



2025

LORTA Synthesis Report

AN ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES FROM
THE IEU'S LEARNING-ORIENTED REAL-TIME
IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME



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LORTA Synthesis Report 2025

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Abbreviations

AE	Accredited Entity
AfDB	African Development Bank
AEPC	Alternative Energy Promotion Centre
Avina	Fundación Avina
BOAD	West African Development Bank
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CCCCC	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
CI	Conservation International Foundation
CRDB	Cooperative Rural Development Bank
DAE	Direct access entity
DBSA	Development Bank for Southern Africa
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
EPIU	Environmental Project Implementation Unit, State Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection, Armenia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMCN	Fondo Mexicano Para La Conservación De La Naturaleza A.C.
FP	Funding proposal
GCF	Green Climate Fund
IAE	International Accredited Entity
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
J-Pal	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
LORTA	Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment
MoE	Ministry of Environment of Rwanda
MSME	Micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises
SLEM	Sustainable Landscapes in Eastern Madagascar
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



I. Background

1. Green Climate Fund (GCF) aims to support a paradigm shift towards low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathways. It is therefore critical to understand whether such a shift is occurring and the GCF's role in driving it. This requires GCF-funded projects to credibly measure whether they achieve their stated goals and intended impacts. Since 2018, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) has investigated the extent to which GCF-supported projects can report their impacts, efficiency and effectiveness in a credible, evidence-based and robust manner through its evaluability study.

2. The IEU's 2022 evaluability study found that most GCF proposals, whether explicitly or implicitly, present their programme logic and provide a reasonable basis for the credibility of their claims regarding causal pathways. Some 36 per cent of approved proposals cite good evidence supporting their causal claims. However, only 34 per cent of proposals satisfactorily considered the unintended consequences of their GCF funding, and 28 per cent ignored the issue. Thirty-six per cent of proposals indicated that they already had or intended to collect baseline data for evaluative purposes. However, only 27 per cent of proposals adequately identified the frequency and level of data collection and reporting necessary to ensure monitoring and evaluation activities could continue unhindered. While the IEU identified improvements over time, the results of the evaluability assessment are alarming. In this context, the IEU's Learning-Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment (LORTA) programme can serve as a countermeasure, illustrating the importance of an adequate programme logic, credible causal pathways and the proper preparation of monitoring and impact evaluation measures.

3. The LORTA programme uses best practices in theory-based impact evaluations to build feedback loops and impact measurement into GCF projects and programmes from the start. In addition, the IEU supports a range of project and programme teams in acquiring skills and competencies applicable to project design, implementation, and evaluation.

4. LORTA's primary objectives are threefold:

- (a) Strengthening the capacity of accredited entities (AEs) for impact assessments of GCF-funded activities
- (b) Supporting the generation of an evidence base for the GCF on the impact of climate action, while improving the quality at entry for GCF investments
- (c) Disseminating lessons learned in real-time across the GCF ecosystem and supporting the GCF's mandate as a learning organization

5. LORTA provides the following activities:

- (a) **Capacity strengthening and identification of impact:** The IEU builds project teams' monitoring and impact evaluation capacity and strengthens their skills in embedding impact evaluations across the project life cycle. This allows teams to capture high-quality data on implementation effectiveness and measure the causal impact of their projects or programmes (hereafter referred to as "projects").
- (b) **Evaluation advisory services:** The IEU provides ongoing advice to project teams on conducting or managing impact evaluations and impact measurement systems, using state-of-the-art, theory-based, counterfactual methods to assess the causal change attributable to GCF investments, throughout the project cycle.
- (c) **Measuring impact:** The IEU measures the impact of the GCF-funded projects through causal analysis of what works and to what extent. In particular, impact assessment is used to evaluate innovations, test causal pathways and drivers for delivery, scale or replicate decisions and increase the global evidence base of what works and what does



not. The AE may assist and/or collaborate with the IEU in identifying impact through robust and credible impact assessments/evaluations.

- (d) **Dissemination to foster wider learning:** The IEU employs impact evaluation designs with theory-based counterfactuals to assess the outcomes of GCF-funded projects and report on implementation challenges and opportunities. The LORTA programme aligns its portfolio to inform and respond to the GCF's strategic and learning needs. Through LORTA, the IEU shares learnings to improve the design and implementation of GCF-funded activities, as well as their monitoring and impact evaluation. In this way, the IEU's LORTA programme serves as a learning mechanism for the GCF.

6. The following report presents the synthesized lessons of the IEU's impact evaluation work conducted in 2025. The baseline, midline, and endline assessments, as well as the impact evaluations conducted in 2025, are the result of a collective effort of the IEU team and the AE teams on the ground between 2018 and 2025.

II. Progress and milestones in 2025

2.1 Designing impact evaluation

2.1.1. Workshop: Annual LORTA impact evaluation design workshop

7. In October 2025, the LORTA team, in collaboration with Development Research Strategies and professors from the Korea Development Institute's School of Public Policy and Management, organized its annual impact evaluation design workshop in Songdo, South Korea. The LORTA workshop aimed to build the capacity of selected AEs, including programme managers and monitoring and impact evaluation specialists, to design and conduct high-quality impact evaluations. The 2025 workshop focused on the Africa region, bringing together six project teams, comprising five from Africa and one from the Asia-Pacific, as listed in Table 1. The interactive workshop provided participants with opportunities to learn about climate interventions and impact evaluation methodologies for measuring impacts across diverse topics and geographies.

