to national circumstances is widely considered strong. High levels of perceived relevance to country needs are evident in all case studies carried out for this evaluation. Additionally, 78 per cent of evaluation survey respondents "somewhat agreed" (44 per cent) or "strongly agreed" (34 per cent) that RPSP in its current form meets beneficiary and stakeholder needs in their countries. Agreement with this statement was high among stakeholders from Asia-Pacific (APAC) (94 per cent), with lower rates of agreement among stakeholders from Eastern Europe (58 per cent).

¹² Relevant Board decisions related to readiness fund allocations are set out in the 2019–2021 readiness strategy. The country readiness page on the GCF website indicates that 50 per cent of total readiness support should go to particularly vulnerable countries, including LDCs, SIDS and African states. See [https://www.greenclimate.fund/readiness#:~:text=All%20developing%20country%20Parties%20to,\(SIDS\)%20and%20African%20States](https://www.greenclimate.fund/readiness#:~:text=All%20developing%20country%20Parties%20to,(SIDS)%20and%20African%20States).

¹³ Note that these three categories of GCF-eligible countries are not mutually exclusive.

¹⁴ The IEU DataLab examined RPSP allocations against two globally recognized indexes. The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Country Index, and the SRI of the U.S. think tank, Fund for Peace. ND-GAIN summarizes a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges in combination with its readiness to improve resilience. It aims to help governments, businesses and communities better prioritize investments for a more efficient response to the immediate global challenges ahead. See <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/>. Analysis shows a low positive correlation indicating that Readiness funding tends to flow toward those countries with higher ND-GAIN scores. Similarly, the SRI identifies the capacities and capabilities (resilience) of countries under stress. See <https://www.fundforpeace.org/SRI/about.html>. Here, the IEU DataLab shows a positive correlation indicating a similar pattern of Readiness allocation to that obtained in the ND-GAIN analysis. This analysis should be interpreted with caution as it assesses correlation rather than causation.

66. To varying degrees across GCF eligible countries, stakeholders recognize that the costs of meeting their climate change mitigation and adaptation targets far outstrip country abilities to absorb without additional outside financing. They recognize that a certain level of country capacity (e.g. in terms of governance, policy and planning, human resources, data, technology-related) is required to put climate finance to good use, and many stakeholders see the GCF's readiness offering to be well attuned for that purpose.
67. Across the RPSP programming landscape, NDAs, DAEs and other entities variously describe RPSP's utility in a manner that reflects the Programme's objectives. Descriptions include, for example: setting up and operating country institutions and coordination mechanisms; aligning climate policies; developing a CP; building up nominated entities for GCF accreditation and gap-filling once accredited; creating or systematizing country adaptation responses; and conceptualizing climate solutions in the adaptation and mitigation realms.¹⁵

Readiness support has been critical because we do not have capacity. I am the only one on GCF issues and I could not get involved in developing a CN. Training has been fundamental, from the accreditation process to the writing and translation of the documents required for the development of the CN.

- National DAE, Interview

68. The RPSP is by no means alone as a funder of readiness activities in the climate action sphere, but it does stand out as the largest and most comprehensive.¹⁶ Among peer programmes, its capacity-building orientation is not unique, neither is its support for pipeline development or its engagement with the private sector. However, it is one-of-a-kind in the support it provides for adaptation planning and NAPs.
69. Readiness is less a sequential and more an iterative proposition. Country conditions warranting readiness support tend to be unique, dynamic and often urgent. One grant begets another as capacity development needs evolve, and not necessarily with a linear progression. The longevity of systems put in place and skills built through readiness support are highly dependent on factors outside of RPSP control. As well, there is an observed upward pressure on readiness budgets from those countries set up to use it. This pressure is also evident in the wider RPSP portfolio as discussed in Chapter 4.
70. DCP regional teams serve as interlocutors between country stakeholders and the busy GCF bureaucracy. There is agreement among DCP regional team members, NDAs and DAEs on the value of collegial engagement as practised under the 2019–2021 RPSP strategy. It is a practice that requires a continual balancing between “guiding” on GCF processes and requirements and “flexing” to local circumstances, all the while poised for solutions-finding and expectations management. The

¹⁵ Country and regional readiness grant documents observed through the case studies addressed such topics as: hazard early warning, AFOLU fire management, ecosystem management strategies, greening various agriculture sector value chains, green building codes and compliance systems, EVs and transport regulations, and adaptation strategies for public health systems. Other grant documents focused more squarely on strengthening country climate finance infrastructure itself; for example: on measurement, reporting and verification (MRV), civil society and private sector engagement, and a DAE learning partnership.

¹⁶ Among 12 comparator readiness programmes examined by the IEU for this evaluation, the RPSP stood out as the largest in total funding available and the most comprehensive in scope. While other programmes have comparable country funding caps within their programming scopes, the RPSP's facility for making resources available on an annual basis is unparalleled. See volume II for this sub-study of the evaluation.

latter are often required as entities navigate GCF's accreditation and pipeline development activities associated with CNs.

Having been drawn into the possibilities of accreditation and tooled with readiness support, we wait without knowing where we stand.

- Financial institution nominated for accreditation, Interview

71. Country stakeholders are generally positive in their assessment of the scope of the RPSP's offering. However, on operations, frequent mention was made of the lack of scope to provide staffing support in lieu of consultants and to procure equipment, all with sustainability implications, as discussed in Chapter 7 and Chapter 9. On programming, mention was made in at least one country study of the limited opportunities outside of any identified project concept (objective 4) to support applied research, citing the limited availability of data in the country to, (a) problem solve, ideate or innovate, and (b) substantiate climate rationale in developing projects.

B. ALIGNMENT OF READINESS ACTIVITIES WITH PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

72. **Finding: Albeit with variances, the distribution of readiness activities identified by NDAs and DPs indicates comprehensive coverage of RPSP objectives and in similar proportions between RPSP 1.0 and 2.0 with a continuing concentration of activities in RPSP 2.0 associated with country capacity development (objective 1).**
73. Readiness investments span the Programme's five objectives in more than 100 countries across all regions (Green Climate Fund, 2023d).¹⁷ In both phases of Readiness, NDA strengthening activities associated with objective 1 predominate, though with a lessening in concentration in RPSP 2.0. That said, objective 1 activities are still most prominent in the RPSP 2.0 portfolio reflecting the observation made earlier that Readiness operates on a continuum of change that begins by establishing the country systems to garner climate finance but then proceeds into system implementation, with emergent and iterative needs. In the context of the institutional capacity development envisioned under objective 1, NDAs and the coordination mechanisms they support evolve in a dynamic public management context.¹⁸ Similarly, so do fledgling DAEs as they strive in a competitive environment for implementation roles.¹⁹

¹⁷ In addition to citing data provided in the RPSP Annual Report on Implementation (2022), the IEU DataLab examined the distribution of activities/outputs per RPSP objective.

¹⁸ Countries that continued to ask for support in setting up the NDAs through NDA/focal point staff training on the operations of country coordination mechanisms before and after Readiness 2.0 was introduced: Albania, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Fiji, Guinea, Haiti, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Thailand. On the other hand, Belize, Benin, and Vanuatu each have two grants under Readiness 2.0 only, that are both requiring support in setting up NDAs through NDA/focal point staff training on the operations of the country coordination mechanism. Pre-Readiness 2.0, countries like Cameroon, Cook Islands, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Tonga, have two grants each that are requiring support in setting up NDAs through NDA/focal point staff training on the operations of the country coordination mechanism. Countries that continued to ask for support for developing NOL processes throughout include Chad, Cuba, Fiji, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay, and Vanuatu.

¹⁹ In the RPSP stakeholder survey carried out for this evaluation, 28 per cent of informants (NDAs, DAEs, DPs mostly) indicated that the area of technical assistance and capacity building was a unique value that the GCF brought to climate finance readiness. On a list of eight possible areas where the GCF provides "unique value in the area of climate finance readiness," this variable ranks first, under-pinning its continuing importance after 7 years of RPSP.

74. **Objective 2** activities associated with the development of strategies to guide GCF investments are equally present in the portfolio over the two phases of the RPSP and equally distributed across the regions. The importance of the function of country programming to synthesize and prioritize climate investment potential for impact has grown. However, GCF's interest in a GCF-centric orientation to the CP is questioned on at least three grounds: a) countries already have the means (or near potential) through other planning instruments to hone their own determination of priorities and thus do not need a GCF CP process or document for that specific purpose, b) in smaller countries, or where NDAs are smaller, the resources required to manage a GCF-specific programme are somewhat prohibitive, and c) to not have an integrated climate finance tool represents a missed opportunity to optimize complementarity across climate finance actors.
75. Activities surrounding the formulation of NAPs or other adaptation planning processes, as per **objective 3**, are contracted separately from those of the other objectives, operating on a three-year project cycle with a higher budget cap. Annual approvals of NAP grants have climbed steadily since 2017, totalling 103 by 2023 and delivering activities in 92 countries. They represent a significant portion (42 per cent) of total Readiness funding (Green Climate Fund, 2023d, pp. 16). Readiness support for NAP preparation – the methodological guidance; latitude for research and analysis; and provision for multi-stakeholder engagement, cross-sectoral coordination, and training – are perceived by country stakeholders to be integral to developing, consolidating and integrating adaptation responses to meet climate priorities.²⁰

Without a NAP, we would be reliant on our NAPA document priorities and ad hoc with our climate resilience programming choices.

- Government official, NAP grant recipient country

76. Similar to objective 2, pipeline development activities associated with **objective 4** are equally present in the portfolio over the two phases of RPSP and equally distributed across the regions.²¹ Here too, the importance of pipeline development is widely recognized among Readiness stakeholders. What is contested, based on experience to date, is the value of the effort expended to bring a CN to fruition for the return obtained.²² Here, a comparison is made with the related non-readiness modality, the PPF, which while more difficult to obtain is seen to be more productive. The relationship between these two modalities is discussed in Chapter 4.

Is the effort we are putting into CN development, just an academic exercise?

- NDA

77. Lastly, **objective 5** activities, related to knowledge sharing and learning, are equally present across the two phases of Readiness programming. They are slightly more prominent proportionally in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) than in APAC and Africa, and are considerably less so in Eastern Europe. The value of cross-cutting, multilevel (entity/sector/country/regional/global) knowledge production is widely recognized, though country stakeholders do not necessarily see the GCF or the

²⁰ Source: key informant interviews and case studies.

²¹ The presence of objective 4 activities in Eastern Europe is somewhat less than in Africa, APAC and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

²² Source: key informant interviews and case studies.

RPSP having a niche role in its design and delivery.²³ To date, the presence of this objective in the Programme is most visible through products or activities generated within countries. However, it is also evident in the support provided for South-South exchanges, and in the learning and exchange that occurs as AEs bring their wider experiences to individual country settings.²⁴ Looking forward, the recent launch of the RKB online platform, now provides the facility for a far-reaching exchange of readiness content (See objective 5 under Chapter 5 for detailed discussion).

C. GLOBAL DRIVERS ON COUNTRY DECISION-MAKING AND POSITIONING OPTIONS FOR RPSP

78. **Finding: Observed drivers nudging country decision makers to embark on low-carbon, climate-resilient development pathways are, first and foremost: the deepening climate change impacts on populations that include their own citizens, and second, country commitments made under the UNFCCC and other related multilateral agreements. Holding country decision makers back from embarking on those same pathways are the “business-as-usual” tendencies in government and the private sector. The scope of activities contained under the RPSP 2019–2021 strategy positions the GCF to engage with all three drivers in pursuit of its climate ambitions.**
79. Broadly speaking, the five objectives of Readiness 2.0 are well-placed to address these global drivers on country decision-making. Taken together, the objectives provide scope for iterative cycles of stakeholder engagement, priority setting and planning, ideation and project development, and learning. From here it is a matter of honing the methodologies country-by-country for optimal impact.
80. RPSP recipient country populations are experiencing the disruptive forces of climate change most notably, rising temperatures and sea levels, and increasingly erratic weather patterns with disruptive effects on livelihoods, Box 3–1 illustrates these alarming trends as observed in the case study countries for this evaluation.

Box 3–1. Climate change observations in case study countries

In **Armenia**, the daily average temperature has risen 1.2° C. between 1929 and 2016, and rainfall amounts have declined over a similar period (Armenia, Ministry of Environment, 2020). A reduction in arable land and declining productivity of staple crops are expected. At the same time, glacial melt in the Caucasus Mountains is expected to reduce water supply to Armenia’s river systems (World Bank and Asian Development Bank, 2021b).

In **Côte d’Ivoire**, inconsistent and heavy rainfall, higher temperatures and a lengthening of the dry season is disrupting a system of agricultural production that is largely rain-fed and subsistence based. It is also affecting hydropower generation. A deadly, record rainfall event in 2020 submerged major roads and caused landslides affecting houses and railways (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). This was preceded by deadly

²³ In the RPSP stakeholder survey carried out for this evaluation, only 9 per cent of informants (NDAs, DAs, DPs mostly) indicated that the area of knowledge exchange and resources was a unique value that the GCF brought to climate finance readiness. On a list of eight possible areas where the GCF provides “unique value in the area of climate finance readiness,” this variable ranked last.

²⁴ The Bhutan case study describes the benefits that accrued from a set of South-South exchanges, and the Côte d’Ivoire case study describes the value obtained from one AE’s knowledge sharing.

floods in October 2019.

In **Lao PDR**, the risk of annual river flooding is extremely high on account of more intense precipitation periods. Floods in 2013 killed more than 350,000 people along with livestock, and damaged 15,000 hectares of rice crop as well as infrastructures such as bridges and schools. Drought exposure is lower, but in 2015 severe drought damaged tens of thousands of hectares of upland rice, and fruit crops. Temperatures are projected to increase across the country as well as in the Lower Mekong Basin, but the magnitude of the increase and how quickly it will occur remains uncertain. The impacts of climate change are likely to fall disproportionately on the poorer and marginalized communities, accentuating inequalities (World Bank Group and Asian Development Bank, 2021a).

In **Tanzania**, climate change has increased extreme weather events such as drought and flood, leaving its population vulnerable due to dependence on rain-fed agriculture, herding, and fishing for livelihoods (Alfi and others, 2023). Climate change is also contributing to forced displacement, food insecurity, energy challenges, and property and infrastructure damage. These factors may, in turn, contribute to instability and conflict in the region and the country (Blocher and Kileli, 2020).

In **Belize**, described as a country beset by droughts, floods, increased coastal erosion, and changing precipitation patterns (Belize, 2021), the anticipated intensification in climate change trends over time includes temperature rise of between 2 and 4 °C. by 2100, longer dry seasons, more intense rainfalls, increased frequency of hurricanes, and warmer sea surfaces and acidification. A World Bank study estimated that losses from hydro-meteorological disasters between 1994 and 2013 accounted for an annual average loss of 4 per cent of GDP (Carneiro, 2016, pp. 7).

In **Bhutan**, 16 disaster events – flash floods, landslides, earthquakes, windstorms, heavy rain and hail, drought and insect infestation – are documented for the period 2009 to 2017 in the country's 2020 reporting to the UNFCCC (Bhutan, National Environment Commission, 2020, pp. 114).

Source: IEU elaboration.

81. Evident in country accounts of changing climate patterns are government, industry and community practices that are adding to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and diminishing capacities to remove them. In some of the countries cited above, these practices include continued (and increasing) reliance on coal burning or other fossil fuels as well as illegal logging, the clearing of forest cover for agriculture, the paucity of clean cooking solutions, and the installation and use of air-conditioning. Country stakeholders comment on inertia in government that can be traced to policies, legal frameworks, and long-standing management paradigms. And those that have already engaged with the private sector through readiness-supported sensitization point to a characteristic aversion to risk, observing that “bottom line” arguments are more powerful than “climate imperative” ones.
82. At the same time, the evaluation observes a change in policy landscapes among Readiness-recipient countries that can be traced to commitments under the UNFCCC. To varying degrees, governments are instilling climate action expectations at a country level through climate policy and the mainstreaming of climate priorities referenced to NDCs into development planning cycles. Examples include the Côte d’Ivoire Plan National de Développement 2021–2025 and Plan Belize: Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022–2026.²⁵

²⁵ This is described in the Côte d’Ivoire, Bhutan and Belize country case studies.

Chapter 4. COHERENCE AND COMPLIMENTARITY

83. This chapter examines both internal and external coherence and complementarities. There are three levels of examination. The first two are internal to the GCF ecosystem; the third level examines the GCF readiness support in relation to the larger field of climate finance actors providing similar support.
84. The first part of the chapter assesses the extent to which the delivery of the GCF's Readiness programme occurs in ways that makes appropriate use of the resources available to support countries in accessing the GCF and climate finance more generally. This part begins with a look inside the GCF: the RPSP's placement within the Fund's operating context and its positioning vis-à-vis its larger suite of programmes. In relation to the ToC (Annex 5), this part of the chapter explores the extent to which the activities and results logic of the RPSP complement the other programming elements of the Fund (e.g. accreditation, the full project cycle). It then moves to examine the coherence of the component parts of the RPSP itself. In relation to the ToC, the coherence of the readiness activities and their associated outputs are the focus of attention. This part of the chapter ends with an examination of the tools in place to demonstrate performance and results against the RPSP strategy.
85. The second part of this chapter examines how the RPSP complements the readiness support of other climate finance institutions, assessing the degree of collaboration and coherence at both the institutional and country levels. It also identifies the niche role and primary contributions of the GCF as compared to other climate finance and readiness support mechanisms. In relation to the ToC, this second part of the chapter examines the activities and logic of the RPSP in relation to analogous readiness processes headed up by other climate finance actors.

A. INTERNAL COHERENCE

1. POSITIONING AND RELATIONSHIPS VIS-À-VIS OTHER GREEN CLIMATE FUND PROGRAMMES AND MODALITIES

86. **Finding: Although better defined in RPSP 2.0 than in its previous phase, the work of “readiness” at the GCF remains insufficiently anchored to the GCF’s organization and strategy and is under-supported by policy. Its value proposition to the GCF remains divergent, under-recognized and under-explored.**
87. Despite there now being a programme strategy and a series of operational advances as per past recommendations, there is a significant degree of doubt about whether the value proposition of the GCF's readiness programming within the Fund is yet sufficiently charted and uniformly shared. This doubt resides both within the GCF Secretariat and among NDAs and DPs. In part, it relates to the presence of strategic trade-offs that remain contested. Top among these in the realm of readiness design are “structure versus flexibility” and “cost-effectiveness versus the value assigned to country ownership.” In part, uncertainty over RPSP's value proposition relates to continuing ambivalence on the extent of its contributory role vis-a-vis the GCF's larger climate ambitions.

We need to be clear about our investment in readiness; these may seem like smallish amounts of money being spread about country-to-country. But when you add them up, the total investment is considerable.

- GCF Secretariat

88. RPSP's "enabling" function within the climate finance realm puts it on the radar of a broad swathe of stakeholders in country and multiple divisions within the GCF Secretariat. With a mandate to support country stakeholders, "to plan, identify, design and implement country-driven, transformational investments," the regional desks of the DCP serve as the direct point of contact for NDAs and DPs (Green Climate Fund, 2023e). The GCF's accreditation function also sits within this division. The DPM backstops DCP in this role with a mandate, "to ensure timely delivery of projects and programmes," through a suite of monitoring, adaptive management, results tracking and knowledge management services (Green Climate Fund, 2023g).²⁶ Division of Finance and Support Services provides project management service as well as support in the review of Readiness proposals. Readiness programming intersects with the Division of Mitigation and Adaptation (DMA), to the extent that it, "leads the preparation and review of public sector concept notes," and with Private Sector Facility (PSF), to the extent that it does the same with private sector focused CNs (Green Climate Fund, 2023f; 2023h). The RPSP intersects with the OSI, to the extent that RPSP grants support the integration of the GCF's ESS policy and standards as well as the Updated Gender Policy and Indigenous People's Policy (Green Climate Fund, 2023a). In this role, it is advised by the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG). OSI is part of the Secretariat's Senior Management Team. On legal and financial matters, the Office of the General Counsel and the Division of Finance and Support Services provide project management services in support of Readiness programming (Green Climate Fund, 2023j; 2023i).
89. Commentary on the positioning of RPSP within the structure and operations of the GCF varies across the Secretariat. Some take the view that the particular ways in which their divisions support readiness are necessarily circumscribed by their work programmes and budgets. Their focus is on providing the best quality inputs to specific aspects of readiness programming identified for the value-addition that can be obtained and, otherwise, to be responsive to requests related to other readiness aspects, as needs arise. Others see in this "specialist" orientation the potential for an unhealthy partitioning of roles between divisions without a shared understanding of RPSP's strategic contribution. For them, the internal convening structures – the Readiness Working Group (RWG) and its interdivisional review process have been insufficient as a basis for building a shared programmatic understanding of RPSP. Their focus is trained much more on assessing the merits of individual readiness proposals than it is on interdivisional learning at a programme level. One consequence of the diverse roles of divisions throughout RPSP grant life cycle is that numerous divisions produce data pertaining to RPSP. In the evaluation team's experience these data are not consistent with one another. For example, the data on number of CNs produced through RPSP differ in the data generated by divisions across GCF.
90. Three additional factors observed to be constraining RPSP's enabling function vis-a-vis country capacity are:

²⁶ In the readiness grant cycle, the DCP takes the lead role on (i) origination and co-development, (ii) appraisal, (iii) approval, and (iv) legal processing. The DPM takes the lead role on (v) monitoring for performance and compliance, (vi) adaptive management, and (vii) evaluation, learning and grant closure. The grant cycle is elaborated upon in the April 2023 version of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme Guidebook.

- A difference in vantage point on RPSP that exists between DCP, on the one hand, and the other divisions, on the other. The former is referenced to the CP and the NDA, while the latter are referenced more to the needs of DPs (AE/IAE/DAE, on non-AE) and the individual grants they champion. Being simultaneously and independently responsive to two discrete stakeholder groups complicates the ability of the Secretariat to provide a coordinated Readiness programme response. It also points to a grant-by-grant view taken by GCF at certain stages in the readiness grant lifecycle.
- Strategic direction on readiness – evident in the Initial Strategic Plan (2015–2019) and USP (2020–2023), but heavily referenced to intended programming directions and allocations rather than anticipated results and results pathways. By not stating country capacity results sought at a strategic level by a future date, the GCF foregoes an opportunity to map collaborative readiness responses for optimal impact.²⁷
- An explicit distribution of lead roles in the management of the Readiness granting cycle residing at a divisional level without formally assigned “strategic” leadership to help forge lateral communication among divisional peers and strategic consideration of RPSP’s role.²⁸

2. INTERFACE BETWEEN RPSP AND OTHER GREEN CLIMATE FUND-RELATED MODALITIES

Accreditation

91. Signals of discontinuity are apparent in the relationship between RPSP’s accreditation support activities, on the one hand, and the GCF’s entity accreditation process, on the other. The message conveyed through RPSP is that prioritizing national DAEs for accreditation is a distinctive part of the GCF’s business model and integral to its goals (Green Climate Fund, 2021e). NDA-nominated candidate organizations are offered needs assessment and capacity-building support, accordingly; and so they begin what can become an indeterminate accreditation journey. The GCF’s actual practice of accrediting new entities is much more limited than suggested in its messaging, and a backlog of DAE applicants exists. As of B.36, 49 entities out of 364 DAEs (both portfolio and in the pipeline) have received accreditation support through the RPSP. Of these, 20 have been granted accreditation, with overall average accreditation processing time of over 2 years for DAEs.²⁹ Nine entities are at various stages in the pipeline and a further 16 entities with a digital accreditation platform account without yet having submitted applications, four entities submitted applications and pending fee payment.³⁰

²⁷ Board level discussions on the GCF Strategic Plan (2024–2027) are accessible at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about/strategic-plan/update>. They indicate movement away from provision of “allocative goals” and toward the use of “climate results oriented” goals. Examples provided in a May 2023 presentation to the Secretariat include the following: (i) Every developing country will have the essential capacities to translate their NDC, AC, NAP or LTS into a climate-evidence informed, country-owned climate investment plan and pipeline of climate investments; (ii) Double the number of DAEs will have built the climate investment capacities to start programming approved public and private sector FPs; (iii) Over 50 new incubators or accelerators will be established to promote innovation of climate solutions in developing countries.

²⁸ GCF divisional lead roles vis-a-vis the readiness grant cycle are set out in the April 2023 RPSP Guidebook (pp.19).

²⁹ This processing time refers to the processing time for all accredited DAEs, whether they have received support from the RPSP throughout the process or not. Variation across entity types is noted, ranging from just over a year for regional DAEs (16 months) and just over two years for national DAEs (29 months).

³⁰ Data sources: Accreditation Entity Relations Unit and GCF’s Open Data Library as of B.36.

Project Preparation Facility

92. On the programme or project pipeline continuum that links climate action ideas to funded projects, the GCF distinguishes two sources of support: RPSP for the development of CNs, and PPF for the latter stages of project design. Neither guarantee a funded project. As it stands, grant development for CN preparation occurs under the leadership of the NDA and, as such, is mostly under the purview of the DCP. By contrast, PPF support is sought by AEs (on a “no-objection” basis) through DMA. Secretariat staff explain that the Board decision establishing the PPF and its operating guidelines delineated the roles of the PPF, including as “ineligible activities”, capacity-building or other activities funded under the Readiness programme. As well, the Operating Guidelines of the PPF and the RPSP Guidelines both describe the differences between Readiness and PPF, though this has been made conceptually clearer with the Climate Investment Planning Framework.³¹
93. From a country perspective, the experience of dealing with two separate modalities to support project development has given rise to calls for closer integration, or even amalgamation. In countries where NDAs and CPs are less firmly developed and AEs predominate, the distinction surrounding “ownership” between the two sources of support is diminished and the argument for bringing them closer together rests more on streamlining rationales. Where NDAs and CPs are more firmly developed and AEs are held more to account for country interests, the argument for amalgamating RPSP and PPF originates in the concern that CNs are insufficiently anchored to the project pipeline especially when they are developed without an AE sponsor, as often happens. Whether the introduction of the Climate Investment Planning Framework can address how these two support modalities can best add value in their own right and work well together should become clearer with its roll out in the next RPSP strategy. Some in the Secretariat caution that simply bringing the two modalities together will muddle fundamental ownership distinctions that have been important to the GCF’s country ownership approach to this point.

Funding proposal

94. For the most part, funded projects are observed to be operating without direct readiness support. Once approved, funded projects are expected to have the wherewithal to navigate their operating environments and ply towards planned outcomes with a high degree of self-reliance. The impact of RPSP on funded project implementation is mostly felt through the operational presence and convening capability of the NDA. At the same time, country stakeholders point to ways the two modalities (i.e. RPSP and funded projects) could be more directly engaged with each other. Three distinct possibilities emerging for readiness support from the country studies are:

- **Supplementing** a funded project’s adaptive management response to an emergent situation where the requirements for an action exceed the funded project’s own budget and/or technical capacity; RPSP resources are then called upon to address the gap.

[*Proposition*] Over a lengthy gestation period, the validity of project assumptions and assessment of project costs can change; quick release of readiness resources could assist the NDA/DP to identify resource gap-filling strategies to maintain highly promising project components.

³¹ The Climate Investment Planning Framework is introduced in the April 2023 RPSP Guidebook. The framework sets out a stepwise approach to country climate investment planning in which readiness grants and technical assistance are assigned to the first four steps (country level planning) and PPF funding and services are available to AE’s to support the development of their FPs.

- **Utilizing the funded project** – its operating environment, methodologies, facilities and equipment, etc. – as a “test bed” or “lab” for wider CP-relevant learning, drawing on RPSP support.

[*Proposition*] Unique opportunities exist to carry out additional RPSP-supported sector applied research, to teach/test stakeholder engagement approaches and project management skills and otherwise to promote low-carbon, climate-resilient pathways.

- **Preparing the ground** (beyond the capabilities of the funded project) in a timely way to scale up components of the funded project that have been proven effective and for which there is high demand for replication/adaptation.

[*Proposition*] Consolidating evidence, showcasing and engaging sector stakeholders (multilevel or multi-type) in planning discussions while the project is still underway could amplify the possibilities for scale and accelerate the change trajectory.

3. SUITABILITY OF RPSP MECHANISMS AND CAPACITIES TO DELIVER

95. **Finding: In general, GCF’s organization of RPSP 2.0 and its choice of delivery modalities are consistent with programme objectives and in keeping with country circumstances and expectations, as divergent as those are country-to-country. At the same time, a methodology gap around the identification of country readiness needs has hindered NDA potential to assert country leadership on readiness investments. As well, the strategic importance, yet sheer fragility, of the country coordination mechanism beckons closer attention from a programme design perspective.**
96. The activities of foundational objectives 1 and 2 of the RPSP have been the most immediately evident in the roll-out of the RPSP over the past 8 years, albeit in country specific ways and to different extents. Activities tend to be focused initially on institutional set up arrangements, inter-ministerial coordination, stakeholder sensitization and identification of DAE candidates, and on country priority setting. Across GCF eligible countries, pipeline related projects (objective 4) are variously incorporated in Readiness grants; and NAP Readiness activities (objective 3), where they are occurring, are pursued almost exclusively through the RPSP. Knowledge sharing activities (objective 5) weave their way through grants as knowledge products and learning opportunities are identified. Over the two phases of the RPSP, grants have been issued either as Framework Agreements (54 per cent) or General Grant Agreements (GGAs) (46 per cent). While the former predominates, utilization of the latter has increased in RPSP 2.0.^{32 33}
97. IAEs and regional DAEs play important delivery roles where national entities are absent or nascent. In some parts of the world where country ambitions for direct access are strong, they support and then give way to national entities as they acquire the credentials to become DPs. In some instances, NDAs/AEs and regional DAEs go one step further in supporting allied organizations to obtain FMCA clearance and then be available to take up DP roles in readiness activities.

³² According to the RPSP Guidebook, Framework Agreements are defined by the GCF as, “an umbrella agreement laying out the terms and conditions for delivery partners and the GCF regarding the implementation of a portfolio of Readiness support requests (grants).” Grant Agreements are defined as, “a bilateral agreement between a NDA or delivery partner and the GCF (or a designated counterparty for the GCF) stating the terms and conditions regarding the implementation of a single Readiness support request or grant.”

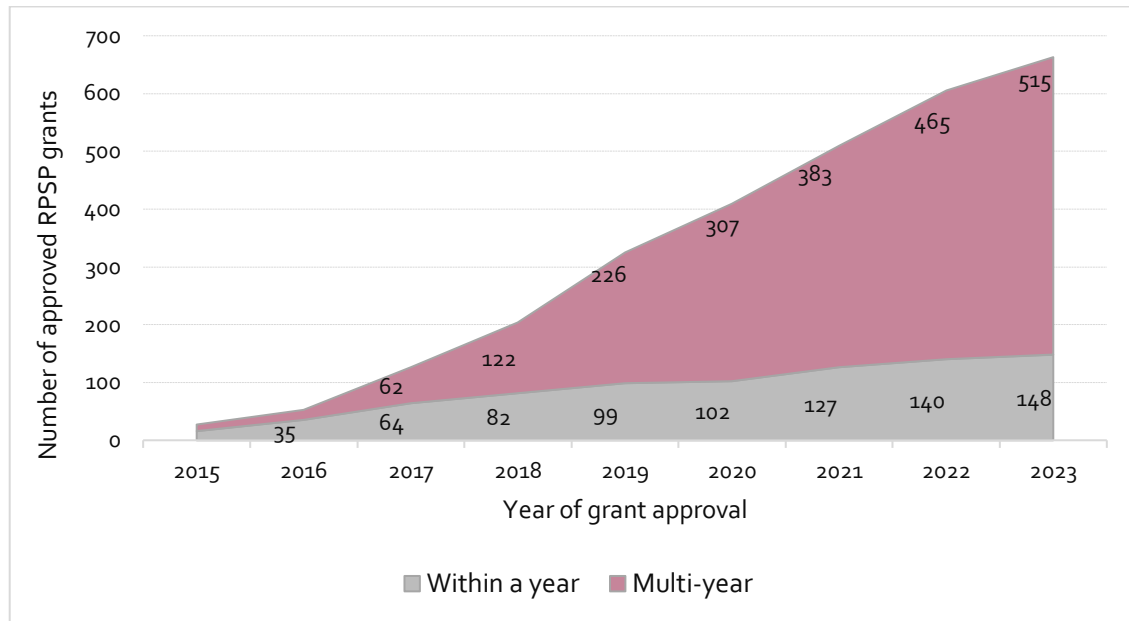
³³ In RPSP 1.0 the GGA represented 28 per cent of the total outlay in that phase. In RPSP 2.0, it represented 40 per cent. Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36.

98. A 2023 global snapshot of GCF DPs, by type, shows a prevailing presence of international AEs in the global readiness portfolio (39 per cent). By contrast, DAEs (regional and national AEs) represent 22 per cent. Non-accredited DPs, a broad category that includes large international organizations assigned programme delivery roles (e.g. providing pre-packaged accreditation support) are the second largest grouping of DPs (33 per cent).³⁴
99. A dominant perception across country stakeholders is that there are strengths and weaknesses associated with each DP type giving countries the opportunity to consider “trade-offs” related to aspects such as: reputation and influence, subject matter experience, understanding of country context and stakeholder connectedness, and project management capacity. Perceptions vary on the utilization of regional DAEs and regional grants.
100. Regional programming has been integral to RPSP delivery in the Caribbean and the Pacific where SIDS share a strong regional identity with political, economic and cultural dimensions, and common ground on climate action. Here, efficiency and knowledge sharing benefits are observable. Among other groupings of countries, the appetite for regional programming is less pronounced. Contributory factors include perceptions of the distinctiveness of individual country contexts, potential for labour intensive effort and bureaucratic complexity, and preference for routing readiness resources through own-country channels (especially relevant in those settings where NDAs are managing readiness requests at or close to funding cap levels).
101. Regarding fund utilization, the proportion of countries meeting their USD 1 million readiness funding caps has increased year-by-year since 2018. In 2022, for example, 25 of the 67 countries receiving support met or exceeded the funding cap for that year. A similar pattern is evident so far for 2023.³⁵ A continuation of this trend is likely to continue putting a squeeze on the availability of resources overall, and specifically for regional programming to the extent that this modality relies on contributions from country allocations.
102. To date, most readiness programming has been delivered through an annual planning cycle. Through Readiness 2.0, multi-year agreements have been encouraged. Aside from having flexibility to spend allocations within longer time frames, the various dimensions of a more programmatic funding approach are not widely understood. Figure 4–1 illustrates implementation period for RPSP grants, within a single year versus multi-year grants before and after RPSP 2.0. The number of grants with the duration of more than 12 months has been increasing in absolute terms as well as relative to grants implemented within a single year. So far, the GCF has approved 515 RPSP grants with multi-year implementation period, 289 of them during RPSP 2.0.

³⁴ Chief among the large DPs in terms of the number of projects are FAO, UNDP, GGGI, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, and UNEP.

³⁵ Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36.

Figure 4–1. Implementation period of the RPSP grants



Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The sample size is 663 approved grants that have provided the expected implementation period information. Grants with missing approval dates, request ID, submission date, approved amount, and agreement types were excluded.

103. Since 2020, the GCF has commissioned TA and advisory support through 45 grants, predominantly to support project development (mostly CNs).³⁶ That the GCF is investing in the development of a pool of TA consultants is viewed positively, overall. The commentary on the quality of the roster from NDAs and DAEs as well as the DCP regional desks indicates strong technical competence overall, but a lack of country-specific understanding and cultural competency for some settings. Relatedly, there is some frustration over situations where known locally or regionally available consultant support cannot be accessed because these individuals are not signed up with the GCF. The most significant concern regarding the use of TA resources surrounds how best to secure the knowledge transfer. Use of “counter-parting” and “mentoring” methodologies is considered essential in stemming the potential for “loss” once the assignment is over.
104. Two operational challenges are observed for their potential to undermine programme coherence and results. The first concerns the means by which NDAs and country stakeholders identify their readiness needs. Guidance exists for CP preparation, both in the Readiness Guidebook and in stand-alone documentation.³⁷ Stakeholders are advised to examine institutional and policy gaps, assets and capacity gaps among climate actors (public and private sector), and technology needs and to include a pipeline to address readiness needs for supporting CNs and projects. The guidance stops short on any further analysis to yield a set of country-owned readiness needs. The absence of such wards against precision readiness priority setting and planning, and leaves the NDA responding to readiness requests from DPs (AEs, DAEs, non-DAEs) made on the basis of broad alignments with

³⁶ In four instances, TA has been used to review and strengthen CP documents.

³⁷ The first version of the RPSP Readiness Guidebook was issued in March 2020, and was shaped by the 2019–2021 RPSP Strategy. The second and most recent version of the Guidebook was released in April 2023. It includes programming updates and new features that will likely be prominent in the 2024–2027 RPSP Strategy, once approved. These include: the Climate Policy Investment Framework, and the RRMF. Guidelines were first provided for CP development through Policy B.17/21 in 2017. These were elaborated upon in January 2021.

national plans or strategies. Country readiness needs assessment is identified as an operational improvement in the 2019–2021 readiness strategy, and is mentioned in relation to the Climate Finance Investment Framework (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 32–33; 2023b, pp. 11–15). Still, at the time of writing, a country readiness needs assessment tool remains under development. Based on RRMF database reporting, only one country, North Macedonia, has reported that a readiness needs assessment has been developed with an associated action plan and strategies for readiness support. In addition, six more countries (Eritrea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Tajikistan) are still implementing the readiness needs assessment development tool.

105. The second operational challenge concerns the nuanced and challenging task of setting up country coordination mechanisms to support access to the GCF and international climate finance, more generally. In the case study countries, the evaluation observes how central these mechanisms are to the implementation of country climate agendas, and yet how vulnerable these mechanisms are to the complex dynamics of country government administrations. The institutional set up of the NDA and its coordination functions necessarily straddle institutions with a science or policy orientation, on the one hand, and those with greater orientation towards finance and public programming, on the other. Power differentials and public management culture are two obvious additional overlays to consider. What has become clearer over RPSP 2.0 is that climate finance governance is one of those readiness topics that warrants continuing (and deepening) attention.

