

## ANNEX 1 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

### I. Aims

The governing instrument of Green Climate Fund (GCF) and various Board decisions recognize country ownership as a core principle of the Fund<sup>1,2</sup>, offering guidance on several country-ownership-related features such as stakeholder engagement, the role of national designated authorities (NDAs), and programming approaches based on country strategies. To assess the extent of country ownership approach operationalization in GCF, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) undertook an independent evaluation in 2019. The exercise resulted in a series of recommendations for the consideration of GCF Board and Secretariat consideration.

At the fortieth meeting of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Board (B.40), held in Songdo, Korea, from October 21–24, 2024, the Board approved the IEU's Workplan for 2025<sup>3</sup>. This workplan includes the undertaking of an independent evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Country Ownership Approach. IEU intends to submit the evaluation report by B.43, currently scheduled as the last Board meeting of 2025.

This Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the context, scope, methods and approach, timelines, and deliverables planned for this evaluation for potential bidders to understand the scope of the evaluation. The methods and timelines are considered iterative and tentative may be revised during the evaluation. This document invites firms to submit a proposal to identify one Service Provider to support the IEU in the evaluation.

### II. Background on GCF and IEU

The GCF is a multilateral fund created to make significant and ambitious contributions to the global efforts to combat climate change. The GCF contributes to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. In the context of sustainable development, the GCF aims to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change, while accounting for their needs and supporting particularly those that are vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The GCF is governed by a Board, composed of an equal number of members from developed and developing countries. It is operated by a Secretariat headed by an Executive Director.

The IEU of the GCF is mandated by the GCF Board under paragraph 60 of its governing instrument to inform its decision-making. Specifically, the governing instrument states "*... the Board will establish an operationally independent evaluation unit as part of the core structure of the Fund. The head of the unit will be selected and will report to the Board. The frequency and types of evaluation to be conducted will be specified by the unit in agreement with the Board.*"

The IEU has several objectives:

- a.) Informing the decision-making by the Board and identifying and disseminating lessons learned, contributing to guiding the Fund and stakeholders as a learning institution, providing strategic guidance;
- b.) Conducting periodic independent evaluations of the fund's performance to objectively assess the results of the GCF and the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities;

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<sup>1</sup> Governing Instrument, paragraph 3 and 31.

<sup>2</sup> GCF/B.40/23, page 74

<sup>3</sup> GCF/B.40/23.

- c.) Providing evaluation reports to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for purposes of periodic reviews of the Financial Mechanism of the convention.<sup>4</sup>

The IEU has a mandate for both discharging an accountability function and supporting a learning function.<sup>5</sup> These are central to the GCF being a learning organization as laid out in its Governing Instrument and the Updated TOR of the IEU.<sup>6</sup> The responsibilities of the IEU are as follows:<sup>7</sup>

- a) Evaluation: The IEU undertakes independent evaluations that inform the GCF strategic result areas. The IEU uses relevant and innovative methods. The vision, criteria, are laid out in the GCF evaluation policy<sup>8</sup>.
- b) Advisory and capacity support: IEU engages closely with the evaluation functions of intermediaries and implementing entities of the GCF, including National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and Accredited Entities (AEs). More specifically, IEU provides capacity building and advisory services through Learning Oriented Real-Time Impact Evaluation (LORTA) to its Accredited Entities (AEs).
- c) Learning: The IEU supports the GCF in its learning function by ensuring that recommendations from independent evaluations are incorporated into the Secretariat's functioning and processes. This includes ensuring timely socialization and uptake of lessons from evaluations.
- d) Engagement: The IEU actively participates in relevant evaluation networks to ensure that it is at the frontier of evaluation practice. It engages with independent evaluation offices of accredited entities and other GCF stakeholders.

### III. Context

Country ownership is a foundational principle of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to empower developing countries to lead in addressing climate change challenges, as reflected in its Governing Instrument and operationalized through numerous Board decisions, guidelines, and strategic frameworks. As outlined in the Governing Instrument, the GCF aims to promote a country-driven approach, enhancing the engagement of national stakeholders to align GCF-funded activities with country priorities. Paragraph 3 of the Governing Instrument explicitly states that the GCF will strengthen engagement at the country level through the involvement of relevant institutions and stakeholders, while paragraph 31 links this principle to operational modalities, ensuring alignment with national climate strategies and emphasizing inclusivity by addressing vulnerable groups and gender aspects<sup>9</sup>.

