



**GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND**

**Meeting of the Board**  
9 – 13 November 2020  
Virtual meeting  
Provisional agenda item 7

**GCF/B.27/Inf.09**

**27 October 2020**

---

# Report on the activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit

---

## **Summary**

This document provides a report of the Independent Evaluation Unit's (IEU) key activities for the period between 1 July and 16 October 2020. It reports on the IEU's outputs and achievements in line with its Board-approved work plan for 2020.

## I. Introduction

1. This document is a report of the key activities and outcomes of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) between 1 July and 16 October 2020. The objectives and key work plan activities of the IEU are presented in the Board-approved 2020 “Independent Evaluation Unit 2020 Work Plan and Budget and Update of its Three-year Objectives and Work Plan” (see document GCF/B.24/12/Rev. 01). This activity report is organized as follows:

- (a) Section I: Introduction.
- (b) Section II: Overview.
- (c) Section III: Report on key activities.
- (d) Section IV: Budget and expenditure report.
- (e) Annex I: Communication materials printed or produced and uploaded to the IEU microsite, 1 July to 16 October 2020.

## II. Overview

2. At its twenty-fourth meeting, the Board by decision B.24/06 approved an overall budget allocation amount of USD 5.58 million for the IEU for 2020.

3. More information about the IEU budget for 2020 is available in section IV.

4. Key activities taken by the IEU for the reporting period 1 July and 16 October 2020 were:

- (a) Evaluations (including evaluations completed and/or started during the reporting period, and ongoing activities related to past evaluations).
- (b) Learning, advisory services, and capacity strengthening.
- (c) Communications, uptake and partnership.
- (d) Building and strengthening the Independent Evaluation Unit.

## III. Report on key activities

5. The IEU has commenced all of its promised activities for the period 1 July and 16 October 2020.

### 3.1 Evaluations (including evaluations completed and/or started during the reporting period and ongoing activities related to past evaluations)

6. **Forward-looking Performance Review (FPR):** July 2020 provided an opportunity to reflect on the IEU’s pioneering FPR, submitted 12 months prior at B.23 where it was noted by the Board with a request for the Secretariat to provide a management response by B.24. In essence, the report recommended that the GCF better address developing countries’ different needs; focus more on adaptation; build an updated strategic plan, and delegate greater authority to the Secretariat. **The Secretariat recognized many of its findings and recommendations and included them in its updated strategic plan, which is now under Board review.** A video marking the 12-month anniversary of the release of the FPR was disseminated and attracted 120 views during subsequent weeks. The video notes that during the first replenishment process many **Board members and contributors felt the FPR reassured them of GCF’s capacity to monitor its strategic landscape**

**and performance.** The [FPR report and an array of other materials](#) are available on the IEU microsite.

7. **Evaluation of the GCF's country ownership approach (COA):** The COA report was shared with the Board at B.24, B.25 and B.26. The report will be presented and discussed following advice from the GCF co-chairs. The evaluation's key recommendations, among others, include operationalizing a broader understanding of country ownership, and encouraging international accredited entities to work with local, accredited entities. The full report and a suite of summary documents are available on the [COA report webpage](#). **Further communication and uptake work on the report during recent months** include the completion of a set of [COA evidence trees](#) that describes the linkage between findings and recommendation, a [video of the COA country case studies](#), and an [video featuring key findings and recommendations](#) of the report.

8. **Evaluation of the GCF's environmental and social safeguards (ESS) and the environmental and social management system (ESMS):** This report was shared with the Board at B.25 and B.26. The report will be presented and discussed following advice from the GCF co-chairs. The report's key finding was that the GCF's current *interim* ESS standards are unsuitable for the GCF's overall mandate. The full report and several summary documents are available on [the evaluation's microsite page](#). **Further communication and uptake work on the evaluation during the reporting period** included activities targeting the evaluation's key audiences. These included the completion of an evidence tree, promotional videos and [evaluation summaries written in Spanish and Russian](#). The IEU is also working with the Secretariat to finalize a joint video on the ESS evaluation.

