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INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE GCF'S APPROACH TO GENDER

Approach paper

February 2026

GREEN CLIMATE FUND
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION UNIT

Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Gender

APPROACH PAPER

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Accredited entity
AFR	Africa region
AI	Artificial intelligence
APAC	Asia and the Pacific region
APR	Annual performance report
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CI	Conservation International
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
COP	Conference of the Parties
DAE	Direct access entity
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EQ	Evaluation question
FP	Funding proposal
GAP	Gender action plan
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGPI	Global Gender Parity Index
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GII	Gender Inequality Index
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IAE	International access entity
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGWG	Interagency Gender Working Group
IOA	Institutional and Organizational Assessment
IPAG	Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRMF	Integrated Readiness Results Management Framework
KII	Key informant interview
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean states region
LDC	Least developed countries
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer
LLM	Large language model

LWPG	Lima Work Programme on Gender
MoI	Means of implementation
NDA	National designated authority
PPF	Project Preparation Facility
PSF	Private Sector Facility
RA	Result area
RPSP	Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme
RRMF	Readiness Results Monitoring Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small island developing States
SRI	State Resilience Index
TPR	Third performance review
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USP-2	Updated Strategic Plan 2024–2027
WEDO	Women’s Environment and Development Organization
WEI	Women’s Empowerment Index
WOCAN	Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management

A. INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

a. Mapping the global landscape: The gender-climate nexus

Mounting research evidence has solidified the link between gender inequality and climate vulnerability, underscoring that climate impacts are not gender-neutral. Studies consistently illustrate those structural inequalities in access to resources, decision-making and economic opportunities shape climate exposure, vulnerability and adaptive capacity, resulting in disproportionate impacts on women.¹ Additionally, women's leadership is increasingly recognized as critical to effective adaptation and resilience. Research evidence shows that greater women's political representation is associated with lower national greenhouse gas emissions (GHG),² positioning gender equality and women's empowerment as strategic drivers of climate action.³ Despite this compelling evidence, women remain underrepresented in climate governance structures at local, national, and global levels. Persisting barriers to women's representation include sociocultural norms, institutional biases, limited access to information and financing, and a lack of enabling environments for women's leadership.⁴ Emerging global, regional and national initiatives aim to strengthen women's roles in climate leadership and decision-making, but progress remains uneven and slow.

Global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) establish climate resilience and gender justice as mutually reinforcing international priorities. **SDG 13** calls for urgent action to combat climate change and strengthen resilience, while **SDG 5** commits countries to achieving gender equality, ending discrimination, enhancing women's leadership, and ensuring equal access to resources. Gender-responsive climate action is recognized as essential to achieving SDG 5 targets, particularly those related to participation in decision-making and resilience to climate-related shocks. Specifically:

- **SDG target 5.5** emphasizes women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership in decision-making, ensuring that climate and environmental policies reflect diverse knowledge and priorities.
- **SDG target 5.7** calls for reforms that ensure women's equal rights to economic resources, property ownership and financial services, which are critical for building climate resilience, supporting sustainable livelihoods, and enabling effective adaptation to environmental change.⁵

At present, global progress on SDG 5 remains largely stagnant and significantly off track for achievement by 2030, with recent United Nations monitoring illustrating that no SDG 5 targets are considered "met or almost met," with only a select few "close to target."⁶ While some countries

¹ Terry Cannon, "Gender and Climate Hazards in Bangladesh," 45–50; Khurshid Alam and Md. Habibur Rahman, "Women in Natural Disasters: A Case Study from the Southern Coastal Region of Bangladesh," 68–82.

² Specifically, there is evidence of a significant, negative relationship among a dataset of 137 countries (2009–2018): As women's share of parliamentary seats increases, national GHG emissions per capita decrease.

³ Laura Winther Engelsbak, "A Globe of One's Own: The Inverse Effect of Women's Political Representation on GHG Emissions," 49–68.

⁴ Nina Kolybashkina, Andrew Norton, and Farah Outeldait, "Harnessing Climate Finance to Advance Women's Climate Leadership;" Women's Environment and Development Organization, "Enhancing Women's Organizations' Role in, and Access to, Climate Finance."

⁵ Global Goals, "Goal 5: Gender Equality."

⁶ UN Women, "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024."

have strengthened legal and policy frameworks, persistent structural inequalities, weak implementation, and limited gender-responsive accountability mechanisms continue to constrain transformative change.⁷

Recognizing the growing body of evidence on the nexus between gender and climate, much global climate finance has evolved from maintaining gender-blind approaches to embedding gender considerations and further institutionalizing gender-responsiveness into climate action.^{8, 9} The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has strengthened its commitment to gender equality through a series of decisions, action plans, and dedicated work programmes that aim for gender-responsive action,¹⁰ with some Parties advancing gender-transformative approaches.¹¹ The Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG), first established at the twentieth session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP20) in 2014, aims to advance gender balance and integrate gender considerations across all climate policy and action.¹² It was strengthened at COP25 through the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its gender action plan (GAP), which sets a five-year agenda to embed gender-responsiveness in national climate strategies, capacity-building, and data systems.¹³

At COP29, Parties agreed to extend the enhanced LWPG for 10 years, setting the frame for a new GAP that was adopted at COP30 in Belém, Brazil, reflecting the continued centrality of gender equality in the UNFCCC process. At COP30, Parties adopted the **Belém Gender Action Plan**, reflecting a nine-year framework (2026–2034) under the UNFCCC aimed at operationalizing **gender-responsive climate action** by setting out priority areas such as capacity-building, gender balance and leadership, as well as gender-responsive implementation, monitoring and reporting.¹⁴ The Belém Gender Action Plan (2026–2034) introduced a strengthened focus on implementation, improving the evidence base and data for reporting (e.g. voluntary Party reporting), and accountability, with an emphasis on better systems and improved mainstreaming across and beyond the convention. Nearly half of COP30 decisions directly referenced gender, including the following decisions directed at the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Adaptation Fund:

- **GCF:** Urges the Board to adopt a new gender action plan, and to actively contribute to the implementation of activities under the Belém Gender Action Plan.
- **GEF:** Encourages the integration of gender into all funded programmes, with continued efforts to deliver strong results for gender equality.

⁷ UN Women and United Nations Evaluation Group, “Good Practices in Gender-Responsive Evaluations.”

⁸ The Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) defines gender-blind approaches as those that ignore gender norms, roles, and relations and assume that policies, programmes, or interventions will affect all people in the same way.

⁹ IGWG defines gender-responsiveness as recognizing and responding to gender norms, roles, and inequalities by taking deliberate action to address them.

¹⁰ Under the UNFCCC (particularly the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan), gender-responsive climate action refers to climate policies, planning, implementation, and finance that systematically integrate gender considerations – including gender equality and women’s empowerment – so that climate actions respond to the differentiated impacts of climate change on people of all genders and improve the equity and effectiveness of outcomes.

¹¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “FCCC/CP/2016/10/Add.2: Decision 21/CP.22 Gender and Climate Change.”

¹² United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.3: Decision 18/CP.20 Lima work programme on gender.”

¹³ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “FCCC/CP/2019/13/Add.1: Decision 3/CP.25 Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan.”

¹⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. “FCCC/CP/2025/L.16 Decision -/CP.30: Belém gender action plan.”

- **Adaptation Fund:** Encourages continuing efforts with the implementation of their gender policy, scorecard, and policy on safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

Based on a benchmarking study of three major climate funds (the Adaptation Fund, Climate Investment Funds (CIF), and GEF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as comparators for development finance institutions, there is convergence around gender-responsive approaches as the minimum standard, mirroring broader international expectations, with all funds articulating gender mainstreaming through concrete, outcome-oriented objectives focused on women's access to resources, assets, services, and socio-economic benefits, with strengthened participation, voice, and leadership in decision-making. Some are even advancing towards more explicit commitments to gender-transformative approaches (i.e. IFAD and CIF, which operationalize these ambitions through dedicated gender action plans and theories of change, with IFAD further distinguishing itself through investment targets and a stand-alone Gender-Transformative Mechanism). By way of comparison, the GCF's updated Gender Policy (adopted by the Board in 2019 as part of its twenty-fourth meeting (B.24) and hereinafter referred to as the "updated Gender Policy") commits to adopting a gender-responsive approach to "promote the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment through its decision on the allocation of funds, operations, and overall impact".¹⁵ While some accredited entities (AEs) implement gender-transformative approaches according to their own gender policy requirements and capacities, GCF's updated Gender Policy does not address the use of such approaches. In addition, while comparators identify specific intended outcomes for gender equality, the GCF's updated Gender Policy commits to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment broadly speaking but does not identify specific expected outcomes – such as women's and men's access to and control over decisions, assets and resources, information, and knowledge (although it recognizes these as important drivers of gender equality).

While global frameworks increasingly recognize intersecting identities, such as gender with indigeneity, disability, age, and socioeconomic status, practical integration and operationalization of intersectional approaches remain limited. Across benchmarked institutions, the Adaptation Fund and IFAD demonstrate the most operationalized intersectional approaches, translating commitments into project-level requirements, guidance, and targeting strategies. CIF shows emerging practice, particularly around disability inclusion, while GEF has responded to evaluative findings by advancing a more explicit Inclusion Agenda under its eighth replenishment cycle (GEF-8). Despite this progress, operational clarity and consistent application across portfolios remains a challenge, with climate finance systems struggling to address the compounded vulnerabilities faced by Indigenous women, LGBTQ+ groups, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized populations.¹⁶

The integration of gender across the project cycle has become increasingly institutionalized among climate funds through formal policy requirements covering project design, consultation, implementation and accountability. All funds require gender analysis at preparation stage and promote its translation into gender-responsive actions, supported by consultation and grievance mechanisms embedded in safeguard frameworks. At the same time, benchmarking evidence

¹⁵ Decision B.24/12: Updated Gender Policy and Action Plan 2020–2023. November 14, 2019. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/decision/b24-12>.

¹⁶ Women's Environment and Development Organization, "Dimensions of feminist climate finance"; Liane Schalatek; "Climate finance fundamentals 10: Gender and climate finance"; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, "Lima Work Programme on Gender."

indicates variation in how consistently gender analysis is translated into concrete actions during implementation, reflecting differences in the prescriptiveness of requirements, accountability arrangements, operating modalities, and the availability of gender expertise at delivery level.

The benchmarking study indicates that CIF, GEF, and IFAD explicitly address private sector engagement within their gender policies and action plans. Across these funds, gender considerations are integrated into private sector engagement through a mix of policy requirements, strategic alignment with private sector strategies, and guidance to support gender-responsive investments, particularly in market systems and value chains. Emerging practices include linking gender objectives to private sector investment frameworks and incentives, as well as strengthening partnerships and capacity development with private sector actors, although approaches to measuring gender-related results within private sector engagement remain uneven and continue to evolve.

The literature repeatedly underscores that grassroots and women-led organizations face systemic barriers to accessing climate finance, with current financing architectures not designed for these groups (e.g. restrictive fiduciary requirements, insufficient direct access modalities, complex application processes, limited institutional capacity).¹⁷ Cited institutional challenges include limited gender expertise, insufficient resources for implementation, weak monitoring frameworks, and inconsistent use of sex-disaggregated data. Institutions with direct implementation modalities (i.e. IFAD) exhibit more embedded gender architectures, while those relying on AEs or multilateral development banks (MDBs) face greater variability in resourcing and gender expertise.

b. GCF's mandate on gender

Within the wider global landscape, GCF serves as a key pillar of international climate finance. Created in 2010 as a designated operating entity of the UNFCCC Financial Mechanism, the GCF supports developing countries – particularly those most vulnerable to climate risks – in mitigating emissions and strengthening climate resilience. Its core mandate is to provide substantial, predictable resources that enable low-emission, climate-resilient development, guided by country ownership and a commitment to transformational impact.

Building on its overarching mandate, GCF has articulated a clear commitment to advancing gender equality across all its investments. This is grounded in the GCF Governing Instrument (GI, 2011), which states that “gender equality considerations should be mainstreamed into the entire project cycle to enhance the efficacy of climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions, and ensure that gender co-benefits are obtained.”^{18, 19} Building on this mandate, the first Gender Policy and accompanying Gender Action Plan were adopted in 2015, establishing a **gender-sensitive approach** focusing on inclusion and do-no-harm principles. Its 2019 update marked a strategic shift towards a **gender-responsive approach** that requires mandatory project-level gender assessments and GAPs.²⁰ Figure 1 below presents the definition of approaches along the gender continuum constructed by the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) evaluation synthesis team drawing on the Interagency Gender Working Group's (IGWG) gender continuum framework, which is used as a

¹⁷Women's Environment and Development Organization, “Enhancing women's organizations' role in, and access to, climate finance”; Liane Schalatek, “Climate finance fundamentals 10: Gender and climate finance”; Women's Environment and Development Organization, “Dimensions of feminist climate finance.”

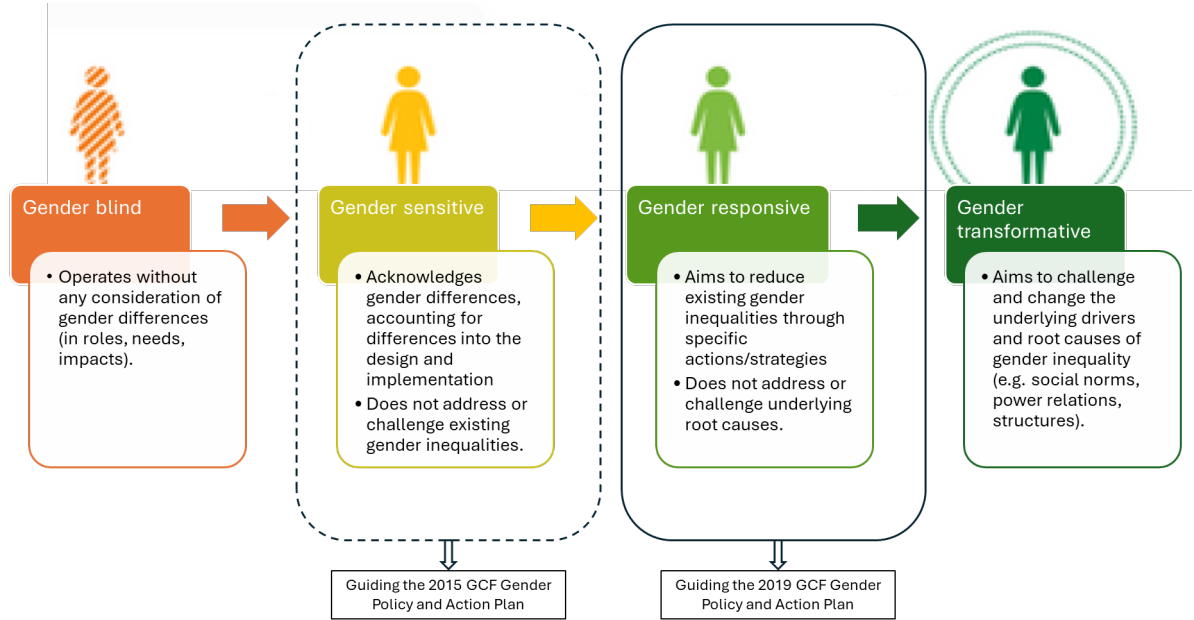
¹⁸ Green Climate Fund, “Project Portfolio: Gender,” n.d. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/projects/sustainability-inclusion/gender>.