#### A. Board Decisions and GCF-relevant Policies

The concept of country ownership further evolved through a series of Board decisions. Decision B.04/05 reaffirmed country ownership as a core principle, introducing National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and focal points (FPs) as key mechanisms for facilitating country-driven processes by endorsing funding proposals, ensuring alignment with national priorities, coordinating multi-stakeholder consultations, and managing the no-objection procedure (NOP). Subsequent decisions, such as B.07/03 and B.08/10, refined these roles, endorsing best practices for country coordination and stakeholder engagement. Annex XIII of B.08/10 provided initial guidelines for NDA establishment, while Annex XIV laid out best-practice options for fostering meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement in GCF-funded initiatives.

The Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) of GCF was introduced to operationalize country ownership. Initially outlined in decision B.05/14, the RPSP provides financial and technical

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<sup>4</sup> FCCC decision 5/CP.19, annex, paragraph 20. The Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC provides the following guidance on the function of the IEU: "The reports of the GCF should include any reports of the independent evaluation unit, including for the purposes of the periodic reviews of the financial mechanism of the Convention".

<sup>5</sup> GCF/B.16/18.

<sup>6</sup> GCF/B.BM-2021/15, annex I.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://ieugreenclimatefund/> for more information on the IEU's mandate, workstreams, and evaluations.

<sup>8</sup> GCF Evaluation Policy 2021: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/evaluation-policy.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> See paragraph 3: "The Fund will pursue a *country-driven approach* and promote and strengthen engagement at the country level through effective involvement of relevant institutions and stakeholders." As well as Paragraph 31: "The Fund will provide simplified and improved access to funding, including direct access, *basing its activities on a country-driven approach* and will encourage the involvement of relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups and addressing gender aspects".

assistance to enhance the capacities of NDAs, focal points, and Direct Access Entities (DAEs). These resources were expected to enable countries to prepare country programmes, develop funding proposals, and strengthen institutional frameworks to meet GCF fiduciary and environmental standards. Decision B.08/11 introduced measures to enhance readiness funding, capping annual commitments per country and prioritizing vulnerable countries, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and African states. The RPSP also supports the development of national adaptation plans (NAPs), further aligning GCF investments with country priorities.

Another critical element of the GCF's country ownership framework is the no-objection procedure (NOP). Decision B.08/10 formalized the NOP as a mechanism to ensure consistency between GCF projects and national climate strategies. NDAs or focal points must issue a no-objection letter for each funding proposal, confirming alignment with national priorities and stakeholder consultation. This process is designed to reinforce accountability and transparency, ensuring that GCF investments reflect the needs and aspirations of the countries they serve.

Country ownership also underpins the GCF's strategic planning processes. The Strategic Plan for 2020–2023 emphasized country-driven programming, directing resources to projects that support paradigm shifts toward low-carbon, climate-resilient development. The Plan recognized the importance of NDAs and focal points in shaping country programmes and project pipelines. Similarly, the GCF's Strategic Plan for 2024–2027 prioritizes enhanced country engagement through updated country ownership guidelines and partnerships that promote inclusivity and institutional capacity-building. These efforts aim to clarify the GCF's role in strengthening country ownership while addressing evolving climate finance challenges.

## **B. IEU Evaluation on Country Ownership approach (COA2019) – findings and implementation**

The 2019 Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) Country Ownership Approach<sup>10</sup> assessed the extent of GCF's implementation of country ownership in its activities. Among its findings, the evaluation recognized achievements such as aligning investments with national priorities, establishing National Designated Authorities (NDAs), and using existing coordination structures to enhance sustainability. However, the evaluation also highlighted key gaps, including the lack of a clear definition of country ownership, inconsistent stakeholder engagement beyond national governments, inefficiencies in processes like accreditation, and limited transparency in critical documents, hinder GCF's ability to realize its country-driven vision fully.

To this end, the evaluation articulated nine key recommendations to refine GCF's country-driven approach. Among these, the evaluation emphasized the need for the GCF to establish a normative standard for country ownership that extends beyond the concept of investment criterion. The IEU further recommended elevating country ownership to an eligibility criterion, ensuring it forms a precondition for funding decisions. Other recommendations sought to enhance the transparency of no-objection procedures (NOPs) and expand the scope of stakeholder engagement to include non-state actors and vulnerable populations. Finally, the IEU stressed the importance of leveraging local systems for procurement and financial management and advocated for long-term support for NDAs through financial incentives, expert placements, and capacity-building initiatives. The strategic integration of Direct Access Entities (DAEs) was also proposed as a mechanism to deepen country ownership.

