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# Report on the activities of the Independent Evaluation Unit

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## **Summary**

This document provides a report of the Independent Evaluation Unit's (IEU) key activities for the period between October 2018 and January 2019 and an update on the Performance Review as requested by the Board. It reports the IEU's outputs and achievements in line with its Board-approved work plan for 2018 (GCF/B.19/07).

## I. Introduction

1. This document is a report of the key activities and outcomes of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) over a four-month period between October 2018 and January 2019. The objectives and key workplan activities of the IEU are presented in its Board-approved annual and three-year workplan.<sup>1</sup> This document is organized as follows:

- (a) Overview;
- (b) Report on key activities;
- (c) Budget and expenditure report; and
- (d) Supporting annexes.

## II. Overview

2. At its nineteenth meeting, the Board by decision B.19/21, approved an overall budget allocation amount of USD 2,953,867 for the IEU for 2018. Key activities taken by the IEU for the period were:

- (a) Building and strengthening the Independent Evaluation Unit;
- (b) Delivering and planning for evaluations;
- (c) Undertaking advisory services, learning & strengthening capacity; and
- (d) Communicating, synthesizing evidence and building partnerships.

## III. Report of key activities

3. The IEU accomplished all its key promised activities and objectives for the period October 2018 and January 2019 except for its recruitment objectives. The last part is explained in Section IV.

### 3.1 Building and strengthening the Independent Evaluation Unit

4. **Staffing:** Given the IEU's ambitious work plan for 2018, a key focus for the relatively small office has been ensuring it has sufficient staff strength to deliver its evaluations. In 2018 it recruited five new staff. It continues to strengthen its staff strength. During this quarter it focused on disseminating job descriptions for positions that have been approved in its 2018/19 work plan. The IEU recruited a Communication and Uptake Associate in January 2019 and is close to completing its recruitment of two researchers (data and qualitative), one GIS analyst and an Evaluation Specialist. In the meanwhile, and as noted in its work plan, it is supported ably by HQ based consultants that currently aid its recently approved IEU data lab and are providing critical support for the evaluations that the IEU is delivering and planning for. The IEU will plan staffing for the data lab once the vision and the structure has matured and will present a workplan in 2020. The IEU was also supported in 2018 by short-term consultants who aided

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<sup>1</sup> Refer document GCF/B.19/07

the IEU's Songdo team on its evaluations that the IEU was tasked to deliver in 2018 (and that will be presented to the Board at B.22).<sup>2</sup>

5. **Strengthening capacity and training:** As the IEU adds new people to its office, it is cognizant that the team must build and solidify a common definition and language around its standards and expectations of quality while focusing on building a culture that fosters collegiality and internal communication. To ensure this, the IEU Songdo team underwent three different batches of technical training during this quarter. The first batch of technical training focused on methods to undertake systematic reviews and evidence gap-maps. The Collaboration of Environment Evidence trained IEU staff and consultants on methods for searching databases, formulating protocols for evidence reviews and illustrating evidence through gap-maps. The second batch of training was on meta-analyses and meta-syntheses. The third batch of training was a primer on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data and techniques and how to leverage GIS to answer important questions for the GCF. This training focused on using GIS for change monitoring, zonal statistical analyses, geocoding and hotspot analysis. Training also focused on algorithmic data analyses.

6. **Team-building:** In November the IEU team in Songdo participated in a one and a half day team-building retreat. The retreat was planned and led by the IEU team and focused on mapping and reviewing the 2019 work plan. It also had sessions on professional development, exchanging lessons from the IEU's first year of (full) existence and communications planning.

7. **The IEU's 2019 Work Plan and Budget:** At B.21 the GCF approved the IEU's 2019 work plan and budget for 4,502,800 USD. This includes strengthening IEU's data capabilities through its data lab, delivering four evaluations including the Performance Review of the GCF and its multi-year Learning Oriented Real Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) program. It also includes one strategic evaluation (the Independent evaluation of GCF's Country Ownership work) and one thematic evaluation (the evaluation of GCF's environmental and social safeguards).