9. **Rapid assessment of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Pilot Scheme:** Shared with the Board at B.26, the SAP assessment found the SAP approval time was not significantly faster than the GCF's regular approval process (365 days versus 399 days). The IEU continued to disseminate **findings and recommendations during the reporting period** with existing [online publications](#) of SAP assessment supplemented by a [recorded webinar, summary](#) and [promotional videos](#), and a recorded virtual [side event at B.26](#), disseminated via social media to targeted stakeholders. Of particular significance was the completion of the SAP assessment's [evidence tree](#), describing the linkage between findings and recommendations. The report will be presented and discussed following advice from the GCF co-chairs.

10. **Independent synthesis of the GCF accreditation process:** This synthesis was shared with the Board at B.26. The report will be presented and discussed following advice from the GCF co-chairs. The synthesis has found several assumptions implicit in the GCF accreditation function; it also identified challenges in the governance of the process and the need for strategic guidance on accreditation in the GCF. **Key activities during the reporting period** include production of the synthesis' [IEU brief](#), 2-page [GEvalNote](#), 4-page [GEvalBrief](#), and promotional [video](#). A fully copyedited and designed version of the [main report](#) was produced during the reporting period. Other dissemination activities included a recorded virtual [side event at B.26](#) and an [evidence tree](#), to help the synthesis reach and inform key decision-makers.

11. **Independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of GCF's investments in Small Island Developing States (SIDS):** The evaluation examines whether the GCF fulfils the urgent and specific needs for climate action in SIDS, and if the GCF's investments complement and cohere with other climate finance channels. **Key activities during the reporting period** include the completion of data collection and the presentation of webinars to representatives from SIDS, civil society organizations, private sector organizations and members of the GCF Board, Secretariat and the independent Technical Advisory Panel. The evaluation identified **five factors that are critical to considering SIDS' climate finance**: urgency of climate action, importance of adaptation, capacity constraints, high transaction/operational costs, and the need for flexibility. The final report and the executive summary have been submitted to the Board at B.27.

12. **Independent evaluation of the adaptation related investments of the GCF:** This evaluation examines the GCF's ability to become a global leader in adaptation investments in developing countries. By learning from the climate finance landscape and illustrating how to make frontier innovation work for all, the evaluation will demonstrate how profound, far-reaching adaptation can be conceived, funded, implemented and measured to enhance the climate security of large populations of people in developing countries. This evaluation was launched in January 2020 and will be submitted to the Board at B.28 in March 2021. Additional activities during the reporting period include the production of a [short video](#), distributed via IEU's social media channels, an [approach paper](#) and a [short brief](#) for GCF stakeholders new to the evaluation.

### 3.2 Learning, advisory services and capacity strengthening

13. **Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment programme (LORTA):** In its third year, the LORTA programme continues to embed real-time impact evaluations into funded projects so GCF can access accurate data on the programme's quality of implementation and likelihood of impact. LORTA has 13 projects in its portfolio with impact evaluation designs progressing through the different stages of implementation. A major activity during the reporting period has been the delivery of an online design workshop for 16 GCF projects when, prior to the COVID pandemic, it was conducted in person (see section 3.3).

14. **IEU Virtual Talks:** Despite COVID-19 bringing the IEU's traditional in-person lunch meetings to a temporary closure, the IEU continued to deliver this important advisory and outreach activity through virtual talks. The IEU's virtual talks attract audiences of up to 120 and reach an even larger audience via video through IEU's social media networks. They have covered diverse topics, including [the role of freshwater](#); [wildmeat consumption](#); [crop insurance](#); findings from the [IEU's accreditation synthesis](#); and the IEU's findings on [improving the GCF's SAP](#).

15. **Engagement and capacity building:** Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, IEU staff were unable attend the usual range of key international events to give keynote addresses, participate in international discussions or facilitate capacity building. To overcome this the IEU placed considerable emphasis on virtual tools such as Bluejeans, Microsoft Teams and Zoom to engage with partners and stakeholders and participate in learning and capacity building activities.

(a) **Webinars:** During the reporting period the IEU conducted webinars on recommendations from the SAP assessment, recommendations from accreditation synthesis, the approach paper of the adaptation evaluation, findings and recommendations from its SIDS evaluation, LORTA and the IEU's work plan. Audiences included representatives from the Secretariat, the Board, including Alternate Board members and advisers, evaluation advisory groups, civil society, the private sector, accredited entities, research organizations and multilateral organizations.