Issued in 2022 in response to the recommendations of the IEU, the Management Action Report (MAR)<sup>11</sup> consolidated the Secretariat's progress and proposed actions to address the gaps identified in the implementation of the COA<sup>12</sup>. The Secretariat expressed agreement or partial agreement with all nine recommendations, with mixed progress on implementation as rated by the IEU. In its comments to the Secretariat, the IEU remarked that the absence of a normative standard for country ownership remains a significant gap, limiting the GCF's ability to set a global benchmark for country-driven processes. Transparency measures, particularly in the publication of NOPs and CPs, continue to face delays, undermining trust and accountability. Capacity-building efforts for NDAs, while supported by Readiness grants, lack the long-term sustainability required to empower national institutions effectively. Finally, the

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<sup>10</sup> Independent Evaluation of GCF's Country Ownership Approach: <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/230322-coa-final-report-top-web-isbn.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Management Action Report of the independent evaluation GCF's Country Ownership Approach 2019: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-b34-inf10.pdf#page=26>

<sup>12</sup> GCF/B.34/Inf.10

IEU identified the need for more systematic integration of DAEs and clearer strategies for leveraging their expertise, which remain underdeveloped.

## **IV. Evaluation Framework**

### **A. Rationale**

The Guidelines for enhanced country ownership and country drivenness were approved in 2017 during the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the GCF Board.<sup>13</sup> The previous Independent Evaluation of GCF's Country Ownership approach was released in 2019. The evaluation was not followed by any updates to the guidelines nor were any substantive decisions pertaining to Country Ownership approved by the Board since 2017. However, the GCF Board has now requested the Secretariat to present an updated version of the Guidelines for ensuring country ownership for its consideration in 2025. Given the substantial lapse of time since the release of the last evaluation and the significant changes that GCF has undergone in the past years the evidence, analysis and recommendations presented in the previous evaluation may need to be updated and a new evaluation is required to inform the Secretariat and the Board on deliberations relating to country ownership and for feeding into the drafting of the updated guidelines for country ownership. This evaluation will be undertaken in parallel with the drafting of the new guidelines.

### **B. Objectives**

This evaluation will be conducted for the following three key purposes in line with the dual accountability and learning functions of the GCF IEU as guided in the GCF Governing Instrument.

1. Provide credible evidence on the performance of the Fund's approach in ensuring country ownership;
2. Provide timely evidence to feed into the drafting of updated guidelines for country ownership;
3. Generate and disseminate useful lessons learned for broader uptake and synthesis.

### **C. Scope**

The evaluation will be led, owned, and delivered by the IEU. IEU evaluation task manager, under the IEU Head has the supervisory role of the evaluation in all respects and will have final say in all matters pertaining to this evaluation. In this context, the evaluation team that is hired for this purpose will be considered an extension of the IEU team and should consider and assume all responsibilities, especially in terms of high quality, confidentiality, and timeliness followed by the IEU team. The draft evaluation report will be co-authored with the IEU team.

The evaluation exercise will build on the IEU's independent evaluation of the Country Ownership Approach in 2019 and synthesize evaluative evidence gathered since then. To this end, it will include a desk review and high-level synthesis of previous evaluations and evidence reviews as relevant. The synthesis work will be integrated into the main evaluation report to inform its findings and recommendations.

The evaluation will, inter alia, focus on the following dimensions:

- a.) An analysis of how country ownership is interpreted and implemented in GCF.
- b.) Emerging learning needs outlined by the Secretariat in developing the updated Country Ownership Guidelines.
- c.) GCF's processes, policies and operational modalities, including the Direct Access, Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) and the Project Preparation Facility (PPF), no-objection process, proposal approval process, including the simplified approval process, the accreditation process, and the overall project cycle and their implications for country ownership. The evaluation will also look at how these have manifested at the country level.
- d.) Forward looking implementation of country ownership in a rapidly evolving GCF.

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<sup>13</sup> [B.17-21 guidelines-enhanced-country-ownership-country-drivenness](#)

As mentioned above, this evaluation is expected to feed directly into the updated country ownership guidelines of GCF and the evaluation as well as drafting of the guidelines will take place in parallel. To that extent, this will be a developmental evaluation. Developmental evaluation involves long-term relationships between evaluators and project or programme staff. Development evaluation is particularly appropriate for projects or programmes working in complex or uncertain environments. It is primarily designed to support learning and management decision-making.<sup>14</sup> The evaluation task lead will ensure that such evaluation is undertaken while balancing the need for ongoing learning with the independence of the evaluation team. A developmental evaluation approach will require flexibility on part of the evaluation team, IEU and consultant team in equal measure, to accommodate the emerging learning needs of GCF.

This evaluation will be focused heavily on the GCF corporate and how the fund is set up to fulfil its mandate of country ownership. Hence, the data collection and the analysis will be focussed on understanding how country ownership is operationalized by GCF and how the same then transpires at the country level. Data will be collected at the country level and GCF level, but the analysis will focus on making the evaluation directly useful for feeding into the process of updated GCF guidelines for country ownership, thus squarely focusing on GCF as the evaluand.