8. **Develop GCF's evaluation policy:** At B.19 the GCF Board requested the IEU to develop the GCF's Evaluation Policy. In developing the policy, the IEU is following well-considered guidelines and principles. During this quarter, the IEU undertook and completed its engagement with GCF stakeholders, including the GCF's Board members, CSO and PSO representatives, AE and NDAs and others, to elicit comments and responses to the Evaluation Policy. It engaged with these audiences through six webinars and its active website. As an update, the co-chairs of the Board have advised the IEU to bring the now-ready evaluation policy of the GCF to B.23 instead of B.22. During these engagements specifically, the IEU clarified the implications of the policy's scope, processes and procedures for its stakeholders. It presented the specific context of the GCF (including its existing policies and governing mandate) and guidance provided by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In December, a first-draft was presented via the IEU website requesting public feedback on the draft policy. The IEU has begun work on developing standards and procedures for the Policy.

## 3.2 Evaluations

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<sup>2</sup> For the remainder of this document, the term 'IEU Songdo team' refers collectively to IEU staff and Songdo based HQ consultants at the IEU. This is because at this early stage of the IEU, both categories ably support IEU's key activities and outcomes. Plans for the overall staffing will only be presented to the Board in 2020, at which time the IEU will have been in existence for three years. This will also mark the end of its first three-year work plan.

9. During these four months, the IEU worked on completing three specific evaluation related activities due in 2018 while also getting ready for new evaluations that the GCF Board has requested the IEU to undertake in 2019.
10. **Readiness evaluation:** At B.17, the GCF Board requested the IEU to evaluate GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) and its aim of strengthening how local entities engage with the GCF.<sup>3</sup> The evaluation's (96-page) main report and (418-page) appendix are now complete and are available on the IEU web site.<sup>4</sup>
11. The evaluation's most critical findings relate to RPSP's relevance and coherence, country ownership, effectiveness, efficiency, gender equity, scalability and innovativeness. Its recommendations focus on capacity building, country programmes, the GCF Secretariat's role, vision and strategy, and future development.
12. The report's main finding and recommendations have been presented via webinars and external workshops to CSOs, Board members, Secretariat staff, NDAs, AEs and other relevant stakeholders. The evaluation, which was originally available for consideration at B.21, will be presented for Board decision at B.22. Summary documents for these – namely a two-page summary of recommendations (*GEvalNote No. 1*) and a longer four-page summary for technical audiences (*GEvalBrief No.1*) have also been produced and are available on IEU's website.<sup>5</sup>
13. **Results management review:** The Board-approved 2018 IEU Work Plan included a review of the Fund's Results Management Framework (RMF). The review's (67-page) main report and (39-page) appendix were completed and uploaded to the IEU web site in November.<sup>6</sup> The IEU was asked to a) assess the design, implementation, and utility of the RMF; and b) develop recommendations to enhance the framework and provide insights on the capacity and needs of the implementing partners and the Fund.
14. The IEU's review of the Framework has ten recommendations on how the RMF may be improved. These findings and recommendations have been shared and discussed widely among internal and external stakeholders through a variety of outreach measures. Summary documents for these including a two-page summary of recommendations for decision makers (*GEvalNote No. 2*) and a longer, four-page summary for technical audiences (*GEvalNote No.2*) have also been produced and are available on IEU's website.<sup>7</sup>
15. The independent review, which was originally available for consideration at B.21, will be presented for Board decision at B.22.
16. **LORTA:** A key element of the Board-approved 2018 IEU Work Plan and Budget was the pilot of the multi-year Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme. As a recap LORTA aims to build capacity and mechanisms for measuring causal changes of GCF investments. This technical assistance program aims to help approved GCF projects build high quality baseline data, undertake real-time learning on the likelihood of impact, and measure the causal impact of GCF investments.