(b) **IEU side-events:** At B.26 the IEU presented and recorded two virtual side-events event aimed at policymakers and interested parties. The first examined key findings and evidence from the IEU's synthesis [study of the GCF's accreditation function](#) and included a presentation from Mr. Lars Roth, Chair of the GCF Accreditation Committee. The second event discussed the IEU's [assessment of the SAP](#), including recommendations on how to streamline access to GCF funding.

16. **Develop the GCF evaluation policy:** In its terms of reference, the IEU is requested by the Board to develop and update the GCF evaluation policy. At the time of this report's submission, the IEU and GCF Secretariat had jointly clarified their roles and responsibilities, shared the draft with the Board, and prepared for a technical session with the Board. The draft policy covers the evaluation function of the GCF, defines the evaluation criteria and main types of evaluations, and identifies roles and responsibilities.

17. **Learning:** The IEU takes very seriously its mandate to foster institutional learning within the GCF and to enhance the knowledge capacity of stakeholders and national partners. Communications, learning papers, evidence gap maps and evidence trees are all important tools in fulfilling this role.
18. **LORTA online workshop:** This new, innovative workshop is teaching evaluation design to 80 participants from 16 GCF-funded projects and 20 different countries. The course introduces participants to different approaches to measuring impact and focuses on theory of change-based designs. Initially planned for delivery in May in Rome, the COVID-19 pandemic saw the LORTA conduct its workshop online.
19. **Evidence reviews.** Evidence reviews are comprehensive collections of research that illustrate existing knowledge on a topic in a structured and rigorous way. More [general information about evidence reviews](#) is available for the [IEU's YouTube channel](#).
20. The IEU recently completed an Evidence Review on Climate Change Adaptation in collaboration with DEval (the German Institute for Development Evaluation) who co-financed the study. The review identifies adaptation interventions that have a strong evidence base and highlights where evidence gaps exist. Further information is available in the review's [approach paper](#) and [summary brief](#).
21. The IEU is undertaking three additional evidence reviews. The first, an Evidence Review on Transformational Change in Energy and Public Health: A review of evidence to inform climate investments, is a collaborative effort with the Climate Investment Funds. It examines the lessons to be learned from transformational changes in the energy sector and from behavioural interventions in the public health sector – an [approach paper](#) and [summary brief](#) are posted on the IEU microsite. The second, an Evidence Review on Private Sector Interventions in Mitigation, focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of private sector interventions in mitigation with an approach paper completed and available on the IEU site imminently. The third, an Evidence Review on Results-Based Payments, is currently assessing the evidence base on the effectiveness of funding mechanisms that make payment to an agent only when the agent achieves pre-defined outcomes that are independently verified.
22. **Evidence trees:** Evidence trees graphically trace how an evaluation methodically progresses from questions to findings to recommendations. The IEU recently produced evidence trees for its [synthesis of the GCF accreditation function](#), its [assessment of the SAP](#) and evaluation of GCF's ESS.

### 3.3 Communications and uptake and partnerships

23. **Overview of major communication and uptake products:** The IEU communications workstream produces a large volume of knowledge and communications materials in more than a dozen media. These materials encourage policy and decision-makers to engage with and implement the findings in IEU evaluations.
24. **Video products:** The IEU's [YouTube channel](#) offers more than 85 videos on the IEU's evaluations, learning and advisory activities. Videos include webinars, Twitter videos, lunch and virtual talks, and interviews with climate and evaluation experts and authors. IEU video products attracted 2,530 views for the reporting period, an increase of 47 per cent compared to the previous period.
25. **New podcast series:** The IEU now produces a professional podcast series, "The Evaluator". IEU produced three Evaluator podcasts during the reporting period: "COVID-19", "Behavioural science", and "Governance and COVID-19." The podcast had over 374 total listens.
26. **Blogs and media outreach (traditional and new):** The IEU builds strategic relations with traditional media, such as newspapers and magazines, and new media, such as online opinion sites and digital news networks. During the reporting period, the IEU microsite published blogs on a range

of topics related to climate change and evaluation. Each of these were further published on the [IEU's blog page](#), in the [Korea Herald](#) and in the [Korea Times](#), or on [Medium.com](#) or [Outlookindia.com](#).