8. A key highlight of the 2025 LORTA workshop was the engagement between the onboarded LORTA project teams and other participating project teams. The exchange of knowledge and best practices supported the workshop's goal of strengthening capacity for rigorous impact evaluation design in climate interventions. The workshop also provided a platform for knowledge sharing, fostering valuable learning and collaboration. In addition, university professors contributed by sharing research findings and leading interactive sessions, supporting participants in developing context-specific impact evaluation designs and applying workshop learning directly to their ongoing projects.

9. All 13 workshop participants completed the satisfaction survey, providing overwhelmingly positive feedback. Most respondents rated the workshop highly, with 77 per cent marking it as "extremely useful", "useful", or "very useful". Participants described the workshop as an "opportunity to refresh and learn about impact evaluation," "extremely useful for reflection, learning, and networking," and a chance to "clearly understand the importance of thinking and planning for the evaluation of project impact from the start to the end of the project." Similarly, individual sessions were also well received, with most attendees finding them "useful" or "very useful."

10. Participants expressed a strong interest in applying impact evaluation methods, giving an average inclination score of 8.4 out of 10 for using these approaches in current projects. While some noted practical challenges, such as budget constraints, project complexities, and timeframes, these did not diminish their enthusiasm for the methodology. Notably, all

participants expressed a willingness to include impact evaluation components in future projects.

11. Feedback also highlighted a desire for greater discussion of real-world challenges and practical applications of impact evaluation, offering valuable suggestions for enhancing future workshops.

Table 1. List of projects participated in the 2025 Annual Impact Evaluation Design Workshop

FP NUMBER	COUNTRY	ACCREDITED ENTITY
SAP045	Burundi	OAF
FP244	Malawi	SCA
SAP047	Pakistan	NRSP
FP217	Rwanda	MoE Rwanda
FP262	Senegal	LBA
FP072	Zambia	UNDP

Source: IEU LORTA database

2.2 Evaluation advisory services

12. LORTA's technical advisory work focuses on supporting approved GCF projects to enhance their skills in high-quality, practical measurement, data management, and impact evaluation. This support includes guidance on impact evaluation methodologies, data collection techniques, statistical analyses, report writing, and dissemination.

13. The LORTA programme has supported AEs in embedding interventions into impact evaluation designs, while ensuring they retain full ownership of their designs and reports. Moreover, the programme supports AEs in analysing collected data for impact evaluation, including technical support for data analysis and the production of baseline, midline and endline reports.

14. In parallel, LORTA's advisory work is informed by ongoing dialogue with the Secretariat, in particular with the Department of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning under the Office of the Chief Strategy and Impact Officer, as well as departments under the Office of the Chief Investment Officer, with the aim of better understanding how impact evaluation findings can complement project-level monitoring and results reporting. While maintaining the IEU's independence, this engagement provides an opportunity to explore practical ways in which evaluation insights may inform monitoring practices and portfolio-level learning, and to identify areas where coordination can enhance the usefulness and uptake of evidence across the project cycle.

15. LORTA made substantial progress in designing and implementing impact assessments in 2025, including designing four impact assessments, collecting six rounds of household data, and finalizing two endline, two midline and one baseline impact evaluation reports.

Table 2. List of 2025 LORTA evaluation advisory services

DESIGN	DATA COLLECTION	ANALYSIS AND REPORTS
SAP031 Brazil (Avina)	Baseline Data	Baseline Report
FP172 Nepal (AEPC)	FP068 Georgia (UNDP)	SAP021 Timor Leste (JICA)
FP214 Thailand (GIZ)	FP192 Barbados (CCCCC)	
FP244 Malawi (SCA)	FP179 Tanzania (CRDB)	
FP246 Somalia (FAO)	Midline Data	Midline Report
	FP087 Guatemala (IUCN)	FP087 Guatemala (IUCN)
	Endline Data	Endline Report
	FP101 Belize - MGF (IFAD)	FP101 Belize-BYG (IFAD)
	FP026 Madagascar (CI)	FP026 Madagascar (CI)
	FP073 Rwanda (MoE, Rwanda)	
	FP034 Uganda (UNDP)	

Source: IEU LORTA database, November 2025

Note: Parenthesized acronyms refer to the projects' AEs, as listed in the Table of Abbreviations.

2.3 Uptake and learning

16. LORTA is committed to ensuring that its dissemination efforts drive meaningful uptake and learning, both within the GCF and across the broader international community. By sharing LORTA findings through diverse platforms, including international conferences, internal learning talks and workshops, LORTA engages a wide range of stakeholders, fosters collaboration, and reinforces the GCF's position as a leader in evidence-based climate finance. These efforts also aim to integrate LORTA's insights into decision-making processes, strengthen feedback loops, and catalyze dialogue to advance the global climate agenda.