## V. Evaluation Criteria and questions

The objectives of the evaluation will be achieved by using the analytical framework as dictated by GCF's evaluation criteria laid out in its evaluation policy.<sup>15</sup> Among all the evaluation criteria this evaluation is expected to focus on the following evaluation criteria:

- (a) Relevance of the country ownership approach of GCF;
- (b) Efficiency of GCF in ensuring country ownership;
- (c) Effectiveness of operationalization of country ownership;<sup>16</sup>
- (d) Coherence and complementarity in operationalization of country ownership with fund's own policies and priorities and other partners;

The number of criteria covered in the evaluation may eventually change. Although the chapters of the final report may or may not be on the lines of the evaluation criteria, the evaluation questions to be answered will be drawn heavily from the criteria.

The evaluation will analyse the above-mentioned criteria customized to the evaluation. The evaluation will also consider several key questions organized under different pillars of analysis (to be decided at the inception stage) and mapped to different evaluation criteria. The tentative set of questions to be answered by this evaluation are elaborated below and other questions may be included in the approach paper and in the evaluation at large.

- To what extent have the recommendations of the previous evaluation been implicitly or explicitly incorporated into GCF's operations? (**Relevance**)
- Is the guidance on Country Ownership clear? How is Country Ownership interpreted in GCF? Does it differ from the "spirit" of the guidance to GCF? (**Relevance**)
- How do countries define country ownership for themselves and does GCF recognize and contribute to them? (**Effectiveness**)
- Is GCF's operationalisation of country ownership relevant to countries' own priorities of programming with GCF? (**Effectiveness**)
- Has GCF been able to promote country ownership? (**Effectiveness**)
- Is GCF efficient in its operationalisation of country ownership? (**Efficiency**)

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Developmental-evaluation.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> GCF/B.BM-2021/07, Annex 1. Evaluation policy for the GCF: <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/document/evaluation-policy-gcf>

<sup>16</sup> Co-benefits and global environmental co-benefits would be included either within relevance and/or effectiveness, depending on the scope as determined during the Inception Phase of this evaluation.

- How coherent is the operationalisation of country ownership with the rest of the GCF, in terms of its priorities and objectives? How coherent is the operationalisation of country ownership with the priorities, investments and operations of other climate funds and development partners? **(Coherence and complementarity)**
- Do GCF tools such as RPSP, PPF, Country Programmes support country ownership? If yes, how do they support country ownership? **(Effectiveness)**
- How are country level systems used and supported by GCF? **(Relevance)**
- What are the key factors determining country ownership? **(Effectiveness)**
- What are the lessons learnt from the experience of other climate funds and development partners in terms of country ownership? **(relevance)**
- What is the way forward to operationalize country ownership in a rapidly evolving institution? **(relevance)**

## VI. Methods.

Under this TOR, selected evaluation team (henceforth, in combination with IEU, referred to as evaluation team unless specified otherwise) shall use the following methods in the conduct of the evaluation:

**A theory of change analysis.** The team is expected to prepare a theory of change (ToC) to promote a common understanding of the GCF's operations and expected results based on the Country Ownership Approach. The ToC will be constructed based on inputs from the GCF Secretariat staff, including its regional divisions, as applicable. The ToC will be revised based on subsequent data collection work and the final theory of change will be included in the final report and will be used for framing a part of the analysis of the evaluation.

**Review of key documents.** The evaluation team will review documents and Board decisions from the GCF and UNFCCC that are relevant to the GCF's Country Ownership Approach. In addition, the evaluation team will review evaluations and strategy documents pertaining to country ownership produced by GCF's comparator climate finance institutions and other development partners.

**Portfolio analysis.** Analysis will be undertaken on self-reported results data and financial data from GCF monitoring and reporting systems including RPSP interim progress reports and completion reports, Annual Performance Report (APRs), Entity Work Programmes (EWPs) and Country Programme (CPs), as well as the data management systems of the Secretariat. The evaluation team may also map and code qualitative data contained in documents into datasets to facilitate quantitative analysis.

**Key informant interviews/focus groups:** External and internal stakeholders will be interviewed to collect inputs on GCF's approach to country ownership. Focus group discussions may be deployed based on the need. Key stakeholders include primarily NDA, selected stakeholders at the GCF Board, Direct Access Entities (DAEs) and IAEs from the regions (including private sector AEs), representatives of other agencies that are doing similar work, selected delivery partners, and relevant GCF Secretariat Staff in the regional divisions and the Division of Private Sector Facility (DPSF) among others. Interviews will also be undertaken with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Private Sector Organizations (PSOs).

**Synthesis of existing evidence:** In 2019, IEU published the independent evaluation of the GCF's Country Ownership approach (COA2019), where it examined the extent to which country needs and country ownership have been incorporated in both the design and implementation of the Fund's policies and practices. This evaluation will build on the findings of COA 2019 by using them as a benchmark for institutional progress since the publication of the independent evaluation in 2019.

