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Report on the activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit

Summary

This document provides a report of the key activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) for the period of 1 January to 30 April 2023. It reports on the IEU's outputs and achievements in line with its Board-approved work plan for 2023.

I. Introduction

1. This document reports on the key activities and outcomes of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) between 1 January and 30 April 2023. The objectives and key work plan activities of the IEU are presented in the Board-approved "Independent Evaluation Unit 2023 Work Plan and Budget and Update of its Three-year Objectives and Work Plan" (see document GCF/B.34/16¹). 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) Supporting annexes
 - (i) Annex I: Progress Report on the Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund
 - (ii) Annex II: IEU deliverable at B.36 under the RPSP evaluation
 - (iii) Annex III: LORTA Synthesis Report 2022
 - (iv) Annex IV: Guidelines for the effective functioning of the Independent Evaluation Unit
 - (v) Annex V: List of IEU publications and communications materials that were published in the reporting period
 - (vi) Annex VI: List of IEU events and engagements with stakeholders and partners in the reporting period

II. Overview

2. At its thirty-fourth meeting held in October 2022, the Board, by decision B.34/06,² approved an overall workplan and budget allocation of USD 6,934,303 for the IEU for 2023.

3. More information about the IEU budget for 2023 is available in document GCF/B.34/16 Annex II.³

4. The Unit's key activities undertaken, in accordance with the 2023 workplan of the IEU, during the reporting period of 1 January and 30 April 2023 are structured as the following in this report:

- (a) Evaluations
- (b) Learning, advisory services, and capacity strengthening
- (c) Uptake, communications, and partnerships
- (d) Building and strengthening the Independent Evaluation Unit

¹ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-b34-16>

² <https://www.greenclimate.fund/decision/b34-06>

³ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-b34-16>

III. Report on key activities

3.1 Evaluations

5. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the IEU,⁴ as derived from the GCF Governing Instrument, states that the IEU will conduct periodic independent evaluations of the GCF's activities to provide objective assessments of the Fund's results, effectiveness, and efficiency. Within the reporting period, several evaluations concluded, and new evaluations were launched as described below.

3.1.1. Completed evaluations.

6. **Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund.**⁵ The Board launched the Second Performance Review (SPR) of the GCF in decision B.BM-2021/11 on 10 June 2021.⁶ The scope of the SPR is to assess the GCF's progress during the GCF-1 programming period, specifically: (i) the GCF's progress in fulfilling its mandate and operational priorities, as outlined in the Updated Strategic Plan (USP), and (ii) the GCF's performance in promoting a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways. During the reporting period, the IEU made progress on the following deliverables contributing to the SPR.

- (a) **SPR substantive outputs:** The IEU delivered the SPR final report, which was shared with the Board in time for B.35. This report came to the GCF Board after the Unit's submission in 2022 of several deliverables contributing to the SPR, namely: the Rapid Assessment of the Progress of the GCF's Updated Strategic Plan, the Report of the Synthesis Study, and the Summary Report. The IEU also completed the country case studies as part of the SPR final report. The Unit further developed briefs, an executive summary, and updated the SPR page of the IEU microsite during the reporting period.
- (b) **SPR procedural outputs:** The SPR continued to produce expected procedural deliverables, including:
 - (i) **Progress Report on the Second Performance Review:** The IEU submitted the Progress Report for the previous reporting period to the Board as part of the IEU's 2022 Annual Report submitted for B.35. For the current reporting period, the IEU prepared this progress report, which is part of the Activity Report submitted for B.36.
 - (ii) **Expenditure report to the Budget Committee:** The IEU submitted the Expense Report for the previous reporting period, which accounts for the progress made on the SPR and budget expenditure from September 2022 to February 2023, to the Board's Budget Committee in March 2023. For the reporting period corresponding with this IEU Activity Report, the IEU is expected to submit an expenditure report aligning with B.36 to the Budget Committee.
- (c) **Engagement and uptake:** At B.35, the IEU presented the SPR final report to the Board, and it was subsequently noted by the Board at this Board meeting. The IEU also made a presentation of the SPR final report at the Second Consultation Meeting of the Second Replenishment of the GCF, which was held on 27-28 April 2023. The IEU and the SPR

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

⁵ <<https://ieugreenclimatefund/evaluation/SPR2022>>

⁶ <<https://www.greenclimate.fund/decision/bbm-2021-11>>

team remained available to Board members, alternates, and advisors for any requested bilateral meetings, as well as for any requests for information to support the decision-making by the Board.

7. **Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the GCF's Investments in the African States.**⁷ This evaluation examined the GCF's effectiveness and efficiency in reducing the vulnerability of local communities and livelihoods to the effects of climate change in the African States, and whether these impacts are likely to be sustained. In line with the Board approved 2022 IEU workplan, the evaluation report was finalized and submitted to the Board in time for B.35 held in March 2023 in Songdo. The evaluation was included in the B.35 agenda and presented to the Board during the meeting. On Day 1 of B.35, a technical session on the recently submitted IEU evaluations was held and was attended by the advisors to the members and alternate members of the Board. In this technical session, the key findings and recommendations of this evaluation were presented and discussed. In response to the discussion held during the B.35 technical session, the Head of the IEU circulated a memo on the independent evaluation to the Board members, through the OGA, during this Board meeting. Prior to B.35, the IEU organized a Board webinar in February 2023 to present the evaluation findings and recommendations immediately upon the finalization of the evaluation report. A four-page GEvalBrief that communicates the evaluation's findings and recommendations was produced subsequently as well as its translated versions in French, Spanish and Arabic in the reporting period.

8. **Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the Green Climate Fund.**⁸ The Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the GCF examined direct access in the GCF through in-depth analyses of available data and evidence, literature reviews, and syntheses of existing evaluations and analyses from the IEU and the GCF Secretariat. The final evaluation report was submitted in time for B.35 in 2023. This evaluation was also included in the B.35 agenda and presented to the Board during the in-person Board meeting. During the technical session held on Day 1 of B.35, this evaluation was also presented to the advisors to the Board members. In February 2023, a Board webinar organized by the IEU was also held to share with the Board the findings and recommendations of this Synthesis immediately upon its finalization. A separate webinar was also held in March for the CSOs and PSOs. To further disseminate and socialize the findings and recommendations from this Synthesis, a four-page GEvalBrief was produced as well as its translated versions in French, Spanish and Arabic for IEU's global audience.

9. **Management Action Reports on five completed IEU evaluations.** During the reporting period, the IEU prepared management action reports (MARs) on five completed evaluations and submitted them to the Board ahead of B.35. The following five MARs were annexed to the 2022 Annual Report of the IEU⁹ and shared with the Board ahead of the Board meeting:

- (a) Management Action Report on the Independent Evaluation of the Adaptation Portfolio and Approach of the Green Climate Fund
- (b) Management Action Report on the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the Least Developed Countries
- (c) Management Action Report on the Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Approach to the Private Sector

⁷ <https://ieugreenclimate.fund/evaluation/AFR2022>

⁸ <https://ieugreenclimate.fund/evaluation/DA2022>

⁹ Annexes 6– 10, 2022 Annual Report of the IEU <ieugreenclimate.fund/annual-report-2022-gcf-b35-inf02.pdf>

- (d) Management Action Report on the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the Small Island Developing States
- (e) Management Action Report on the Independent Synthesis of the GCF's Accreditation function

10. As stipulated in the Evaluation Policy for the GCF,¹⁰ the Board “receives management action reports prepared by the IEU”. MARs track the progress made in the adoption of recommendations contained in IEU evaluations and the Secretariat’s management response. The MAR includes a rating and commentary prepared by the IEU. The draft rating scales and commentaries are first shared and discussed with the GCF Secretariat. Comments provided by the Secretariat are also considered in the preparation of reports. In addition to producing these MARs in the reporting period, the IEU organized one in-person Board side event on Day 2 of B.35 to introduce to the Board and observers key learnings from the five MARs. Immediately after the conclusion of B.35, the Unit hosted one additional Board webinar on the content of these MARs to accommodate the Board members and advisors who missed the in-person Board side event held during B.35. During these events, Board members also recognized the importance of the MARs and the continued active consideration of evaluations by the Board. The Board members have underscored the importance of a combined register of recommendations made by all previous IEU evaluations.

3.1.2. On-going evaluations.

11. **Independent Evaluation of the GCF’s Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme.**¹¹ This evaluation was launched in January 2023 and aims to assess the progress, gains, effectiveness, and efficiency of GCF’s readiness and preparatory support programme (RPSP), while gauging the extent to which the RPSP has led to transformational projects and programmes in the Fund. The IEU delivered, in time for B.35, a synthesis note on RPSP as a preliminary deliverable from the evaluation to inform the development of the GCF’s RPSP strategy. The IEU produced another deliverable in time for B.36 to inform the discussions on RPSP strategy and present the evaluation evidence in a timely manner. A factual draft for this deliverable was made available to the Secretariat for feedback and information. This B.36 RPSP deliverable is an additional deliverable apart from the deliverables already listed in the Workplan and Budget of the IEU for 2023. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the Board at the first Board meeting in 2024. The following lists the key activities undertaken and achievements made by the evaluation team in the four-month reporting period:

- (a) Data collection for this evaluation began in January 2023 and has continued since then. In particular, the evaluation team collected data on outputs of RPSP, using the Readiness Results Management Framework (RRMF) as the basis.
- (b) In April 2023, the evaluation team organized a joint workshop on the RPSP theory of change together with the Division of Portfolio Management of the GCF Secretariat, and invited GCF Secretariat colleagues for an in-depth discussion around the ToC that can be integrated into the final evaluation report. The product of the ToC was shared with the Secretariat to enhance the evaluation capacity of the Secretariat.
- (c) The recommendations of the first independent evaluation of the GCF’s RPSP undertaken by the IEU in 2018 led to significant strategic reflections and improvements of the

¹⁰ Annex I, Decision B.BM-2021/07 <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/document/evaluation-policy-gcf>>

¹¹ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/RPSP2023>

readiness programme, which resulted in the GCF's RPSP strategy 2.0 (see decision B.22/11).¹² The IEU originally intended to sequence the Second Performance Review of the GCF and the 2023 Independent Evaluation of the GCF's RPSP to inform the RPSP strategy and operations in the GCF-2 period; this original plan also took into consideration the Secretariat's review of the implementation of the RRMF among other things. However, with the 2023 workplan of the IEU (see document GCF/B.34/16), the IEU committed to providing an RPSP evaluation synthesis, in addition to the SPR. The continuous exchange between the IEU and the Secretariat has also underscored the importance of evidence that is provided through an independent evaluation. To provide continued support for GCF's learning, the IEU will overdeliver on this evaluation and has decided to provide the Board and Secretariat with a second early deliverable in time for B.36. This deliverable is attached to this activity report as Annex II.

- (d) Additionally, the evaluation team completed two country missions in Armenia and Belize in the January-April period and made good progress on the remaining country missions to Tanzania, Lao PDR, Ivory Coast and Bhutan with the aim of concluding these four missions by the end of May 2023. There will be one more country mission to Mexico which is likely to take place in June 2023 for the RPSP evaluation.
- (e) Furthermore, the evaluation team plans to interview a host of internal and external stakeholders in May and June in addition to launching an online perception survey.
- (f) The team also completed drafting the evaluation approach paper and held webinars on the approach, methods, and timeline.

12. **Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Investment Framework.**¹³ This evaluation was launched in 2023 in line with the Board-approved 2023 workplan of the IEU. It will broadly assess the relevance and effectiveness of the GCF's investment framework in fulfilling the GCF's mandate and strategic goals. It will look at and consider all relevant policies, tools, frameworks, and processes that come into play to enable the GCF in identifying high-quality climate change projects and making investment decisions.

- (a) During the reporting period, the IEU undertook initial inception interviews with the Secretariat staff.
- (b) The IEU team proceeded to prepare an initial draft of the approach paper, outlining the background, key evaluation questions, methods, and proposed schedule of the evaluation.
- (c) The IEU also did the preparatory work for webinars with the Board, Secretariat, CSOs, PSOs, and AEs to introduce the proposed evaluation approach.
- (d) During the reporting period, the IEU also continued the process of procurement of an external team of experts to support the evaluation. The final evaluation report is expected to be completed before the first Board meeting of 2024.

13. **Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to the Energy Sector.**¹⁴ This evaluation, also launched during the reporting period, aims to assess the relevance, efficiency, suitability, effectiveness, and innovativeness of GCF's portfolio in the energy sector in achieving climate goals alongside the lessons learned from the GCF investments. The evaluation will

¹² With decision B.22/11 (c), the Board noted that the revision to the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme as mandated by decision B.19/15, paragraph (f) is based on the outcome of the conclusions of the Secretariat's initial review and of the independent evaluation of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme.

¹³ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/IF2023>

¹⁴ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/ES2023>

assess not only the GCF's energy portfolio but also its approach to the energy sector. The final evaluation report will be submitted to the Board in time for the first Board meeting in 2024.

- (a) During the reporting period, the evaluation team conducted procurement to select a consulting firm that will support this evaluation. The team issued a contract to the firm in March 2023.
- (b) The evaluation team held an inception workshop in April and also a series of inception interviews with the GCF Secretariat. During the inception workshop, the evaluation matrix that contains key evaluation questions was prepared. The team also began working on the evaluation approach paper with input from the interviews with the Secretariat as well as the evaluation matrix.

14. **UNEG Peer review of the evaluation function of the GCF.** At the beginning of 2023, the IEU requested an external peer review of the evaluation function of the GCF by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). And during the reporting period, this request was accepted by UNEG, and the activity is included in the UNEG workplan for the year. The peer review will comprehensively and independently review the evaluation function of the GCF. It is expected to provide inputs to make the operations, evaluations, and methodology of the IEU and the GCF more robust and rigorous. A strengthened IEU will positively contribute to the results and learning architecture of the GCF. The IEU has been a member of UNEG since January 2022.

3.2 Learning, advisory services, and capacity strengthening

3.2.1 Evaluation data

15. The IEU's DataLab provides data-driven evidence using high-quality methods to inform IEU's evaluations. DataLab develops and maintains a repository of quantitative and qualitative data originating from the GCF systems and documents, as well as external sources.

16. **Informing evaluations.** During the reporting period, DataLab conducted data collection and analysis for the following evaluations that were launched in 2023: (i) Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, (ii) Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Investment Framework, and (iii) Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to the Energy Sector. Prior to this, DataLab finalized complementary data analyses for the following evaluations: (i) Second Performance Review of the GCF (SPR), (ii) Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the GCF's Investments in the African States, and (iii) Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the GCF. These additional data analyses and supplementary graphs and figures the team produced are contained in the Annexes to the main evaluation reports for each. Rigorous quality assurance for all data analyses contained in the abovementioned evaluation reports and their supporting Annexes was also completed during the reporting period.

17. **Data management and acquisition.** DataLab continued to expand its data coverage with relevant internal and external sources. Through consolidated internal processes, the data is regularly updated, revised, streamlined, and safely archived. Other key elements of data management have included strengthening the technical capacity for data analysis and increasing efficiency within the workstream. The team also took measures to enable and strengthen effective collaboration with other workstreams of the Unit, such as the Learning, Uptake, Knowledge Management, and Synthesis (LUKS) workstream. DataLab and the LUKS workstream are working closely to expedite and enhance data visualization methods and the subsequent designing and formatting of evaluation reports. Among other things, the two teams introduced new ways of inter-team collaboration and task sharing.

3.2.2. Learning papers and evidence reviews

18. The Evaluation Policy for the GCF¹⁵ requires the IEU to promote learning and dialogue by disseminating knowledge and lessons learned. Learning papers, working papers, and evidence reviews are important tools in fulfilling this role.

19. **Learning papers.** During the reporting period, the IEU completed a capacity needs assessment for GCF's direct access entities, which was published as a blog on the IEU microsite in April 2023. Additionally, the Unit disseminated and socialized the key takeaways from the 'Evaluability Assessment of the GCF Funding Proposals', which was finalized in December 2022. This learning paper assessed the tools and frameworks within GCF funding proposals that enable robust monitoring and measurement of results during project implementation. Work will continue for the other four learning papers to be completed in 2023. Two of these learning papers focus on geospatial analysis and methods; one of these discusses the methodology used by the IEU for assessing the annual performance reports (APRs) submitted from 2019 to 2021, and how input from this assessment was used by various IEU evaluations; and finally, the other learning paper looks at LORTA impact assessments and challenges associated with this work.

20. **Evidence reviews.** In the reporting period, the IEU socialized and further disseminated the findings of its 2022 evidence reviews on i) women's empowerment in developing countries and ii) behavioural insights in climate interventions, which were finalized in late 2022. For this, the Unit produced a 2-page brief of these evidence reviews, which were published on the IEU microsite in the reporting period.¹⁶ The IEU team also shared the key learnings from these evidence reviews with the GCF Secretariat and other partners through various events and engagement opportunities as the following:

- (a) First, the evidence review on women's empowerment was launched and presented by the IEU and IFAD for the first time during IFAD's Food for Thought series on 26 January 2023. Two IEU team members served as panelists at the event and presented the evidence gap map and the systematic review, together with their IFAD counterparts. The same evidence review was presented to the GCF Secretariat through a Learning Talk organized by the IEU in a hybrid format in March 2023. Both IEU and IFAD focal points participated in the Learning Talk and answered various questions on the topic from the GCF Secretariat.
- (b) For the 2022 evidence review on behavioural science, the IEU plans to organize a Learning Talk on this topic for the month of May. The IEU will also attend the UN Behavioural Science Week, organized by the United Nations Innovation Network, in June 2023 and present the learnings from the evidence review.

21. During the reporting period, the IEU also launched three new evidence reviews on the topics of i) the water sector, ii) just transition, and iii) market-based mechanisms in climate change and made progress on these as the following.