4. RPSP STRATEGY AND TOOLS FOR OPERATIONALIZATION

106. **Finding: There has been little harmonization between the release of the RPSP strategy and tools for operationalization of the strategy and implementation of the RPSP programme. Numerous tools and frameworks have been released over the period of RPSP 2.0 to operationalize the strategy. This has left a perception of constant change in the RPSP programme among stakeholders, and necessitated ex-post adjustments and retrofitting of operations.**
107. As a follow-up to the release of the Readiness strategy in 2019, GCF developed a Readiness Guidebook published in March 2020. The guidebook contains an overview of the Readiness programme and brief guidance for NDAs and DPs on desirable elements and best practices that GCF staff look for when reviewing proposals. Lastly, it contains guidance for NDAs and DPs on different processes to be followed during implementation of RPSP grants. Only in February 2022, GCF released the RRMF to provide a framework for measuring results. All active grants were retrofitted to ensure uniform reporting of results. In March 2023, GCF also released a new version of the Readiness Guidebook which now also contained a Readiness Standards Handbook as an annex to serve as a guide for ensuring that appropriate review and appraisal is conducted on each readiness proposal in a consistent manner, laying out the process of review at the Secretariat.
108. The above-mentioned tools are important elements for operationalization of RPSP strategy. However, interviews with stakeholders reveal a perception of constant changes and accompanying demands on their time and effort with each of these changes. This is, to an extent, due to the extended operationalization of the RPSP strategy through introduction and refinement of the above tools. Many stakeholders find it difficult to follow the changes and new tools and this feeds into the perception of constant change in GCF policies and procedures. While GCF has undertaken webinars to communicate these additions and raise awareness among the DPs, NDAs and other stakeholders the relative utility of the numerous tools and their fit in the RPSP architecture is still not well understood. In addition, introduction of tools in the middle of the RPSP strategy period also

necessitates retrofitting, as in the case of RRMF noted above, which puts additional burden on various stakeholders.

5. RPSP AND THE TOOLS TO MEASURE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

109. **Finding: Solid headway has been made putting in place a means to tell the GCF's readiness results story. Where there was little ability to understand impact beyond that created grant-by-grant, groundwork has been laid to understand the RPSP at a programme level. The presence of an RRMF moves GCF and RPSP stakeholders one step closer to understanding readiness contributions and potential at a country level. Tools for periodic measurement of results and quality of grant implementation are yet to be fully developed.**
110. The RPSP was launched without a baseline understanding of its operating context and ToC to guide its contribution to the GCF's goals. A rudimentary results logic was incorporated in the 2019–2021 RPSP strategy and since then a more complete ToC has emerged along with a RRMF. This was approved by the Executive Director in February 2022. The RRMF is aligned to the readiness strategy. Accordingly, it is structured around the five objectives and related outcomes (numbering 18). RPSP outcomes are supported by a menu of associated outputs (50) and indicators (71). All active grants have been retrofitted by the GCF to allow for standardized reporting against the RRMF (budgets associated with these grants have remained as originally formulated). Grants coming on stream after 5 May 2023 subscribe to the RRMF in designing the grant (narrative and budget). Initial guidance exists for these tasks.³⁸
111. In the absence of a programme level framework, grants were approved on the merits of individualized ToCs and budgets referenced to programme outcomes (and outputs). This has compromised attempts to aggregate project level performance and results data at a programme level. The Secretariat's reporting to the Board on RPSP has reflected this activity-focused orientation. Results-focused reporting to the Board is expected in 2023 as project level progress and Completion Reports are submitted using the new format. A new online portal is operational.
112. Between the individual grant and the programme level perspective, a country level results perspective is important to understanding readiness impacts and informing on future readiness investments. This is anticipated as RPSP continues to introduce multi-year programming. Thus far, any readings of country baseline conditions for readiness programming have been anecdotal. As well, once fully operational in 2024, the Secretariat is expected to have data showing the extent to which RPSP has contributed to the total amount of climate finance mobilized at the country level.
113. At the country level, the evaluation has not captured widespread reaction to the introduction of the RRMF. At this stage, it is mostly familiar to those with direct management and/or reporting responsibilities. At the Secretariat, DCP staff are just now using it to assess the merits of grant applications. Some AEs have expressed concern that the introduction of the RRMF represents an imposition made without sufficient stakeholder input. In particular, they mention instances where the retrofitting of previously stated results into the framework misrepresents results claims originally made. The view from those close to the task of creating the RRMF and tools is that: DPs, NDAs and the Secretariat were consulted; instances of mis-representation of planned results did occur as might be expected in an exercise of this scale, and that perceived problems with the retrofit may have also

³⁸ Guidance includes, to date, an introduction in the April 2023 RPSP Guidebook, an RRMF orientation webinar and a document entitled, "RRMF Grant Output-Level Indicator Reference Sheets". See Green Climate Fund (n.d.-d).

stemmed from different understandings of GCF's intent regarding the introduction of the RRMF, and from different notions of what can and cannot be included in the scope of the outputs and indicators provided. It is suggested that, over this period of transition, the programme level ToC created under the RPSP strategy requires validation, initially through reporting, programme level monitoring and ultimately through a series of theory-based evaluations.

114. The presence RRMF provides a current and future framework for measurement of results. However, measuring results also requires tools which can collect, aggregate data and report on results outlined in the RRMF systematically. In 2022, DPM has undertaken an exercise to collect output-level data to report on RRMF results. However, there is little clarity on the ongoing frequency of such exercise to continue reporting on output-level results of RRMF. IEU has undertaken a review of the database of outputs created in the process of this review and has updated such data in this evaluation. As noted in the limitations section of chapter 1 (Chapter 1.A.2.c), IEU is unable to assess the quality of grant implementation and, by function, the quality of output. At best, the exercise was able to state whether the output expected to be achieved in the grant appraisal report has been reported to have been achieved in the completion report or not. Similarly, DPM is currently in the process of undertaking an evaluation of the outcomes and impact-level results of the RPSP. Given the ongoing nature of such an exercise the periodicity and utility remain to be seen. Thus, GCF has few well defined and real time tools and mechanisms to measure quality of implementation and results at outcome and impact level.

B. EXTERNAL COHERENCE

1. COHERENCE AND COMPLIMENTARITY OF RPSP TO OTHER READINESS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING SUPPORTS

115. **Finding: Evidence of external coherence and complementarity between the GCF and other readiness and capacity-building support is variable across comparator organizations and is highly context dependent and specific. At fund level, collaboration is often ad hoc and opportunistic, and fund-level agreements have only limited effects on the GCF's country-level engagements. At national level, mechanisms for country programming and focal point coordination facilitate coherence and complementarity, in some settings.**

a. Past findings and related expectations

116. In June 2017, the Board adopted its “Operational framework for complementarity and coherence.”³⁹ The framework seeks to strengthen external coherence and complementarity across finance institutions through four operational pillars: Board-level discussions on fund-to-fund arrangements, activity-level complementarity, national programming coherence, and complementarity through established dialogue. With regard to readiness support, the intention was to increase the exchange of information and coordination arrangements among climate finance institutions on matters related to such topics as NDCs, NAPs, and entity accreditation. The framework focused explicitly on the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Climate Investment Funds (CIF), and Adaptation Fund (AF).
117. The 2018 RPSP evaluation assessed complementarity, coordination, and synergies at the activity level and with regard to country programming approaches, investment planning, and pipeline

³⁹ Available at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/framework-complementarity-coherence.pdf>.

development. The assessment identified readiness support provided by bilateral institutions, UNDP, UNEP, and World Resources Institute, and it documented additional readiness support from the GEF, AF, and CIF in all nine evaluation case study countries. At the same time, the evaluation found that the degrees of coordination in each country varied. High levels of coordination were attributed to strong country ownership of the climate agenda and clear expression of priorities and strategies on climate action. The evaluation also found that RPSP country programming focused primarily on the GCF as a source of readiness funding, and that the GCF did not specify requirements for coordination.

118. Following the 2018 RPSP evaluation, the GCF Secretariat incorporated a number of improvements related to external coherence (Green Climate Fund, 2019a). To address challenges related to the strategic use of readiness support, the Secretariat sought to further develop a coherent, country-driven approach to planning for readiness, which included identifying “other multilateral climate funds with which to ensure coherence and complementarity of readiness support” (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 12). The GCF requested that countries note any complementary readiness resources in grant requests. Additionally, the Fund identified the need for multi-year readiness support planning and strengthened coordination with other multilateral climate funds to ensure coherence and complementarity. These coherence-related aims are included in the RPSP 2019 Work Programme (Green Climate Fund, 2019a) under the following objectives:
- **Objective 1:** Enhancing complementarity and coherence of GCF and other climate financing mechanisms to better mobilize financial and technical capacities.
 - **Objective 2:** Enhancing collaboration with other funds to align programming at a national level.
 - **Objective 4:** Ensuring collaboration and coherence at the activity level to identify and scale opportunities.
119. Regarding fund-to-fund coherence, the GCF and the GEF share a long-term vision on complementarity and coherence (Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility, 2021). While this is the only formal framework the GCF has in place with another climate finance institution, the GCF, GEF, AF, and CIF have annual dialogues and have pursued other means of engagement, both formal and informal. Reflecting this, the 2023 Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund’s Investments in the African States (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023a) found that while the GCF Secretariat had pursued high-level coordination with the GEF, less had been done to ensure coherence and complementarity with the AF and CIF. It also found that coherence and complementarity happened largely at the level of AEs and was otherwise unsystematic.

b. Observed coherence and complementarity across funds

120. Consistent with the findings of these earlier evaluations, this evaluation finds similar patterns of coherence and complementarity between the GCF’s readiness and capacity-building support and that provided by other institutions, and that the support that is provided is highly context dependent and specific. Those interviewed for this evaluation conveyed a lack of a systematic approach on inter-institutional coherence and complementarity at the GCF that affects all levels of its work, both at the country and Secretariat levels. A survey of RPSP stakeholders found that 71 per cent of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed that RPSP has been complementary to the readiness support of other climate finance agencies. For NDAs, this percentage was 85 per cent, while for DPs, DAEs, and IAEs, the percentage was only 61 per cent. This may reflect the NDA’s centralized position and

role in ensuring coherence and complementarity, a perspective that differs from that of the Secretariat, IAEs, and DPs, who often perceive complementarities emerging opportunistically.

At the country level

121. At the country level, coherence and collaboration are highly dependent on institutional structures, strategies, and stakeholder capacities. One mechanism for coherence at the country level is the fast-track accreditation of AEs (see Box 4–1). The GCF Secretariat staff interviewed for this evaluation noted that opportunities for synergies pop up through NDAs and DPs and that conversations are serendipitous. This informal approach is like that taken by other climate finance institutions, which often rely on country demand or requests for engagement (e.g. AF, GIZ and the GCA-Technical Assistance Programme). Stakeholders described the NDA as being particularly important for ensuring coherence and coordination.

Box 4–1. Fast-track accreditation

The policy for fast-track accreditation, adopted by the Board in decision B.08/03, stipulates that entities that already meet fiduciary, environment, and social principles and standards found to be comparable to those of the GCF are eligible for fast-track accreditation, which can shorten the accreditation review. This includes entities accredited by the GEF, the AF, and EU DEVCO. In principle, this should increase the complementarity and coordination of climate finance institutions as they share AEs who can be involved in projects with multiple institutions. While fast-tracked accreditation helps entities to go more smoothly through the Secretariat and Accreditation Panel review process, it has been slow to go through the legal process for Accreditation Master Agreement effectiveness compared to entities going through normal accreditation processes. Moreover, the fast-track accreditation process has been significantly slower than intended in half of the instances identified in case study countries.

Source: IEU elaboration.

122. In cases in which the NDA was described as lacking capacity to engage with the GCF and its processes – often due to limitations in time, staffing, technical skills, and monetary resources – coordination and complementarity were similarly seen as limited or even problematic. Such may be the case when NDAs are affected by changes in government, changes that in turn affect existing relationships and coordination mechanisms. In some instances, AEs and DPs have played key roles ensuring coordination at the country level, serving as a bridge between the GCF, on-the-ground stakeholders, and even other climate finance and development institutions.
123. Consequently, the levels of coherence and complementarity across country settings are variable. For example:
- In Tanzania, there is no evidence of a strategic or explicit coordination approach favouring complementarity.
 - In Armenia, there is no evidence that the GCF has facilitated coordination with or connections to other climate finance institutions on readiness or capacity-building. While the GEF, AF, World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and CIF are active in the country, country stakeholders could not identify any instances of collaboration between these institutions and the GCF.
 - In Lao PDR, the complexity of GCF procedures and requirements has been described as a constraining factor to a coordinated approach with other funders.

- There is evidence of complementarity in Panama, where climate finance institutions collaborate on e-mobility work and GCF readiness has contributed to IDB funded projects. There is also coherence regarding the development of a carbon market; while GCF readiness has supported legislative and institutional development as well as stakeholder mapping, the World Bank has contributed to the identification of a key mechanism for the market.
 - In Mexico, GCF readiness support is connected indirectly to projects funded by the GEF and FAO.
 - Côte d'Ivoire has engaged multiple actors including the World Bank, CTCN, UNEP, and Ernst & Young to do studies related to readiness. Stakeholders there identified clear links between the GCF's training and capacity-building and their ability to work on an AF project on innovative technologies and practices for smallholder farmers.
 - Bhutan has accessed readiness support to address emergent gaps in a REDD+ readiness grant from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, and UN Capital Development Fund has supported Bhutan in CN development.
124. Similarly, the levels of awareness about climate finance and climate financiers also vary by country and by stakeholder group. For example, while some stakeholders in Côte d'Ivoire were able to describe the linkages between GCF readiness support and climate financing from the AF as well as complementarities between the GEF, GCF, GGGI, the World Bank, the NDC Partnership, and the AF, others outside of the government and AEs were less aware, or were even unaware, of other financing opportunities beyond that provided by the GCF. DPs noted that many complementarities were not visible and that synergies were limited; as well, some civil society stakeholders expressed that they only recently became aware of what the NDA could fund with readiness support. Many stakeholders in Tanzania, particularly those outside the government, were unaware of the full scope of GCF Readiness support or of other entities that could provide capacity-building or other Readiness funding. Some interviewed in Lao PDR noted that they had seen little or no evidence of coherence and complementarity between climate finance institutions, and they expressed a desire for the GCF to be more proactive in this regard to ensure more sectoral and regional coherence.
125. These cases reveal the concrete ways in which national institutions and political contexts affect the degree of external coherence and complementarity at the country level. Examples from some of the case study countries are in Table 4–1 below.

Table 4–1. Contextualizing coherence and complementarity

COUNTRY	EXAMPLE
Côte d'Ivoire	The existence of a CP plays an essential role in bringing together stakeholders and informing collaboration. There, the NDA has made a concerted effort to develop a climate finance strategy that engages a multitude of actors. In this instance, the location of the GEF and GCF focal points in distinct ministries limits the strategic overlap between the two. In-country dynamics of national institutions addressing climate finance are discussed in section A of this chapter.
Panama	There is significant evidence of complementary and coherence. Collaboration is driven largely by a national consultant funded by RPSP.
Belize	A high degree of coherence is likely linked to having the AF and GCF focal points in the same ministry and a coordination mechanism in place to oversee the development of a climate funding pipeline. As a result, seven of Belize's GCF CP projects are financed by international donors other than the GCF, and are described as having already benefited or being likely to benefit from readiness support.

COUNTRY	EXAMPLE
Lao PDR	The country experiences lower levels of coherence and complementarity despite the GCF and GEF focal points being in the same department (although the AF has a different focal point). Stakeholders feel that the country could benefit from a comprehensive strategy or CP to support a coherent, landscape-based approach to climate finance that includes AF resources.
Tanzania	There is limited coherence and collaboration between stakeholders. According to some country stakeholders, this is explained by the limited amount of coordination undertaken by the NDA. Tanzania also lacks a CP or coordination mechanism and has experienced high turnover in key government offices.

Source: IEU elaboration.

At the GCF level

126. The GCF Secretariat, IAEs, DPs, and stakeholders from other climate finance institutions describe collaboration between the GCF and other climate finance entities including the GEF, AF, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, GIZ, and The Commonwealth as ad hoc and opportunistic. Particularly at the Secretariat level, there is an acknowledgement that while the UNFCCC has mandated coherence among institutions, actual examples of collaboration are generally informal across funds or else reflective of strong coordination, policy, and/or strategy mechanisms at the country level. This is further described in the landscape analysis (Volume II of the evaluation), which found limited evidence of coordination.
127. The GCF and GEF have made the most visible effort and progress in pursuit of complementarities, particularly as related to adaptation planning (see Box 4–2). Some coordination is noted between the GCF and AF, including through joint activities, workshops, and through the Community of Practice for Direct Access Entities (CPDAE), a self-governed network of NIEs and DAEs dedicated to sharing best practices on direct access implementation.

Box 4–2. Complementarity between the GCF and GEF

Strategic and intentional efforts to foster complementarity are noted between the GCF and GEF Least Developed Country Fund/Special Climate Change Fund. These efforts are evident in strategic documents, with the GEF-8 Strategy noting that the GEF and GCF will continue to provide complementary NAP support through the Least Developed Country Fund/Special Climate Change Fund and Readiness programme, respectively.

Evidence of complementarity between these funds is seen as trickling down at the country level, with financing proposals prepared under the GCF leading to financing under the LDCF in Lao PDR and in Mauritius, where the GEF has provided financing for the introduction of electric buses around the capital and where the GCF is providing readiness financing to scale up this work.

Source: IEU elaboration.

128. However, high-level agreements between climate finance institutions on matters of coordination do not necessarily translate to the way the Secretariat engages at country or grant levels of operation. Secretariat staff described being unaware of how strategic decisions on coordination are pursued, finding it to be more an afterthought than a programming feature mainstreamed in GCF operations. As a result, even when GCF staff visit countries with existing grants, they may not meet with other development partners, and NDAs may not share information on existing synergies. Although countries applying for readiness are asked to identify complementarities, Secretariat staff noted that

this information is generally not validated or monitored and is, instead, taken at face value. Some feel that more needs to be done to help countries develop comprehensive plans for climate investments.

129. Another important challenge consistently echoed across stakeholder groups, including government entities, AEs, and DPs, relates to the GCF's policies and practices, which were depicted as too bureaucratic, cumbersome, confusing, unfriendly, and constantly shifting. Some interviewees described situations in which stakeholders were unaware that readiness could support institutional capacity development support by consultants for CNs destined for other climate financiers. Others noted that GCF requirements made it impossible to involve more than one United Nations agency involved in readiness grants despite the benefits that this may have provided. Stakeholders also described the amount of feedback on and particular policy requirements for accreditation applications as overwhelming and not in line with on-the-ground realities. In some cases, those interviewed expressed confusion about who was supposed to follow up with DPs on readiness work.

c. Prospects for greater coherence and complementarity

130. Overall, this evaluation reveals a diversity of ways in which the readiness supports of multiple organizations can be combined in an unstructured space lacking formalized or widely understood guidance, practices, or policies. Conditions for Readiness programming are highly dependent on national contexts and on the organizations and individuals operating in them. And as many stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation mentioned, complementarity is essential as the GCF cannot possibly fund all readiness-related needs, particularly with its current funding modalities. The importance of this complementarity is reinforced by the overlap in programming, geographic coverage, and priority country groups among the GCF and other institutions. Additionally, as several other programmes indirectly or directly target support to increase access to the GCF, fostering complementarity presents an opportunity for a more efficient use of RPS resources.
131. A willingness for greater complementarity is evident among other funds. Under the AF Midterm Strategy (MTS) 2023–2027, readiness support was identified as an area in which there are key opportunities for enhanced complementarity, coherence, and coordination with other climate funds. Desire for collaboration and heightened complementarity is also evident in documentation from the Landscape Resilience Fund, the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub and the USAID-Climate Readiness Project, and several other programmes seek to support access indirectly or directly to GCF resources, perhaps presenting an opportunity to expand complementarity and coordination of support.
132. To counter the lack of a systematic approach to complementarity, some stakeholders noted that the GCF should engage in more country-level dialogues, thus bolstering what some see as its underutilized role as a convenor to ensure that there are comprehensive strategies for climate finance, that implementation issues are resolved, and that coordinating mechanisms are in place. Stakeholders have also asked that the GCF be more motivated in ensuring that all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, have access to these coordination mechanisms. Others have asked that the GCF be more proactive in coordinating with other climate funds at the country level, although stakeholders differ as to whose role that should be, with some pointing to the NDA and Fund focal points. Because an involved in-country presence such as this is outside of the GCF's current operating model and resource scope, other methods of encouraging country-level complementarity will be necessary to address current gaps.

2. COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE AND NICHE OF THE RPSP RELATIVE TO OTHER READINESS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING SUPPORTS

133. **Finding: RPSP's comparative advantages include its focus on capacity and institution-building, its support to climate finance planning and strategies, including the underlying information for these, and its connection to the GCF's role as a convenor. Key limitations include a perceived lack of clarity on requirements and the absence of a regional presence.**
134. The GCF's RPSP has several advantages over other climate finance readiness and capacity-building support opportunities.⁴⁰ One of the most frequently cited advantages is the RPSP's assistance with capacity- and institution-building. Numerous stakeholders interviewed cited this as the main RPSP contribution, stating that most other entities will not fund capacity-building, which is a high priority need for countries lacking technical capacities, institutional frameworks, and/or seeking support for accreditation. A survey of RPSP stakeholders supports this finding, with the highest percentage of respondents (28 per cent) indicating that TA and capacity-building are the GCF's unique value added in the area of climate finance readiness. While a review of comparator programmes as part of the landscape analysis indicates that other programmes do in fact provide such support, this support may not be well known or as well regarded as that of the GCF.
135. Another key value added of the RPSP is its support of climate finance planning and strategies, including the completion of climate studies necessary for developing them. While other entities such as bilateral donors focus on concrete implementation activities, the GCF fills a niche role of providing the inputs needed for planning purposes. This is related to another comparative advantage cited by those interviewed and surveyed for the evaluation: the GCF's varied financing mechanisms and broad reach, including its ability to provide funding for all developing countries irrespective of their circumstances. Indeed, the second highest grouping of survey respondents (26 per cent) indicated the GCF's value added is assisting with finance mobilization, while another 20 per cent of respondents pointed towards the GCF's dedicated funding support as its unique value in the area of climate finance readiness. Numerous stakeholders interviewed referenced specific examples in which the GCF was able to fund studies and other readiness work not eligible for funding by other institutions. As a result, NDAs, DAEs, and DPs often see the GCF as essential in the process of climate finance planning.
136. Stakeholders also believe that the GCF has an important role in convening due to its approach to inclusivity and encouragement of broad-based multi-stakeholder engagement processes, including with the private sector (see country ownership). While described by some as a value add, it is important to note that some stakeholders felt that the inclusivity pushed for by the GCF is conceptual or theoretical only, and that inclusivity disappears during implementation.
137. One particular limitation of the GCF cited by other climate finance entities and some NDAs, AEs, and DPs is its lack of a (physical) regional presence. Some of those interviewed described other climate finance entities such as The Commonwealth, the AF, and GIZ as having a greater regional presence or being decentralized in ways that supported better relationships with country stakeholders and more contextualized work. Another limitation of the GCF as compared to other climate finance institutions is the perception that it is not clear on its requirements for accessing

⁴⁰ Many of these value additions are cited as being the essential value adds of proposed readiness-related activities in the 2013 "Modalities for Readiness and Preparatory Support," which notes the GCF could add value in the areas of sustained and ongoing readiness support, inclusive support that targets private and public sector stakeholders, and purposeful collaboration that builds institutional capacity.

funding. Some of those interviewed for this evaluation compared it to the GEF, which they feel is much more straightforward and proactive in engaging stakeholders on its requirements and organizational needs when countries seek to access finance. While the GCF's limited country presence allows it to conserve resources, when coupled with a lack of clarity on processes and policies on RPSP, this negatively affects its perceived utility.

Chapter 5. EFFECTIVENESS

138. This chapter assesses the effectiveness of the RPSP. It first assesses the extent to which each RPSP objective has been achieved, to date. This assessment is followed by an analysis of key factors that have enabled or hindered the achievement of these objectives. The achievement of objectives is assessed based on achievement rates, that is, whether the planned outputs were delivered, as well as based on the quality of these outputs and whether they are leading to the desired outcomes. Special considerations are given to priority countries, namely LDCs, SIDS and African States,⁴¹ throughout the chapter.
139. As per the ToC (Annex 5), the RPSP is expected to deliver country-level results across the five objectives of the GCF Readiness Strategy 2019–2021. These are to be results over which the Readiness programme has direct influence. That is to say, they are changes further along the results chain from outputs (i.e. deliverables) yet sufficiently within the RPSP's sphere of influence to realize given available time and resources. As such, effectiveness is to be observed on the basis of the extent to which:
- **Country capacity** was strengthened to drive low-emission, climate-resilient development, with particular attention to the functioning of the NDA, DAEs/DPs and relevant other stakeholders (objective 1)
 - **Strategies** were put in place to guide GCF investment that are relevant to country priorities and complementary with other climate financiers (objective 2)
 - **Adaptation planning** is funded to catalyse climate finance with attention to matters of institutional coordination, quality of evidence, private sector engagement, and adaptation finance (objective 3)
 - **Pipeline development** is helped with the formulation of priority-aligned, paradigm-shifting concepts and FP including through DAEs. (objective 4)
 - **Knowledge sharing and learning** has informed practice (climate relevant project development and implementation (objective 5)⁴²
140. As well, progress on each objective hinges on a set of assumptions holding strong.

A. ACHIEVEMENT OF RPSP OBJECTIVES

141. **Finding: RPSP grants and TA address RPSP objectives to variable degrees and show variable degrees of effectiveness. Higher effectiveness is noted for objectives 1 and 3, while effectiveness appears more limited for objectives 2, 4 and 5. While capacity-building and NAP support have been highly valued, a need to broaden and increase capacity-building support (e.g. secure accreditation), mitigate impacts of staff turnover, and support NAP and climate finance investment implementation are noted. Challenges related to pipeline developed have**

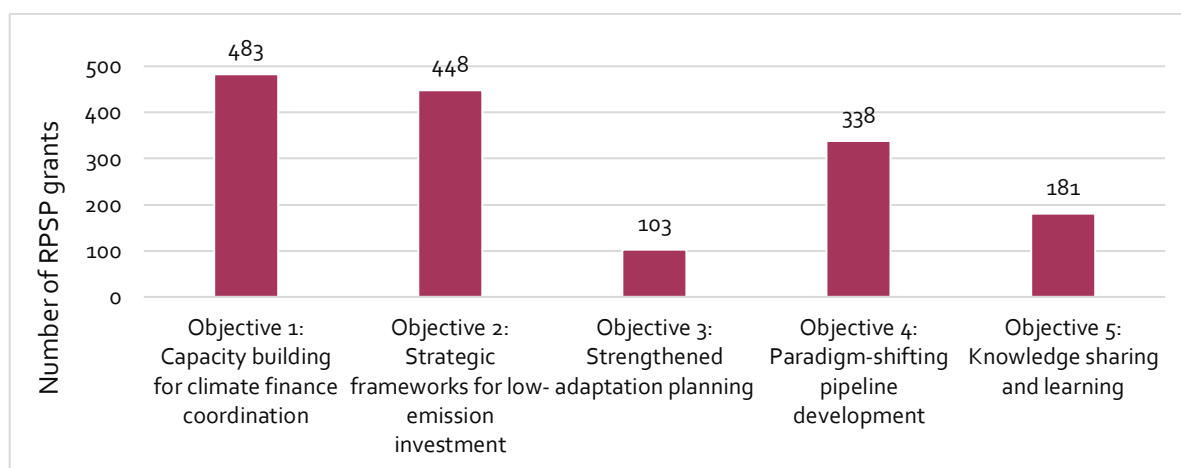
⁴¹ Unless country classification – LDCs, SIDS and African States – are explicitly mentioned, the reference to ‘priority countries’ pertains to all countries falling in at least one of these categories.

⁴² Statements paraphrased from the collection of objective and outcome statements set out in the RPSP evaluation ToC in Annex 5. Refer to the 2019–2021 readiness strategy for a full elaboration of these statements.

hampered the achievement of objectives 2 and 4, while capturing lessons learned and providing for knowledge sharing need to be further systematized.

142. Since its inception, the GCF has approved 707 RPSP requests worth USD 518.99 million, excluding workshops, events and structured dialogue, with 63 per cent of these delivered in a priority country (representing 62 per cent of the total RPSP financing). The majority of RPSP grants have included capacity-building activities (objective 1), followed by the development of strategic framework for climate finance implementation (objective 2) and support for pipeline development (objective 4). A smaller proportion of grants have focused on knowledge sharing and learning (objective 5) and the strengthening of adaptation planning, including the development of NAPs (objective 3). Overall, RPSP grants have addressed each objective to varying degrees (see Figure 5–1). The extent to which these grants have successfully and effectively achieved each objective varies. An overview of the effectiveness of the RPSP portfolio to achieve each of these objectives is described in the chapters below.

Figure 5–1. Total number of approved RPSP grants per objective



Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The RPSP grants can address more than one objective, with the exception of objective 3.

Objective 1: Capacity-building for climate finance coordination

143. Under objective 1, the RPSP seeks to establish human, technical, and institutional capacity to drive low-emission and climate-resilient development, including through direct access to the GCF.
144. The RPSP is generally considered as having made good progress in achieving this objective. Four in five survey respondents identified capacity-building for finance coordination as an area where the RPSP has made significant contributions (81 per cent). Quantitative data from a review of the portfolio indicates a high delivery achievement rate, averaging at 88 per cent⁴³ (Annex 1; see Box 5–1 for observations of objective 1 achievement rates in priority countries). This positive assessment of the RPSP's performance on objective 1 is further echoed in interviews. For the most part, stakeholders recognize the RPSP as effective in building capacity and achieving immediate results.

⁴³ The achievement rate represents the percentage of RPSP grants that planned for an output to be delivered and reported it as delivered at completion. The achievement rate is only estimated based on RPSP grants having submitted a Completion Report (CR). Grants that have submitted an Interim Progress Report were not considered as certain outputs may be planned for subsequent years, thus underrepresenting the achievement of results. The achievement rate is also not an indication of the extent to which the delivery of outputs has led to the achievement of outcomes the output seeks to achieve.

That said, the extent to which capacity built is sustained and leads to impact was questioned (see Chapter 8 and Chapter 9), and the extent to which immediate results have been achieved varies across stakeholder type.

Box 5–1. Observations in priority countries – Objective 1

Achievement rates in SIDS are particularly high under this objective, standing at an average of 93 per cent. However, the recent SIDS evaluation notes that more support is needed to systematically and efficiently bridge the gap between capacity strengthening to achieve accreditation and for the preparation and implementation of projects. In this regard, the evaluation reports a need for the RPSP to adopt an accompaniment approach over a longer period, rather than short-term TA as is currently being delivered (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2020). Stakeholders, however, highlighted the heterogeneity of SIDS, noting needs can vary greatly. This is evident in Belize, where support delivered under this objective was largely perceived positively and as successful.

On the other hand, achievement rates reported are low for LDCs and African States, particularly for outcome 1.2. This appears to be particularly driven by a low achievement rate related to the nomination of DAEs, with challenges in capacity-building for DAEs noted in the recent African States evaluation (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023a). Stakeholders consulted as part of that evaluation reported that capacity-building provided was valued, although remaining too limited when compared to needs. This was noted as further compounded in contexts of institutional fragmentation as can be found in African States.

Similarly, persistent challenges in achieving accreditation were reported in the recent LDC evaluation. The evaluation further notes that what the RPSP offers does not address broader conditions that affect countries' abilities for lasting climate action (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2022).

Source: IEU elaboration.

145. NDA strengthening has been delivered extensively through the RPSP portfolio, particularly given NDAs' central role in achieving RPSP and broader GCF objectives, and vice versa. A review of the portfolio indicates that such activities (as per outcome 1.1) were planned in at least 246 RPSP grants (i.e. 41 per cent of RPSP non-NAP grants).⁴⁴ Capacity-building activities targeting NDAs have typically been perceived as effective. However, high turnover rates have created some sustainability challenges and have in cases meant basic capacity-building activities need to be delivered repeatedly. Restrictions on the use of RPSP resources to cover operational costs for the NDA and focal points have constrained NDA/focal point functions where local counterpart resources have not been assigned.
146. In relation to NDA strengthening, the RPSP plays a key role in building capacity to fulfil their coordination role. This is largely achieved through output 1.1.1 (country coordination mechanism) and output 1.1.2 (NDA established or strengthened a country mechanism for inter-institutional coordination). The strengthening and establishment of sustainable mechanisms to fulfil this role has been achieved to variable degrees, with variation in part driven by aforementioned turnover challenges and NDA institutional arrangements – with stakeholders noting that establishing a national coordination mechanism for climate finance is a highly complex undertaking, particularly in situations where the NDA role is institutionally distinct from the climate leadership role in government. Some of these challenges are particularly evident in case studies.

⁴⁴ This estimate is based on the RRMF database. Note that not all RPSP grants are included in this database.

147. In Côte d'Ivoire, challenges to effective coordination are driven by institutional arrangements, where the NDA sits in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development while the second focal point for the GCF and the focal points for other key climate agencies and actors sit across the 'direction de la lutte contre les changements climatiques' limiting communication between key actors. On the other hand, in Bhutan, the NDA sits within a unit in the Ministry of Finance that brings together all the focal activities for Bhutan's international donor community. This position is set up towards avoiding duplication and supporting complementarity across climate finance. While institutional arrangements enable a strong coordination role, the loss of staff and recent appointment of a new NDA are noted as constraints to effectiveness. Finally, in Belize, RPSP grants provided in 2020 and 2021 have sought to strengthen the Belize National Coordination Committee and its subcommittee, who play a key role in climate action coordination, to render them fully operational vis-a-vis their climate finance role. To date, this has not been achieved given heavy workloads, competing demands, insufficient leadership, and COVID-19 restrictions.
148. The RPSP has provided support to national entities nominated by their NDA for GCF accreditation. This is done with an understanding that support provided, while calibrated to meet accreditation requirements, offers no guarantee of accreditation. Thus far, RPSP completion and progress reports self-reported that 40 grants have supported these entities with training, capacity development, or systems improvements, and at least 59 national entities have been identified and entered the accreditation stream with RPSP support, indicating that RPSP grants have each supported between one and three national entities along their road to accreditation.⁴⁵ While the support delivered is valued, including for the intrinsic value the enhanced organizational capacities added to the entity, challenges remain in securing accreditation. As of B.36, only 20 of the readiness-recipient DAEs have secured accreditation, with another nine DAEs reaching stage I or II of the accreditation process, while 16 are nominated entities yet to submit application, and 4 pending fee payment.
149. The disparity between the readiness effort and the accreditation result is evident in the case studies for this evaluation. These show multiple instances where national entities have been nominated but where accreditation has not yet been secured, and this despite the support having been delivered over several years (e.g. in Armenia, Bhutan and Côte d'Ivoire). In Lao PDR, country stakeholders reported that the resource allocation and duration of RPSP grants is considered inadequate for reaching accreditation. This concern extends to entities that have secured accreditation wherein the capacity required to develop and implement projects is perceived to be insufficient. In other cases, DAEs consulted were unaware they were eligible to receive RPSP support. Data indicates that less than 12 per cent of accredited DAEs or DAEs at stage I or II of accreditation have received RPSP support, even where they were eligible.
150. The extent to which the capacity of other national actors, such as private sector and civil society is built varies greatly. In countries such as Belize, civil society and private sector stakeholders report good engagement and skills acquisition from training received on document preparation to meet climate financier information needs. In other cases, such as in Côte d'Ivoire, capacity-building activities undertaken are considered more as "information-sharing" activities, for the most part. Further capacity-building needs for these stakeholders are also reported in DRC, including where the completion report for the NAP support grant raises needs for strengthened budgeting preparation and training among public sector, civil society and private sector actors.

⁴⁵ This includes nine in LDCs, 18 in SIDS, and 17 in African States. The highest number of these entities are in the APAC region (22), followed by Africa (17), LAC (11), and Eastern Europe (9). Note that the number of nominated entities was not provided for all grants in the RRMF database. Therefore, the number of nominated entities is actually higher than 56.

151. Finally, while good achievements are reported on this objective, capacity-building needs are seen as recurrent, particularly as related to capacity-building for implementation. High turnover and significant workforce skills deficits related to project cycle management are cited. Needs to drive low-emission and climate-resilient development are also not entirely addressed by the RPSP. Several barriers are noted in particularly low-readiness countries, notably related to the sociopolitical situations faced in country, which are not addressed by the RPSP (e.g. weak rule and enforcement of laws and regulations, and weak political leadership). Additionally, in Lao PDR, DPs and RPSP beneficiaries who have conducted technical preparatory work during RPSP report that academic and vocational training, beyond what is currently provided under the RPSP, is needed to operationalize the policy work, particularly in the sectors of EV-mobility and energy savings.

Objective 2: Strategies for climate finance implementation

152. Under objective 2, the RPSP seeks to support the production of strategies to guide GCF investments based on analyses of emissions reduction potential and climate vulnerability and risk, and in complementarity with other sources of climate finance.
153. Several outputs have been generated under this objective, particularly CPs; strategies to foster private sector financing; and studies, modelling effort systems, and other relevant research or technical efforts (Table 5–1). The average delivery achievement rate under this objective stands at 84 per cent (Annex 1; see Box 5–2 for observations of objective 2 achievement rates in priority countries).⁴⁶ However, while outputs are being developed and delivered, there is limited evidence of these truly informing or guiding climate finance. This is particularly evident in case studies such as Armenia and Lao PDR, where studies, guidelines, policies, regulations, etc. are developed, but with little evidence of these informing climate investments. In the case of Armenia, climate investments were noted as rather being guided by impacts experienced on the ground. In the case of Lao, policies, guidelines, labels and regulations were intended to prepare markets for future investments. One success story is however noted in Panama, where support delivered under the regional e-mobility RPSP activity has led to the drafting of regulations which notably establish that all public institutions of the Government of Panama are expected to renew their fleet with a minimum of 40 per cent of electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030. In this regard, an IDB loan is expected to finance the renewal of 400 new EVs (out of 1,300 vehicles) for MiBus (Panama City's main private transportation company).

Box 5–2. Observations in priority countries – Objective 2

The achievement rate for SIDS under this objective is high compared to the portfolio, and is so for all outcomes. On the other hand, LDCs and African States show lower achievement rates. Challenges are particularly noted in relation to the revisions to the NDC and the establishment of the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) systems.

Source: IEU elaboration.