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<sup>3</sup> Decision B.17/07

<sup>4</sup> The full report, appendix, a short two-page brief for decision makers (*GEvalNote No. 1*), a longer four-page note for technical audiences (*GEvalBrief No. 1*) and other RPSP evaluation-related documents and videos are available here: <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluations/rpsp-evaluation>

<sup>5</sup> Summary documents for the Readiness Evaluation include a two-page summary for decision makers *GEvalNote No. 1* [here](#) and a four-page brief *GEvalBrief No. 1* [here](#).

<sup>6</sup> The full report, appendix, a short two page note for decision makers (*GEvalNote No.2*) and a longer four-page brief for technical audiences (*GEvalBrief No. 2*) and other RMF review-related documents and videos are available on IEU's website: <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluations/rmf-review>

<sup>7</sup> Summary documents for the results framework assessment include a two-page summary for decision makers *GEvalNote No. 2* [here](#) and a four-page brief *GEvalBrief No. 2* [here](#).

17. Eight projects were selected for assessment during the first phase of the pilot and their formative project evaluations were concluded in 2018. Team meetings were held in Malawi, Madagascar, Mongolia, Paraguay, Vanuatu, Georgia, Zambia and Uganda. The field missions and technical assistance conducted during these visits have gathered data and initiated the processes for building high quality measurement and real-time systems that will likely inform the IEU in its initial assessments. In 2019, the IEU will support six additional projects that will be selected for their ownership and representativeness, among other criteria. Further detail on LORTA's progress thus far is included as an annex in this activity report (see Annex II). A report laying out baseline findings from all selected projects will be submitted to the Board at B.24.
18. **Planning for 2019 evaluations:** At B.21, the GCF Board requested the IEU to undertake four evaluations in 2019. The past four months have been dedicated to initiating these four evaluations. This preparatory work is summarized here.
- (a) **Performance review:** At B.21 the GCF Board asked the IEU to assess the extent to which the Fund has delivered its objectives as laid out in its initial strategic plan, and the extent to which it has responded to the needs of developing countries.<sup>8</sup> The objectives of the Performance Review's (PR) include examining the likely performance of GCF, its funded activities and their effectiveness and efficiency; assessing the existing GCF portfolio and expected impacts of funding decisions and other support activities. As part of its regular engagement strategy, the IEU met with the GCF's Senior Management Team in January to inform them of the approaches being used for the PR. An approach paper guiding the review will be presented on the IEU website in the middle of February 2019. Annex I in this activity report summarizes the progress of the PR. The final PR report will be completed by June 2019 and its outputs will inform the GCF's replenishment process.
- (b) **Environmental and Social Safeguards Assessment:** As approved in its 2019 workplan, the IEU will be undertaking an independent assessment of the GCF's Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS), including the Environmental Social Management System (ESMS). The ESS evaluation will advise the Board, Secretariat, Management and other stakeholders on how well the current ESS framework and ESMS serve to: a) prevent, mitigate and manage potential adverse environmental and social impacts of GCF activities, programmes and projects; b) improve the environmental and social performance of the Fund and its portfolio over time; and c) determine how the design and implementation of GCF projects influence results in these areas. In recent months the IEU has requested different GCF divisions to comment on the terms of reference drafted by the IEU and held consultations across the Secretariat and the Independent Units. The IEU is currently in the process of recruiting a firm that will assist the IEU in undertaking the assessment.
- (c) **Country Ownership evaluation:** As approved in its 2019 workplan the IEU will undertake an independent evaluation of how effectively and efficiently country ownership and country needs have been incorporated into GCF's policies and practices. Initial planning work is underway for country engagements, reviews of key documents, on-the-ground verifications and an assessment of what is working, how and for whom, while identifying key bottlenecks in ensuring access and commitment to this overall guiding principle of country ownership. The assessment will recognize that country ownership is an evolving and ongoing process and will make recommendations for improvements. The final report will be presented to the Board in October 2019.