- (a) First, the Unit completed procurement for a systematic review of global evidence on the water sector, onboarded the firm South Africa Centre for Evidence (SACE), and drafted a theory of change as the basis for this review.
- (b) And a Request for Proposals was published for the selection of a firm for the evidence review on just transition. The IEU's evidence review on just transition is timely, given the new mandate from UNFCCC COP27 that GCF is to support a just transition in

¹⁵ Annex I, Decision B.BM-2021/07 <<https://ieugreenclimate.fund/document/evaluation-policy-gcf>>

¹⁶ <https://ieugreenclimate.fund/evaluations/evidence-reviews>

developing countries. The just transition evidence review will inform the GCF Board and the Secretariat and ensure that GCF maintains its status as a learning institution. This evidence review could also support the GCF Secretariat's ongoing efforts to align the GCF result areas with the four focal areas of just transition: namely, energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and ecosystem services.

- (c) Lastly, a Request for Proposals was also launched for the evidence review on market-based mechanisms. The evidence review aims to consolidate the evidence base on market mechanisms across sectors and intervention types with a focus on identifying what works in climate interventions in developing countries.

3.2.3. Capacity building

22. **IEU to support the development of evaluation capacity.** The IEU's TOR¹⁷ requires the Unit to support the strengthening of the evaluation capacities of the GCF's implementing entities. The Evaluation Policy for the GCF also provides that the IEU will support the development of evaluation capacities, particularly that of direct access entities (DAEs). In this context, the Unit completed an assessment of DAE capacities in evaluation through desk reviews and published the assessment findings in the form of a blog on the IEU microsite in April 2023.¹⁸ In this study, the existing evaluation capacities of 72 DAEs (those that were accredited by October 2022) were assessed, and the assessment findings will guide the Unit's ongoing and future capacity-building support and activities for GCF's accredited entities (AEs). The IEU plans to conduct a more advanced capacity needs assessment of AEs, which will use interviews and surveys to be undertaken in the remainder of the year. Based on this assessment, the Unit will develop a long-term capacity-building support plan for AEs as well as national designated authorities (NDAs) and country focal points.

23. **Capacity building.** The IEU also plans to roll out a series of training modules for evaluation capacity-building, which will be made available for AEs. Under this initiative, the Unit made progress in producing and finalizing the content of several modules during the reporting period. These training modules cover the topics of evaluation methods and approach, theory of change, data collection, evaluation costing, and budgeting. And the modules, upon finalization, will be tested and piloted first with a few AEs before the rollout. The Unit hopes to upload these modules as online learning resources for AEs by 2024.

3.2.4. Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment Programme

24. The IEU's LORTA programme¹⁹ continues to support real-time impact evaluations of GCF projects so that the GCF can access accurate data on the quality of project implementation and impact. LORTA enhances learning through advisory services and capacity-building in the area of impact evaluation and contributes to the global evidence in the climate space by collaborating with practitioners, academia, policymakers, and other GCF stakeholders.

25. **LORTA portfolio and progress made with the portfolio.** LORTA currently has seven projects in the engagement and design stage, seven in baseline, and eight in the post-baseline stages. In the reporting period, further progress was made with the existing LORTA portfolio of projects. Impact evaluation baseline reports for a GCF project in Zambia (UNDP, FP072)²⁰ and

¹⁷ Annex I, Decision B.BM-2021/15 <<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/updated-tor-ieu.pdf>>

¹⁸ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/blog/evaluation-capacity-assessment-dae>

¹⁹ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/lorta>

²⁰ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/230213-lorta-zambia-baseline-report-top.pdf>

another project in Bangladesh (UNDP, FP069)²¹ were completed and published on the IEU microsite. Further, baseline data collection for the GCF project in Georgia (UNDP, FP068) and Uganda (UNDP, FP034) was finalized. Similarly, midline data were collected in Rwanda (Ministry of Environment, FP073). Data cleaning of the midline data for Madagascar (Conservation International, FP026) and the endline data for Bangladesh (UNDP, FP069) was also conducted during the reporting period. And the LORTA team is currently working on impact evaluation reports for these GCF projects.

26. **Key LORTA activities and engagements.** As part of its ongoing effort to support the AEs within its portfolio, the LORTA team actively engaged and interacted with the entities and project teams through virtual means and country visits. Notably, country visits were done for Rwanda, Uganda, and Armenia to support their data collection for impact evaluation and project monitoring and evaluation.

- (a) **Rwanda:** The visit to Rwanda took the form of a three-day workshop with over 20 stakeholders. The workshop was convened by The Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA) and the Ministry of Environment. The main purpose of the workshop was to pre-test and finalize the survey instrument as well as the enumerator training before launching data collection in the field. It was attended by government officials and consultants from the survey firm.
- (b) **Uganda:** The visit to Uganda involved a four-day workshop held in Kampala with over 30 stakeholders to support the LORTA Uganda baseline survey. Participants came from the Ministries of water and environment, agriculture, and meteorology as well as the climate change department. Through the workshop, the participants agreed on the sampling of wetland systems based on expert knowledge as well as the available GIS data.
- (c) **Armenia:** The visit to Yerevan, Armenia took place at the end of March as a combined mission for the IEU's ongoing RPSP evaluation and also for LORTA. One day was allocated to meeting the Environmental Project Implementation Unit (EPIU) of the Ministry of Nature Protection, and discussing the concept note and design of the country's forestry project as well as its potential impact evaluation with the support of LORTA. The project's focus is on establishing backyard nurseries at the household level for reforestation with a clear possibility of randomizing the project delivery to measure causal impact.

27. As part of its external engagement during the reporting period, the IEU was represented by a LORTA team member at the UN Data Forum held in April 2023. The IEU participated in a session titled "Rethinking data: listening to government's experiences" chaired by UNDP and showcased two of the LORTA-supported GCF projects there. In this session, the government representatives of Bangladesh and Malawi shared their experiences and views on how the data collection processes for their LORTA-supported impact evaluations led to a rethinking of their policy, interventions, and public services.

28. For better uptake and dissemination of LORTA-related learnings and insights, the IEU dedicated its monthly Learning Talk for April to the topic of LORTA's impact evaluation of FP002 in Malawi. The talk was titled "How do we know GCF investments work?". In this Learning Talk, a colleague from the GCF Division of Mitigation and Adaptation introduced basic facts about the project FP002, which was then followed by a presentation by the LORTA team on lessons learned from its impact evaluation of a component of this GCF project. Through this

²¹ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/230323-lorta-bangladesh-baseline-report-top.pdf>

Learning Talk organized by the IEU, the participants including the GCF Secretariat colleagues had a chance to learn about how the impact of GCF interventions gets measured at different stages of the project cycle, by looking at the examples from FP002.

3.3 Uptake, communications, and partnerships

29. The IEU ensures knowledge dissemination and uptake by engaging in various external and internal events, producing a wide range of publications and outreach materials, regularly updating its microsite, and sharing content on social media, among others.

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

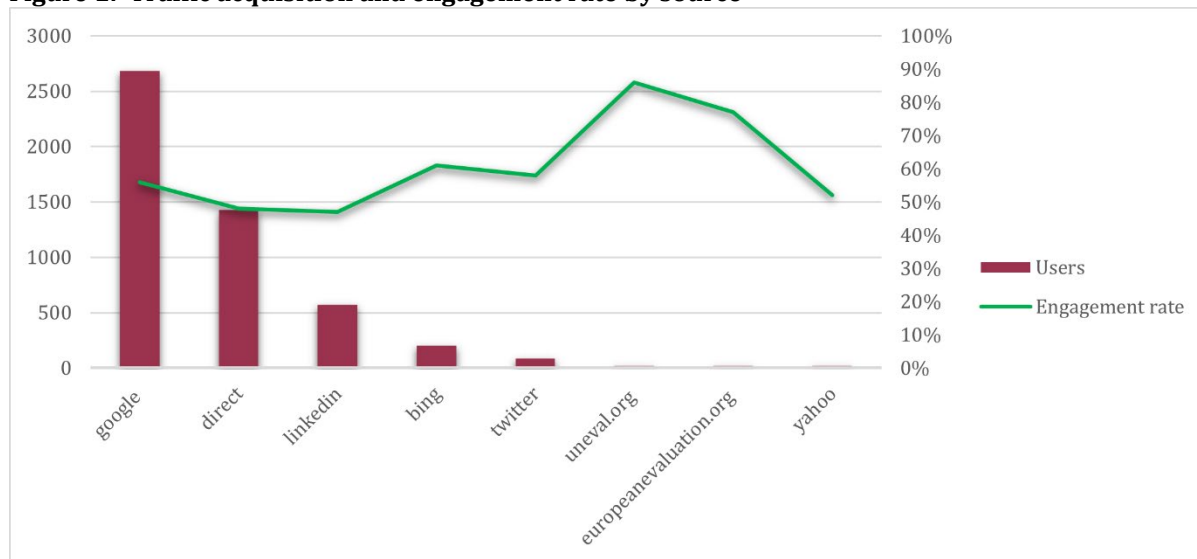
3.3.1. Communications products and uptake

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

32. **IEU microsite analytics.** In the January – April 2023 period, the IEU microsite received a total of 6,948 visitors. While recording 6,948 total visitors, 6,663 were marked as engagements from 'new users' and 1,618 as engagements from 'returning users'. In the preceding four-month period (September - December 2022), the microsite registered 5,442 total visitors with 5,135 marked as 'new users' and 1,139 as 'returning users'. The 28 per cent rise in the number of total users and 42 per cent uptick in the retention rate may relate to the fact that the three IEU evaluations reached their final stage in February 2023, resulting in an increased number of finished products that were published online in the reporting period. For example, the spikes in the user count and their activity on the website were recorded on 2 and 3 March; these dates correspond to when the three final evaluation reports and the new issue of the IEU newsletter were advertised on social media.

33. Visitors predominantly used three main avenues to access the IEU microsite and publications: (i) web searches (e.g. via Google), (ii) direct URL access (e.g. via a browser bookmark), (iii) social media (e.g. via Twitter or LinkedIn) and (iv) referral (e.g. partner websites). An interesting trend the IEU has observed is that users who arrive on the IEU microsite via referrals, tend to spend more time on the microsite and engage more actively with the IEU content (see Figure 1 below). This could be explained by the fact that these users, particularly those referred by evaluation networks, such as the UN Evaluation Group and European Evaluation Society, are evaluation experts who might be keen to learn more about IEU activities, as opposed to users who discover the website via search engines.

Figure 1: Traffic acquisition and engagement rate by source



Source: Google Analytics

34. With regards to IEU publications posted on the microsite during the reporting period, the final report of the Second Performance Review received the most traction with 148 recorded downloads. This was followed by the learning paper on “Evaluability Assessment of the Green Climate Fund Funding Proposals” which was downloaded 102 times, and the final report of the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the GCF’s Investments in the African States with 91 downloads. Other evaluation products, including the Executive Summaries of SPR and Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the GCF, also attracted a lot of user traffic and were among the most downloaded.

35. **Social media analytics.** The IEU’s solid presence on social media enables the Unit to reach a wide range of stakeholders, including members of global evaluation networks and associations, other climate funds and international organizations, evaluation offices of UN agencies, AEs, NGOs, and academia, in addition to the GCF stakeholders including the Board members and advisors. As mentioned in paragraph 33 above, social media also serves as an important gateway for the stakeholders to access various IEU evaluation reports, evidence reviews, and studies for the first time, which then leads them to check content from the IEU microsite. For this reason, the IEU posts content on social media daily and closely monitors social media analytics and engagements. Over the reporting period, the IEU’s social media channels saw a significant growth in user followership and subscriber numbers across all platforms (see Table 1).

Table 1: Growth in SNS followership over the reporting period

Platform	Number of new followers	Total number of followers	Rate of growth in followership
LinkedIn	1,119	4,369	34.4
Twitter	57	1,466	4.0
YouTube	21	410	5.4

Source: LinkedIn Analytics, Twitter Analytics, YouTube Analytics

- (a) **LinkedIn.**²² The number of followers of the IEU's LinkedIn account increased by 1,119 to 4,369 in the reporting period, representing an increase of 34.4 per cent. Across the IEU's LinkedIn visitors and followers, the large majority come from the fields of international affairs, non-profit organizations, and research services (more than a third), and these followers are mostly based in Asia, Europe, and North America, with hot spots in Seoul-Incheon, Washington, Delhi, Calabarzon, Geneva, and Madison. It is notable that considering the total follower size of the IEU's LinkedIn page, the IEU posts an above-average number of posts and receives strong engagement across the posts, on a par with its peer organizations, such as UNEG and 3ie that have double or quadruple the follower count of the IEU. Over the reporting period, the IEU launched 86 new posts on LinkedIn. Posts contained information about the IEU's latest evaluations, external and internal events, job openings, team achievements, and new blogs. Those receiving the highest engagement included the Special Learning Talk on the Wetlands, IEU Interns' Day visits to the UNPOG Office and the Pakistan Embassy in Seoul, the meeting with other climate evaluators during UNEG Week, and the MARs Board side event held during B.35.
- (b) **Twitter.**²³ The IEU disseminated 83 new tweets in the four-month reporting period, amounting to over 25,000 tweet impressions, the total number of times any user could have potentially seen the IEU's name or message. The number of impressions at the end of February 2023 reached 6.2k impressions, and this figure tripled to 19k impressions by the end of April 2023. The number of total link clicks per month increased almost fourfold, and the number of followers grew by 57 to 1,466. Overall, the engagement rate of visitors to the page has shown an upward trend over the period. Tweets over this period informed key stakeholders of the IEU's latest evaluation products, engagements, events, partnerships, blogs, team achievements, and vacancies. Tweets also disseminated relevant information about the B.35 proceedings and discussions. Those receiving the highest engagement on Twitter included the learning event organized by IFAD on the joint evidence review on women's empowerment, the IEU Interns' Day visit to the Pakistan Embassy, IEU participation at the World Sustainable Development Summit, developments at B.35, and job vacancy announcements.
- (c) **YouTube.**²⁴ The IEU published 10 new videos (nine recordings of IEU-organized webinars and events, and one professionally edited video) on YouTube in the reporting period. And the channel received over 2,400 views, equivalent to 161.2 hours of viewing time, over the reporting period. The number of subscribers increased by 21 to 410 subscribers, an increase of 5.4 per cent. The videos receiving the highest engagement included the spotlight videos on the GCF's Adaptation Portfolio (349 views), LORTA (131 views), and Environmental and Social Safeguards (116 views), as well as the IEU Webinar on the Inception Report of the SIDS Evaluation (141 views) and IEU Learning Talk on the Evaluation Policy of the GCF (102 views).

3.3.2. Partnerships

36. The IEU works with a wide range of partners.²⁵ To date, it has Memoranda of Understanding, membership, and partnership agreements with a total of 26 accredited entities, national designated authorities, universities, research institutes, government ministries, civil

²² <https://www.linkedin.com/company/gcf-eval/>

²³ https://twitter.com/GCF_Eval

²⁴ https://youtube.com/@GCF_Eval

²⁵ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/about/partners>

society organizations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and independent evaluation offices of accredited entities. Additionally, in January 2023, the IEU joined the global SDG Synthesis Coalition, which consists of 40 evaluation offices of UN organizations, research networks, multilateral and international organizations, and other partner entities. The SDG Synthesis Coalition will aim to produce syntheses of evaluative evidence on the SDGs that are grouped into five pillars: namely, People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. Of the five pillars, the IEU is serving as the Co-Chair of the Management Group of the Planet pillar SDGs Synthesis, together with the UNEP Independent Evaluation Office.²⁶ In April 2023, the IEU also signed an MoU with the International Labor Organization.

3.3.3. Internal Events

37. The GCF's Evaluation Policy and the IEU's TOR require the IEU to disseminate lessons learned. According to the GCF Evaluation Policy, dialogue is one of the key functions of evaluations. IEU-organized webinars and events are an excellent channel for disseminating information, increasing awareness of the IEU's work and its relevance to the GCF, encouraging the exchange of ideas, and fostering dialogue and learning among the IEU's global stakeholders and partners. During the reporting period, the IEU delivered the following events:²⁷

- (a) Seven **IEU Webinars and Learning Talks** aimed at fostering discussion on topics of the IEU's work with the GCF Secretariat. The IEU Learning Talks held during the reporting period covered the topics of: accreditation, the Evaluation Policy for the GCF, impact evaluations of GCF projects, wetlands conservation, and the completed IEU evidence review on women's empowerment in developing countries. In addition, two IEU webinars were held to discuss the key findings of the IEU's RPSP Synthesis Note and the learning paper titled "Evaluability Assessment of the Green Climate Fund Funding Proposals".
- (b) Six **evaluation webinars** for the GCF Board members, alternate Board members, and advisors, and CSOs, PSOs, and AEs. These webinars are aimed at disseminating key information relating to IEU's evaluations. These webinars covered the topics of: Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the Green Climate Fund, Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the GCF's Investments in the African States, Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, as well as Management Action Reports (MARs) on five completed IEU evaluations – Accreditation, SIDS, Private Sector approach, Adaptation, and LDCs.
- (c) Two **IEU Interns' Day** visits for the interns aimed at allowing them to share IEU's work with and gain exposure to external stakeholders. In February 2023, the IEU interns visited the United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) and in April 2023, they visited the Embassy of Pakistan in Seoul.

38. In January 2023, on the side of the UNEG Evaluation Week, the IEU also convened a meeting of the evaluation offices of climate funds. Additionally, the IEU participated in and presented its work at the following GCF events and meetings: GCF New Staff Orientation (7 February), International Women's Day Panel Discussion on Climate Technology and Innovation organized by GCF Women (8 March), GCF Division of Mitigation and Adaptation Weekly Meeting (22 March), GCF All Staff Meeting (23 March), and the GCF Second Replenishment Consultation Meeting (27 April).

²⁶ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/events/ieu-at-sdg-synthesis-coalition>

²⁷ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/newsroom/events>

3.3.4. External events

39. The IEU continued with its engagement and exchange of information with external stakeholders. During the reporting period, the IEU was invited to present key findings and lessons learned in two international conferences, the World Sustainable Development Summit (23 February) and the UN World Data Forum (27 April). In addition, the IEU participated in two webinars and lectures organized by external partners: i) IFAD's Food 4 Thought Series on What works for women's empowerment in developing countries in January and ii) Delhi IIT's lecture on Climate Finance and Development Assistance in March.