17. In 2025, LORTA disseminated its findings and engaged stakeholders through the following activities:

- (a) **United Nations Evaluation Group Workshop (February 2025, Tokyo, Japan):** The workshop was held at the United Nations University Headquarters in Tokyo. The IEU was invited to attend the Evaluation Practice Exchange and deliver a professional development seminar in the form of a workshop on impact evaluation.
- (b) **Learning talk on GCF Impact on the Ground (May 2025, Songdo, Korea):** During this learning talk, the IEU team presented findings from two impact evaluations: FP026 in Madagascar and FP101 in Belize. Together, these cases offered early evidence on forest conservation, climate-smart agriculture, food security, and value chain development.
- (c) **Thirteenth International Conference on Sustainable Development (September 2025, Rome, Italy):** The conference took place at Roma Eventi Congress Center in Rome, bringing together researchers, practitioners, and academics focused on climate change, economic, and sociocultural sustainability. The LORTA team presented evidence from its impact evaluation projects and work on climate resilience.
- (d) **Italian Society of Development Economics (SITES) Conference (September 2025, Rome, Italy):** The tenth annual SITES conference focused on "Africa and the Mediterranean: Economic Perspective and Sustainable Development." This high-level academic conference brought together leading development economists, policymakers,



and international organizations. The team presented evidence from impact evaluations and from its work on climate resilience.

- (e) **Asian Evaluation Week (September 2025, Xi'An, China):** The IEU led and contributed to four sessions during the week, including a session titled “Beyond Metrics: Tools for Climate Project Success” in which the team presented the need for and use of global evidence reviews, an evaluability study of the GCF project portfolio, and evaluation quality assessments to inform and support to improve project design, strengthen accountability, and enhance learning. The IEU also participated in a joint session with the Global Environment Facility on “Health, Water, Food Security and Wellbeing: Evidence for Resilient and Inclusive Growth”, during which the team presented a LORTA impact evaluation case study from GCF FP026 in Madagascar.
- (f) **Learning Talk on Trusted and Rigorous Evidence: How do we get there? (October 2025, Songdo, South Korea):** During the LORTA 2025 Workshop, the team delivered a learning talk presenting evidence from several projects and its use for restitution and dissemination. The team presented evidence from Belize (FP101), Madagascar (FP026), and Guatemala (FP087).
- (g) **The 30th session of the Conference of the Parties – The Effects of the World Food Programme’s integrated interventions on resilience and food security (November 2025, Brazil – Virtual):** The LORTA team was invited to serve as a discussant at a World Food Programme presentation on the effect of the programme’s work on resilience and food security.
- (h) **Global Impact Evaluation Forum (December 2025, Rome, Italy):** The IEU contributed to the forum by sharing evidence from LORTA impact evaluations in a session titled “Layering, sequencing, and collaborating to build resilience.” Drawing on LORTA’s evaluation of the Sustainable Landscapes in Eastern Madagascar (SLEM) programme, IEU highlighted evidence on the potential for integrated interventions to support both ecosystem restoration and livelihoods in climate-vulnerable contexts, as well as the importance of accounting for climate shocks and longer-term pathways in impact evaluation. This engagement supported ongoing discussions on improving cross-agency collaboration, evidence synthesis, and the development of shared approaches to assessing climate resilience.

III. Portfolio

18. Since 2018, the LORTA programme has onboarded 29 GCF projects, equivalent to around 10 per cent of all approved GCF projects. Of these, three were dropped due to implementation challenges. LORTA currently has 11 projects at the engagement and design stage, seven at the baseline stage, five at the post-baseline stage, and six at the results and dissemination stage. The status and phase of each project are summarized in Table 3.¹

¹ Additional information about the current portfolio can be found in Annex I.

**Table 3. LORTA project portfolio status and phase**

	COUNTRY/ REGION	ENGAGEMENT/ DESIGN	BASELINE	POST- BASELINE STAGE	RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION
1ST COHORT (ENTERED IN 2018)	FP002 Malawi				X
	FP035 Vanuatu		X		
	FP026 Madagascar				X
	FP062 Paraguay			X	
	FP034 Uganda				X
	FP068 Georgia		X		
	FP072 Zambia			X	
2ND COHORT (ENTERED IN 2019)	FP096 DRC	X			
	FP069 Bangladesh				X
	FP073 Rwanda				X
	FP087 Guatemala			X	
	FP097 Central America	X			
	FP098 Southern Africa	X			
3RD COHORT (ENTERED IN 2020)	FP101 Belize				X
	FP110 Ecuador		X		
	FP116 Kyrgyzstan	X			
4TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2021)	FP172 Nepal		X		
	SAP023 Mexico			X	
	FP138 Senegal	X			
	FP060 Barbados			X	
5TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2022)	SAP059 Armenia	X			
	SAP031 Brazil	X			
6TH COHORT (ENTERED	FP179 Tanzania		X		
	FP187 Benin		X		



	COUNTRY/ REGION	ENGAGEMENT/ DESIGN	BASELINE	POST-BASELINE STAGE	RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION
IN 2023)	FP192 Barbados		X		
	SAP021 Timor Leste			X	
7TH COHORT (ENTERED IN 2024)	FP246 Somalia	X			
	FP214 Thailand	X			
	FP244 Malawi	X			