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<sup>8</sup> GCF/B.21/34

### 3.3 Advisory services, learning & capacity strengthening

19. As part of the IEU's multi-year programme, in 2018 the IEU hosted a two-and-a-half-day capacity-building workshop for relevant GCF investment representatives and staff from GCF approved projects. There were 60 overall attendees including representatives from accredited entities, project teams, and the secretariat. Workshop topics included training on basic concepts of impact evaluation, the need for evidence in the climate change, overviews of key methods for impact evaluation, and how to develop a Theory of Change.

20. **The IEU DataLab©:** The IEU's plan for 2019 includes building measurement and evaluation-ready datasets for all GCF Board approved projects. The IEU's Datalab will enable IEU to collect, clean and analyze data from different GCF platforms, such as from iPMS, the Country portal, the Entity portal, Fluxx, SharePoint, the GCF website and from different divisions. The vision for the Datalab emerged from the evaluations that the IEU undertook in 2018: that experience showed that although the GCF has a lot of data, these are frequently not synchronized, digitized or available in a machine-readable manner and therefore unfortunately cannot be used to inform GCF's results in a reliable manner. During this quarter, the IEU also built on the technical capacity of its staff to envision the advantages of geographically disaggregated data to analyze the potential for impact for GCF. As a follow-up to the Board's approval of the IEU's plans for the Datalab, the IEU worked on creating a functional architecture for the lab and engaged with different parts of the Fund to ensure that it has a comprehensive view of where different types of data lie. Currently the IEU Songdo team is engaged in digitizing data and developing data dictionaries on investment criteria, including impact, paradigm shift and sustainable development.

21. **Engagement:** The IEU leads informational sessions regularly in Songdo, during missions and at key international events such as Board Meetings, Structured Dialogues, the Global Landscape Forum and COP24. Activities have included a 'Learn the Art of' session for the Secretariat on 'Measurement and evaluation – what works, for whom and how much?', LORTA workshops, informational sessions for CSOs, stakeholders of IEU's various evaluations and dialogues on the GCF's Performance Review and Evaluation Policy. A list of these events for this quarter are available on request.

### 3.4 Syntheses, communications and building partnerships

22. The IEU is in the process of preparing several evidence syntheses studies that aim to take stock of high-quality evidence in specific thematic areas, globally and help the IEU and GCF gauge state of the art practice and theory in climate change areas relevant to the Fund.

23. **Forestry evidence gap-map:** As part of its 2018 work plan, the IEU commissioned "Outcomes from Forest Conservation Interventions: An Evidence Gap Map." This study examines the effectiveness of different forest conservation actions. The gap-map presents impact evaluations and systematic reviews of forestry interventions with a special focus on REDD+. Co-authored between IEU staff and scientists at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the study is now complete and will be disseminated via the IEU website by May 2019. A short brief will also be subsequently prepared.

24. **Learning paper on complexity:** In 2018, the IEU commissioned a learning paper on how complexity science perspectives may inform designs and evaluations of GCF investments. This learning paper examines theories of complexity, its definitions across different sectors relevant to climate change and examines its implications for evaluations. The IEU published the approach paper in November 2018. The learning paper will be a joint product of IEU staff and

Dr. Karoline Wiesner from the Department of Mathematics at the University of Bristol. The paper will combine expert knowledge on complex systems in biology, physics and applied mathematics with evaluation practice while illustrating uses relevant to GCF-funded projects. The learning paper will be available on the IEU website by June 2019.

25. **Evaluability study:** The IEU recently completed a working paper titled "*Becoming bigger, better, smarter: A summary of the evaluability of Green Climate Fund.*" The paper examines the extent to which GCF-supported investments are capable of credibly reporting their impacts, efficiency and effectiveness, in an evidence-based and robust way. This working paper will be published on the IEU website in June 2019.

26. **Transformational change:** The IEU is partnering with the Climate Investment Funds to uncover evidence on transformational change. The approach paper, including the search protocol was submitted for peer review in late 2018. The IEU has discussed these approaches at several events including two international conferences on evaluation and at several thematic meetings on climate change including one co-hosted by the GCF Secretariat and CIFOR. This study is ambitious in that it also looks outside of climate change to understand how other sectors define transformational change. The study will be available at the end of 2019.

