



## IEU's LEARNING-ORIENTED REAL-TIME IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LORTA) PROGRAMME PHASE 1 - FORMATIVE ENGAGEMENT AND DESIGN

### BACKGROUND

The multi-year Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme of the IEU started in 2018. This briefing summarizes the lessons learned since then in implementing Phase 1 of the programme.

**LORTA aims** to help GCF investments measure their change, credibly and in a high-quality manner, by providing technical assistance both at the systems level and at the human resource level. The programme does this through a range of activities. These activities include engagement, building and clarifying theories of change, co-building real-time and longer term measurement systems, helping projects incorporate theory-based experimental and quasi-experimental designs, using quantitative and qualitative approaches and analyzing data. The overall aim of LORTA is to measure the causal change of GCF investments and their results, while understanding their effectiveness and efficiency.

LORTA: In GCF investments, what works? How much? For whom? Why? Under what circumstances? How will we know?

- Measuring the overall change (outcome or impact) of GCF investments;
- Building measurement and tracking systems and enhancing in-project learning;
- Understanding and measuring results credibly at different points during implementation; and
- Measuring GCF's overall contribution to catalyzing a paradigm shift and achieving impacts at scale.

### NINE LESSONS LEARNED FROM PHASE 1

- 1. Budgets are key:** GCF-funded projects and investments need to budget early for the cost of undertaking impact evaluations/assessments. This facilitates high-quality designs for building real-time measurement systems and credible measurement.
- 2. Early planning and co-owning designs for impact assessments and measurement systems is critical:** Consultation and co-owning and co-building designs and implementation of measurement systems is essential. This means project teams should participate as early as feasible and start working with the LORTA teams. Ideally, project teams should engage with LORTA before they start planning implementation (and after Board approval).
- 3. In-country formative work is a *sine qua non*:** It is imperative LORTA teams undertake country missions that engage the full programme team (especially its senior staff). Hands-on sessions where project staff can work through the implications of theories of change, measurement systems, surveys and analyzes plans can ensure that there is ownership from the start. IEU LORTA country missions should also include context analyzes and engagement with the ultimate beneficiaries of GCF investments. Formative work includes analyzing the field and context, discussing theory of change, and examining project capacities for tracking implementation fidelity. Thorough engagement of relevant accreditation entity (AE) staff cannot be over emphasized.
- 4. Developing a deep understanding of evaluation designs and measurement methods among project team staff is essential:** Project staff need to have a good understanding of theories of change, survey design, sample sizes and implementation fidelity tracking systems. Since the LORTA teams provide technical assistance, project staff don't need to become experts. (Continued ...)



## LORTA'S METHODOLOGY

LORTA uses **mixed method approaches** that incorporate quantitative and qualitative data. Also, LORTA relies on theory-based counterfactual impact assessment methods that are underpinned by experimental or quasi-experimental designs. LORTA measures key results and indicators with **fit-for-purpose statistical strategies**. Attention is given to mitigate impediments to causal validity, such as biases in programme placement, confounding, sample selection, spillovers, contamination, data collection and reporting. Data from designs co-developed with teams will be used to highlight findings on the progress of programmes, specifically changes in key outcome or impact indicators relevant to the funded activity and GCF result areas.

Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of different impact evaluation/assessment designs that can be applied according to project context and real-world considerations.

## NINE LESSONS LEARNED FROM PHASE 1

5. **Engagement from key stakeholders is critical:** Nationally Designated Authorities, AEs, implementing partners, GCF project managers, and potential beneficiaries must be involved. The LORTA team works with the key stakeholders of selected projects before, during and after country missions.
6. **Co-designing measurement systems and impact evaluation designs helps considerably:** In Phase I, LORTA team members and project staff co-developed measurement systems and impact evaluation designs. Initial country missions also include setting up systems for tracking progress and appropriate counterfactuals, as well as assessing administrative and secondary data sources, including Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data.
7. **Real-world considerations must inform designs:** The overall reporting and implementation goals of the GCF project team must inform impact assessment and real-time measurement system designs. *(Continued...)*