40. During the reporting period, and as part of ongoing partnerships the IEU is engaged in, the IEU personnel also participated in the UNEG Evaluation Week 2023 in January, and Transformational Climate Finance Workshop: Advancing Just and Equitable Solutions for the Climate Crisis in March, and the SDG Synthesis Coalition Member States' Briefings and technical meetings throughout the first quarter of 2023 (see Annex VI for the full listing of internal and external events held during the reporting period).

3.4 Building and strengthening the Independent Evaluation Unit

41. Based on the Evaluation Policy for the GCF, the IEU is expected to be a global leader in climate evaluation. Accordingly, it places considerable emphasis on developing internal capacity through a wide range of training and learning opportunities.

42. **Staffing.** The new Executive Assistant joined the office in January 2023, concluding a hiring process of 2022. The selection of the Chief Evaluation Advisor for the Unit was finalized in March 2023. One female staff member was promoted at the Unit in the reporting period. The Head of the IEU, who was selected by the Board in October 2022, officially took the helm of the Unit in March 2023. Recruitment for six of the nine vacant staff positions was still underway by the end of April 2023, and these are: Principal Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Specialist, Impact Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Data Associate, and Evaluation Associate. The position of Deputy Head remains vacant, as the Board requested further consideration about this position. And two further promotion requests were submitted to OHR but were pending a response from them by the end of April 2023. The IEU will continue to support the OHR in the execution of hiring processes for the Unit and work towards filling the Board-approved 26 staff positions for 2023.

43. In the context of the significant hiring delays for the vacant staff positions, the IEU Head has decided to adjust and redirect unused allocations of the Unit's staff budget to balance capacity and human resources needs in light of the 2023 workplan targets. The budget lines will be adjusted to give the Unit more modularity and to enhance its capacity to deliver on the 2023 workplan of the IEU. The reallocated budget will be directed towards:

- (a) Legal and professional services to enhance the capacity of the IEU staff and support the delivery of the 2023 evaluations through external consultant capacity;
- (b) Consultant services for professional copyediting and translation of IEU publications; and
- (c) Printing orders for its evaluation reports, summaries and briefs.

Nevertheless, the current staffing shortage may affect the delivery of several activities under the 2023 workplan of the IEU. The IEU Head continues to discuss possible impacts with an internal coordination group on a weekly basis. Adjustments to the Unit priorities are decided and presented to the IEU team regularly by the Head.

44. **Internship programme.** As a part of the wider GCF internship programme, the IEU internship offers young graduates an opportunity to learn and grow by supporting the development and undertaking of evaluations for six months. The IEU’s recruitment of interns aims to ensure both training and learning. In addition to a final report at the end of the internship, IEU interns are responsible for drafting and distributing a weekly internal report that provides an update on the tasks assigned to them in the previous week. The IEU’s Interns’ Day programme allows the interns to put aside their usual day-to-day tasks and learn about other areas of the IEU’s work, the GCF, or climate change. For the Interns’ Day programme for the month of February 2023, the IEU interns visited the United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), which is also located in the G-Tower in Songdo, and learned about the mandate and work of UNPOG in developing countries. For the month of April, the IEU interns visited the Pakistan Embassy in Seoul together with the IEU Head and other staff members for the Unit’s bilateral exchange with the Pakistan seat. The IEU welcomed one new intern in April 2023 and will welcome two new interns in June. The current interns are set to complete their internship programme in June 2023. The IEU is pleased to inform that one of the current cohort interns left the Unit in early 2023 to commence a position as Assistant Professor at a Korean university.

45. **Team training.** In January 2023, the IEU convened a virtual workshop to check and discuss the results of the 2022 GCF Staff Engagement Survey that are relevant for the IEU team. During this workshop, the IEU drafted an action plan for the areas that had been identified by its own members as areas requiring further improvement, including improving the wellbeing of team members, better communicating individual priorities in a way that could still ensure the effective functioning of the Unit, and ensuring individual accountability for tasks. In the remainder of 2023, the IEU plans to hold two team retreats as well as a workplan retreat for 2024. It is a common practice for the IEU to organize team retreats with the aim of enhancing team culture and interpersonal cooperation and of building a better plan for the year ahead. The first team retreat is being planned for July 2023 and the second one for November 2023. The workplan retreat to prepare for 2024 will also take place in July 2023.

46. **Other training.** In the period of March – April 2023, the IEU had two GCF performance management and development system (PMDS) training sessions with the OHR. The first session was designed to help close the 2022 PMDS cycle by answering the various questions the IEU team members had. And the second training session was held to help the team members with the planning for the new PMDS cycle for 2023. The IEU senior staff members with a managerial role will also undergo a GCF leaders’ training in the next few months.

IV. Budget and expenditure report

47. Table 2 below shows the IEU’s 2023 budget and expenditure report as of 30 April 2023 in USD.

Table 2: IEU budget and expenditure report in United States dollars (USD) as of 30 April 2023

Items	2023 budget (1)	Actual spent (2)	Committed amount as of 4/2023 (3)	Sub-total (4)=(2)+(3)	% (4) as a percentage of (1)	Remaining budget (1-4)
Staff costs	4,550,980	1,030,959	203,635	1,234,594	27%	3,316,386
Full-time staff	4,051,326	918,756	-	918,756	23%	3,132,570



Consultants & interns	499,654	112,203	203,635	315,838	63%	183,816
Travel	258,107	14,891	50,293	65,184	25%	192,923
General	258,107	14,891	50,293	65,184	25%	192,923
Professional services	1,496,499	88,254	210,778	299,032	20%	1,197,467
Legal & professional services	1,460,000	85,946	210,778	296,724	20%	1,163,276
Operating costs	36,499	2,308	-	2,308	6%	34,191
Sub-Total (IEU)	6,305,586	1,134,104	464,706	1,598,810	25%	4,706,776
Shared cost allocation	658,704	219,568	439,136	658,704	100%	-
Grand Total	6,964,290	1,353,672	903,842	2,257,514	32%	4,706,776

Note: In Q1 of 2023, the IEU entered into several contracts with consulting firms that provide technical support for the delivery of 2023 evaluations. The commitment amount for these contracts will substantially increase the budget execution rate as key evaluation milestones are being met and disbursements are made accordingly.

Annex I: Progress Report on the Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund

I. Introduction

1. The Board launched the Second Performance Review (SPR) of the GCF in decision B.BM-2021/11 on 10 June 2021. The scope of the SPR is to assess the GCF's progress during the GCF-1 programming period, specifically: (i) the GCF's progress in fulfilling its mandate and operational priorities, as outlined in the Updated Strategic Plan (USP) and (ii) the GCF's performance in promoting a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways.
2. In decision B.27/08, the GCF Board approved the work plan and budget of the Independent Evaluation Unit for 2021. Document GCF/B.28/07 notes that "At every Board meeting, IEU activities reports will include an update on the progress made on the second performance review." This progress report provides an account of the progress made on the SPR in the reporting period of January 2023 to April 2023.

II. Activities under the SPR

2.1 Data collection

3. During the reporting period, the SPR team concluded the key data collection activities, as well as analysis and drafting of the final report. In particular, the SPR team finished the following prior to the reporting period:
 - (a) Prior to the reporting period, the IEU concluded data collection for country case studies. SPR missions covered the following countries in a hybrid or in-person mode: Bangladesh, Georgia, Grenada, India, Kenya, the Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Peru, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, and Viet Nam. IEU members undertook travel relating to country missions in coordination with the GCF Secretariat, including the travel and the security teams, and in adherence to the Administrative Instruction on the GCF Official Travel.
 - (b) Prior to the reporting period, the IEU concluded the examination of existing data sources, such as data systems maintained by the Secretariat and the IEU's in-house databases and relevant external data, including GIS data. Several new approaches were implemented to close the information gaps and triangulate the evidence under the mixed methods approach. These analyses were directed to contribute to the SPR final report.
 - (c) Semi-structured stakeholder interviews for data collection were also concluded prior to the reporting period. Specifically, the SPR team undertook extensive interviews with members of the Board, Secretariat, AEs, NDAs, other partners, and experts. Overall, the SPR team undertook more than 700 semi-structured interviews, including country case studies.

2.2 Analysis and drafting

4. In 2023, the SPR team undertook the drafting and finalizing of the final report of the SPR. The SPR team undertook virtual and, where possible, in-person workshops for analysis,

writing, and editing. The scope of the workshops covered the findings as well as recommendations.

5. The IEU shared a factual draft of the SPR final report with the Secretariat in December 2022. The comments and feedback provided by the Secretariat were taken into account during the revisions and preparation of the final report.

6. In the context of B.35, the IEU shared a raw version of the SPR final report with the Co-Chairs to support the timely circulation of the report. The IEU also shared the recommendations with the Secretariat to support the timely development of the management response. The IEU circulated the final report of the SPR in time for B.35.

7. In addition to the final report, the IEU also prepared country case study reports as well as a 2-page and a 4-page brief to provide accessible summaries of the report.

2.3 SPR substantial outputs

8. The IEU is expected to produce several deliverables under the SPR. The IEU previously produced and delivered the FPR Management Action Report (MAR) and the SPR Synthesis Study. Further, ahead of B.32, the IEU prepared for Board's consideration a) the rapid assessment of the USP 2020-2021 and b) the SPR approach paper. At B.34, the IEU submitted the SPR summary report to the Board, including evidence and finding areas with recommendations.

9. During the reporting period, the IEU delivered the SPR final report, which was shared with the Board in time for B.35. The IEU also completed the country case studies as part of the SPR final report. It further developed briefs and an executive summary and updated the site during the reporting period.

2.4 SPR procedural outputs

10. As a part of the SPR, the IEU is expected to produce several procedural deliverables, including:

- (a) **Progress Report on the Second Performance Review:** The IEU submitted the Progress Report for the previous reporting period to the Board as part of the IEU Annual Report submitted for B.35. For the current reporting period, the IEU prepared this progress report, which is part of the Activity Report submitted for B.36.
- (b) **Expenditure Report to the Budget Committee:** The IEU submitted the Expense Report for the previous reporting period, which accounted for the progress made on the SPR and budget expenditure from September 2022 to February 2023, to the Board's Budget Committee in March 2023. For the reporting period corresponding with this IEU Activity Report, the IEU is expected to submit an expenditure report aligning with B.36 to the Budget Committee.

2.5 Engagement and uptake

11. The GCF Evaluation Standards call for evaluations to take a participatory approach.

- (a) **Replenishment Meeting for GCF-2** – The IEU made a presentation of the SPR final report at the Second Consultation Meeting of the Second Replenishment of the GCF on 27-28 April 2023.

- (b) **B.35 Board presentation** – At B.35, the IEU presented the SPR final report to the Board. This report was noted by the Board in this Board meeting.
- (c) **Bilateral meetings** – The IEU and SPR team remained available to Board members, alternates, and advisors for any requested bilateral meetings, as well as for any requests for information to support the decision-making by the Board.

Annex II: IEU deliverable at B.36 under the RPSP evaluation

I. Background

1. In decision B.34/06, the Board approved the work plan and budget for 2023 and the update of its three-year rolling work plan and objectives. The Board-approved work plan (document GCF/B.34/28) commissioned the independent evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) to assess the progress, results and outcomes, effectiveness, and efficiency of its operational processes.
2. The evaluation addresses key questions, including:
 - (a) Assessing progress and gains made in the effectiveness of the RPSP
 - (b) Assessing the extent to which readiness has created an enabling environment for accessing climate finance at country level
 - (c) Assessing the effectiveness of the Readiness programme's operational approach
3. The synthesis note of the evaluation was published in March 2023. The synthesis note offers an overview of existing evaluative evidence on the RPSP of various dimensions of importance based on the findings of previous IEU evaluations. Building on the evaluation report of the Second Performance Review (SPR) presented to the Board at its thirty-fifth meeting (B.35), the first IEU evaluation of the RPSP in 2018 and other IEU evaluations, the synthesis note provides preliminary lessons learned to support the development of a new RPSP strategy.
4. This additional deliverable of the evaluation at B.36 is based on key findings from previous evaluations, a preliminary review of the landscape, evidence related to internal structure relevant to the RPSP, and some strategic reflections. The balance of the evaluation will be completed by October 2023, followed by the submission of the final evaluation report in time for the following Board meeting in 2024.

II. Methods

5. In terms of methods, this deliverable is based on a synthesis of many IEU and other documents, and the evidence therein. These include: the SPR (including its various deliverables), country case studies of the SPR and IEU evaluations undertaken during the GCF-1 period (2020–2023), preliminary findings of a landscape analysis undertaken as part of the RPSP evaluation, an IEU analysis of correlation between RPSP and approved funding proposal (FP), and a review of Conference of the Parties (COP) decisions.

III. Reflections from available evidence and previous evaluations

6. **The RPSP has a highly relevant role and many proven strengths.** The RPSP is the world's largest climate capacity-building programme, housed in the world's largest dedicated climate fund. It has come to be used as a relatively flexible and largely demand-driven instrument that supports emergent capacity development to meet national designated authority (NDA) strategic needs, and helps aspiring partners gain access to the GCF.
7. The RPSP currently has five key objectives and continues to serve many purposes for the GCF. In COP decisions (and Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) decisions where relevant), it is expected that the RPSP should primarily support the developing countries' formulation and implementation of national

adaptation plans (NAPs) and other voluntary adaptation planning processes. In more recent COP decisions, it is mentioned that the RPSP should support technology development transfer, capacity-building (e.g. for in-country institutional strengthening, setting up of a coordination structure with the GCF, and strengthening of fiduciary standards and environmental and social safeguards (ESS)), and development of national and subnational gender strategies, in a country-driven manner.

8. Particularly in SPR case studies, many positive examples from existing RPSP grants are cited by respondents. Some positive examples refer to programme roles in strengthening the role of NDAs, developing concept notes (CNs), and promoting stakeholder engagement. In some country case studies, stakeholders reported finding the RPSP helpful for accreditation of targeted entities. The SPR analysis also found a relatively high correlation between RPSP and CN submission, particularly where the accredited entity (AE) was also the RPSP delivery partner (DP). In SPR analyses, the IEU found that readiness finance is positively associated with public and private sector FP finance. As well, the presence of readiness support is strongly correlated with the number of FPs submitted to the GCF. Widely cited as an additional positive, becoming a DP offers entities a non-AE route for institutional engagement with GCF. Historically, GCF has concentrated its attention on how readiness resources can be used to support the development of country programmes (CPs) along with the priorities identified in these documents. It has paid much less attention to the question of how the country programming process itself could be used to prioritize readiness needs.

9. This support, however, is provided without sufficient clarity on the strategic choices the GCF wishes to make. The SPR has previously found that the GCF has so far operated with deliberate or accidental strategic ambiguity. Beyond the broad portfolio targets such as balance between adaptation and mitigation, priority for direct access, and emphasis on vulnerable countries, the precise trade-offs within the GCF are not clear. Portfolio trade-offs are in fact being made by the GCF, but the basis for such trade-offs is not clear.

10. In the absence of specific targets or strategic choices, the readiness support provided by the GCF and partners is targeted, generally, at building of capacities. Readiness support is guided by the choices and priorities articulated by partners at the country level. The Secretariat plays a reactive role, and is not strictly involved in planning the RPSP pipeline at the country level. **GCF readiness support is not necessarily directed at specific GCF inputs, nor directly associated with internal choices that the GCF makes in directing its portfolio.** Programme level impacts or targets are not yet clearly articulated by the GCF, leading to somewhat fragmented interventions at the country level.

11. As a largely demand driven instrument, the RPSP operates without explicit linkages with other strategic engagement approaches (e.g. CPs, entity work programmes, partnerships). It also appears related but disconnected with the objectives of the project preparation facility of the GCF. This means that GCF funding, objectives and delivery models are not necessarily aligned. As a consequence, the trajectory toward a flow of climate finance for a country that is set in motion from delivery of RPSP capacity and accreditation support is far from assured and largely speculative.

12. While the RPSP model is demand driven, the GCF programming and accreditation pipelines are more driven by resources and GCF priorities. The link between RPSP grants and GCF programming and accreditation is not explicit. In a handful of cases, IEU case study data suggests that readiness support directed at accreditation processes or the development of CNs/funding proposals might actually run at odds with GCF Board and Secretariat programming considerations that remain internal and not officially or explicitly stated. For example, through 2022–2023, the Board and Secretariat reviewed strategy options pertinent to readiness programming that include, applying limits to the portfolio of AEs and directing FPs

towards specific strategic targets. **Overall, there is emerging evidence that the readiness support provided by GCF and others would benefit from the articulation of GCF priorities.**

13. In its current articulation, the RPSP is a multi-objective demand-driven instrument. This leads to a form where the RPSP includes a portfolio of piecemeal and task-oriented interventions. **Individual grants may achieve success in their own right, but in the absence of a clear narrative of impact, the results of the programme can appear fragmented and not directed towards a specific impact.**

14. There appear to be several possible pathways to address this narrative of “fragmented impacts”, and some of them may include: explicitly directing the RPSP to continue to fulfil important (even if programmatically disconnected) country priorities; use of the RPSP strictly in line with GCF strategic choices (which would need further articulation); and use of RPSP resources to support needs that become apparent only during FP implementation, particularly those related to implementation capacity, emerging project needs, or emerging key opportunities (or the last mile). The support for FP implementation may be particularly relevant as the GCF still finds itself unable to provide flexibility during the implementation of FPs.

15. The planning and delivery of the RPSP often relies on low-capacity NDAs and DPs with their own preferences and agendas, often with different (and in some cases, limited) understanding of national context. The current RPSP model is based around an implicit assumption of NDA capacity to engage strategically and martial RPSP resources effectively, which is only true in a small number of countries. In many country contexts, there is limited availability of DPs to implement the RPSP, resulting in unsuitable selection of partners and low capacity.