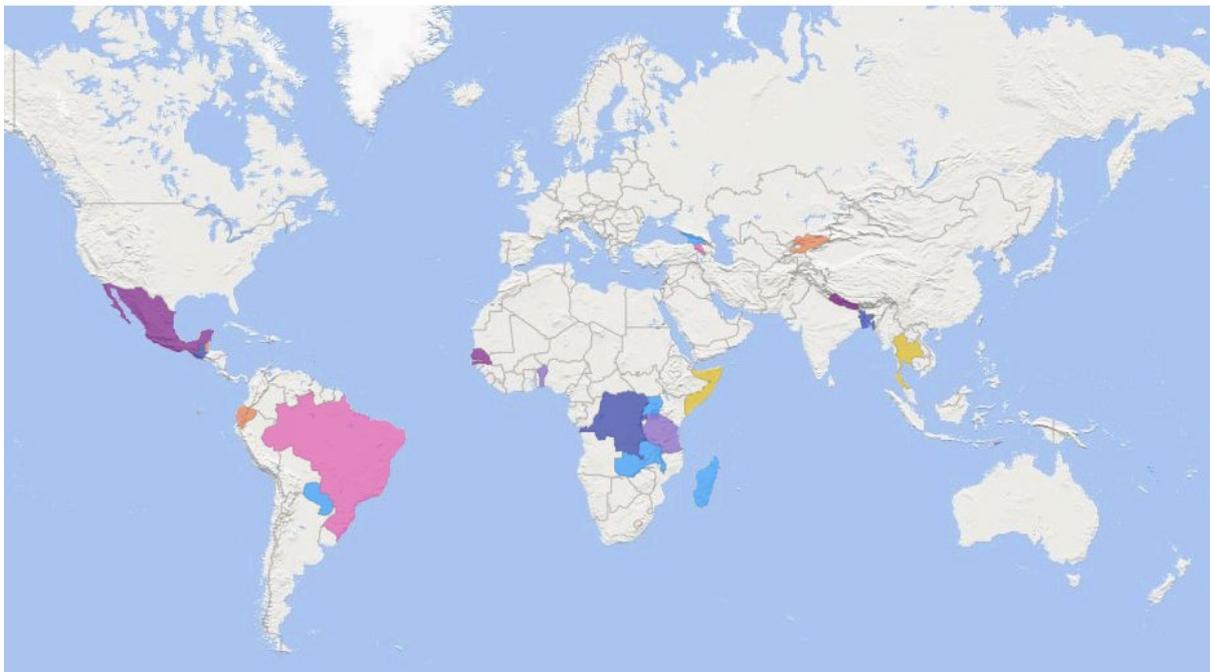
Source: IEU LORTA database, as of November 2025.

3.1 Portfolio by cohort and project location

19. As of November 2025, the LORTA portfolio comprises 29 GCF-funded activities worldwide. Figure 1 shows the projects’ geographical locations and the year in which each project was onboarded to the IEU’s programme. Since its inception in 2018, the LORTA programme has achieved a balanced regional distribution of projects. There are currently 12 projects in Africa, six in the Asia-Pacific region, nine in Latin America and the Caribbean, and two in Eastern Europe.

Figure 1. World overview of LORTA projects

Year entered ● 2018 ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023 ● 2024



Source: IEU LORTA database as of November 2025.

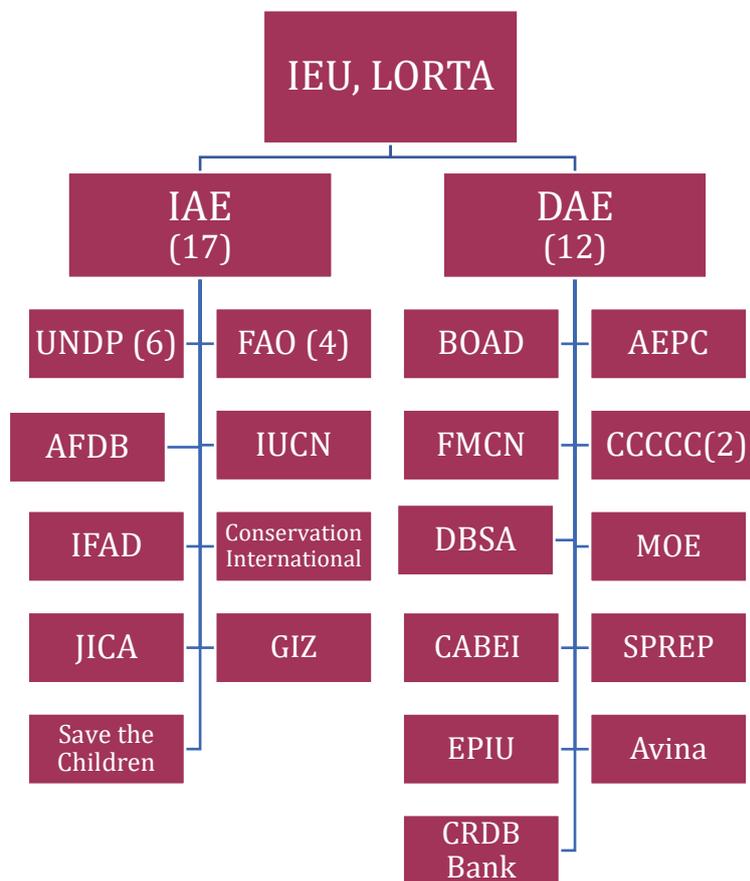
Note: The figure shows the geographic distribution of GCF-funded projects under the LORTA programme. The colour legend indicates the year in which LORTA onboarded the projects.