27. **IEU microsite analytics:** For the period up to 16 October, the IEU microsite had more than 3,000 visitors. Of this figure, 79 per cent were new visitors to the site. Visitors predominantly came from South Korea (18.86 per cent), the United States (11.73 per cent), United Kingdom (6.15 per cent), Germany (5.39 per cent), and India (4.60 per cent).

28. **Social media analytics:** The IEU's Twitter account has over 1,000 followers, with 16.2 per cent in the USA, 8.15 per cent in the UK, 7.21 per cent India, and 5.85 per cent in Germany and 5.02 per cent in Korea. During the reporting period, the IEU's Twitter account had a 56.3 per cent increase in the engagement rate of its followers. The IEU's LinkedIn page has almost 800 followers and this number continues to increase.

29. **Building partnerships:** The IEU places considerable emphasis on partnerships and collaboration. They are critical to ensuring the IEU delivers effective evaluations, contributes to its own and the GCF's learning, and builds the capacity of in-country agencies.

30. In late June, the IEU and the University of Warwick signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) on developing a strategic knowledge partnership looking at climate change adaptation and mitigation.

31. In July, the IEU and Seoul National University signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) on promoting cooperation in technical expertise and exchanging evaluation knowledge.

### 3.4 Building and strengthening the Independent Evaluation Unit

32. **Staffing:** During the reporting period the IEU continued or initiated procurement and/or recruitment processes for an Impact Evaluation Officer, a Team Assistant, a Junior Researcher and a Formatting and Branding Communications Assistant Consultant. During the reporting period the Head of the IEU, Dr. Jyotsna Puri, announced her intention to further her career outside the GCF and will depart the Fund in November 2020. The IEU's Principal Evaluation Officer, Mr. Andreas Reumann, is currently acting Officer-in-Charge.

33. **Formal training and capacity strengthening within the IEU:** During the reporting period several IEU team members commenced a rigorous 10-week, part-time online course with the Busara Centre for Behavioural Economics. The course enhanced the IEU's understanding of how behaviour effects climate-related decisions. The IEU is now applying this knowledge in their evaluations, in the IEU's DataLAB and BaDLab, and in the advice it provides to the GCF and key climate finance partners.

34. **DataLab:** The IEU DataLab provides high-quality data to support the IEU in its rigorous, evidence-based evaluations. It continually develops and maintains databases through extraction and update of quantitative and qualitative information from the GCF as well as external sources. The DataLab's key activities for the reporting period include providing data-related support for all IEU evaluations and updating datasets to fill the gap in machine-readable data found in GCF information sources. This ensured accurate and up-to-date data analysis in IEU evaluations.

35. **BaDLab:** The IEU has re-organized its DataLab to form the Behaviour and Design Lab (BaDLab). It applies insights from behavioural science to the IEU's evaluation work. During the reporting period the team participated in the above-mentioned Busara training. Currently, it is assisting the IEU's adaptation evaluation and LORTA online workshop.

36. **Communication and uptake focal points:** The Communications workstream's key capacity building activity for the reporting period was the provision of communication and uptake support and strategies and technical assistance for all IEU evaluations. Integrated within an evaluation, the communication and uptake focal points focuses on real-time communication support, ranging from

assistance with writing and editing reports, through to identifying key audiences, messages and mediums to ensure better uptake of evaluation findings.

37. **A new microsite:** The IEU microsite houses all of the IEU's evaluations, outreach materials and knowledge products. It also provides the TOR of the IEU, presents the entire IEU team and informs about the latest blogs, upcoming events and job opportunities. As the main platform to access the IEU's output, the microsite aids both external and internal stakeholders. During the reporting period, the IEU re-designed its microsite to conform with the new layout and design of the GCF website.

38. **IEU Evaluation team meetings:** The IEU holds weekly evaluation meetings to mutually exchange views and discuss ongoing IEU evaluations, share experiences with stakeholder engagements, country missions, and discuss emerging findings and new evaluation techniques. These meetings strengthen the IEU's internal communication, learning and capacity-building. Importantly, the sharing of information leads to more insightful and fit-for-purpose evaluations.