154. Case studies also show the extent of implementation of projects outlined in CPs remains limited. This appears to be largely driven by challenges in mobilizing financing, including procedural

⁴⁶ The achievement rate is only estimated based on RPSP grants having submitted a CR. The achievement rate is not an indication of the extent to which the delivery of outputs has led to the achievement of outcomes the output seeks to achieve.

challenges related to the submission and approval of funded projects, as well as remaining capacity gaps in developing high-quality proposals, as is described under objective 4 below.

Table 5–1. Objective 2 output realization

OUTPUT TYPE	NUMBER OF RPSP GRANTS (REALIZED)
CPs	79
Strategies to foster private sector financing	52
Studies, modelling effort systems, and other research or technical efforts	42
MRV system	31
Updating or revising the NDC with the support of RPSP grant	3
Sector related strategic framework or action plans	20
Identification of climate technologies and solutions	14
Entity work programmes	11
Business model or financial mechanism or scheme	9
Readiness needs assessment	1
LTS-long-term strategy	0

Source: GCF RRMF data, as of B.36. Analysis by Universalialia.

Note: All RPSP grants that have reported outputs were included here, whether reported through a Completion Report (CR) or Interim Progress Report.

155. Consulted GCF Secretariat staff highlighted the importance of RPSP grants yielding content – a prioritization of needs, new technical understanding – that can inform pipeline development activities under objective 4. A review of the RRMF database suggests that these linkages are not being made in a systematic way. Some 80 per cent of projects which planned for the development of studies, modelling effort systems, and other research or technical efforts, did not plan for the development of project ideas, CNs or FPs. Similarly, 88 per cent of projects that sought to identify climate technologies and solutions did not plan for the development of a project idea, CNs or FPs. This suggests that more than two-thirds of grants through which technical knowledge are generated are not intentionally developing CNs and FPs.

Objective 3: NAPs and/or adaptation planning processes

156. Under objective 3, the RPSP seeks to support the formulation of NAP and/or other adaptation planning processes to catalyse public and private adaptation finance at scale.
157. The RPSP has provided NAP and/or adaptation planning process-related support through 103 grants across 92 countries. The support delivered in relation to this objective is generally perceived to be effective. Three-quarters of survey respondents believe the RPSP has effectively supported the formulation of NAPs or advanced other adaptation planning or programming processes. The average delivery achievement rate for outputs under this objective stands at around 89 per cent (see Box 5–3 for observations of objective 3 achievement rates in priority countries).⁴⁷ It is early days, however,

⁴⁷ The achievement rate is only estimated based on RPSP grants having submitted a completion report. The achievement rate is not an indication of the extent to which the delivery of outputs has led to the achievement of outcomes the output seeks to achieve.

to be assessing effectiveness on this objective through an analysis of the portfolio. To date, only 10 grant holders have submitted their CR.

Box 5–3. Observations in priority countries – Objective 3

This objective appears to have been addressed to a lesser extent in priority countries (i.e. states classified as being part of one or more of the following country groupings: SIDS, African States and LDCs). As of B.36, only 10 out of 79 grants (13 per cent) planned to develop or update the NAP have been implemented in these countries.

Lower achievement rates are particularly noted in LDCs as manifested in the low achievement rate for the development of CNs (see Box 5–4) and low achievement rate on capacity-building to the private sector on adaptation options. The latter may be explained by the characteristics of private sector actors in these countries – often small and composed of MSMEs – as highlighted in stakeholder interviews, and further observed in the recent LDC evaluation.

While African States showed comparable performance under this objective compared to the full RPSP portfolio, lower achievement rates remain recorded under outcome 3.4, indicating challenges in developing CNs (see Box 5–4).

No NAP-related grant in SIDS had submitted a CR at the time of the evaluation.

Source: IEU elaboration.

158. RPSP resources under this objective have predominantly been used to support the formulation of NAPs (79 of the 103 grants). Several case study countries have used the RPSP to support this process, including Armenia, Belize, Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire and Panama. By contrast, Lao PDR turned to the GEF LDCF to finance this. For the most part, GCF readiness grants that have included NAP development are still underway, with only 14 NAPs completed to date,⁴⁸ including those of Armenia and Bhutan among case study countries. Indeed, the RRMF data shows that nearly a third of grants that include support for the formulation of a NAP have been approved in 2021 or later, and over half were approved in 2020 or later.
159. While stakeholders consulted considered NAP support delivered by the GCF to have been effective, GCF Secretariat staff reported a shift (that had earlier been foreseen) in the nature of the NAP support now needed. These stakeholders highlighted that, as the NAP development process has been launched (or to a much lesser extent completed) for nearly all eligible countries, current indications suggest a shift is required to support country implementation. A UNFCCC report on NAP progress indicated that as of October 2021, 129 of the 154 developing countries had undertaken at least one activity related to the formulation and implementation of NAPs (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021). In Bhutan, for example, the country's NDA has raised questions regarding the level of readiness of relevant ministries and departments to design and deliver adaptation initiatives, as per the NAP, despite there being practical guidance in the NAP package. In this country, at present, a rapid turnover in staffing is a particular source of concern.

Objective 4: Paradigm-shifting pipeline development

160. Under objective 4, the RPSP seeks to support the submission of country priority-aligned and paradigm-shifting CNs and FPs in countries with lesser capacity, including LDCs, and DAEs.

⁴⁸ The RPSP has contributed to the formulation of the following finalized NAPs: Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, DRC, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Liberia, Nepal, Niger, Haiti, Serbia, and Zambia.

161. Many RPSP grants have contributed to this objective, with 301 grants signalling a plan to produce at least one CN (for a total of 680 CNs planned), 108 planning for the development of project ideas, and 24 planning for the development of FPs. Moreover, most RPSPs having reached CR outputs as having been achieved, with respective achievement rates for production of CNs, development of project ideas and development of FPs of 82 per cent, 95 per cent and 85 per cent (see Box 5–4 for observations of objective 4 achievement rates in priority countries).

Box 5–4. Observations in priority countries – Objective 4

Output achievement rates are comparable across priority countries and the RPSP portfolio.

However, findings from the SIDS evaluation indicate capacity to develop quality CNs and FPs is the greatest challenge faced in these countries. While support provided under the RPSP is valued, the evaluation observes, a more hand-on approach is required, one that goes beyond a reliance on trainings, workshops and short-term TA (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2020).

Similarly, the recent African States evaluation finds that the extent to which the RPSP has been successful in supporting the development of a pipeline in African States is limited, with only isolated examples identified (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023a).

The LDC evaluation also reports gaps in support for development of high-quality FPs (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2022).

Source: IEU elaboration.

162. At the same time, there is limited evidence of the extent of the RPSP's contribution towards submission and subsequent approval of these CNs and FPs. Indeed, a DPM study on CN and FP development under RPSP 1.0 found that among the 103 CNs and 5 FPs that materialized, only 17 CNs had been submitted to the DMA and PSF pipelines with none becoming approved FPs, and only two FPs having received approval (Green Climate Fund, 2023d). A similar observation is drawn from a review of FPs approved between B.26 and B.36.⁴⁹ It indicates that only 2 per cent of approved FPs were developed with support from the RPSP. The quality of CNs and FPs was reported as not always being on par with GCF requirements.
163. One DP notes the duration of support under this objective was a particular hinderance, as it did not allow for continued consultant involvement in responding to GCF comments, while another noted additional support was required to help address GCF requirements beyond stage 1. Challenges in reaching approval are further evident in case studies, including in Armenia and Belize where CNs developed remain under revision, and in Lao PDR and Côte d'Ivoire where the development of quality CNs and FPs was identified as a significant challenge.
164. Challenges are also raised by DPs in relation to the development of CNs given that, as non-AEs, they cannot submit CNs directly to the GCF. One DP indicated that they avoid including the development of CNs in RPSP activities and instead opt for project ideas, if activities of this nature are warranted. Related challenges were raised in Lao PDR, where DPs indicated finding it difficult to identify AEs to pick up and champion CNs being developed. The lack of DAEs in the country was highlighted as a potential factor contributing to this challenge. There is evidence from some

⁴⁹ Grants approved during this period used the new template which includes a box on Readiness and PPF support received during the project development phase.

countries that CNs are developed by DPs and then stranded without a champion for taking them forward.

165. Belize and Bhutan serve as contrasting examples in this regard. In Belize, where the NDA plays a strong leadership role, draft CNs developed by DPs are routinely screened and referred to focal ministries and sectors before being finalized and submitted. The NDA remains involved as an intermediary between the GCF Secretariat and these ministries throughout the revision process. High NDA capacity is clearly essential for such a process to be adopted.

Objective 5: Knowledge sharing and learning (cross-cutting)

166. Under objective 5, the RPSP seeks to increase levels of awareness, knowledge sharing and learning that contribute to countries developing and implementing transformational projects in low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathways.
167. Among the objectives, this one has received the least attention, with 181 grants including activities to advance this objective. The comparative difference is reflected in the 2022 RPSP Annual Report on implementation where objective 5 shows the lowest (or among the lowest) uptake levels across all regions and in priority countries (Green Climate Fund, 2023d, pp. 14) (see Box 5–5). GCF Secretariat staff interviewed confirmed there is a lower level of uptake compared to other objectives and this was also evident in case studies.

Box 5–5. Observations in priority countries – Objective 5

Achievement rates are comparable across priority countries and the RPSP portfolio. This objective is however not systematically addressed in RPSP grants in priority countries, covered in only approximately 29 per cent of RPSP grants.

Source: IEU elaboration.

168. In general, for objective 5, effectiveness has been perceived as limited. Several case studies show persisting needs and a paucity of knowledge and information necessary for the development and implementation of projects. For example, in Armenia, while awareness-raising activities were included in all grants, needs remain, particularly for the private sector as they continue to lack information and knowledge on climate finance tools, mechanisms and incentives to efficiently make their own investment choices. The situation is similar in Côte d'Ivoire. Stakeholders consulted as part of the Mexico case study also observed that as projects are approved and start implementation, a key role of the Readiness programme could be to further support the development and sharing of innovative practices.
169. GCF Secretariat staff further reported the GCF misses opportunities to engage with knowledge sharing and learning, often noting the GCF, itself, is too removed from mechanisms aimed at enabling this. Additionally, while recognizing that several activities take place, GCF Secretariat staff describe a gap in knowledge management and, specifically, the feedback loops that link knowledge to investment opportunities. GCF Secretariat staff and IAEs interviewed flagged the need for lessons learned to be more systematically captured and shared. The assessment is also recognized in the 2022 RPSP Annual Report on Implementation, where the revision of the SOP for the RPSP grant cycle is described and included efforts to integrate learning and feedback loops (internal and external) for knowledge management.
170. Moreover, the need for greater degree of knowledge exchanges between countries is highlighted by multiple IAEs as well as among country stakeholders. This includes South-South exchanges and

regional/global knowledge sharing events and activities. This commentary comes with caution related to the calibration of design and delivery to user information needs and highlights the importance of knowledge sharing processes being driven and based on common needs, priorities and challenges (see unexpected results for more on this). In Tanzania, for example, the relevance of webinars has been put into question by stakeholders describing information shared as too far removed from the realities of the country or region.

171. Where successes have been noted is where knowledge sharing and learning has taken place through DPs. This is observed in cases where DPs implement multiple grants within a country or across a region. The Côte d'Ivoire case study illustrates how the knowledge and lessons learned from one country can be considered in other countries. In Mexico, three RPSG grants were implemented by one DP, this was noted as a value add as lessons learned from one RPSG grant were considered and applied in subsequent readiness work in the country. Regional programming observed in the Caribbean and Pacific offers multiple examples of this kind of learning potential as SIDS address common climate hazards in comparable ways.
172. GCF's recently launched RKB⁵⁰, which serves as a repository of related to readiness, including success stories, policies, evaluations, guidebooks. This new platform has the potential to contribute to objective 5, should it be properly framed and promoted. IAEs interviewed however emphasized that the GCF should remain mindful that the expertise lies within its agencies, given they implement work on the ground. Thus, success hinges on intentional linkages being drawn between the RKB and DPs to foster utility at the country level where knowledge sharing is needed most.

B. UNEXPECTED AND UNINTENDED RESULTS

173. **Finding: The evaluation has identified two unexpected results. First, a shift in practices brought on by COVID-19 has been beneficial for the implementation of some projects, particularly in the countries with sociopolitical unrest. Second, present regional readiness support points to efficiency gains.**
174. Two unexpected and unintended results were identified through the evaluation. One relates to the unforeseen impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the other to the potential merits of adopting a regional approach for certain RPSG activities.
175. As disruptive as it was in so many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic has, in some instances, facilitated the implementation of certain activities. This is most notable in countries with sociopolitical instability. In these cases, the global shift towards online working practices adopted during the pandemic demonstrated the possibilities for continuing to work in country settings otherwise facing constraints on mobility. In particular, online practices have supported the practice of stakeholder consultation.
176. The second unexpected result pertains to the potential value of regional readiness support. GCF Secretariat staff note that regional readiness was not initially envisioned in the Programme Strategy but has been an innovative, effective and efficient approach in certain regions. This has particularly been the case in LAC, where the political landscape allows for such activities to be developed and where needs are often the same across countries and in some instance, are of a transboundary nature. This approach is seen as reducing transaction costs while decreasing pressures on the GCF Secretariat as one rather than multiple proposals can be submitted. The value of such an approach is

⁵⁰ Available at <https://knowledge.greenclimate.fund/>.

also raised by IAEs, who recognize the need for more exchanges between countries and more harmonized tools and methods at a global level.

C. ENABLING AND HINDERING FACTORS

177. **Finding: Above all, political shuffles and changes in government are identified as hindering factors to the success of the RPSP. Additionally, the location of the NDA, the country's sociopolitical context, and the DAE and DP landscape were also found to have implications for the effectiveness of the RPSP. Challenges with regard to RPSP accessibility and grant implementation timelines are also flagged for the risks they pose to the delivery of RPSP outputs. Country case studies highlight the merit of having a strong DP with extensive knowledge of GCF processes and the in-country context, and the merits of continuity of support which can be fostered by DPs implementing multiple RPSP grants in a country.**
178. Hindering factors were observed for their negative influence on key readiness variables: operating conditions governing readiness implementation, the quality and continued relevance of RPSP outputs, and in-country institutional and networking capacities. Enabling factors were also identified for their positive influence on the above variable, albeit to a lesser extent.
179. Chief among the enabling factors is the strong presence and applied expertise of the NDA and/or DP, empowered within their own-country structures to make use of RPSP supports and foster continued development (including through RPSP) of climate finance capability.
180. The most frequently mentioned hindering factors to the success of the RPSP are the political shuffles and changes in government. These are shifts and upheavals that lie beyond the Programme's sphere of influence. Yet, the high turnover rates associated with them are widely identified as a detriment to effectiveness, to later stage impacts and sustainable systems changes towards which the RPSP contributes. The destabilizing influences of rapid political change require compensatory capacity-building – repetition in Readiness programming fed by a need to re-introduce stakeholders to GCF processes due to losses in institutional memory and continuity, all of which hampers coordination and cooperation (i.e., inhibits the development of strong relationships among actors).
181. Turnover can be driven by changes in government but also by limited resource availability (i.e. low salaries), causing retention challenges. Limited resource availability has reportedly been a challenge for some tourism-dependant SIDS following the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic constraints have led to NDA personnel having limited operating office space or even being laid off. Moreover, changes in government are known to cause staff turnover which are often also accompanied by shifts in priority and/or government restructuring. Such developments are cited for the affect they have (positively or negatively) on implementation and on the relevance of outputs. Stakeholders highlight the importance of developing mechanisms for knowledge and capacity gains to withstand political shuffles and changes in government, while others stress the need to adopt an adaptive management approach that provides enough flexibility to respond to such changes.
182. The ministry in which the NDA is housed in government is also observed to be a determinant of effectiveness. Where an NDA is located in a ministry that is structurally and politically low within the government hierarchy, stakeholders report having limited power to influence and lead national level processes. In countries where the NDA is located in central (high demand) ministries or offices, their positioning may appear strong, and in some situations it is. But it may also be squeezed in its ability to operate by the heavy burdens of Ministry business.

183. The sociopolitical context in countries can also have an impact on implementation and effectiveness. This is particularly noted in low-readiness contexts, where social and/or political tensions have affected the implementation of activities. In these cases, primarily security-related issues on the ground have resulted in limiting access to certain regions and stakeholders, and creating challenges in the recruitment of consultants to implement Readiness activities. In certain countries, armed conflict has also had an impact on RPSP activities as government priorities shift away from addressing climate-related issues, including readiness.
184. Conflict outside of the country can also have implications for effectiveness, although somewhat indirectly. This is noted in Armenia in relation to the war in Ukraine which led to the inflow of refugees in Armenia, with positive impacts noted on Armenia's GDP and its ability to absorb climate finance. Moreover, the impact of the war on gas price increases has created a push for the country to move away from the polluting energy sources towards renewable energy.
185. The DAE and DP landscape in countries can both hinder and enable readiness activities. Some countries are facing challenges in identifying DPs to implement readiness activities, particularly in African States and in low-readiness, conflict-affected contexts. In other cases, DPs report challenges in identifying AEs, thus compromising the ability to fully deliver on objective 4. These challenges are most observable in countries with no DAEs.
186. Conversely, in some cases, the DP landscape is characterized as being a factor enabling country readiness. This is notably the case in Mexico which has one very experienced DP, with a successful track record implementing RPSP grants. The case study reveals the merits of having in place at least one proven DP with a strong understanding of GCF processes and experience in designing and delivering projects. DP involvement in successive grants brings continuity between readiness investments allowing each investment to build on the experience of the last and the DP to promote synergies and learning among the different beneficiaries of these projects, including (developing) DAEs. In the case of Mexico, the DP has been further strengthened in country through being embedded within the Ministry of Finance (the NDA). This has allowed the DP to gain an in-depth understanding of the national context and to provide continuous support to the NDA in its leadership and coordinating role as a designated authority.
187. RPSP accessibility and implementation timelines are also found to have implications for the effectiveness of the RPSP. These challenges can be linked to GCF processes (see Chapter 10), development partner organization approval processes, preparatory work (e.g., consultant recruitment, procurement processes, etc.), and in-country dynamics such as staff turnover (e.g., as familiarity with GCF processes is lost). Timelines from project conception to approval to completion can create risks for the continuing relevance of outputs. This was seen in one African state, where the premise for an RPSP grant for an energy efficiency study lost its relevance and strategic merit over the six-year period between initial submission and projected end date.
188. Challenges related to broader GCF processes, notably accreditation and CN or FP approval processes have also hindered achievement of readiness results. The complexity of these GCF processes, that operate independently from RPSP, are mentioned for the dampening effect intermittent or indeterminate communication and long wait times have on country stakeholder ambitions.
189. Other factors identified as having an impact on effectiveness include:
 - The background and network of the NDA, which can have a positive outcome in instances where there is strong expertise in environmental finance and strong networks in key sectors.

- Challenges in attracting co-financing, which have in some cases been heightened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The absence of a strong private sector, and its impact on resource mobilization and absorption capacity for climate finance, particularly found in LDCs.
- Reliance on consultants, which limits continuity and knowledge transfer.
- Inadequate levels of readiness financing to achieve objectives.
- The nature of RPSP support delivered, which does not address all needs; as well as the narrow targeting of some RPSP activities (e.g. capacity-building – see discussion under objective 1).
- Limited understanding of the GCF processes and offerings, particularly among those who are primary intended beneficiaries.

Chapter 6. GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

190. This chapter assesses the extent to which the GCF has addressed gender-related and social inclusion dimensions of its mandate through the RPSP. In particular, it examines: the integration of its policy requirements into Readiness programme delivery, assistance provided to country NDAs/focal points and DPs to address human and technical capacity constraints in operationalizing GCF policy related to gender, ESS and indigenous peoples, and the extent to which those policy requirements reflect in country/regional planning processes.
191. In relation to the ToC (Annex 5), the chapter explores the extent to which GCF's gender equality and social inclusion requirements are observed through the results logic of the RPSP. These are anchored under policies and procedures and promulgated through the readiness activities.

A. INTEGRATION IN PROGRAMME DELIVERY

192. **Finding: With regard to advancing the GCF's gender and social inclusion ambitions, GCF policy and strategy level expectations on the RPSP to deliver and demonstrate contribution-to-impact are considerable when considered in relation to available in-house resources. The modestly sized OSI with corporate-wide responsibilities covers the Readiness programming terrain selectively, reliant on DCP regional teams and DPM to incorporate ESS and inclusion policy requirements into their respective lead roles. It is not clear that this arrangement is sufficient to "mainstream" gender and enhance engagement with indigenous peoples as policy requires.**
193. Gender and social inclusion-related expectations on the RPSP are rooted in policy and the GCF strategy. The RPSP is included within the scope of GCF's 2019 gender policy and 2018 indigenous peoples policy, and specified under multiple requirements in each (Green Climate Fund, 2018c; 2019c). In the gender policy, the Programme is explicitly mentioned in the statements of objective.⁵¹ Further, the policy is operationalized in the GCF's gender action plan (2020–2023) which identifies the RPSP as the budget source (along with the GCF administration) for plan implementation, and specifies the Programme as the means by which NDAs and focal points can obtain support from the GCF, "to develop their policies, procedures and competencies to meet the requirements of the Gender Policy" (Green Climate Fund, 2019b, pp. 1).
194. The USP for the GCF (2020–2023) commits GCF to, "promote gender mainstreaming across its internal and external activities and programming, including working to ensure project proposals have gender assessment and action plans, as well as strengthening gender mainstreaming and social inclusion capabilities among staff, partners and stakeholders" (Green Climate Fund, 2020c, pp. 13). Mainstreaming gender in the context of RPSP delivery focuses attention on, among other items:

⁵¹ The gender policy has three main objectives: (i) to support climate change interventions and innovations through a comprehensive gender approach, applied both within the institution and by its network of partners, including accredited entities (AEs), national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points, and DPs for activities under the GCF RPSP; (ii) to promote climate investments that (a) advance gender equality through climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, and (b) minimize social, gender-related and climate-related risks in all climate change actions, and (iii) to contribute to reducing the gender gap of climate change-exacerbated social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and exclusions through GCF climate investments that mainstream gender equality issues.

- Gender balance in NDA composition/staffing
 - Representation of women's groups in stakeholder consultations
 - Training to women's groups on climate finance and GCF
 - Incorporation of gender dimensions in the formulation of country programming
 - Supporting national implementing entities (DPs, DAEs) to incorporate gender responsive approaches and to prepare gender assessments and action plans, to meet policy requirements, as well as NDA capacity to provide initial screenings of projects and programmes⁵²
195. In relation to indigenous peoples, the updated strategy commits the GCF to “enhance engagement with Indigenous Peoples in line with the Indigenous Peoples Policy...” (Green Climate Fund, 2020c, pp. 13).
196. With regard to ESS, the gender policy and the indigenous peoples policy, the 2019–2021 RPSP strategy calls on the Secretariat to “work with NDAs and DPs to disseminate tools, guidance and good practice examples” to support readiness interventions across the five objectives (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 32). It draws attention to the “challenge” observed in the initial phase of RPSP of country stakeholders not being able to demonstrate how to address the GCF’s gender and social inclusion requirements both at the point of accessing readiness resources and, later, on engagement processes and analysis pertinent to NAP-related (objective 3) and project pipeline (objective 4) activities (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 11–12, 14–15). Specific actions advanced in the strategy to strengthen capacities in these areas are regional structured dialogues, specific guidance notes on ESS, gender policy and indigenous peoples policy, and the creation of an online knowledge platform.
197. Expectations on gender and social inclusion for the RPSP are considerable when considered against the human resources capacity within the Secretariat. At present, there are three technical experts in OSI with gender expertise and additional staff in DCP with gender backgrounds and capacity to deliver support to country stakeholders on gender and social inclusion dimensions. There is one indigenous peoples specialist in OSI with lead responsibilities related to indigenous peoples. There have been doubts within the Secretariat that this capacity was adequate to meet the GCF’s policy and strategy expectations.
198. In February 2023, the new OSI was formed as a separate Office. Previously, it was a unit under the Office of Risk Management and Compliance. The team has grown threefold since 2021, from four full-time equivalent staff to 12. OSI reports directly to the Deputy Executive Director. With corporate-wide responsibilities and a scope inclusive of the full range of safeguards, OSI has few direct overlaps with the RPSP. Its fullest engagement is with NAP activities (objective 3), judging these to be a “strategic entry point” for good social inclusion. Activities involve reviewing NAP readiness grant submissions and commenting on deliverables.⁵³
199. Historically, the team has provided sensitization and training sessions on social inclusion topics including through structured dialogues, and this continues. OSI is available to support other aspects of readiness programming (e.g. non-NAP-related submission, NDA/DAE capacity development), and does so on a request-basis. With their finite level of resourcing, the OSI operates on the assumption that there is sufficient capacity resident across the divisions to help advance the GCF’s

⁵² This list is adapted from Table 1 of the GCF’s leading gender guidance document, “Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects” (Green Climate Fund and UN Women, 2017, pp. 19).

⁵³ OSI support for the development of FPs occurs mostly through the PPF mechanism.

inclusion ambitions, and that those ambitions are also shared and worked on by other divisions including DCP.

200. Similarly, DCP provides a leadership role in providing support, including gender and social inclusion supports, to NDAs, DPs and other country/regional stakeholders. At the same time, there is a less than optimal presence of social inclusion expertise in interdivisional and RWG deliberations. And, more generally, DCP regional desks face resource constraints (as three person offices serving multiple countries) in playing that country interface role, even with consultant rosters at hand.
201. The main GCF sources of stakeholder guidance for the Secretariat, AEs and executing entities on gender and social inclusion topics are:
 - **Readiness guidebook (2020)** – with scattered references to policy requirements throughout and a one-page list of “gender considerations for readiness including adaptation planning support” (Annex VI).
 - **Readiness guidebook (2023)** – an introduction to the GCF’s “gender sensitive” approach as per the updated gender policy (2018); an introduction to the GCF’s indigenous peoples policy and its operational guidelines; an outline of expectations related to gender equality analysis; inclusion of ESS, gender, and indigenous peoples related probes in a quality standards template for grant submissions.
 - **Mainstreaming gender in Green Climate Fund projects (2017)** – co-developed with UN Women and currently the lead gender resource for the Fund; specific guidance related to RPSP highlighting gender considerations associated with various facets of the Programme; practical guidance (with examples) on gender analysis, gender assessment, preparing a gender responsive results framework (including a gender action plan, results-based logic framework, and a performance measurement framework); and practical guidance incorporating gender aspects into project cycle management including monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
 - **Mainstreaming gender in National Adaptation Plan (NAP)** – a three module online course that builds on the 2017 gender mainstreaming resource, covering entry points for mainstreaming in adaptation planning, and addressing gender requirements in the NAP proposal.
 - **Sustainability guidance note: Designing and ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement on GCF-financed activities (2022)** – definitions and an overview of GCF stakeholder requirements; engagement planning steps; an overview of readiness supports for stakeholder engagement activities; lessons learned and additional resources.
 - **Operational guidelines: Indigenous Peoples Policy (2019)** – an explanation of the requirements of the indigenous peoples policy and the related ESS.
 - **Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) risk assessment guideline (2023)** - an overview of SEAH and guidance on assessing SEAH risks related to proposed projects in order to predict, mitigate and ideally prevent SEAH from occurring.
202. Readiness-specific guidance notes on ESS, identified for development by DCP in the RPSP Strategy have not materialized, to date. However, facility for widespread sharing on gender and social inclusion dimensions has recently been established through the newly minted, online RKB.

203. GCF's implementation of its indigenous peoples policy has progressed considerably since the establishment of the IPAG. Prior to that the focus was more on safeguards, whereas the focus is now more balanced with indigenous peoples co-benefits (Green Climate Fund, 2021d; 2022e).⁵⁴ It is hoped that this progress is also reflected more in the Readiness programme, with more requests for support to work on indigenous peoples issues in the future. In 2023, IPAG is expected to participate in four regional dialogues for this purpose.
204. NDA/AE/DP, private sector and civil society views are mixed on whether support from RPSP helps to advance gender equity in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Among respondents to the survey carried out for this evaluation, 68 per cent "somewhat agreed" (41 per cent) or "strongly agreed" (27 per cent) that it did. However, nearly a third were ambivalent or contrary. In the survey, those agreeing that RPSP is supportive were participants in country strategy activities; considerably fewer were participants of pipeline development activities. Those same respondents are further divided on supports for advancing the inclusion of indigenous peoples, with 53 per cent "somewhat agreeing" (30 per cent) or "strongly agreeing" (23 per cent) that the RPSP is supportive.
205. Finally, what transpires with regard to the gender and social inclusion dimensions incorporated into readiness grants has not been reported on in any systematic way since the launch of RPSP. Progress and CR templates used prior to the introduction of the RRMF offer no structure for doing this. This means that any content, in quantitative or qualitative form, cannot be aggregated with assurance that it provides a Programme-level reading of achievement regarding inclusion. This is expected to change as DPM rolls out the RRMF. The menu of output indicators in the framework specifies gender disaggregation in some places and references ESS, gender policy and indigenous peoples policy requirements in others. (See the earlier discussion of the RRMF in this report in Chapter 4).

B. INTEGRATION IN NDA/DAE PROCESSES

206. **Finding: By virtue of the central role RPSP plays in preparing countries to accept GCF (and to a lesser extent, international) climate finance, the Fund's championship of gender and social inclusion is strategic. But its approach to the work is not unlike that of analogous organizations (global, regional and national) including those with longer track records and deeper roots at a country level. In view of observed delivery constraints at the Secretariat, country-level communities of practice that in some settings generate local expertise represent a resource to be tapped for greater programming reach and impact on gender and social dimensions.**
207. Patterns of gender and social inclusion integration are observable at a country level and are traceable to the RPSP. Gender considerations, in particular, are evident in the guidelines developed for NDAs, in sensitization activities that engage the private sector, in pre- and post- accreditation support, in the formulation of CP documents, and in initial in-country project and grant screening practices.⁵⁵ In Armenia, for example, all DPs confirmed that they received support from gender experts in the

⁵⁴ The formation of the IPAG was mandated in the indigenous peoples policy that was adopted by the Board in February 2018 (B.19/11). As described in its ToR, the IPAG's role is to: provide advice to the indigenous peoples focal point, NDAs and AEs and EEs on GCF-financed activities affecting indigenous peoples; review the implementation and monitoring of the indigenous peoples policy, particularly on the appropriate modality to enhance dialogue among indigenous peoples, GCF, states, AEs, EEs and other experts; and provide guidance and advice to the Board as may be requested. It is to be comprised of a gender-balanced group of four indigenous peoples representatives (with alternates) from regional groupings of indigenous peoples identified by the United Nations. (Green Climate Fund, 2021d).

⁵⁵ Observations are drawn from the country case studies carried out for this evaluation.

implementation of their RPSP investments, albeit to different extents. In Bhutan, the NDA has carried through on its obligation to ensure stakeholders are aware of gender and social inclusion requirements. These have been covered in training sessions, in the screening of “white papers” (the pitching of project ideas), and in the review of project designs (including in the set-up of M&E frameworks). And in Belize, gender and social inclusion considerations are routinely integrated within readiness activities (accreditation track, CN track and NAP development). These include engagement strategies, team or staff training, organizational policy and tools development, gender analysis (e.g. barriers to integration of women in MSMEs) and integration of gender considerations in climate vulnerability studies and hazard analyses, collection of gender disaggregated data, gender and social inclusion provisions vis-a-vis the establishment of grievance mechanisms.

208. Instances of changes in institutional behaviour are also observable, though to a lesser extent. In Bhutan, two of three financial institutions vying for GCF accreditation have introduced gender policies drafted with readiness support to cover workplace and customer service functions. Similarly, in Côte d’Ivoire, a nominated finance sector DAE has improved their ESMS and gender policy.
209. As set out in the 2019–2021 RPSP Strategy, “Readiness support is recognized in the ESS and the policies as a resource that eligible countries should use if they see that they need capacity development support to fulfil the requirements set in these policies” (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 32). In relation to this, Secretariat staff and country stakeholders underline that the GCF is not alone, nor is it necessarily a leading resource on gender and social inclusion topics. Rather, they suggest, it is a player in an already busy space that in some places is also building local expertise.⁵⁶ Among the comparator (readiness providing) organizations the IEU examined for this evaluation, all provide gender and social inclusion-related supports at a country and entity level. And, in contrast to the GCF, some among these explicitly incorporate support for additional marginalized groups including youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ communities. GCF and country stakeholders see in this community of practice the potential for coordinated readiness action to extend reach and impact country-to-country on gender and social inclusion.

C. INTEGRATION IN COUNTRY AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESSES

210. **Finding: For myriad reasons unique to individual countries, incorporating gender and social inclusion dimensions in planning processes is easier in some settings than others. It requires a nuanced (localized, culturally attuned) approach from those in facilitation roles (notably DCP, AEs/DPs and TA consultants). And it poses a challenge when setting global expectations, particularly on indicator and target setting.**
211. As indicated in RPSP guidance, multi-stakeholder engagement is integral to country programming. Those countries following GCF’s Country Programmes Guidance (the most recent version of which was released in 2021) variously incorporate stakeholder gatherings at ideation and validation stages in the preparation cycle. Multi-stakeholder engagement is also integral to NAP processes.
212. In some countries (e.g. Côte d’Ivoire and Belize), the presence of gender and/or inclusion legislation establishes a firm foundation upon which to build inclusion strategies. Here, inclusion-related changes or standards can be leveraged against national commitments. In countries already culturally

⁵⁶ In the realm of gender, specifically, this UNFCCC online compendium demonstrates the range of guidelines and tools for climate change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, n.d.).

pre-disposed to notions of gender equality, the task is easier. Among country stakeholders who do not see differences in the status of women and men, this component can be a source of puzzlement or distraction. And for stakeholders operating in specific sector activities that are heavily gender-specific, “50:50” participation requirements are a frustration that can de-value the intention behind the GCF’s ESS and inclusion policies.

213. With regard to indigenous peoples, specifically, a low level of awareness of GCF among indigenous peoples, a generalized lack of awareness of indigenous rights in some countries, and a particular reticence among some national governments to identify people groups as “indigenous” inhibits integration of policy requirements where indigeneity is self-declared at a community level (Tebtebba Foundation, 2019).⁵⁷ Relevant GCF divisions are highly attuned to the principles of country ownership and there is a recognition that in the face of these divergent conditions, it is more for the GCF to convene and suggest than it is to direct. With its indigenous peoples policy and accompanying operational guidelines in place, the GCF now has concrete points of reference with which to advance the case for meaningful inclusion. This was not the case leading up to the 2018 RPSP evaluation.

⁵⁷ In 2017, TEBTEBBA – the Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education – commissioned its Elatia partner organizations (indigenous peoples organizations) to examine national legislation on climate change and on indigenous peoples’ rights in selected countries. The studies examined NDA/AE-indigenous peoples interactions and included an examination of GCF readiness involvement/benefits among indigenous peoples (especially women and children). After an initial scoping study of five countries, namely Peru, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Vietnam, the same ToRs were used in a second set of countries, namely Bangladesh, Philippines, Nepal, Cameroon, and Paraguay. On what is documented on matters related to GCF readiness and the inclusion of indigenous peoples, the TEBTEBBA reports stand out for being substantive and contextualized at a country level.

Chapter 7. COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

214. This chapter examines the ways the RPSP has fostered country ownership on climate action, particularly the extent to which it has strengthened stakeholder capacities to engage in country programming with NDA leadership. In relation to the ToC (Annex 5), the chapter examines a critical and highly valued change process that extends beyond the RPSP's realm of programmatic control and is expressed across RPSP objectives, outcomes as well as later stage programmatic outcomes.

A. FOSTERING COUNTRY OWNERSHIP OVER CLIMATE ACTION AND FINANCE

215. **Finding: Country ownership over climate action and finance is highly context dependent, and so its prevalence varies considerably across GCF eligible countries. The RPSP has supported some factors that contribute to ownership, most notably: institutional capacities, CP development and use, and the accreditation of national entities. GCF requirements and capacities also play a role in the level of country ownership, with a key challenge being how to balance providing sufficient guidance and resources, on the one hand, while leaving space for countries to take the lead on the other.**
216. The principle of country ownership is core to the GCF's approach and is laid out in various policies and decisions, evolving over time (Green Climate Fund, 2022a). The 2017 "Guidelines for enhanced country ownership and country drivenness" (Green Climate Fund, 2017) highlights important components of country ownership without defining it fully, including:
- Flexibility in the face of a variety of country contexts
 - The recognition that country ownership is an ongoing and evolving process
 - The various roles that NDAs, AEs, and the Secretariat have in developing country ownership
 - The importance of capacity and capability of NDAs in fulfilling their roles
 - The role of the CP in strengthening country ownership
 - The need for country ownership throughout the programming cycle, including in readiness activities
 - The inclusion of national and sub-national stakeholders in country ownership
217. The guidelines underline that the RPSP is key to enhancing country ownership, and that these resources should be accessed by countries to strengthen their ownership through CPs, improved institutional capacity, and coordination mechanisms. The document makes clear the essential role of the NDA in country ownership, highlighting the importance throughout of NDA capacity and the role of the NDA in establishing consultation processes for multi-stakeholder engagement.
218. The 2018 RPSP evaluation laid out a framework for assessing country ownership composed of key elements that, when in place or well underway, indicate country ownership. The 2023 "Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the African States" (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023a) built on this framework (see Box 7-1).

Combined, this work provides substance to what is largely a conceptually undefined yet crucial operating principle for the GCF.

Box 7–1. Elements of country ownership

- The NDA acts as an executing entity for FPs
- The country co-finances GCF-approved projects
- Number of entities nominated for accreditation
- Number of national DAEs
- Stakeholder engagement
- Existence of a CP
- Existence of NDC or updated NDC
- Existence of NAP
- Country received readiness support for NDA capacity strengthening
- Country received readiness support for NAP planning
- Country received PPF grants
- Existence of single-country FP
- Existence of multi-country FP
- DAE capacity to develop projects
- Receipt of climate finance from other funds since 2015

Source: IEU elaboration.