16. In the current model, there is a lack of differentiated approaches and windows for objectives (e.g. strategy for NDAs vs. narrow capacity building for direct access entities (DAEs)). This creates the risk of doing none particularly well. In many case study countries, the RPSP follows a competitive application model and in some others selection is undertaken through bureaucratic channels. This means that the RPSP is generally accessed by those actors already with greatest capacity to navigate application processes, whose priorities may not necessarily align with the greatest needs for readiness. **Further, the RPSP is channelled through DPs with limited GCF involvement. Such partners are not always suitable for supporting wider strategic engagement; many DPs see themselves as contractors for delivery rather than strategic engagement partners. Finally, the RPSP has yet to demonstrate robust knowledge management and lesson learning.**

17. **There is emerging evidence that the RPSP has had limited use or effectiveness in some areas.** For instance, there is limited evidence that the RPSP has significantly improved DAE capacity for project planning and delivery. Implementation support is not currently a highly sought after RPSP activity. To date, the RPSP has had limited application in addressing policy, regulatory and other enabling environment blockages, which prevents strategic wins on ambition and investment. Further, the RPSP has had limited use for private sector activities, which may result in limited integration of private finance into NAPs, nationally determined contribution (NDC) design and investment planning processes.

18. There is no doubt that access to climate finance is a challenge for many potential recipients. **Yet, access to readiness itself is a challenge.** There is a prevalent perception that GCF readiness processes are cumbersome and protracted. For instance, the COP has consistently requested that the GCF accelerate the disbursement of RPSP resources. In earlier COP decisions, there was a notion that RPSP disbursement can be expedited for the least developed countries and the small island developing States that urgently request for such

support. The slow and bureaucratic GCF processes relative to scale of funding can create frustrations and barriers to entry for entities. The RPSP has had long lead times, with some improvements during GCF-1. On average, the review process took 214 days in GCF-1 (from submission of request to approval by Secretariat), which is 73 days faster compared to the 287 days in the Initial Resource Mobilization period. There is limited Secretariat capacity to oversee, and administer large numbers of RPSP small grants in an efficient and insightful manner; GCF Secretariat staff are managing entire regions with a handful of people or less. Recipients also report the frustrations with inflexibility and inexperience of GCF staff to take into account small changes during implementation. The forthcoming report of the readiness evaluation is expected to address this in more detail. However, a strategic commitment to efficient processes would help address this at the operational level.

IV. External landscape

19. There is evidence that beyond the GCF there are other development partners that provide readiness or similar support targeted at general climate finance or specifically the GCF. The IEU RPSP evaluation team reviewed the portfolios and strategies of the following providers of readiness or similar support (not strictly limited to climate finance):

- (a) *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH/KfW Development Bank – Climate Finance Readiness Programme ('CFReady')*
- (b) Adaptation Fund (AF) – Readiness Programme for Climate Finance
- (c) Climate Investment Funds (CIF) – Technical Assistance Facility (CIF-TAF)
- (d) Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) – Readiness Fund
- (e) Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol (MFIMP)
- (f) Global Environment Facility (GEF) – Least Developed Countries Fund for Climate Change (LDCF)
- (g) GEF-Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)
- (h) Asian Development Bank (ADB) – Project Readiness Improvement Trust Fund (PRI)
- (i) Landscape Resilience Fund (LRF) – Investment readiness or pre-investment support services
- (j) Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) – Technical Assistance Program (TAP)
- (k) Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH)
- (l) USAID – Climate Ready Project

20. Besides these there may be other partners who provide support that resembles the GCF RPSP. For instance, in South Africa, the government of Flanders is a provider of readiness support. In Bhutan, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) has supported the building of capacities directed towards the GCF. This is an indication of the variety of development partners who provide ad-hoc support that resembles readiness for access to the GCF.

21. Twelve readiness programmes analogous to the RPSP have been reviewed by the evaluation team. Most seek to increase access to finance and/or support the ability to use and manage additional finance. Some of the support providers have very specific objectives, for instance, supporting compliance to an international agreement (MFIMP), supporting REDD+ participation (FCPF), or supporting design and procurement within projects (ADB). Most of the

reviewed programmes directly relate to climate finance (nine programmes), with a stronger focus on adaptation (six programmes). Beyond the GCF RPSP, there are three programmes that specifically target access to the GCF. These include the GCA-TAP, GiZ, and CCFAH. According to the analysis by the evaluation team, objectives of many readiness providers overlap with the GCF RPSP objectives (Table 1). Comparator programmes are found to provide support similar to that delivered by the RPSP, with a particularly strong alignment with capacity building and accreditation support, as well as support for climate finance project pipeline development. However, the RPSP was identified as the sole provider in recent years of support to drafting NAPs, with comparators having focused more recently on supporting NAP implementation. Additionally, some comparator programmes are noted as having a stronger focus on the private sector than the RPSP, including through the delivery of capacity building activities to private sector actors and those seeking to attract private sector financing. As seen in Table 1 below, the type of support delivered by comparator programmes aligns with RPSP objectives to varying degrees.

Table 1: Alignment of comparator support with RPSP objectives

	Obj. 1: Capacity building for climate coordination	Obj. 2: Strategies for climate finance implementation	Obj. 3: NAP and/or adaptation planning process	Obj. 4: Paradigm shifting pipeline development	Obj. 5: Knowledge sharing and learning
GCF RPSP	X	X	X	X	X
GIZ-EACF	X	X	X	X	X
AF-RPCF	X			X	X
CIF-TAF	X			X	X
FCPF-RF					
MFIMP					
GEF-LDCF	X		X		
GEF-SCCF	-	-	X	X	X
ADB-PRI				X	
LRF-IR			-		
GCA-TAP	X			X	
CCFAH	X	-		-	X
USAID- CRF	X	-	X	X	
TOTAL	8	4	5	8	5

Source: Landscape analysis undertaken by the evaluation team.

Note: Those programmes marked with an “X” have direct coherence with the RPSP objective, while those marked with a “-” have more indirect complementarity.

22. As of May 2023, the GCF has approved USD 513 million in RPSP support. As seen in Table 2, the **RPSP is among the largest programmes to provide readiness support**, with only the MFIMP and GEF-LDCF reporting higher resources and half (6) of the comparators having resource levels below USD 50 million. It should be noted that the **GEF-LDCF and GEF-SCCF support activities go beyond readiness support**, and therefore readiness-related

support is likely lower than what is reported in the table.¹ Typically among all providers, readiness support is largely provided through grants and/or technical assistance with support largely delivered by implementation/delivery partners.

Table 2: Programme funding envelopes

Comparator organization and programme	Resources (USD, million)	Data point type ^a
MFIMP	4,560	Received
GEF-LDCF*	1,000-1,300	GEF-8 Planning
GCF RPSP	513	Allocated
GEF-SCCF*	200-300	GEF-8 Planning
FCPF-RF	314	Allocated
CIF-TAF	37	Allocated
AF-RPCF	25	Budgeted
USAID-CRP	24	Contract Value
LRF-IR	14	Received
ADB-PRI**	8	Received
GIZ-EACF***	4	Allocated

Notes:

* These are resources and caps for all activities, not just those related to readiness. Financial breakdowns provided in the financing scenarios do not allow for the disaggregation of readiness-related and non-readiness financing.

** ADB report financing information in Euros. The PRI has received EUR 7 million, based on interview data with the evaluation team.

*** GiZ financing presented here only accounts for the global component of their readiness programme. While GiZ's readiness programme also has country level activities, these are activities financed under the RPSP, for which GiZ is a delivery partner. These activities (valued at USD 2.5 million) were excluded from the table to avoid double counting of RPSP resources.

**** Programmes not included either did not provide financial figures online (GCA-TAP), or are technical assistance based (CCFAH), and therefore do not directly provide financing to countries or institutions receiving support. For the CCFAH, programme budget at design for the period of 2017–2021 estimated operational costs at just below GBP 5 billion.

^a "Data point type" includes the following categories: "Received" refers to the amounts that a programme has received from donors to date (but which may not have been allocated yet); "Allocated" refers to amounts that have been allocated to readiness activities; "Budgeted" refers to the amount specified in the programme's budget (although the extent to which that amount has been secured is unknown); and "Contract value" refers to the amount listed in the project-specific contract. For the GEF-related programmes, the amounts are those provided in the GEF-8 documentation.

¹ It should also be noted that the GEF-SCCF 2021 Program Evaluation highlights challenges in replenishing the fund, attributed to the programme's lack of visibility. The evaluation describes the programme as having reached a "dormancy phase", further noting "the SCCF has suffered from a virtual absence of new pledges and received little attention both internally and from its traditional donors." The GEF-8 Programming Strategy for the LDCF and the SCCF proposes four approaches for the SCCF: 1) a full revitalization; 2) maintaining the status quo; 3) enhancing focused support; and 4) suspending the fund. The latter is noted as being the least desirable and the second is noted as not being viable as the current (and only) donor indicated they would not continue supporting the SCCF without additional donors. The future of the funds currently remains unclear.

23. **The GCF has a polar position among the providers of climate readiness**, by virtue of the size of its portfolio, its encompassing geographic scope, and its position as the leading provider of multilateral climate finance. As the SPR states, the GCF has a key position among multilateral climate funds, through a combination of factors, including its legitimacy, positioning with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), ability to provide highly concessional finance, diversity of instruments, focus on adaptation, focus on vulnerable countries, and a focus on direct access. In fact, at least three of the readiness providers (Commonwealth, GiZ, and GCA TAP) are focused directly or indirectly on providing readiness that supports access to GCF resources.

24. The extent to which suitable and effective mechanisms to ensure complementarities, coordination, and cohesion between readiness programmes has been established appears limited. While there is some evidence of complementarity and coordination between the support delivered by the GCF and GEF specifically, as well as between the GCF and AF, other complementarity related mechanisms identified largely focus on knowledge sharing, with a lack of evidence of this leading to harmonization. It is unlikely that the support provided by the GCF-focused agencies is in fact in advance informed by GCF strategic and programmatic choices.

25. **There is an opportunity and a need for coordination among the global providers of readiness, with a view to create complementarity.** Given the size and polar position of the GCF in this space, it can be a reasonable expectation that the GCF should assume such a role. This would require the GCF to convene global partners, identify gaps and overlaps (in terms of geographies and priorities), and create coordination such that provision of readiness is coordinated and, more importantly, is informed by GCF internal priorities.

V. Strategic considerations for the RPSP

5.1 Pragmatism

26. **Fund the RPSP and other readiness and capacity development activities as much as the GCF's second replenishment (GCF-2) context allows.** The need for climate readiness is vast and urgent, yet there is no way GCF can realistically address all needs in a country, let alone all developing countries. Developing lasting capacities takes time. The overall need is far greater than GCF support available, and any country's needs will evolve over time. At the same time, there are countries and support types that are largely being missed by other possible resources – which would be desirable for GCF to address to the extent circumstances allow. It is important that the GCF has sufficient access not only to grant funding, but also to direct Secretariat staffing and a robust expert pool from which to draw to fully implement GCF's vision for the RPSP.

27. **Be clearer on RPSP scope, priorities and boundaries.** In the context of limited financial and staff resources along with vast and varied need, it is important to be clear on what the RPSP currently seeks to do and not to do. The GCF must be focused to avoid wasted or lost opportunities. As part of this, the Secretariat needs clear, robust, and transparent prioritization mechanisms that are consistently implemented. Prioritization mechanisms should consider a country's existing capacities and priorities, access to DPs, previous engagement with GCF (e.g. amount, type, success of prior grants, DPs used, etc.), ongoing support from development partners and access to future support from development partners.

28. **When in doubt, err on the side of realism rather than optimism on the GCF role.** There is only so much the GCF can realistically accomplish and in order to optimize effectiveness the GCF needs to be practical in operationalizing its vision for readiness support for GCF-2. In light of past overoptimism on what can be expected of countries, DPs and overall

evolutions in context, it is important that GCF be very realistic and clear on what it seeks to accomplish with the RPSP in GCF-2. It is particularly important that any RPSP strategy incorporates a realistic view of DP access, as well as their capacities and potential roles (or not). Also, as was noted in the SPR, in many cases other development partners are better positioned than GCF can ever be for in-depth strategic roles in countries.

5.2 Purpose

29. **Clearly articulate the purpose of readiness.** The RPSP needs a narrative. The GCF faces a subjective choice between several impacts, such as targeting readiness towards access to FPs, targeting readiness towards potential AEs, and targeting readiness towards the building of capacities, enabling environments, institutional strengthening, or even support during implementation. While many of these are mutually reinforcing objectives, a clearer articulation of the programme priorities would support the targeting of RPSP resources.

30. **Fully align with the Updated Strategic Plan (USP) and overall “direction of travel” of the GCF global role.** With the expected updates to the USP, the GCF is on the cusp of a significant refinement of its global role and engagement with partners. The RPSP is a major component of how this updated role will be operationalized in countries. The timing of the next RPSP strategy should be staggered as needed to fully incorporate updated direction from the updated USP and related GCF-level refinements in its global role. Ultimately readiness support should clearly link to GCF goals – for example, NDC investment planning, GCF programming, private sector engagement and post-accreditation support. Elements of the GCF strategy (e.g. climate risk, greening financial systems) that have strong links to the RPSP should be delivered collectively, rather than in silos. The GCF readiness strategy should be directly linked to and informed by the overall programmatic priorities of the GCF. For instance, if DPs are to be considered a form of “access” in parallel with accreditation, this needs emphasis and clarity.

31. **Suggested priorities include:** ongoing capacity strengthening of NDAs as needed; dedicated DAE support with options to integrate accreditation support with CN and FP development; developing holistic/systems level investment plans expected to lead to transformational finance-ready FPs; ensuring sufficient attention to adaptation planning and needs; building capacities for climate information systems; and stakeholder engagement and leadership, particularly of private sector and marginalized groups. The strategy should consider how the GCF readiness outputs are linked to accreditation and the building of a GCF pipeline. Making these links explicit would be a natural expectation from a new readiness strategy. The use of the RPSP to support FP implementation may also be considered, to support emerging needs, gaps in DAE and AE capacities, and key opportunities. The latter may especially allow the GCF to develop a means for flexibility that it is otherwise unable to demonstrate during project implementation.

32. **Shift to promoting a more holistic systems approach rather than project approach to better facilitate paradigm shift.** This shift is happening globally and is likely to be at least foreshadowed if not fully addressed in the new USP. Similarly it will be important to integrate the concept of just transitions of developing countries and transition to resilient economies, and associated enablers of just transitions and access to related climate finance.

33. **Periodically reassess RPSP scope and ensure ongoing alignment with the suite of GCF policies and strategies.** There also should be regular assessments within the broader GCF-2 timeframe of RPSP scope and priorities, to be responsive to evolutions in GCF priorities as well as in-country contexts. Regular reassessment is also important to ensure ongoing alignment with other evolving GCF policies such as accreditation, private sector and other GCF

support resources (e.g. DAE resource window or the Project Preparation Facility (PPF)). In this way the GCF can, for example, more holistically and coherently address strategic capacity development of DAEs/local DPs, such as by further tailoring needs assessment approaches to ensure supported activities have a high probability of lasting capacity directly related to GCF FPs, including monitoring and evaluation. This would also facilitate adjusting private sector elements in the RPSP as needed to strategically target high value private sector engagement approaches shown to directly link to country priorities. The reassessment process should include opportunities for meaningful stakeholder feedback.

5.3 Partners

34. **The GCF may wish to take a leadership or at least a convening/coordination role among the providers of readiness support at the global level.** Coordination among providers of readiness would lead to better targeting of resources towards needs as well as GCF priorities; it may also allow the other providers to increase their own effectiveness. GCF readiness support is uniquely well informed by resources, and it may be worthwhile to continue such a link.

35. **Ensure countries have access to appropriate DPs.** There is a need to ensure countries have sufficient access to the DPs (with appropriate technical capacities, local knowledge and priorities) that meet country needs to serve as DPs. This likely includes matchmaking as needed to ensure priority needs in a country are met. This may also include more work to broaden the types of entities/requirements needed to serve as DPs. It may be possible to further refine/expand the roster of experts concept as needed to ensure coverage and provide more flexibility for tailoring.

36. **Prioritize the most vulnerable with least access to other sources of support.** Further invest in a needs-based and tailored approach with particular attention to the most vulnerable countries as well as those least served to date (due to lack of access rather than due to having other resources/less need). This will likely require deeper understanding of and engagement with options realistically available from other climate funds and support sources.

37. **Clearly articulate a tiered pathway for countries with differentiated engagement models that are responsive to different contexts.** Continue promotion of need assessments (including opportunities and challenges) not only for countries to understand their needs but also to aid GCF in prioritizing and allocating resources effectively. This includes more clearly articulating the key pathways for development in educational materials so that countries can recognize where they fit and then follow the suggested pathways to achieve lasting capacities as well as successful GCF funding proposals. Similarly, GCF approaches must be sufficiently nuanced to address the range of partner needs and experiences.

38. **Investment planning and pipeline development is important, but other key capacity building activities also are critical for ultimate success.** Alignment and prioritization are key functions for the GCF to incorporate into any readiness support activities in a country. The updated prioritization needs to allow room to (continue to) support critical capacity building activities including NDA strengthening and key stakeholder engagement when indicated by needs assessments, to increase the likelihood of any investment planning being realized and reaching its potential. The GCF also needs to clarify where CPs and entity work programmes fit, or do not, into future RPSP priorities.