3.2 Portfolio by working partner

20. In line with the GCF's accreditation mandate, the LORTA portfolio has achieved a balanced representation of both international accredited entities (IAEs) and direct access entities (DAEs), as shown in Figure 2. The portfolio's composition enables the IEU to assess the impacts of GCF investments across a wide range of institutional and implementation contexts – locally, regionally and internationally. As a result, impact testing under LORTA spans a broad set of AEs, strengthening cross-entity learning and enhancing the relevance of findings for the wider GCF portfolio. Building on this portfolio-wide coverage, LORTA also functions as a learning platform that facilitates structured knowledge exchange across AEs, not only on evaluation findings but also on practical experience in conducting impact assessments to inform project design, implementation and adaptive management. This balanced distribution ensures diverse perspectives and experiences, contributing to the programme's success and effectiveness.

Figure 2. List of LORTA working partners



Source: LORTA Impact Evaluation Portfolio.

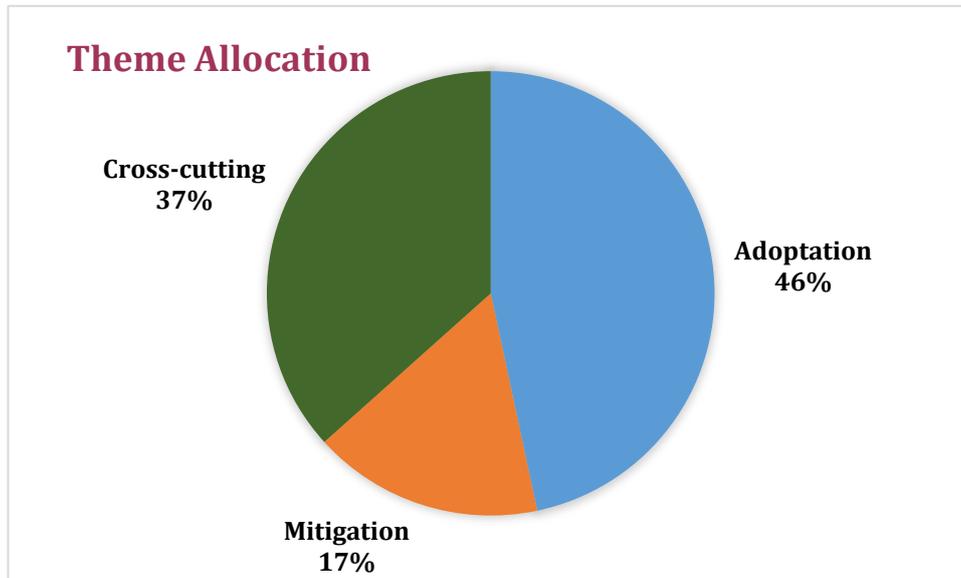
Note: (#) indicates the number of projects managed by each entity if the number is bigger than one. For example, UNDP has six projects with LORTA.

3.3 Portfolio by adaptation and mitigation

21. The LORTA portfolio comprises 29 projects: 13 focusing on adaptation, five on mitigation, and 11 cross-cutting.



Figure 3. Theme allocation of onboarded projects



Source: IEU LORTA database, as of November 2025.

IV. Learnings in 2025

4.1 Learning 1: Sustaining behaviour change requires an enabling environment and strong community support.

22. This year's endline results from the Madagascar SLEM project (FP026) marked an important milestone for LORTA, demonstrating the value of long-term evaluations in understanding livelihood transitions, forest conservation outcomes, and household resilience. While the project generated clear improvements in agricultural practices at midline, the endline results highlight a key challenge: sustaining conservation agriculture practices over time proved difficult for many households once project support ended.

23. The evaluation reveals clear patterns in the sustainability of promoted practices. Between 2019 and 2021, the project supported a range of conservation agriculture techniques, including soil conservation, agroforestry, terracing, irrigation, and off-season rice cultivation, through community-based training led by lead farmers, supplemented by inputs such as small agricultural equipment, seeds, and fertilizers. Adoption and persistence, however, varied markedly across practices. Low-cost, low-labour soil conservation practices, such as mulching and composting, were more widely adopted and more likely to be sustained over time. In contrast, more resource- and labour-intensive practices, including irrigation and terracing, showed lower uptake, with adoption declining further once project support concluded.