219. Findings from the 2018 RPSP evaluation revealed that while Readiness support of the time provided the mechanisms for promoting country ownership, and that there had been some strengthening of NDAs, several challenges remained at the country level. These included: limited development of CPs, both in their prevalence across countries and in their elaboration; political disagreements, weak political commitments, and limited allocation of government resources, including for the staffing of NDAs; limited development of project pipelines and an unclear relationship between RPSP support and those pipelines; and a lack of sufficient participation by stakeholders outside of the government, namely the private sector, civil society, indigenous peoples, and local communities. Findings from the 2023 African States evaluation found that the RPSP has been underutilized and is difficult to access.
220. An analysis of the RPSP portfolio for this evaluation reveals the following results against country ownership indicators (see Table 7–1).

Table 7–1. Country ownership indicators

INDICATOR	RESULTS
Number/percentage of countries which have an established NDA	55 countries received support for NDA/staff training. 74 countries received support to establish the NDA.
Number/percentage of countries which have an established NOP	87 countries received support to establish no-objection letter (NOL) procedure. 113 NDA-level processes established through completed grants

INDICATOR	RESULTS
	(including non-objection procedures and other processes, tools, or work systems that help NDAs perform their roles). (Green Climate Fund, 2023d, pp. 4, 24).
Number/percentage of countries that have at least one accredited DAE	A total of 50 countries have at least one accredited DAE. Overall, the Accreditation portfolio has 118 AEs, of which 75 are DAEs and 43 IAEs.
Number/percentage of countries that have a DAE with at least one project proposal	Of 100 CNs developed through 120 completed grants that included the development of CNs, 20 were developed (20 per cent) by DAEs. The number/percentage of countries are not known. (Green Climate Fund, 2023d, pp. 5)
Number/percentage of countries that have at least one funded readiness grant	142 countries have received readiness support.
Number of countries with a coordination mechanism	74 countries have a coordination mechanism.
Number of countries with a CP	39 countries have submitted their CPs and published on the GCF website.

Source: IEU elaboration.

221. Overall, the evaluation reveals modest and quite variable results regarding the RPSP's contribution to country ownership over climate action and finance, many of which echo the findings from previous evaluations. Some stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation and other reviewed documents describe positive examples of country ownership in which the RPSP is used to set up coordination mechanisms, draft strategic documents, develop FPs and project pipelines, draft manuals and guidance, nominate entities for accreditation, and provide staff training. At the same time, many stakeholders from case study countries signalled a lack of awareness of what readiness is, how it is accessed and what it can support, as well as limited strategic documents and challenges in coordination that limit country ownership. Some also indicated that ownership is also often limited to a select few within the country (often the NDA and a handful of other government stakeholders). More specific findings from case study countries are set out in Table 7–2 below.

Table 7–2. Country ownership in case study countries

COUNTRY	COUNTRY OWNERSHIP FINDINGS
Tanzania	Two readiness grants are managed by IAEs. Many in-country stakeholders describe having a limited knowledge or understanding of RPSP modalities and opportunities. There is no CP, and the NDA's resources are limited. There is a feeling among most stakeholders interviewed that the GCF's support for country ownership is lacking, whether as a result of its reliance on IAEs and international consultants, its limited engagement with country stakeholders, or the challenging requirements it places on country stakeholders in accessing climate finance and in becoming accredited as a DAE.
Armenia	Stakeholders describe readiness support as being challenging to obtain though useful in enhancing stakeholder capacity to engage in the programming process and increasing awareness of climate issues among national actors in government, civil society, the private sector, journalism, and the public. To date, the DAE has not developed any FPs, which could indicate limited capacity. Stakeholders noted that understanding of climate needs remains to be developed. Armenia does not have a CP.
Panama	Readiness is aligned with a CP that is inclusive of existing mechanisms and institutions, including for e-mobility and carbon market work. The country does not have a national DAE,

COUNTRY	COUNTRY OWNERSHIP FINDINGS
	and there is limited understanding among stakeholders there about how to receive GCF accreditation and its benefits.
Côte d'Ivoire	Readiness support has been used to develop NDA capacities, a strategy, and a CP. There are no DAEs in the country, though significant progress has been made towards accreditation for the two that have been nominated. Efforts to engage the private sector have produced few results, with only slightly better results among civil society. There is evidence that institutional fragmentation of government entities results in competition over GCF resources. The existence of two GCF focal points inhibits the development of a coherent strategy and the country's ability to use RPSP resources in advancing one.
Lao PDR	The NDA relies on the CP and sectoral strategies as guides, although the CP has been influenced by a desire to access funding by focusing on GCF priority areas. As such, it does not completely align with the country's 5-year plan. The RPSP has been used to build the foundation of collaboration among ministries as well as at the subnational level; it has also been used to support accreditation for a national DAE, but this process is incomplete. Questions remain as to how systems, policies, and guidelines developed in the context of readiness can effectively be implemented without additional support.
Bhutan	In addition to an established climate planning process, the NDA is situated within an influential ministry with a dedicated team committed to advancing DAEs with unique contributions. A coordination mechanism exists that brings together political and technical contributions from across ministries and departments as well as from external stakeholders, though in the immediate aftermath of a civil service restructuring, these arrangements are in a state of transition.
Mexico	Climate finance is guided by a national development plan that goes beyond the GCF, and the NDA is described as having clear rules of engagement and being consistent in its priorities. The CP was developed through rigorous and involved consultations, according to some stakeholders. Readiness has supported engagement of the private sector and has helped to increase strategic focus and efficiency.
Belize	The NDA sits within an influential ministry and has a dedicated team. It is guided by an intentional strategy, including to advance specific DAEs that can make calculated contributions. The CP has been developed through a consultative process that included introducing a range of stakeholders to the GCF and engaging them in conversation to provide inputs into climate financing plans.

Source: IEU elaboration.

222. Based on survey results and information obtained through interviews, there are several circumstances that affect country ownership. These include DPs and accreditation, the role of the CP, and GCF requirements and capacities. These circumstances are addressed below.

DPs and accreditation

223. One of the most cited challenges to country ownership by those interviewed relates to the profile of readiness DPs. Globally, IAEs deliver the largest share of RPSP support at 39 per cent. This is followed by non-accredited DPs (33 per cent), regional DAEs (11 per cent), national DAEs (11 per cent), and NDAs (6 per cent). Although a slight decrease in the prominence of IAEs has been noted in more recent years,⁵⁸ the breakdown indicates the continuing prominence of non-national entities as DPs, a key challenge to country ownership as observed by national-level stakeholders.

⁵⁸ International DAEs were DPs on 41 per cent of RPSP grants under RPSP 1.0 compared to 37 per cent under RPSP 2.0. This was accompanied by an increase in the representation of non-accredited DPs, passing from 31 per cent to 36 per cent and a slight increase for regional DAEs, passing from 10 per cent to 12 per cent (see Annex 1).

Box 7–2. Regional variations in country ownership

There is evidence of regional variation in perceptions of country ownership. The 2018 RPSP evaluation found that country ownership is the least developed among LDCs, SIDS, and African States. The present evaluation indicates that these regional variations remain. Just 56 per cent of survey respondents working or based in LDCs, SIDS, and African States somewhat or strongly agreed that RPSP modalities are appropriately flexible to be tailored to country-specific priorities compared to 76 per cent of those outside of these geographic locations. Similarly, while 54 per cent of those working or based in LDCs, SIDS, and African States somewhat or strongly agree that RPSP working methods enable country ownership, this percentage is 68 per cent for those outside of these places.

Source: IEU elaboration.

224. The concern is that working with a regional or international DP can diminish ownership by limiting a country's ability to ensure that Readiness activities align with national priorities and are responsive to the local context. In some instances, the concern extends to matters of national accountability, wherein stakeholders report limited oversight of and communication about Readiness activities delivered by these entities. Difficulties in relationships between NDAs and international implementing entities may stem from misunderstandings about roles and processes that have not been clarified by the GCF. In some instances, DPs are simply considered by NDAs as unresponsive and difficult to work with. While regional or international DPs are described as being more likely to understand the GCF and what it wants, their focus can be more sectoral and less tied to country needs. All of this can lead to tensions around the ownership of grants and projects. Secretariat staff also offer the view that national DAEs would help further country ownership.
225. In general, then, country stakeholders tend to prefer national DPs for readiness to avoid issues of misunderstanding and/or miscommunication that can emanate from language barriers, limited understanding of the context, or other factors. Yet, the situation is more nuanced than this. The evaluation observes that the degree of discomfort among country stakeholders with non-national DPs varies. In some countries, continued reliance on IAEs (and regional DAEs) is welcomed and deemed practical for situations where DAE strength is absent or nascent. Where this sentiment is observed, IAEs are widely regarded for their long-term, respectful presence. Indeed, in some settings they, along with regional DAEs, are seen as instrumental in building country capacity to assume greater ownership roles.

Role of the Country Programme and other strategic frameworks

226. While considered a key facet of country ownership, the development of CPs (under objective 2) is yet to become prominent across GCF eligible countries. While the majority of survey respondents (82 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that the RPSP has provided the institutional capacity to establish national priorities for climate finance, and many noted that readiness has helped with climate finance coordination and strengthened adaptation planning, only 25 per cent of eligible countries have submitted a CP as of B.36. More are expected, however; among the 603 non-NAP RPSP grants in the portfolio, 185 (31 per cent) include a plan to develop a CP.
227. Many of those interviewed recognize the key role that a CP and/or other strategic framework can play in increasing country ownership. If done well and with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, these documents help NDAs and others to prioritize climate finance activities and provide a more comprehensive picture of needs than can be obtained with a grant-by-grant focus that some country and Secretariat stakeholders describe. CPs can also clarify roles and responsibilities and strengthen the leadership of the NDA. Examples of their beneficial use in

ensuring readiness can be found in some of the case studies (above) as well as in other contexts such as Colombia (Green Climate Fund, n.d.-b). Despite this, CPs are not required, and in some instances their utility may not be well understood. Some country stakeholders see them as duplicative of other climate finance strategy and policy documents in use or as a stand-alone GCF document that should be tailored to the Fund's priorities.

Green Climate Fund requirements and capacity

228. While the principle of country ownership is highlighted as essential to the way the GCF operates, and many stakeholders appreciate the focus on country needs and agency, there are indications that some stakeholders perceive the GCF's requirements and processes as barriers to country ownership. Some of those interviewed, for example, find that feedback on readiness proposals results in increasing compliance with GCF policies and priorities while decreasing country ownership. Others described the GCF's requirements as being too rigid and inflexible.
229. The complex role of GCF requirements in ensuring country ownership is also illustrated by survey results, which substantiate the finding that an important minority believe that the GCF's operations can actually hinder country ownership. While 64 per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that RPSP support modalities are appropriately flexible to be tailored to country-specific priorities, 20 per cent strongly or somewhat disagreed with this statement. Similarly, 59 per cent of survey respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that the RPSP's internal ways of working enable country ownership, while 24 per cent somewhat or strongly disagreed.
230. One particular GCF mode of operating described by some country-level stakeholders as limiting country ownership is the reliance (or what is sometimes described as an over-reliance) on international consultants to support readiness activities. The use of international consultants, they feel, not only limits country ownership in the present, but it also limits country ownership in the future by removing opportunities to develop in-country capacities. However, others (particularly DPs) noted that this is necessary because it is difficult to find national consultants with the right skill set. It is important to note that while the Readiness Guidebook states that the GCF prefers DPs to select national consultants, in-country stakeholders described being required to look for international consultants. It is unclear where the disconnect lies. One issue may be that the guidebook is not well known among stakeholders. Some also appear to be receiving instructions that contradict it, whether from the GCF or DPs.
231. Another challenge emanates from the GCF's ways of working and its limited capacities. As described by some in the Secretariat, the focus of engagement and reviews is often on the DP and the particular grant instead of the country as a whole. The current funding mechanism also does not promote a comprehensive approach. Rather, it incentivizes the NDA to engage with whichever DP can use the available money in the short time frame of the grant rather than to be more strategic about the use of these resources. On the whole, national strategy is left to the NDA, which may lack the capacity or resources to guide a comprehensive approach to climate finance. While this is in line with the GCF's operating model and the principle of country ownership, it can also result in limited country ownership.
232. Because the GCF's model relies on less physical presence in favour of more procedures and policies such as the Readiness Guidebook and RPSP webinars, it cannot ensure that its resources are used appropriately or impactfully, particularly in places with limited capacities. Although country-level and AE stakeholders indicate that the GCF should do more to understand how RPSP grants fit within a larger set of needs and a comprehensive country-level trajectory, and that it should have additional touchpoints with the countries (i.e. beyond the regional desks of the DCP), this is currently outside of its scope of work.

Political complexities

233. While largely outside of the GCF's control, it is worth mentioning the role that political complexities play in levels of country ownership. Institutional fragmentation, elections, and more can diminish a country's capacity to exert full ownership over its climate finance strategy and plans. Insufficient strategies, undefined complementarities, the division of key responsibilities into different ministries or focal points, competition over climate finance resources, and the mismatch between political and technical competencies can all play a role. While long-term capacity-building support and a CP that supports collaboration, outlines clear responsibilities, and is built from an inclusive process could contribute to ameliorating these complexities, there is little to be done about such events as elections and political turnover that are often named as key constraints on Readiness programming (see Chapter 5). However, these factors will continue to pose a challenge to country ownership and the development of necessary in-country capacities and, as such, must be considered by the GCF in the way it provides readiness support.

B. NDA LEADERSHIP AS A RESULT OF CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

234. **Finding: NDA leadership resulting from capacity-building activities has so far been variable, despite achievements under objective 1 of the RPSP strategy. Key limiting factors include high NDA turnover, political complexities, a lack of clear country strategies for readiness, and GCF capacity constraints.**
235. As noted in the 2020 Readiness and Preparatory Support Guidebook, the NDA “plays a key role in ensuring country ownership in the GCF project cycle” (Green Climate Fund, 2020a, pp. 5). This includes the NDA's role in recommending FPs to the GCF and providing NOLs. For country ownership to be effective, therefore, it is important that the NDA have sufficient capacities to engage with both the GCF as well as country-level stakeholders. To this end, “RPSP is envisioned to be the main tool to the GCF for enhancing country ownership” (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2018, pp. ix), doing so by supporting the development of NDAs and other stakeholder capacities to engage with the GCF and on climate finance planning, generally.
236. As a result, there has been a strong focus within the RPSP on objective 1: Capacity-building for climate finance coordination, with 483 of 705⁵⁹ (69 per cent) approved RPSP grants contributing to this objective (see Chapter 5). Among outputs under objective 1, three are specific to NDAs and NDA strengthening. These have had a relatively high achievement rate at completion (between 89 per cent and 93 per cent; see Table 7–3), indicating that NDA capacity-building activities are taking place.

⁵⁹ The RRMF database comprises 705 approved grants, while the overall RPSP portfolio included 707 approved grants (excluding workshops, events and structured dialogues). The difference occurred as the result of two grants, which were initially approved and later cancelled, and the team could not locate their proposal documents.

Table 7–3. Outputs related to strengthening NDA capacities

OUTCOME	OUTPUT STATEMENT	PLANNED	REALIZED	ACHIEVEMENT RATE AT COMPLETION
Outcome 1.1	1.1.1: NDA or focal point staff trained in areas relevant to the GCF objectives of the GCF and oversight of GCF activities.	55	51 (+2)	93%
	1.1.2: NDA mechanisms established or strengthened for inter-institutional coordination, including engagement with the GCF and other climate funds.	80	71	89%
	1.1.3: Decision-making processes defined and operationalized at the NDA level for NOLs and consideration/facilitation of climate change projects.	98	88	90%

Source: GCF RRMF data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Notes: Only RPSP grants having submitted a CR were considered here.

Additional projects identified in parenthesis in the realized columns are projects that report the output being realized, even though the output was not initially planned. These RPSP grants were not considered in the calculation of the achievement rate itself.

237. However, the extent to which the capacity-building support provided to NDAs has translated into NDA leadership in overseeing the portfolio of the GCF and other climate-related investments in their country varies. For example, the Armenia case study found that RPSP grants improved the capacities of the NDA and increased its leadership. In contrast, the Côte d’Ivoire case study indicated that while the RPSP has contributed to developing NDA capacities, there have only been moderate implications for country ownership based on the NDA’s efforts to engage a wide variety of stakeholders, and to address the broader contextual matter of the country’s institutional fragmentation in the sphere of climate finance.
238. Some characteristics and functions of NDAs where greater country ownership or leadership is observed include:
- The NDA understanding and playing a key and active role in developing readiness grants and overseeing the GCF portfolio, often in alignment with a clearly defined climate finance strategy.
 - The NDA being proactive in sharing calls for proposals, collecting CNs and proposals, determining who can apply, and otherwise engaging with a variety of stakeholders.
 - The NDA providing support to entities seeking accreditation beyond an NOL.
 - The creation and funding of staffing positions on climate finance by the government.
239. Possible supporting factors include:
- RPSP grants that improve the capacity of the NDA as well as other actors such as DPs, DAEs, and entities nominated for accreditation. This means going beyond one-way exchanges and providing information for the active development of tools, mechanisms, and capacities that can be used for participatory engagement in climate finance processes.
 - The presence of a readiness partner (e.g. a DP) with a staff person that sits within the NDA and provides additional capacity to manage GCF-related work (as seen in Mexico and Côte d’Ivoire). Since readiness cannot pay for in-country staff, this provides an alternative to supporting human and technical capacities of an NDA that might otherwise be lacking.

- The location of the NDA within the government. While outside of the GCF's control, this can either hinder or support the NDA's leadership role. When placed within a strong ministry with a whole-of-government approach, for example, the NDA is much more likely to function as an effective leader. However, if the NDA's authority is questioned or challenged by another ministry or government actor, this creates an obstacle to its role in ensuring country ownership.

Limiting factors

240. There are several specific challenges to NDA capacity-building and, thus, leadership. The first is high turnover with the NDA itself. In some countries, elections and political complexities can contribute to situations in which the focal point changes frequently and/or NDA staff rotate frequently. In these cases, institutional knowledge is not maintained, capacity is not sustained, and basic capacity-building must begin again.
241. As well, NDAs are at times selected on the basis of the prestige the role brings rather than on the basis of institutional characteristics and capacities that lend towards the role. As a result, some NDAs have limited human resources or are already overburdened with other responsibilities. And since readiness cannot pay for NDA staff, there is little that can currently be done to address this challenge, save for drawing on the direct capacity support of readiness partners (e.g. DPs).
242. Another key challenge is the lack of a clear strategy for readiness in some countries. CPs are not required for readiness and, combined with insufficient NDA capacities, readiness resources are often not used systematically. This means that in some countries, rather than the NDA taking on the leadership role, it is left to DPs (often IAEs) who do have the capacity and their own, internal strategies that reflect country priorities to greater or lesser degrees.
243. Finally, the GCF itself also has limited capacity to fully understand and engage with country needs and the context, which includes developing an understanding of where NDA capacity-building has or has not taken place.⁶⁰ This hinders the ability of readiness to support country ownership in the most fundamental way: by developing NDA capacity, in strategic, systematic, and adaptive ways.

C. INCREASED STAKEHOLDER CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS THROUGH SKILLS, TOOLS AND SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

244. **Finding: The RPSP has had limited results thus far for increasing widespread stakeholder capacity for engagement, and there are differences in how stakeholder engagement is seen across countries and stakeholder groups. Most readiness support has been used for informational or training purposes.**
245. As described in the 2019–2021 RPSP strategy, readiness seeks to provide capacity-building that in turn leads to strategic programming, investment identification, funding request submission, and successful implementation of climate finance activities. It is intended “to be deployed across the entire value chain of climate finance” (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 27), to strengthen national coordination, to provide opportunities to develop national and regional experts as well as DAEs, and to engage the private sector and civil society through country strategies, frameworks, and capacity-building.

⁶⁰ The GCF Secretariat has pointed out that the DPM lacks visibility in this area and has not undertaken this level of analysis, which would require interactive discussions with NDAs.

246. There is general consensus among those interviewed for this evaluation that the engagement of a wide variety of stakeholders is essential for country ownership of GCF to work and that, in many cases, readiness support is being used for that purpose. Nearly three quarters of survey respondents strongly agree (34 per cent) or somewhat agree (40 per cent) that the RPSP has been instrumental for enabling stakeholder consultations.⁶¹ In both survey responses and interviews, those with experience of the RPSP noted ways in which it has been used to bring stakeholders together, gather their inputs, strengthen coordination mechanisms, and capture diverse perspectives in CPs and project pipelines. These stakeholders include those from civil society, the private sector, and academia. In some cases, stakeholder engagement has addressed aspects of inclusion, such as the development of gender action plans or the capacities of indigenous peoples in climate finance.
247. However, like many findings on the RPSP, the results are highly dependent on the country context and the type of stakeholder. While government and DP stakeholders often describe high levels of engagement and various opportunities for collaboration, those within the private sector and civil society often characterize these opportunities as one-way, with the NDA or DP providing information or training sessions where information is shared but where there are a few or no opportunities to truly collaborate. For some, even these opportunities can seem ill-suited to their needs. For example, private sector and civil society stakeholders in some case study countries described readiness-supported activities that informed them of the GCF but left them with little awareness of what readiness is used for or how it can support the private sector. In more limited instances, stakeholders outside of government are given the opportunity to review and validate what has been put together by the NDA or DP, but this still does not reach the level of true engagement and collaboration.
248. These kinds of activities do build stakeholder understanding of the GCF, which is a foundational step in engaging further. But it is also understood by many of those interviewed that simply providing information – whether it is the DP presenting details on the GCF or a GCF-hosted webinar – is not sufficient to really build the capacities, tools, and processes that stakeholders need to engage. One widely recognized and referred to way to address this issue is the development of inclusive national collaboration mechanisms, the creation of which is planned or underway in several countries (including some of the case study countries for this evaluation). These mechanisms are also cited for their utility in developing GCF FPs and activities (Green Climate Fund, n.d.-a).
249. For some stakeholders, the responsibility for establishing these mechanisms and ensuring that there is inclusive participation rests with the NDA. And yet some of those interviewed for this evaluation note that the NDA's conventional approach for stakeholder engagement does not adequately include civil society, indigenous peoples, or the private sector. Not including these stakeholder groups runs contrary to GCF requirements that proposals align with its gender, ESS, and indigenous peoples policies. While countries may check the boxes in this regard, civil society describes situations in which GCF-funded activities are participatory in principle but not in practice, that they are more consultative than collaborative. GCF Secretariat staff also note that they have little visibility into what is actually happening on the ground, especially after the approvals stage in the grant cycle.
250. This illustrates the paradox of the GCF's principle of country ownership. GCF support for more widespread awareness-raising and collaboration among stakeholders outside of the NDA, government, and DPs could be beneficial, as could more comprehensive GCF requirements for stakeholder engagement that are then validated. However, Secretariat staff acknowledge that the

⁶¹ CSO and PSO respondents responded to the contrary; however, the sample size was limited (four total).

principle of country ownership also limits their ability to prescribe certain activities or actions. In addition, and as discussed above, the GCF Secretariat is itself constrained by its limited capacity to follow-up at a country level, particularly in places where language or time zones pose an additional hurdle.

Chapter 8. IMPACT AND PARADIGM SHIFT

251. This chapter explores the extent to which countries are enhancing their enabling environments for low-carbon, climate-resilient development, and are obtaining more climate finance (GCF, other-sourced) as a consequence of GCF's readiness investments. The chapter then explores the extent to which those readiness investments are supporting country stakeholders to integrate concepts of transformational change and paradigm shift in ways favourable to GCF goals.
252. In addition to enhanced country ownership (Chapter 7), ToC expectations (Annex 5) for the Readiness portfolio are described under the Programmatic outcomes and impact spheres of change. Key among them are:
- Enhanced country-level enabling environments for climate action vis-a-vis:
 - Institutional frameworks
 - Technology deployment/dissemination
 - Market development/transformation
 - Knowledge generation and learning
 - A change in financial flows to the country that can be traced to readiness support
253. For expected shifts in a country's enabling environment to occur, the ToC suggests, the pressures on and incentives for government to remove market barriers, address policy gaps, deploy new technologies, etc. must override status quo tendencies. In other words, a culture shift is required.

A. CLIMATE FINANCE TRENDS AND RPSP CONTRIBUTIONS

254. **Finding: There are limited concrete impacts of the RPSP leading to the mobilization of climate finance from the GCF or other resources, although isolated success stories are identified. The persistent barriers to climate financing and the need to shift towards an outcome-oriented approach have limited the extent to which the Programme has led to impact in this regard.**
255. As of B.36, the majority of grants remain under implementation with only 17 per cent completed, to date. With that, it is still early days to assess the impact of readiness on country climate financing. As discussed under Chapter 5, challenges in achieving objective 4 are noted, with much of the RPSP support to date focusing on capacity-building and little recorded achievement on pipeline development.
256. An examination of the Readiness portfolio shows a slight positive correlation between RPSP approved financing and approved GCF project financing ($R=0.234$, $P=0.01$). Specifically, the data points to a slightly higher value of approved FPs in countries with higher approved RPSP grant amounts (Annex 1). However, the evaluation team is unable to establish a causal link between RPSP support and FPs. The effectiveness analysis indicates little in the way of a relationship between RPSP support and access to GCF FPs. Any positive correlation may simply indicate that certain countries are better able to navigate the GCF processes and access resources than others regardless of the supports received.
257. A review of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data on climate finance indicates an increase in climate finance commitments in more recent years, across all

regions and country types.⁶² The extent to which the RPSP has directly contributed to these increases is difficult to ascertain but is likely limited. The evaluation found no correlation between climate commitments captured by OECD, on the one hand, and approved or disbursed RPSP financing on the other.

258. At a country level of analysis, there are examples of fund mobilization that can be traced to RPSP-supported activities. These include:
- A readiness project in Mongolia that helped mobilize private capital to reduce GHG emissions in line with the country's NDC.
 - A readiness grant in Liberia that was reported to "lay the foundation" for an FP that led to a project valued at USD 11.4 million.
 - A readiness grant in Panama that leveraged IDB funding for projects.
259. The potential for mobilizing additional resources through the RPSP is substantial given the volume of pipeline CNs generated through activities under objectives 4 and 3. However, obstacles stand in the way of those resources materializing as requested, as discussed in Chapter 5, on effectiveness.
260. Clearer links can be drawn at this latter stage of Readiness 2.0 between readiness investments and changes in country-level enabling environments (e.g. policies/regulations, market shifts, technologies, knowledge generation). In the portfolio, as many as 63 out of 103 (62 per cent) grants support policy or regulatory changes, with others linked to innovation as well. Examples of such from case study countries are set out below:
- From the Caribbean and Belize – a credit risk abatement instrument to stimulate green investment; nature-based solutions for communities adjacent to agriculture, forestry and other land use; climate hazard early warning technologies to support decision-making (multiple sectors); policy and planning frameworks for climate-smart urban land management and infrastructure development.
 - From Panama – inter-institutional examination of e-mobility (normative framework development, examination of fiscal incentive structures) leading to the drafting and adoption of Law 295 (2022), which incentivizes electric mobility for ground transportation, and Executive Decree No.51 (2023) which regulates the law.
 - From Lao PDR – groundwork for e-mobility investments enabling the development of a policy and regulations on e-mobility as well as capacity-building and awareness-raising; market preparation for industrial energy efficiency leading to the formulation of recommendations on energy efficiency.
 - From Bhutan – backstopping the final steps in the formulation of its REDD+ strategy paving the way for Bhutan to advance to the REDD+ implementation stage and position itself to demonstrate GHG emissions reductions and collect results-based payments.
261. To date, the tracking of RPSP impacts has been difficult on account of the absence of a Programme results framework. The recent introduction of the RRMF with its outcomes focus promises to make it easier to trace readiness investments to larger scale systems change at portfolio and at country level (see more in Chapter 4).

⁶² The OECD tracks and publishes data on bilateral and multilateral climate-related development finance commitments. The current database does not provide data on disbursements. As such, the analysis is based on commitments rather than materialized funds. More detail on the methodological approach adopted by the OECD is available at https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/METHODOLOGICAL_NOTE.pdf.

B. SIGNALS OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE (PARADIGM SHIFT)

262. **Finding: Transformative change and paradigm shift are critical elements in the architecture that links GCF investments to its goals. At the country level, however, the concept remains largely abstract to stakeholders. For some GCF staff and country stakeholders, the paradigm shift concept is associated with the later stage results of climate investments to be teased out when developing project theories of change (potentially with readiness support); for others paradigm shift is associated with a mind shift that develops in a population at a country level over time (also potentially with readiness support). Underpinned by such ambiguity and divergence, RPSP's role in fostering paradigm shift remains vastly under-explored.**
263. GCF is committed to projects and programmes that demonstrate maximum potential for a “paradigm shift” towards low-carbon and climate-resilient development. Paradigm shift potential is sought in the development of programme and project CNs, and is demonstrated to the extent that GCF investments in mitigation and adaptation catalyse impact beyond any given project or programme.⁶³
264. Across its five objectives, the RPSP has a contributory role to play in this regard, though there is some divergent thinking at the Secretariat over what that role should be. One view tends to objectify paradigm shift as a later stage development and preferred future, removed from the “preparatory” focus of RPSP. From this vantage point, RPSP's function is to help stakeholders understand the dimensions of paradigm shift as per the GCF investment framework so that the concept can be integrated within project designs. A contrasting view holds paradigm shift less as a high level, intended future and more as a shifting of mindsets that, with proper nurturing, can “snowball” into transformative change. Understood from this vantage point, the RPSP offers a breadth of potential to seed necessary mind shifts.
265. Appreciating the diversity of GCF eligible countries in relation to culture, physical geography, politics, economy etc., “what constitutes a paradigm shift in one country will necessarily differ from its manifestation in another”.⁶⁴ Yet, by and large, the concept is also abstract at the country level, not embedded. The evaluation observes the paradigm shift concept being introduced to stakeholders through sensitization activities and in much the same way that it is presented in GCF documents. As such, RPSP's specific role in advancing paradigm shift is left unexplored, and formal encounters with the concept await mostly those particular stakeholders tasked with project development.

Paradigm shift is poorly articulated by the GCF. The concept is not shared among other peer actors, and it is unexplored at a country level where it will mean something unique to each of the 142 states.

- GCF Secretariat, Interview

266. Among case study and deep-dive countries where CPs have been developed, the concept of paradigm shift is scarcely mentioned. Where it is, paradigm shift is largely framed in relation to GCF ambitions (where it exists), or is simply listed as a criterion considered for activity and project development/selection. There are few signals to show that the concept is truly understood (i.e. internalized).

⁶³ GCF discussion on paradigm shift can be found in the GCF Initial Investment Framework, available at <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/initial-investment-framework.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Source: key informant interview.

267. Country stakeholders and some within the Secretariat point to the importance of building a contextualized understanding of the concept and, more importantly, using these tailored notions of paradigm shift with country stakeholders to drive a development discourse in search of low-carbon, climate-resilient pathways and associated climate financing strategies. Such an application would have potentially far-reaching implications on the use of GCF's climate investment planning tools and would draw significantly on GCF's convening power. It would also inform future iterations of the RPSP ToC and, specifically, the formulation of RPSP outputs and outcomes and associated indicators.

Chapter 9. SUSTAINABILITY

268. This chapter examines the sustainability of RPSP outcomes. In relation to the ToC (Annex 5), the chapter looks at the extent to which the newfound capacities claimed at the outcome level (Chapter 5), and impact level (Chapter 8) have longevity. To this end, the chapter looks for evidence of deepening and widening relationships among country actors with key roles to play in forging low-carbon, climate-resilient development pathways. Firstly, it looks at the extent to which the capacities built with RPSP projects are likely to be sustained over time. Secondly, it assesses the extent to which the RPSP has contributed to building enduring relationships for climate financing across sectors and beyond ministries of environment, as well as across constituencies including the private sector, civil society, and academia.

A. SUSTAINABILITY OF RPSP CAPACITY-BUILDING IMPACT AT COUNTRY LEVEL

269. **Finding: The sustainability of RPSP results has been mixed though promising. The RPSP contributed to organizational structures and policies for climate financing that will likely be sustained, although high turnover of government staff represents a continued challenge to sustaining national capacities. This, combined with the lack of knowledge of GCF procedures and “language” among national stakeholders, suggests that the GCF’s “phased-out approach” to capacity-building is inadequate. Furthermore, CPs developed with RPSP support contribute to a long-term vision for GCF investments, but difficulties in moving from CN development to GCF FP approval pose sustainability concerns.**
270. The evaluation found promising evidence of the Readiness programme having contributed to the development of national policies and strategies that are likely to be sustained in time. As noted in Chapter 5, the Readiness programme has effectively contributed to the development of NAPs. Also, 62 per cent of RPSP grants support the development and introduction of policy or regulatory changes. A good majority of case studies for this evaluation provides evidence suggesting the RPSP has contributed to an enabling environment through support for the development of normative frameworks. In these cases, including Mexico, Panama, Lao PDR, Belize and Bhutan, stakeholders expected that these results would be sustained beyond current political administrations.
271. However, some stakeholders expressed concerns that these processes are sometimes not sufficiently connected with other outputs along the impact pathways to ensure sustained results. For example, in Lao PDR, the RPSP supported the development of the Industrial Policy of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce; however, it did not fund activities for its dissemination, which is an important step to ensure that the private sector is aware of key developments in the industry.
272. NDAs in three case studies expressed that multi-year RPSP grants are better suited than one-year grants for sustainability, because they promote long-term thinking required for policy change and resilience.⁶⁵ A portfolio analysis conducted for this evaluation indicates little change in the

⁶⁵ Also linked to this idea about multi-year RPSP grants is the DP/AE/NDAs’ wishes for the RPSP to allow more flexibility and scope for doing pilots of what a full-scale project could look like. It was suggested that within the design of

proportion of multi-year RPSP in the portfolio, with only 3 per cent of RPSP grants being multi-year in 2023.

273. The evaluation also found that the RPSP has contributed, to variable extents, to the development of organizational structures, policies, and mechanisms of NDAs and DAEs. For example, in Belize the RPSP contributed to strengthening the NDA's organizational structure, from one person in 2017 to a three-unit department in 2023. Several case studies also point to contributions in developing organizational processes, such as the no-objection procedure. GCF Secretariat staff have noted that the fact that countries now have a structure to address climate financing is a sustainable achievement in and of itself. Despite slow progress in the accreditation process of prospect DAEs, the RPSP has also contributed to the organizational strengthening of these organizations in preparation for accreditation.
274. In many case studies, the RPSP has contributed to the development of organizational policies (i.e. gender policy, etc.), ESS, and communication mechanisms. Of particular interest, nominated DAEs describe having benefited from RPSP support for improved organizational policies related to conflict of interest, transparency, environmental sustainability, and gender equality, among others.
275. NDAs and DAEs across country case studies recognize the significant contribution of the RPSP to building their capacities through training, guidance, and tools. However, most case studies also raise concerns regarding the sustainability of capacities developed. Most case studies reported turnover among NDA or DAE staff, which has resulted in loss of institutional memory and capacities. Acknowledging this recurrent issue, national stakeholders underline the importance of setting aside resources for continuous capacity-building of NDAs and DAEs. At the same time, there is indication that DCP has pushed back on requests that appear to repeat foundational capacity-building activities. The reason given is that the Fund is moving away from providing "generic training" in order to further support the development of project pipelines.
276. In relation to CN development, the extent to which RPSP support for this activity has resulted in sustained capacities is mixed. While several DAEs acknowledge having learned a lot about climate financing and CN development, they describe not being sufficiently familiar with the GCF language and needing more continuous support from DPs.
277. Another key issue hindering sustainability that was frequently observed across case studies is the lack of resources. In most case study countries, the government lacks resources to finance activities to implement strategies and plans developed with RPSP support, including the NAP. Similarly, a number of NDAs lack funding to finance activities that support their coordination mandate, such as meetings and transportation.
278. Finally, the RPSP has contributed to the development of a medium- to long-term vision for GCF investments through the elaboration of CPs. However, slow progress in moving CNs to investment projects jeopardizes the sustainability of RPSP gains and the GCF more broadly. Across case study countries, only one of the five CPs have at least one project approved. In addition, one national stakeholder expressed concerns that it would be difficult for the government to renew its contribution to GCF-2 if it does not see any return on investments with at least one approved project within this GCF cycle. Inefficiencies in project approval therefore pose a risk to the sustainability of the GCF and, consequently, to its RPSP.

the RPSP, such piloting of project ideas on a small-scale should be made possible, also preferably within a longer multi-year timeframe.

B. ENDURING AND DIVERSE PARTNERSHIPS AT INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

279. **Finding: The RPSP is contributing to building an ecosystem for climate financing in countries. However, multisectoral coordination varies across countries. Despite recent improvements, engagement with non-State actors remains a work in progress.**
280. The RPSP programme engages in a variety of partnerships involving DPs, IAEs, NDAs, DAEs, and other national stakeholders. The relationship between the RPSP and its DPs is a crucial collaboration aimed at catalysing climate action on a global scale. DPs, comprising AEs such as international organizations and national development banks, as well as non-AEs, play a pivotal role in facilitating the effective implementation of the RPSP. They bridge the gap between the GCF and recipient countries, offering expertise, guidance, and capacity-building support. This partnership ensures that the climate finance provided by the GCF is properly channelled, ultimately advancing climate resilience and sustainable development. The synergy between the GCF RPSP and its DPs exemplifies a collaborative approach to addressing the urgent challenges of climate change.
281. While the collaboration between the GCF RPSP and its DPs is undeniably pivotal, some key informants have raised concerns about the sheer number of DPs, and that the relationship can sometimes appear transactional rather than strategic in nature. To address these concerns, some have suggested the possibility of streamlining the DP network, focusing on their respective comparative advantages, and adopting a more strategic approach. For instance, one DP could specialize in providing comprehensive support for NAPs, while others could concentrate on pipeline development or other areas. Interviews suggests that slow but important changes are underway in this direction; in LAC, for example, UNEP has become the main entity focusing on providing support for the NAP.
282. Part of the sustainability of the RPSP model is due to partnerships with DPs, of their timely exit, and of their renewed support as appropriate. As noted earlier, DPs may be accredited or non-AEs. AEs as DPs have the advantage of providing continued partnership and perhaps deepening support across multiple GCF and non-GCF programmatic offerings, much beyond the RPSP. Significant stakeholder appreciation was also expressed for the support provided by the non-accredited DPs (e.g. in Latin America and in Africa), who brought a clear exit strategy to their delivery model. This multiplicity of approaches underscores the Programme's commitment to promoting sustainable national capacity-building, an equitable and effective utilization of resources within the RPSP framework, and a diversity of approaches to partnership. Indeed, the RPSP has served to build the basis for an ecosystem of partners for climate financing, both globally and nationally.
283. Some case studies reported RPSP contributions towards the accreditation process of DAEs, in some instances noting important delays in this process, with DAEs wondering if they will ever become accredited. This points to shortcomings in ensuring an appropriate balance between IAEs and DAEs with potentially inhibiting repercussions on the sustainability of these developing ecosystems. Even so, several IAEs and DAEs have developed strong relationships through the implementation of RPSP grants and noted planning to implement GCF projects together in the future.
284. Despite observed progress in developing these country institutional ecosystems, shortcomings in governance arrangements for climate financing persist. In some countries, it has been more difficult for the NDA to ensure multisectoral coordination for climate financing than in others. This is particularly true in countries where the NDA function has been entrusted to the Ministry of Environment, which typically has few resources and weak convening power compared to other

ministries, as observed in some case study countries. A lack of knowledge of GCF objectives and procedures across sectors is also still evident in some RPSP-supported countries. Case studies also point to processes that have seeded multisectoral collaboration, such as the development of the NAP or the CP, though it is still early to tell if this will lead to sustained engagement.

