



**GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND**

Meeting of the Board
10 – 13 July 2023
In-person meeting

Annex II, GCF/B.36/Inf.09

10 – 13 July 2023

IEU deliverable at B.36 under the RPSP evaluation

Summary

The Board-approved workplan of the IEU (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. This additional deliverable of the evaluation was submitted at B.36 originally as an annex to IEU's Activity Report (GCF/B.36/Inf.09), and this standalone version was created to enable stakeholders' direct and easy access to the IEU's B.36 deliverable under the RPSP evaluation. It is based on key findings from previous evaluations, a preliminary review of the landscape, evidence related to internal structure relevant to GCF's RPSP, and some strategic reflections.

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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).