5.4 Processes

39. A strategy statement on the desired processing times could benefit the subsequent operationalization of the strategy.
40. **Upgrade RPSP tracking systems, both formal reporting to the Board and more informal internal metrics.** A more fit-for-purpose monitoring system is important not only to better capture the results of RPSP activities but also to more deeply inform (a) internal feedback loops on what works under what conditions, and (b) more nuanced approaches to risk management. It is natural to manage to the targets, which puts tremendous pressure on getting the indicators and associated targets right up front. A future system might include more outcome indicators and consider clear milestone/incremental indicators to continue to the next stage. Further it may be useful to consider how to document when RPSP activities result in lasting capacities built or other positive change even when not directly linked to a GCF FP. It is also important to work to ensure all approved RPSP grants approved have a clear pathway that is tracked to promote sustainability (lasting impact) of activities funded and any next steps/factors beyond control but needed for sustainability. The efforts to track the grants would support the RPSP to increase veritable and tangible outputs and outcomes.
41. **Sufficiently staff regional desks and other units directly involved in RPSP development and monitoring implementation.** Regularly engage with countries to assess their current status and evolutions in needs, as well as to clarify misunderstandings or help troubleshoot blocks to ongoing progress (including new RPSP requests).
42. **Assertively continue to clarify RPSP scope and application and implementation monitoring processes for countries and DPs.** Increase clarity of what will or won't be covered and steps to receive support. Given ongoing frustrations and some parties' reluctance to engage further, remedial work is needed to reassure countries and DPs that the RPSP likely has a role to play in their countries and it should/will get easier to go through the processes.
43. **Continue proactively streamlining, tailoring and communicating application and implementation processes.** Speed up approvals, make processes clearer and more realistic, and easier to comply with requirements. Tailor second-level due diligence to grant/entity risks when feasible. While the Secretariat continues to make progress on the elements within its control, there is still a long way to go for it to be more fit-for-purpose for the urgency as well as the relatively modest scale of RPSP grants.
44. **Further support peer to peer learning for NDAs as well as DAEs and local DPs.** Engage IAEs and international DPs as feasible, yet proactively ensure more practical learning opportunities are available for countries and local partners.
45. **Consider a more incremental grant approach with longer/larger overall GCF commitments as long as key progress milestones are reached.** Multi-year/larger grants are important for continuity when ongoing coherence can be ensured. NDAs and DPs however find the process, requirements and timeframes for receiving RPSP grants burdensome to the point of being unrealistic in many contexts. A more stepwise incremental approach with certainty of future support as long as reasonable milestones are reached, would help all parties move forward more quickly with less uncertainty – that is, with earlier steps being relatively easy for applicants and leading to the development of more advanced/larger grants with more review thresholds. This may even include a modest support grant with manageable requirements to then further develop a full RPSP grant (e.g. for low-capacity DPs/DAEs or even for consultancy support to the NDA to initiate a grant proposal).

Annex III: LORTA Synthesis Report 2022

I. Background

1. The IEU's Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme uses best practices in theory-based impact evaluations to build feedback loops and measurement into GCF projects and programmes.
2. LORTA has supported a range of project and programme teams to acquire skills and competencies that can be applied to project design, implementation and evaluation.
3. The primary objectives of LORTA are threefold:
 - (a) Strengthening the capacity of accredited entities (AEs) for impact assessments
 - (b) Supporting the generation of an evidence base for the GCF about the impact of GCF investments
 - (c) Disseminating lessons learnt in real-time to the GCF ecosystem
4. The following activities are provided by LORTA:
 - (a) Capacity building: The IEU builds capacity within GCF-funded projects/programmes to design and embed impact evaluations and measuring systems into these projects/programmes that provide project teams and managers with high-quality data on the effectiveness of implementation and likelihood of impact, while helping them to manage and ensure that the attributable causal change of GCF investments is maintained.
 - (b) Evaluation advisory services: The IEU provides advisory services on how project teams can conduct or manage impact evaluations and impact measurement systems, by employing state-of-the-art, theory-based, counterfactual methods to measure the causal change attributable to GCF investments.
 - (c) Measuring impact: The IEU measures the impact of the GCF-funded project/programmes by gauging what works and to what extent, through causal analysis. In particular, impact assessment is used to assess innovations, to test causal pathways and delivery mechanisms, and to inform strategic decisions to scale up or make course corrections.
 - (d) Dissemination to foster wider learning: The IEU engages impact evaluation designs using theory-based counterfactuals to provide results of the GCF-funded projects/programmes, and to report on the implementation challenges and opportunities of the projects/programmes and the LORTA programme, as a learning mechanism of the GCF. The IEU also provides annual syntheses of lessons learnt from the implementation of real-time measurement systems alongside the implementation of GCF-funded projects/programmes.
5. The IEU has been expanding the portfolio of the LORTA programme since its inception in 2018, not only to generate evidence about what works, but also to enhance learnings about the design, implementation and management of real-time measurement systems and impact evaluations within the GCF ecosystem.
6. To date, the LORTA programme has engaged with around 50 GCF-funded project teams who have benefited from capacity building sessions and technical assistance in conducting impact evaluations. In 2022, the IEU onboarded two new projects (SAP040 Brazil and CN

Armenia) into the LORTA programme. The next section presents the programme's overall achievements and the progress made by each project.

II. Progress and milestones in 2022

7. In 2022, the IEU LORTA programme continued to guide, assist and advise the impact assessment for a selection of GCF funded projects. Learnings from the LORTA programme can be applied to improve the quality of funding proposals, the adequate budgeting of funding activities, and to build in foresight for project implementation. The lessons from the LORTA programme can also be applied to strengthen and support the review processes and adaptive management of the GCF funded projects.

2.1 Capacity building

8. As part of LORTA's ongoing effort to support AEs within its portfolio, the team actively engaged and interacted with entities and project teams online and in person through country visits. For example, country missions were conducted in Paraguay in November and Madagascar in October, to support the data collection process of impact evaluations and to provide project monitoring and evaluation services. Such support was provided in-country, besides collective capacity building workshops which were delivered both online and in-person.

9. **Workshops:** Annual Impact Evaluation Design workshop (July 2022) and Data Collection and Analysis Workshop (December 2022)

- (a) In July 2022, the LORTA team completed its Annual Impact Evaluation Design workshop with over 15 direct access entities (DAEs), one international access entity (IAE) (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bhutan), and more than 60 participants. As in earlier years, topics covered in this year's workshop included the concept of an impact evaluation, how to construct a project's theory of change (TOC) and outcome indicators, how to track a project's progress in real-time, and how to design an impact evaluation. Several guest speakers were invited to share their experiences from impact evaluations across climate, development, and peacebuilding interventions. These speakers represented institutions including Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), International Security and Development Center (ISDC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- (b) In December 2022, the LORTA team also held an in-person workshop in Ethiopia, which focused on data collection and data analysis. Nine country teams which have finalized impact evaluation designs and are in the data collection phase participated in the workshop, improving the capacities of 27 participants. During the workshop, information was shared on data collection processes, implementation and monitoring, and how to conduct data cleaning and analysis. Participants were able to share with each other their project experience, and under the guidance of a specialist explored how information from the workshop applied to their respective projects.

2.2 Evaluation advisory services

10. LORTA's technical advisory work aims to support approved GCF projects to build independent, high quality and useful measurement and data systems. Advice is provided in terms of impact evaluation methodology, data collection methods and statistical analyses.

11. The LORTA programme has supported AEs in embedding the impact evaluation designs of interventions, while ensuring that AEs have full ownership of evaluation designs and reports. Moreover, the programme also supports AEs in analyzing collected data for the impact evaluation, which includes the provision of technical support for data analysis and producing baseline, midline or endline reports.

12. The programme made substantial progress in terms of the design and implementation of impact assessments in 2022 – four impact assessments were designed, two rounds of household data were collected, and two baseline reports were finalized.

Table 1: List of 2022 LORTA evaluation advisory services

Design	Data collection	Analysis and reports
SAP023 Mexico (FMCN) FP138 Senegal (BOAD) FP172 Nepal (AEPC) FP060 Barbados (IUCN)	Midline data FP026 Madagascar (CI) Endline data FP069 Bangladesh (UNDP)	Two baseline reports FP072 Zambia (UNDP) FP069 Bangladesh (UNDP)

Source: IEU LORTA database, as of 6 June 2023.

Note: Letters in parentheses represent the project AEs.

2.3 Dissemination and outreach

13. Findings from the LORTA-supported impact evaluation in Malawi (UNDP, FP002) were submitted to the Food Policy academic journal.¹ This publication contributes to existing, but rather scarce evidence in the climate adaptation and mitigation space. In addition, the IEU has presented the findings of the Malawi impact evaluation in hybrid events to the GCF Secretariat, the GCF ecosystem and other stakeholders in relevant fora such as gLOCAL Evaluation Week in June 2022, and at the What Works Global Summit and the National Evaluation Capacities Conference, both held in October 2022.

III. Portfolio

14. Since 2018, the programme has onboarded 25 GCF projects, equivalent to around 10 per cent of all approved GCF projects. Two projects were dropped due to implementation challenges. LORTA currently has seven projects in the engagement and design stage, seven in baseline, eight projects in post-baseline stages, and one completed project. The status and phase of each project is summarized in Table 2.²

Table 2: LORTA project portfolio status and phase

	Country/region	Engagement/design	Baseline	Post-baseline stage	Results and dissemination
1st cohort (entered in 2018)	FP002 Malawi				X
	FP035 Vanuatu		X		
	FP026 Madagascar			X	

¹ “Scaling up the use of Modernized Climate information and Early Warning Systems in Malawi” project.

² Additional information about the current portfolio can be found in Table 7.

	Country/region	Engagement/design	Baseline	Post-baseline stage	Results and dissemination
	FP062 Paraguay		X		
	FP034 Uganda			X	
	FP068 Georgia			X	
	FP072 Zambia			X	
2nd cohort (entered in 2019)	FP096 DRC	X			
	FP069 Bangladesh			X	
	FP073 Rwanda			X	
	FP087 Guatemala			X	
	FP097 Central America	X			
	FP098 Southern Africa	X			
3rd cohort (entered in 2020)	FP101 Belize		X		
	FP110 Ecuador		X		
	SAP010 Philippines		X		
	FP116 Kyrgyzstan	X			
4th cohort (entered in 2021)	FP172 Nepal		X		
	SAP023 Mexico		X		
	FP138 Senegal	X			
	FP060 Barbados			X	
5th cohort (entered in 2022)	CN Armenia	X			
	SAP040 Brazil	X			

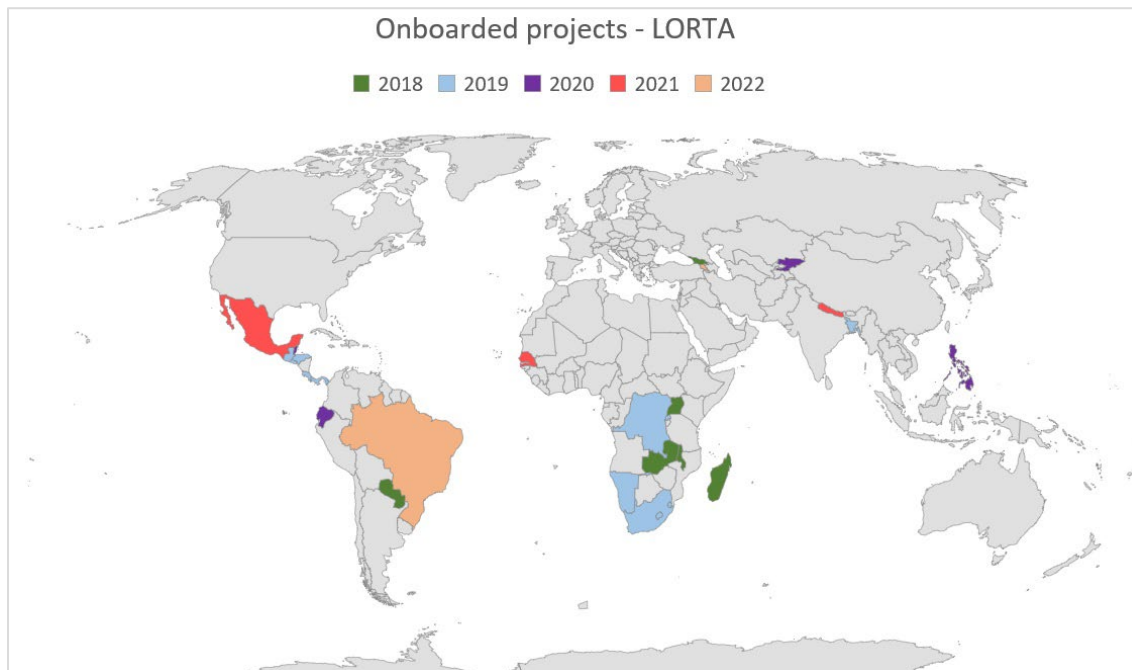
Source: IEU LORTA database, as of 6 June 2023.

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

3.1 Portfolio by LORTA cohort and project location

15. As of 2022, the current LORTA portfolio holds 23 GCF funded projects worldwide. The below figure illustrates when these projects were onboarded onto the LORTA programme, and their geographical locations. Since its inception in 2018, the LORTA programme has achieved a well-balanced regional distribution of projects. There are currently eight projects in Africa, five in the Asia-Pacific region, eight in Latin America and the Caribbean, and two in Eastern Europe.

Figure 1: World overview of LORTA projects



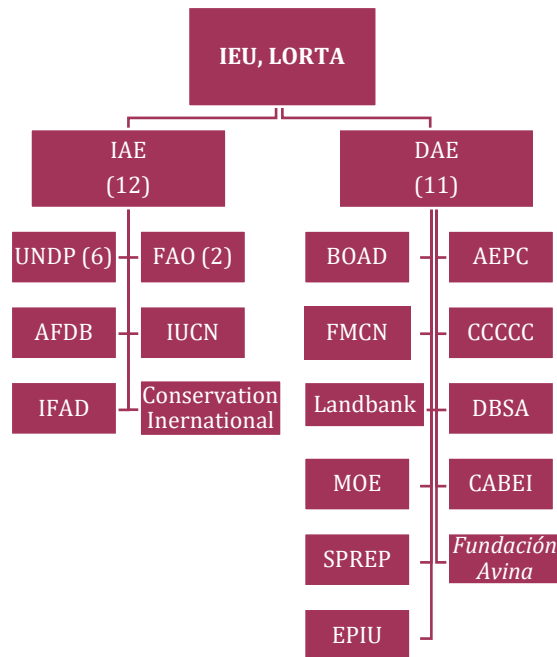
Source: IEU LORTA database, as of 6 June 2023.

Note: The figure shows the geographic distribution of GCF funded projects under the LORTA programme. The colour legend represents the year LORTA projects subscribed to the programme.

3.2 Portfolio by implementing partner

16. The LORTA portfolio has achieved a balanced representation of both IAEs and DAEs, as can be seen in Figure 2 below. This balanced distribution ensures diverse perspectives and experiences, contributing to the overall success and effectiveness of the programme.

Figure 2: List of LORTA working partners



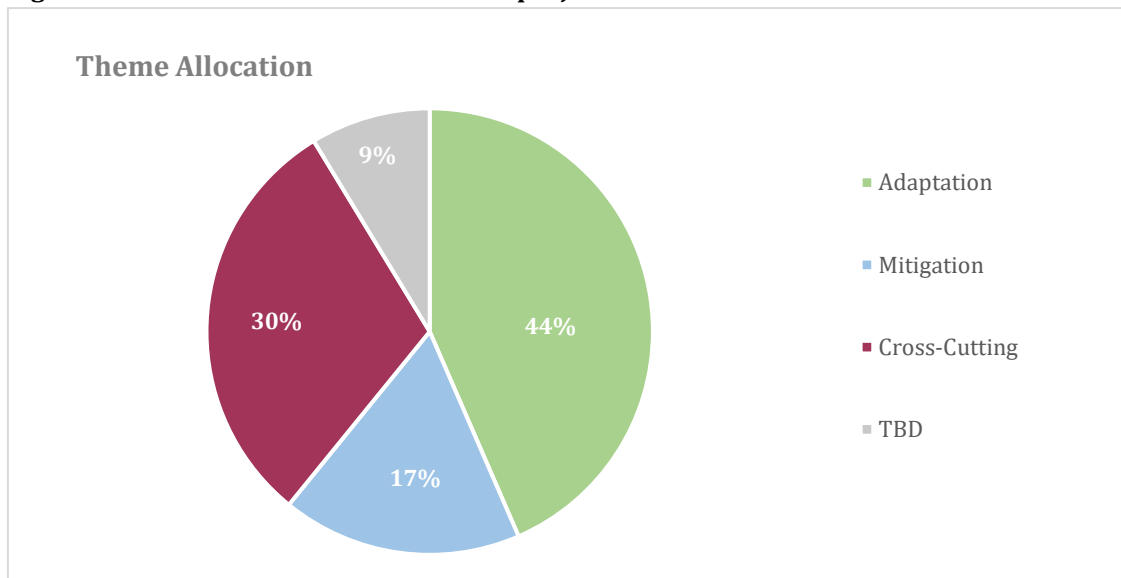
Source: LORTA Impact Evaluation Portfolio.

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

3.3 Portfolio by theme

17. Out of the 23 projects in the LORTA portfolio, the majority fall under the adaptation category (10), followed by cross-cutting (7), mitigation (4), and those still to be determined (TBD) (2).

Figure 3: Theme allocation of onboarded projects



Source: IEU LORTA database, as of 6 June 2023.

Note: The LORTA programme includes two projects, CN Armenia and SAP040 Brazil, onboarded in 2022 after the 2022 Annual Impact Evaluation Design workshop. These two projects are currently under consideration for the Board approval process, thus their thematic allocation has not yet been confirmed.

IV. Learning in 2022

18. The LORTA cycle follows closely the implementation cycle of GCF funded activities. This leads to certain dependencies – the implementation challenges facing project teams affect the work of the LORTA team, as well. These challenges include delays in field activities, procurement delays, challenges with stakeholder engagement, and lack of capacity, all of which are also highlighted in other GCF documents, such as the Annual Portfolio Performance Report 2021 (GCF/B.34/Inf.11/Rev.01).