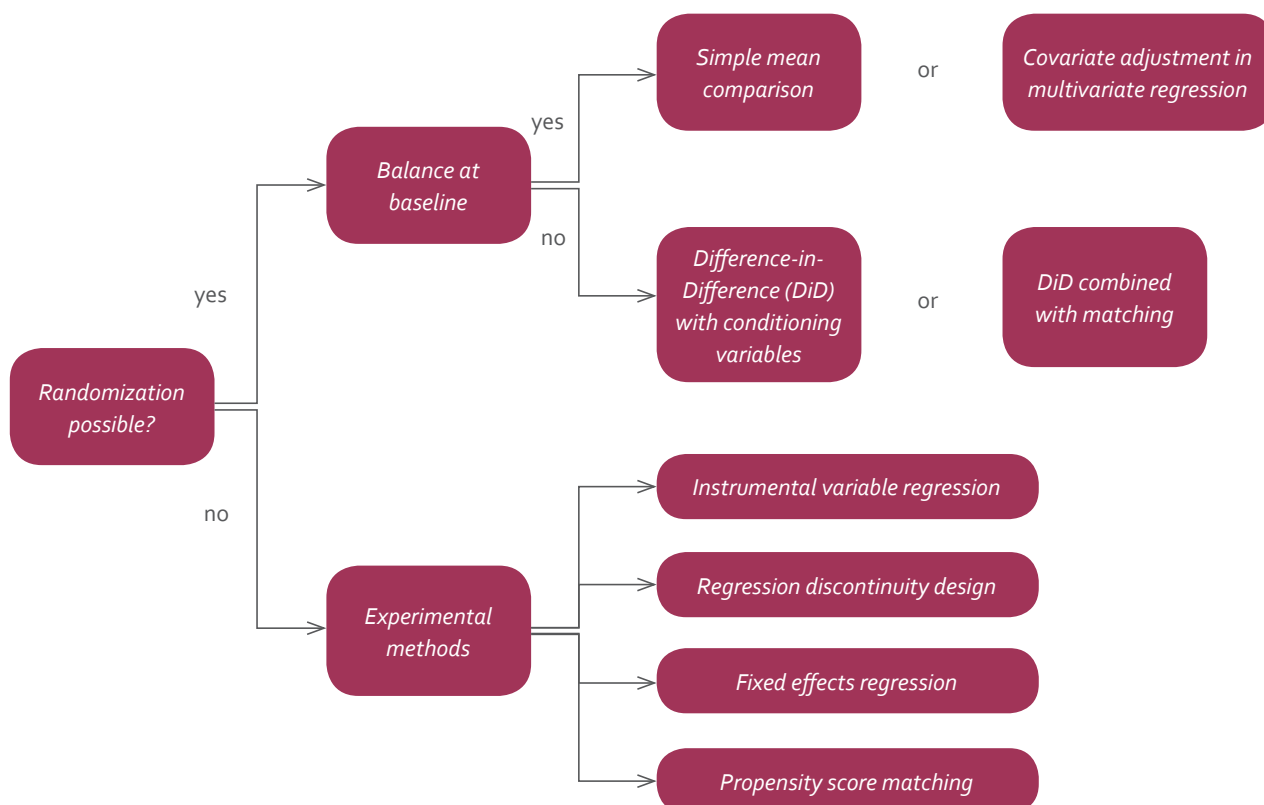


Figure 1: Decision-tree showing impact evaluation designs

Source: LORTA Synthesis Report - Phase 1, 2018

## PHASE 1

In 2018, preparation started on eight selected GCF-funded projects, including formative work and design. The LORTA team consisted of IEU staff and consultants and staff at the Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED) associated with the University of Mannheim, Germany. The LORTA team assisted with technical needs and evaluation capacity building.

- Eligibility criteria for participation in LORTA included innovativeness and/or importance, resource need and/or scalability, portfolio representativeness, project team capacity, flexibility, engagement and inclination for co-ownership, and readiness for measuring results credibly.
- Thematic areas: In Phase 1, eligible GCF investments focused on climate information services, REDD+ and livelihoods.

**LORTA Design workshop:** Sixty participants from 15 GCF projects participated in IEU's first LORTA Design workshop held in April 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Attendees learned about the LORTA programme, how to define evaluation questions, construct theories of change, select impact evaluation methods, estimate sample sizes, and set timelines for implementing evaluations. At the end of the workshop, attendees presented outlines of



*LORTA workshop participants learned a range of evaluation skills.*

## NINE LESSONS LEARNED FROM PHASE 1

These should be balanced with analytical rigor and the need of key stakeholders in-country. In many cases, project teams will likely be able to incorporate these measurement and analytical systems into their implementation plans provided they have information on a few key variables of their projects and are open to being guided by sample size calculations.

**8. Integrated timelines are important:** Teams should distinguish between implementation tracking systems that measure the progress of short-term changes and those that measure longer term changes (through surveys). They should build an integrated timeline showing implementation, tracking and surveys. GIS data can help reduce data requirements.

**9. Persistence and rigour is key:** Most teams initially plan to collect too much data. They often exhaust their funds and lose their impetus before the project ends. However, with some re-jigging and re-planning, they can undertake high-quality measurement. Sticking to the plan for rolling out impact evaluations and implementation is critical.

their proposed evaluation designs.

**Country missions and evaluation designs:** During Phase 1, the LORTA team developed impact evaluation designs for each of the selected GCF-funded projects. This required working in-country, conducting context analyses, examining the existence of appropriate counterfactuals, assessing administrative and secondary data sources, and discussing theories of change.



*The LORTA team meets with project implementing staff in Dedza, Malawi.*

Table 1 below provides examples of the types of evaluation questions identified and possible impact evaluation designs for the eight selected projects.

Table 1: Identification of evaluation questions and possible impact designs

COUNTRY	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	DESIGNS
Malawi	Does Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture training help farmers adapt to climate change and lead to more resilient livelihoods?	Randomization or Difference-in-Difference (DiD) with matching
Mongolia	Does the Eco-loan programme and the related awareness campaign lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions?	None selected
Uganda	Do community members become more resilient against climate shocks due to wetland restoration and livelihood training?	Randomized phase-in or matching
Paraguay	Are households benefiting from this project more resilient to weather events? Do efficient cooking stoves help mitigate climate change?	Randomized phase-in
Madagascar	Do adaptation interventions reduce households vulnerability to climate hazards? Does patrolling protected forest areas reduce deforestation?	Randomized phase-in
Vanuatu	Does the early warning capacity of Doppler radar and the use of climate information services increase the adaptive capacity of households?	Randomization and DiD with matching
Zambia	Did the programme lead to climate resilient practices, reduced vulnerability and improved yields?	DiD with matching and randomized phase-in
Georgia	What is the impact of Community-Based Early Warning Systems and Community-Based Climate Risk Management on households' resilience against natural hazards?	Randomization and DiD

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR 2019-20?

**Main impact assessment stage:** This stage will involve working with seven of the eight GCF projects selected in 2018. During Phase II, selected teams will roll-out the final versions of baseline surveys and work with their project teams to see how impact evaluation and measurement systems may be best leveraged through their current plans.

Baseline and endline data collection, as well as analysis, will be conducted depending on the stage of project implementation.

**New projects will enroll in Phase 1's formative stage:** In 2019, the LORTA Team will work with stakeholders to identify six additional GCF-funded projects to collaborate with and build the capacity to design and implement real-time and impact assessment systems.

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