Besides COA2019, IEU has published 17 evaluations as of the time of writing these TORs.<sup>17</sup> Numerous country case studies have been undertaken during these evaluations and country-specific evidence has been generated from these evaluations and case studies. While these case studies were undertaken in the context of different evaluations the synthesis exercise will extract common issues identified in the context of country ownership approach across evaluations and countries. A separate analytical piece may be prepared from such evidence to serve as an input into preparation of the approach paper. Depending on the time of onboarding of the selected consultant team for the exercise, the selected team may be able to provide inputs and comments to be incorporated into such analytical piece. In addition to evidence from

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<sup>17</sup> [https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluations?f\[\]=field\\_status:394#list-of-evaluations](https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluations?f[]=field_status:394#list-of-evaluations)



previous IEU evaluations and related case studies, evidence from evaluations of similar nature by other comparator organizations will also be synthesized. Any relevant evaluations, reviews and assessments commissioned by GCF relevant to the country ownership approach will also be considered.

**Deep dive studies.** As mentioned above, under the section describing the scope of this evaluation, this evaluation will focus on GCF corporate. Country-level evidence will be collected through online interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, IEU plans to undertake two deep dives in selected countries/group of countries to understand specific country contexts which may provide interesting examples of country ownership. These deep dives are likely to be more opportunistic in nature, with visits planned based on emerging potential for interesting insights from specific contexts. These deep dives may involve country visits, followed by brief, analytical deep-dive reports that outline analysis and findings.

## VII. Tasks and Deliverables

The evaluation team that will work on the COA evaluation will be comprised of and be under the direction and overall leadership and responsibility of the Head of the IEU. The team will be led and managed by an IEU task manager who will actively take intellectual leadership for the evaluation. The team will include members of the IEU, including IEU's DataLab<sup>18</sup> staff to support quantitative data analysis. The selected team to be contracted under these TORs will also report to IEU for this evaluation.

The evaluation will be led, owned, and delivered by the IEU. In this context, the selected evaluation team that is hired for this purpose will be considered an extension of the IEU team and should consider all responsibilities, especially in terms of high quality, confidentiality, and timeliness followed by the IEU team. The final report will be co-authored with the IEU team. Under this TOR, the selected team shall have the following deliverables:

- A.) **Approach paper.** IEU team will prepare the draft approach paper. The selected consultant team will provide comments on the draft AP and write select parts of the approach paper, as required. This will include providing inputs into the evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix will be built on and elaborate further the evaluation questions elaborated earlier in these TORs. The questions will be mapped to the evaluation criteria, as applicable.
- B.) **Synthesis of evidence on Country Ownership.** IEU will draw on the existing evidence in GCF on country ownership to prepare an analytical note summarizing the existing evidence on the topic. This synthesis note will, iteratively, feed into the preparation of the approach paper, provide a baseline of the existing evidence on which to further build the evaluation and provide preliminary feedback to Secretariat on the existing evidence and analysis as the Secretariat embarks on preparatory work for the Updated Guidelines on Country Ownership.
- C.) **Document and portfolio review.** The evaluation team will undertake a review of numerous GCF policies, Board and Secretariat documents. This will specifically include a review of funding proposals, Annual Performance Reports (APRs) of projects<sup>19</sup>, mid-term evaluations and end-of-project evaluations undertaken by AEs on projects in the region. In addition, desk reviews may also be required for strategies and evaluations relevant to the Country Ownership Approach from other organizations. The selected team is expected to undertake document reviews, extract the appropriate data for analysis, code the relevant data and turn the relevant data into quantitative datasets.
- D.) **Quantitative data need identification:** IEU has a dedicated data team that undertakes collection and analysis of quantitative data. The selected team will be responsible for working closely with the IEU task manager during data collection and analysis, particularly in terms of engagement with the IEU DataLab. The selected team is expected to identify, in collaboration with the task manager, the possible data that can be extracted from GCF's systems to answer evaluation questions in the approach paper. In addition, the selected team will liaise with the IEU task manager and the IEU DataLab team for analysing the qualitative data that has been coded into quantitative datasets.
- E.) **Interviews:** The selected team is expected to come up with an interview protocol for the interviews with different stakeholders. Members of the team are also expected to lead, attend

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<sup>18</sup> IEU has dedicated in-house team of data analysts collectively known as DataLab and they harvest and analyse the existing data from GCF's data systems.

<sup>19</sup> APRs are annual reports produced by Accredited Entities of GCF

meetings and interviews with all relevant stakeholders including Secretariat as well as in-country stakeholders, peer institutions and board members. The selected team will also be expected to take notes, code the qualitative data and extract meaningful findings from such interviews for the main report.