¹⁹ Specifically, paragraph 3 of the GI states that, “The Fund will strive to maximise the impact of its funding for adaptation and mitigation ... promoting environmental, social, economic and development co-benefits and taking a gender-sensitive approach”.

²⁰ The GCF Gender Policy applies to the GCF Secretariat and Board, AEs, national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points, as well as delivery partners and executing entities engaged in GCF-financed activities.

framework to help situate GCF's approach to mainstreaming gender but not to assess GCF progress against.

Figure 1. Adapted gender integration continuum



Source: IGWG gender continuum framework, adapted by the IEU synthesis team.²¹

IEU Synthesis Note 2025²² findings reveal that this shift towards gender-responsiveness is reflected in project-level reporting documents. Based on a portfolio analysis of available annual performance reports (APRs) published between 2017 and 2023, 73.5 per cent (411 APRs) reported gender-sensitive actions that recognize and account for gender differences (e.g. gender-balanced targeting, participation and representation), and 68.7 per cent (384 APRs) reported gender-responsive actions that are specifically targeted towards reducing gender inequalities.²³ Moreover, APRs after 2021 demonstrate a marked increase in AEs reporting on gender-sensitive and gender-responsive measures. While the updated Gender Policy commits to the mainstreaming of gender-responsive measures in the GCF portfolio, the IEU Synthesis Note identified a small proportion of GCF-funded projects (approximately 11 per cent) that exceed Gender Policy expectations in their adoption of gender-transformative approaches – which appears to be due to AEs' own procedures and approaches to gender mainstreaming rather than the GCF Gender Policy.²⁴ For example, AEs such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), IFAD, Acumen Fund Inc., and Conservation International (CI) establish explicit institution-wide gender-transformative frameworks or mechanisms.

This reflects a clear evolution in the GCF's commitment to targeted measures for gender, strengthening roles and responsibilities at organizational and partner levels, and increasing

²¹ Interagency Gender Working Group, "The Gender Integration Continuum." For example, see Figure 1 (p. 8) in United Nations Children's Fund, "Gender transformative programming: Background paper for the UNICEF Gender Policy and Action Plan 2022–2025."

²² <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/2025-ieu-gender-synthesis-4.pdf>

²³ Independent Evaluation Unit, "Independent Synthesis of the GCF's Gender Approach."

²⁴ Ibid.

accountability through operational requirements. The GCF's Strategic Plan (2024–2027) reaffirms its mandate of ensuring that all programming integrates gender equality and social inclusion, reinforces operational requirements for project-level gender assessments and GAPs for all funding proposals (FPs), and strengthens expectations for quality of implementation and monitoring. The GCF approach to gender aligns with global frameworks and agendas, positioning the Fund as a central mechanism for delivering climate finance that is not only impactful but also equitable, inclusive, and consistent with the SDG 2030 Agenda's vision of sustainable development for all. The GCF advances the intersection of SDG 13 and SDG 5 by requiring all funded activities to integrate gender analysis, address gender-differentiated climate vulnerabilities, and promote women's leadership in climate decision-making. GCF's gender framework is informed by Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement, which underscores that climate adaptation should be gender responsive. The Fund also translates COP guidance into operational requirements by mandating gender assessments, gender-responsive project design, and monitoring of gender outcomes. The Gender Policy embeds principles consistent with UNFCCC gender guidance and international human rights and gender equality frameworks. Revisions to the updated institutional Gender Action Plan are driven in part by COP/CMA (Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement) guidance (e.g. Lima Work Programme on Gender), reinforcing coherence with global climate governance norms and expectations for gender-responsive climate finance. However, COP reporting (2024) invites the GCF to improve the gender-responsiveness of its work.²⁵

The updated Gender Policy is the principal instrument that establishes mandatory requirements for gender responsiveness across all GCF result areas (RAs), encompassing both adaptation and mitigation portfolios. Moreover, it outlines accountability expectations through accreditation, requiring AEs to demonstrate they have the policies in place to comply with GCF policy. The updated Gender Policy recognizes that AEs operate within diverse institutional contexts and may have gender policies, standards or commitments that go beyond GCF's minimum requirements. In such cases, the Policy does not constrain AEs from applying stronger or more advanced gender commitments, provided that these are consistent with the principles and requirements of the GCF Gender Policy and aligned with national policies and priorities on gender equality. The updated Gender Policy explicitly emphasizes compliance with GCF requirements as a minimum standard, while encouraging the use of best practices and existing institutional capacities to strengthen gender-responsive design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting at the project and readiness levels. The updated Gender Policy introduces clearer accountability mechanisms that require AEs to integrate gender actions into project design and report annually on progress against these actions via project-level GAP indicators. This represents a significant step toward systematic gender accountability at both Fund and implementing partner levels. The organization-wide Gender Action Plan (2020–2023) operationalizes policy commitments through defined priority areas, indicators and timelines to guide implementation, monitoring and accountability.²⁶

When considering the gender-continuum framework, gender-responsiveness is the main accountability requirement for the GCF. Therefore, the evaluation will centre its analysis on the extent to which the GCF is achieving gender-responsiveness results. However, as noted above, some AEs have gone beyond GCF gender-responsive requirements by implementing gender transformative approaches. While the evaluation does not expect the GCF to implement gender

²⁵ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, "FCCC/CP/2024/11/Add.1: Decision 3/CP.29 Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and Guidance to the Green Climate Fund."

²⁶ This action plan should not be confused with project-level GAPs, which are mandatory annexes to individual funding proposals (FPs) and outline project-specific measures.

approaches beyond what it has committed to in its policy, it will nonetheless seek to identify good practices and lessons learned from the implementation of gender transformation approaches across the GCF portfolio.

Advancing its gender-responsive agenda, the GCF offers institutional support modalities such as the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) and the Project Preparation Facility (PPF). These are variably designed to build national, direct access and AE entity capacity to mainstream gender into climate planning and finance, strengthening country ownership and equitable access. RPSP and PPF serve complementary functions in how gender is mainstreamed into country engagement and project pipelines to strengthen enabling conditions for gender-responsive climate finance:

- **RPSP** supports early stages of engagement by providing grants and technical assistance to national designated authorities (NDAs), direct access entities (DAEs), and other national actors to strengthen institutional capacity, governance systems, and planning frameworks that integrate gender considerations into national climate strategies and GCF country programmes. **The Readiness Framework (2023–2024)** introduced a more explicit focus on gender equality, social inclusion and locally led adaptation, set clearer expectations for gender-responsive readiness planning, and established clearer thematic windows and more flexible funding which have expanded opportunities to use readiness for cross-cutting priorities such as gender.
- **PPF** provides targeted resources to support the design of FPs, including robust gender assessments and project-level GAPs.

As the synthesis found, the uptake and results of utilizing RPSP and PPF for integrating gender into GCF-related work have remained uneven in practice. While both mechanisms offer important pathways to embed gender into readiness and project design, their effectiveness for mainstreaming gender has been constrained by persistent capacity gaps among DAEs and national partners, and weak monitoring and follow-up on how gender support translates into tangible outcomes.

2. MANDATE, PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE GENDER EVALUATION

As part of the fortieth meeting of the Board (B.40) held in Songdo, Republic of Korea, from 21 to 24 October 2024, the Board requested the IEU of the GCF to conduct an evaluation of the GCF's approach to gender in 2026, beginning with a synthesis to be conducted in 2025 as part of the evaluation preparation.²⁷ Specifically, B.40 notes that the IEU would prepare a Synthesis Note in 2025 that would inform the Independent Evaluation of GCF's Approach to Gender, "synthesizing existing evidence available to the unit from past evaluations, assessments and studies."²⁸

This Approach Paper of the Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Gender is informed by key insights that emerged from the 2025 GCF Gender Synthesis, including: (i) a synthesis of available evaluative evidence (i.e. internal GCF documentation and **key informant interviews (KIIs)** with GCF staff);²⁹ (ii) a review of external academic and grey literature on climate and gender; and (iii) a benchmarking study examining the gender frameworks of four comparators (i.e.

²⁷ Green Climate Fund. "Decisions of the Board – Fortieth Meeting of the Board, 21–24 October 2024," 26 November 2024. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/decisions-board-fortieth-meeting-board-21-24-october-2024-gcf-b40-23.pdf>.

²⁸ Green Climate Fund. "Report of the Fortieth Meeting of the Board, 21–24 October 2024," 7 February 2025. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/report-meeting-fortieth-meeting-board-21-24-october-2024-gcf-b40-24.pdf>.

²⁹ Independent Evaluation Unit, "Independent Synthesis of the GCF's Gender Approach."

the Adaptation Fund, CIF, GEF, and the IFAD). This Approach Paper is additionally informed by KIIs with a total of 32 individuals (see Appendix 1 for a full list of stakeholders consulted).

In detail, these three IEU reports have informed the evaluation approach:

a. Gender Synthesis report

Synthesis on the GCF's Gender Approach³⁰ completed in September 2025 aimed at consolidating insights from past evaluations and assessments. The Synthesis examined gender integration at both institutional and project levels, highlighting the Fund's progress in advancing from a gender-sensitive to a gender-responsive approach under the 2019 Updated Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan. This Gender Synthesis report is published and available on the IEU website.

b. Literature review

The review gathered, critically reviewed, and consolidated evaluative evidence on how the GCF mainstreams gender at both the corporate and project levels, covering policies, institutional capacities, and implementation practices across the project life cycle. Within this broader synthesis, the literature review situates the GCF's approach within the wider international landscape, synthesizing current global trends, frameworks, and best practices on gender mainstreaming in climate finance to provide a comparative and contextual foundation for the upcoming evaluation. The review was completed in October 2025 and serves as an additional reference document for the evaluation approach.

c. Benchmarking study

The benchmarking study examined relevant comparators' gender frameworks, including their respective gender policies, action plans, and approaches for mainstreaming gender. By examining the approaches of GCF's peer institutions, the study assessed the extent to which gender considerations are integrated in climate finance decision-making and implementation. The study was completed in February 2026 and serves as an additional reference document for the evaluation approach.

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine GCF's overall approach to mainstreaming gender across its operations – both at the organizational level and within its portfolio of funded activities at the project level. The objectives of this evaluation are twofold:

- **Accountability:** First, the evaluation aims to **provide accountability to the GCF Board** regarding the extent to which the GCF Gender Policy and its associated institutional Gender Action Plan have been implemented across the Fund's operations, systems, and institutional arrangements. In doing so, the evaluation will assess progress made toward meeting the Gender Policy's stated commitments, with particular attention to the Policy's ambition to promote gender-responsive climate action.
- **Learning:** Second, the evaluation seeks to **generate learning to support more effective implementation of the Gender Policy** going forward. In inception interviews, stakeholders consistently emphasized that while the Gender Policy is widely regarded as sound and appropriately ambitious, its **objectives for gender-responsive** climate action have not yet been fully translated into practice. Additionally, a particular focus of the learning objective centers

³⁰ Green Climate Fund, "IEU Synthesis on the GCF's approach to gender", <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/2025-ieu-gender-synthesis-4.pdf>

on **organizational readiness for gender mainstreaming**. Inception interviews highlighted perceived gaps between the ambitions of the Gender Policy and the availability of human and financial resources, institutional capacities, and systems required for its timely and effective implementation. The evaluation thereby seeks to learn about the extent to which the GCF has put in place the organizational capacities, incentives, and support structures needed to implement the Gender Policy and mainstream gender across its portfolio, particularly in light of the GCF's recent institutional restructuring (i.e. institutional **regionalization and decentralization process**).

This evaluation is strategically timed to complement ongoing efforts to update the GCF Gender Action Plan. The evaluation is an opportunity for evidence to inform the design, prioritization, and implementation modalities of the forthcoming Gender Action Plan. Given this is a strategic evaluation of the GCF Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan, the approach can be expected to generate forward-looking, actionable insights to inform the revision and strengthening of the upcoming Gender Action Plan.

The scope of the evaluation is defined across temporal, geographic, and thematic dimensions.

- **Temporal scope:** The evaluation covers the period from the adoption of the GCF Gender Policy in 2019 through the end of 2025, allowing for an assessment of progress in implementation over the full life of the current Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan period and its extension (2019–2023 original timeline, extension up to 2025).
- **Geographic scope:** The evaluation is global in scope and covers gender-related activities across the full range of GCF's portfolio of operations and institutional functions (including entity types, modalities, and result areas to ensure representation).
- **Thematic and programmatic scope:** The evaluation focuses on the implementation of the GCF Gender Policy, Gender Action Plan and related institutional commitments. However, it is not a policy evaluation per se; therefore, the substantive content, design, or ambition of the Gender Policy itself will not be assessed. Rather, the evaluation examines how the Policy has been operationalized in practice through the Gender Action Plan. In addition, the evaluation will assess organizational processes, practices, systems and guidelines related to gender mainstreaming, including institutional arrangements, roles and responsibilities, and operational mechanisms supporting implementation. The evaluation will also consider intersectional approaches to gender equality where relevant. However, GCF's work with Indigenous Peoples has been examined under a separate evaluation (January 2025) and is therefore outside the scope of this evaluation.³¹ The evaluation will assess the alignment of the Gender Policy with the broader suite of GCF policies, drawing on the key findings of the Gender Synthesis Report, and will assess its external alignment based on the benchmarking study.