24. The evaluation also highlights important gender differences in adoption and sustainability. Female-headed households consistently exhibited lower uptake of labour- and input-intensive practices, with gaps widening after project support ended. By endline, 39 per cent of female-headed households continued to use irrigation, compared to 58 per cent of male-headed households. By contrast, female-headed households were slightly more likely than male-headed households to adopt and sustain lower-input practices such as mulching and composting. These patterns reflect structural constraints rather than a lack of interest: female-headed households faced tighter labour availability, time constraints associated with caregiving responsibilities, and more limited access to resources. The findings underscore the importance of gender-responsive programme design that explicitly addresses these barriers.



25. At the same time, the evaluation provides evidence that the project strengthened households' capacity to cope with climate shocks. When a major cyclone struck in 2022, households in project areas were significantly less likely to rely on negative coping strategies, such as skipping meals, harvesting wild foods, or begging, compared to similarly affected households outside project areas. This suggests that project interventions contributed to greater absorptive capacity, likely through more diversified livelihoods, higher income, and improved preparedness.

26. Overall, the SLEM project demonstrates that forest conservation, when combined with rural livelihoods development, can generate meaningful economic benefits, strengthen household resilience, and reduce environmental degradation. However, the results also show that sustaining these gains requires more than short-term income gains. As climate shocks intensify, future programmes should complement livelihood support with investments in enabling conditions, such as rural infrastructure, market access, targeted food security support, and risk-management tools, and address structural constraints from the outset, particularly those faced by female-headed households, to support lasting behaviour change.

4.2 Learning 2: Field-based impact evaluation strengthens design, implementation, learning, and delivery effectiveness.

27. LORTA's early field engagement strengthens evaluation readiness and supports more credible learning on how interventions work in practice.

- (a) **First, early field engagement improves the relevance and quality of baseline data.** In the impact evaluation of FP179 in Tanzania, direct engagement with farmers and frontline staff enabled the LORTA team to refine baseline questionnaires to better reflect the constraints farmers face, including loan eligibility, disbursement timing relative to agricultural calendars, access to inputs, and women's participation. This ensured that baseline data captured contextually relevant factors, strengthening both the interpretation of results and real-time learning on implementation effectiveness.
- (b) **Second, impact evaluation supports implementation learning by clarifying how interventions are rolled out in practice.** Field discussions and pilot activities provided an opportunity to reflect jointly with the Accredited Entity on practical questions that shape implementation effectiveness, such as how loan products are communicated to farmers, which channels are used for outreach, how eligibility criteria are understood, and how disbursement schedules align with crop-specific planting cycles across regions. These discussions help clarify the implementation logic and identify adjustments to improve uptake and effectiveness.
- (c) **Third, delivery agents are central to implementation and learning in private sector projects.** In Tanzania (FP179), relationship managers employed by the Cooperative Rural Development Bank (CRDB) play a critical role in connecting the bank's headquarters and branch managers with farmers. As frontline delivery agents, they tailor engagement strategies across farmer groups and communities, understand local farming practices and seasonal cycles, and adapt outreach according to crop calendars and farmer constraints. Through this role, they actively shape how financial products are understood, accessed, and used. Differences in delivery agents' capacity, motivation, and local knowledge can influence uptake and participation, potentially leading to uneven outcomes. Impact evaluation can shed light on these dynamics, highlighting implementation risks and opportunities that may not be evident from project documents.



4.3 Learning 3: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Modern Conservation Practices

28. The Guatemala highlands evaluation offers unique insights into the relationship between traditional agricultural practices and modern climate-smart interventions. Working with predominantly Maya communities, 84 per cent of whom self-identify as Indigenous Peoples, across five departments, LORTA's panel data reveal a central issue for climate adaptation policy: whether traditional ecological knowledge complements or substitutes for modern conservation techniques.

29. The research examined 1,251 farming households practising three distinct approaches: MILPA² cultivation alone, modern conservation techniques alone, or both simultaneously. While both MILPA and modern conservation practices enhance resilience compared to no intervention, they serve fundamentally different functions and generate distinct outcomes across wellbeing dimensions.

30. MILPA practices, particularly the traditional Maya polyculture system integrating maize, beans, squash and other crops, demonstrate a strong capacity to maintain agricultural biodiversity and dietary diversity. Households practising MILPA show crop diversification indices nearly three times higher than those using only modern techniques. This reflects MILPA's inherent orientation towards meeting household nutritional requirements rather than producing market surpluses. In contrast, modern conservation techniques show marginally stronger effects on overall resilience capacity as assessed through RIMA II (Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis version two), particularly in building adaptive capacity to climate variability.

31. Perhaps most striking, households adopting both approaches simultaneously show smaller effects than specialization in either approach alone, a pattern that suggests substitution rather than complementarity. The one exception emerges in livelihood composition: households practising both MILPA and modern techniques successfully transition towards agricultural commercialization, increasing crop sales while reducing dependence on external wage labour. This substitution effect reveals important constraints facing smallholder farmers, where joint adoption appears to create resource trade-offs or management incompatibilities that limit implementation effectiveness.

32. The Guatemala findings emphasize a fundamental choice facing climate adaptation policy. MILPA practices support agricultural intensification and preserve traditional ecological knowledge without requiring livelihood diversification beyond agriculture. Modern conservation techniques facilitate economic transformation and market integration, potentially enabling broader structural change in rural economies. These represent distinct development trajectories with divergent implications for cultural preservation and territorial identity. The appropriate choice cannot be determined through top-down technocratic planning but must emerge from participatory governance frameworks that meaningfully incorporate Indigenous communities in decision-making.