- F.) **Deep dive reports:** IEU is targeting to undertake two deep dives in the course of this evaluation. The deep dives may involve country visits, if required. The selected team (firm) will be expected to recruit relevant local consultants and translators for the mission, if required, organize local meetings and participate (at least one member) in the mission. A staff member of IEU team will also be a part of the mission. The selected team is expected to perform data collection for the deep dive with preconstructed and tested data collection protocols, perform interviews with key informants and groups of stakeholders, and analyze the data collected. The team is also expected to keep notes from all meetings. Based on the interviews and data collected during deep dive missions, the selected team will prepare deep dive reports for review of IEU. Such deep dive reports will be revised based on IEU's inputs. Deep dive reports will be brief (no more than 15 pages of analytical content) will remain internal to IEU and will not be published.
- G.) **Report outline discussion note and data analysis report.** Based on the data collected in the course of the evaluation the selected team is expected to come up with a slide deck or a note which lays out the preliminary, summary outline and content of the report. Such output will serve as a means for discussion for the team to discuss and reach an agreement on the content of the report in a report writing workshop. Based on the discussions during the data analysis workshop the selected team will also prepare a data analysis report which will serve as a precursor to the drafting of the draft evaluation report.
- H.) **Draft report and final report.** Based on the data collected from various sources the evaluation team is expected to prepare the first draft with substantive inputs and iterative feedback from relevant stakeholders. Based on the comments by IEU reviewers and Secretariat subsequent versions of the report are expected to be revised by IEU and/or the selected team, as appropriate and as designate by evaluation task manager. The process of report writing and revision is expected to entail discussions and drafting of relevant conclusions and recommendations as well. The final report is to be delivered to IEU with relevant annexes, as agreed with the task manager.

All data collected by the selected team will need to be transferred to IEU during the evaluation or at the end of it. All data collected belongs to IEU and IEU task manager, under the overall supervision of Head of IEU have final authority on all matters relating the evaluation and the selected firm is expected adhere to such decisions.

## VIII. Evaluation stages and timeline

The evaluation consists of four main parts, which also coincide with the four stages of the work plan. These are as follows:

- Stage 1: Inception, planning, and Approach Paper along with a synthesis of existing evidence on the Green Climate Fund's country ownership approach;
- Stage 2: Information and data collection, data management, initial analyses, field missions (virtual/physical), and benchmarking study;
- Stage 3: Final analyses and factual draft; and
- Stage 4: Final Report, including recommendations, along with deep dive reports and key communication products.

### **Stage 1: Inception, planning, and final Approach Paper (November 2024 - March 2025):**

The inception period is to ensure that preparations and planning are undertaken appropriately.

During this period, IEU will parse the important questions that will be answered in the evaluation and develop an evaluation matrix. Scoping interviews will be undertaken with relevant GCF Secretariat and external stakeholders. Also, during this phase, stakeholder analysis will be conducted to identify key stakeholders and IEU will lay out the tentative plan for deep dives. A synthesis report containing a



compiled summary of findings from previous IEU evaluations, country case studies undertaken in the context of evaluations and findings from any reviews undertaken by Secretariat or Independent Units of GCF will be undertaken. The approach paper will also contain some of the findings from the Independent Evaluation on GCF's Country Ownership Approach published by IEU in 2019, along with a summary of relevant findings on country ownership from previous evaluations. The synthesis report of previous evaluations may be published as a standalone document, as an annex to the approach paper or final report, depending on the pace of progress and the evaluation's needs. The synthesis report and draft approach paper will be produced by IEU. The approach paper will present the perspectives from the initial interviews, and fine-tune questions of the overall evaluation.

Depending on the agreement with the IEU evaluation task lead, the selected team may conduct an **inception mission** to GCF Headquarters in Songdo, the Republic of Korea to meet with the IEU team, subject to budget availability. Alternatively, the inception meeting may be carried out online. These meetings will provide the selected team the opportunity to share the understanding of priorities for this evaluation, establish working relations, develop common systems, discuss the division of labor, sample sizes and generally launch the evaluation process. A series of other meetings will also be arranged with relevant stakeholders at the GCF Secretariat. After the inception meeting, the evaluation team may also engage a range of key informants and stakeholders, either face-to-face or by phone/videoconferencing, interviews, focus group discussions to acquire a good understanding of stakeholder priorities for the evaluation. This will, in turn, inform the refinement of the evaluation matrix set out in the draft approach paper and planning for the next phases of the evaluation process and also help in drafting data collection tools and protocols. In this phase, the inputs of the Secretariat team developing the updated guidelines on country ownership will be particularly important and will be incorporated, as relevant. Based on the timing of onboarding, the selected team will get an opportunity to draft some parts of the approach paper or provide inputs into the approach paper and the synthesis note. At this stage, the evaluation team will jointly outline a data collection and analysis plan and general timeline for the evaluation

Key outputs at the end of Stage 1 will include:

1. Inception mission/Inception meeting.
2. Evaluation data collection analysis plan and evaluation timeline.
3. Define and pilot data collection tools and protocols.
4. Approach paper and synthesis note finalization.
5. Interviews with select stakeholders on evaluation design.