3. AUDIENCE

The primary audience for this evaluation is the GCF Board, who will use the findings to inform strategic decision-making, strengthen oversight, and enhance institutional approaches to gender mainstreaming. Secondary users include the GCF Secretariat as well as AEs, delivery partners, NDAs, civil society organizations (CSOs), gender experts, gender machineries in countries, and private sector and beneficiary groups, all of whom can draw on the evaluation's insights to improve project design, implementation, and accountability for gender-responsive climate action. Together,

³¹ Independent Evaluation Unit, "Independent evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's approach to Indigenous Peoples."

these audiences represent the full spectrum of actors responsible for translating GCF’s gender commitments into meaningful results on the ground.

B. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The evaluation applies evaluation criteria grounded in the IEU’s mandate to ensure rigour, independence and learning, as articulated in the Updated Terms of Reference of the IEU,³² and aligned with the principles, objectives and evaluative criteria set out in the Evaluation Policy of the Green Climate Fund,³³ and the Evaluation Standards. Together, these documents provide the foundation for assessing relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability in a manner consistent with GCF-wide standards for credible and useful evaluation. For the purpose of this evaluation, some evaluation criteria have been combined, as outlined and defined in Table 1. Based on this set of evaluation criteria, evaluation questions, with corresponding sub-questions, were developed for each criterion (see Table 2). Further details on the indicators and data sources for each question, as well as what analytics would be required to respond to each question, are outlined in the full Evaluation Matrix in Appendix 2.

Table 1. Defining evaluation criteria³⁴

CRITERION	PURPOSE
Relevance	Alignment with GCF mandate and country needs
Coherence and complementarity	Coherence in climate finance delivery and fit with other policies and multilateral entities
Effectiveness and impact	Achievement of intended results; long-term climate and development effects
Efficiency	Optimal use of resources
Sustainability	Likelihood that results will endure
Replication and scalability	Potential to expand or be replicated elsewhere
Country ownership	National leadership and alignment
Innovation	Potential to drive paradigm shifts toward low-emission and climate-resilient pathways

Source: Independent Evaluation Unit, “Evaluation Policy of the Green Climate Fund.” Synthesis of evaluation criteria definitions provided in Appendix 2.

Table 2. Evaluation questions and sub-questions

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS
Relevance	1.1 To what extent is GCF’s institutional approach to gender aligned with key international commitments on gender equality and climate change, and how	1.1.1. To what extent is GCF’s approach to gender aligned with key international commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment, including the UNFCCC’s LWPG, the UNFCCC Belém

³² Independent Evaluation Unit, “Terms of Reference of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU).”

³³ Independent Evaluation Unit, “Evaluation Policy of the Green Climate Fund.”

³⁴ Ibid.

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS
	effectively do its organizational requirements, tools, and systems enable the integration of gender considerations in ways that strengthen the gender-responsiveness of GCF-supported climate finance?	GAP priority areas, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement? 1.1.2. To what extent do GCF's organizational requirements, tools and systems (e.g. Investment Framework; Integrated Readiness Results Framework (IRMF); Readiness Results Monitoring Framework (RRMF) Handbook; project-level gender assessments and project-level GAPs, etc.) enable AEs to sufficiently integrate gender considerations in ways that strengthen GCF's ability to deliver gender-responsive climate finance?
Coherence and complementarity	2.1 External complementarity: How coherent is GCF's approach to gender with that of other climate funds?	2.1.1. To what extent does the GCF actively coordinate or collaborate with other climate finance actors under the <i>Operational Framework for Complementarity and Coherence</i> among climate finance institutions to enhance collective impact and avoid duplication in advancing gender-responsive climate action?
	2.2 Internal coherence: To what extent is the GCF's institutional approach to gender coherent across its overall policy and operational framework to integrate gender priorities and support gender-responsive programming across the institution?	2.2.1. How coherently is the GCF Gender Policy reflected within strategic planning (e.g. Updated Strategic Plan 2024–2027 (USP-2) and the IRMF), and to what extent do these strategic frameworks reinforce the Fund's gender responsive objectives? 2.2.2. To what extent does the GCF's suite of policies, operational guidelines, accreditation standards, readiness support modalities, and project-level requirements consistently and adequately embed gender considerations, and how well do these instruments work together to promote coherent gender mainstreaming across the Fund's operations?
Effectiveness and impact	3.1 Institutional outcomes: To what extent has GCF advanced its institutional gender-related objectives?	3.1.1. To what extent has the GCF made progress on the specific indicators, milestones, and targets set out in the institutional GAP 2020–2023, and what factors explain variances between planned and actual performance across priority areas: (i) governance, (ii) competencies and capacity-development, (iii) resource allocation accessibility and budgeting, (iv) operational procedures, (v) knowledge generation and communications?
		3.1.2. What factors have facilitated or constrained the translation of policy commitments into implementation?
	3.2 Programmatic outcomes: To what extent has the GCF contributed to the achievement of gender and intersectional	3.2.1. To what extent have GCF-funded activities generated intended and unintended gender-related results (both positive and negative)?

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS
	<p>outcomes (such as disability, indigeneity), including any longer-term impacts, across its portfolio?</p>	<p>3.2.2. What enabling internal and external factors have facilitated the achievement of gender outcomes?</p> <p>3.2.3. What hindering internal and external factors have impeded the achievement of gender outcomes?</p> <p>3.2.4. How do gender and intersectional outcomes vary across different types of GCF projects (e.g. between adaptation and mitigation projects, between public and private sector projections, between international access entities (IAEs) and DAEs), and what factors (enabling conditions or barriers) explain observed differences in results?</p> <p>3.2.5. To what extent has the GCF supported participatory approaches in project origination and the implementation of its gender commitments, including meaningful engagement of women and groups experiencing intersecting forms of marginalization (such as disability, indigeneity, age) in achieving gender-related results?</p> <p>3.2.6. To what extent have AEs adhered to gender-related safeguards (e.g. prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH), discrimination, exclusion)?</p>
	<p>3.3 To what extent are the GCF's monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems fit-for-purpose to support accountability, learning, and decision-making on gender equality outcomes?</p>	<p>3.3.1. To what extent is the GCF's monitoring and reporting system fit-for-purpose to capture, analyze, and communicate gender-related outcomes, including changes in participation, access to benefits, and representation?</p> <p>3.3.2. To what extent do GCF and AE-led evaluations effectively report on gender outcomes?</p>
<p>Efficiency</p>	<p>4.1 To what extent are GCF's resourcing and organizational arrangements adequate to enable timely and effective mainstreaming of gender across operations?</p>	<p>4.1.1. Efficiency of support programmes: To what extent do GCF support programmes, such as RPSP and PPF, provide timely, adequate, and accessible support for mainstreaming gender in country programming/platforms and project development?</p> <p>4.1.2. Staffing, human resources, financial resources, and internal capacities: To what extent does GCF's allocation of resources, staffing structures, gender expertise, and capacity levels enable efficient and effective mainstreaming of gender across the organization and portfolio?</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS
		<p>4.1.3. Secretariat structure and organizational arrangements: To what extent does the recent Secretariat re-organization and shift toward regionalization support coherent, coordinated, and timely implementation of gender-related responsibilities?</p>
Sustainability	<p>5.1 To what extent are GCF's gender-related results and capacities likely to be sustained?</p>	<p>5.1.1. Programmatic dimension: To what extent are the gender-related results achieved through GCF-funded activities likely to be sustained beyond the duration of the projects?</p> <p>5.1.2. Partnership dimension: To what extent have GCF investments strengthened the long-term gender-related capacities of partners, including NDAs, AEs, CSOs, and others, and how likely are these institutions to maintain and apply these capacities after GCF support ends?</p>
Replication and scalability	<p>6.1 To what extent does GCF's approach to gender enable gender-responsive practices and results to be replicated and scaled across different contexts, countries, and portfolios?</p>	<p>6.1.1. Organization-wide knowledge sharing: To what extent does GCF facilitate learning, knowledge sharing, and dissemination of good practices, partnerships or delivery models for gender equality that enable replication and scaling (e.g. through guidance, communities of practice, or learning products)?</p> <p>6.1.2. Institutional enabling environment for replication of gender-responsive approaches: To what extent do GCF's institutional policies, tools and knowledge systems support the replication of effective gender-responsive approaches across different projects, countries, sectors, and AEs?</p> <p>6.1.3 Institutional enabling environment for the scaling of gender-responsive approaches: To what extent do GCF's incentives (e.g. approval criteria, scorecards, performance frameworks, or reporting requirements) encourage AEs to prioritize replicable and scalable gender-responsive approaches?</p>
Country ownership	<p>7.1 To what extent does the GCF support and strengthen country ownership of gender-responsive climate action, including the integration of gender priorities into national climate strategies and meaningful engagement of country-level stakeholders in GCF-supported activities?</p>	<p>7.1.1. Integration of gender into national climate strategies: To what extent do GCF country programmes and platforms, readiness support, and engagement processes facilitate the integration of gender considerations into nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national adaptation plans (NAPs), and other long-term national climate strategies, and planning documents.</p> <p>7.1.2. Participation of gender-focused institutions in climate governance: To what extent does the GCF support and enable the meaningful participation of gender-specific</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS
		ministries, bodies, and CSOs in national climate coordination mechanisms and decision-making processes?
Innovation	8.1 To what extent does GCF foster innovative approaches across results areas to advance paradigm shifts toward low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways that promote gender equality, and what can be learned from other climate funds in terms of innovations?	<p>8.1.1. To what extent do GCF’s gender policies, strategies, frameworks, incentives, systems and institutional processes encourage and track innovation along the gender integration continuum – including the design and support of gender transformative approaches?</p> <p>8.1.2. What institutional enablers or constraints influence the development and uptake of innovative gender approaches across the GCF portfolio?</p> <p>8.1.3. What can GCF learn from other climate funds in terms of best practices related to gender (e.g. intersectionality, women’s empowerment, women’s participation and representation, gender-transformative approaches)?</p>

Source: Evaluation team

1. EVALUATION APPROACH

a. Gender-sensitive evaluation approach

The evaluation team will undertake the evaluation with deep attention to **inclusion as well as gender-sensitivity**, both in the evaluation questions, approaches and in the evaluation process. The evaluation team is committed to taking measures to ensure gender-sensitivity throughout all phases of the evaluation – including design, data collection, analysis, and reporting phases – with careful attention to **intersectionality** (described below). This approach goes beyond treating gender as a standalone thematic issue and instead integrates gender considerations systematically across all evaluation methods and analytical processes, in line with international good practice (e.g. the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 2014 guidance document on *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspectives in Evaluations*).³⁵

All evaluation methods will be designed and implemented with an explicit gender lens. This includes ensuring that data collection tools, sampling strategies, and engagement modalities are sensitive to gender differences, roles, and power relations. For example, the evaluation will aim for gender-balanced sampling, with data collection processes being designed to ensure safe and inclusive spaces for participation, including attention to confidentiality, power dynamics between interviewers and respondents, and culturally appropriate engagement practices (see section D on Ethical Considerations for further details). Where relevant, interview protocols will be adapted to encourage reflection on gender norms, decision-making processes, and institutional practices that

³⁵ United Nations Evaluation Group, “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations.”

influence gender outcomes. The evaluation will also draw on sex-disaggregated data (male/female) where available to identify gender differentials.³⁶

Finally, a gender lens will be applied to analysis and reporting to examine gender-differentiated roles, responsibilities, power relations and access to resources shaping gender outcomes, as well as key barriers and enabling factors for integrating gender equality within policies, systems, and GCF-funded interventions. Gender considerations will be systematically integrated into evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations, ensuring that evidence on gender equality is explicitly reflected in evaluative judgments and informs actionable, context-specific recommendations.

This gender-sensitive evaluation approach will apply consistently across all data sources and methods outlined in Section C, rather than being confined to a single method or data stream. This ensures that gender considerations inform both qualitative and quantitative analysis and are reflected across evaluation findings.

Intersectional lens: The evaluation will apply an intersectional lens to consider the multifaceted range of experiences among different categories of women and men, and the diversity of issues, needs, priorities and challenges of different groups. This entails examining how gender intersects with other social and institutional factors – such as age, indigeneity, disability, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geographic location – to shape differentiated experiences, access to benefits, and outcomes.

b. Approach to assessing organizational readiness for gender mainstreaming

This evaluation is designed as a **strategy evaluation**, examining how the GCF's Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan have guided the organization and enabled it to put in place the institutional, organizational, and system-level conditions required to effectively realize its gender mainstreaming ambitions. This entails a strong focus on organizational readiness and institutional performance, including leadership, capacities, processes, incentives, and accountability mechanisms that enable or constrain gender mainstreaming across the Fund. In line with this strategic focus, the evaluation will also examine how recent institutional reorganization and decentralization processes, including institutional regionalization and moves towards a regional presence, have affected roles, responsibilities, coordination, and accountability for gender mainstreaming within GCF operations and programming.

To assess organizational readiness and effectiveness in a structured and theory-informed manner, the evaluation adopts a combined analytical approach, drawing on elements of the **Institutional and Organizational Assessment (IOA) model** and the priority areas and process indicators of the institutional Gender Action Plan. Together, these two elements provide a coherent framework for assessing both the formal implementation of gender commitments and the institutional conditions that enable or constrain implementation in practice.