27. **Adaptation:** The IEU and the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) have commissioned an evidence gap map on climate change adaptation. The study addresses the pluralism of adaptation, its conceptualization and measurement. The firm Assesoramiento Ambiental Estrategico (AAE) has been brought on to work with IEU and Deval on this study. The initial approach was first discussed at the Resilience Measurement, Evidence and Learning Conference, in New Orleans in November 2018. The approach paper, including the search protocol has now been submitted for peer review. An advisory group constituted by experts in climate adaptation and systematic reviews has been brought on board. The IEU and DEval will present on the approach during the 9th AfrEA International Conference in March 2019 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire and engage with stakeholders on the ground.

28. **Communications:** The IEU produced a variety of publications and outreach materials during this quarter. Some of the more significant of these have been: IEU's first Annual Report. The Report summarizes the Unit's activities in 2018. The Unit also produced a briefer and easy to maneuver on-line version of the [report](#).<sup>9</sup> During this period the Unit also developed templates for summary and dissemination ready documents for its evaluations and other research products This includes longer four-page 'briefs' (called *GEvalBriefs*) and shorter two-page 'notes' for decision makers (called *GEvalNotes*). Examples of these are briefs and notes mentioned above for LORTA, the independent evaluation of the RPSP and the review of the RMF. The IEU also produced it's last quarterly IEU newsletter for 2018 and updated its website. On the newly updated website, several learning videos including one on how to develop a Theory of Change, and others that explain the outcomes of IEU's RPSP and RMF evaluations are also available.<sup>10</sup>

29. **IEU lunch talks:** The IEU's monthly lunch talks continue to be popular. Since B.21 the IEU lunch talks have featured experts that have discussed the impact of climate risk on poverty; the use of machine learning in evaluating international aid; the role and impact of the Global Environment Facility; and policy implications of temporal trends in effect sizes. Videos of IEU lunch talks are also [available](#).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Also see it here <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/documents/977793/985626/IEU+Annual+Report+2018/1208866e-6c09-1125-a9ac-d184df6bc6fe>

<sup>10</sup> These videos are here: <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/resources>

<sup>11</sup> Or see here: <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/resources/ieu-lunch-talks>

30. **Building partnerships:** The IEU continues to emphasize the importance of partnerships and collaboration. In recent months it signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the government of Antigua and Barbuda (represented by the Department of Environment), the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), the Global Development Network (GDN) and the *Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)*.

#### IV. Budget and Expenditure Report

31. Table 1 shows IEU's budget and expenditure report at the end of 2018. As noted earlier, the IEU spent more time than planned to recruit suitable staff. In two cases, job descriptions for two posts were reposted after the first round of selection did not provide any suitable candidates. This meant that there was some delay in its staff recruitment. Consequently, the contracts of HQ based consultants were extended to cover these functions. This explains the underspend on the staff budget line (75%) and the over-spend on the consultancy budget. Overall the IEU disbursed 90% of its allocated budgetary outlay of \$2.95 million.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 1: IEU's budget and expenditure Report for 2018**

ITEMS	BUDGET	ACTUAL	COMMITMENT	SUB-TOTAL	%
I. Staff costs					
Full-time staff	1,583,667	1,123,543	58,800	1,182,343	75%
Consultants	492,200	548,471	24,000	572,471	116%
Sub-total	<b>2,075,867</b>	<b>1,672,014</b>	<b>82,800</b>	<b>1,754,814</b>	<b>85%</b>
II. Travel					
General	183,000	160,666	23,666	184,332	101%
III. Contractual services					
Legal and professional	630,000	425,007	239,748	664,755	106%
Operating Costs	65,000	27,412	14,129	41,541	64%
Sub-total	<b>695,000</b>	<b>452,419</b>	<b>253,877</b>	<b>706,296</b>	<b>102%</b>
TOTAL	<b>2,953,867</b>	<b>2,285,100</b>	<b>360,343</b>	<b>2,645,443</b>	<b>90%</b>

<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that at the time of writing, not all expenditures that will draw upon this budget, with activities undertaken in 2018, had been reconciled on the GCF finance platform. It is likely that this number and percentage for disbursement will increase slightly over the two months.