## **Stage 2: Data collection (April – June 2025)**

The second phase will be the main phase of the evaluation. Interviews will be undertaken with Secretariat, NDAs, AEs, pipeline AEs, executing entities, delivery partner interviews, Board members, civil society organization (CSO) groups and private sector representatives. Focus group discussions, an online perception survey, and an analysis of the documentation and the project and readiness portfolio. Deep dives will also be undertaken at this stage. Findings will be triangulated to ensure that inferences are robust. Country visits for deep dives may be undertaken in this period. Documentation and evaluations on Country Ownership or related concepts in other organizations will also be reviewed for the meta-analysis and benchmarking element of this evaluation, to the extent that it has not been undertaken at the inception stage. A major part of the quantitative data collection and analysis will also be undertaken at this stage. The

Key outputs in Stage 2 will include:

1. Interview and focus group discussion notes
2. Deep dive missions and deep dive reports
3. Document and literature review

#### 4. Quantitative data collection and analysis

### **Stage 3: Analyses and factual draft (July-August 2025)**

The third stage of the evaluation comprises the analyzing the data collected and report writing. The qualitative and quantitative data collected at the data collection stage will be processed and analyzed. IEU will undertake analysis of most of the quantitative data and the selected team will help IEU undertake analysis of qualitative data. The evaluation team will undertake processing of data collected and come up with analysis rooted in a triangulation of all data sources. A report outline discussion note will be prepared by the selected team to bring discussion points to the table. It is usually at this stage that the evaluation team undertakes a data analysis and report writing workshop where all the collected and analyzed data along with the evaluative judgement is brought together to create an outline of the report. Based on the workshop a brief data analysis report is prepared, the contents of which become the basis for preparation of the first draft of the report. The selected team is expected to prepare the data analysis report. Based on the agreement with the evaluation task manager both the report outline discussion note and the data analysis report may be in PPT format as well, with the idea being to form the basis of brainstorming on the main report. At this stage, the first draft of the report is drafted, followed by an iterative process of revision of the report and its contents to create an acceptable draft. The report writing effort may be distributed between IEU and the selected consultant team.

Key outputs at the end of Stage 3 will include:

1. Report outline discussion note
2. Data analysis report (usually no more than 6-8 pages to outline the main arguments that the draft report will make)
3. The factual report, circulated to the GCF Secretariat and other relevant stakeholders;
4. Presentation of preliminary findings.

### **Stage 4: Final Report and annexes (August-December 2025)**

During the final stage of the evaluation, the evaluation report and its associated products will be finalized. After receiving comments on the factual report, the evaluation team will prepare the **final report** of the evaluation, including the recommendations. The communication and dissemination of the evaluation report will include webinar(s), presentation(s) to the GCF Board and other stakeholders, and evaluation briefs. Other products may include side-event during GCF Board meeting, and additional communication products. The team will be expected to remain available to support these processes and products.

The final report is expected to be presented to the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Board (which is currently foreseen to take place in October 2025). The main report with select annexes will be required to be fully finalized in time for such Board session. Such timeline will be discussed during inception. Volume II of the report, if any, will be finalized and published by December 2025.

Key outputs at the end of Stage 4 will include:

1. Final main report, including recommendations, and select annexes of the report;
2. Presentation of evaluation findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholders within the GCF;
3. Support for communication products,<sup>20</sup> dissemination of the results from the evaluation.

The tentative list of deliverables, the potential timeline and the foreseen distribution of responsibilities of the team are elaborated below. The exact dates for deliverables will be discussed and pinned down in the course of the evaluation, including the inception, to meet emerging needs of the evaluation.

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<sup>20</sup> All photographs and GIS coordinates and other data will be the property of the IEU, and should be duly submitted to the IEU.