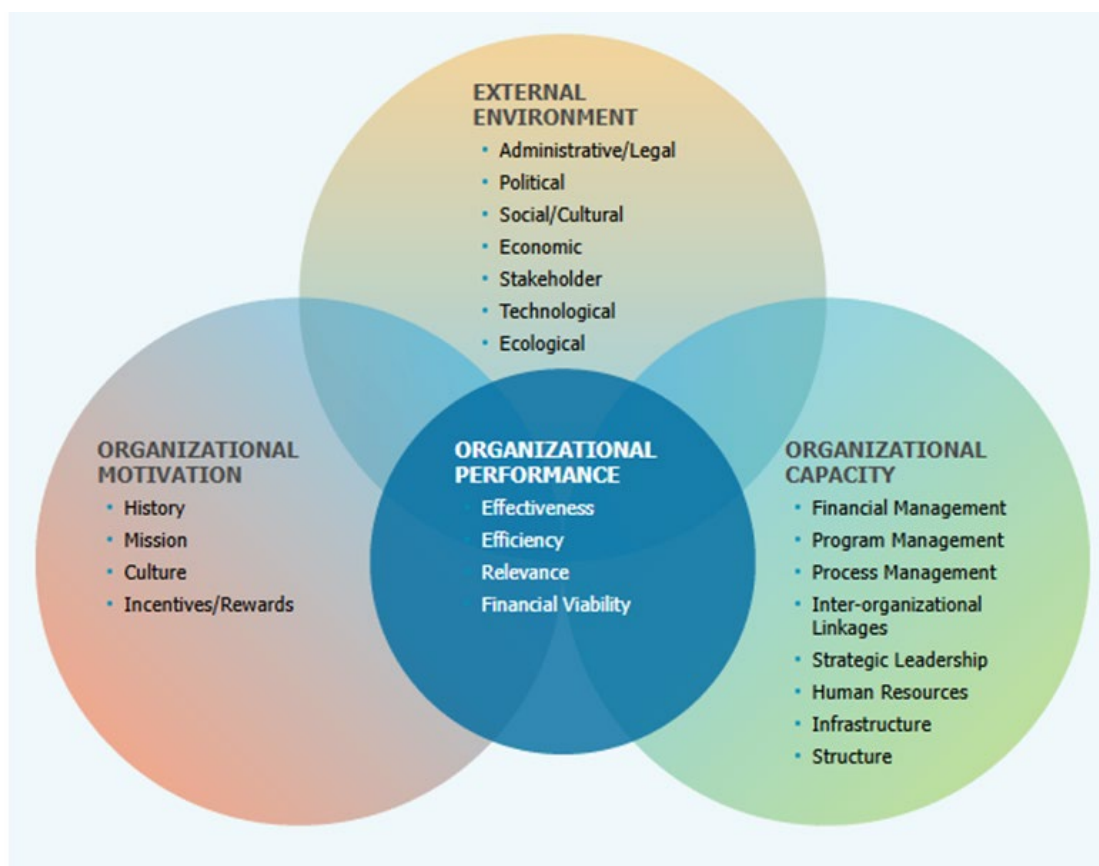
The Gender Action Plan provides a structured, time-bound framework for operationalizing the Gender Policy and includes priority areas and associated process indicators related to: (i) governance; (ii) competencies and capacity development; (iii) resource allocation, accessibility, and budgeting; (iv) operational procedures; and (v) knowledge generation and communications. These priority areas form a basis for assessing implementation progress and institutional compliance.

³⁶ This evaluation adopts a binary male/female approach to gender, as the available disaggregated data are reported in this format. While this reflects current data availability, an intersectional lens is applied in the broader analysis to consider other dimensions of gender, inclusion, and diversity, including LGBTQ+ perspectives, where relevant.

However, Gender Action Plan indicators do not fully capture all dimensions of organizational readiness, particularly those related to internal motivation, incentives, and the influence of external operating contexts.

To address this, the evaluation proposes to use the IOA model as a conceptual framework to complement and deepen the analysis. As illustrated in Figure 2, the IOA model conceptualizes organizational performance (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and financial viability) as being shaped by three interrelated drivers: the external environment, organizational motivation, and organizational capacity.

Figure 2. Institutional and organizational performance assessment model



Source: Developed by Universalia in collaboration with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).³⁷

As part of this combined approach, Gender Action Plan priority areas and indicators will be used as core reference points and sources of evidence, while the IOA model provides the structure for analyzing how and why implementation might have progressed unevenly. This use of the IOA model will allow the evaluation to systematically examine dimensions that are only partially covered, or not explicitly addressed, in the Gender Action Plan – such as the external environment or elements of organizational capacity not covered in the Gender Action Plan (e.g. inter-organizational linkages, strategic leadership, structure). In discussion with the IEU, and considering

³⁷ Lusthaus, Charles, Marie H el ene Adrien, Gary Anderson, Fred Carden, and George Plinio Montalv an, "Organizational Assessment: A Framework for Improving Performance."

the tight timeline to complete the evaluation, it was decided that the evaluation will not cover aspects of the IOA model related to **organizational motivation**.

The evaluation will also examine the **external environment** (see Figure 2) as the country- and region-specific context in which GCF-supported activities are implemented. This includes the importance of administrative and legal frameworks, political and institutional dynamics, socio-cultural norms related to gender equality, stakeholder ecosystems, and other contextual factors that shape the feasibility and reception of gender-responsive approaches. Inception interviews highlighted that some contexts are more conducive than others to implementing gender commitments, particularly those that are gender responsive. The evaluation will therefore analyze how the Gender Policy has been implemented across different country and regional contexts, and will extract lessons on what works in more enabling environments, as well as strategies that have helped address constraints in more challenging settings.

The evaluation will further examine **organizational capacity** (see Figure 2), focusing on the structures, systems and resources of the GCF Secretariat that support gender mainstreaming in practice. This includes human resources and competencies, budgetary allocations, operational guidance and tools, coordination mechanisms across units and regions, and clarity of roles and responsibilities associated with the ongoing institutional reorganization and regionalization. Gender Action Plan indicators related to staffing, training, budgeting, operational procedures, and knowledge management will be used as evidence, while the IOA framework will guide a deeper assessment of how these elements function together as a system. Importantly, the IOA model will also be used to examine the extent to which the organization integrated gender in its strategic planning (which is a subset of strategic leadership as per the diagram presented in Figure 2). In this sense, the evaluation will examine whether and to what extent elements of the Gender Policy have been translated into strategic planning documents, namely the GCF Updated Strategic Plan (2024–2027) and the IRMF.

Another important component of organizational capacity concerns the gender-related capacity of AEs. The evaluation will examine how accreditation requirements have been used to recognize and promote gender competencies among AEs (and delivery partners), and how gender considerations are integrated into ongoing monitoring and oversight arrangements. In addition, the evaluation will assess how GCF instruments designed to support implementation – particularly the RPSP and the PPF – have been used to advance gender mainstreaming. The evaluation will examine how the RPSP has contributed to strengthening gender-related institutional capacities at country and entity levels and/or the enabling environment for gender-responsive climate action, including the development or enhancement of AEs' gender policies, procedures, tools, and competencies. In contrast, the examination of the PPF will focus on how it has supported the integration of gender considerations during project preparation, including the quality and use of gender assessments, project-level GAPs, and related analytical and design work. The evaluation will examine whether these instruments are appropriately targeted, accessible, equitable and responsive to identified capacity and implementation gaps, and how effectively they complement each other in supporting the objectives of the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan.

Finally, the evaluation will examine how GCF's organizational tools have influenced the integration of gender considerations in FPs and readiness and RPSP grants by analysing the distinct roles played by the Fund's Investment Framework and the revised Results and Risk Management Framework (RRMF). For FPs, the analysis reviews how gender considerations are integrated through the Investment Framework's (IF) six investment criteria and their associated coverage areas, with particular attention to those that explicitly provide entry points for gender analysis. The assessment

will focus on how these gender-relevant coverage areas are applied in approved FPs to justify needs, inform stakeholder engagement, and articulate expected gender-related development impacts. For RPSP grants, the analysis will examine how the RRMF structures the integration of gender within readiness activities, including how gender considerations are reflected in results statements, indicators, and risk management approaches. Particular attention is paid to the extent to which RPSP support strengthens the capacity of national institutions and AEs to meet GCF gender requirements – such as conducting gender analysis, preparing GAPs, and aligning readiness outputs with GCF results and reporting expectations.

Drawing on the discussion presented above, Table 3 provides an overview of the elements of the IOA model that will be used to help answer specific questions outlined in the evaluation matrix.

Table 3. Application of elements of the IOA model to answer the evaluation questions

ELEMENT FROM THE IOA MODEL	FOCUS AND APPROACH
External environment (Political and social/cultural)	Analyzes how national political, legal, and socio-cultural contexts enable or constrain the implementation of the GCF Gender Policy across different country settings. <i>(Linked to EQ 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.)</i>
Organizational capacity (Strategic leadership – strategic planning)	Assesses the integration of gender priorities within GCF strategic planning instruments (USP-2, IRMF) through document review. <i>(Linked to EQ 2.2.2.)</i>
Organizational capacity (Process management – monitoring and evaluation)	Assesses the extent to which GCF's monitoring systems (IRMF, project indicators, APRs, evaluations) are fit-for-purpose to track and analyze gender-related outcomes. <i>(Linked to EQ 3.3.1.)</i>
Organizational capacity (Human resources management - staffing)	Assesses the adequacy, distribution, and use of gender expertise within the GCF Secretariat and across projects, including the presence and role of gender specialists at AE and project levels. <i>(Linked to EQ 4.1.2.)</i>
Organizational capacity (Financial management – financial planning)	Assesses the adequacy and allocation of financial resources for gender activities at Secretariat and project levels. <i>(Linked to EQ 4.1.2.)</i>
Organizational capacity (Organizational structure – operational structure)	Assesses how Secretariat organizational arrangements, including recent re-organization and regionalization, support coordinated and timely implementation of gender-related responsibilities. <i>(Linked to EQ 4.1.2.)</i>
Organizational capacity	Assesses how the RPSP has strengthened the capacity of AEs for integrating gender equality considerations into the GCF portfolio. <i>(Linked to EQ 4.1.1.)</i>

Source: Evaluation team

Note: EQ = evaluation question.

c. Approach to assessing gender-responsiveness and gender outcomes

The GCF Gender Policy and its associated Gender Action Plan articulate an ambition for GCF-financed activities to be gender-responsive. In substantive terms, this is understood to involve integrating gender considerations throughout the project cycle and contributing to areas such as addressing differentiated climate vulnerabilities of women and men, promoting equitable

participation and decision-making, enhancing access to project benefits, and supporting women's empowerment where relevant (see Figure 1).

While the Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan establish these broad areas of intended contribution, they do not provide a definition of gender-responsiveness; as such, the evaluation will use a constructed definition that draws on the gender integration continuum provided in Figure 1, which builds on international frameworks such as the IGWG. Moreover, GCF's policy framework does not articulate specific gender outcome objectives at the portfolio level, nor does it define outcome indicators, targets, or causal pathways against which progress could be systematically assessed. The Gender Action Plan primarily includes process indicators, focused on governance, capacities, resource allocation, operational procedures, and knowledge and learning. However, it does not include development or outcome indicators that would enable an assessment of progress toward gender equality outcomes at an aggregate level. In addition, the GCF's primary results framework under the Updated Strategic Plan 2024–2027 (USP-2) does not include explicit gender outcome objectives or indicators. Gender considerations are addressed indirectly through cross-cutting policy commitments and, in some cases, sex-disaggregated reporting at project level, but are not embedded within the Fund's core results logic.

As a result, the GCF's results architecture does not provide a basis for measuring or aggregating gender outcomes from the project level to the portfolio level. This limitation was also highlighted during inception interviews, in which stakeholders pointed to weaknesses in the Fund's results architecture and monitoring and reporting mechanisms, including the absence of common outcome definitions, baselines, and aggregation logic for gender-related results.

In light of these constraints, the evaluation does not seek to reconstruct a portfolio-level theory of change for gender outcomes, nor to generate an aggregate assessment of progress toward gender equality outcomes across the GCF portfolio. Instead, the evaluation proposes using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify the range of intended/unintended outcomes across APRs, evaluations, and progress and completion reports, as the primary method for assessing gender outcomes. Secondly, it will use the field visits and interviews to further inquire about how and why gender outcomes were achieved, examining enabling and hindering internal and external factors. This analysis will explore the nature of outcomes reported at project level – such as participation, access to benefits, changes in adaptive capacity, or empowerment-related effects – and how these outcomes vary across contexts, themes, modalities, and implementation arrangements.

In addition, while the corporate results architecture does not include expected results for gender outcomes, the Investment Framework includes – as mentioned above – gender considerations in its investment criteria and related coverage area. Therefore, the evaluation will draw on these gender-relevant coverage areas as an analytical entry point to examine whether and how gender-related results are reflected in project-level reporting. Specifically, the analysis will review annual performance reports, interim and final evaluations, and related documentation to identify evidence that speaks to gender-sensitive development impacts, attention to vulnerability and gender aspects, and stakeholder engagement with women and women-led organizations, as originally articulated under the relevant Investment Framework criteria. Where available, AI-supported text analysis will be used to systematically scan reporting documents for such evidence, allowing the evaluation to assess the extent to which gender considerations embedded at appraisal stage are subsequently reflected in implementation and reporting, despite the absence of dedicated gender outcome indicators at the corporate level.

Based on this analysis, the evaluation will draw on a typology of gender outcomes observed across the project sample as an analytical framework.³⁸ The purpose of this typology is not to assess aggregate performance against predefined outcome targets, but to generate learning on how gender-responsive intentions are translated into outcomes under different conditions, and how organizational fit-for-purpose, institutional arrangements, and contextual factors influence the types of outcomes achieved.

For RPSP grants, the evaluation draws on the revised RRMF, which explicitly incorporates gender considerations across its results, risk, and reporting structures. Unlike the corporate results architecture for FPs, the RRMF does provide a clearer basis for assessing gender-related outputs and outcomes from readiness activities, including indicators and qualitative reporting related to gender analysis, stakeholder engagement, institutional capacity development, and safeguards. The evaluation will therefore use the RRMF as the primary reference framework to assess whether and how RPSP grants have contributed to strengthening gender-responsive capacities at the national and institutional levels – such as support for conducting gender assessments, developing gender action plans, enhancing data and monitoring systems, and integrating gender considerations into policies, strategies, and future FPs. Reporting from RPSP grants will be reviewed to assess both the presence and quality of gender-related results, as well as the extent to which gender considerations are embedded within readiness objectives, risk management approaches, and reported outputs, consistent with the expectations set out in the revised RRMF.

d. Human rights-based and participatory approaches

The evaluation will also be informed by relevant **international normative frameworks**, including the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, and other global commitments and relevant human rights conventions (e.g. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)) on gender equality and human rights. These standards provide an external benchmark against which the GCF's practices can be assessed, ensuring that the evaluation not only considers internal policies and procedures but also situates the Fund's performance within broader global expectations for gender-responsive climate action.