19. Travel opportunities remained limited in 2022 due to continued disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although most of the technical support and activities offered by LORTA were delivered through virtual platforms, the LORTA team gradually resumed its in-person country visits and organized an in-person workshop in the second half of 2022. Lessons from engaging with the AEs in 2022 include the following:

- (a) **Learning 1. In-person interaction is a must for some of LORTA’s activities. Grounding the findings in the context of the project is key.**
- (i) LORTA enables long-term engagement with implementing partners from the inception to the closure of a GCF project to assess its impacts. Political transitions, changes in governments, and turnover in staff in implementation partner teams are common over the course of a project cycle. In addition, each time there is a change in focal point, there is a need for new engagement and buy-in from stakeholders, as well as for the LORTA team to explain the background and objectives of LORTA again to the new focal point.
 - (ii) Country missions and face-to-face interactions were effective in re-building relationships with key stakeholders, and especially in obtaining buy-in from relevant government agencies to conduct impact assessments, which was not as successful when virtual meetings were held in the period of COVID-related travel restrictions.
 - (iii) After more than two years of virtual engagement, we held an in-person workshop in Addis Ababa in December 2022 by bringing together nine projects (Bangladesh, Belize, Georgia, Madagascar, Mexico, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, and Uganda). It was a data collection and analysis capacity development workshop covering the development of a high-quality survey instrument, data collection in the field, and data cleaning and analysis. The participants gave positive feedback and noted they found the sharing of knowledge and experience useful. Participants were able to share information and project related insights through the workshop sessions as well as through informal conversations over breakfast, coffee breaks and dinner.
 - (iv) LORTA is a programme, but at the same time it helps the concertation of stakeholders to foster a culture of impact evaluation among climate project practitioners and to generate evidence from GCF funded projects. A lack of opportunities for knowledge sharing and dissemination was identified as a challenge in one of the GCF Board documents. LORTA not only provides relevant technical assistance but also offers a platform for development partners to share their experiences and learnings. Virtual platforms have proven to be effective for

some activities, such as knowledge dissemination; however, to enable rigorous engagement and in-depth discussion, in-person interaction is found to be much more effective. Therefore, the LORTA team has adopted a hybrid approach and offers both virtual and in-person support for the onboarded GCF projects to maximize project and programme impact.

(b) **Learning 2. Timely mid-course correction or restructuring is key to effective project implementation and impact assessment.**

- (i) Many GCF-funded projects undergo some form of adjustment; both minor project changes and major restructuring are common. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many projects experienced some implementation delays, and these may result in the extension of projects to achieve stated targets and objectives. Annual progress reports are first a reporting tool, but could also be understood as a risk management tool by some stakeholders and the Secretariat itself. The midterm and endline evaluation reports are currently the only results-reporting and management tools. LORTA, through its data collection efforts and more direct and timely interaction with AEs, is filling this gap. For example, at the project level, when real-time implementation tracking shows that there are too few eligible beneficiaries in a project area, project teams have to respond and come up with a solution or alternative approach to reflect the reality on the ground.
- (ii) It is important to make necessary changes throughout the project cycle to achieve project objectives. Needless to say, restructuring or changes to the project design require valid justification and evidence. LORTA's real-time implementation tracking can provide robust evidence, and thus, helps to guide project teams through this process.
- (iii) Given its setup, the GCF may be far from project implementation, both physically and administratively. With the management of GCF funded activities done by AEs, there may be several layers of actors between the GCF Secretariat and project beneficiaries. This may be particularly true for IAEs with local offices in the country, regional offices besides their global headquarters.
- (iv) Some delays in the implementation stage are found to be associated with delays in project approval, lack of timely feedback, and poor communication between the GCF Secretariat, project teams and implementing entities. Measurement systems for impact assessments and impact assessment design at the start of a project may provide a solution. A study by the World Bank finds that investment-level implementation risk is lower for development projects with impact evaluation. It may be too early to conclude the same for LORTA-supported GCF funded projects. Nevertheless, with the growing size and maturity of the LORTA portfolio, a similar analysis could be made about LORTA and GCF investments if real-time impact assessments are shown to have a significant impact on implementation risks through more timely delivery and closing the gap between the planned and executed disbursement period over the implementation cycle.

(c) **Learning 3. Early engagement with new projects has some advantages but some drawbacks too. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for impact assessments.**

- (i) Every year, LORTA hosts an Impact Evaluation Design Workshop for GCF-funded projects. In the past, a group of selected GCF projects was invited to this design workshop. In 2022, the LORTA team extended the invitation to a small number

of projects in their pre-approval stage (e.g. CN stage) to start early engagement with project teams concerned about the design and development of impact assessments in their project.

- (ii) Early LORTA engagement may also strengthen the project teams' understanding of the importance of impact measurement and assessments in the design and development of funding proposals. The Impact Evaluation Design Workshop covers topics such as the TOC, project impact indicators, budgeting, ethics, evaluation standards, evaluation methods, and why and how we design and implement impact evaluations.
- (iii) Some sessions of the Impact Evaluation Design Workshop show a particularly close linkage between considerations of impact/learning and the overall developing and refining of their FPs. For example, the LORTA team reviews the TOC and log frame carefully, identifies gaps in the logic, and assesses data types and indicators, through an evaluation lens. The LORTA team also reflects together with the project teams on the local context and evaluability of the project. These exercises may contribute to the project teams' capacities to improve the quality of submitted FPs.
- (iv) Early LORTA engagement was also successful in managing the expectations of AEs by clarifying roles and responsibilities. Experience suggests that early engagement helps AEs to prepare better funding proposals with an evaluation lens, and more realistic budget plans for conducting rigorous evaluations; however, the general time lag between engagement and the effectiveness/implementation of projects remains a challenge for the LORTA programme. The GCF project appraisal process and funded activity agreement (FAA) negotiations have a direct effect on the commencement of LORTA-related activities.
- (v) Closer collaboration with the GCF Secretariat is key for the success of the LORTA programme. The IEU engages with the Secretariat during Annual Impact Evaluation Design workshop, particularly in the selection process of potential project candidates for the LORTA programme.

V. Learnings from GCF funded projects under LORTA

20. By the end of 2022, the LORTA programme conducted baseline data collection in six GCF funded projects (Bangladesh, Georgia, Guatemala, Madagascar, Rwanda, and Zambia), one endline data collection for a GCF project in Malawi, and published five baseline reports and one impact evaluation (IE) report. Summary statistics of baseline, midline and endline data are presented in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3: Summary statistics of data collected at baseline

	Country				
	Baseline				
	FP069 Bangladesh	FP072 Zambia	FP026 Madagascar	FP087 Guatemala	FP073 Rwanda
Sample size	3,120	2,508	2,730	1,486	1,299
Sample size of treatment group	2,000	1,218	1,822	758	651
Sample size of control group	1,120	1,290	908	728	648
Unit of observation	Household	Household	Household	Household	Household
Date of data collection	Sep – Oct 2021	Nov – Dec 2020	Mar – May 2019	May – Jun 2021	Jun – Sep 2020
Population of interest	66,171 households living in project areas – 2 coastal districts out of 64 districts in Bangladesh	All eligible households from the 16 (out of total of 116 districts of Zambia) districts in agro-ecological zones I and II	23,800 households, including members of COBA/VOI, women’s associations and PAPs groups around the two protected areas CAZ and COFAV	Households in the area of 48 micro watersheds in the intervention zone	All households living in private dwellings in the 18 sectors of the Gicumbi district (18 out of 21 sectors)
Sample coverage	39 out of 143 <i>Union Parishads</i> (UPs) across 5 <i>Upazilas</i> in 2 districts: Khulna (2/9 <i>Upazilas</i> , 21 UPs) and Satkhira (3/7 <i>Upazilas</i> , 18 UPs)	1,433 villages across 5 out of 10 provinces in Zambia	45 out of 73 municipalities around the two protected areas: CAZ (total of 28 municipalities) and COFAV (total of 45 municipalities)	The area of intervention – recharge areas of four watersheds, and 21 micro watersheds 14 micro watersheds outside of the area of intervention	126 villages out of 252 villages in the Gicumbi district

Source: LORTA baseline reports.

Abbreviations: COBA/VOI = community in charge of locally natural resources management; PAPs = associations of local people affected by the creation of protected areas; CAZ = Ankeniheny-Zahamena Forest Corridor protected area; COFAV = Ambositra Vondrozo Forest Corridor protected area.

Table 4: Summary statistics of data collected at midline and endline

	Country		
	Midline	Endline	
	FP026 Madagascar	FP069 Bangladesh	FP002 Malawi
Sample size	1,634	2,817	1,644
Sample size of treatment group	806	1,777	810
Sample size of control group	828	1,040	834
Unit of observation	Household	Household	Household
Date of data collection	Nov 2022	Nov 2022	Oct 2020
Population of interest	2,730 households from the baseline data	3,120 households from the baseline data	Smallholder households in 21 districts out of a total of 28 in Malawi
Sample coverage	Regions covered during the baseline data collection	2,817 out of 3,120 households from the baseline data	8 districts (4 treatment and 4 control group) 1,799 households from the baseline data collection

Source: LORTA database, as of 6 June 2023; Impact Evaluation Report for FP002 Malawi.

21. One of the purposes of carrying out baseline data collection for impact assessment is to identify pre-existing patterns and possible differences between treatment and control groups. Assessing the extent of similarity between the two groups allows us to determine the validity of our proposed strategies to identify the impacts of the programme. Table 5 presents a list of modules used for data collection for the six impact evaluations.

22. Overall, the descriptive evidence so far coming from the collected baseline data confirms the suitability of GCF project activities to the local context and needs of the target population. In addition, the balance tests – to check whether treatment and control groups are different in a systematic way – show that on average the treatment and comparison groups are similar. If the two groups are indeed similar on average, any differences arising after the interventions can be attributed to those interventions. In this section we present the findings from two baseline surveys, Zambia and Bangladesh.

Table 5: Baseline and endline survey questionnaire modules for six IEs

	Module	Bangladesh	Guatemala	Madagascar	Rwanda	Zambia	Malawi
1	Household characteristics and demographics	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Socio-economic characteristics	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	Food security	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	Nutrition and food diversity	X		X		X	X
5	Agricultural production		X	X	X	X	X
6	Livelihood activities	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	Water security and accessibility	X	X		X		
8	Insurance	X			X		X
9	Coping strategies for climate change		X	X	X	X	X
10	Perception of climate change	X	X	X	X	X	X
11	Early warning system and climate information experience		X		X		X
12	Social capital and infrastructure	X			X	X	
13	Specific project components under IE	X	X	X	X	X	X

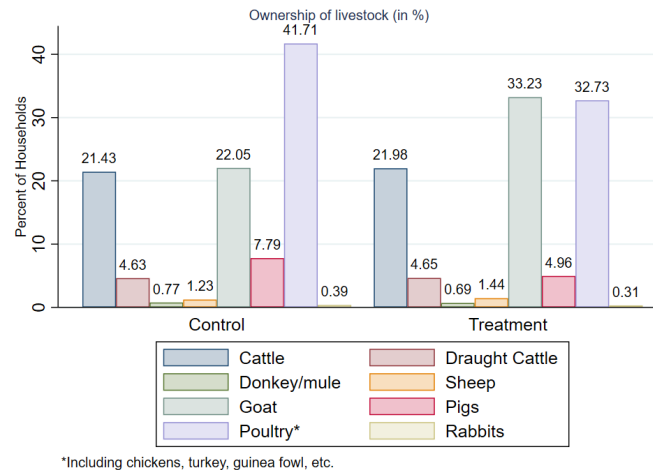
Source: IEU LORTA baseline, endline reports.

- Module 1 was used to collect information on the number of people in each household, head of household, their age, gender, education and occupation.
- Module 2 was used to gather information on the economic status of households, such as income, financial assets, livestock assets, and access to credit. It also includes information on the availability of basic services such as healthcare, level of education, and sanitation.
- Module 3 was used to collect data on food security, which refers to availability, access, use and stability in supply of food.
- Module 4 was used to collect data on the types of food consumed by households, the frequency of consumption, and the sources of food.
- Module 5 was used to collect information on the agricultural practices and crops grown by households, as well as their income-generating activities outside of agriculture.
- Module 6 was used to collect information on sources of income and livestock-related activities.
- Module 7 captured the availability of water sources, the quality of water, and the distance and time required to access water.
- Module 8 captured information on insurance such as availability of insurance, knowledge of insurance, and experience of receiving reimbursement.
- Module 9 was used to collect information on coping strategies for managing the effects of climate change or hazards such as reducing non-food expenses, increasing savings, and other coping strategies.
- Module 10 was used to collect information on the awareness of climate change, climate-related hazards, and the adverse effects on livelihood activities due to climate change.
- Module 11 included information on the availability and effectiveness of early warning systems for weather-related hazards, as well as the experience of communities in receiving and using climate information.
- Module 12 was used to collect data on the social networks and community organizations in the study area, as well as the infrastructure available for transportation, communication, and other services.
- Module 13 focused on the beneficiaries' participation in implementing project activities, such as trainings, and use of interventions, which could be used to assess the impacts of the project interventions between treatment and control groups.

5.1 FP072 Zambia

23. In November 2020, the LORTA team collected baseline data for the “Strengthening climate resilience of agricultural livelihoods in agro-ecological regions I and II in Zambia” project (SCRALA). In total the survey team interviewed 1,218 households in the treatment group and 1,290 in the control group, from 15 districts.
24. The project objective is to improve food security and income generation by promoting climate-resilient farming and diversification practices, as well as to enhance access to markets and foster the commercialization of climate-resilient agricultural commodities.
25. The focus of the impact assessment is specifically on component 2 of the project, “alternative livelihood activities”, that is the distribution of beehives and goats. In total, the project distributed 1,520 beehives and 14,000 goats in the target districts through a public lottery.
26. The baseline data highlighted significant differences between treatment and control households across indicators including expenditure, asset ownership, and food consumption. One explanation could be the timing of the baseline survey. Due to logistical challenges caused by unfavourable weather, there were delays in the data collection process. This meant that 60 per cent of treatment households received the intervention before the baseline survey was completed. Since goats and beehives are considered to impact beneficiary households promptly for their relatively immediate realization into economic goods, such differences between treatment and control groups suggest an idea that GCF-funded activities are reaching the target population on the ground, who are vulnerable and food insecure.
27. As mentioned above, baseline data is used to assess similarities between treatment and control groups and its gathering is usually conducted before the implementation of intervention. The early distribution of the inputs makes it difficult to distinguish the original characteristics of the treatment group from the short-term impact of the inputs. If these differences between the two groups are not accounted for, they can potentially mitigate the impact of project intervention.
28. The follow up data collection for this project is planned for 2025. It takes time to measure the impact and sustainability of investments on climate-resilient agricultural practices, climate resilience, food security and dietary diversity. The LORTA team will address the observed differences from the two groups, if necessary, by employing back up impact evaluation strategies, keeping track of the progress of implementation and collecting additional data during the endline data collection.

Figure 4: Ownership of livestock type among project beneficiaries



Source: Impact evaluation baseline report for FP072.

5.2 FP069 Bangladesh

46. In 2021, the LORTA team conducted a baseline survey in Bangladesh, covering 3,120 households for the project “Enhancing adaptive capacities of coastal communities, especially women, to cope with climate change induced salinity”. One of the key components of the project under impact evaluation is providing drinking water solutions to target communities and households.

47. The baseline survey revealed that about 90 per cent of households did not have access to water sources within their compounds. Moreover, on average, household members spent a total of 5.5 hours per week collecting water. It is often a woman’s responsibility to provide the family with safe drinking water, an outcome supported by baseline data collected in the target area. With more than 75 per cent of respondent households answering that only female members were involved in fetching water, this project largely targets female participants. The large amount of time spent collecting water reduces the time available for other activities, including opportunities to engage with other economic activities.

48. When estimating the impact of the drinking water component, in addition to the access-to-water solutions and time spent on fetching water, the LORTA team is therefore interested in analyzing how this investment transformed the time allocation and lives of the project beneficiaries, especially women. The endline data was collected in late 2022 and the final impact assessment report will be available in 2023.

VI. Effectiveness and impact of GCF investments on climate mitigation and adaptation

6.1 Findings from FP002 Malawi impact evaluation report

49. In 2022, the LORTA programme published an impact evaluation report for the GCF country project “Scaling up the use of modernized climate information and early warning systems in Malawi”. The objective of the project was to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts on lives and livelihoods, particularly those of women, from extreme weather events and climate change. One of the components of the Malawi project is Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA).

50. PICSA is a training-based intervention intended to empower farmers in making informed agricultural and livelihood decisions based on accurate, location-specific climate and weather information and the use of tools for participatory discussions.

51. The impact evaluation report provided the first causal findings of the impact of PICSA on the farmers’ adaptation decisions and food security. The LORTA team relied on baseline and endline household surveys which were collected before the start of the programme and two years after the first implementation.

52. Overall, the findings indicate that the PICSA intervention was successful in improving both intermediate and long-term outcomes. In particular, the analysis found significant and positive impacts on the use of seasonal forecasts to plan farm decisions, changes to crop activity, maize yields and an increase in wellbeing in terms of a reduction in work on other farms.

6.2 Measuring climate resilience

53. The LORTA impact evaluations aim to measure the impact of climate interventions on various indicators. Measuring climate resilience is one of the key impact indicators for the ongoing efforts of the LORTA team. Climate resilience encompasses abilities to forecast, prepare for and respond to negative impacts related to climate and thus it cannot be measured with a sole, simple indicator. Through the baseline and endline data collection, the LORTA team collected information on climate resilience by using diverse indexes that comprised multiple indicators. Table 6 presents different indexes and scales that the LORTA data collection team collected at baseline and endline to measure and assess climate resilience.

54. The LORTA team is interested in employing comprehensive indicators and generating credible data on climate resilience and the impacts of GCF funded projects.