**Table 1: Tentative list of deliverables and milestones under COA Evaluation**

DELIVERABLE	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE EVALUATION TEAM, BETWEEN IEU AND CONSULTANT FIRM	TENTATIVE TIME OF DELIVERY
Approach Paper	IEU will prepare the first draft. Selected consultant team will provide inputs on the draft version and write small, specific parts, if required.	March 2024
Synthesis of past evaluations	IEU will prepare the first draft. Selected consultant team may provide comments.	March 2024
Data collection and associated outputs (interview notes, focus group discussion notes)	Distributed responsibility between IEU and selected consultant team to be discussed in the inception workshop or immediately after. Most of the note taking to be done by the selected consultant team.	February-June 2024
Deep dive reports	The selected consultant team will undertake the mission together with IEU and drafts the reports and IEU will provide comments. The selected consultant team will revise based on the IEU inputs.	May-July 2024
Data analysis and report writing workshop	IEU will organize the workshop. The selected consultant team is expected to come with some initial findings based on the analysis of all the data collected thus far in the outline discussion note. After the workshop the consultant team will prepare a data analysis report which lays out the structure of the report and briefly elaborates on the contents of the main report, as discussed during the data analysis and report writing workshop.	June-July 2024

DELIVERABLE	DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE EVALUATION TEAM, BETWEEN IEU AND CONSULTANT FIRM	TENTATIVE TIME OF DELIVERY
Evaluation report first draft (usually known as factual draft)	IEU and the consultant team distribute responsibilities for drafting the different parts of the report.	July-August 2024
Evaluation report draft revisions	IEU and consultant team distribute responsibilities for drafting the different parts, as per IEU task manager's discretion.	August-September 2024
Evaluation communication production and any relevant annexes for volume II of the report.	The consultant team will be asked to prepare text for short communication products and communication.	September-December 2024

The proposed timeline table is as follows:

**Table 2: Timeline for the Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund’s Country Ownership Approach**

			B.41		B.42			B.43
		Dec 24 - Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May-Jun 25	Jul-Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct-Dec 25
Pre-contract	TOR advertised							
	Selection and contracting							
Stage 1	Inception							
	Approach Paper							
	Approach Paper finalization by IEU							
Stage 2	Stakeholder interviews/ Focus groups							
	Documentation review & portfolio analysis							
	Country visits and Deep dives							
	IEU Datalab analysis							
Stage 3	First Draft Report							
	Communication and socialization of emerging findings							
	Report finalization							
Stage 4	Final report with selected annexes							
	Final report Volume II with addition annexes							
	Communications and socialization							

**Table 3: Deliverables for Payments<sup>21</sup>**

N	DELIVERABLES	EXPECTED DEADLINES OF THE DELIVERABLES	PAYMENT (% OF CONTRACTUAL PRICE)
	Finalization of approach paper	March 2025	20%
	Data analysis report	July 2025	15%
	First draft report	August 2025	35%
	Finalization of the main report with select annexes	September 2025	20%
	Communication Products and Services, including dissemination of the evaluation and finalization of second volume	December 2025	10%

## IX. Relevant additional information for the bidder

**Specificity of the topic.** The principle of country ownership is climate finance-centric, and, for this reason, the evaluation is expected to be highly conceptual. The nature of the topic and the evaluation also implies that the evaluation will rely quite heavily on document and literature review. In addition, given the general lack of quantitative data pertaining to country ownership the evaluation team may have to create specific datasets on its own. For this reason, the selected team is expected to have sufficient capacity for undertaking extensive literature and desk review of UNFCCC, GCF and other pertinent documents and also to code specific data from documents into datasets, alongside IEU.

Given the specificity of country ownership to GCF and climate finance space the selected team will have to bring deep knowledge of GCF and/or the climate finance space. This deep knowledge of climate finance space is also expected to assist in targeted literature review to be undertaken for the evaluation, as outlined in the previous paragraph.

**Nature of the evaluation.** A developmental evaluation of this nature requires the evaluation team to respond to emerging priorities for learning of the evaluand (in the case of this evaluation the evaluand being GCF Secretariat). This may manifest in the following ways:

- a.) The learning needs are not clear at the start of the evaluation but the same becomes clearer as the evaluation progresses.
- b.) The learning needs outlined at the beginning of the evaluation change as the evaluation progresses.

Thus, the selected team is expected to be highly flexible and adaptive in the process of this evaluation. The selected team will have to work under the IEU task manager to reorient the evaluation, if the need so arises.

**Team composition.** Without prejudice to any ideas and proposals that the firm bidding for this evaluation brings, the task manager foresees a core team 3 consultants with differing levels of seniority and different kinds of expertise.

**Timeline.** The bulk of the evaluation's work is expected to be undertaken over 9 months, with the selected team having approximately 6 months to finish most of the evaluation-related tasks. Thus, the evaluation is

<sup>21</sup> Payment for mission expenses will be made at the end of all missions.





expected to be fast paced. The selected team is expected to be conscious of such a timeline and comply with the requirements of the tight timeline.

Lastly, if the selected team is located in a time zone different from Korea, the selected team is expected to make adjustments to accommodate the working hours of GCF.