A **participatory and inclusive approach** will be central to the evaluation design. This includes deliberate efforts to ensure that the perspectives of women, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized or climate-vulnerable groups are meaningfully incorporated to the extent possible. Through stakeholder consultations, country-level engagement, and data collection methods, the evaluation will seek to elevate diverse voices in climate finance processes. This approach aims to ensure that findings reflect lived experiences and that recommendations support more equitable and gender-responsive outcomes across GCF's work and partnerships.

C. METHODS

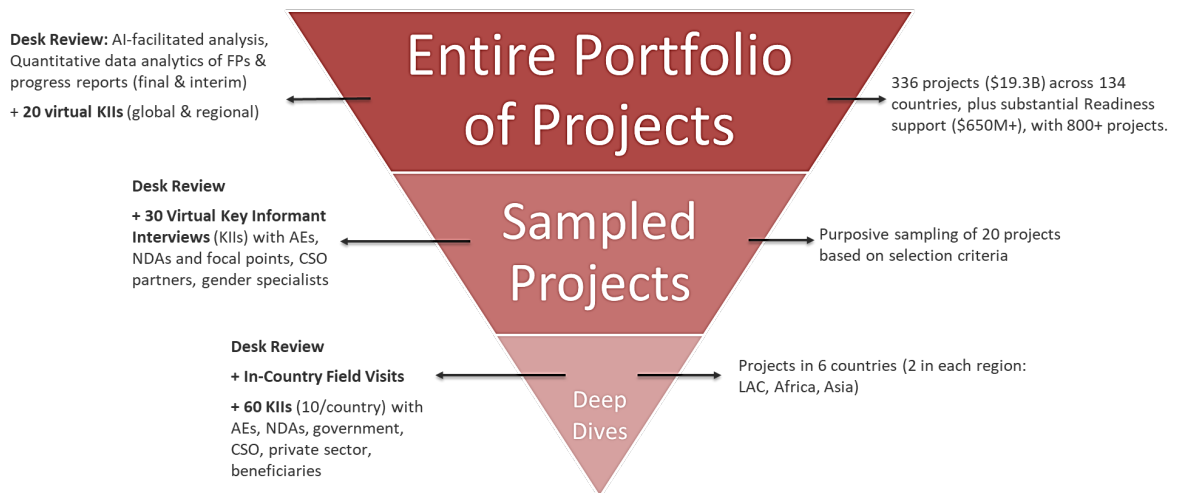
The evaluation draws on a mixed method approach that combines several complementary lines of evidence to address the key evaluation questions. The methods used include:

³⁸ Specifically, this approach builds on the typology used in the IEU [Gender Synthesis IV](#), p.48), which assessed gender outcomes and gender integration within APRs through a systematic scoring approach. A scoring system was developed that rated each APR document based on its incorporation of gender considerations and reporting on gender outcomes. These quantitative measures were then analyzed to understand the distribution of gender integration across projects and annual reports, enabling identification of patterns in gender reporting quality and outcomes achievement across different project types, regions, and implementation periods.

- Desk research
- Institutional Gender Action Plan assessment
- Portfolio review and indicator analysis
- In-country field visits
- Stakeholder Interviews

The evaluation team proposes a tiered design that applies different layers of methodological approaches and levels of stakeholder engagement and sampling, as follows (see Figure 3): (i) At the broadest level, the evaluation will examine the entire portfolio of projects through desk research, and virtual interviews at the regional and global level; (ii) based on defined selection criteria, a sample of projects for deepened project portfolio review will include document review and virtual interviews with AEs, NDAs and focal points, gender specialists and civil society partners linked with the sampled projects; (iii) the evaluation will zoom in on a selection of projects for a deeper dive that includes a diversity of projects (e.g. a mix of PPF/RPSP, a mix of themes, etc.) through field visits in six countries across three regions (Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) states, Africa (AFR), Asia and the Pacific (APAC)), with in-country interviews with AEs, NDAs and focal points, government, private sector, civil society and beneficiaries. The various methods are each detailed below.

Figure 3. Tiered methodological approach



Source: Evaluation team

1. DESK RESEARCH

The evaluation will draw on document review to inform the assessment of policy commitments, implementation arrangements, and institutional performance related to gender mainstreaming. Key documents to be reviewed include GCF policy and strategy documents, relevant Board decisions, Secretariat guidelines and operational manuals, and existing evaluative evidence, including IEU evaluation reports and synthesis products. Project-level documents will also be reviewed, including concept notes, FPs, project-level gender assessments, project-level GAPs, APRs and AE-led evaluations – together with final and interim progress reports.

2. INSTITUTIONAL GENDER ACTION PLAN ASSESSMENT

The evaluation will include a dedicated assessment of the implementation of the institutional Gender Action Plan, using the Gender Action Plan priority areas and indicators as an explicit analytical framework. During inception interviews, both Board members and civil society stakeholders expressed concerns that the Secretariat has not systematically reported on implementation using the indicators defined in the Gender Action Plan framework. In particular, stakeholders highlighted the need for an independent assessment of what has been achieved against Gender Action Plan commitments, what has worked well, where gaps remain, and what corrective actions may be needed, in order to strengthen organizational accountability and effectiveness.

In response to these concerns, the evaluation will seek to reconstruct and assess progress against institutional Gender Action Plan indicators to the extent possible, drawing on available documentation, internal reporting, interviews, and portfolio data. This assessment will be further supported by the use of AI and large language models (LLMs) for systematic analysis across existing databases, guided by clear guidelines and protocols.

The assessment will cover the Gender Action Plan's priority areas, including: (i) governance; (ii) competencies and capacity development; (iii) resource allocation, accessibility, and budgeting; (iv) operational procedures; and (v) knowledge generation and communications. In doing so it will examine the extent to which intended actions and milestones have been implemented. Given limitations in existing reporting, the evaluation will draw on multiple data sources, including internal datasets and analytical tools to triangulate evidence and provide a consolidated picture of institutional performance. This assessment is intended to provide the Board with a clearer understanding of organizational effectiveness in operationalizing the Gender Action Plan.

3. PORTFOLIO REVIEW AND INDICATOR ANALYSIS

a. Project portfolio review

The evaluation will use a project portfolio analysis as a core method to examine both: (i) the implementation of gender-related organizational processes across the GCF project cycle, and (ii) the types of gender outcomes achieved in practice.

The portfolio analysis will examine how institutional commitments to gender-responsiveness are translated into project-level practice through a structured review of concept notes, FPs, project-level gender assessments, project-level GAPs, and APRs. This review will assess the extent to which gender considerations are integrated at different stages of the project cycle, including the use of guidance and tools during project design, the quality and coherence of gender assessments and project-level GAPs, and the extent to which gender-related commitments articulated in project-level GAPs are subsequently reflected in implementation and reported on in APRs. In parallel, the analysis of APRs will be used to examine the gender outcomes reported at the project level, with a view to identifying patterns in the types of outcomes achieved.

Twenty projects will be selected through **purposive sampling**. The sampling strategy is designed to ensure diversity across organizational, programmatic, and contextual dimensions – including diversity across the gender continuum (gender blind, gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, gender-transformative), types of AEs (e.g. international access entity (IAE), DAE, MDB) and modalities (e.g. RPSP, PPF), regional and national contexts (e.g. enabling and restrictive environments for gender, small island developing States (SIDS), least developed countries (LDCs)), and results areas and themes (e.g. mitigation, adaptation) and will include private sector and locally-led interventions.

This sampling approach will enable analysis of how gender-responsiveness and gender outcomes vary across different operating environments, consistent with the external environment dimension of the IOA model (see Figure 2).

The project sample will be selected based on the following criteria, focusing on projects approved since 2019, in line with the evaluation scope:

- **Regional and contextual diversity:** Projects will be selected across multiple regions and country contexts, including contexts that are more and less conducive to gender equality and women's empowerment, in order to examine how external political, institutional, and socio-cultural environments shape implementation and outcomes. More specifically, the sample will seek regional diversity considering GCF's four regions of operation (i.e. AFR, APAC, LAC, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA)) and GCF priority countries (i.e. African States, LDCs and SIDS), as per integrated Portfolio Management System (iPMS) data. Gender context will be based on gender scoring across three indices developed by UNDP and UN Women: the Gender Inequality Index (GII), the Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and the Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI). The evaluation will also consider a diversity of climate vulnerability and resilience levels, using Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index (ND-Gain) scoring and the Fund for Peace's State Resilience Index (SRI).
- **Position along the gender continuum:** The sample will include projects classified as gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, and, where relevant, gender-transformative. While the Gender Policy does not require gender-transformative approaches, the evaluation intends to focus qualitative learning to draw insights from cases that demonstrate transformative potential. The application of this criterion will rely on work undertaken during the synthesis, where AI tools were used to classify GCF funded projects along the gender continuum.
- **Mix of themes and result areas:** Projects will be selected across adaptation and mitigation themes and across the range of results areas, with a particular focus on those where gender integration has been identified as more challenging (e.g. energy or infrastructure), to support comparative learning. The application of this criterion will rely on GCF funded proposal classification as per the iPMS.
- **Public and private sector investments:** The sample will include both public and private sector projects, reflecting concerns raised during inception interviews and prior analyses regarding the integration of gender considerations in private sector operations. The application of this criterion will rely on GCF funded proposal classification as per the iPMS.
- **Diversity of AE types:** Projects implemented by different types of AEs and accreditation categories will be included to examine how different AE financing instruments, capacities, modalities, and institutional arrangements influence gender mainstreaming and outcomes. More specifically, the sample will seek to include both IAEs and DAEs (regional and national), as well as a private sector DAE. The application of this criterion will rely on GCF funded proposal classification as per the iPMS and Accreditation Applications Dataset.
- **PPF support:** the sampling will also consider projects that have received support from the PPF to understand the extent to which this has contributed to stronger integration of gender in project design. The team will work closely with the IEU to develop a methodology to identify such projects and may entail building on AI analytic work conducted as part of the Third Performance Review (TPR).

In-country field visits for project deep dives: Within the project sample, in-country field visits and stakeholder interviews will be conducted for select projects of the portfolio review as part of a deep dive. The purpose of these field visits is to examine projects' results and effectiveness as well

as links between gender, readiness, pipeline development, project development, and AE involvement. For example, the field visits will consider how the project has contributed to gender results and how the implementation of the Gender Policy has varied across contexts. Field visits will also examine the extent to which the RPSP effectively strengthened the integration of gender in country programming or in NAPs, and whether it has contributed to strengthening AE capacity for gender mainstreaming. In addition, field visits will explore the extent to which RPSP and PPF have effectively strengthened the integration of gender in concept note development and in FPs, respectively. Field visits will cover six countries for coverage across three regions (LAC, AFR, and APAC), and aim to extract learnings on GCF's approach to gender across projects in all countries and regions visited. Field visits are not envisioned as country case studies, but rather deep dives as part of the project portfolio review.

Field visits will also include examination of RPSP grants to understand the extent to which these have contributed to strengthening capacity for gender mainstreaming as well as the integration of gender in key frameworks and projects. AI will be used to systematically scrape the RPSP database to identify gender-related RPSP support and outcomes, such as those related to: (i) capacity strengthening of AEs during accreditation to meet gender-related requirements; (ii) strengthening national capacity in terms of gender, with a particular focus on the integration of gender in national adaptation frameworks, strategies and plans; and (iii) support towards the integration of gender in GCF country programmes/platforms and broader pipeline development.

4. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The evaluation team will conduct a series of KIIs to gather qualitative data around the evaluation questions. Interviews will be guided by tailored interview protocols that have been developed based on the agreed evaluation matrix. Interviews will include virtual global and regional level interviews, as well as virtual interviews with AEs that are involved in a subset of multiple projects that can speak to their experiences integrating gender across various project contexts, accreditation, and risk management. As part of field visits, in-person country level interviews will be conducted with NDAs and beneficiaries.

Overall, the evaluation team aims to consult with approximately **60 in-country interviews as part of field visits** (with approximately 10 interviews per country to cover deep dive projects, including AEs, NDAs and focal points, other government entities, civil society and private sector partners), **approximately 30 virtual interviews (with AEs, NDAs and focal points, and civil society and gender specialists** linked with the projects in the sample), and **20 virtual interviews with broader global and regional stakeholders** (e.g. GCF Secretariat staff and Board members; the GCF Observer Network of Civil Society Organizations; Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG)).

Interviewees will be purposefully selected based on their involvement in the implementation of gender-relevant components of GCF projects. To the extent possible, the evaluation team will seek gender balance in the selection of interviewees.

D. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation team will conduct its work with professional integrity, adhering to GCF Evaluation Standards as well as established professional and ethical guidelines for evaluators,³⁹ including the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The evaluation will be carried out in line with the core principles of evaluation ethics, such as integrity, accountability, respect, beneficence, and the commitment to “do no harm” with particular attention to gender and power dynamics that may shape participation.

Specifically, the evaluation will respect participants’ autonomy and their right to provide information in confidence. The evaluation team will ensure respect for confidentiality and informed consent in all data-collection activities. Team members will explicitly seek voluntary, informed consent from stakeholders for participation in all data-collection activities, with clear information provided about the purpose of participation, and will ensure that participants have the opportunity to decline or withdraw at any point without consequence.

Anonymity will be safeguarded across all relevant data-collection methods (e.g. interviews, surveys). Interview notes will be anonymized for analysis and will not be shared outside the evaluation team. The team will also ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced back to individual sources through triangulation, so that findings are not reliant on a single source of evidence. To safeguard the confidentiality of sensitive information collected through interviews, all evaluation data will be managed in-house and securely stored on SharePoint. Access to interview transcripts and related materials will be restricted to evaluation team members.