285. The development of partnerships for climate financing at decentralized level is incipient and uneven across countries. Engagement with non-state actors, such as the private sector, civil society and academia remains a work in progress, as discussed throughout this report, with RPSP support. While private sector engagement continues to evolve and grow, challenges persist stemming from a lack of clarity among private sector actors about how they can engage with and benefit from RPSP resources at national level. Despite improvements, case studies revealed that civil society is typically given meagre space to engage in national coordinating mechanisms. Also, RPSP projects have engaged with academia to support evidence generation and study preparation; it remains widely believed in academic circles consulted for this evaluation that universities could be further involved, towards ensuring that educational programmes sufficiently address climate change issues and that new graduates have the required capacity to sustain national ecosystems for climate financing. Finally, partnership development with sub-national governments has been initiated across multiple case study countries, with the added complexity recognized in doing so.

Chapter 10. EFFICIENCY

286. This chapter assesses three areas of efficiency. First, it assesses the extent to which the Readiness programme grant cycle is operating as expected in relation to Secretariat outreach to and communication with national stakeholders, grant approval processes, and grant implementation. Second, it discusses key challenges in accessing RPSP resources for priority countries, that is LDCs, SIDS and African States. Third, it assesses risk management in the context of the Readiness programme. In relation to the ToC (Annex 5), this final chapter returns to the operational dimensions of the Programme to examine the conversion of inputs (resources) into activities, and activities into the outputs intended in order to secure achievement of the five RPSP objectives.

A. OUTREACH TO STAKEHOLDERS

287. **Finding: Overall, communication frequency from the GCF to country partners continues to be perceived as inadequate with detrimental effects on the implementation of RPSP grant activities. Key contributing factors are the lack of a GCF institutional presence or at least a routine of country visits by GCF staff, the time difference between many stakeholders and GCF headquarters, and persistent language constraints. In addition, GCF communication efforts are insufficient for socializing knowledge, and are inefficient.**
288. Despite there being a direct link established between DCP regional desks and NDAs, communication between GCF as a whole and with country partners is perceived by country stakeholders as inadequate, as made evident in interviews and in survey responses. Specifically, the low frequency and specificity of GCF's communications is considered detrimental to the RPSP-supported efforts of countries to integrate international climate finance in national development planning. In addition, the GCF is criticized for using an inaccessible language, that is not used nor always understood at country level. This continues a trend observed in previous evaluations, and indicates that while DCP engagement through regional desks is welcomed and valued, it is not sufficient.
289. In most case study countries, stakeholders report communication issues with the GCF, including long wait times before receiving feedback on Readiness deliverables and a lack of clarity and consistency in GCF comments. Variability is also noted in the frequency of and responses given by supporting teams at the Secretariat, particularly about but not limited to communication over changes in RPSP policies and procedures. For instance, two consulted DPs reported a lack of shared information and guidance related to funding under the non-NAP, multi-year single-country modality.
290. The lack of GCF institutional presence, or even country visits by GCF staff, inevitable time differences between many stakeholders around the world and GCF headquarters in South Korea, and persistent language constraints (not all stakeholders have equal mastery of English, the GCF's primary operating language) are all named as inhibitors of communication between the GCF and country partners. Finally, NDAs and DPs tend to have only cursory familiarity of key RPSP tools, as described below, suggesting that GCF communication geared to socializing knowledge about their purpose and application is insufficient or inefficient in its delivery.

291. The GCF Readiness Guidebook is a key reference tool for NDAs and DPs, for the development of RPSP proposals and the implementation of ensuing RPSP grants. In April 2023, a revised version of the guidebook was published on the GCF website. This updated version reflects the programmatic developments as well as the operational improvements and lessons learned from the past years' implementation of the Programme, aiming to make the submission of proposals clearer and more efficient. Until August 2023, the guidebook was only available in English, which put many non-English speaking RPSP-eligible countries at a disadvantage over a four-month period. One NDA/focal point reportedly translated segments of the guidebook to share with colleagues so they could work together. At the beginning of August 2023, the GCF published Spanish, French, and Arabic versions of the Guidebook.
292. On 20 April 2023 and 25 April 2023, the GCF organized webinars to familiarize diverse stakeholders with the 2023 Revised Readiness Guidebook, providing a comprehensive overview of the changes made to the guidebook. These sessions were conducted in English with Spanish and French translation. The sessions were offered in two different time slots, allowing for participation by representatives across various regions. However, notwithstanding these dissemination efforts, a lack of awareness of the readiness guidebook is still reported by country partners.
293. Launched in May 2023, the RKB is an online platform intending to provide easy access to RPSP-related GCF policies, tools and guidance, case studies, and a dashboard of Readiness results (Green Climate Fund, n.d.-c). The platform is easy to navigate, providing access to up-to-date resources such as the RPSP guidebook, proposal template, budget document, procurement information, human resource and implementation plan template, and the RRMF grant output-level indicator reference sheet. At this point, however, all the materials are in English.⁶⁶ Also, as a relatively recent resource, the RKB was not mentioned during stakeholder consultation, indicating it might not be well known by country partners and DPs. Communication efforts aimed at socializing the RKB have yet to reach their intended targets and purpose.

B. THE READINESS GRANT CYCLE

294. **Finding: Improvements in the different stages of the RPSP grant cycle have been noted during consultations with NDAs, DPs, and GCF stakeholders, as well as by survey respondents. The average number of days from proposal submission to approval has decreased, though it remains still too long. The application process is viewed by some as requiring a level of detail and provision of types of information that seem irrelevant to them, time-consuming, costly, and disproportionate to the size of support provided by grants with a duration of one year. Africa remains the region where the average number of days from proposal submission to approval is the highest, which is concerning for a GCF priority country group.**
295. **Finding: Several challenges impact the implementation of readiness grants. Disbursement is slow, which negatively affects implementation timelines. An over-reliance on consultants for TA is challenging, with DPs reporting difficulties in their search for suitable consultants, both national and international. NDAs and DPs describe a lack of flexibility in implementation from the GCF, in ways that do not align with adaptive management principles. That said, while the COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected RPSP delivery, the GCF is recognized for**

⁶⁶ Except for the readiness guidebook that was also made available in Spanish, French, and Arabic at the beginning of August 2023.

having pursued a flexible approach for reducing the impact of pandemic-related disruptions on implementation.

296. The readiness grant cycle as presented in the 2020 guidebook is set out in seven distinct stages, from conceptualization and development to completion and grant closure, as described in Table 10–1.⁶⁷
297. Improvements in the different stages of the RPSP grant cycle have been noted during consultations with NDAs, DPs, and GCF stakeholders, as well by survey respondents. Indeed, over 60 per cent of the 57 survey respondents consider that RPSP processes have improved since 2018. This perception is strongest among NDAs and IAEs, and less pronounced among DAEs and DPs.⁶⁸ Enabling and hindering factors to an efficient delivery of the RPSP at each stage of the cycle are further discussed below.

Table 10–1. Readiness grant cycle

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Stage 1. Conceptualization and development	The NDA and DPs develop a proposal.
Stage 2. Submission	The NDA submits the Readiness proposal and supporting documentation to the Secretariat via the online submission system.
Stage 3. Review and appraisal	The proposal is reviewed by the GCF Secretariat.
Stage 4. Approval	The proposal is endorsed by the interdivisional technical committee and approved by the approving authority.
Stage 5. Legal processing and first disbursement	The GCF and the grant recipient enter into the legal agreement for the implementation of grant activities. Within 30 days of reaching legal effectiveness, the DP must submit the request for the first disbursement. Within 30 days of receiving the first disbursement request, the GCF must dispatch the funds to the NDA/DP.
Stage 6. Implementation, monitoring and reporting	Readiness activities are implemented. The Secretariat or the fund agent (e.g. UNOPS) carries out monitoring functions of individual readiness grants. The NDA/DP submits progress reports at the agreed intervals and internal audited financial statements, and can submit requests for subsequent disbursements. Adaptive management measures adopted by the Secretariat include granting extensions, budget reallocation, restructuring and cancellation of grants.
Stage 7. Completion and grant closure	The GCF conducts reviews of the readiness grants to assess their performance. The NDA/DP submits final audited financial statements.

Source: Green Climate Fund (2020a).

1. FROM CONCEPTUALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT TO APPROVAL (STAGES 1-4)

298. The first and the second stage of the readiness grant cycle consists of the NDA and DPs developing and submitting a proposal. The complete proposal includes: the proposal template; the budget, procurement and implementation plan template; and letters of financial support from all participating countries signed by their NDAs in the case of regional or multi-country proposals.

⁶⁷ While the Readiness grant cycle has been revised and updated in the April 2023 Guidebook, the Readiness grant cycle presented in the 2020 Guidebook was the reference during most of the period covered by this evaluation.

⁶⁸ In the survey, over 70 per cent of NDA and IAE respondents perceived an improvement in the RPSP grant cycle. This perception is less pronounced among DAEs (56 per cent) and DPs (60 per cent).

During this stage, DCP provides co-development support. Their role is to accompany the NDAs and DPs during the submission process to bring proposals to an appropriate quality standard. However, DCP has capacity challenges. DCP is structured as eight regional desks with three staff members in each. This is not enough to address all country needs such that DCP has to rely on Readiness TA consultants. As there is a shortage of this kind of expertise, DCP has been unable to provide adequate and timely co-development support, as per its intentions.

299. In the third and fourth stage, proposals are reviewed, endorsed, and approved. The RWG at the Secretariat conducts an appraisal to ensure that the proposal adheres to GCF standards and complies with GCF objectives and Board decisions. If the proposal does not meet quality standards, DCP informs the NDA and/or DP, sharing the review sheet. Based on stakeholder feedback received from NDAs, DPs, and AEs, the GCF has recently updated its Readiness SOP, aiming to reduce the number of review days. This update includes the development of review criteria to standardize processes and reviews, ensure consistency, and reduce the number of proposal iterations. The GCF has also rolled out its Readiness Standards Handbook, that contains a series of guiding questions and criteria that readiness proposal reviewers should use for their appraisals, to confine the review and increase transparency in the process. These questions were developed in consultation with the interdivisional review members.
300. After endorsement, the readiness proposal is approved by the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, or the Director of DCP, depending on whether the country is under United Nations Security Council sanctions or not, and based on the amount to be approved. The RWG has the authority to endorse requests of USD 500,000 and above. For smaller grants, the director of DCP has approving authority.

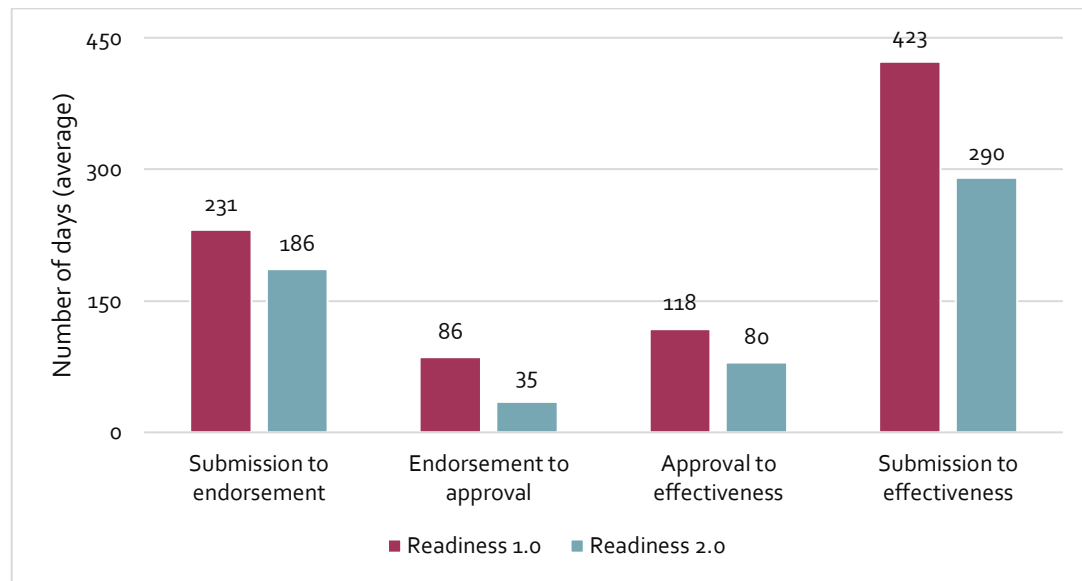
Timelapse analysis: From proposal submission to approval

301. The GCF's efforts to reduce timespans, particularly on the time required for review, have produced results. Between Readiness 1 and Readiness 2, the average number of days from proposal submission to effectiveness has decreased globally, going from 423 days in RPSP 1 to 290 days for RPSP 2, with decreases in processing time noted at all stages (Figure 10–1).^{69,70}

⁶⁹ These estimates are based on 588 grants for which a date was provided for each stage, i.e. submission, endorsement, approval, agreement signature and effectiveness. These grants were the basis for all timelapse analyses presented in this report, unless stated otherwise.

⁷⁰ The average number of days from submission to effectiveness includes the time taken for NDAs and DPs to respond to the Secretariat's feedback and resubmit their proposals.

Figure 10–1. Average number of days from submission to effectiveness



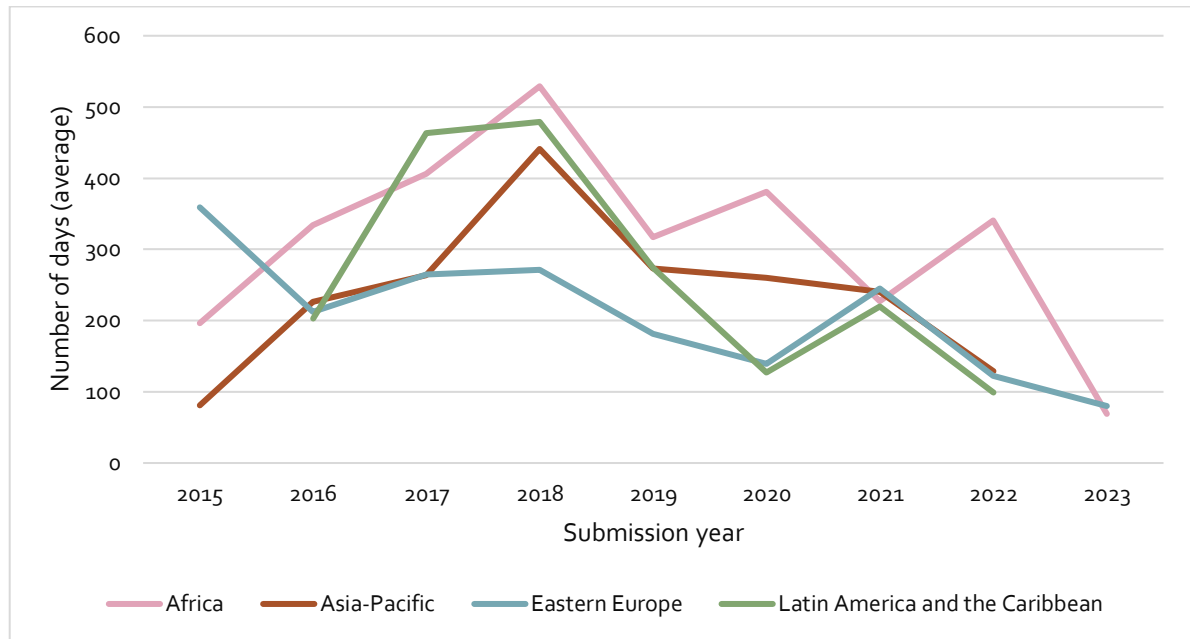
Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: Period was determined based on the date of submission, with RPSP 1 including all grants submitted in 2019 or prior, and RPSP 2 including all grants submitted after 2019.

302. However, there are important regional disparities, with some GCF priority countries experiencing the longest delays in accessing readiness support. Africa remains the region where the average number of days from proposal submission to approval is the highest (or among the highest), with on average 341 days in 2022. This compares to an average number of days of 129 in APAC and 122 in Eastern Europe and 99 in LAC (see Figure 10–2).⁷¹ The RPSP is meant to provide quick and timely access to funds for countries. An average processing time of 11 months thus remains too long for this purpose. And for African countries, which is a priority country group for the GCF, this is inappropriate, as clearly expressed by African (and other) stakeholders consulted for this evaluation.

⁷¹ Three grants among the 588 included in the timelapse analysis did not have an identified region and were therefore not included in the regional analysis.

Figure 10–2. Average number of days from submission to approval, by region



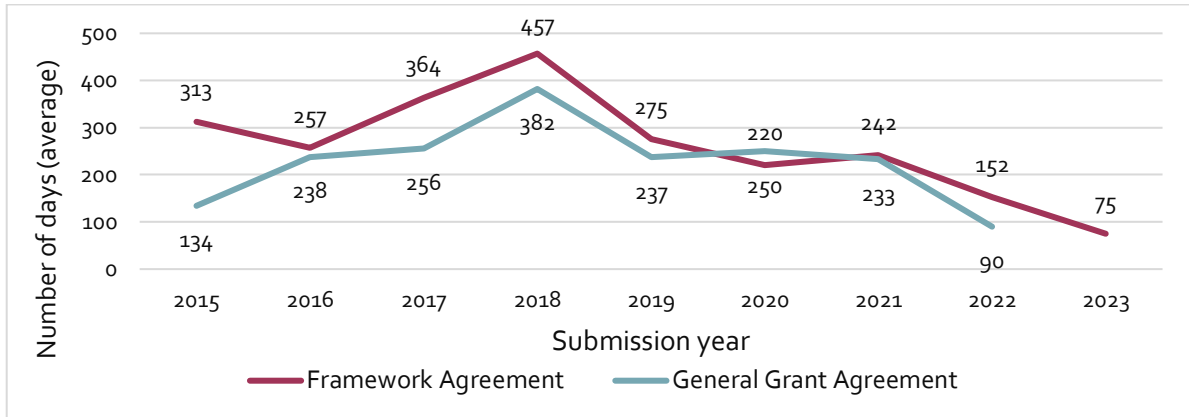
Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

303. Differences in the average number of days from proposal submission to approval are noted for a FWA and GGA. The GCF has signed a total of nine FWAs with international entities serving as DPs. In contrast to GGAs that are negotiated individually and after the grant is approved, FWAs are umbrella agreements that govern and regulate the terms and conditions of all RPSG grants managed and implemented by a DP until the termination of the agreement. Grants that are under an FWA thus become effective immediately after approval.
304. Between 2015 and 2023 (except for grants submitted in 2020), it took a significantly higher number of days to approve grants managed through a FWA compared to a GGA (Figure 10–3).⁷² According to consulted stakeholders at the GCF, this may be due to some international entities proposing implementation arrangements that are not consistent with the FWA, thus leading to longer negotiations before a grant is approved.⁷³ For instance, in 2021, it required over 1,000 days to approve two grants delivered by UNDP and one grant delivered by UNEP. These grants were delivered in Africa.

⁷² 6 out of 588 included in the timelapse analysis did not have an identified agreement type and were therefore not included in the analysis by grant type.

⁷³ A RPSG proposal that will be covered under a framework agreement is required to be consistent with the terms of the FWA, as it becomes effective on approval and there is no separate grant agreement signed for each individual grant under the FWA.

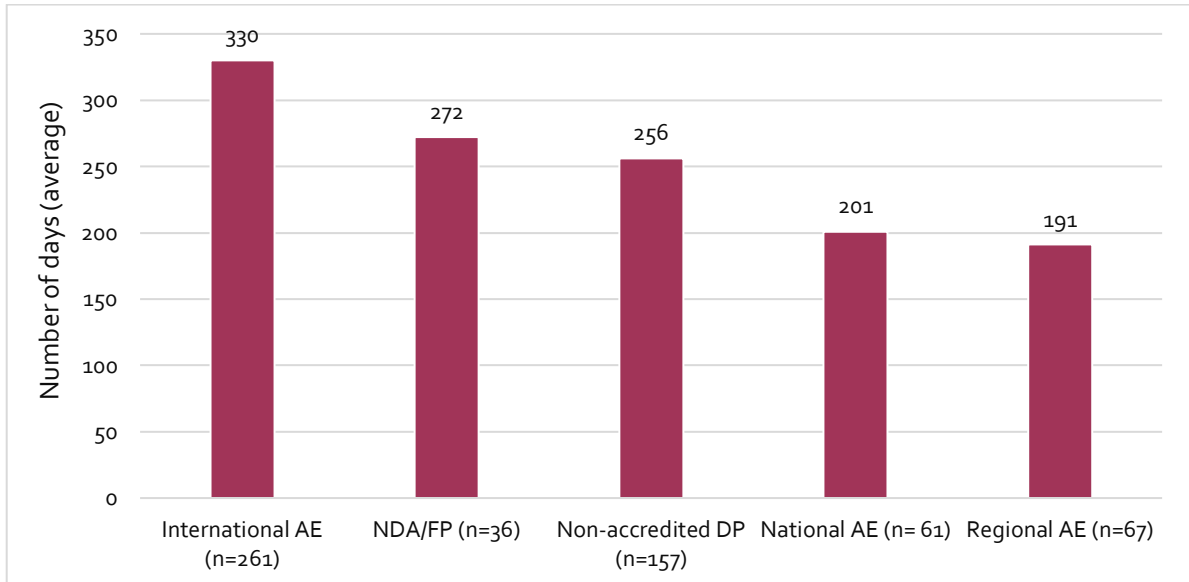
Figure 10–3. Average number of days from submission to approval, by grant agreement type



Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

305. Finally, the average number of days from proposal submission to approval varies depending on the DP. As seen in Figure 10–4, grants delivered by international AEs saw the highest number of days, with an average of 330 days (11 months), followed by NDAs/focal points (272 days, or 9 months), non-accredited DPs (256 days, or 8 months), national AEs (201 days, or 7 months) and regional AEs (191 days, or 6 months).⁷⁴ It should be noted that while international AEs have the longest average number of days from submission to approval, they are one of the only AE types to have received approval for grants submitted in 2023. One grant submitted by a regional AE in 2023 has already received approval. On the other hand, the last grants submitted by NDAs having received approval were submitted in 2021.

Figure 10–4. Average number of days from submission to approval, by type of DP



Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: Grants were classified based on the year of submission.

⁷⁴ One of the 588 included in the timelapse analysis did not have an identified DP and was therefore not included in the analysis by grant type.

306. The application process is still considered too long and complex and is viewed by some country-level and DP stakeholders as requiring a level of detail that seems irrelevant and time-consuming to collect. It is mentioned by several country stakeholders and is identified as a roadblock by 42 per cent of survey respondents. In addition, only half of survey respondents agreed that the Secretariat processes RPSP proposals and other requests in a timely manner. DPs are particularly dissatisfied, with only 38 per cent agreeing that the GCF processes RPSP proposals and other requests in a timely manner. Expediting the RPSP review process is the improvement most commonly suggested among survey respondents.
307. At the same time, it is widely perceived that RPSP processes require disproportionate efforts and costs in relation to the size of support provided by grants with a duration of one year. Because of this, several DPs mentioned they would be more interested in applying for multi-year readiness as the grant amount is higher and it allows for better planning. As a result of B.22/11, NDAs can submit multi-year strategic single-country proposals for up to USD 3 million with a maximum duration of 36 months, provided that the budget of the proposal in each year remains within the annual cap of USD 1 million.
308. Finally, the readiness annual cap is a modality that has challenged the submission-to-approval process at the Secretariat as well as at the country level. The RPSP has an annual cap of USD 1 million per country for non-NAP projects. Until 2022, readiness proposals had to be approved by the GCF by 31 December of any given year to count against the same year's annual cap. The annual cap and the cut-off date of 31 December have been critiqued by stakeholders at the Secretariat and in countries, as explained below.
309. The cut-off date has resulted in cases where countries have missed the funding window. NDAs tend to submit proposals just in time to benefit from each year's cap, which results in a significant number of proposals being submitted at the same time. This has both created pressure on Secretariat staff reviewing the submissions and brought about lags in the reviewing time. Staffing levels at the Secretariat are noted as a key constraint, here. For instance, a DP noted that in 2021 their readiness proposal could not be approved on time because of staffing shortages in the Secretariat. This led to the country losing USD 800,000 of their RPSP grant for that year.
310. In 2022, the GCF modified the cut-off date for approving proposals to 31 March of the following year. They did so to avoid readiness proposal revisions coinciding with other demands during a busy period for NDAs and for the Secretariat (e.g. annual UNFCCC COPs, the closure of the fiscal year, and the holiday season). Whether or not this change in the cut-off date has been having the desired impact remains to be assessed.

2. FROM LEGAL PROCESSING TO GRANT CLOSURE (STAGES 4-7)

311. As of B.36, the GCF has approved 707 readiness grants (excluding workshops) in 142 countries, for a total of approximately USD 518.99 million. Of these grants, 8 per cent are in legal processing (stage 4), 7 per cent have legal agreement effective and are ready to submit their first disbursement request (stage 4), 67 per cent have received at least one disbursement (stages 5-6), 17 per cent are complete (stage 7), and 2 per cent have been cancelled.
312. Once the proposal is approved, the GCF and the grant recipient (NDA or DP) enter into legal agreements (stage 4), for grants managed through a GGA.⁷⁵ Legal agreements guide the administration of the readiness grant with conditions for the implementation of activities, including

⁷⁵ For grants managed through a FWA, these modalities are already stated as part of the FWA.

disbursement and use of grant proceeds, procurement, monitoring and reporting, audits, cancellation, and refunds. The average time between approval and the signature of legal agreements, for grants managed through a GGA, has been decreasing. Indeed, the average time for grants approved during Readiness 1 was 161 days. This compares to an average of 156 days for grants approved under Readiness 2.

313. When legal agreements come into force, the Secretariat releases the first disbursement. Slow disbursement has been identified as an issue in several case study countries. Delays in disbursement have created cash flow issues which have led in some cases to activities being stalled. In 2023, the responsibility to allocate first disbursements was switched from DCP to DPM; delays are likely to be reduced, although it remains too early to tell as the DPM assumed this responsibility from December 2022.
314. In stage 6, readiness activities are implemented, monitored, and reported on. Monitoring of individual readiness grants is carried out by the Secretariat, or the fund agent (e.g. UNOPS for GGAs). The main tool used for monitoring project implementation is progress reports that are submitted by the NDA/DP at agreed intervals. In addition, the Secretariat recently developed the RRMF to allow for a more consistent and coherent capture of RPSP results. NDAs and DPs are required to use the RRMF to develop the logical framework as part of readiness proposal development. The NDA/DP also submits internal audited financial statements and can submit requests for subsequent disbursements.
315. As per the 2023 RPSP guidebook, adaptive management measures are adopted by the Secretariat. These measures include granting extensions, budget reallocation, restructuring and cancellation of grants. The PPMS is another tool that was recently implemented by the GCF. The PPMS is an online centralized portfolio management system that aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes during implementation, disbursements and adaptive management requests, as well as capture lessons learned and the results of the RPSP.
316. Finally, in the seventh and last stage, the GCF conducts reviews of the readiness grants to assess their performance on a rolling basis through completion reports and financial audits reports and the certified financial statement based on the audited financial statement. The NDA/DP submits final audited financial statements and the certified financial statement, which are key to making the final disbursement and reaching grant closure.

Prominent challenges in implementation

317. Different factors have been identified as affecting the efficiency of processes in grant implementation. First, most projects are designed to start operating immediately after the grant is approved, however most DPs cannot act before they receive the first instalment. This situation inevitably creates a delay of months before readiness activities can begin and puts pressure on actual project delivery given the short implementation windows that have been characteristic of readiness grants.
318. The high dependence on consultants also causes delays, as it can take 5–6 months out of a 12-month grant for a DP to find a consultant. Indeed, DPs in most case study countries report difficulties in finding suitable consultants, both national and international. As indicated in the RPSP Guidebook, the GCF encourages DPs to select national consultants; however, the lack of national expertise often forces DPs to turn to international consultants. This often results in budget allocations being insufficient to cover consulting fees.
319. Another issue raised during the evaluation is the GCF's lack of flexibility in implementation, with practices that do not align with adaptive management principles. This is particularly problematic as

the GCF engages with countries where rapidly changing contextual factors impact implementation and project relevance. The most common example pertains to approvals for no-cost extensions and cost reallocations. Any extension must be requested in a Letter of Request for Change and undergo the Secretariat's review and approval, which inevitably creates delays. On reallocation, any change beyond 20 per cent of any given budget category must go through UNOPS and/or Secretariat approval. This threshold of 20 per cent is deemed too low, thereby creating an administrative burden in instances where relatively minor changes are requested. One frequently cited example where cost reallocations are requested is where DPs seek to move from using local to using international consultants to address non-availability of local expertise.

320. The GCF allows a project management cost (PMC) budget of up to 7.5 per cent of the project budget⁷⁶ as well as a DP fee budget of up to 8.5 per cent⁷⁷ of the project budget and the PMC together, intended to support the implementation of the readiness grant. According to both DPs and GCF consulted stakeholders, a DP fee budget of 8.5 per cent of the total grant is not always enough, especially when grants are extended.
321. Inefficient processes at the Secretariat beyond the RPSP, including lengthy and complex processes related to accreditation and project pipeline development, have affected the effectiveness of the programme and put in question whether the RPSP is a cost-effective tool. Indeed, these inefficiencies have hampered Readiness programme effectiveness, leading to limited benefits to countries (see Chapter 5).
322. The COVID-19 pandemic also greatly affected RPSP delivery. The Board required the GCF to adopt measures to reduce the impact of implementation disruption and adjust to the changed context. In 2020, the Board approved the Secretariat offering facilitated access to readiness resources to enable countries to respond to the profound economic impacts of the pandemic. Overall, the GCF has been described as flexible in allowing no-cost extensions on grants implemented during the pandemic months.

Contract with UNOPS

323. In February 2018, after a negotiation of 4 years, the GCF Secretariat signed a contract with UNOPS to ease the burden on the Secretariat of managing the RPSP. This agreement was renewed in December 2021. The agreement sees UNOPS committed to providing grant management support on RPSP and PPF grants that are approved and managed through a GGA. By comparison, grants established through an FWA are managed by the GCF directly.
324. UNOPS provides grant management support, which includes negotiating terms and signing grant support agreements with DPs; transferring funds, with disbursement scheduled as per project proposals; monitoring the delivery of grants and the performance of DPs; providing day-to-day support; and closing grants. Consulted UNOPS stakeholders confirmed that they have provided feedback to GCF on policies and on DP implementation. They provide quarterly reporting and hold biweekly coordination calls with DCP and DPM.
325. Overall, country partners seem satisfied with the support provided by UNOPS. According to a survey conducted in 2023 among 65 DPs, AEs and NDAs worldwide, UNOPS operates in a timely manner to finalize grant agreements, disburse the first instalment, monitor grant implementation, provide support on requests for change submission, and to close projects. In addition, over 75 per

⁷⁶ DPs have the possibility to ask for an increase of the 7.5 per cent PMC cap by providing documentation and justification supporting the entire PMC budget.

⁷⁷ In case of the micro-size projects, a fees cap may be increased to 10 per cent if the Secretariat considers that there is a strong justification for increasing the percentage (Policy on fees: annex VIII to decision B.19/09).

cent of respondents agree or strongly agree that the UNOPS team responds to their enquiries with adequate information and in a timely manner.

C. KEY CHALLENGES IN RPSB ACCESS FOR PRIORITY COUNTRIES

326. **Finding: Access to RPSB is challenging for priority countries, particularly for LDCs and African States and further exacerbated in African LDCs. GCF processes and requirements as well as low disbursements were considered as particular hinderances to GCF's readiness ambitions in these countries. Heterogeneity is particularly noted in SIDS resulting in important variation in accessibility to RPSB resources.**
327. Accessibility issues for priority countries were reported by interviewees, who noted particular challenges for LDCs and African States. These challenges were also reflected in recent IEU evaluations, including the African States evaluation which found that African States, particularly African LDCs, are under-utilizing the country RPSB envelope and experiencing challenges in accessing the RPSB (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023a). The LDC evaluation also found that “significant challenges remain for LDCs to access GCF Readiness funding” (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2022, pp. 26). Accessibility challenges are also noted for SIDS, although to a lesser extent, and with important variation across countries.
328. As called for in the RPSB strategy, the majority of RPSB grants approved are in priority countries, with 31 per cent of funds in African States, 29 per cent in LDCs, and 26 per cent in SIDS. However, despite the weight of priority countries in the portfolio, data suggest priority countries, particularly LDCs and African States, see on average less projects and lower funds per country through the RPSB than other eligible countries (Table 10–2). For SIDS, while they see a comparable number of projects per country as with other eligible countries, the average level of funding is lower (likely reflecting their relative size among GCF eligible countries).

Table 10–2. Portfolio size and value by country type

COUNTRY TYPE	# GRANTS	AMOUNT APPROVED (\$M)	SHARE OF TOTAL FUNDS (%)	AVERAGE # GRANTS PER COUNTRY	AVERAGE FUNDS PER COUNTRY (\$M)	AVERAGE VALUE OF GRANT (\$M)
Africa (54)	217	158.78	31%	4.02	2.98	0.743
LDCs (46)	200	151.11	29%	4.35	3.32	0.764
SIDS (39)	191	134.97	26%	5.00	3.58	0.716
SIDS, LDCs and Africa (95)	447	319.56	62%	4.75	3.44	0.725
Other eligible countries (47)	252	197.98	37%	5.28	4.17	0.791

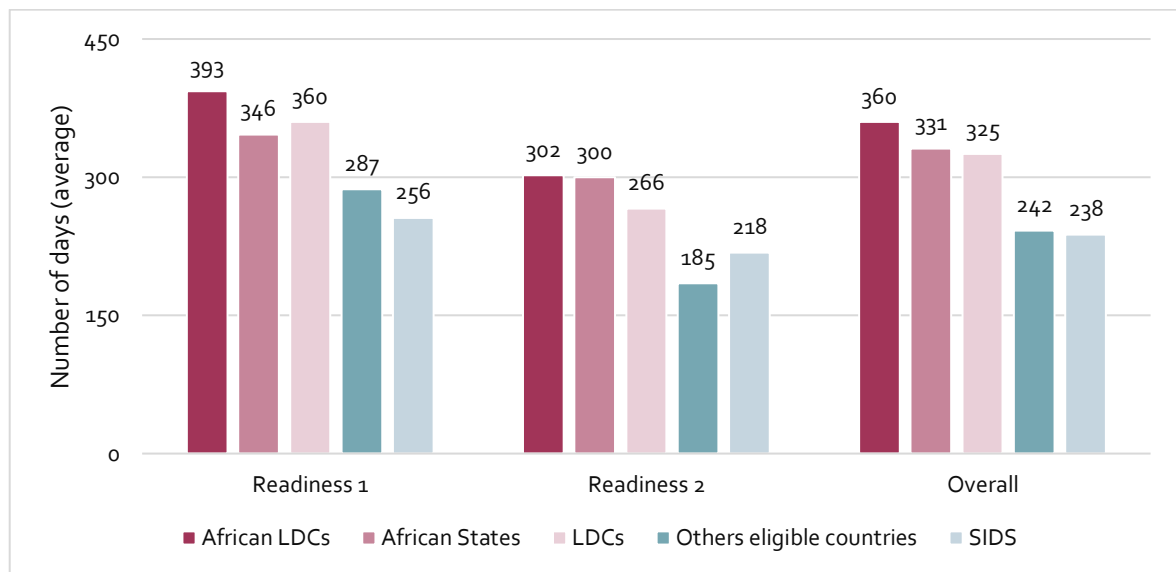
Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

329. GCF processes and requirements are considered a particular hinderance in priority countries. Long procedures and heavy requirements are seen as a burden for countries with already low capacity. In this regard, the first come first served model for fund dissemination is perceived to put priority countries at a particular disadvantage whereby proposals are reviewed for approval as they come in, with no proposal prioritization protocol, and common procedures adopted for priority countries and

other eligible countries. This favours countries with greater knowledge of GCF processes, experience of RPS requirements and capacity more generally.

330. Indeed, a review of approval process times shows longer delays in priority countries, particularly in African States and LDCs, with significant delays noted in African LDCs (Figure 10–5).⁷⁸ This challenge was identified in the African States evaluation published in 2022, where a specific recommendation was made to this effect (see Recommendation 3 of the African States evaluation⁷⁹). Such challenges were also identified in the LDC evaluation, where structural barriers and procedural bottlenecks in the preparation of proposals were identified and found to lead to longer and more resource intensive processes.

Figure 10–5. Approval process time by priority countries, 2018 to 2023



Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: Grants were classified based on the year of submission.

331. As seen in Figure 10–5 above, processing time is considered comparable for grants in SIDS and those in other eligible countries, standing at approximately eight months, although with noteworthy differences for the Readiness 2 period compared to Readiness 1. While overall processing times in priority countries have decreased during the Readiness 2 period, these still remain higher than what is seen in other eligible countries.
332. For instance, findings from the Belize case study suggest a satisfaction with formulation and approval processes, especially since 2020. It should however be noted that stakeholders flagged the heterogeneity of SIDS, in terms of country capacity, NDA leadership and in-country context. Belize is particularly noted as a SIDS with strong NDA leadership which may have an incidence on the country’s ease with accessing GCF resources. Approval times by country do indicate significant

⁷⁸ Five grants among the 588 included in the timelapse analysis did not have an identified country and were therefore not included in the priority country analysis.