Table 6: Climate resilience indexes and scales

	Bangladesh	Zambia	Madagascar	Guatemala	Rwanda	Malawi
Indexes and scales	Household Food Access Scale Food Consumption Score Household Income Stability Household Resilience to Shocks	Coping Strategy Index Food Consumption Score The Livelihood and Asset-based Coping Strategy	Climate Change Vulnerability Index	Resilient and Diversified Livelihoods Index Responsiveness Index	Coping Strategies Index Climate Resilience Index	Food Security Household Dietary/Food Diversity Score Climate Information



	Bangladesh	Zambia	Madagascar	Guatemala	Rwanda	Malawi
	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale Score	Food-based Coping Strategy				

Source: IEU LORTA baseline, endline reports.

Table 7: List of current LORTA Portfolio

Project ID	Country/region	Related sector	Climate topic	AE	Milestone	Onboarding year
FP068	Georgia	Climate information and early warning system	Early warning system	UNDP	Implementation	2018
FP026	Madagascar	Agriculture and food security Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Smart agriculture, forest protection	Conservation International	Implementation	2018
FP002	Malawi	Climate information and early warning system	Climate information and adaptive livelihoods	UNDP	Academic publication	2018
FP062	Paraguay	Forest and land use	Reforestation	FAO	Implementation	2018
FP034	Uganda	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Wetlands and sustainable livelihoods	UNDP	Implementation	2018
FP035	Vanuatu	Climate information and early warning system	Climate information	SPREP	Implementation at pause	2018
FP072	Zambia	Agriculture and food security	Agricultural livelihoods	UNDP	Implementation	2018
FP069	Bangladesh	Agriculture and food security Water security	Agricultural Livelihoods, water security	UNDP	Implementation	2019
FP097	Central America	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Biodiversity friendly MSMEs	CABEI	Inception at pause	2019
FP087	Guatemala	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Watershed management, climate smart agriculture	IUCN	Implementation	2019
FP096	DRC	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	AfDB	MoU	2019

Project ID	Country/region	Related sector	Climate topic	AE	Milestone	Onboarding year
FP073	Rwanda	Agriculture and food security	Watershed protection and adaptive livelihoods	MOE	Implementation	2019
FP098	Southern Africa	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	DBSA	Implementation	2019
FP101	Belize	Agriculture and food security	Smart agriculture	IFAD	Implementation	2020
FP110	Ecuador	Forest and land use	REDD-plus reforestation	UNDP	Implementation at pause	2020
FP116	Kyrgyzstan	Energy access and power generation	Natural resources management	FAO	MoU delayed	2020
SAP010	Philippines	Climate information and early warning system	Early warning system	Landbank	Implementation	2020
FP060	Barbados	Water security	Adaptive livelihoods, water security	CCCCC	Implementation	2021
SAP023	Mexico	Forest and land use	Ecosystem	FMCN	Implementation	2021
FP172	Nepal	Energy access and power generation	Clean cooking solutions	AEPC	FAA	2021
FP138	Senegal	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	BOAD	Inception at pause	2021
CN	Armenia	TBD	TBD	EPIU	Pre-approval	2022
SAP040	Brazil	TBD	TBD	<i>Fundación Avina</i>	Pre-approval	2022

Source: LORTA database.

Abbreviations

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

Annex IV: Guidelines for the effective functioning of the Independent Evaluation Unit

I. Introduction

1. The Revised terms of reference (TOR) of the Head of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) (hereafter, 'Head TOR'), which were initially approved by the Board of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in decision B.10/05 and revised in decision B.31/03, requested¹, "*... proposing detailed guidelines and procedures governing the work of the IEU to be approved by the Board. The procedures will be updated as necessary and approved by the Board so as to always ensure that the procedures allow for the work of the IEU to be carried out efficiently and in a cost-effective manner while meeting best international standards.*"
2. This document presents the Guidelines for the effective functioning of the Independent Evaluation Unit (hereafter, 'Guidelines'). These Guidelines are based on the Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (hereafter, 'IEU TOR') which was approved by the Board in decision B.BM 2021/15 and in the Head TOR². The Guidelines also consider the Evaluation Policy for the GCF (hereafter, 'Evaluation Policy') adopted by the Board in decision B.BM-2021/07.³
3. Previous versions of these Guidelines were shared with the Board at its twenty-fourth meeting (B.24) and its twenty-ninth meeting (B.29).^{4,5}

II. Mandate of the IEU

4. The Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund (GI) states:⁶
 - (a) As per paragraph 59, there will be periodic independent evaluations of the performance of the Fund to provide an objective assessment of the results of the Fund, including its funded activities and its effectiveness and efficiency. The purpose of these independent evaluations will be to inform decision-making by the Board and to identify and disseminate lessons learned. The results of the periodic evaluations will be published.⁷
 - (b) As per paragraph 60, 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 by, 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.
5. The IEU TOR was approved by the Board with the following objectives which are derived from the GI:⁸

¹ As contained in Board document GCF/B.31/14, annex I.

² Board decision B.BM-2021/15, annex I.

³ Board decision B.BM-2021/07, annex I.

⁴ As contained in Board document GCF/B.24/Inf.12.

⁵ As contained in Board document GCF/B.29/Inf.08, annex III.

⁶ As annexed to decision 3/CP.17 presented in UNFCCC document FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1.

⁷ Policy documents are not quoted verbatim to ensure consistency within this document unless specifically indicated otherwise. The language from policy documents has undergone minor changes for editorial consistency.

⁸ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraph 3.

- (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 Fund's performance in order to provide an objective assessment of the Fund's results and the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities.
 - (c) Providing evaluation reports to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for purposes of periodic reviews of the financial mechanism of the Convention.
6. The Head TOR further states that the independent evaluation work is separate from the day-to-day monitoring and evaluation (M&E) work of the Secretariat as per paragraph 23 (j) of the GI.⁹

III. Role and responsibilities of the IEU

7. The Evaluation Policy provides that the IEU will promote learning and dialogue, and disseminate lessons learned to Board members, accredited entities (AEs), and the Secretariat.¹⁰
8. Following the guidance in the GI, the Board established the IEU and provided for independence within the IEU TOR and the Evaluation Policy:^{11, 12}
- (a) As per paragraph 4 of the IEU TOR, the evaluation function should be located independently from the other management functions so that it can be free from undue influence according to the best-practice norms and standards for independent evaluation. The IEU will have full discretion in directly submitting its reports to the Board.
 - (b) As per paragraph 5 of the IEU TOR, the Head of the IEU will be appointed by, and report to, the Board, potentially through a designated Board committee. The tenure of the Head of the IEU will be for three years, renewable once. The recruitment process will be conducted in a transparent manner by the Board. The Head of the IEU can be removed only by decision of the Board. To preserve independence, upon termination of service as the IEU Head, he/she will not be eligible for staff positions within the Secretariat.
 - (c) As per paragraph 7 of the IEU TOR, the Board will review and approve the Evaluation Policy and the IEU's three-year rolling evaluation work plans, the IEU annual work programme and budget. It will also review management action reports prepared by the IEU, which will provide an assessment of the progress in the implementation of IEU recommendations.
 - (d) Paragraph 28 of Evaluation Policy also states that the Board is expected to actively consider findings and recommendations from IEU evaluations, and to incorporate them into the policies and advice it provides to the Fund overall.
9. To ensure the independence of the IEU, as per the GI and the IEU TOR, the Board approved the Head TOR which states: "To preserve operational independence, upon termination of service as the Head of the IEU, he/she shall not be eligible for any type of staff

⁹ Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund (2011), paragraph 23(j).

¹⁰ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 56.

¹¹ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraphs 4, 5 and 7.

¹² Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 28.

positions within the Secretariat.” Further, the Head TOR identifies the following responsibilities to provide for operational and financial independence:

- (a) Proposing an annual administrative budget and work plan and updated three-year rolling work plans for the IEU, to ensure its financial independence, to be considered and approved by the Board.
 - (b) Leadership and management of the unit, including the authority to make appointments and manage staff of the unit.
 - (c) The Performance Oversight Committee of the Executive Director and Heads of Independent Units will assist the Board in discharging its responsibilities regarding the performance management of the Head of the IEU.¹³
 - (d) The Head reports and communicates directly with the Board.¹⁴
10. As stated in paragraph 4 of the IEU TOR, the IEU will exercise full discretion in directly submitting its reports to the Board. The IEU will have independence in the development of evaluation reports, including design, drafting, and delivery.¹⁵
11. The GCF Evaluation Standards (hereafter ‘Evaluation Standards’) lists four dimensions of independence in evaluations:¹⁶
- (a) Structural independence: where each evaluation has its own budget.
 - (b) Functional independence: where the evaluation team can determine how to conduct the evaluation.
 - (c) Organizational independence: where the evaluation team is positioned outside the organization’s reporting line and staff management function.
 - (d) Behavioural independence: where the operational unit does not interfere with or influence the process or the interpretation and reporting of the evaluation findings. This dimension would apply even in cases where the operational unit commissions the evaluation of its own project or programme.

3.1 IEU-led evaluations

12. With the above provisions on independence, the IEU undertakes several functions, the first of which is evaluations.
- (a) As per paragraph 52 of the Evaluation Policy, the IEU will be responsible for undertaking independent evaluations/reviews/assessments. Additionally, upon request by the Secretariat, the IEU could provide technical support in the design or implementation of evaluations or reviews to be conducted or managed by the Secretariat. The IEU can also attest to the quality of self-evaluations by the Secretariat as approved in the IEU TOR upon request by the Board. The IEU may undertake evaluability assessments as well as impact evaluations, in line with their Board-approved TOR, at the different stages of implementation of GCF projects or programmes, in cooperation with the AEs. The IEU will synthesize findings and lessons

¹³ Terms of reference of the Performance Oversight Committee of the Executive Director and Heads of Independent Units (2018), paragraph 1.

¹⁴ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraph 5.

¹⁵ Ibid., paragraph 4.

¹⁶ Green Climate Fund Evaluation Standards (2022).

learned from evaluations to inform the Board, the Executive Director and stakeholders.¹⁷

- (b) As listed in the Head TOR, the Head of the IEU will be responsible for conducting or managing, by contracting consultants, evaluations using as much as possible internally generated data streams and analytical outputs and applying evaluation standards and practice in accordance with best international practice and standards.

13. Further, paragraph 8 of the IEU TOR states that should the COP request the Board for an independent assessment of the overall performance of the Fund, the Board may request the IEU to support the work involved in such an assessment. The IEU will be responsible for the overall performance review of the Fund every programming/replenishment period.¹⁸

14. The Evaluation Policy and IEU TOR further identify many types of evaluation. The Evaluation Policy recognizes three types of evaluations: GCF independent evaluations, Secretariat-led evaluations, and AE-led evaluations.¹⁹ Further, as stated in paragraph 24 of the Evaluation Policy, the Fund may carry out ex-post evaluations following the end of project/programme implementation at its own cost, and with reasonable notice to AEs. These evaluations can either be Secretariat-led evaluations or IEU independent evaluations.²⁰ The IEU TOR further identifies other types of evaluations and the Fund's results areas. The types of evaluation mentioned below will provide the Board and the COP with an independent assessment of the Fund's operations:²¹

- (a) As per paragraph 17 of the IEU TOR, given that the Fund pursues a country-driven approach, IEU may perform country portfolio evaluations.
- (b) As per paragraph 18 of the IEU TOR, IEU may perform thematic evaluations of the different types of activities that the Fund will finance. These are designed to enable and support enhanced actions on climate change adaptation and mitigation. These thematic evaluations may cover all the results areas of the Fund.
- (c) As per paragraph 19 of the IEU TOR, IEU may also perform evaluations of project-based and programmatic approaches.

15. The IEU will be responsible for the overall performance review of the Fund every programming/replenishment period.²² The performance review will launch in the second year of the GCF programming period and conclude in the fourth year, aiming to align with replenishment cycles and to inform them. The Board may wish to provide guidance related to strategic direction and scope, ahead of the second year of the programming period, or within the strategic plan.

16. The Board has provided operational guidance on evaluations. The IEU TOR states that the IEU will be responsible for conducting, or managing by contracting consultants, the types of evaluations, using as much as possible internally generated data streams and analytical outputs, and applying the best evaluation norms and standards.²³ The use of technical expert panels or similar mechanisms may be appropriate. The Head TOR identifies the following responsibilities:

¹⁷ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraphs 19, 20, 21, and 22.

¹⁸ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraph 8.

¹⁹ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 52.

²⁰ Ibid., paragraph 24.

²¹ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraphs 17, 18, and 19.

²² Ibid., paragraph 8.

²³ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraphs 6, 9, and 15.

- (a) Conducting or managing, by contracting consultants, evaluations using as much as possible internally generated data streams and analytical outputs and applying evaluation standards and practice in accordance with best international practice and standards. The use of technical expert panels or similar mechanisms may be appropriate. The Head of the IEU will ensure that evaluation team members do not have conflicts of interest with respect to the activities in whose evaluation they will be involved.
 - (b) Ensuring the IEU contributes to the GCF knowledge management process, including communicating lessons and best practices as learned by the IEU.
 - (c) Providing reliable and objective assurance to the Board and GCF senior management concerning governance, risk and control as part of the IEU's line of responsibility in the Fund's internal control framework, namely the Committee of Sponsoring the Treadway Commission (COSO).
 - (d) Attesting to the quality of the Fund's self-evaluations conducted by the Secretariat.
17. The Administrative guidelines on the internal control framework and internal audit standards and the Compliance risk policy of the GCF have identified the IEU as the third line of defense in ensuring effective internal control of the Fund.^{24, 25} The IEU, in accordance with the IEU TOR, will conduct reviews and other assurance engagements. The IEU reports may be used to gain assurance that the design and implementation of policies and procedures by the First and Second Levels are managing the risks of Fund appropriately.²⁶
18. While undertaking quality assurance, the IEU will consider the Evaluation Standards, GCF evaluation principles, and GCF evaluation criteria, alongside the available evaluative evidence to assess the quality of review at hand. Requests for quality assurance reviews would have to be made with sufficient advance notice to the IEU. Reports for quality assurance undertaken by the IEU will be made available to the Board.
19. For the IEU to undertake its own knowledge management function, it will focus its activities such that lessons can be shared internally within the IEU, as well as externally for potential use by the Secretariat and other relevant stakeholders. This will form a virtuous cycle of learning and knowledge sharing.
20. As stated in paragraph 58(g) of the Evaluation Policy, all evaluations (or reviews or assessments) submitted by the IEU to the Board will have an official management response prepared by the GCF Secretariat (prepared in consultation with relevant GCF stakeholders) to inform Board decision-making.²⁷ Ideally, this response should be presented to the Board at the same time as the evaluation. If time is insufficient, the management response may be presented no later than the next Board meeting.
21. Paragraph 58(g) of the Evaluation Policy further states that the IEU will assess how the Secretariat followed on from the Board decision related to the IEU evaluations, during relevant subsequent IEU evaluations and during the overall performance evaluation of the GCF.²⁸

²⁴ Administrative guidelines on the internal control framework and internal audit standards (2015).

²⁵ Compliance risk policy (Component VIII) (2019).

²⁶ Ibid., paragraph 8(iii).

²⁷ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 58(g).

²⁸ Ibid., paragraph 58(g).

22. All evaluations, reviews and assessments of the IEU will be followed up by a management action report, a year or more later, after consideration by the Board.²⁹
23. **Evaluation advisory group:** The IEU may establish an evaluation advisory group (the advisory group) comprising leaders in the field and experts on the subjects of IEU-led evaluations. The advisory group will not include members of the Board or those involved with the governance of the GCF. The advisory group also will not include staff of the GCF Secretariat or GCF AEs. This advisory group will not be a decision-making body, and its members will be volunteers. In this way, the advisory group will not constitute a committee of the Board. Advice provided by the group will be considered as additional feedback on technical and thematic areas during the design and implementation of its evaluations but will not be considered binding.
24. **Performance Oversight Committee (POC):** As established in decision B.21/13, the performance oversight committee will assist the Board in discharging its responsibilities regarding the performance management of the Head of the IEU.³⁰ Among other roles, the POC is responsible for setting objectives and monitoring the performance of Board-appointed officials.

3.2 Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment

25. As per paragraph 53 of the Evaluation Policy, the IEU will be responsible, in collaboration with the Secretariat, for advising, guiding and assisting real-time impact assessments/evaluations for a selection of the funded activities portfolio, such as the Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme. The IEU will receive all data and reports generated through these real-time impact assessments and also share them with the Secretariat. The IEU, in coordination with the Secretariat, would select projects/programmes for LORTA. The Secretariat will further participate in the implementation of LORTA for learning purposes.³¹
26. The long-term aim is that approximately 30 per cent of the Fund's projects and programmes approved annually by the Board will include real-time impact assessments as part of their evaluation plans. These impact assessments will be used to inform the GCF portfolio and its strategic choices. Their standards will be set by the IEU, developed in consultation with the Secretariat, and informed by Board-mandated IEU functions.³²
27. The IEU may undertake evaluability assessments as well as impact evaluations, in line with the Board-approved IEU TOR, at the different stages of implementation of GCF projects or programmes, in cooperation with the AEs.³³
28. The LORTA programme offers capacity building, advisory services, and dissemination and outreach of impact assessment to AEs throughout the project lifecycle. To measure the attributable causal change of GCF investments, the LORTA programme builds the capacities of AEs to develop and implement impact assessment by conducting workshops (including design workshops) and country missions. By undertaking stakeholder concertation, the LORTA programme fosters a culture of impact assessment among AEs and other climate project

²⁹ Ibid., paragraph 64(b).

³⁰ Board decision B.21/13.

³¹ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 53.

³² Ibid., paragraph 58(e).

³³ Ibid., paragraph 52.

practitioners to enhance learning and enable knowledge sharing. It also provides oversight of impact assessment activities conducted by AEs within the LORTA programme.

29. The LORTA programme does not provide financial or budgetary support to impact evaluations from the budget of the IEU, and it is expected that the GCF will support projects to have sufficient budgets for impact evaluations. The Evaluation Policy has set the longer-term aim of ensuring that approximately 30 per cent of the Fund's projects and programmes approved annually by the Board will include real-time impact assessments as part of their evaluation plans.

30. Aligned with the Evaluation Policy and the Evaluation Standards, impact evaluations of GCF funded activities can be carried out by the IEU, the evaluation office of the AE and/or the project team of the AE.