It will also uphold the standards and principles of human rights, gender equality, and environmental responsibility. The team will remain sensitive to differences in culture, country of origin, ethnicity, ability, age, gender, sexual orientation, language, religious beliefs, and the cultural, economic, and physical environments of stakeholders. It will do so by recognizing and valuing diversity across contexts, and will adapt its approach to respect local practices and perspectives. The evaluation will actively promote inclusivity, safeguarding participants from potential risks and ensuring that all voices, particularly those of marginalized groups, are heard and represented fairly.

E. LIMITATIONS

While the evaluation is designed to be comprehensive, several limitations may affect the depth and breadth of analysis, shaping the scope and interpretation of its findings. The evaluation will be conducted within a compressed timeframe and resource constraints, which may limit the depth of country-level engagement and the breadth of stakeholder consultations. As noted above, the evaluation is limited by the absence of clear gender-related outcomes in the GCF’s results architecture. Neither the Gender Policy nor the Gender Action Plan defines portfolio-level gender outcome objectives, indicators, or causal pathways, relying instead on process-focused measures. Similarly, the USP-2 does not include explicit gender outcome indicators within the core results framework. As a result, there is a limited basis for aggregating gender results across the portfolio. Another key limitation relates to the availability, consistency, and quality of gender-disaggregated data at the project level. Many projects lack sex-disaggregated indicators or do not systematically collect gender-responsive monitoring data, making it difficult to assess differential outcomes for

³⁹ Independent Evaluation Unit, “Green Climate Fund Evaluation Standards.”

women, men, and marginalized groups. Moreover, baseline data are incomplete or absent in several cases, which constrains the evaluation's ability to measure change over time or aggregate results across diverse project contexts. This challenge is compounded by the heterogeneity of project-level indicators, which limits the potential for meaningful aggregation or portfolio-wide analysis.

Institutional reporting gaps, particularly limited reporting against GCF's Gender Action Plan indicators, reduce the availability of systematic evidence on how gender commitments are being implemented at the organizational level. Finally, attribution also presents a methodological challenge. GCF interventions often operate alongside other funding sources, national policies, and partner activities, making it difficult to isolate the specific contribution of GCF support to observed gender outcomes.

F. WORKPLAN

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The evaluation team is led by the IEU, working in partnership with an external consultancy firm, Universal Management Group (Universal), which supported the preparatory phase (i.e. the Gender Synthesis). The evaluation team comprises seasoned methodological and thematic experts, data analysts and AI specialists to ensure sustained and in-depth engagement throughout the evaluation, and in the preparation of deliverables, ensuring that findings and recommendations are communicated clearly and effectively to a wide and diverse audience.

2. DETAILED WORKPLAN

The evaluation structures implementation in three key stages, preceded by a background stage (i.e. the GCF Gender Synthesis preparatory work in 2025), as follows.

- **Synthesis stage** (April 2025 to December 2025), during which the evaluation team undertook preparatory work to inform the Gender Evaluation. This included initial stakeholder consultations, desk review and background analysis, with the preparation of the Gender Synthesis report. The evaluation team also completed a Literature Review, and Benchmarking Study with four comparators (i.e. the Adaptation Fund, CIF, GEF, IFAD), to inform the comprehensive evaluation of the GCF's approach to gender.
- **Inception stage** (December 2025 to February 2026), during which the scope, design and methodology of the Gender Evaluation are refined with the finalization of the Approach Paper.
- **Data collection and analysis stage** (February 2026 to April 2026), during which data collection and analysis will be undertaken, including triangulation and a writing workshop.
- **Reporting and communication stage** (April 2026 to July 2026), during which the evaluation team will prepare the evaluation report, organize relevant presentations and develop communication products.

The timeline with proposed dates of key activities is provided in a detailed workplan presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Gender evaluation workplan

ACTIVITIES/ METHODS/ DELIVERABLES	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE (APPROXIMATE DATES)
Stage 1: Inception		
Completion of inception interviews (virtual)	The evaluation team held multiple individual and small group virtual interviews to engage stakeholders, with a focus on scoping questions and building a foundational understanding of the stakeholders' priorities for this evaluation. These inception interviews served as round one of the review team's phased approach to stakeholder consultations.	Weeks of 12 January to 4 February 2026
Evaluation matrix development	An evaluation matrix setting out evaluation questions and sub-questions, data-collection methods and sources, and data analysis methods was developed, and will be further refined following feedback. The evaluation matrix serves as the central reference point for developing data-collection tools, analyzing findings, crafting recommendations and the overall structure of the evaluation report.	Weeks of 12 January to 25 February 2026
Development of Approach Paper (draft)	An Approach Paper was prepared, which includes key background information, the evaluation's scope, objectives, methods and approaches, the evaluation matrix, workplan, timeline and key deliverables. The draft Approach Paper will also be shared with stakeholders, including the Secretariat, and subsequent inputs will be carefully considered in the finalization of the Approach Paper. The Approach Paper will serve as the primary guiding tool for the evaluation.	Weeks of 1 December 2025 to 6 February 2026
Finalization of Approach Paper		Finalization of Approach Paper by 27 February 2026
Development of data-collection and management tools	The evaluation team will develop and refine tools for coherent and systematic data collection. A shared platform established by the IEU will be utilized for storing and managing tools and data.	Weeks of 23 February to 2 March 2026
Stage 2: Data collection and analysis		
Document review and portfolio analysis	In line with the evaluation matrix, documents will be reviewed to cover the following components: (i) a targeted desk review of key GCF policies, Board decisions, guidance materials, evaluative evidence, and project documents; (ii) a project-level portfolio review of 20 purposively selected projects, and (iii) in-country field visits for the selected deep dives.	Weeks of 2 March to 23 March 2026

ACTIVITIES/ METHODS/ DELIVERABLES	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE (APPROXIMATE DATES)
Consultation with key stakeholders	Virtual stakeholder consultations will be conducted with approximately 50 individuals (20 global/regional stakeholders, and 30 interviews as part of the 20-project sample – such as AEs, NDAs and focal points, gender experts). Consultations will be guided by protocols to gather qualitative insights from global, regional, and country-level stakeholders familiar with the selected projects, further supported by the use of qualitative memoing to circulate key messages from interviews within the team.	Weeks of 16 February to 6 March 2026
In-country field visits	In-country field visits and stakeholder interviews will be conducted as part of the deep dives.	In-country field visits for deep dives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFR, LAC: Weeks of 16 and 23 March 2026 • APAC: Week of 6 April 2026
Event attendance (virtual – regional dialogues, workshops, gender webinars or conferences, etc.)	The evaluation team will identify relevant events (regional dialogues, workshops, gender webinars or conferences) to attend virtually. Events will provide additional data collected through stakeholder engagement and participant observation as well as act as an opportunity to socialize progress and results related to the evaluation.	Ongoing, throughout
Data management	To ensure data privacy for sensitive information contained in interviews, data management will be maintained in-house. All evaluation data will be securely stored on SharePoint, including interview transcripts shared between team members. The evaluation team will ensure that data management approaches are pursued and shared consistently by team members.	Ongoing, throughout
Data analysis	Data will be analysed by triangulating all data collected across various data collection methods, with data analysis and coding maintained in-house through the institutional SharePoint.	Weeks of 9 March to 13 April 2026
Preliminary data analysis writing workshops (in-person)	After data have been analysed and triangulated, the review team will gather for an in-person writing workshop to prepare findings and recommendations of the main evaluation report.	Week of 13 April 2026

ACTIVITIES/ METHODS/ DELIVERABLES	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE (APPROXIMATE DATES)
Stage 3: Reporting and communication		
Progress Report on the Implementation of the GAP – an interim deliverable	As a deliverable for B.44, the evaluation team will prepare a 5-10 page (not including annexes) data-informed progress report on the implementation of the GAP 2020-2023, including its qualitative and quantitative indicators. This report will map progress made on the implementation of the GAP, including practical inputs to inform the GAP update, such as what data is available for GAP indicators, feasibility of indicators, and identifying data gaps where information is not available. The results will speak to the framework and monitoring exercise underpinning the GAP.	Submitted to Board: 4 March 2026
Factual review report (Zero Draft)	The evaluation team will prepare a Factual Draft Evaluation Report, comprising the main report only, without recommendations.	Factual Draft Evaluation Report 5 May 2026
Secretariat Review (Zero Draft)	The factual evaluation report will be reviewed by the GCF Secretariat for factual errors ahead of report finalization.	5 May to 15 May 2026
Revisions of the draft evaluation report	On receiving feedback on the factual report, the evaluation team will prepare a draft evaluation report that will include recommendations and annexes.	Draft Evaluation Report: 29 May 2026
Emerging findings and recommendations presentations	The review team will organize virtual presentations on emerging findings and recommendations with the Board and the Secretariat. This is aligned with the Board's discussion of the Secretariat's draft GAP.	2 June 2026
Final Evaluation Report	A Final Evaluation Report will be prepared and submitted to the GCF Board.	Final Evaluation Report: First week of June 2026 submitted to the Board
Communication and knowledge products	The evaluation team will prepare content for short communications products on the results and findings of the evaluation. Communications products may include presentations, events, webinars and more.	June to July 2026

Source: Evaluation team

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

A list of key stakeholders consulted during the inception phase to inform the preparation of this Approach Paper is provided below. This includes those consulted as part of the preparatory work involved with the Synthesis Note and the benchmarking study.

Table A - 1. List of stakeholders consulted

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION
BREITBARTH	TIM	Investment Operations Manager	GCF, Office of the Chief Investment Officer (OCIO) Front Office (Project-specific Assessment Approach (PSAA))
CHIUDZA	BERTHA	Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist	GCF, Operations Team
CHOGA	FAITH	Environmental and Social Safeguards and Gender Expert	GCF, Operations Team
COLLANTES	VERONA	Senior Gender Specialist	GEF
DANIEL	TARA	Senior Manager, Policy	Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) (CSO Observer)
ERNST	KAREN	Head	GCF, Independent Integrity Unit (IIU)
GHOSAL	RAJIB	Global Head, Climate, Portfolio and Quality (Former GCF Gender and Social Specialist)	Save the Children International
LEE	YOUNG HEE	Governance Specialist and Gender Lead	Adaptation Fund
HIJAR	GRACIELA	Gender Team	Adaptation Fund
JARVINEN	PETRA	Programme Officer	IFAD
KADIAN	RASHMI	Operational Safeguards Lead	GCF, Operations Team
KOLYBASHKINA	NINA	Senior Social Development Specialist	CIF
KUMAR	PREKSHA KRISHNA	Registrar and Compliance Specialist	GCF, Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM)

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	POSITION	AFFILIATION
MAINA	LOISE	Lead Technical Specialist	IFAD
MUSIZVINGOZA	RONALD	Gender Analyst	Adaptation Fund
NARRAINEN	SANJEEV	Integrity and Compliance Manager	GCF, IIU
NEGUSSIE	SEBLEWONGEL	Gender and Social Specialist	GCF
OUTELDAIT	FARAH	Consultant	CIF
PARK	ADRIENNE SOOBIN	Sustainability Specialist	GCF, Operations Team
SUBRAMANIAN	PATTABIRAMAN	Senior Readiness Specialist	GCF, RPSP
TABRIZI	CAMERON	Accreditation Officer	GCF, Accreditation Team
WASTI	NAZEEM	Lead	GCF, PPF
BHANDARI	BINDU	Programme Specialist	UN Women
MATTELLONE	ERICA	Senior Evaluation Specialist	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
SCHALATEK	LIANE	Associate Director	Heinrich Böll Stiftung (CSO Observer)
HEWITT	BARBARA	Board Member	GCF Board (United Kingdom)
ENGELSBAK	LAURA WINTHER	Board Member	GCF Board (Denmark)
INAURI	LASHA	Board Member	GCF Board (Georgia)
MOULIN	ANNE	Board Member	GCF Board (Switzerland)
BUCHMANN	DANIELA	Board Member	GCF Board (Switzerland)
CAMARA	ISATOU F.	Director of Climate Finance	GCF Board (Gambia)
OSSES	FELIPE	Board Member	GCF Board (Gambia)

Source: Evaluation team

Appendix 2. EVALUATION MATRIX

Table A - 2. Evaluation questions, sub-questions and analytics required

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
Relevance	1.1 To what extent is GCF's institutional approach to gender aligned with key international commitments on gender equality and climate change, and how effectively do its organizational requirements, tools, and systems enable the integration of gender considerations in ways that strengthen the gender-responsiveness of GCF-supported climate finance?	1.1.1 To what extent is GCF's approach to gender aligned with key international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment, including the UNFCCC's LWPG, the UNFCCC Belém GAP priority areas, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit references to international gender commitments (LWPG/Belem GAP, SDGs, Paris Agreement) across GCF Gender Policy, GCF institutional GAP, Strategic Plan/USP-2 • Evidence of adaptation in GCF's gender approach following updates to international gender commitments (e.g. LWPG, Belem GAP) • Evidence of integration of international gender commitments into operational requirements within GCF guidelines and project-cycle instruments (e.g. gender toolkit, FPs, environmental and social safeguards (ESS)) 	Document review: GCF Gender Policy, GCF institutional GAP, Strategic Plan/USP-2, gender toolkit, FPs, etc. UNFCCC LWPG-related documents, SDGs and Paris Agreement
		1.1.2 To what extent do GCF's organizational requirements, tools and systems (e.g. Investment Framework; IRMF, RRMF Handbook; project-level gender assessments and project-level GAPs) enable AEs to sufficiently integrate gender considerations in ways that strengthen GCF's ability to deliver gender-responsive climate finance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection of gender considerations from relevant Investment Framework coverage areas in core FP design elements (e.g. problem analysis, stakeholder engagement, expected impacts) • Extent of integration of gender-related elements from the revised RRMF Handbook into RPSG grants (e.g. gender analysis, results statements, indicators, stakeholder engagement, and risk management) • Quality and relevance of context-specific gender analysis in project-level gender assessments • Degree of alignment between project-level GAPs and the findings of gender assessments • Alignment of project-level GAPs with national priorities (NDAs, NAPs, other long-term strategies) 	Document review: Investment Framework; IRMF, RRMF Handbook; approved FPs and annexes (including gender assessments and project-level GAPs); RPSG grant proposals; APRs