⁷⁹ Recommendation 3: “The GCF should clarify and reinforce guidance on the selection of, and responsibilities allocated to the NDAs/focal points of African States. In addition, the GCF should consider a more tailored approach to RPS support in Africa. With it, the GCF should consider developing terms of reference and/or guidelines for NDAs that provide clear guidance to them on how to work with the GCF” (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023a, pp. xxviii).

difference between countries, ranging from average approval process times of under 150 days (5 months) in some SIDS, to over 400 days (13 months) in others.⁸⁰

333. Disparities are also noted at the implementation stage, with slightly lower disbursement rates in priority countries compared to other eligible countries (this is particularly the case for SIDS); and this, despite seeing a higher proportion of projects at disbursement stage (see Table A - 7 and Table A - 8 in Annex 1). As mentioned previously in the chapter, slow disbursements were flagged in several case study countries and perceived as hampering the programme's efficiency and timely delivery. This is notably the case in Côte d'Ivoire and Belize, given the short duration of RPSP grants. According to some GCF stakeholders, lower disbursement values in priority countries compared to other eligible countries is an indication of (i) the country's low capacity to implement the grant in a timely manner with the expected expenditure flow; and (ii) lower approved values for readiness in priority countries, as indicated in Table 10–2.
334. Completion rates are also slightly lower in priority countries, with 15 per cent of approved RPSP grants closed compared to 20 per cent in other countries. Rates are particularly lagging in LDCs, where 13 per cent of approved RPSP grants have been closed. Moreover, African States see an important proportion of no-cost extension requests, representing around 61 per cent of all RPSP grants in the region (Green Climate Fund, 2022d). The average extension for African States is estimated at about 11.4 months, that is, nearly a year (Green Climate Fund, 2022d). Extension procedures also affect project timeliness, in some instances. This is notably the case in Lao PDR, an LDC, where requests for no-cost extensions of changes in design have taken an inordinately long time to reach approval and are seen to be presenting a significant challenge for regional RPSP projects. A timelapse review of no-cost extension request procedures does reveal longer delays in priority countries, with an average of 65 days for the review of an application, compared to 47 for other eligible countries. Longer delays are particularly noted in LDCs and African States, both with an average of 77 days between request and approval, a number which increases to 87 when considering African LDCs (Annex 1).

D. RISK MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF RPSP

335. **Finding: The GCF has integrated different internal risk management mechanisms into its processes. However, several of these mechanisms embedded in the RPSP grant cycle impact efficiency by creating long delays and burdensome bureaucracy. At the organizational level, GCF portfolio risk management comprises two distinct levels of due diligence and appraisal, one undertaken by the NDA/DP and the other by the GCF Secretariat, independent units, and panels. At the country level, GCF accreditation and financial disbursement practices are themselves key components of a risk management and mitigation system. In delivering readiness support, the GCF works with DPs with whom it has FWAs, or with UNOPS to manage resources with national and regional entities, ensuring that risks are minimized.**
336. The GCF has integrated different internal risk management mechanisms in its processes to ensure resources are appropriately used at the country level, as described below. However, as discussed previously in the chapter and throughout the report, several of these mechanisms embedded in the RPSP grant cycle impact the efficiency of RPSP delivery by creating long delays and burdensome

⁸⁰ When considering the average review time in SIDS on a country basis, a standard deviation of 209 days is found, (i.e. seven months). A high standard deviation indicates high variability in each value compared to the mean, signalling great variation in the approval process times across SIDS.

bureaucracy. Heavy risk mitigation mechanisms in RPSP processes are sometimes interpreted as a lack of trust from the GCF by country partners and DPs, particularly the ones who have signed an FWA.

337. GCF portfolio risk management comprises two distinct levels of due diligence and appraisal.⁸¹ First, the primary due diligence and appraisal in the context of the RPSP is a process undertaken by the NDA/DP to document, assess, and verify the details of the readiness grant being proposed. The main output of primary due diligence and appraisal is a proposal package. As mentioned in section B.1 of this chapter, the proposal package to be submitted includes the proposal template, the logical framework, the budget, procurement, human resource and implementation plan, and letters of financial support from all participating countries.
338. The secondary due diligence and appraisal is undertaken by the GCF Secretariat, independent units, and panels to assess the details of RPSP proposals and identify any relevant risks. As indicated in section B.1 of this chapter, this entails the RWG at the Secretariat conducting an appraisal to ensure that the proposal adheres to GCF standards and complies with GCF objectives and Board decisions.
339. However, as mentioned by relevant GCF consulted stakeholders, there are still areas of improvement when it comes to applying internal risk management mechanisms to RPSP processes. For instance, as part of secondary due diligence, the GCF's Independent Integrity Unit has a proactive integrity review process that employs artificial intelligence and machine learning to investigate the different projects and understand the possible red flags related to integrity violations. Based on the number of red flags, the Unit selects projects to conduct in-depth reviews and develop a list of findings and recommendations for the entity to safeguard GCF funding. As of now, this review process has not been applied to the Readiness programme. However, it is anticipated that one readiness grant will be selected for an in-depth review every year, starting in 2023. According to a consulted stakeholder at the Secretariat, this will better position the GCF to understand the weaknesses of the Readiness programme at the country and at the GCF levels, and take corrective actions.
340. At the country level, the GCF adopts a variety of measures to reduce or share risks with reliable partners. Under the Readiness programme, there are three kinds of implementing organizations that may receive grant funds: AEs, DPs and NDAs. AEs serve to mitigate risk. Indeed, the accreditation process entails a deep and thorough assessment of the applicant's policies and procedures, track record, and capacity to undertake projects and programmes of different financial instruments and environmental and social risk categories (Green Climate Fund, 2022b). In addition, applicants must demonstrate they have an Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) in place and that they align with international best practices (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2021).
341. For any organization that is not an AE, they must undergo an FMCA. The FMCA reviews the legal, fiduciary, compliance, project management and procurement capacities of the organization to ensure they possess the requisite skills and experience to manage and report on GCF funding. The assessment is conducted by UNOPS, the GCF finance division, as well as the RWG.
342. In delivering readiness support, the GCF works with DPs with whom it has framework agreements. These entities typically have risk management systems in place that supplement those of the GCF. For instance, GGGI, who is a DP in nearly 10 per cent of the readiness portfolio, has rules on

⁸¹ For more information, see the GCF administrative guidelines on the internal control framework and internal audit standards.

integrity due diligence in place on a broad range of issues, including money-laundering, human rights violations and organized crime. Procurement processes are standardized, and disbursements are timed and predictable. International best practices seem to be followed at every step, with most of this handled at GGGI headquarters in South Korea.

343. For GGAs, the GCF works with UNOPS to manage resources with national and regional entities, ensuring that risks are minimized in terms of financial irregularities, failures of compliance with GCF systems, failure to deliver, and in other ways.
344. Finally, all grants are subjected to a screening against United Nations Security Council sanction lists. This screening is intended to assure that no funds of the grant are used by, paid to, or otherwise benefit entities and individuals who may be prohibited from such use, receipt or payment by the terms of such sanction programmes.
345. An outstanding area of risk management is the tracking of emerging risks during the implementation of RPSP grants. As noted in Chapter 4, currently, GCF has no periodic mechanisms to assess the quality of implementation of RPSP grants. This precludes a comprehensive view of any emerging risks from the RPSP grants portfolio.

Chapter 11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

346. **Conclusion 1. The RPSP is the key GCF programme designed to meet the climate finance needs of developing countries, but its value proposition remains insufficiently developed and universally shared within the GCF and by its stakeholders to substantiate its strategic importance.** While the RPSP has undergone significant changes since its inception, it remains a “work in progress” on account of iterations informed by evaluations, reviews and deliberations. GCF has put in place two RPSP strategies and numerous processes, guidelines and frameworks to increase the relevance and effectiveness of the RPSP and provide readiness support in a timely manner. However, the full potential of the RPSP’s value to countries and its contribution to GCF’s overall goals and operations has not been fully understood and elaborated among different stakeholders within and outside the GCF. Being one of the world’s key leading readiness programmes in the climate space, its role in the global climate finance architecture is insufficiently articulated and communicated.
347. **Conclusion 2. The RPSP’s effectiveness and efficiency are challenged by GCF’s known operational constraints.** These constraints include, inter alia, lack of sufficient staff capacity to meet its institutional ambitions, insufficient appreciation of operating contexts, lack of flexibility in its processes, the long review times of RPSP proposals, and lack of integration between different processes in the GCF (including the discord between RPSP and Project Preparation Facility (PPF) support). These constraints also impact timely access to the RPSP by countries. There have been some improvements since the first RPSP programme, with country stakeholders able to access readiness resources more quickly and transaction times across grant cycles having somewhat improved, albeit with persistent variances associated with levels of country vulnerability.
348. **Conclusion 3. The fragmentation of GCF’s internal structure affects the level of integrated engagement with country-level stakeholders and the degree of continuity in the transition from RPSP-related offerings to downstream initiatives related to funding activities.** GCF’s ability to provide integrated support to meet country needs is constrained by the lack of internal coherence between GCF’s divisions (i.e. DCP, DMA, PSF, DPM). The Secretariat’s championship of the RPSP is not entirely clear, with RPSP responsibilities spread across numerous divisions. Discrepancies in data information and availability across the Secretariat’s data structure also speaks to this fragmentation. Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence that the CNs lead to the project proposals, as well as that the funded activities can be attributed solely to the RPSP. These different layers of fragmentation also affect the active integration of gender and indigenous people’s issues into the RPSP.
349. **Conclusion 4. The success of the RPSP at country level is predicated upon contextual factors which are not fully acknowledged and addressed in the delivery of the RPSP.** The Programme is delivered as a collection of individual grants; the success of individual grants depends on yet-unaccounted for contextual factors while the grant-specific approach prevents country-level or portfolio results. GCF as an institution is still in the process of enhancing its accessibility and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including civil society organizations, private sector organizations (PSOs), DPs, and DAEs among others. There is still a nascent but evolving understanding in countries of GCF and its requirements and vice versa. The “different languages”

spoken by country stakeholders – including national DPs – and GCF create higher transaction costs for countries in accessing the RPSP. The GCF has attempted to bring down the transaction costs through the release of documented knowledge products, guidelines and modalities. Their reception and success are yet to be assessed.

350. At country level, factors such as lack of NDA capacity or interest, staff turnover in NDAs, and low understanding of GCF procedures and processes affect the RPSP and thus give rise to ongoing capacity challenges which contradict possible assumptions of capacity-building as a static and largely one-time activity. Capacity needs are neither linear nor definitive as country needs evolve. Both the role of the RPSP in assisting in the preparation of CPs, and the usage of CPs for setting national climate priorities remain context specific. The readiness programme does not always account for this country-specificity. It is more prominently directed towards the DPs rather than the countries and, therefore, country readiness needs are still not fully understood. The GCF has been able to achieve an understanding of promoting complementarity with other climate funds at the corporate level but the same has not been uniformly realized at the country level.
351. **Conclusion 5. Lack of clarity around key concepts in its theory of change is an impediment for the RPSP.** This is especially true for paradigm shift and country ownership. The RPSP has demonstrated the potential of achieving a paradigm shift in countries that have a developed understanding of paradigm shift. Building clarity on the concept of paradigm shift within the Secretariat and elaborating a country-specific view of the concept are requirements that remain to be achieved for GCF to realize the full potential of the RPSP's key goal. Similarly, the RPSP has enabled GCF to set up policies and processes and to invest in building capacities at the country level. Some essential dimensions of country ownership however are still missing. Country ownership is deemed solely to be government ownership. However, technical capacity, leadership, strategic stakeholder engagement, and a strong climate movement are also elements of country ownership. To this extent, conceptual clarity is missing vis-a-vis the RPSP's role in promoting paradigm shift and country ownership.
352. **Conclusion 6. The RRMF provides a framework for measuring results. The fund has no means to periodically assess the quality of implementation and the final results of the RPSP.** The RRMF was introduced in the middle of the implementation of the 2019 RPSP strategy and provides a framework for measuring the past and current results of the RPSP. The current data available to the Secretariat and the IEU is insufficient for assessing the outcomes, impacts and risk pertaining to the RPSP at portfolio level. GCF also lacks mechanisms for measuring the quality of implementation.
353. **Conclusion 7. There is little harmonization and coherence between the RPSP strategy and the tools for its operationalization.** There has been a time lag between the release of the RPSP strategy and various tools such as the RRMF, readiness handbooks, and the Standard Operating Procedures. The time lag has extended nearly to the end of the current cycle of the RPSP strategy with the release of a revised handbook and Readiness Knowledge Bank (RKB) in 2023. The extended operationalization of the RPSP strategy creates an impression of constant change during the RPSP programme and also requires a retrofitting of RPSP grants. This imposes transaction costs upon countries and DPs.

Progress on RPSP objectives

354. Given the time that has elapsed since the start of the RPSP there is an expectation for the Programme to demonstrate results, and such results are variable across objectives. Results are more prominent in the domain of institutional capacity-building and NAP support while they remain less

prominent in supporting the preparation of strategic frameworks and policies at the country level, and in pipeline development and knowledge management. Conclusions by objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Country capacity

355. The RPSP has been successful in supporting the development of country NDAs/focal points and in aiding their related national systems to integrate climate finance (e.g. their coordination mechanisms). Establishing this country capacity is a foundational achievement, though it requires continued attention in the face of complex national dynamics and contexts. While country ownership over climate action and finance is sought, NDAs/focal points often have been less stable than anticipated, subject as they are to internal political divisions, idiosyncratic institutional arrangements, frequent changes in leadership and staff, heavy workloads and competing demands, any of which can undermine the delivery and sustainability of results.
356. Overall, RPSP engagement for capacity strengthening at a country level has remained concentrated around NDAs/focal points and DPs. Relatively little has been offered to the private sector, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic and other national actors, though this varies with the NDAs/focal points of some countries taking very deliberate actions to expand their stakeholder reach. Also, while the RPSP is meant to advance GCF's gender and social inclusion ambitions, it has only partially been able to do so, given the substantial needs when considered against available in-house resources.
357. The successes and shortcomings in the sustainability of the RPSP's results substantially draw upon the institutional capacity-building undertaken with NDAs, DAEs and other institutions in a country. The high level of focus on institutional capacity development is a recognized comparative advantage of GCF's readiness operations.

Objective 2: Strategies

358. The Programme's second objective has focused on the implementation of ambitious strategies to guide GCF investments, done in a manner that is complementary to the methods of other climate financiers. Important progress has been made in this respect, as evidenced by the increasing presence of CPs in GCF eligible countries along with the elaboration of strategic frameworks, policies, regulations and plans. Determining the best use of readiness resources in a country context remains a "work in progress", however. The needs are great, the resources are finite, and the clamour for readiness support from many quarters is fuelled by a range of motives.
359. The development of strategies for integrating international climate finance and attracting country-level private sector investment remains formative. RPSP successes with the private sector largely have been confined to early-stage exposure and engagement. GCF – and particularly RPSP – processes are widely perceived to be ill-suited to the private sector, and also to intermediary organizations.

Objective 3: Adaptation planning

360. Adaptation planning over the evaluation period has seen much success that can be attributed to a matching of country government motivation, on the one hand, and the presence in the RPSP of an adequately sized resource envelope, on the other. The Programme has produced a strengthening in adaptation planning, governance and institutional coordination, though some challenges are still noted among the more vulnerable countries. As with the RPSP under objective 1, however, the complexity of operating contexts warrants an iterative programming approach that in at least some countries would benefit from more extensive and protracted support than one NAP funding cycle could provide to establish a skills base, embedded practice and results.

361. While adaptation planning has advanced significantly, there is no evidence as yet that readiness activities have led to increases in adaptation financing. The Programme appears short on the mechanisms and means to significantly catalyse private sector participation and meaningful civil society engagement in adaptation.

Objective 4: Pipeline development

362. The Readiness programme has been least effective in realizing its pipeline development objectives, based on current, quite limited available evidence. RPSB grant closure has often preceded the submission of CNs where they have indeed materialized, so tracking this indicator is particularly challenging. The extent of handoff from RPSB-supported CNs to PPF-supported FPs cannot be ascertained with any measure of certainty. Significant barriers persist in tracking the achievement of such outcomes across the portfolio.
363. NDAs/focal points and steering committees have had relatively little oversight in the development of CNs by DPs or DAEs, which has seen heavy reliance on the use of consultants.
364. Challenges in the development of CNs, particularly in meeting quality standards are also noted. The length of RPSB support is perceived as inadequate to span from ideation to approval. Larger GCF processes are also observed to impede the extent to which CNs are approved in a timely manner and moved through the subsequent phase until they reach approval as a funded project. These include an adjudication approach centred on climate rationale, a finite institutional capacity at GCF to process projects for Board approval, and the presence within GCF of drivers that favour the deployment of international AEs, impact investment funds and the packaging of multi-country financing initiatives.

Objective 5: Knowledge sharing and learning

365. The most recent objective of the Programme has focused on knowledge sharing and learning. Even before this objective was formulated, the Programme was supporting knowledge sharing and learning activities through such events as regional and structured dialogues. These have been widely appreciated by a broad range of stakeholders when they take place (noting that the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily curtailed in-person participation). Knowledge sharing is widely perceived as valuable and needed, both by the GCF and a broader range of stakeholders. While there has been very good participation in the range of dialogues organized by the GCF, with RPSB support, the Readiness Guidebook has seen only variable use – despite it providing highly pertinent information – for want of targeted outreach and training on its use.
366. GCF's commitment to knowledge sharing and learning has thus far only modestly translated into practice. The extent to which partnerships have been established and operationalized to foster the development and dissemination of methods, frameworks, and information systems for enhanced climate finance programming has also been limited to date, and more ad hoc than planned. This now appears to be changing with systemic investments being made using readiness resources (e.g. by DPs). Increased attention to this objective is reflected in the recent development of the RKB, which has started to document approaches, successes, and lessons learned across the Programme. The socialization of the RKB however remains a work in progress.

PROGRESS ON RPSB OBJECTIVES

367. Given the time that has elapsed since the start of the RPSB there is an expectation for the Programme to demonstrate results, and such results are variable across objectives. Results are more prominent in the domain of institutional capacity-building and NAP support while they remain less prominent in supporting the preparation of strategic frameworks and policies at the country level, and in pipeline development and knowledge management. Conclusions by objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: Country capacity

368. The RPSP has been successful in supporting the development of country NDAs/focal points and in aiding their related national systems to integrate climate finance (e.g. their coordination mechanisms). Establishing this country capacity is a foundational achievement, though it requires continued attention in the face of complex national dynamics and contexts. While country ownership over climate action and finance is sought, NDAs/focal points often have been less stable than anticipated, subject as they are to internal political divisions, idiosyncratic institutional arrangements, frequent changes in leadership and staff, heavy workloads and competing demands, any of which can undermine the delivery and sustainability of results.
369. Overall, RPSP engagement for capacity strengthening at a country level has remained concentrated around NDAs/focal points and DPs. Relatively little has been offered to the private sector, CSOs, NGOs, academic and other national actors, though this varies with the NDAs/focal points of some countries taking very deliberate actions to expand their stakeholder reach. Also, while the RPSP is meant to advance GCF's gender and social inclusion ambitions, it has only partially been able to do so, given the substantial needs when considered against available in-house resources.
370. The successes and shortcomings in the sustainability of the RPSP's results substantially draw upon the institutional capacity-building undertaken with NDAs, DAEs and other institutions in a country. The high level of focus on institutional capacity development is a recognized comparative advantage of GCF's readiness operations.

Objective 2: Strategies

371. The Programme's second objective has focused on the implementation of ambitious strategies to guide GCF investments, done in a manner that is complementary to the methods of other climate financiers. Important progress has been made in this respect, as evidenced by the increasing presence of CPs in GCF eligible countries along with the elaboration of strategic frameworks, policies, regulations and plans. Determining the best use of readiness resources in a country context remains a "work in progress", however. The needs are great, the resources are finite, and the clamour for readiness support from many quarters is fuelled by a range of motives.
372. The development of strategies for integrating international climate finance and attracting country-level private sector investment remains formative. RPSP successes with the private sector largely have been confined to early-stage exposure and engagement. GCF – and particularly RPSP – processes are widely perceived to be ill-suited to the private sector, and also to intermediary organizations.

Objective 3: Adaptation planning

373. Adaptation planning over the evaluation period has seen much success that can be attributed to a matching of country government motivation, on the one hand, and the presence in the RPSP of an adequately sized resource envelope, on the other. The Programme has produced a strengthening in adaptation planning, governance and institutional coordination, though some challenges are still noted among the more vulnerable countries. As with the RPSP under objective 1, however, the complexity of operating contexts warrants an iterative programming approach that in at least some countries would benefit from more extensive and protracted support than one NAP funding cycle could provide to establish a skills base, embedded practice and results.
374. While adaptation planning has advanced significantly, there is no evidence as yet that readiness activities have led to increases in adaptation financing. The Programme appears short on the mechanisms and means to significantly catalyse private sector participation and meaningful civil society engagement in adaptation.

Objective 4: Pipeline development

375. The Readiness programme has been least effective in realizing its pipeline development objectives, based on current, quite limited available evidence. RPSP grant closure has often preceded the submission of CNs where they have indeed materialized, so tracking this indicator is particularly challenging. The extent of handoff from RPSP-supported CNs to PPF-supported FPs cannot be ascertained with any measure of certainty. Significant barriers persist in tracking the achievement of such outcomes across the portfolio.
376. NDAs/focal points and steering committees have had relatively little oversight in the development of CNs by DPs or DAEs, which has seen heavy reliance on the use of consultants.
377. Challenges in the development of CNs, particularly in meeting quality standards are also noted. The length of RPSP support is perceived as inadequate to span from ideation to approval. Larger GCF processes are also observed to impede the extent to which CNs are approved in a timely manner and moved through the subsequent phase until they reach approval as a funded project. These include an adjudication approach centred on climate rationale, a finite institutional capacity at GCF to process projects for Board approval, and the presence within GCF of drivers that favour the deployment of international AEs, impact investment funds and the packaging of multi-country financing initiatives.

Objective 5: Knowledge sharing and learning

378. The most recent objective of the Programme has focused on knowledge sharing and learning. Even before this objective was formulated, the Programme was supporting knowledge sharing and learning activities through such events as regional and structured dialogues. These have been widely appreciated by a broad range of stakeholders when they take place (noting that the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily curtailed in-person participation). Knowledge sharing is widely perceived as valuable and needed, both by the GCF and a broader range of stakeholders. While there has been very good participation in the range of dialogues organized by the GCF, with RPSP support, the Readiness Guidebook has seen only variable use – despite it providing highly pertinent information – for want of targeted outreach and training on its use.
379. GCF's commitment to knowledge sharing and learning has thus far only modestly translated into practice. The extent to which partnerships have been established and operationalized to foster the development and dissemination of methods, frameworks, and information systems for enhanced climate finance programming has also been limited to date, and more ad hoc than planned. This now appears to be changing with systemic investments being made using readiness resources (e.g. by DPs). Increased attention to this objective is reflected in the recent development of the RKB, which has started to document approaches, successes, and lessons learned across the Programme. The socialization of the RKB however remains a work in progress.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

380. This evaluation proposes a set of seven high-level recommendations and associated explanatory details for each. Taken as a whole, these recommendations speak to the strategic and operational issues discussed, intent on informing the next phase of the RPSP of the GCF. Implementing these recommendations would result in a more strategic, impactful, larger and more streamlined Programme, adapted to the challenges, priorities and capacities of GCF-eligible countries, stakeholders and recipients. These recommendations acknowledge and build upon a Programme that has improved over the past 5 years. They do not aim to bring only minor adjustments to the

Programme, but to build ambitiously on its increasingly solid foundations, to recognize and catalyse its greater potential.

381. **Recommendation 1. The GCF should sharpen its strategic intent and orientation for the RPSP at corporate level. The GCF should rationalize its capacity to resource the Readiness programme.**

Recommendation 1.1. The GCF should clarify the value proposition and business case of its Readiness programme as one of its central offerings. Its role needs to be anchored within the strategic directions and modalities of the Fund overall (including the PPF, PSF, accreditation and others). GCF needs to be much clearer on what the Programme is trying to achieve for the Fund, for climate finance and for countries needing climate finance to address urgent climate change circumstances. It bears revisiting the following questions in planning forward: “Readiness for what? Readiness for whom? Readiness by when?”. The new strategy should clarify the value proposition and business case of the RPSP. Greater strategic clarity will help focus the actions of actors both internal and external to the GCF, ensuring that knowledge is purposefully shared across divisions and readily available to those who need it.

Recommendation 1.2. To effectively mobilize its strategic intent for the Readiness programme, the GCF should provide for formal, “strategic” programme leadership. Within the GCF, the fact that the Programme straddles multiple divisions – and particularly the DCP and DPM that are themselves responsive to two distinct stakeholder groups (i.e. countries and their CPs on the one hand, and DPs on the other) – has contributed to the ambiguity regarding programme purpose and priorities; an ambiguity which demands attention. The RPSP needs championship at a senior management level to make the most of its cross-cutting service orientation, and to provide a strategic perspective on the various divisional inputs.

Recommendation 1.3. While clarifying its value proposition in the new RPSP strategy, the GCF should rationalize its capacity to resource the Readiness programme. The experience of country stakeholders and GCF Secretariat staff engaged with the RPSP is that demands on the Programme exceed the resources available at the Secretariat to address them in a timely way. This manifests most obviously in delays across the grant cycle including for co-development, revision and approval, legal agreement, disbursement, and grant closure.

382. Layered on this experience, felt at an administrative level, is the experience of indeterminacy in addressing the larger GCF decision-making processes associated with the accreditation and project development pipelines. This manifests for country stakeholders in long waits, multiple iterations and requests that, from a country standpoint, often seem unreasonable.

Underpinning this picture of a programme hampered by resource constraints is a deeper calibration issue. In the absence of a strong, unified strategic vision for readiness, on the one hand, and the relative paucity of data to show outcome-based value-for-money for readiness investments to date, on the other, there is an insufficient basis to match the Programme’s purpose, demand, programming and results with required resources and capacities. Taking on the task of rationalizing resources to programming, requires first and foremost attention to sharpening the strategic intent of the Readiness programme. It also requires that GCF utilize its RRMF and any future mechanisms to understand how best to match resources for the readiness impacts sought.

383. **Recommendation 2. The RPSP should adopt a country-centred approach to its operations.**

With the RPSP, as with all GCF programmatic offerings, continued tension persists between the needs of countries, the project modality of DPs (and AEs), and the aspirations for the impact of the GCF itself. Situated amidst the tensions of this tripartite relationship, country needs and thus country

readiness have remained an underdeveloped aspect of the Programme. This has been detrimental to country ownership.

Recommendation 2.1. The GCF should adopt a country-centred approach, to:

- Develop a country-specific approach to understanding the paradigm shift to be facilitated by the RPSP.
- Integrate country context into RPSP operations.
- Move away from a grant-by-grant and DP-centric view of readiness to a country-level view of readiness.
- Get a better understanding of country-level climate finance needs and readiness needs.

The GCF should consider using existing forums (such as regional structural dialogues) to deliver this for the short and medium term, and where not possible, develop alternative modes of developing these approaches.

Recommendation 2.2. The GCF should update the guidance and reinforce support to countries on key considerations for the set-up and operation of country coordination mechanisms. While some countries have managed to do very well in this respect, others would welcome additional guidance and soft parameters for doing so. Given the historical role of the RPSP in establishing country coordination mechanisms and NDAs, GCF should support and enable lesson learning for: considerations for location within government administrations; NDA leadership, composition, and capacity requirements; mechanisms for stakeholder participation; and more. Guidance could further be complemented by peer-to-peer, South-South learning processes, and through structured or regional dialogue processes. Doing so would address some of the challenges, costs and investments involved in the current approach, bringing greater efficiencies for those who seek them.

Recommendation 2.3. In re-orienting the RPSP, GCF should consider the interplay of objectives and the differentiated country needs. The complexities inherent in managing multiple stakeholder groups with distinct and often competing interests are enormous. Overall, the RPSP must be understood as a strategic “enabler” that does not operate in a linear fashion (i.e. sequencing from an original focus on objectives 1 towards 2 and then later on objectives 3 and 4, with 5 at the end). It should be re-imagined as a strategic, flexible and dynamic instrument that is responsive to country needs. Indeed, in an enabling role, it may be more effective in certain instances to move beyond its traditional pipeline development role, to direct readiness resources towards funded projects (e.g. as a way to prepare the terrain for scaling up components of funded projects) and, in so doing, be drawn back into new institutional capacity-building roles to manage forward movement in the CP.

384. **Recommendation 3. In socializing the RPSP, the GCF should be more intentional and targeted in communicating programmatic offerings and enabling learning.**

Country-level stakeholders do not share an adequate baseline understanding of readiness and its programmatic offerings. The addition of objective 5 on knowledge and learning has been welcome and is expected to generate much-valued information that can be acted upon. Nevertheless, this evaluation period found that this objective has received the least attention among all readiness objectives, and the uptake of tools has been limited.

The RPSP Guidebook, while replete with very valuable information (and now available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic) needs to be complemented with learning-oriented sessions about how to use it effectively. And, while the multi-year grant modality has been available for many years, additional efforts need to be made to ensure widespread NDA and DAE awareness of its existence, its merits, and the means to use it. The GCF should ensure that accredited DAEs and DAEs at stage

I or II of accreditation are aware of the RPSP support for which they are eligible. Further, it is not widely known that RPSP-funded capacity support from consultants could be offered for CNs destined for other climate financiers. Private sector actors at the country level have widely indicated they lack information and awareness on how to engage with and benefit from the Readiness programme, and by extension the GCF more broadly.

Recommendation 3.1. The GCF should curate the value proposition of the RPSP to different categories of stakeholders and consider tailoring the communication of such offerings through dedicated channels and forums. The GCF should better communicate the RPSP's specialized offerings for different types of stakeholders. To that end, the GCF needs to increase the effectiveness of current communication and make efforts to find more effective means. Increasing effectiveness may require adapting and tailoring current practices (including frequency and sequence of webinars, visits, and structured dialogues), while the latter may require finding newer means of communication.

Recommendation 3.2. The GCF should continue integrating and operationalizing tools for knowledge management such as the RKB, to link knowledge to investment opportunities in locally relevant ways. The newly created RKB should contribute to the extent that the GCF is successful in mobilizing NDA, DP and GCF Secretariat utilization.

385. **Recommendation 4. The GCF should invest in solidifying the newly created RRMF as a learning and accountability tool.**

The newly established RRMF fills a large void in establishing a basis to understand the RPSP's contribution to GCF's mandate. For the first time, a complete theory of change – linking actions to results with a disciplined referencing to results nomenclature – serves as a singular point of reference for all Readiness grants. Its accompanying measurement framework makes possible the aggregation of individual project achievements. However, certain improvements are required to build upon the RRMF and close the results measurement loop.

Recommendation 4.1. The GCF should develop additional mechanisms to enable periodic elaboration and measurement of outcome and impact-level results of the RPSP at the portfolio level. Such mechanisms should have special considerations for data quality and credibility. These mechanisms should faithfully represent GCF's strategic intent for the RPSP and provide useful data externally and internally to support communications and learning, and service programme accountability needs.

Recommendation 4.2. The GCF should also develop mechanisms to enable rigorous, periodic assessment of the quality of RPSP grant implementation. Such mechanisms will also enable GCF to better identify and manage emerging RPSP portfolio risks. This would also address the serious challenge of lack of data for the accountability mechanisms of the GCF, to assure against the risks pertaining to RPSP grants.

386. **Recommendation 5. GCF should operationalize the new RPSP strategy in a time-bound and timely manner.**

Under the current RPSP strategy, the GCF did not have the benefit of referring to an overarching strategic plan. Similarly, GCF did not have the suite of tools, frameworks and mechanisms to fully operationalize the strategy in a time-bound and timely manner. With the prospective introduction of the new RPSP strategy, GCF has the opportunity to sequence and align tools, modalities and mechanisms.

Recommendation 5.1. The GCF should introduce the tools, frameworks, and Standard Operating Procedures for operationalizing the new RPSP strategy in a time-bound and timely

manner. This will ensure internal and external stakeholders are able to understand, internalize and operationalize the priorities and modalities set by the strategy and integrate the same into individual RPSP proposals and the portfolio at large. It will also minimize the perception held by numerous stakeholders of constant change in the Readiness programme and minimize the need to retrofit existing grants.

387. **Recommendation 6. With a view to enhance the sustainability of RPSP results, the GCF should reach diverse actors and cultivate national climate finance ecosystems.**

Recommendation 6.1. To favour an optimized and sustained impact of the Programme, particularly at country level, the RPSP should continue to invest in strengthening the capacities of NDAs and (aspiring/nominated) DAEs. This will include yet greater attention paid to contextual challenges, notably for the most vulnerable among GCF eligible countries. To assist this, support should be encouraged for the development of national policies, strategies, plans and programmes to guide GCF investments, and in complementarity with other climate finance sources.

Recommendation 6.2. The Programme should be understood as playing an enabling role in building national climate finance ecosystems. The RPSP should further its orientation towards medium-term outcomes over short-term gains. In addition to supporting NDAs and DAEs, the Programme should more intentionally support the private sector, civil society and academia in particular, intent on harnessing their localized insight and expertise for climate action. Further, GCF should provide guidance on climate finance partnerships across the ecosystem and provide accessible financing through the Readiness programme for such partnership development and consolidation. Coordination at national level through multi-stakeholder and multisectoral approaches may enhance the sustainability of RPSP results.

388. **Recommendation 7. The GCF should increase the overall accessibility and cost-effectiveness of the RPSP, particularly for vulnerable countries, by adjusting its strategic orientation, processes and mechanisms.**

Engaging in the RPSP has been a challenging prospect for some vulnerable countries. Adjustments to some RPSP processes and mechanisms would greatly facilitate improved accessibility and cost-effectiveness.

Recommendation 7.1. The GCF should orient the new RPSP strategy to the needs of vulnerable countries. This would allow the GCF to promote greater coverage and access for these countries. It will also provide for strategic guidance from which RPSP processes and mechanisms suited to vulnerable countries can be developed.

Recommendation 7.2. The GCF should explore the possibility of creating RPSP requirements and processes that are adapted to vulnerable countries, where capacity challenges in developing Readiness proposals and implementing grants hinder the GCF's readiness ambitions in these countries. These adaptations could be in the processes pertaining to RPSP grant review and approval as well as greater flexibility in implementation depending on the conditions on the ground (e.g. no-cost extensions and cost reallocations).