33. The Guatemala evaluation highlights a broader tension across LORTA's portfolio: policies oriented towards income generation and economic diversification often conflict with resilience-enhancing interventions focused on agricultural strengthening. For practitioners, this suggests that effective resilience programming requires explicit choices about development pathways, rather than assuming that all interventions are oriented towards common objectives. Programmes promoting agricultural intensification serve different households and generate

² MILPA refers to a traditional agricultural system specifically adopted in Mesoamerica, particularly in Mexico and Central America, including Guatemala. It involves cultivating a field where crops such as maize, beans, and squash are grown together. It is often referred to as the "Three Sisters" (crops) system.



different outcomes than programmes facilitating economic diversification. Both pathways can enhance resilience, but they do so through distinct mechanisms, with varying implications for agricultural systems and territorial development.

34. This learning is particularly timely given the GCF Board's request for an evaluation on ecosystems and biodiversity, reflecting growing institutional interest in understanding how the Fund's investments affect both ecological integrity and the communities that depend on these systems. The Guatemala case offers early evidence relevant to this inquiry, demonstrating how traditional agricultural systems such as MILPA simultaneously maintain agricultural biodiversity and support household food security. Moreover, these findings align closely with the IEU's Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Indigenous Peoples (2025),³ which found that while the GCF's policy framework sets a relatively high standard for engaging Indigenous Peoples, the integration of traditional knowledge into funded projects remains limited. The IEU recommended operationalizing the inclusion of traditional knowledge through specific guidelines and noted that external evidence suggests that supporting Indigenous Peoples can cost-effectively and sustainably achieve both mitigation and adaptation results. The Guatemala evaluation provides concrete, quantitative evidence supporting this conclusion: traditional ecological knowledge, when properly supported, generates measurable resilience and biodiversity outcomes. As its evidence base continues to mature, LORTA will be well-positioned to contribute empirical insights to the forthcoming ecosystems and biodiversity evaluation. LORTA will also be well placed to provide cross-country evidence on this subject, as several projects currently under evaluation are generating relevant findings.

4.4 Learning 4: Clear beneficiary definitions and realistic demand estimation are critical to achieving project impact.

35. Portfolio-level findings indicate that projects with well-defined target populations and clear strategies for reaching them are better positioned to translate inputs into outcomes. In contrast, weak articulation of beneficiary groups, engagement strategies, or demand assumptions often results in implementation bottlenecks and lower-than-expected uptake. These challenges are frequently compounded by overly optimistic demand estimates that are insufficiently grounded in local market conditions, affordability constraints or institutional realities. Strengthening beneficiary targeting and basing demand estimates on empirical, context-specific evidence can significantly improve implementation efficiency and the likelihood of sustained impact.

36. While GCF project design and review processes place strong emphasis on identifying beneficiaries and reporting on beneficiary reach, clarity is often lacking on how beneficiaries are expected to engage with project activities, and which questions should be asked to assess uptake and outcomes. As noted in the IEU monitoring and impact evaluation synthesis, monitoring frameworks tend to prioritize aggregate beneficiary counts and outputs, with more limited attention to beneficiary-level constraints, behavioural responses, and demand dynamics. As a result, critical information on why uptake falls short or varies across groups is frequently lost, constraining adaptive management and learning.

37. Impact evaluation country visits conducted under LORTA have been instrumental in identifying and addressing these issues early in the project lifecycle. Through field engagement and structured consultations with local stakeholders, LORTA supports the development of credible impact evaluation frameworks while generating actionable insights for project teams.

38. The February 2025 mission to Nepal illustrates this value. During preparatory work for the impact evaluation of FP172's success in promoting clean cooking solutions, field visits and

³ <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation/IP2024>



consultations in the country's Terai region confirmed strong beneficiary demand and local ownership. At the same time, the mission revealed procurement complexities arising from co-financing requirements and fluctuating market prices, which directly affected beneficiary contributions and affordability. In addition, existing municipal-level prioritization and allocation plans provided important inputs for refining beneficiary targeting, sampling strategies, and baseline design. These insights helped align evaluation design and, by extension, project expectations more closely with on the ground realities.

V. Conclusion

39. The 2025 learnings from the LORTA programme reaffirm the value of impact evaluation not only as a tool for accountability, but as a mechanism for learning, adaptive management, and improved decision-making by project teams, as well as for informing portfolio-level choices within the GCF. The findings demonstrate that impact evaluations are most useful when they are designed to explain results rather than assess success or failure; when they identify implementation and demand-side constraints at an early stage; and when they generate actionable insights that inform project course correction, portfolio learning, and future investment choices.

40. Across projects, the findings underscore the importance of mixed-methods approaches to interpret unexpected or null results, the role of enabling environments and community-based support in sustaining behaviour change, and the need for adaptive, cost-effective data collection strategies when implementation does not proceed as planned. Together, these lessons highlight that project outcomes are shaped not only by project inputs, but also by broader institutional, market, and social conditions that impact evaluations need to explicitly account for when assessing results.

