



THE IEU'S INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE READINESS AND PREPARATORY SUPPORT PROGRAMME*

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Green Climate Fund's (GCF) Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) was launched in 2014. The basis of the RPSP is defined in the Governing Instrument of the GCF: *the Fund will provide resources for readiness and preparatory activities and technical assistance such as the preparation or strengthening of low-emission development strategies ... and for in-country institutional strengthening. This also includes the strengthening of capacities for country coordination and to meet fiduciary and environmental and social safeguards, in order to enable countries to directly access the Fund.*

At its seventeenth meeting, the GCF Board requested the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) to evaluate the RPSP. Its objectives were:

- Assess the effectiveness and the extent that RPSP processes fulfill their intended objectives, and the objectives of country ownership.
- Review approaches in the implementation of the RPSP and make recommendations for improving alignment with the objectives of the programme; and recommend gains in effectiveness, efficiency, country ownership and sustained impact.

The evaluation used the following criteria to examine the programme: relevance and coherence; country ownership; effectiveness; gender equity; efficiency; innovativeness; and scalability.



OVERVIEW OF THE RPSP PORTFOLIO

As of July 2018, 52% of the USD 190m allocated to the RPSP has been committed, and 28% of the committed amount has been disbursed in project grants (*Table 1*). Demand from countries and potential Direct Access Entities (DAEs) has been uniform across different groups of countries.

About 77% of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), 74% of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and 80% of African countries, had received RPSP support. However, as of July 2018, 35 of 148 eligible countries had not accessed the RPSP grants facility.

Table 1. Overall RPSP approvals and disbursement

FUNDING TYPE	AMOUNT APPROVED (USD)	AMOUNT DISBURSED (USD)	AMOUNT DISBURSED (%)
Country - Grants	93,424,727	25,709,469	27.5
PwC Direct Access Entity Support	915,466	724,385	79.1
Structured Dialogues and Workshops	5,362,682	4,728,663	88.2
Total	99,702,875	31,162,517	31.3

Notes: The amount of approved grants is through to 15 May 2018, disbursement amount is through to 13 July 2018.

*The IEU's RPSP evaluation was submitted to the GCF Board at its twenty-first meeting.

FINDINGS OF THE IEU'S EVALUATION

Relevance and coherence

The aims, design and activities of the RPSP are **well aligned** with the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the GCF, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement.

The GCF operates alongside many global, regional, multi- and bi-lateral climate funds, each with its own objectives and characteristics. A meta-analysis of six comparable climate-related global funds shows that **the design of the RPSP is broader and more ambitious compared to comparator funds. The RPSP's goals are consistent with the overall ambition of the GCF** (Table 2).

Three quarters of eligible countries have so far received RPSP grant approvals. Countries that do not access the RPSP represent a heterogeneous group, and a variety of factors explain their non-participation.

The evaluation found that RPSP-supported country programming **focused primarily on countries' engagement with the GCF, and not more broadly with other sources of climate finance.**

Country ownership

The RPSP is envisioned as the GCF's main tool for enhancing country ownership. About 70%

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Box: METHODS

The evaluation team developed and used several methodological approaches and tools. The overall approach adopted was a theory-based evaluation that has included reconstructing the RPSP Theory of Change.

This evaluation employed mixed-method approaches using both qualitative and quantitative data types from primary and secondary sources.

The evaluation included a review of programme, policy and project documents, an IEU Database that compiled data from various sources, a global on-line perception survey of National Designated Authorities/ Focal Points (NDAs/FPs), interviews with 362 informants, and focus group discussions.

A series of country case studies included evaluation missions to Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Haiti (virtually), Kenya, Mongolia, Namibia, Paraguay, Senegal, and Vanuatu. Data analyses included a time-lapse analysis, benchmarking and meta-analysis.

Table 2. RPSP activities supported by GCF and other climate-related global funds

ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY RPSP	GCF	GEF+	MLF	AF	CIF	FCPF
Establishing and strengthening the capacity of NDAs, including establishing the no-objection procedure	√		√			
Developing strategic frameworks for engaging with the GCF, including the preparation of country programmes	√	√	√		√	√
Developing initial pipeline of programmes and project proposals	√	√			√	√
Supporting the accreditation of DAEs, including support for DAEs that are already accredited to upgrade their accreditation status	√			√		
Adaptation planning	√	√			√	
Information sharing, primarily through structured regional and DAE dialogues	√	√	√		√	√

Notes: GEF+ = Global Environment Facility plus the Least Developed Countries Fund for Climate Change and the Special Climate Change Fund, which are operated by the GEF; MLF = Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol; AF = Adaptation Fund; CIF = Climate Investment Funds; FCPF = Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

FINDINGS (CONT.)

of countries accessing RPSP received funds for strengthening NDAs/FPs, stakeholder engagement, No Objection procedures and coordination mechanisms.