ANNEXES

Annex 1. ADDITIONAL SUPPORTIVE DATA

Chapter 2. Mainstreaming of 2018 RPSP evaluation

Table A - 1. Progress towards recommendations from 2018 RPSP evaluation

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
1A. Capacity-building, outreach and support to countries			
Outreach to countries should be improved, by translating the Readiness Guidebook and associate templates at least into French and Spanish, regularly updating it (in all languages) and enabling opportunities for timely and continuous learning about changes to the Programme. Any such changes should be communicated to all stakeholders concerned.	<p><u>2021:</u></p> <p>Outreach and translation (French, Spanish, and Arabic) of 2020 Readiness Guidebook.</p> <p>In 2021, the Secretariat held webinars targeting country NDAs and LDCs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-hosted a “Webinar on the CPDAE Readiness proposal in April 2021” to introduce CPDAE and the Readiness proposal to “NDAs of the countries that have entities members of CPDAE”. • Held an outreach webinar for LDCs who had not yet submitted an adaptation planning proposal. • Hosted a “technical programming dialogue” with the Caribbean region, bringing together multiple stakeholders (Green Climate Fund, 2022d, pp. 36). • “Regular conference calls with NDAs regarding readiness proposals” (Green Climate Fund, 2022d, pp. 35) <p><u>2023:</u></p> <p>Outreach for the Readiness Guidebook was done in April 2023, in the form of webinars conducted in English and translated into French and Spanish. However, as noted in Chapter 10, country partners still report being unaware of the Readiness Guidebook.</p> <p>As of August 2023, the GCF Readiness Guidebook has been published in Spanish, French, and Arabic.</p> <p>Further plans include hosting “more in-person structured programming dialogues, workshops and training particularly on the updated Readiness Guidebook and policies including SAP, project-specific accreditation approach, integrated results management framework DAE new</p>	High	High

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
	funding window, readiness results management framework application and other training as needed” (Green Climate Fund, 2022d, pp. 7).		
Opportunities for peer learning should be encouraged. Peer-to-peer learning among countries and DAEs should be privileged more, in structured dialogues and also via sub-regional meetings.	<p><u>2021:</u></p> <p>“CDPAE supported by Readiness funding DP workshop held in Bangkok (November 2019)</p> <p>Series of webinars on the updated Readiness programme (April 2020)” (Green Climate Fund, 2020b, pp. 35)</p> <p>Reference to the Secretariat facilitating learning and promoting best practices for preparing Readiness requests among NDAs and DPs (Green Climate Fund, 2020b, pp. 10)</p> <p>Two virtual regional dialogues in the Caribbean and Pacific (2021)</p> <p>Webinars on “Readiness programme COVID-19 response grants” (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 25).</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic reportedly slowed progress on structured dialogues and regional workshops (2020) (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 25).</p> <p><u>2023:</u></p> <p>A Learning Plan is under development which takes into consideration feedback from DPs and NDAs for implementation of Readiness programme objectives (Independent Evaluation Unit, 2023c).</p>	Medium	Medium
<p><u>Post accreditation support and capacity strengthening:</u></p> <p>Provision should be made for strengthening the capacities of NDA/focal points and offering post- accreditation support for DAEs, in particular for the preparation of CNs with clear climate rationales.</p>	<p><u>2021:</u> Support for NDA and DAE CP development, and creation of expert roster for RPSP proposal development (DAEs) and CNs (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 26).</p> <p><u>2023:</u> As discussed in Chapter 5, NDA strengthening activities have been planned in at least one-third (246/602) of RPSP non-NAP grants. However, there remain barriers to the sustainability of capacity-building.</p> <p>Challenges remain in securing accreditation for DAEs, with only 20 readiness-recipient DAEs having secured accreditation by B.36. It is therefore early to assess post-accreditation support for DAEs.</p> <p>The GCF adopted an accreditation strategy at B.34/19 (October 2022) – on ‘improving guidance on the role of AEs and the accreditation process,’ the strategy states that GCF will “proactively engage</p>	Medium	High

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
	<p>with and incentivize NDAs to ensure quality AE nominations are made by NDAs, and will support their capacity to undertake this role” (Green Climate Fund, 2022c, pp. 3). Strengthening capacities for re-accreditation is also noted, as is the need to invest in the capacities of nominated and accredited DAEs through the RPSP – e.g., through “the creation of a dedicated DAE window” in the RPSP (Green Climate Fund, 2022c, pp. 3).</p>		
<p><u>Capacity building:</u> Countries should be provided with financial support plus advisory services (i.e. capacity-building and TA) for meeting their needs and priorities; More long- term national consultants should be funded to provide support to weak NDA/focal points in LDCs, SIDS and in Africa; greater capacity-building support should be provided on gender and ESS to ensure that countries are able to develop RPSP and FPs in line with the gender, ESS and indigenous peoples policies of the GCF. With respect to gender, a concerted effort should be made in Africa.</p>	<p><u>2021:</u> This is noted to be an ongoing process, where readiness grants have been used by “several countries in the LDCs and SIDS” to engage long-term consultants/support. These consultants are in NDA or national DAE offices (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 27). <u>2023:</u> <u>Financial support and advisory services:</u> As discussed in Chapter 5, most (483/705 approved requests) RPSP grants have included capacity-building activities and 81 per cent of survey respondents identified capacity-building for finance coordination as an area where the RPSP has made significant achievements. <u>Long-term national consultants:</u> Some indication of an over-reliance on international consultants and difficulty finding national consultants with the right skill set (see Chapter 7). A disconnect is identified between the Readiness Guidebook (which states a preference for DPs to select national consultants) and in-country stakeholder perceptions that they are meant to look for international consultants. In Panama, a national consultant is funded by the RPSP to manage a regional e-mobility project. <u>Capacity-building support on gender and ESS:</u> The gender action plan identifies the RPSP as the budget source (with the GCF administration) for plan implementation (see Chapter 6) and the means through which NDAs and focal points can obtain GCF support to meet the requirements of the gender policy. Support is provided by an inclusion specialist team within the OSI, which engages with the RPSP on NAP activities as a “strategic entry point” for social inclusion (see Chapter 6). There is some indication of human capacity constraints within the GCF to deliver on</p>	Medium	Medium

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
	<p>its gender equality and social inclusion expectations for the RPSP.</p> <p>The 2022–2023 workplan and budget notes that the Secretariat is developing training videos for readiness and adaptation planning proposal development, with a series on “gender mainstreaming in adaptation planning” expected in July 2022 (Green Climate Fund, 2022d, pp. 7). A training course ‘Mainstreaming Gender in National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)’ is available on the GCF website.</p> <p><u>Concerted effort on gender in Africa:</u> Not identified.</p>		
1B. Country Programmes and in- country support			
<p><u>Country programmes:</u> Clear guidelines for CPs should be provided, with a focus on developing clear priorities and concrete CNs, taking into account fully the policies of the GCF regarding gender, ESS and indigenous peoples, and strengthening climate rationales, while articulating the overall outcomes of CPs, their value-added and managing of expectations.</p>	<p><u>2021:</u> Preparation and translation (French and Spanish) of CP guidance, with regional webinars (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 27). USP refocused country programming in a way that favours streamlining of processes (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 28). <u>2023:</u> Work programme and budget 2022–2023 notes that the Secretariat “will work through consulting firms to provide tailored TA and develop new partnerships with other institutions to support the programming processes with a focus on translating the NDCs, LTS and country programmes into investment pipelines, as well as to prioritize continued capturing of knowledge and lessons learned to further inform origination and learning by doing” (Green Climate Fund, 2022d, pp. 7).</p>	Substantial	Substantial
<p><u>DAEs and country ownership:</u> Criteria should be developed to determine if some countries need several DAEs to pursue their objectives. If so, pre-accreditation support should be made available to all potential candidates recommended by NDA/focal points.</p>	<p><u>2021:</u> Enhanced institutional support to DAEs pre- and post-accreditation (Green Climate Fund, 2019a, pp. 3). DAE action plan presented to Board (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 28). OPM developing “procedural guidance and templates on handling Readiness grant implementation challenges” (to be included in updated Readiness Guidebook) (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 29). <u>2023:</u> Not identified.</p>	Low	Low
<p><u>Coordination and firewalls to</u></p>	<p><u>2021:</u></p>	Medium	Medium

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
<p><u>prevent conflicts of interest:</u> Within countries, specific expectations and requirements for intragovernmental coordination and stakeholder consultations should be formulated, similar to the Country Coordination Mechanism of the Global Fund.</p>	<p>Existence of Sustainability Guidance Note, which speaks to stakeholder engagement (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 29).</p> <p>No stakeholder engagement policy (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 29).</p> <p><u>2023:</u> The 2023 Guidebook references the Revised Environmental and Social Policy (2021) and the GCF Sustainability Guidance note as speaking to stakeholder engagement (Green Climate Fund, 2023b, pp. 6).</p>		
<p>1C. Secretariat level process changes</p>			
<p>Post-approval flexibility: Greater flexibility should be allowed for project-level adjustments after approval, in response to changing conditions and circumstances on the ground.</p>	<p><u>2021:</u> Improving adaptive management has been identified as a priority – in the 2020–2021 work programme and budget [Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme – work programme and budget 2020–2021] plans to develop “standardized policies on issues such as no-cost extension, timing of reporting, cancellation, restructuring, change of DP during implementation, refunding GCF after completion, among others” in 2020 are noted, as well as the development of templates for communicating these changes (Green Climate Fund, 2020b, pp. 10).</p> <p>The 2020 publication of a Letter of Request for Change of Approved Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme Proposal template is noted.</p> <p>Implementation guidance developed for addressing COVID-19 related challenges in implementation; extension for grants allowed (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 30).</p> <p><u>2023:</u> Flexibility is noted for spending allocations within longer time frames (Chapter 4). Reports among NDAs and DPs of a lack of flexibility in implementation from the GCF, in ways that do not align with adaptive management principles – most commonly noted are administrative delays regarding approvals for no-cost extensions and cost reallocations (Chapter 10).</p>	Substantial	Substantial
<p><u>Roles and responsibilities:</u> The roles and responsibilities of RAs, associate professionals, country dialogue specialists and other related staff and consultants should be articulated, developing</p>	<p><u>2021:</u> Job descriptions and roles clarified and revised (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 30).</p> <p><u>2023:</u> The Readiness Guidebook 2023 outlines the roles and responsibilities for primary grant stakeholders (Green</p>	Substantial	Substantial

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
synergies between them and making best use of expanded regional resources. In an effort to ensure a more efficient coordination and complementarity of different Secretariat divisions and units, the roles and responsibilities of each with respect to the RPSP (and its various component priorities) require greater definition.	Climate Fund, 2023b, pp. 37–39).		
SOPs for the Readiness programme need to be more clearly articulated (and in some cases developed), both with respect to the readiness value chain within the Secretariat (i.e. how different entities work together) and in terms of the relationship between the Secretariat, NDA/focal points, AEs, DAEs, DPs and others (e.g. on expected turnaround times).	<u>2021</u> : Readiness Guidebook (2020) and SOPs prepared, but to be published in subsequent Guidebook (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 31). <u>2023</u> : Readiness programme SOPs have been updated with the aim to increase efficiency and “simplify internal processes” throughout the Readiness grant cycle (Green Climate Fund, 2023b, pp. ix). These were not released at the time of writing the evaluation report.	Substantial	Substantial
Results-oriented planning and reporting for RPSP activities should be introduced and implemented, including also periodic evaluations.	<u>2021</u> : RRMF under development. <u>2023</u> : RRMF for standardized tracking of readiness results, with accompanying training webinar was endorsed in 2022.	Low	Substantial
The RPSP should have a database that is open to countries who can then view the status of their applications and grants. The information should be provided in a transparent and an inter-operable way and countries should be able to check status. The Secretariat should ensure that any further database development is harmonized, to avoid duplication, redundancy and inconsistencies.	<u>2021</u> : There is an existing database (Fluxx), but no open database as specified in the recommendation (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 32). <u>2023</u> : The RKB provides a clear view of Readiness proposal stages with links to resources including a database of approved Readiness proposals, framework agreements, and grant agreements.	Not rated	Low
2. Build a vision and specific targets for the RPSP and manage for results			
Define vision: What does it mean for a country to be “ready” (i.e. to be ready to access GCF funding for a project, for accessing climate finance more broadly, for addressing climate change within countries)? This requires developing a clear	<u>2021</u> : RPSP Strategy 2019–2021 developed and adopted. The 2020 Readiness Guidebook includes a section on “Defining Readiness Support Needs,” which provides guiding questions to assess country needs (Green Climate Fund, 2020a). ToC conceptualized. <u>2023</u> : An evolved RPSP Strategy is under development for 2024–2027. New	High	High

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
vision and defining a niche for the RPSP; define strategy and targets: When is a country “ready”? This requires the development of readiness targets.	features of the programme have been integrated into an updated Readiness Guidebook (2023).		
Measure and manage: How “ready” are countries, at any given time? This requires progress and results indicators. It is premature and beyond the scope of this evaluation to provide the details of such a strategy for the RPSP. Nonetheless, the evaluation has identified several choices that the Secretariat could consider.	<u>2021</u> : RRMF under development. ToC conceptualized. <u>2023</u> : RRMF finalized and released.	Low	Medium
Establish complementarity and coherence with unfunded elements of investment plans under the CIFs (and potential others), in particular through the PPF and NAP support windows, and report on this as well.	<u>2021</u> : The Readiness programme application template has, since 2019, included a request for information on coherence and complementarity (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 33). <u>2023</u> : The April 2023 Readiness and preparatory support proposal template has a section on “Synergies and Complementarity” with other GCF Readiness grants as well as past and ongoing initiatives (with GCF and/or other development partners) relevant to the problem being addressed (Green Climate Fund, 2023c).	Medium	Medium
Identify and remove barriers to crowding-in private sector investments, while defining and supporting the creation of conducive policies for private sector participation.	<u>2021</u> : RPSP support not used in this context. While there is a strategy in place “for enabling private sector participation and investment in low-emissions development,” the benefit to NDAs is not clear (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 34). Relevant outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1.3 “Relevant country stakeholders (which may include executing entities, civil society organizations and private sector) have established adequate capacity, systems and networks to support the planning, programming and implementation of GCF-funded activities” (Green Climate Fund, 2020a, pp. 40). • Outcome 2.4 “Strategies for transforming and attracting private sector investment for low emissions and resilience developed and being 	Low	Low

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
	<p>used” (Green Climate Fund, 2020a, pp. 40).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 3.3 “Private sector engagement in adaptation catalysed” (Green Climate Fund, 2020a, pp. 41). <p><u>2023</u>: An evolved RPSP Strategy is under development for 2024–2027.</p>		
Develop comprehensive strategies to catalyse investments to deploy and scale-up prioritized climate technology solutions.	<p><u>2021</u>: “...no strategy for catalysing investment nor approach to technology under GCF’s readiness support” (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 34).</p> <p><u>2023</u>: An evolved RPSP Strategy is under development for 2024–2027.</p>	Low	Low
Enable more flexible cooperation with the private sector, rooted in a strategy for engaging with the private sector that is based in greater alignment with its sectoral practices.	<p><u>2021</u>: RPSP support not used in this context. While there is a strategy in place “for enabling private sector participation and investment in low-emissions development,” the benefit to NDAs is not clear (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 34).</p> <p>Outcomes 1.3, 2.4, and 3.3 relevant to private sector engagement.</p> <p><u>2023</u>: An evolved RPSP Strategy is under development for 2024–2027.</p>	Low	Low
Engage with additional parts of governments (e.g. ministries of agriculture, forestry, and meteorology departments).	<p><u>2021</u>: Human and technical capacity-building through the RPSP has involved different stakeholder groups. Extent to which is has been effectively operationalized and sustainability still a question (Green Climate Fund, 2021c, pp. 35).</p> <p><u>2023</u>: There is a continued focus on capacity development through objective 1, with indications of improved capacity and some remaining questions around sustainability.</p>	Medium	Medium
3. Discontinue business-as-usual and develop a specific strategy for RPSP v2.0			
Discontinue business-as-usual and develop a specific strategy for RPSP v2.0. This set of recommendations examines two scenarios for the future development of the RPSP. These scenarios are understood to be general, guiding frameworks, which if agreed upon, would then require more targeted thinking. They recognize that the pace of RPSP progress is contextually dependent, based on overall vulnerability; prior readiness	<p><u>2021</u>: RPSP Strategy 2019–2021 developed and adopted.</p> <p><u>2023</u>: RPSP Strategy 2024–2027 under development.</p>	High	High

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS MADE	IEU RATING (2021)*	REVISED RATING (2023)
support; institutional capacity.			
Source:	Green Climate Fund (2021c).		
Note:	* The 2021 “Management action report on the independent evaluation of the GCF’s Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme” provided comments and a rating for adoption of recommendations from the 2018 RPSP evaluation.		

Chapter 5. Effectiveness

The tables below provide an overview of the achievement rate for each output, organized by RPSP objective.

Table A - 2. Objective 1: Achievement rate by output

OUTCOME	OUTPUT STATEMENT	PLANNED	REALIZED	ACHIEVEMENT RATE AT COMPLETION
Outcome 1.1	1.1.1. NDA or FP staff trained in areas relevant to the GCF objectives and oversight of GCF activities.	55	51 (+2)	93%
	1.1.2. NDA mechanisms established or strengthened for inter-institutional coordination, including engagement with the GCF and other climate funds.	80	71	89%
	1.1.3. Decision-making process defined and operationalized at NDA level for NOLs and consideration/facilitation of climate change projects.	98	88	90%
Outcome 1.2	1.2.1. Candidate entities identified and nominated for direct access.	50	39	78%
	1.2.2. Direct access applicants supported with training, capacity development, or improved systems to close gaps.	34	28 (+2)	82%
	1.2.3. Accredited DAEs’ institutional capacities strengthened to improve accreditation status and effectively implement GCF-funded activities.	13	12	92%
Outcome 1.3	1.3.1. Relevant stakeholders engaged and trained to support planning, programming and implementation of GCF-funded activities.	110	105 (+1)	95%
	1.3.2. Stakeholder engagement mechanisms established to support planning, programming and implementation of GCF-funded activities.	56	48 (+2)	85%
	1.3.3. Strengthened information-sharing.	37	34 (+1)	92%

Source: GCF RRMF data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Notes: Only RPSP grants having submitted a CR were considered here.

Additional projects identified in parenthesis in the realized columns are projects that report the output being realized, even though the output was not initially planned. These RPSP grants were not considered in the calculation of the achievement rate itself.

Table A - 3. Objective 2: Achievement rate by output

OUTCOME	OUTPUT STATEMENT	PLANNED	REALIZED	ACHIEVEMENT RATE AT COMPLETION
Outcome 2.1	2.1.1. CPs endorsed by GCF recipient country processes.	111	89	80%
Outcome 2.2	2.2.1. Readiness needs assessment to develop an action plan with strategies for readiness support.	1	1	100%
	2.2.2. Long-term, Low-Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDs / LTS) developed.	0	0	N/A
	2.2.3. NDC updated or revised and/or financing strategy or related policies developed.	6	3	50%
	2.2.4. MRV systems developed and operational for tracking internal and external climate finance flows.	43	29	67%
	2.2.5. Studies, action plans, modelling efforts and other research efforts conducted/developed.	26	24 (+1)	92%
	2.2.6. Sectoral strategic frameworks or associated plans developed.	13	12 (+1)	92%
	2.2.7. Appropriate climate technologies/solutions identified and prioritized.	6	6	100%
Outcome 2.3	2.3.1. Entity work programmes aligned to CPs developed and submitted to GCF.	14	10	71%
Outcome 2.4	2.4.1. New business models incubated and/or innovative financial mechanisms and schemes created to increase low-emission and climate-resilient investment.	5	5	100%
	2.4.2. Strategies, road maps, studies and policy incentives completed to foster private financing for CP implementation and/or low-emissions climate-resilient development.	49	44 (+1)	90%

Source: GCF RRMF data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Notes: Only RPSP grants having submitted a CR were considered here.

Additional projects identified in parenthesis in the realized columns are projects that report the output being realized, even though the output was not initially planned. These RPSP grants were not considered in the calculation of the achievement rate itself.

Table A - 4. Objective 3: Achievement rate by output

OUTCOME	OUTPUT STATEMENT	PLANNED	REALIZED	ACHIEVEMENT RATE AT COMPLETION
Outcome 3.1	3.1.1. National, sub-national and/or sectoral adaptation plans developed or updated.	9	9	100%
	3.1.2. Adaptation policy and/or regulations developed or strengthened for integrating adaptation actions/measures in sectoral, subnational and national development strategies and plans.	6	5	83%
	3.1.3. Inter and intra-institutional coordination and decision-making mechanisms established or strengthened.	10	9	90%

OUTCOME	OUTPUT STATEMENT	PLANNED	REALIZED	ACHIEVEMENT RATE AT COMPLETION
	3.1.4. Stakeholder engagement frameworks, agreements and awareness-raising conducted or strengthened.	4	4	100%
Outcome 3.2	3.2.1. Adaptation impact monitoring, evaluation and learning systems established or strengthened for strategic planning and investment.	7	6	86%
	3.2.2. Studies on climate vulnerability, and identification of adaptation solutions conducted (and used) for strengthening adaptation investment.	10	9	90%
Outcome 3.3	3.3.1. Strategies, policies, and incentives developed to foster private investment in adaptation solutions.	6	5	83%
	3.3.2. Assessments and knowledge products to inform the private sector on adaptation options and GCF finance developed.	2	2 (+1)	100%
	3.3.3. Capacity-building provided to the private sector on adaptation options.	5	3	60%
Outcome 3.4	3.4.1. Mechanisms established to prioritize adaptation options based on objective criteria.	8	7	88%
	3.4.2. Number of CNs and/or FPs developed for adaptation priority actions.	7	4	57%
	3.4.3. National systems developed for tracking adaptation national and international finance flows.	4	4	100%

Source: GCF RRMF data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Notes: Only RPSP grants having submitted a CR were considered here. Additional projects identified in parenthesis in the realized columns are projects that report the output being realized, even though the output was not initially planned. These RPSP grants were not considered in the calculation of the achievement rate itself.

Table A - 5. Objective 4: Achievement rate by output

OUTCOME	OUTPUT STATEMENT	PLANNED (# PROJECTS)	REALIZED (# PROJECTS)	ACHIEVEMENT RATE AT COMPLETION
Outcome 4.1	4.1.1. Development of CN.	79	65 (5)	82%
	4.1.2. Pipeline identification (project ideas) and prioritization assessments.	37	35 (+1)	95%
	4.1.3. Mitigation potential assessments.	1	1	100%
	4.1.4. Prefeasibility studies planned.	11	9	82%
Outcome 4.2	4.2.1. Number of FPs developed.	13	11(+2)	85%
	4.2.2. Number of assessment studies conducted for the development of an FP.	8	6	75%
Outcome 4.3	4.3.1. Number of PPF applications planned to be submitted with a CN.	18	17	94%

Source: GCF RRMF data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Notes: Only RPSP grants having submitted a CR were considered here.

Additional projects identified in parenthesis in the realized columns are projects for which the number of planned outputs was surpassed.

Additional projects identified in parenthesis and a “+” in the realized columns are projects that report the output being realized, even though the output was not initially planned. These RPSP grants were not considered in the calculation of the achievement rate itself.

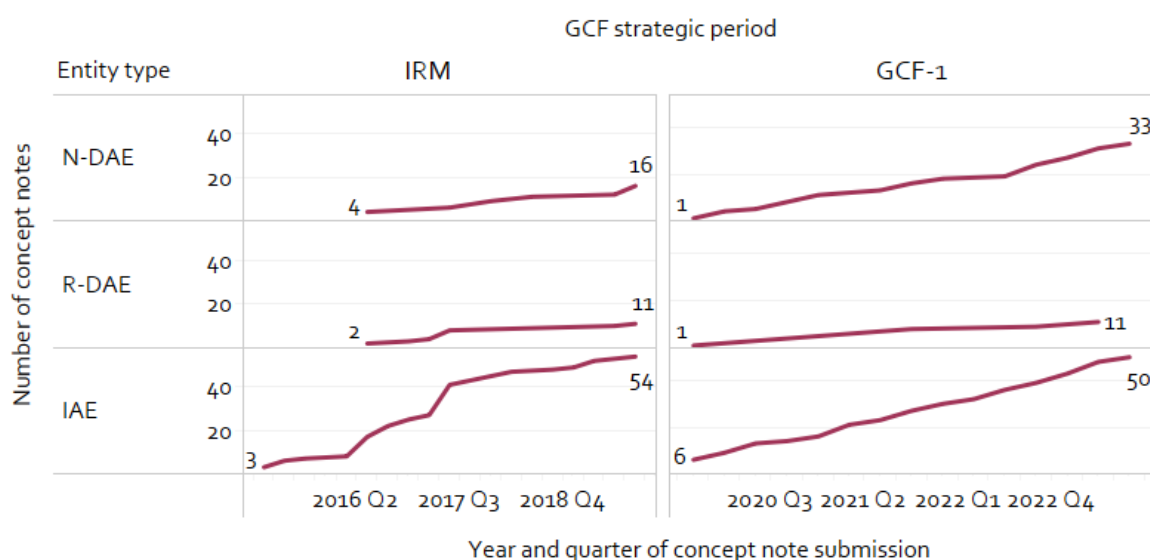
Table A - 6. Objective 5: Achievement rate by output

OUTPUT	OUTPUT STATEMENT	PLANNED	REALIZED	ACHIEVEMENT RATE
Outcome 5.1	5.1.1. NDAs, DAEs, DPs have developed knowledge products containing information on low-emission and climate-resilient development, lessons learned, or best practices extracted from within the country and from other countries (South-South cooperation).	40	39	98%
	5.1.2. NDAs/DAEs who have established process, systems and/or platforms for identification of best practices, lessons learned and Knowledge Management.	11	11 (+1)	100%
Outcome 5.2	5.2.1. Collaborations at subnational, national, or regional levels to foster development and dissemination of methods, frameworks, and information systems for enhanced climate finance programming.	2	2	100%

Source: GCF RRMF data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Notes: Only RPSP grants having submitted a CR were considered here. Additional projects identified in parenthesis in the realized columns are projects that report the output being realized, even though the output was not initially planned. These RPSP grants were not considered in the calculation of the achievement rate itself.

Figure A - 1. CNs submitted to the PSF by entity type



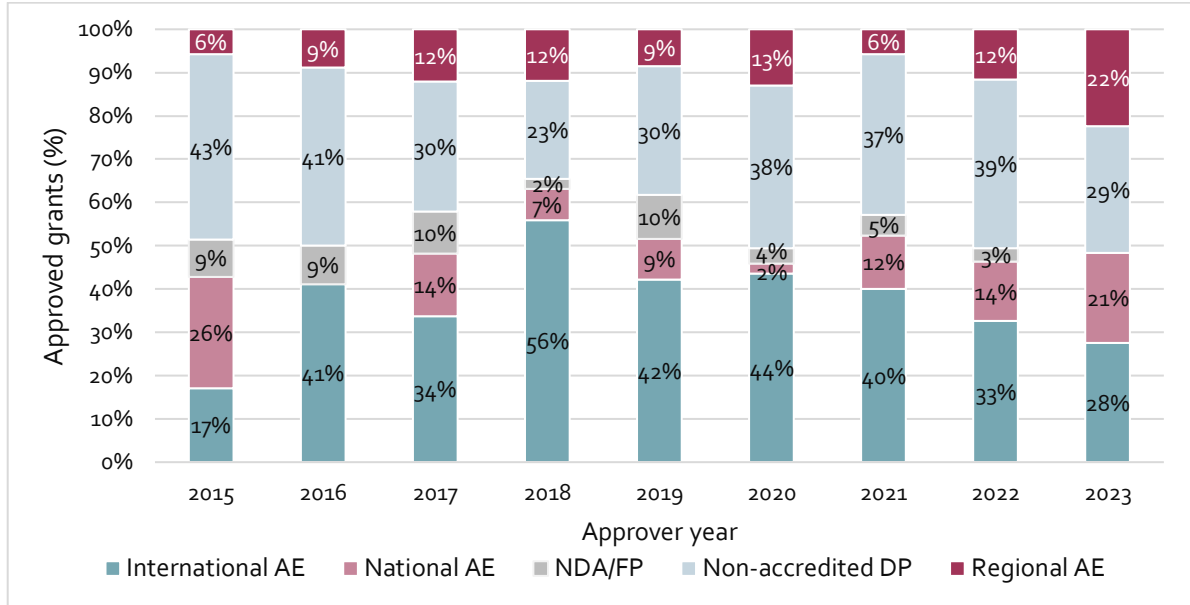
Source: GCF iPMS data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The sample size is 175 CNs recorded in the system, inclusive of inactive, withdrawn and approved projects. The filtering options are only PSF, non-missing entity type, non-missing CN submission date. GCF-1 period covers 2020 up to present. The number of CNs submitted in GCF-1 by private

sector National DAEs is almost double of the number from the initial resource mobilization period. No change in private sector Regional DAE and IAE submissions.

Chapter 7. Country ownership

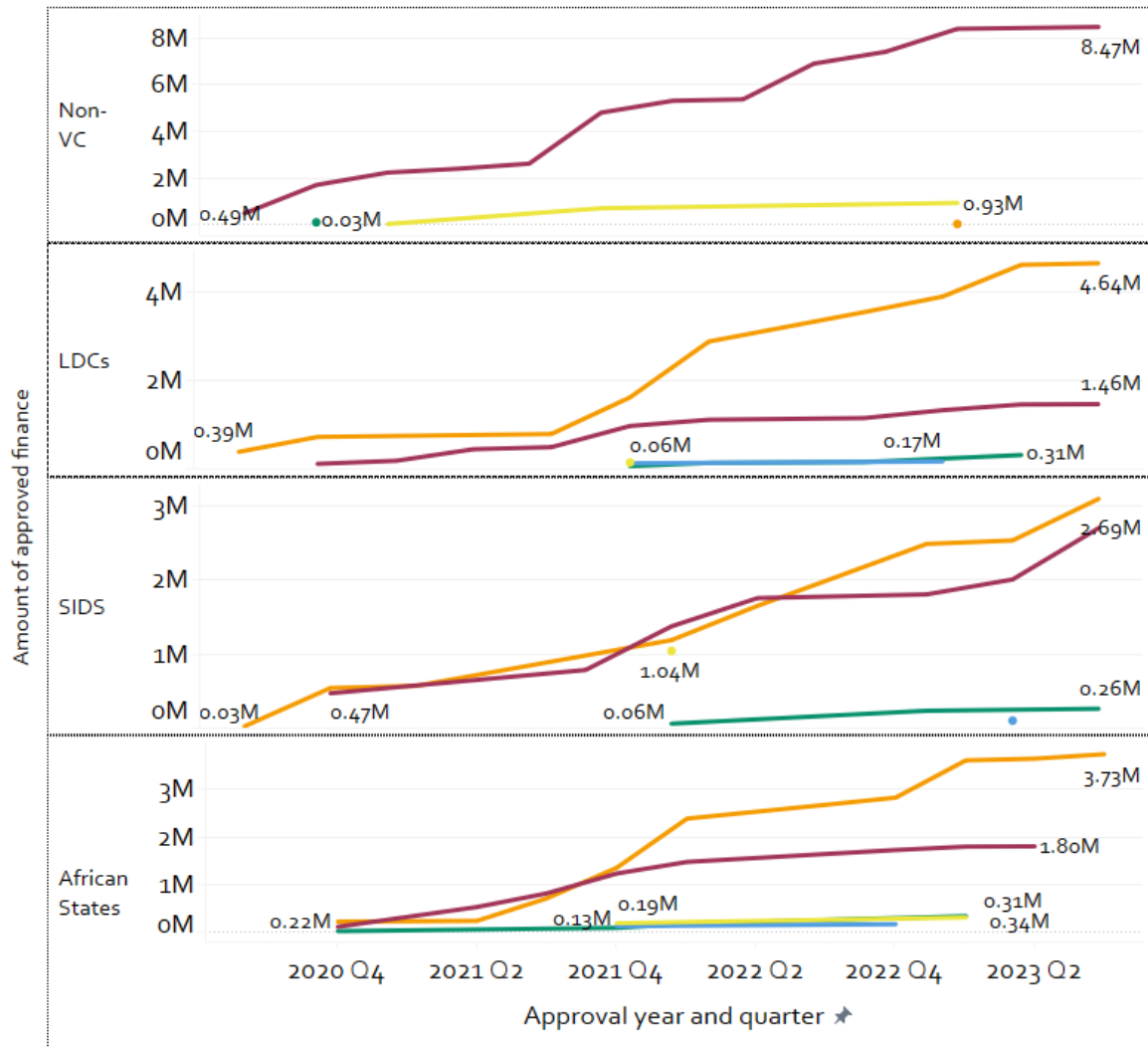
Figure A - 2. Annual distribution of DPs



Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: RPSF grants were classified based on approval years.

Figure A - 3. Trends in the approved amount for outcomes of RPSP 2.0 objective 4 - Pipeline development by vulnerable country group (VC)



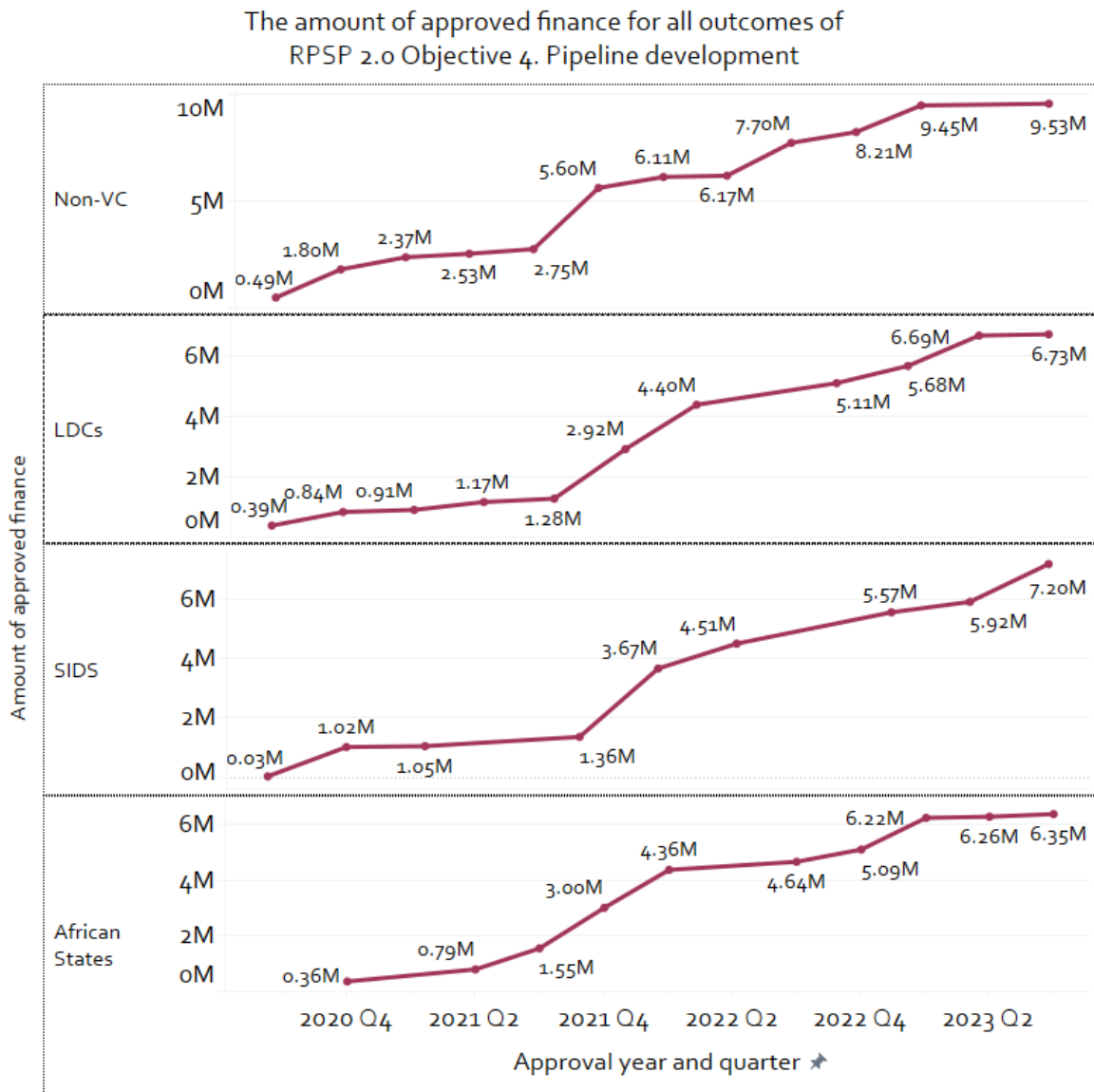
Outcome number and title of RPSP 2.0 Objective 4. Pipeline development

- 4.1 Number of CNs developed
- 4.2 Number of DAE FPs developed
- 4.3 Number of VC CNs developed
- 4.4 Number of VC FPs developed
- 4.5 The proportion of PPF requests and FPs approved

Source: GCF RPSP data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The sample size is 272 RPSP 2.0 grants as of B.36. 176 out of 272 grants have a pipeline development activity. LDCs, SIDS, African States are non-mutually exclusive categories. Large amount of approved funding is directed towards CN development in all categories (versus FP). The use of outcomes 4.2, 4.4, and 4.5 seems to be consistently limited across time. DAE support to develop CNs is more pronounced in the non-vulnerable country category.

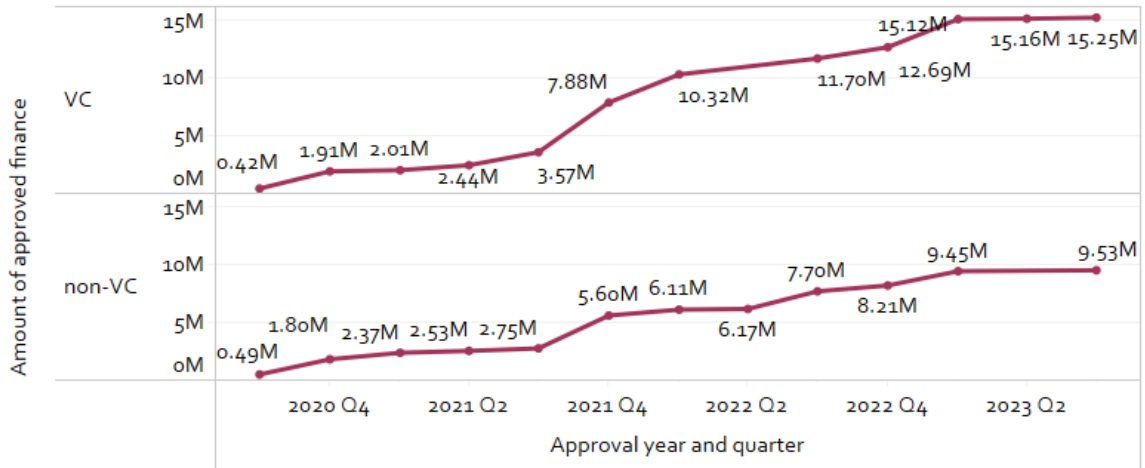
Figure A - 4. Trends in the approved amount for all outcomes of RPSP 2.0 objective 4 - Pipeline development by vulnerable country group (VC)



Source: GCF RPSP data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The sample size is 272 RPSP 2.0 grants as of B.36. 176 out of 272 grants have a pipeline development activity. LDCs, SIDS, African States are non-mutually exclusive categories. All outcomes are aggregated to show total finance for pipeline development per country category. The absolute amount of finance for pipeline development is higher in the non-vulnerable country category compared to LDCs, SIDS, and African States.

Figure A - 5. Trends in the approved amount for all outcomes of RPSP 2.0 objective 4 - Pipeline development VC versus non-VC



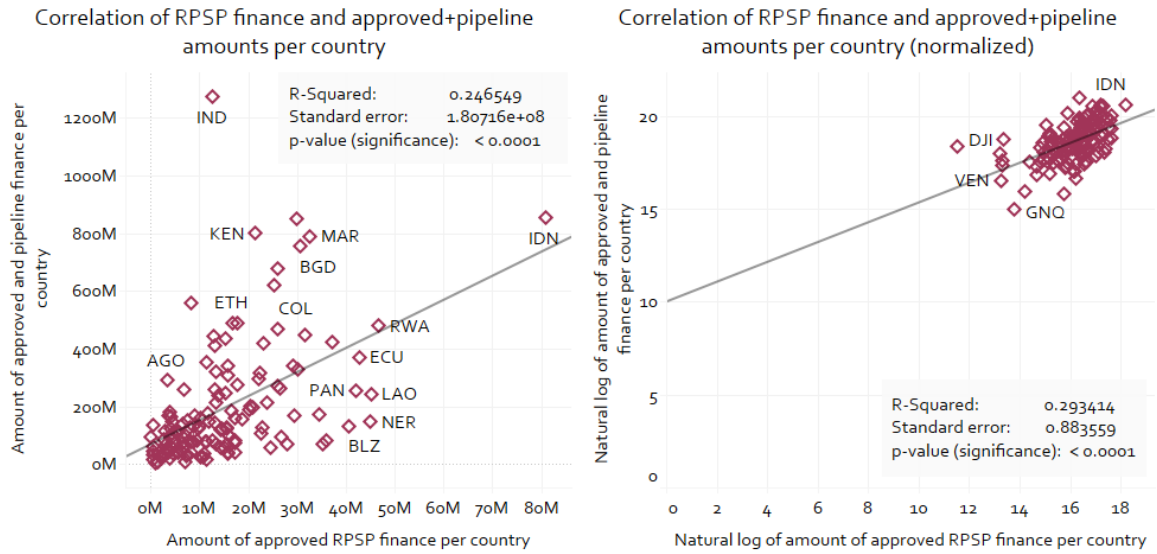
Source: GCF RPSP data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The sample size is 272 RPSP 2.0 grants as of B.36. 176 out of 272 grants have a pipeline development activity. Vulnerable country is defined as a country being either LDC or SIDS or African state. All outcomes are aggregated to show total finance for pipeline development per country category. The absolute amount approved for the vulnerable country category is higher than that for nonvulnerable countries.