3.3 Policy formulation

31. As per paragraph 9 of the IEU TOR, the IEU will be responsible for developing and updating the Evaluation Policy.³⁴

32. The IEU is the custodian of the Evaluation Policy. The IEU will advise on the effective implementation of this Policy in cooperation with the Secretariat and shall periodically recommend updates to the Policy to the Board. While updating the Evaluation Policy, the IEU will engage with stakeholders and draw upon their advice and feedback.³⁵

33. The Evaluation Policy covers the evaluation functions of the Fund exercised by the IEU, the Secretariat and AEs as defined under the GI, decisions adopted by the Board, relevant TORs, and legal agreements. The Policy also covers how the Fund may respond to the evaluation capacity development needs of AEs and other entities associated with the GCF. The IEU TOR provides the mandate given by the Board to the IEU, including, among other things, the mandate for IEU-led evaluation described by the Evaluation Policy.³⁶

34. As stated in paragraph 51 of the Evaluation Policy, the IEU shall, every 5 years present a report on issues related to the implementation of the Evaluation Policy along with any recommendations for changes to it. The report will include a review of evaluation budgets and lessons learned from the integrated results management framework (IRMF) implementation.³⁷

35. As per paragraph 50 of the Evaluation Policy, the IEU shall develop standards in collaboration with the Secretariat, and the Secretariat will develop guidelines to implement the Policy, in collaboration with the IEU, that ensure the Fund is able to inform its overall results, successes and unintended consequences in a credible and measurable manner.³⁸ The Evaluation Standards are developed to support the implementation and operationalization of the Evaluation Policy.³⁹

³⁴ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraph 9.

³⁵ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 50.

³⁶ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraph 2.

³⁷ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 51.

³⁸ Ibid., paragraph 50.

³⁹ Green Climate Fund Evaluation Standards (2022), paragraph 1.

36. The IEU developed the Initial set of guidelines for the effective functioning of the IEU as the Board requested the IEU in decision B.24/15 to present the detailed procedures and guidelines for the effective operation of the IEU.⁴⁰

3.4 Capacity building

37. The IEU TOR identifies the following responsibilities:⁴¹

- (a) As per paragraph 10, the IEU will make recommendations to improve the Fund's performance indicators and its results management framework.
- (b) As per paragraph 11, the IEU will attest to the quality of the Fund's self-evaluation and reviews conducted by the Secretariat.
- (c) As per paragraph 25, the IEU shall closely cooperate with the relevant departments or units of implementing entities and should seek to involve them in its activities wherever feasible.
- (d) As per paragraph 26, the relationship between the IEU and the corresponding bodies of implementing entities and relevant partners will be covered by relevant agreements (such as accreditation master agreements (AMAs), funded activity agreement (FAAs), and memoranda of understanding (MoUs)) which will be entered into by the Fund with these entities and will require these entities to cooperate with the Fund's IEU, where required.
- (e) As per paragraph 27, the IEU will support the strengthening of evaluation capacities of implementing entities, to enable evaluation of their Fund portfolio activities. Over time, in those countries in which there are entities with evaluation capacities, the IEU could involve them in Fund evaluations.

38. The Head TOR identifies the following responsibilities:

- (a) Providing recommendations to AEs on how to design projects/programmes and monitoring those activities so as to improve the ability of the IEU to provide quality evaluation of the Fund's activities.
- (b) Establishing close relationships with the equivalent units of the AEs in order to avoid duplication of their respective activities, and sharing lessons learned to ensure continuous learning.
- (c) Developing plans to ensure that evidence informs learning across the Fund.

39. Paragraph 55 of the Evaluation Policy also states that the IEU will strengthen evaluation capacities in AEs and intermediaries to enable evaluation of their Fund portfolio activities. The IEU will assume, as established in its TOR, a leadership role in the evaluation community regarding climate change, and actively participate in relevant evaluation networks. Furthermore, the IEU will work on establishing and leading a community of practice of evaluators working in the climate change space.⁴²

40. IEU may provide capacity building on areas and best practice related to evaluation design and undertaking, including but not limited to theoretical frameworks, data collection,

⁴⁰ Board decision B.24/15.

⁴¹ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraphs 10, 11, 25, 26, and 27.

⁴² Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 55.

data processing, and management and use of data in evaluations. Further, the IEU will focus on building capacities for impact evaluations, including through the LORTA programme.

3.5 Learning, synthesis and dissemination

41. The IEU TOR and the Evaluation Policy state:
 - (a) The IEU will produce a synthesis for presentation to the Board based on these evaluations (or reviews or assessments).⁴³
 - (b) The IEU will synthesize the findings and lessons learned from its evaluations to inform the Board and the Secretariat, national designated authorities, implementing entities, observer organizations, as well as stakeholders.⁴⁴
42. The IEU TOR further provides for feedback and knowledge management:⁴⁵
 - (a) As per paragraph 24, evaluation results should feed back into the development, update and design of strategies, policies and operations, thus contributing to enhancing the quality of overall performance of the GCF. To facilitate this process, the IEU will periodically prepare brief notes synthesizing lessons learned from evaluations.
43. The Head TOR identifies the following responsibilities:
 - (a) Synthesizing and sharing the findings and lessons learned from the IEU's evaluations with key internal and external audiences, including AEs, in order to inform decision-making by the Board and the Executive Director.
 - (b) In addition to synthesizing the findings and/or lessons learned, disseminating/communicating results with relevant audiences.
44. The Evaluation Policy provides that the IEU will promote learning and dialogue, and disseminate lessons learned to Board members, AEs, the Secretariat, and other actors. The IEU independent evaluations will also incorporate lessons learned from research and prior IEU evaluations.⁴⁶
45. Leading up to and during the preparation of its reports, the IEU may share emerging findings for feedback and fact-checking by the Secretariat. Final IEU evaluation reports will be shared with the Board. The IEU may disseminate its reports after submission to the Board and will make them available on the IEU website.⁴⁷ Approach papers for each evaluation will include plans for communication and review.
46. The Head TOR states the following responsibilities:
 - (a) Providing evaluation reports to the COP of the UNFCCC for the purposes of periodic review of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention.
 - (b) Preparing and submitting periodic progress reports to the Board, as and when required, and an annual report that will also be disseminated to the public.

⁴³ Ibid., paragraph 59(e).

⁴⁴ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraph 12.

⁴⁵ Ibid., paragraph 24.

⁴⁶ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 56.

⁴⁷ Ibid., paragraph 59(a).

(c) Making recommendations to improve the Fund's performance, in light of the IEU's evaluations, including in particular to the Fund's performance indicators and its results management framework.

47. Paragraph 64(a) of Evaluation Policy also states the responsibilities in the uptake of evaluative evidence and learning:⁴⁸

(a) The IEU and the Secretariat will include a dissemination/knowledge management plan for evaluations in their respective work programmes. The Secretariat's knowledge management function will also play a critical role in this space.

48. To operationalize the above guidance, the IEU will make use of prevalent means of Board communications, such as webinars, side events at Board meetings, and other means to socialize approach papers, emerging findings, and final reports.

49. The IEU TOR states following responsibilities regarding networking and relationship building:⁴⁹

(a) The IEU will actively participate in relevant international evaluation networks to ensure that it is at the frontier of evaluation practice and that it benefits from relevant initiatives undertaken by other evaluation units, in particular the United Nations Evaluation Group.

(b) The IEU will establish close relationships with the independent evaluation units of the accredited entities and relevant stakeholders, and will seek to involve them in their activities wherever feasible and appropriate.

IV. Workplan, budget and annual report of the IEU

50. Paragraph 21 of the IEU TOR states that to maximize the value added of evaluations, the IEU will prepare its annual and three-year rolling work plans after consulting with the Board and the Secretariat and taking into account the Board workplan for the strategic period, Board policy and review cycle, and any other Board-approved documents defining the subjects and schedules of reviews.⁵⁰

51. The Evaluation Policy, paragraph 58(b) further provides that the IEU budget should be linked to the size of the GCF programming envelope since it represents the volume of operations that the IEU will evaluate in the future. It is anticipated that the overall annual budget for the IEU will not exceed 1 per cent of the programming envelope of the GCF, while ensuring that the IEU annual budget will be sufficient to cover the annual work plan of the IEU approved by the Board.⁵¹

V. Administrative matters

52. As per paragraph 6 of the IEU TOR, the staff of the IEU will be subject to GCF Code of Conduct of Staff and the Head of the IEU will be subject to the policy on ethics and conflict of interest of Board appointed officials (B.13/27 para (a)). The IEU will ensure that evaluation

⁴⁸ Ibid., paragraph 64(a).

⁴⁹ Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraphs 13 and 14.

⁵⁰ Ibid., paragraph 21.

⁵¹ Evaluation policy for the GCF (2021), paragraph 58(b).

team members do not have conflicts of interest with respect to the activities in whose evaluation they will be involved.⁵²

53. The Head of the IEU will report to the Board and, for administrative purposes only, to the Executive Director. Pursuant to the provisions related to administrative matters, the Head of IEU (along with Heads of other independent units) meets periodically with the Executive Director to discuss, among other things, administrative matters. Administrative matters may include the allocation to the independent units of overhead costs for common budget items. To illustrate the cost allocation, the IEU budget includes an administrative cost allocation, which relates to information and communications technology (ICT) costs, utilities, supplies, depreciation, international SOS, and costs to support designated human resources and procurement staff. The IEU may enter into service-level agreements with the Secretariat on provision and standards of administrative services such as procurement, ICT, human resources, and other areas. The administrative sections of the Secretariat will provide to the IEU service standards that are consistent with those provided to the Secretariat. The IEU may explore the provision of additional services through external service providers (for example, head hunting firms).

54. The Head of the IEU will be responsible for the leadership and management of the Unit, including the authority to make appointments and to manage staff of the Unit, as provided in the Head TOR.

⁵² Updated terms of reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (2021), paragraph 6.

Table 1: Timelines of IEU independent evaluations

Document	Action	By Whom	When
IEU workplan (the plan for IEU Independent Evaluations)	Board decision	Board of the GCF	Final Board meeting of the year
IEU Independent Evaluations/ Assessments/ Reviews	Submitted to the Board Shared with Secretariat	IEU	In time for Board meeting, and in accordance with the IEU workplan
Management Response	Submitted to the Board	Secretariat	No later than the Board meeting following submission of the Evaluation Report
Board Decision	Board decision	Board of the GCF	After consideration of the Evaluation Report and/or Management Response
Management Action Report	Submitted to the Board	IEU	One year after Board decision

Table 2: IEU recommended actions for the Board’s consideration based on the variety of IEU-led evaluations⁵³

Types of evaluations	Potential actions for the Board’s consideration				
	Discuss/ dialogue	Take note/ welcome	Provide policy guidance	Provide strategic guidance	Take note of lessons for future consideration
Learning-oriented evaluations (e.g. small island developing States (SIDS))	Yes	Yes	Not essential	Not essential	Yes
Accountability-oriented evaluations (e.g. Simplified Approval Process (SAP) or Requests for Proposals (RFP))	Yes	Yes	Likely	Not essential	Yes
Dialogue-oriented evaluations (e.g. impact evaluations)	Yes	Yes	Not essential	Not essential	Yes
Thematic evaluations (e.g. adaptation)	Yes	Yes	Not essential	Not essential	Yes
Portfolio evaluations (e.g. SIDS or least developed countries (LDCs))	Yes	Yes	Not essential	Not essential	Yes
Policy/programme evaluations (e.g. Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP))	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not essential	Yes
Strategic evaluations (e.g. private sector)	Yes	Yes	Not essential	Yes	Yes
Performance reviews	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

⁵³ Other learning may emerge while the Board considers any evaluations.

Annex V: List of IEU publications and communications materials that were published in the reporting period

Document type	Topic
Board Report	GCF/B.35/Inf.02 2022 Annual Report of the IEU
Brief	IEU work plan and budget for 2023
Policy	Evaluation Operational Procedures and Guidelines for Accredited Entity-led Evaluations
Evaluation report	Final Report of the Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund
Evaluation report	Final Report of the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the African States
Evaluation report	Final Report of the Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the Green Climate Fund
Evaluation brief	4-page brief of the Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the Green Climate Fund. The Brief was translated and published also in Arabic, French, and Spanish languages.
Evaluation brief	4-page brief of the Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund The Brief was translated and published also in Arabic, French, and Spanish languages.
Evaluation brief	2-page brief of the Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund. The Brief was translated and published also in Arabic, French, and Spanish languages.
Evaluation brief	4-page brief of the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the African States The Brief was translated and published also in Arabic, French, and Spanish languages.
Evaluation knowledge product	Synthesis Note: An IEU deliverable for the Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Readiness and Preparatory Support Program
Evaluation brief	Approach brief: Independent Evaluation of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme
Impact evaluation knowledge product	Impact evaluation baseline report for FP072: Strengthening climate resilience of agricultural livelihoods in agro-ecological regions I and II in Zambia
Impact evaluation knowledge product	Impact evaluation baseline report for FP069: Enhancing adaptive capacities of coastal communities, especially women, to cope with climate change induced salinity
Management Action Reports (MAR)	MAR on the Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to the Private Sector (Annex 8 to the 2022 Annual Report)

Document type	Topic
Management Action Reports (MAR)	MAR on the Independent evaluation of the adaptation portfolio and approach of the Green Climate Fund (Annex 6 to the 2022 Annual Report)
Management Action Reports (MAR)	MAR on the Independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the GCF's investments in the LDCs (Annex 7 to the 2022 Annual Report)
Management Action Reports (MAR)	MAR on the Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the SIDS (Annex 9 to the 2022 Annual Report)
Management Action Reports (MAR)	MAR on the Independent synthesis of the GCF's Accreditation function (Annex 10 to the 2022 Annual Report)
IEU Blog	B.35 Data Outlook: Funding proposals for Board's consideration
IEU Blog	About the Bees, Climate and Complexity
IEU Blog	Stakeholder Engagement in Impact Evaluation
IEU Blog	Evaluation Capacity Assessment of the Green Climate Fund's Direct Access Entities
Learning paper	Evaluability assessment of the Green Climate Fund funding proposals
External publication	Debt-for-nature swap, Dictionary of Ecological Economics by Martin Prowse, Danny P. Cassimon, and Dennis Essers (2023)
Evidence review	Effectiveness of life skills training interventions for the empowerment of women in developing countries: A systematic review
Evidence review	[Systematic review] Behavioural science interventions within the development and environmental fields in developing countries
Video	Spotlight: Introducing IEU's Learning-Oriented Real-time Impact Assessment programme (LORTA)
Newsletter	IEU Newsletter 18
Article	PRESS RELEASE: 'Green Climate Fund's governance on track, but other improvements needed': Independent report
Article	PRESS RELEASE: Andreas Reumann Appointed as Head of the Independent Evaluation Unit
Article	IEU takes part in Global SDG Synthesis Coalition
Article	The IEU Interns Visit the UNPOG Office in Songdo, South Korea
Article	The IEU at International Women's Day Panel Discussion on Climate Technology and Innovation
Article	IEU participates in Climate Funds Evaluation Meeting on side of UNEG Meetings

Document type	Topic
Article	IEU celebrates 2023 World Wetlands Day: Time for Wetland Restoration
Article	IEU interns engage in an exchange programme with Incheon City
Article	(Korean version) IEU interns engage in an exchange programme with Incheon City
Article	IEU's Yeonji Kim receives commendation for outstanding contribution to society from Korea's Minister of Foreign Affairs

Annex VI: List of IEU events and engagements with stakeholders and partners in the reporting period

#	Month	Event	Type
1	January	IEU Learning Talk: Accreditation at the GCF	IEU event for Secretariat
2		UNEG Evaluation Week 2023	External
3		Food 4 Thought Series: What works for women's empowerment in developing countries	External
4		Climate Funds Evaluations Meeting	IEU event for Stakeholders/Partners
5		IEU brief session on the RPSP Synthesis Note	IEU event for Secretariat
6	February	IEU Board Webinar: Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the Green Climate Fund	IEU event for GCF Board
7		GCF New Staff Orientation - IEU Introduction	GCF Event
8		IEU Intern's Day: Visit to United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG)	IEU engagement - external
9		IEU Board Webinar: Independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the GCF's investments in the African States	IEU event for GCF Board
10		IEU Learning Talk: Evaluation Policy of the GCF	IEU event for Secretariat
11		IEU webinar: What do we know about planning for measuring the impact of GCF's investment?	IEU event for Stakeholders/Partners
12		World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)	External
13		IEU Board Webinar: Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme	IEU event for GCF Board
14		Special IEU Learning Talk on the Wetlands	IEU event for Stakeholders/Partners
15	March	Delhi IIT Lecture: Climate Finance and development assistance	External
16		IEU Webinar: Direct Access and African States (CSO/PSO/AEs)	IEU event for GCF Stakeholders/Partners
17		GCF Women International Women's Day Panel Discussion on Climate Technology and Innovation	GCF Event

#	Month	Event	Type
18		IEU at B.35 In-Person Side Event: Management Action Reports	IEU event for GCF Board
19		GCF Division of Mitigation and Adaptation Weekly Meeting: IEU Work Presentation	IEU engagement with GCF Secretariat
20		GCF All Staff Meeting - Presentation of IEU 2023 Workplan	IEU engagement with GCF Secretariat
21		SDG Synthesis Coalition Member States' Briefing for Planet and People Pillars	External
22		Transformational Climate Finance: Advancing Just and Equitable Solutions for the Climate Crisis	External
23		IEU Learning Talk: Evidence Review on Women's Empowerment	IEU event for Secretariat
24		IEU Board Webinar: Management Action Reports	IEU event for GCF Board
25		GCF Second Replenishment Consultation Meeting: SPR Presentation	GCF Event
26	April	IEU Intern's Day: Visit to Embassy of Pakistan, Republic of Korea	IEU engagement - external
27		UN World Data Forum	External
28		IEU Learning Talk: How do we know GCF investments work?	IEU event for Secretariat