#### IV. Budget and expenditure report

39. Table 1 shows the IEU's 2020 budget and the expenditure report as of 30 August 2020 in USD.

**Table 1: IEU Budget and Expenditure report**

Items	2020 budget	Actual	Commitment	Sub-total	%	Remaining Budget
<b>Staff Costs</b>						
Full-time Staff [1]	2,649,897	1,366,211		1,366,211	52%	1,283,686
Consultants [2]	678,160	482,680	359,566	842,246	124%	-164,086
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,328,057</b>	<b>1,848,891</b>	<b>359,566</b>	<b>2,208,457</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>1,119,600</b>
<b>Travel</b>						
General	375,228	67,193	12,123	79,316	21%	295,912
<b>Contractual services</b>						
Legal and professional services	1,540,000	235,018	778,999	1,014,159	66%	525,983
Operating costs	338,700	99,563		99,563	29%	239,137
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,878,700</b>	<b>334,541</b>	<b>778,999</b>	<b>1,113,580</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>765,120</b>
<b>Grand TOTAL</b>	<b>5,581,985</b>	<b>2,250,665</b>	<b>1,150,688</b>	<b>3,401,353</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>2,180,632</b>

[1] Staff Costs include staff salaries, benefits, staff training and development costs

[2] Consultants costs include consultants' fees, benefits and travel costs

## Annex I: Communication materials printed or produced and uploaded to the IEU microsite

1. For the 16-week period between 1 July and 16 October 2020, the IEU printed more than 10 publications and prepared and uploaded 29 digital products. Also, the IEU uploaded 45 updates about the IEU to Linked-In, distributed 80 Tweets, and published eight opinion pieces on Medium.com.

Communication product	Type
1. B26 Poster	Print copy
2. B27 Poster	Print copy
3. B26 Flyer	Digital copy
4. B27 Flyer	Digital copy
5. <a href="#">Show and Tell Session: The IEU's main recommendations and plans for accreditation</a>	Video (YouTube)
6. <a href="#">B.26 Virtual Side Event: IEU's Assessment of the GCF's SAP Pilot Scheme</a>	Video (YouTube)
7. <a href="#">B.26 Virtual Side Event: IEU's Accreditation Synthesis</a>	Video (YouTube)
8. <a href="#">IEU marks International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies</a>	Video (YouTube)
9. <a href="#">Spotlight: Independent Assessment of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Pilot Scheme</a>	Video (YouTube)
10. <a href="#">Farewell from Dr. Jyotsna Puri (Jo)</a>	Video (YouTube)
11. <a href="#">IEU Virtual Talk: Using behavioural science to mitigate climate shocks – a case study</a>	Video (YouTube)
12. Interviewing for Evaluations: 3 Tips for Success	IEU Blog Posts
13. What can the Green Climate Fund learn about innovation from institutional economics: Lessons for multilaterals	IEU Blog Posts
14. Vertical and horizontal work cultures: A first-hand account	IEU Blog Posts
15. If I could time travel: does access to credit help the decision to adapt to climate change in developing countries?	IEU Blog Posts
16. <a href="#">IEU at B.26: Virtual Side Events</a>	IEU News Updates
17. <a href="#">IEU attends Asian Evaluation Week</a>	IEU News Updates
18. <a href="#">A fond farewell: Parting thoughts from IEU Head, Dr. Jyotsna Puri (Jo)</a>	IEU News Updates
19. Newsletter Issue 10: April-August 2020	Digital publication
20. <a href="#">Approach Paper: A review of the attributes of transformational change in the energy and public health sectors</a>	Digital publication
21. Upcoming: SIDS Main Report	Digital publication
22. Upcoming: SIDS Executive Summary	Digital Publication
23. <a href="#">IEU Brief No.5 – Transformational change in the energy and public health sectors</a>	Digital publication
24. <a href="#">‘The Evaluator’ Episode 1: COVID-19 and Developing Countries</a>	Podcast
25. <a href="#">‘The Evaluator’ Episode 2: Behavioural Science and Climate Change</a>	Podcast
26. <a href="#">‘The Evaluator’ Episode 3: COVID-19, Governance and the New Normal</a>	Podcast
27. 26 Tweets	Twitter
28. 18 Updates	LinkedIn
29. 3 opinion pieces	Medium