## Annex I: Progress summary of the Performance Review

1. At its 21st meeting the Board of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), having considered document GCF/B.21/27 titled “Performance review of the Green Climate Fund” and recalling paragraphs 59 to 62 of the Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund, decided (Decision B.21/17) to initiate a review of the performance of the Green Climate Fund in ways that are appropriate to the current stage of the Fund’s operations and with a view to the GCF being a learning institution. The Board decided that the review should also take into account the outcomes of a number of existing GCF review documents, and that the scope will be to assess the progress made by GCF so far in delivering on its mandate as set out in the Fund’s Governing Instrument and in terms of its core operational priorities and actions as outlined in the initial Strategic Plan of GCF and its business model, in particular, the extent to which the GCF has responded to the needs of developing countries, the level of country ownership; and the performance of the GCF, including of its funded activities, likely effectiveness and efficiencies, the disbursement levels to funded activities; the existing GCF portfolio and pipeline, the application of financial instruments, the expected impacts of funding decisions and other support activities, including in terms of mitigation and adaptation, on both a forward-looking as well as backward-looking basis.
2. The IEU is undertaking this review in three parallel and simultaneous tracks. In **Track One**, a consultant has been brought on to synthesize and critically appraise available documents and findings mainly of previous IEU reviews, external documents and some relevant Secretariat documents as part of the synthesis desk study. This Track was started in November 2018, immediately after the Board decision. This Track will focus on drawing lessons and highlight key patterns emerging from the evaluative work by the IEU, GCF’s Independent Units, as well as reviews undertaken by the GCF Secretariat and other organizations operating within the climate finance space. A report summarizing the key findings and emerging areas of recommendations is due by 30 March 2019.
3. **In Track Two**, a consortium consisting of external consultants, selected after a highly competitive process have been brought on, and contracting completed in January 2019, to support the IEU team for this highly ambitious Performance Review. The full complement of the Performance Review team (consisting of IEU staff, consultants and the consortium) have been engaging to finalize the approach paper for Track Two, which will adopt different methods and develop a variety of tools to answer the questions asked by the Board. These methods and tools consist of an online survey, informant interviews, country field missions, time lag analyses and reviews of international practice. Track Two will also review the GCF portfolio and review the processes of the Secretariat. This track will be marked by six special supporting studies that will closely examine the Initial Resource Mobilization period, examine the Private Sector Facility of the GCF and focus on non-grant instruments, examine the structure and processes of the independent units, analyze the accreditation process and identify and examine some good practices in other organizations. This work will also be supported by initial work being done by the IEU on country ownership and environmental and social safeguards that the IEU will start in February and March respectively, and by field work and initial formative reviews undertaken for LORTA by the IEU in 2018 (see Annex II).
4. **Track Three** consists of data collection and analyses by the IEU Datalab. The Data lab has been working on digitizing a lot of data in funded proposals and Secretariat

documents as well as reconciling data across different platforms to ensure important analyses can be undertaken for the Performance Review. It is also digitizing the location and intervention areas for selected GCF investments (the LORTA projects and the projects identified for country visits) with the aim of constructing a geographically disaggregated and explicit database consisting of different layers, such as population distribution and trends, land use distribution and trends, physiographic factors, poverty and access to markets. This will help the IEU team understand the attributes of locations where the GCF is investing resources and draw some initial conclusions about transformational and impact potential.

5. An approach paper for the Performance Review will be uploaded to the IEU website in early February. For the Performance Review, the IEU is also supported for advice by a group of experts from partner organizations. This will help ensure the IEU's performance review reflects state of the art methods and is informed by experiences and best practices in other institutions. The advisory group consists of staff from the independent evaluation offices of the WFP, UNDP, IADB, GEF and two independent experts that have excellent expertise in climate change. The Performance Review will be completed by June 2019 and its outputs will inform the GCF's replenishment process.