Chapter 8. Impact and paradigm shift

There is a statistically significant correlation between the RPSP and funded activity (FA) finance (approved and pipeline) of 27 per cent to 29 per cent. The sign and significance levels hold in nominal and normalized specifications. Precision is much higher in normalized equations. There are multiple possible interpretations of this, and various factors can have an implication on both RPSP finance and FA finance, such as countries having better policies and capacities which may attract both financial streams.

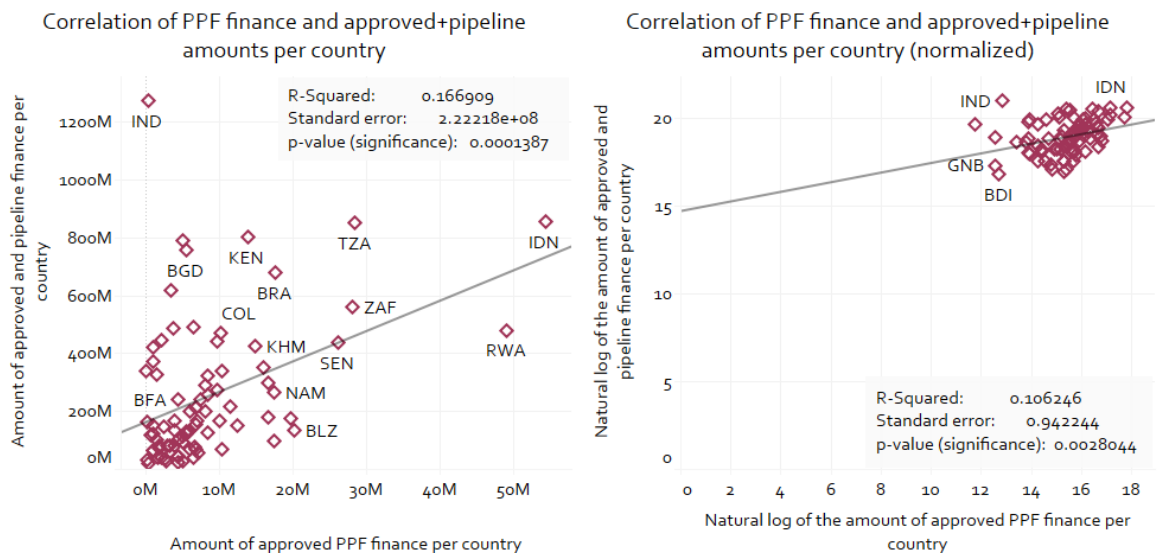
Figure A - 6. Correlation between RPSP and FA finance



Source: GCF iPMS, Fluxx and RPSP data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Notes: The sample size is 134 countries that received RPSP finance and has funded activity approved or in planning (pipeline). RPSP finance includes all grants/services and types of projects as soon as the country allocations could be identified. The total RPSP finance in this analysis is USD 515.5 million after exclusion of grants where country allocation is not specified. The total of funded activity in this analysis is USD 26.3 billion, which is inclusive of all active items in the data set. The source of finance is GCF.
Caution: Correlation does not imply causation (i.e. we cannot infer from this data that the presence of RPSP resources is responsible for greater amounts of pipeline finance).

Figure A - 7. Correlation between PPF and FA finance



Source: GCF iPMS data as of B.36 and iPMS-PPF-Live data. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The sample size is 82 countries that received PPF finance and got funded activity finance approved or in planning (pipeline). PPF finance includes both grants and PPF service. The total PPF finance in this analysis is USD 44.7 million, which represents 79 grants/services. The total of funded activity finance in this analysis is USD 26.3 billion which is inclusive of all active items in the data set. The source of the finance is the GCF.

Caution: correlation does not imply causation (i.e. we cannot infer from this data that the presence of PPF resources is responsible for greater amounts of pipeline finance).

Chapter 10. Efficiency

Table A - 7. Disbursement rate for RPSP grants by country type

APPROVAL YEAR	PORTFOLIO-WIDE	LDCs	SIDS	AFR	OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES
2015	73%	78%	85%	74%	60%
2016	85%	88%	79%	71%	95%
2017	77%	88%	76%	75%	76%
2018	88%	91%	74%	93%	91%
2019	79%	84%	80%	82%	78%
2020	72%	65%	64%	66%	77%
2021	44%	38%	47%	38%	48%
2022	37%	29%	34%	31%	45%
2023	10%	1%	11%	3%	16%
Overall	60%	58%	54%	57%	66%

Source: GCF Fluxx disbursement data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

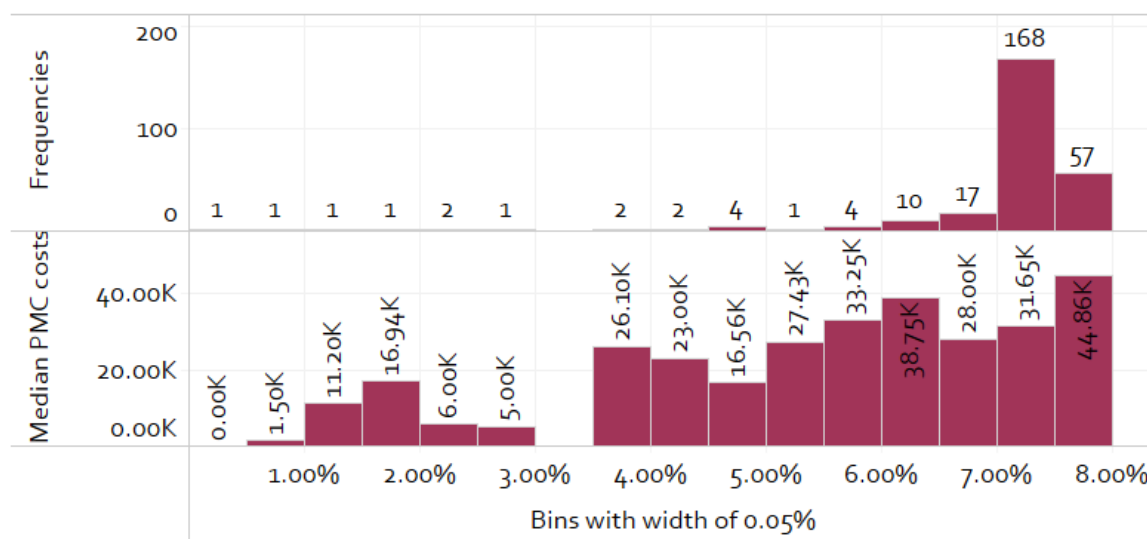
Note: Grants were classified based on their approval year. The disbursement rate is based on disbursement amounts versus approved amounts. Only grants identified as being completed or disbursed were included in the analysis.

Table A - 8. RPSP status by country classification

STATUS	LDC	SIDS	AFR	OTHER ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES
Cancelled	1%	2%	2%	2%
Completed	13%	15%	16%	20%
Disbursed	74%	69%	69%	61%
Agreement effective	4%	6%	4%	11%
In legal processing	9%	8%	8%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: GCF iPMS and Fluxx data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Figure A - 8. Breakdown of the project management costs of RPSP 2.0



Source: GCF RPSP data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: The sample size is 272 RPSP 2.0 grants as of B.36. 271 grants have a positive project management cost budget line approved. The bins of 0.05 per cent are presented. Project management costs in RPSP 2.0 mostly range from 6.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent of the total Project value. There is one instance of a zero project management cost in a project, which may be an error in the budget document. Project management costs are a necessary part of the grant to operationalize proposed RPSP activities. Median project management cost sizes are presented in the lower facet. The median for 6.5 per cent – 7 per cent bin is USD 31,000, and for 7 per cent - 7.5 per cent it is USD 45,000. The largest project management costs are USD 209,000 for AFR-RS-005 and the lowest amount is 0 for MUL-RS-001.

Table A - 9. Timelapse analysis of no-cost extension processing times by country type

	REQUEST TO APPROVAL (DAYS)	APPROVAL TO LETTER SENDING (DAYS)	LETTER SENDING TO COUNTERSIGNATURE (DAYS)	REQUEST TO COUNTERSIGNATURE (DAYS)
Portfolio-wide	55	20	8	88
Priority countries	60	20	8	94
African LDC	87	24	7	118
LDC	66	22	9	108
AFR	68	23	7	107
SIDS	49	16	9	76
Other eligible countries	46	20	8	77

Source: GCF Fluxx disbursement data, as of B.36. Analysis by the IEU DataLab.

Note: This analysis is based on grants for which all four dates were available (request, approval, sending letter, and countersignature of letter).

Annex 2. CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION
Abdulla	Hawabai	Senior Business Development Officer	Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB)
Affian	Ezoua Joachim	<i>Chargé d'Études</i>	<i>Direction des Études, de la Planification et de l'Évaluation, Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, Côte d'Ivoire</i>
Agbri	Lako	<i>Expert Climat</i>	<i>Projet NAP-GCF, Côte d'Ivoire</i>
Aguirre	Laura	General Director	Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP), Mexico
Aikman	Kim	CEO	Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)
Akhalkatsi	George	Head of Armenia	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Armenia
Akossi	Oneste Samtoni	<i>Équipe AND/FCV, Assistant Technique Attenuation</i>	<i>Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable de Côte d'Ivoire</i>
Aloyan	Tatevik	Business Development Manager	ArmSwissBank, Armenia
Ampudia	Luis A.	Director de Información de Proyectos	Banobras, Mexico
Anaman	Jean Douglas	Expert <i>Politique</i> NAP	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/ Programme National Changements Climatiques (PNCC), Côte d'Ivoire
Anicet Durand	Oboué	<i>Coordonateur National de PACJA-Côte d'Ivoire, Fondateur du CDD-CI</i>	ONG Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) / Club Development Durable de Côte d'Ivoire (CDD-CI)
Anselmo	Emilia	Carbon Markets and Climate Change Specialist	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Panama
Anzan	Christiane	<i>Directrice</i>	<i>Direction des Études, de la Planification et de l'Évaluation, Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, Côte d'Ivoire</i>
Apikyan	Lia	Temporary Head of Cooperation with Donors Department	Environmental Project Implementation Unit of the State Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia (EPIU)
Arnaoudov	Vladislav	Senior Quality Assurance and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	GCF Secretariat
Assamoi	Eric Michel	<i>Directeur de la DLCC, Point Focal UNFCCC</i>	<i>Direction de la Lutte Contre les Changements Climatiques (DLCC), Côte d'Ivoire</i>
Assy	Guillaume	<i>Direction des Opérations, Département Genre et</i>	<i>Banque Nationale d'Investissements (BNI-Côte d'Ivoire)</i>

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION
		<i>Développement Durable (DGDD), Chef de DGDD</i>	
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Annex 3. COP CMA DECISIONS AND DIRECTIONS RELATING TO THE GCF READINESS PROGRAMME

DECISION NO.	TEXT
Decision -/CP.27 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”	<p>The Conference of the Parties,</p> <p>Further welcomes the progress under the Green Climate Fund in 2022, including in relation to actions taken by the Board in response to guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties:</p> <p>(c) The increase in the approval of grants for readiness support for national adaptation plans and other adaptation planning processes, bringing the total number of grants approved to 87;</p> <p>Welcomes the continued support of the Board under the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme for enhancing support for technology development and transfer and capacity-building and encourages the Board to continue to support developing countries in this regard;</p> <p>Encourages the Board to consider enhancing the provision of support through the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme for the development of national and subnational gender strategies, as they relate to climate, and consider further strengthening the gender programming of Green Climate Fund activities through supporting the implementation of the policies and projects therein;</p>
Decision 6/CP.26 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”	<p>The Conference of the Parties,</p> <p>Takes note of the continued efforts of the Board to provide financial resources for activities relevant to averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage in developing country Parties consistent with the existing investment, results framework and funding windows and structures of the Green Climate Fund, including through the Project Preparation Facility and the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme;</p>
Decision 9/CP.26 “Enhancing climate technology development and transfer through the Technology Mechanism”	<p>The Conference of the Parties,</p> <p>Notes with appreciation that the Climate Technology Centre and Network is now the largest provider of readiness support for technology under the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme and encourages the Climate Technology Centre and Network to continue its collaboration through the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme and to extend its engagement through the Project Preparation Facility with the Green Climate Fund;</p>
Decision 11/CMA.3 “Guidance to the Green Climate Fund”	<p>The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA),</p> <p>Takes note of the continued efforts of the Board to provide financial resources for activities relevant to averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage in developing country Parties consistent with the existing investment, results framework and funding windows and structures of the Green Climate Fund, including through the Project Preparation</p>

DECISION NO.	TEXT
	Facility and the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme;
Decision 15/CMA.3 “Enhancing climate technology development and transfer to support implementation of the Paris Agreement”	The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, Notes with appreciation that the Climate Technology Centre and Network is now the largest provider of readiness support for technology under the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme and encourages the Climate Technology Centre and Network to continue its collaboration through the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme and to extend its engagement through the Project Preparation Facility with the Green Climate Fund;
Decision 12/CP.25 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”	The Conference of the Parties, Also welcomes the progress of the Green Climate Fund in 2019 on the following, including in relation to guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties: The adoption of a revised strategy for the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme; Reiterates the request to the Green Climate Fund to accelerate the disbursement of funds for already approved projects, including for readiness support , and provide detailed information on disbursement levels and measures taken in this regard in its report to the Conference of the Parties; Welcomes the approval of the Board’s four-year workplan and requests the Board to complete its work on closing policy gaps, streamlining and simplifying approval processes, including for readiness support and national adaptation plans , and addressing the review of the accreditation framework as soon as possible so as not to disrupt the project and programme approval cycle during the first formal replenishment;
Decision 7/CP.25 “National adaptation plans”	The Conference of the Parties, Notes the challenges and complexities experienced by developing country Parties in accessing funding from the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme for the formulation of national adaptation plans , particularly relating to the application and review of proposals for funding; Invites delivery partners of the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme for the formulation of national adaptation plans to strengthen efforts to support developing country Parties with the goal of expediting the submission of readiness proposals to the Green Climate Fund; Encourages the Green Climate Fund to continue to enhance its support for adaptation and requests the Green Climate Fund to: (a) Swiftly conclude its work on guidance on the approach and scope for providing support to adaptation activities; (b) Continue to enhance its support for the implementation of national adaptation plans, in line with Board decisions on enhancing readiness programming;
Decision 14/CP.25 “Enhancing climate technology development and transfer through the Technology Mechanism”	The Conference of the Parties, Also welcomes the progress of the Climate Technology Centre and Network in collaborating with the Green Climate Fund and encourages the Climate Technology Centre and Network to continue this collaboration, including under the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme , for, inter alia, developing and updating

DECISION NO.	TEXT
	<p>technology needs assessments and technology action plans to support implementation of nationally determined contributions;</p>
<p>Decision 6/CMA.2 “Guidance to the Green Climate Fund”</p>	<p>The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, Encourages the Green Climate Fund to continue to enhance its support for adaptation and requests the Green Climate Fund to: (a) Swiftly conclude its work on guidance on the approach and scope for providing support to adaptation activities; (b) Continue to enhance its support for the implementation of national adaptation plans, in line with Board decisions on enhancing readiness programming;</p>
<p>Decision 5/CP.24 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”</p>	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Noting the draft guidance to the Green Climate Fund prepared by the Standing Committee on Finance, Recalling decision 10/CP.22, paragraph 5, Also welcomes the progress of the Green Climate Fund in 2018, including: Efforts made to improve access to the Green Climate Fund through the structured dialogues and the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme; Takes note of the independent evaluations of the readiness and preparatory support programme and encourages the Board to address the recommendations contained therein, in accordance with paragraph 59 of the Governing Instrument, with a view to improving access to the Green Climate Fund and increasing the Fund’s efforts to support country ownership and country programming;</p>
<p>Decision 8/CP.24 “National adaptation plans”</p>	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Welcomes the approval by the Green Climate Fund secretariat, as at 4 December 2018, of 22 proposals from developing countries under the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme to support the formulation of national adaptation plans and/or other adaptation planning processes amounting to USD 81 million, of which 6 proposals, amounting to USD 15 million, are from the least developed countries;</p>
<p>Decision 9/CP.23 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”</p>	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Notes with appreciation the significant scaling-up of the operations of the Green Climate Fund in 2017, including: The expansion of its portfolio to include: (1) USD 41.8 million to support 130 requests in 92 countries through the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, two thirds of which are in the least developed countries, small island developing States and African States; and (2) USD 2.65 billion to support 54 projects and programmes in 73 countries; (d) The availability of additional financial resources for the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, including for the formulation of national adaptation plans and/or other national adaptation planning processes; (e) The decision of the Board to initiate an independent review of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (Green Climate Fund Board decision B.15/04);</p>

DECISION NO.	TEXT
	Encourages the Board to continue improving the process to review and approve readiness and preparatory support requests, including requests for support to prepare national adaptation plans and voluntary adaptation planning processes, including timely disbursement for approved programmes;
Decision 6/CP.22 “National adaptation plans”	The Conference of the Parties, Notes with appreciation the decision of the Board of the Green Climate Fund at its thirteenth meeting that approved up to USD 3 million per country through the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme to support the formulation of national adaptation plans and/or other national adaptation planning processes (Green Climate Fund Board decision B.13/09, paragraph (e));
Decision 10/CP.22 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”	The Conference of the Parties, Also welcomes the following actions taken by the Board in response to previous guidance from the Conference of the Parties as contained in decisions 3/CP.17, 6/CP.18, 4/CP.19, 7/CP.20 and 7/CP.21: Progress made to date in the implementation of the readiness and preparatory support programme with the approval of readiness proposals in 57 countries totalling USD 16 million, including the decision of the Board to simplify the template and to mandate the Green Climate Fund secretariat to expedite the approval and disbursement of readiness and preparatory support resources; The approval of up to USD 3 million per country in funding for the preparation of national adaptation plans and/or other national adaptation planning processes through the readiness and preparatory support programme; Responses to the operationalization of results-based payments for the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70, consistent with decision 9/CP.19 and in accordance with Board decision B.08/08, as well as the recognition that the Green Climate Fund can support the development and implementation of national REDD-plus strategies or action plans and investment plans, including through the readiness and preparatory support programme; Also requests the Board to take into account decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 64, to enhance the coordination and delivery of resources to support country-driven strategies through simplified and efficient application and approval procedures, and through continued readiness support to developing country Parties, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, as appropriate, and in accordance with Board decisions; Invites national designated authorities and focal points to utilize the readiness and preparatory support programme, and to collaborate with accredited entities to use the project preparation facility, where appropriate, to prepare adaptation and mitigation proposals of increasing quality and impact potential;
Decision 4/CP.21 “National adaptation plans”	The Conference of the Parties, [preamble] Noting decision B.11/04 of the Board of the Green Climate Fund on the readiness programme implementation (progress report), whereby it reaffirms that it may support a voluntary country-driven national adaptation planning process through its readiness and preparatory support programme, in coordination with other programmes and

DECISION NO.	TEXT
	channels,
<p>Decision 7/CP.21 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”</p>	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Recalling decision 7/CP.20, Noting the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance contained in its report to the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-first session with regard to the provision of draft guidance to the Green Climate Fund, Takes note of the progress achieved to date in the implementation of the readiness and preparatory support programme of the Green Climate Fund and stresses the importance of improving the approval process and timely disbursement of readiness resources to facilitate readiness programme implementation pursuant to Green Climate Fund Board decision B.11/04;</p>
<p>Decision 4/CP.20 “Report of the Adaptation Committee” Annex: Recommendations for the Conference of the Parties by the Adaptation Committee under UNFCCC</p>	<p>1. The Adaptation Committee (AC) agreed to include the following recommendations in its report for consideration by the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its twentieth session. Regarding the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, the AC recommends the following actions for consideration by the COP: (a) Inviting the Board of the GCF to consider the significant work undertaken under the Cancun Adaptation Framework and on the NAP process as it continues to provide the governance of the Fund; Inviting the Board of the GCF to engage with institutions that have started initiatives on countries’ readiness to access GCF funding and exploring how more countries can benefit from such initiatives;</p>
<p>Decision 7/CP.20 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”</p>	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Recalling Articles 4 and 11 of the Convention, Taking into account decision 11/CP.1, Recalling decisions 1/CP.16, 3/CP.17, 1/CP.18, 6/CP.18, 7/CP.18, 4/CP.19 and 5/CP.19, Also requests the Board of the Green Climate Fund to accelerate the implementation of its work programme on readiness and preparatory support, ensuring that adequate resources are provided for its execution, including from the initial resource mobilization process, providing urgent support to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States and African States, led by their national designated authorities or focal points to build institutional capacities in accordance with Green Climate Fund Board decision B.08/11; Encourages the timely implementation of the accreditation framework and requests the Board of the Green Climate Fund, in its implementation, to pay adequate attention to the priorities and needs of developing country Parties, including the least developed countries, small island developing States and African States, emphasizing the need to provide readiness support to those national and regional entities eligible for fast tracking that request it;</p>
<p>Decision 9/CP.20 “Fifth review of the Financial Mechanism”</p>	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Recalling decisions 3/CP.4, 2.CP.12, 1/CP.16, 2/CP.16 and 8/CP.19,</p>

DECISION NO.	TEXT
Annex: Executive summary of the technical paper on the fifth review of the Financial Mechanism	<p>Welcoming the progress made by the Board of the Green Climate Fund in operationalizing the Green Climate Fund, Noting that the fifth review of the Financial Mechanism focused on the Global Environment Facility owing to the fact that the Green Climate Fund is still developing its operations and that therefore it was premature to review many aspects of the Green Climate Fund,</p> <p>Annex, paragraph 56. The GCF will allow direct access to it by national institutions based in developing countries. The GCF readiness programme is intended to foster a better direct engagement between it and its recipient countries. It will provide technical and capacity-building support for implementing entities (particularly national and subnational institutions) that may not meet the standards of the Fund yet.</p> <p>Annex, paragraph 63. The concept of country ownership has been a driving principle in the design of the GCF. It is also a key element of the GCF investment framework approved in May 2014. Coherence with national policies and strategies and engagement with national stakeholders will be key considerations in fostering country ownership in the actions of the GCF. A transparent no-objection procedure is to be developed to this end. Through early investments in readiness, the GCF secretariat is beginning the process of engagement with countries in order to understand their priorities.</p>
Decision 3/CP.19 “Long-term climate finance”	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Recalling Articles 4 and 11 of the Convention,</p> <p>Decides to continue deliberations on long-term finance and requests the secretariat to organize in-session workshops on, inter alia, strategies and approaches for scaling up climate finance referred to in paragraph 10, cooperation on enhanced enabling environments and support for readiness activities, and on needs for support to developing countries, from 2014 to 2020. Further requests the secretariat to prepare a summary of the workshops for consideration by the Conference of the Parties and to inform the ministerial dialogue referred to in paragraph 13;</p>
Decision 4/CP.19 “Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund”	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Recalling Articles 4 and 11 of the Convention, Taking into account decision 11/CP.1, Recalling decisions 1/CP.16, 3/CP.17, 1/CP.18, 6/CP.18 and 7/CP.18,</p> <p>Calls for ambitious and timely contributions by developed countries to enable an effective operationalization, including for readiness and preparatory support of the Green Climate Fund that reflects the needs and challenges of developing countries in addressing climate change in the context of preparing, by the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties (December 2014), the initial resource mobilization process described in paragraph 12 above;</p>
Decision 3/CP.17 “Launching the Green Climate Fund” Annex: Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund	<p>The Conference of the Parties, Recalling decision 1/CP.16,</p> <p>Annex (GCF GI), paragraph 40: The Fund will provide resources for readiness and preparatory activities and technical assistance, such as the preparation or strengthening of low-emission development strategies or plans, NAMAs, NAPs,</p>

DECISION NO.	TEXT
	NAPAs and for in-country institutional strengthening, including the strengthening of capacities for country coordination and to meet fiduciary principles and standards and environmental and social safeguards, in order to enable countries to directly access the Fund.

Annex 4. READINESS RESULTS MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

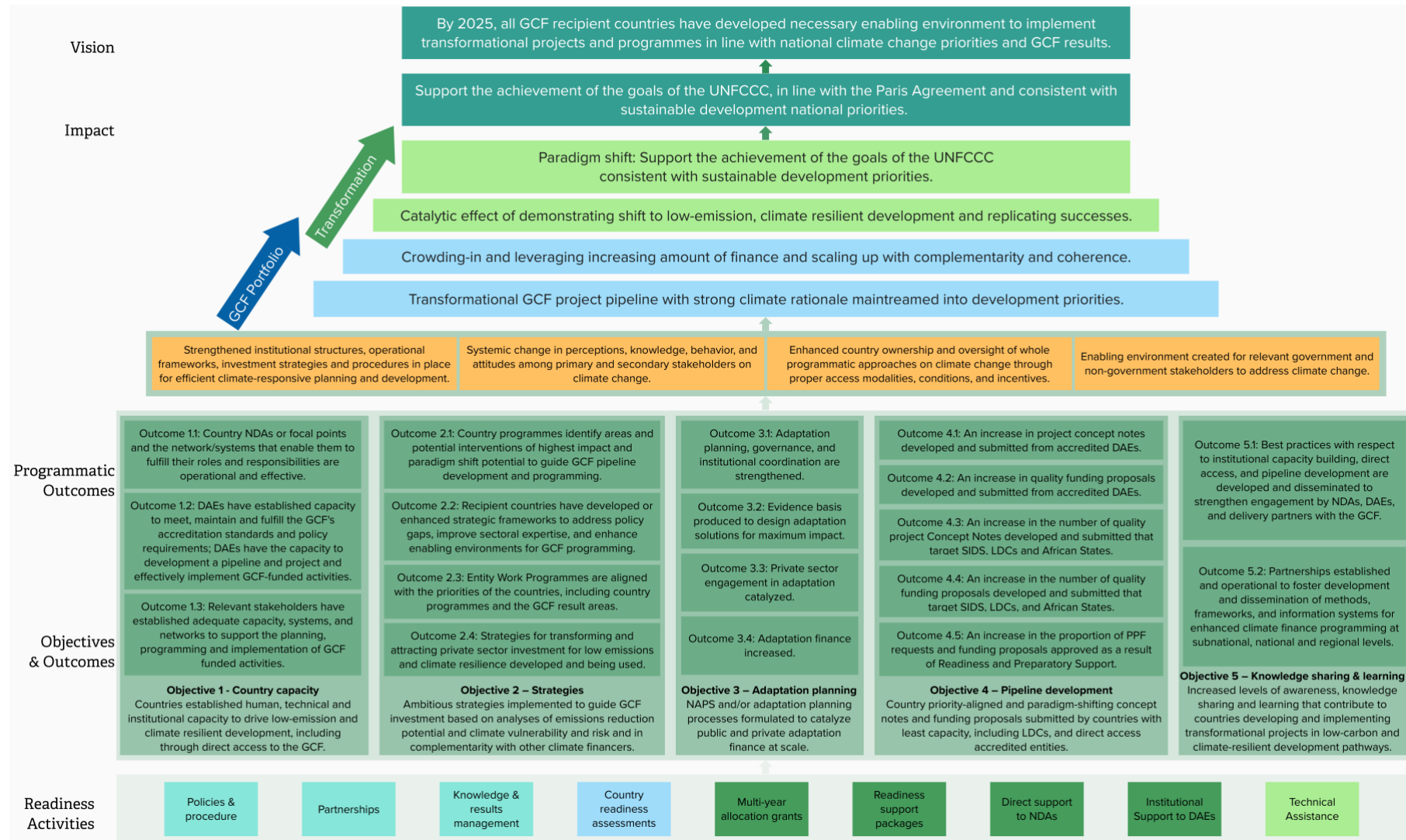
OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
1 Capacity-building for climate finance coordination	1.1 Country NDAs or focal points and the network/systems that enable them to fulfil their roles, responsibilities and policy requirements are operational and effective	1.1.1 NDA or focal point staff trained in areas relevant to the objectives of the GCF and oversight of GCF activities
		1.1.2 NDA mechanisms established or strengthened for inter-institutional coordination, including engagement with the GCF and other climate funds
		1.1.3 Decision-making processes defined and operationalized at the NDA level for NOLs and consideration/facilitation of climate change projects
	1.2 Direct access applicants and AEs, that is, DAEs, have established capacity to meet and maintain the GCF's accreditation standards; and accredited DAEs have the capacity to develop a pipeline of projects and effectively implement GCF-funded activities	1.2.1 Candidate entities identified and nominated for direct access
		1.2.2 Direct access applicants supported with training, capacity development, or improved systems to close gaps
		1.2.3 Accredited DAEs' institutional capacities strengthened to improve accreditation status and effective implementation of GCF-funded activities
	1.3 Relevant country stakeholders (which may include EEs, CSOs and private sector) have established adequate capacity, systems and networks to support the planning, programming and implementation of GCF-funded activities	1.3.1 Relevant stakeholders engaged and trained to support planning, programming and implementation of GCF-funded activities
		1.3.2 Stakeholder engagement mechanisms established to support planning, programming and implementation of GCF-funded activities
		1.3.3 Strengthened information-sharing
2 Strategic frameworks for low-emission investment	2.1 GCF recipient countries have developed initial CPs to guide GCF investment and programming of GCF readiness and preparatory support resources	2.1.1 CPs endorsed by GCF recipient country processes
	2.2 GCF recipient countries have developed or enhanced strategic frameworks to address policy gaps, improve sectoral expertise, and enhance enabling environments for GCF programming in	2.2.1 Readiness needs assessment to develop an action plan with strategies for readiness support
		2.2.2 Long-term, low-emission development strategy (LT-LEDs/LTS) developed
		2.2.3 NDC updated or revised and/or financing strategy or related policies developed

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
	low-emission investment	2.2.4 MRV systems developed and operational for tracking internal and external climate finance flows
		2.2.5 Studies, modelling efforts and other research efforts conducted and developed
		2.2.6 Sectoral strategic frameworks or associated plans developed
		2.2.7 Appropriate climate technologies/solutions identified and prioritized
	2.3 Entity work programmes of accredited DAEs developed, that are aligned with the priorities of the countries, including CPs and the GCF result areas	2.3.1 Entity work programmes aligned to CPs developed and submitted to GCF
	2.4 Strategies for transforming and attracting private sector investment for low emissions and resilience developed and being used	2.4.1 New business models incubated and/or innovative financial mechanisms and schemes created to increase low-emission and climate-resilient investment
		2.4.2 Strategies, road maps, studies, and policy incentives completed to foster private financing for CP implementation and/or low-emissions climate-resilient development
	3 Strengthened adaptation planning	3.1 Adaptation planning governance and institutional coordination strengthened
3.1.2 Adaptation policy and/or regulations developed or strengthened for integrating adaptation actions and measures in sectoral, subnational, and national development strategies and plans		
3.1.3 Inter- and intra-institutional coordination and decision-making mechanisms established or strengthened		
3.1.4 Stakeholder engagement frameworks, agreements and awareness-raising conducted or strengthened		
3.2 Evidence produced to design adaptation solutions for maximum impact		3.2.1 Adaptation impact monitoring, evaluation and learning systems established or strengthened for strategic planning and investment
		3.2.2 Studies on climate vulnerability, and identification of adaptation solutions conducted (and used) for strengthening adaptation investment
3.3 Private sector engagement in adaptation catalysed		3.3.1 Strategies, policies, and incentives developed to foster private investment in adaptation solutions

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
		3.3.2 Assessments and knowledge products to inform the private sector on adaptation options and GCF finance developed
		3.3.3 Capacity-building provided to the private sector on adaptation options
	3.4 Adaptation finance increased	3.4.1 Mechanisms established to prioritize adaptation options based on objective criteria
		3.4.2 Number of CNs and/or FPs developed for adaptation priority actions
		3.4.3 National systems developed for tracking adaptation national and international finance flows
4 Paradigm-shifting pipeline development	4.1 Increase in the number of quality project CNs developed and submitted	4.1.1 CNs for priority sectors developed with the support of the RPSP for submission to the GCF
		4.1.2 Pipeline identified and prioritization assessments
		4.1.3 Mitigation potential assessed
		4.1.4 Prefeasibility studies conducted
	4.2 Increase in the quality of FPs developed and submitted from accredited DAEs	4.2.1 FP developed and submitted by DAEs
		4.2.2 Assessments and studies conducted for the development of quality FPs (submitted from accredited DAEs)
	4.3 An increase in the number of quality CNs developed and submitted that target SIDS, LDCs and African States	4.3.1 CN developed targeting SIDS, LDCs and African States
		4.3.2 Pipeline identified and prioritization assessments targeting SIDS, LDCs and African States
		4.3.3 Mitigation potential assessed targeting SIDS, LDCs and African States
		4.3.4 Prefeasibility studies conducted targeting SIDS, LDCs and African States
	4.4 An increase in the number of quality FPs developed and submitted that target SIDS, LDCs and African States	4.4.1 FPs developed and submitted that target SIDS, LDCs and African States
		4.4.2 Assessments and studies conducted for the development of quality FPs that target SIDS, LDCs, African States
	4.5 An increase in the proportion of PPF requests and FPs approved as a result of readiness and preparatory support	4.5.1 PPF assistance requested linked to a CN developed with support of the readiness grant
		4.5.2 FPs submitted to the GCF developed with the support of the RPSP, disaggregated by

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
		sector
		4.5.3 Assessments and studies conducted for the development of quality FPs as part of the PPF's support
5 Knowledge sharing and learning	5.1 Best practices with respect to institutional capacity-building, direct access, and pipeline development are developed and disseminated to strengthen engagement by NDAs, DAEs, and delivery partners with the GCF	5.1.1 NDAs, DAEs, DPs have developed knowledge products containing information on low-emission and climate-resilient development, lessons learned, or best practices extracted from within the country and from other countries (South-South cooperation)
		5.1.2 NDAs/DAEs that have established processes, systems and/or platforms for identification of best practices, lessons learned and knowledge management
	5.2 Partnerships established and operational to foster development and dissemination of methods, frameworks, and information systems for enhanced climate finance programming at subnational, national and regional levels	5.2.1 Collaborations at subnational, national, or regional levels to foster development and dissemination of methods, frameworks, and information systems for enhanced climate finance programming

Annex 5. RPSP THEORY OF CHANGE



ASSUMPTIONS

Programmatic outcomes

1. Global pressures – sustained or worsening climate crisis, country participation in regional/global climate covenants, building public awareness, demonstration effect from exemplars (multiple levels) – encourage the integration of climate finance instruments in national development policy, planning, programming, and pursuit of results.
2. The pressures on and incentives for governments to remove market barriers, address policy gaps, deploy new technologies, etc. override status quo tendencies.
3. The NDA and a critical mass of country stakeholders (government and non-government) see themselves as part of a climate finance value chain that depends on each other's contributions and generates net benefits for all.

Objective 1

1. National governments perceive that the advantages of investing in institutional reforms to drive low-emission and climate-resilient development outweigh status quo tendencies.
2. NDAs are sufficiently knowledgeable of the private sector, civil society and other stakeholder groups to be able to engage them in a meaningful way.
3. Leadership of prospective DAEs are able to focus on the process of becoming accredited despite the presence of competing commitments and demands on their organizational resources.
4. Perceived country level strategic advantage in pursuing coherence and complementarity with other climate finance mechanisms overrides organizational inertia typically associated with bridging across mechanisms.

Objective 2

1. National governments perceive that the advantages to investing in policy-strategy initiatives to enhance enabling environments outweigh status quo tendencies.
2. DAEs (regional and national) are willing/able to put country priorities at the forefront when developing their work programmes.
3. What is known by country stakeholders of the climate science and climate finance landscapes, and the national development priorities is sufficiently current and comprehensive to support Country Programmes for GCF investment and use of readiness resources.
4. Leading elements within the country's private sector perceive business case potential through involvement in GCF activities.
5. Civil society and academia perceives net opportunities for a constructive role in informing/contributing to GCF supported activities.
6. Intermediary organizations (industry associations, network organizations) are available to facilitate engagement between the NDA/DAEs, on the one hand, and the private sector and civil society, on the other.
7. The imperative to collaborate across ministries/sectors overrides public administration tendencies toward being siloed and in competition.

Objective 3

1. That which is required at a country level to inform climate adaptation policy and programming – data, engagement, analysis, action planning – can be garnered within the resource envelope for NAPs.
2. National governments perceive that the advantages to investing in NAPs to address climate vulnerability outweigh status quo tendencies.
3. Intra- and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms are sufficiently robust to support the cross-sectoral nature of NAP planning.
4. At the point of hand-over from readiness support, NDAs and DAEs are sufficiently resourced/prepared to steward the integration of recommendations and the development of concept notes.
5. Leading elements within the country's private sector perceive business case potential through involvement in NAP implementation.
6. Civil society and academia perceive net opportunities for a constructive role informing/contributing to NAP formulation and implementation.
7. Intermediary organizations (industry associations, network organizations) are available to facilitate engagement between the NDA/DAEs, on the one hand, and the private sector and civil society, on the other.

Objective 4

1. NDAs and steering committees hold DAEs/DPs to account for the primacy of country needs/priorities in concept note formulation.
2. NDAs bring together the appropriate mix of stakeholder interests/skills in the formulation of concept notes.
3. Country stakeholders have ready access to appropriate TA resources to support concept note development.
4. For the most part, national contexts across GCF-eligible countries are not an impediment to the development of concept notes.

Objective 5

1. The knowledge capture/sharing landscape for climate action stakeholders (GCF and beyond) perceives utility through engagement (participation/partnership) with GCF's knowledge sharing and learning initiatives.
2. Knowledge capture and dissemination tools and processes are accessed by NDAs, DAEs and other climate action stakeholders.

Operational assumptions

1. The Readiness programme is sufficiently resourced to address its strategic vision.
2. The GCF Secretariat is organized to adequately deliver on the five readiness objectives.
3. There is sufficient latitude within the Readiness programme's design and resource limits to cater to the differentiated needs of GCF eligible countries.
4. GCF is sufficiently explicit in its understanding of "paradigm shift potential" to allow the Readiness programme to inform actions at country and regional levels.
5. The ToC is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to the different trajectories of countries and country types.
6. GCF accreditation requirements are sufficiently flexible to facilitate national and regional readiness through the engagement of pre-accredited entities and those having gone through FMCA's.
7. The rationale for extending readiness planning cycles over longer periods of time and with programmatic approaches is sufficiently rooted in the experiences of countries to date.

Readiness programme assumptions

1. DPs are appropriately equipped (relevant skills & experience; organizational backing) to engage in readiness roles.
2. Those around the world with appropriate expertise to lend toward GCF readiness are aware of and attracted to its consultant pool.

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