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages between project-level GAPs and project design/workplans • Evidence of project-level GAP reporting in project-level APRs 	
Coherence and complementarity	2.1 External complementarity: How coherent is GCF's approach to gender with that of other climate funds?	2.1.1 To what extent does the GCF actively coordinate or collaborate with other climate finance actors under the Operational Framework for Complementarity and Coherence among climate finance institutions to enhance collective impact and avoid duplication in advancing gender-responsive climate action?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of gender objectives within GCF's complementarity and coherence framework • Regular coordination between GCF and peer climate funds on gender (e.g. through gender focal points or dedicated mechanisms) • Joint or coordinated gender-related actions with other climate finance actors • Stakeholder perceptions of the quality and added value of gender-related collaboration • Evidence of reduced duplication or enhanced complementarity in gender-related efforts 	<p>Document review: Reporting on the Operational Framework for Complementarity and Coherence</p> <p>KIIs: Other climate funds</p>
	2.2 Internal coherence: To what extent is GCF's institutional approach to gender coherent across its overall policy and operational framework to integrate gender	2.2.1 How coherently is the GCF Gender Policy reflected within strategic planning (e.g. USP-2 and the IRMF), and to what extent do these strategic frameworks reinforce the Fund's gender responsive objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit reflection of Gender Policy priorities within strategic planning frameworks (e.g. USP-2, IRMF) • Consistency between Gender Policy objectives and strategic gender commitments articulated in USP-2 • Integration of Gender Policy ambitions in IRMF results architecture • Integration of Gender Policy commitments in the Investment Framework 	<p>Document review: Relevant GCF policies (e.g. Indigenous Peoples, ESS, ethics, etc.); gender toolkit; Accreditation Framework</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; Board members; AEs</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	priorities and support gender-responsive programming across the institution?	2.2.2 To what extent does the GCF suite of policies, operational guidelines, accreditation standards, readiness support modalities, and project-level requirements consistently and adequately embed gender considerations, and how well do these instruments work together to promote coherent gender mainstreaming across the Fund's operations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage of gender considerations across GCF policies, guidelines, standards, and requirements • Consistency of gender-related requirements across key operational instruments (e.g. policies, accreditation standards, readiness modalities, project-level requirements) • Internal coherence between gender-related policies and operational guidance (e.g. alignment between policy intent, guidance, and implementation requirements) • Clarity and usability of gender-related guidance for AEs and partners 	<p>Document review: Relevant GCF policies (e.g. Gender Policy; USP-2 and the IRMF); gender toolkit;</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; Board members</p>
Effectiveness and impact	3.1 Institutional outcomes: To what extent has GCF advanced its institutional gender-related objectives?	3.1.1 To what extent has the GCF made progress on the specific indicators, milestones, and targets set out in the institutional GAP 2020–2023, and what factors explain variances between planned and actual performance across priority areas: (i) governance, (ii) competencies and capacity-development, (iii) resource allocation accessibility and budgeting, (iv) operational procedures, (v) knowledge generation and communications?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the updated policy (Priority Area 1) • Annual progress reports to the Board (Priority Area 1) • Reporting on gender issues is covered in the annual Independent Redress Mechanism report and in the annual report to the Conference of the Parties (Priority Area 1) • Percentage of AEs with policies and procedures on gender equality at the time of accreditation (Priority Area 1) • Percentage of AEs with gender equality competencies and track records in gender equality issues at the stage of accreditation (Priority Area 1) • Percentage of direct access applicants and AEs requesting readiness support for the development of gender equality policies and procedures (Priority Area 1) • Stakeholder perception on the value of institutional GAP implementation in advancing gender-responsive 	<p>Document review: Institutional GAP indicator analysis</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; Board members; AEs; NDAs.</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
			<p>governance (Priority Area 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of stakeholders, NDAs/focal points and AEs that received gender training (Priority Area 2) • GCF gender toolkit disseminated and guidance provided to NDAs/focal points and AEs on how to interpret the information contained in the toolkit (Priority Area 2) • Stakeholder perception on the value of institutional GAP implementation in improving competencies and capacities for gender-responsive programming (Priority Area 2) • Approved budget amount for targeted gender support at the project/programme/portfolio level (Priority Area 3) • Percentage of the annual administrative budget earmarked by the Secretariat to support gender expertise (staff, consultants), training, communications and monitoring and evaluation (Priority Area 3) • Stakeholder perception on the value of institutional GAP implementation in enhancing resources and budgeting for gender-responsive programming (Priority Area 3) • Guidelines issued and communicated to NDAs/focal points and AEs through the GCF website and through active outreach (Priority Area 4) • 100 per cent of all approved FPs contain a gender assessment and a project-level GAP made for public viewing on the GCF website (Priority Area 4) • Number of training sessions on the guidelines provided to NDAs/focal points and AEs and the qualitative reporting of these training sessions (Priority Area 4) • Number of toolkits, sourcebooks and references posted on the GCF website (Priority Area 4) • Percentage of projects that apply gender-balanced stakeholder consultations (Priority Area 4) 	

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of FPs whose principal objective is to promote gender equality in climate action (Priority Area 4) • Number of projects where women and men report improvements in their quality of life (Priority Area 4) • Number of projects that demonstrate the reduced vulnerability of both women and men (Priority Area 4) • Number of projects that demonstrate increased adaptive capacity of women and men to respond to the impacts of climate change (Priority Area 4) • Number of projects that contain strategies and specific budgets to leverage co-benefits between gender equality and climate action (Priority Area 4) • Projects with resilient infrastructure measures in place to prevent economic losses and mitigate gender-related risks (Priority Area 4) • Number of projects that have undertaken a gender audit and strengthened operational systems and made course corrections to mainstream gender (Priority Area 4) • Increase in the number of FPs with principal objectives of promoting gender equality in climate change (Priority Area 4) • Stakeholder perception on the value of institutional GAP implementation in improving operational procedures for gender-responsive programming (Priority 4) • Stock-taking report posted on the website (Priority Area 5) • Communications and dissemination strategy that address gender issues developed (Priority Area 5) • Communication materials developed and disseminated to internal and external stakeholders (Priority Area 5) • Public outreach activities undertaken at the national and 	

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
			grassroots levels (Priority Area 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multimedia campaign on gender equality and climate change launched at the country level (Priority Area 5) • Stakeholder perception on the value of institutional GAP implementation in enhancing knowledge generation and communication for gender-responsive programming (Priority Area 5) 	
		3.1.2 What factors have facilitated or constrained the translation of policy commitments into implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling external factors • Enabling internal factors • Hindering external factors • Hindering internal factors 	KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; Board members; AEs; NDAs.
	3.2 Programmatic outcomes: To what extent has the GCF contributed to the achievement of gender and intersectional outcomes (such as disability, indigeneity), including any longer-term impacts, across its portfolio?	3.2.1 To what extent have GCF-funded activities generated intended and unintended gender-related results (both positive and negative)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of gender-related outcomes achieved (across themes, AEs) • Distribution of outcomes across stakeholder groups • Presence of unintended gender effects (positive or negative) • Co-benefits (gender and women empowerment) 	Document review: APRs, sex-disaggregated IRMF reporting. KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; Board members; AEs; NDAs.
		3.2.2 What enabling internal and external factors have facilitated the achievement of gender outcomes?	Internal factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of financial resources • AE staff retention/gender expertise availability External factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduciveness of national gender equality legislative framework • Political will for gender equality • Existence of strong institutions for gender equality • Coordination mechanisms for gender equality 	Document review: APRs KIIs: AEs; NDAs; government partners; private sector; CSOs

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-cultural norms and practices influencing the acceptance and uptake of gender-responsive approaches Strength and engagement of civil society and women's organizations in project contexts 	
		3.2.3 What hindering internal and external factors have impeded the achievement of gender outcomes?	<p>Internal factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of financial resources AE staff turnover/lack of gender expertise availability <p>External factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of conducive national gender equality legislative framework Lack of political will for gender equality Absence of strong institutions for gender equality Lack of coordination mechanisms for gender equality Harmful socio-cultural norms and practices hindering the acceptance and uptake of gender-responsive approaches Weakness and lack of engagement of civil society and women's organizations in project contexts 	<p>Document review: APRs</p> <p>KIIs: AEs; NDAs; government partners; private sector; CSOs</p>
		3.2.4 How do gender and intersectional outcomes vary across different types of GCF projects (e.g. between adaptation and mitigation projects, between public and private sector projects, between IAEs and DAEs), and what factors (enabling conditions or barriers) explain observed differences in results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variation in gender-related outcomes between adaptation and mitigation projects (and their respective result areas) Variation in gender-related outcomes between public and private sector projects Variation in gender-related outcomes between IAEs and DAEs Differences in attention to intersectional groups across project types (e.g. disability, Indigenous Peoples, age) Influence of project design features on gender and intersectional outcomes Role of contextual enabling conditions or barriers in shaping observed differences in results 	<p>Document review: Interim and final reports; APRs; project-level GAPs</p> <p>KIIs: AEs; NDAs; government partners; private sector; CSOs</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
		3.2.5 To what extent has the GCF supported participatory approaches in project origination and the implementation of its gender commitments, including meaningful engagement of women and groups experiencing intersecting forms of marginalization (such as disability, indigeneity, age) in achieving gender-related results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of consultation with key stakeholders at project origination Evidence that stakeholder priorities were integrated in project origination Type of stakeholders identified in the Project Stakeholder Engagement Plan (e.g. women, Indigenous groups, people with disability, youth, private sector, etc.) Evidence of continued engagement with stakeholder groups throughout implementation Evidence of functioning feedback loop mechanisms 	<p>Document review: Project stakeholder engagement plan; project-level GAPs; APRs, AE-led evaluation reports</p> <p>KIIs: AEs; NDAs; government partners; private sector; CSOs</p>
		3.2.6 To what extent have AEs adhered to gender-related safeguards (e.g. prevention of GBV, PSEAH, discrimination, exclusion)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of gender-related risk prevention measures in project design (e.g. GBV, PSEAH, discrimination, exclusion) Inclusion of gender-related safeguards within project-level GAPs and implementation arrangements Functioning of grievance and redress mechanisms for gender-related complaints Evidence of monitoring and reporting on gender-related safeguard risks and incidents 	<p>Document review: FPs/Funded Activity Agreements (FAAs); APRs; project-level GAPs</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs; CSOs</p>
	3.3 To what extent are the GCF's monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems fit-for-purpose to support	3.3.1 To what extent is the GCF's monitoring and reporting system fit-for-purpose to capture, analyze, and communicate gender-related outcomes, including changes in participation,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolution of coverage of gender-related outcome dimensions in the RRMF and IRMF Adequacy of project monitoring indicators to measure gender outcomes (e.g. access to benefits, decision-making, control over resources, etc.) Quality and consistency of gender-related reporting in APRs 	<p>Document review: FPs/FAAs; APRs; project-level GAPs</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	accountability, learning, and decision-making on gender equality outcomes?	access to benefits, and representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of gender outcome reporting Functioning monitoring and reporting mechanisms to aggregate gender outcomes from project to portfolio level 	
		3.3.2 To what extent do GCF and AE-led evaluations effectively report on gender outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage of gender-related outcomes in GCF-commissioned evaluations Coverage of gender-related outcomes in AE-led project evaluations Alignment of AE-led evaluations with GCF gender requirements and project-level GAPs Aggregation of gender-related findings from AE-led evaluations into GCF portfolio-level reporting Inclusion of intersectional dimensions in evaluation reporting on gender outcomes 	Document review: AE-led evaluations
Efficiency	4.1 To what extent are GCF's resourcing and organizational arrangements adequate to enable timely and effective mainstreaming of gender across operations?	4.1.1 Efficiency of support programmes: To what extent do GCF support programmes, such as RPSP and PPF, provide timely, adequate, and accessible support for mainstreaming gender in country programming/platforms and project development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of GCF projects that used PPF to support gender-related activities in project preparation Perception of AEs on the value of PPF support for gender-related activities Percentage of AEs (by type) that have accessed RPSP support for institutional capacity strengthening on gender Evidence of institutional capacity strengthening of AEs for gender Number of countries having used RPSP to integrate gender in country programme Number of countries having used RPSP to integrate gender in NAP 	<p>Document review: APR, country programme documents, RPSP grant proposals, NAPs, evaluations</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs; NDAs</p>
		4.1.2 Staffing, human resources, financial resources, and internal capacities: To what extent	<p>Organizational level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender balance of GCF Secretariat staff Gender balance of GCF Board Evidence (and adequacy of) budgetary allocation for 	<p>Document review: APR, evaluations</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
		<p>does GCF's allocation of resources, staffing structures, gender expertise, and capacity levels enable efficient and effective mainstreaming of gender across the organization and portfolio?</p>	<p>institutional GAP implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of gender specialists at GCF Secretariat • Access to and distribution of gender expertise across Secretariat units (e.g. gender specialists/focal points) • Adequacy of gender expertise relative to portfolio size and workload <p>Project/AE level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of FPs with dedicated budget for gender activities • Percentage of FPs with dedicated gender specialist, disaggregated by AE type • Self-assessment of AEs on their capacity • Stability and continuity of gender expertise within AEs/projects 	<p>staff; AEs; NDAs, CSOs</p>
		<p>4.1.3 Secretariat structure and organizational arrangements: To what extent does the recent Secretariat re-organization and shift toward regionalization support coherent, coordinated, and timely implementation of gender-related responsibilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of intended roles and responsibilities for gender under the revised Secretariat structure • Establishment of coordination mechanisms for gender across headquarters and regional teams • Early functionality of regionalized gender support arrangements • Alignment of organizational arrangements with planned gender responsibilities • Perceptions of readiness of the new structure to support gender-related functions 	<p>Document review: Board decisions</p> <p>KIIs: Board members; GCF Secretariat staff</p>
Sustainability	5.1 To what extent are GCF's gender-related results and capacities likely to	<p>5.1.1 Programmatic dimension: To what extent are the gender-related results achieved through GCF-funded activities likely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of gender priorities into country programming • Ownership of gender-related results by national and local institutions • Evidence of continued commitment or resourcing for 	<p>Document review: APRs; Country Programme documents, evaluations</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	be sustained?	to be sustained beyond the duration of the projects?	gender-related objectives beyond project duration	KIIs: NDAs; government partners; AEs
		5.1.2 Partnership dimension: To what extent have GCF investments strengthened the long-term gender-related capacities of partners, including NDAs, AEs, CSOs, and others, and how likely are these institutions to maintain and apply these capacities after GCF support ends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening and institutionalization of gender-related capacities within NDAs (e.g. guidance, coordination roles, or review functions) • Existence and implementation of institutional gender policies or strategies within AEs • Presence and functional role of dedicated gender expertise within AEs (e.g. gender focal points, specialists, or embedded expertise) • Institutionalization of standard operating procedures or guidance for integrating gender in project development within AEs • Use of strengthened gender capacities by AEs beyond individual GCF-funded projects • Evidence that CSOs (particularly gender-focused organizations) have assumed leadership in projecting results forward • Evidence of capacity strengthening through RPSP/PPF 	Document review: APRs, evaluations KIIs: NDAs; AEs, gender focal points
Replication and scalability	6.1 To what extent does GCF's approach to gender enable gender-responsive practices and results to be replicated and scaled across different contexts,	6.1.1 Organization-wide knowledge sharing: To what extent does GCF facilitate learning, knowledge sharing, and dissemination of good practices, partnerships or delivery models for gender equality that enable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production and dissemination of gender-related guidance and learning products to AEs, NDAs, and delivery partners • Facilitation of communities of practice or peer learning on gender-responsive approaches involving partners (e.g. AEs, NDAs) • Evidence that lessons and good practices are shared with partners to inform subsequent project or programme design 	Document review: APR, evaluations. KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs; NDAs

