



LEARNING-ORIENTED REAL-TIME IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME: PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2020

BACKGROUND

The Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme offers technical assistance to GCF projects to build capacity, help projects and investments create high-quality data sets, and support real-time learning on implementation and the likelihood of causal impact. LORTA uses a theory-based approach to assessing impact that includes experimental and quasi-experimental designs, with two to three waves of survey data from beneficiaries and, where relevant, comparison populations. In 2020, LORTA continued the partnership with staff of accredited entities (AEs) and project teams to provide advice on and build the capacity for theory-based impact evaluations. The LORTA programme also worked with the GCF Secretariat to understand capacity building efforts provided by the GCF Secretariat. The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) works hard to build relationships with key actors who, in turn, can advocate, build and budget for theory-based impact evaluations within investment proposals.

LORTA VIRTUAL DESIGN WORKSHOP

In 2020, the third cohort of projects entered the LORTA programme. The LORTA design workshop that had initially been scheduled for May 2020 at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome was conducted virtually via an online learning module due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual workshop, which started on 21 September 2020 and concluded on 16 November 2020, had over 70 participants, including representatives of 16 GCF-funded projects. The virtual design workshop consisted of eight webinars, each of which was preceded by an online learning video on the GCF's iLearn platform. Project teams also participated in weekly breakout sessions before each webinar.

NEW PROJECTS IN THE LORTA PORTFOLIO

In the first half of 2021, five projects were undergoing Phase I of LORTA (formative engagement and design). Inception workshops took place with AEs and project teams in Belize, Ecuador,

Pakistan and the Philippines. As of June 2021, the delivery of Phase I technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan is pending completion of the funded activity agreement. The details of the five 2020 projects that are currently in Phase I are listed in [Table 1](#).

PROGRESS IN EXISTING LORTA PORTFOLIO

Activities in the existing LORTA portfolio were influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and changing windows of opportunity for data collection in different contexts. Nevertheless, LORTA successfully collected baseline data in Rwanda, baseline data in Zambia and end line data in Malawi. LORTA activities continued to emphasize the importance of the three foundations on which the programme is based. First, the importance of creating equal partnerships and mutual trust with accredited entities and project teams. Second, the importance of flexibility. This foundation has been especially important in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape for all countries, including how technical assistance is offered and received. Third, the importance of learning, uptake and use, which ensure that LORTA can help inform the evidence needs of the GCF and, most importantly, the climate needs of developing countries.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND DESIGNS

The project in Belize is focusing on two options for the impact evaluation. First, difference-in-differences with matching will be used to evaluate smallholder participation in selected value chains. Second, a phase-in experimental design will generate estimates for backyard garden interventions targeting rural, low-income households. The project in Pakistan is again focusing on two options for the impact evaluation. First, training through farmer field schools, including women-only schools. The evaluation design for this training will be a phase-in experimental design. Second, an evaluation of climate-relevant extension messages for farmers via mobile phones using an encouragement experimental design. The Ecuador project is focusing on the transition to sustainable

agricultural production systems, with a likely design of difference-in-differences with matching. In the Philippines, design options include the evaluation of climate forecasts that focus on what the weather

will do (not what the weather will be) through mobile applications or awareness-raising, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of implementing people-centred forecast and early action warning systems.

Table 1. *Projects that joined the LORTA programme in 2020*

COUNTRY	PROJECT NAME	ACCREDITED ENTITY	THEME / SECTOR	EVALUATION DESIGN OPTIONS
Belize	Resilient rural Belize (Be-Resilient)	International accredited entity: International Fund for Agricultural Development	Adaptation / public	A matching grant fund that will introduce smallholder participation in selected value chains (difference-in-differences with matching) Backyard garden interventions targeting rural, low-income households to foster food security (phase-in experimental design)
Ecuador	Ecuador REDD-plus RBP for results Period 2014	International accredited entity: United Nations Development Programme	Mitigation / public	The transition to sustainable agricultural production systems (difference-in-differences with matching)
Kyrgyzstan	Carbon sequestration through climate investment in forests and rangelands in the Kyrgyz Republic	International accredited entity: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Cross-cutting / public	Pending funded activity agreement
Pakistan	Transforming the Indus basin with climate resilient agriculture and water management	International accredited entity: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Adaptation / public	Farmer training, which will take place in the form of farmer field schools, including women-only schools (phase-in experimental design) Climate extension messages for farmers (encouragement experimental design)
Philippines	Multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning system for the Philippines	National direct access entity: Land Bank	Adaptation / public	Use of mobile applications and awareness-raising to increase the effectiveness of implementing people-centred forecast and early action warning systems

CONTACT THE IEU

Independent Evaluation Unit
Green Climate Fund
175, Art center-daero, Yeonsu-gu
Incheon 22004
Republic of Korea

☎ (+82) 032-458-6450
✉ ieu@gcfund.org
🌐 ieu.greenclimate.fund



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