## Annex II: Progress summary of IEU's Learning Oriented Real Time Assessment (LORTA) program

1. The extent to which GCF projects lead to lower greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience can only be measured with the help of rigorous impact assessments. In 2018, the IEU initiated the multi-year Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme to start building measurement systems in approved GCF investments and to ensure that the GCF will be able to inform its results credibly and measurably. LORTA aims to inform the socio-economic and climate related benefits of GCF investments and aims to support projects in keeping track of implementation fidelity. To achieve this, LORTA incorporates state-of-the-art approaches for measuring results *caused* by GCF investments and helps to introduce effectiveness and efficiency into GCF funded projects.
2. It is envisioned that GCF-funded projects will be able to increasingly use theory-based impact evaluations and better measure the changes in GCF's key result areas that can be attributed to project activities. the objectives of LORTA include: (i) measuring the overall change (outcome or impact) of GCF-funded projects and enhance learning; (ii) understanding and measuring results at different parts of theories of change, and (iii) measuring GCF's overall contribution to catalysing a paradigm shift and achieving impacts at scale.
3. In 2018, the IEU contracted the Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED) to support its multi-year work on impact assessment. The collaboration between IEU and C4ED has been close, including weekly calls with updates and constant exchange of ideas and feedback.
4. LORTA is organized in three multi-year phases:
  - a. Phase I – formative engagement and design: IEU selects GCF-funded projects to build high-quality, theory-based impact evaluation designs. Formative work includes engagement with project teams, Accredited Entities (AEs), and GCF staff, and co-thinking and co-building designs for theory-based impact evaluations, and protocols for database development.
  - b. Phase II – impact assessment related database building: This phase will go over 2-5 years and includes technical advice on baseline and endline data collection and planning. Specifically, the IEU led team provides advice on piloting survey instruments, rolling out measurement and tracking systems, planning for and collecting baseline and endline data and continuous monitoring of real-time learning.
  - c. Phase III – data analysis and feedback: The final stage involves analysing data (both qualitative and quantitative), discussing results and engaging with diverse stakeholders to share results and incorporate feedback as required.
5. In 2018, Phase I took place with eight GCF-funded projects undergoing the formative engagement and design stage of the programme. The major activities in this formative stage included a LORTA Design Workshop organized by IEU that took place on July 24th – 26th, 2018 in Bangkok. Over 60 participants engaged intensely and included representatives from different divisions within GCF, impact evaluation specialists from C4ED, evaluation specialists from the World Bank, WFP and other international organizations, as well as representatives of AEs, implementing partners and project

staff from 15 GCF-funded projects. Workshop participants were paired with impact assessment experts over two and a half days to discuss contexts, capacities, designs and methods. Plenary sessions consisted of short didactic and engagement sessions.

6. After the workshop, eight GCF-funded projects were selected for closer LORTA engagement and field work. The aim of the close engagement was to ensure they gained an interest, understanding and feeling of ownership for the planned theory-based impact assessments. Cooperation of stakeholders was crucial for the following steps of the LORTA programme. The eight projects selected for Phase I of LORTA 2018 were projects in Vanuatu, Mongolia, Georgia, Uganda, Zambia, Madagascar, Paraguay and Malawi. Staff from other projects did not think that their projects were ready for the intense measurement planning that LORTA entails but promised to re-engage in subsequent years.
  7. During Phase I of the LORTA programme, the LORTA teams conducted field missions. They produced impact evaluation designs for each of the selected GCF-funded projects for which they conducted context analyses, examined the existence of appropriate counterfactuals, assessed administrative and secondary data sources and discussed theories of change with Project staff. Some of this work was conducted while the LORTA teams were in the field, but most was done remotely, either during preparation or debriefing phases. A synthesis report from Phase I will soon be made available.
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