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	countries, and portfolios?	replication and scaling (e.g. through guidance, communities of practice, or learning products)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for replication or scaling of effective gender-responsive delivery models and partnerships 	
		6.1.2 Institutional enabling environment for replication of gender-responsive approaches: To what extent do GCF's institutional policies, tools and knowledge systems support the replication of effective gender-responsive approaches across different projects, countries, sectors, and AEs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of institutional platforms, communities of practice, or regular knowledge exchanges focused on gender-responsive approaches Presence of portfolio-wide guidance, toolkits, or case studies that distil transferable gender-responsive design features Evidence that gender-related lessons are documented, synthesized, and made accessible to AEs and NDAs Evidence of a gender-responsive approach pioneered in one project/country that is adopted in another without requiring new policy changes 	Document review: APR, evaluations, GCF tools and guidance KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs; NDAs
		6.1.3 Institutional enabling environment for the scaling of gender-responsive approaches: To what extent do GCF's incentives (e.g. approval criteria, scorecards, performance frameworks, or reporting requirements) encourage AEs to prioritize replicable and scalable gender-responsive approaches?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of clear institutional pathways (e.g. Simplified Approval Process (SAP) → FPs, programmatic approaches, follow-on financing) that can expand successful gender interventions Evidence that Readiness or country programming has been used to broaden or deepen successful gender-responsive models Example where a pilot gender-responsive intervention was expanded to a larger geographic area, population, or budget envelope Evidence that scaled interventions are embedded in national policies, plans, or institutional practices Evidence that projects with strong gender results receive follow-on funding or are incorporated into subsequent 	Document review: APR, evaluations, GCF tools and guidance KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs; NDAs

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
			programming phases	
Country ownership	7.1 To what extent does GCF support and strengthen country ownership of gender-responsive climate action, including the integration of gender priorities into national climate strategies and meaningful engagement of country-level stakeholders in GCF-supported activities?	7.1.1 Integration of gender into national climate strategies: To what extent do GCF country programmes and platforms, readiness support, and engagement processes facilitate the integration of gender considerations into NDCs, NAPs, and other long-term national climate strategies, and planning documents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived contribution of GCF engagement to strengthening gender integration in national climate strategies Incorporation of gender considerations in NDCs, NAPs, and long-term national climate strategies Institutionalization of gender considerations within national climate planning processes (e.g. roles, procedures, coordination mechanisms) Evidence that gender priorities supported through GCF country programming/country platform are reflected in national climate planning 	<p>Document review: NDCs, NAPs, country programme documents, APRs, evaluations.</p> <p>KIIs: AEs; NDAs; CSOs; government partners</p>
		7.1.2 Participation of gender-focused institutions in climate governance: To what extent does GCF support and enable the meaningful participation of gender-specific ministries, bodies, and CSOs in national climate coordination mechanisms and decision-making processes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of consultation of ministry of gender, women's organizations or other gender bodies in country programme development Representation of gender-focused institutions and CSOs in country platform Evidence that inputs from gender-focused institutions inform climate policy, planning, or investment decisions 	<p>Document review: Country programme documents, APRs, evaluations, UNFCCC decisions.</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs; NDAs; CSOs; government partners</p>
Innovation	8.1 To what extent does GCF foster innovative approaches across results areas to	8.1.1 To what extent do GCF's gender policies, strategies, frameworks, incentives, systems and institutional processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that GCF policies, strategies, or review processes explicitly encourage experimentation or approaches that go beyond minimum gender compliance Availability of guidance, templates, or analytical tools that both: (i) support innovation, and (ii) allow projects to 	<p>Document review: APRs; evaluations</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	advance paradigm shifts toward low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways that promote gender equality, and what can be learned from other climate funds in terms of innovations?	encourage and track innovation along the gender integration continuum – including the design and support of gender transformative approaches?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> operate at different levels of gender integration Existence and consistent use of a corporate method to classify and monitor projects’ gender integration, including identification of innovative approaches Evidence that lessons from innovative projects (or those with higher levels of gender integration) are captured and used to inform future guidance, systems, or practices 	staff; AEs; NDAs; CSOs
		8.1.2 What institutional enablers or constraints influence the development and uptake of innovative gender approaches across the GCF portfolio?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of leadership signals, incentives, and accountability mechanisms that encourage innovative gender approaches Evidence of operational systems, procedures, and templates that enable experimentation in gender integration Evidence of institutional learning mechanisms that support cross-portfolio uptake of innovative gender approaches 	<p>Document review: APRs; evaluations</p> <p>KIIs: GCF Secretariat staff; AEs; NDAs; CSOs</p>
		8.1.3 What can GCF learn from other climate funds in terms of best practices related to gender (e.g. intersectionality, women’s empowerment, women’s participation and representation, gender-transformative approaches)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of best practices of other climate funds in promoting women’s economic empowerment, climate-resilient livelihoods, and adaptive capacity to fill gaps identified in GCF’s approach Use of best practices of other climate funds in addressing intersecting forms of vulnerability (e.g. poverty, Indigenous status, disability, geography) to fill gaps identified in GCF’s approach Use of best practices of other climate funds in promoting women’s participation and leadership in climate governance and decision-making processes to fill gaps identified in GCF’s approach Use of best practices of other climate funds in facilitating access to climate finance for women’s organizations and 	<p>Document review: Complementarity and coherence framework; Benchmarking study report insights on the gender policies, GAPs of climate funds, and evaluations of other climate funds (CIF, AF, GEF) and IFAD</p> <p>KIIs: Other climate funds</p>

CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
			women-led initiatives to fill gaps identified in GCF's approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of best practices of other climate funds in integrating gender considerations into private sector operations and investments to fill gaps in GCF's approach 	

Source: Evaluation team

Appendix 3. EVALUATION COMMUNICATION PLAN

Background

Paragraph 64(a) of the Evaluation Policy for the Green Climate Fund (GCF), as outlined in [annex I of decision B.BM-2021/07](#), stipulates that:

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.

Furthermore, paragraph 64(d) of the Evaluation Policy states that “*the GCF will promote the sharing of evaluative evidence across GCF partners through **different modes of dissemination and communication.***”

Context and communication objectives

In this context, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of the GCF has developed this draft communications plan as its “dissemination/knowledge management plan” for the *Independent Evaluation of GCF’s Approach to Gender*. The strategy outlines the evaluation team’s envisioned approach for disseminating the evaluation’s findings and learnings, and details the suggested modes of dissemination and communication. It also provides an indicative timeline for key dissemination and engagement activities and engagement. Additionally, the plan is designed to raise awareness of the evaluation both during its implementation and after its completion, with a particular focus on promoting and disseminating its findings and recommendations to decision-makers and other key stakeholders within the GCF ecosystem.

Table A - 3. Target audiences or stakeholders

KEY AUDIENCE GROUP	TARGET SUBGROUP (IF APPLICABLE)	DESIRED CHANGE	KEY OUTPUTS, ENGAGEMENT	KEY OUTPUTS, PRODUCTS
GCF Board	Board Members, including the Co-Chairs, Board Members from least developed countries (LDCs), and those who can be considered as “champions” for this evaluation.	Board Members are aware of the evaluation’s key findings and use the evaluation’s recommendations to improve the GCF business model and operations, as the GCF’s ultimate decision-making body.	IEU webinars, Board side events, bilateral consultations between IEU management and Board members, IEU newsletters, social media, COP30 side event(s).	Executive summary, final Evaluation Report, evaluation briefs in EN/FR/ES/AR, IEU newsletters (including Board special editions), the “evaluations” section of IEU activities/annual reports.

KEY AUDIENCE GROUP	TARGET SUBGROUP (IF APPLICABLE)	DESIRED CHANGE	KEY OUTPUTS, ENGAGEMENT	KEY OUTPUTS, PRODUCTS
GCF Secretariat	Particularly the Social Inclusion Team and the senior management and other relevant divisions of the GCF Secretariat.	Social Inclusion Team and the Secretariat become aware of the evaluation's key findings and recommendations and submit a timely and thoughtful management response to the evaluation. The Secretariat integrates the evaluation learnings in future planning processes.	IEU webinars, Board side events, regular meetings between the IEU head and the Executive Director, IEU newsletters, news updates on the GCF intranet GreenShift and social media, COP30 side event(s) and engagements.	Executive summary, final Evaluation Report, evaluation briefs, regular GreenShift updates, IEU newsletters, press release, IEU's video/podcast focusing on the evaluation findings and recommendations.
GCF partners (accredited entities (AEs), executing entities, advisory group, etc.)	GCF's AEs, implementing entities, national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points and observers, particularly those who work in gender or are gender champions.	The AEs' and the observers' understanding of the GCF is improved, and they become aware of the IEU evaluation's key findings and recommendations.	IEU webinars, Board side events, IEU's engagement in external conferences/events hosted by GCF partners, IEU newsletter, social media updates, IEU Learning Talks, COP30 side events. Advisory group engagement in feedback meetings.	Executive summary, final Evaluation Report, evaluation briefs, press release, IEU's video/podcast focusing on content of the evaluation findings and recommendations.

Table A - 4. Communications-related outputs

OUTPUT	KEY AUDIENCE	CONTENT/COMMENTS
IEU website	All	Serves as a hub for all public resources generated by the evaluation; updated immediately once new content becomes available
Approach Paper	Board, Secretariat	Approach, questions, messages of the evaluation
Draft country case study reports	All	Countries and projects are still tentative
Feedback meeting from advisory group	Advisory group	Feedback on factual draft of evaluation report

OUTPUT	KEY AUDIENCE	CONTENT/COMMENTS
Webinars and/or Board side events to present key findings	Board, Secretariat	In these webinars or Board (virtual) side events, the evaluation team will present the evaluation's key findings and answer any questions the attendees may have
Feedback meeting from advisory group	Advisory group	Feedback on final Evaluation Report
Final Evaluation Report	All	Contains the evaluation question, in-depth data analyses, conclusions, findings and recommendations
Executive summary	All	A 10–15-page executive summary of the Evaluation Report
Summary document “Evaluation Brief”	All	A 2- or 4-page summary brief that focuses primarily on the evaluation's background, key question, findings and recommendations. This summary brief is designed for busy readers and is a useful tool to disseminate to a wider audience
Social media	All	Key updates for every product/event related to the assessment evaluation
Video (subject to personnel capacity available during the suggested period)	All	A 5–7-minute video summary of the evaluation's key findings and recommendations, which will be uploaded to YouTube and the IEU's website

Opportunities and plans for engaging stakeholders on the evaluation findings and recommendations

- a) **Webinars on the Approach Paper | February 2026** - Three webinars were held in March 2026, for different audience groups – the Board and advisors, AEs and NDAs; the Secretariat; and the civil society organizations (CSOs)/public sector organizations (PSOs) and other non-governmental organizations, to present and elicit initial comments on the approach of the evaluation. The webinar presentation is to be recorded and published online.
- b) **2026 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) | November 2026** - Possible side event.
- c) **IEU webinars on emerging findings (for the Board, Secretariat, and CSO-PSOs) | May 2026 – June 2026** - Presentation of key findings in an interactive format to sensitize the audience to the evaluation findings and recommendations.
- d) **IEU Learning Talks (to present syntheses/emerging findings etc.) | At any appropriate period/time of the year** - Possible learning session with the Social Inclusion Team to present the evaluation and advocate for the gender agenda within the organization.

Table A - 5. Timeline of key evaluation and communications activities (indicative)

TASKS	~MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Inception and planning phase										
Approach Paper			D							
Approach Paper webinar	D									
Data collection and analysis phase										
Data analysis and stakeholder surveys										
Reporting phase										
Factual draft										
Draft evaluation report										
Final Evaluation Report										
Executive summary										
COP30 engagement										
Webinars										
Management/continuous activities										
Regular follow-up meetings										
Communications strategy development and implementation										
Gender microsite page management										

Independent Evaluation of the GCF’s Approach to Gender
 Approach paper - Appendices

TASKS	~MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Post-final report communication										
Summary documents (briefs)										
Social media promotion of outputs										
Video (subject to personnel capacity available during the suggested time period)										
B.46 side events										

Note: D=Deliverable
 Working period – period in which the Independent Evaluation of the GCF’s Approach to Gender evaluation team is working on the deliverables.
 Communications working period – period in which the IEU’s communications workstream will be producing and/or supporting the finalization of the various communications outputs for this evaluation.

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