41. At the same time, 2025 marks an important milestone for LORTA's evidence base. To date, four LORTA-supported impact evaluations have been completed, covering climate information services in Malawi, sustainable livelihoods in Bangladesh, natural resource management in Madagascar, and climate-smart agriculture in Belize. These evaluations strengthen evidence use at multiple levels by supporting project teams in understanding what works and why, informing portfolio-level learning and strategic decision-making within the GCF, and contributing to the global knowledge base on climate resilience and adaptation. While these evaluations represent only a subset of LORTA's growing portfolio, they provide concrete and credible insights into how GCF-supported interventions are affecting livelihoods, resilience, and adaptive capacity across diverse climate contexts.

42. Looking ahead, LORTA will continue to expand and consolidate its evidence base in the climate change domain, while strengthening its learning-oriented and adaptive approach to impact evaluation, including through continued dialogue and collaboration with the Secretariat's Office of the Chief Strategy and Impact Officer and the Office of the Chief Investment Officer. Over the long term, the GCF aims for approximately 30 per cent of approved projects and programmes to include real-time impact assessments as part of their evaluation plans. These impact assessments may provide an opportunity to inform the GCF portfolio and its strategic choices. The optimized approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning has substantively supported this collaboration, clarifying the roles and responsibilities between monitoring and impact evaluation, and independent impact evaluation. By embedding rigorous yet flexible impact evaluations within GCF-funded projects, the programme will support more realistic assumptions, clearer beneficiary targeting, and more effective pathways to sustained climate impact, ensuring that learning from completed and ongoing evaluations continues to inform future investments and strategic choices.



Annex I: List of current LORTA portfolio

PROJECT ID	COUNTRY/ REGION	RELATED SECTOR	CLIMATE TOPIC	AE	IE MILESTONE	ONBOARDING YEAR
FP068	Georgia	Climate information and early warning system	Early warning system	UNDP	Implementation	2018
FP026	Madagascar	Agriculture and food security Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Smart agriculture, forest protection	Conservation International	Endline	2018
FP002	Malawi	Climate information and early warning system	Climate information and adaptive livelihoods	UNDP	Academic publication	2018
FP062	Paraguay	Forest and land use	Reforestation	FAO	Implementation	2018
FP034	Uganda	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Wetlands and sustainable livelihoods	UNDP	Endline	2018
FP035	Vanuatu	Climate information and early warning system	Climate information	SPREP	At pause	2018
FP072	Zambia	Agriculture and food security	Agricultural livelihoods	UNDP	Implementation	2018
FP069	Bangladesh	Agriculture and food security Water security	Agricultural livelihoods, water security	UNDP	Completion	2019
FP097	Central America	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Biodiversity-friendly MSMEs	CABEI	At pause	2019
FP087	Guatemala	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Watershed management, climate-smart agriculture	IUCN	Implementation	2019



PROJECT ID	COUNTRY/ REGION	RELATED SECTOR	CLIMATE TOPIC	AE	IE MILESTONE	ONBOARDING YEAR
FP096	DRC	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	AfDB	At pause	2019
FP073	Rwanda	Agriculture and food security	Watershed protection and adaptive livelihoods	MoE	Endline	2019
FP098	Southern Africa	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	DBSA	At pause	2019
FP101	Belize	Agriculture and food security	Smart agriculture	IFAD	Endline	2020
FP110	Ecuador	Forest and land use	REDD-plus reforestation	UNDP	At pause	2020
FP116	Kyrgyzstan	Energy access and power generation	Natural resources management	FAO	Dropped	2020
FP060	Barbados	Water security	Adaptive livelihoods, water security	CCCCC	Implementation	2021
SAP023	Mexico	Forest and land use	Ecosystem	FMCN	At pause	2021
FP172	Nepal	Energy access and power generation	Clean cooking solutions	AEPC	Baseline	2021
FP138	Senegal	Energy access and power generation	Renewable energy	BOAD	At pause	2021
SAP059	Armenia	Forest and land use	Ecosystem	EPIU	Inception	2022
SAP031	Brazil	Agriculture and food security	Agroforestry	<i>Fundación Avina</i>	Inception	2022
FP179	Tanzania	Agriculture and food security	Adaptive livelihoods, Agricultural livelihoods	CRDB Bank	Implementation	2023
FP187	Benin	Agriculture and food security	Adaptive livelihoods, Agricultural livelihoods	FAO	Implementation	2023



PROJECT ID	COUNTRY/ REGION	RELATED SECTOR	CLIMATE TOPIC	AE	IE MILESTONE	ONBOARDING YEAR
FP192	Barbados	Water security	Water and energy management	CCCCC	Baseline	2023
SAP021	Timor Leste	Forest and land use	Land use planning, natural resource management	JICA	Implementation	2023
FP246	Somalia	Agricultur e and food security	Adaptive livelihoods, Agricultural livelihoods	FAO	At pause	2024
FP214	Thailand	Agricultur e and food security	Land use planning, natural resource management	GIZ	Inception	2024
FP244	Malawi	Health	Health	Save the Children	Baseline	2024

Source: LORTA database.