Readiness support for in-country coordination mechanisms has at times created **national tensions related to the control of GCF access**, and has tended to **support civil society participation the least**. About 40% of entities accessing RPSP funding do not have project funding proposals, and **capacity building support is seen in many countries as insufficient to enable pipeline development**. Support for DAEs has not yet translated into significant GCF pipeline development.

Effectiveness

The RPSP has been **effective in organizing information-sharing** events that have enabled engagement with the GCF. Indeed, the RPSP has supported a range of Structured Dialogues and workshops worldwide. Nonetheless, **participation of civil society in the RPSP is still rudimentary and nascent**.

RPSP's effectiveness in strengthening NDAs/FPs, in supporting GCF pipeline development and in engaging with the private sector has been uneven across countries. In terms of strengthening NDAs/FPs, RPSP is least effective among LDC, SIDS, and African countries. Also, the RPSP has not **adequately contributed to the development of domestic policies and institutions that improve the incentives for crowding-in private sector investment**.

The RPSP has provided valuable support to countries in **identifying and nominating** potential candidates for accreditation. However, it has been less effective in moving these candidates through basic or upgraded accreditation, except in SIDS. The national adaptation plan window is recent to RPSP and consequently there are few demonstrable outcomes, but progress has been made in **programme outputs**.

Efficiency

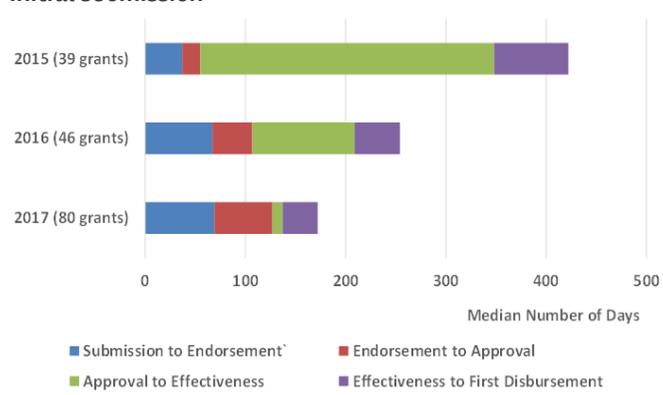
The GCF Secretariat has significantly reduced the typical processing times for RPSP grant approval

from submission to first disbursement (*Figure 1*). Typical (or median) processing times decreased from 422 days in 2015 to 172 days in 2017. For Delivery Partners (DPs) with Framework Agreements, the processing times are significantly shorter.

However, the lack of standard operating procedures and inconsistent guidelines have contributed to disproportionate efforts, costs and **significant inefficiencies**. When processing times are analyzed by country groups, **significant disparities remain**, particularly among SIDS and Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The learning curve within RPSP operational teams has been steep and the adjustments in the Programme have been continuous. Many NDA/FPs and DPs experience difficulty in absorbing all of these changes. In other words, while learning and adjustments have been happening fast, clarity and communication is required in certain areas of operation to ensure that learning is integrated and absorbed effectively across all key actors of the RPSP.

Figure 1 Median processing times of RPSP grants by year of initial submission



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE IEU'S EVALUATION:

Capacity building

- Provide countries with adequate funding and advice to meet their priorities, including funding for long-term national consultants to provide support to weak National Designated Authorities/ Focal Points in Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and in Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT.)

- Provide greater capacity-building support for gender and environmental social safeguards.
- Provide post-accreditation support to DAEs.
- Encourage opportunities for peer-to-peer learning among countries and DAEs.
- Make greater use of French and Spanish in outreach activities, particularly in the readiness guidelines and associated templates.

Country programmes

- Provide country programmes with clear guidelines, with a focus on developing clear priorities and concrete concept notes.
- Develop criteria for country ownership, including whether countries need more than one DAE.
- Ensure better coordination and stronger firewalls to prevent conflicts of interest within countries.

Secretariat

- Allow greater flexibility for project-level adjustments after approval.
- Articulate the roles of regional advisors, consultants, related staff and different Secretariat divisions and units to develop synergies and ensure best use of expanded regional resources.
- Set up the standard operating procedures for the RPSP.

- Produce and implement results-oriented planning and reporting for RPSP activities.
- Provide an open RPSP database so countries can monitor the status of applications and grants.

Vision, strategy, targets

- Define when a country is considered ready.
- Decide *how* to manage the RPSP for results, not just for activities and outputs.
- Define RPSP's comparative advantage in design, delivery and results vis-à-vis other bilateral and multilateral climate institutions.
- Better articulate the contribution of the RPSP to 'Readiness' and communicate targets and overall achieved results (as distinct from activities and outputs).

Future development

The Secretariat is advised to consider two scenarios for the future development of the RPSP:

- Making critical and significant short-term adjustments in the programme where business as usual is not an option.
- Customizing the RPSP to ensure a strategic focus on national needs, contexts, results and works, and providing differentiated services based on country demands and types.

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