



**GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND**

RPSP Interim Deliverable

Lab Report

July 2026

Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme 2024–2027

Summary

This Lab Report is an interim deliverable of the ongoing Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) 2024–2027. It presents synthesized learnings from the evaluation interviews and focus group discussions, literature review, and data collection and analysis done so far during the inception- and early data collection and analysis phases. As an interim deliverable, this lab report does not contain the final conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. The Lab Report briefly covers the evolution of GCF's readiness support through the three key RPSP strategy phases (the initial RPSP phase of 2014–2018; RPSP Strategy 2019–2021 period which was extended to the end of 2023; and the RPSP Strategy 2024–2027 which is currently in effect at the time of this evaluation), and highlights the available evidence and lessons around the current Strategy 2024–2027 (or Readiness 3.0) period and the Strategy operations so far.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations	3
I. Introduction	4
II. Method and evidence base.....	5
III. RPSP as an evolving instrument.....	6
IV. Persistent operating conditions and what remains under-evidenced	9
V. Selected lessons from adjacent readiness and capacity-building initiatives	11
VI. Conclusion.....	13
References.....	15

Tables

Table 1. Main features of Readiness 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0.....	6
Table 2. Recurring operating conditions and Readiness 3.0 responses.....	10
Table 3. Summary table of select lessons.....	13

Abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund
DAE	Direct access entity
GCF	Green Climate Fund
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
LDC	Least developed country
NDA	National designated authority
PPF	Project Preparation Facility
RPSP	Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme
RRMF	Readiness Results Management Framework
RRMF-2	Revised Readiness Results Management Framework
SIDS	Small island developing State
USP-2	Updated Strategic Plan for the Green Climate Fund 2024–2027

I. Introduction

1. The Green Climate Fund's (GCF) Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) has evolved since its establishment in 2014. Initially conceived as a mechanism to strengthen country capacity to engage with the GCF, the programme has progressively expanded and adapted in response to changing institutional priorities, country needs, Board decisions, and evaluative findings. Across successive phases, RPSP has been expected to support national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points, strengthen country programming, enable direct access, improve climate finance coordination, support adaptation planning, and contribute to the development of project pipelines.
2. The adoption of the Readiness Strategy 2024–2027 marks a significant moment in its evolution. The new strategy narrows and reorganizes RPSP objectives, introduces country and direct access entity (DAE) windows, strengthens links to climate programming and pipeline development, revises the readiness results framework, and introduces new modalities such as the GCF Liaison Officer placement scheme in the broader context of GCF's renewed and enhanced support for country platforms. These reforms respond to several issues identified in earlier evaluations of RPSP by the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU), including the need for a clearer value proposition of the programme, stronger country ownership, more differentiated access, improved direct access support, clearer links to pipeline development, and better results evidence.
3. This Lab Report is prepared as an analytic input to the ongoing independent evaluation of the GCF's RPSP Strategy 2024–2027.¹ Its purpose is not to re-evaluate the RPSP, nor to provide a full systematic review of all evidence on readiness support. Rather, it provides a structured learning synthesis of how expectations for RPSP have changed over time, what recurring issues have been identified, how the Strategy 2024–2027 or Readiness 3.0 attempts to respond, and which issues appear to have been addressed, adapted to, reframed, or remain unresolved.
4. The analysis suggests that Readiness 3.0 is more than a procedural or process update. It can be understood as an effort to reposition RPSP from a broad readiness support facility towards a more structured instrument for enabling climate finance access for countries and DAEs. Yet the central issue is not only whether new reforms have been introduced, but whether these reforms are addressing the underlying operating conditions that have historically constrained the performance of RPSP. These include conditions that make readiness support difficult to implement efficiently, difficult for some countries and entities to use strategically, difficult to evidence beyond outputs, and difficult to sustain institutionally.
5. The Lab Report is organized around five guiding questions:
 - (a) What has RPSP been expected to do over time?
 - (b) What recurring problems have prior evaluations identified?
 - (c) How does Readiness 3.0 attempt to respond?
 - (d) Which issues persist or reappear in later evaluative evidence?
 - (e) What does this imply for the future positioning of readiness support?
6. These questions are intended to support the ongoing RPSP evaluation by identifying the programme's main learning trajectory and highlighting issues that merit further assessment during implementation. The Lab Report also provides evaluation stakeholders, particularly the GCF Secretariat and its Readiness team, with a concise synthesis of the evidence base informing

¹ This Lab Report represents the collaborative analytical and synthesis work of Amy Catherine Jersild, Yeonji Kim, and On Ki Wong.

the evaluation at this stage. A second Lab Report is expected to build on this evaluative baseline by examining the early strategic positioning of Readiness 3.0, including how readiness support is being understood, prioritized, and operationalized by different stakeholder groups, and how intended strategic shifts are beginning to appear in implementation practice.

II. Method and evidence base

7. This Lab Report is based on a targeted review and synthesis of evaluative and strategic evidence relevant to the evolution of the RPSP. The review focused first on core RPSP evidence, specifically the 2018 and 2023 IEU evaluations of the RPSP, the Readiness Strategy 2024–2027, associated Board documentation, and the revised Readiness Results Management Framework (or RRMF 2). These sources were used to identify how RPSP has been assessed over time, what recommendations were made, and how the current strategy and results architecture respond to earlier findings.

8. The review also drew selectively on those adjacent IEU evaluations and syntheses that speak directly to RPSP's current positioning, including evidence on direct access, country ownership, and the Project Preparation Facility (PPF). These sources were not reviewed as stand-alone evaluations in their entirety. Rather, they were used to test and elaborate themes that emerged from the RPSP evidence, including direct access capacity, country ownership, pipeline development, RPSP–PPF complementarity, differentiated access, institutional capacity, and results management. The review also considered selected comparator evidence from other readiness and capacity-building initiatives to identify broader lessons relevant to the future positioning of RPSP.

9. An AI-assisted synthesis report prepared during the evaluation's inception phase was used as a basis for this review. It helped identify initial themes, recurring issues, and potential links across the evidence base. Significant claims emerging from this report were checked against original source documents where possible. Approximately 20 interviews conducted during the evaluation's inception period in the period of April–May 2026 were also analysed, surfacing current concerns around the purpose of RPSP, operationalization of Readiness 3.0, country ownership, direct access, pipeline development, transaction costs and delivery, results management, and coherence with other GCF modalities. These interviews were not used as the primary evidence for evidence claims. Rather, they served to help identify which issues from prior evaluations continue to resonate with stakeholders in the current Readiness 3.0 implementation context.

10. Evidence was organized using three tools: a source inventory list, an evidence and claim extraction matrix, and a theme progress matrix. The analysis traced each major theme across four areas: earlier evaluation findings, Readiness 3.0 reform responses, adjacent IEU evidence, and inception interview resonance. This made it possible to distinguish between issues that appear to have been addressed, adapted to, reframed, reproduced, or left unresolved over time.

11. The synthesis groups recurring issues according to four operating conditions that influence RPSP performance:

- (a) **Implementation:** whether the programme can be delivered efficiently through workable systems, roles, processes, timelines, and institutional arrangements.
- (b) **Use:** whether countries, NDAs, DAEs, and other stakeholders can use RPSP strategically to define priorities, access support, strengthen capacities, and advance climate finance objectives.
- (c) **Evidence:** whether RPSP can demonstrate contribution, quality, pipeline effects, outcomes, and learning beyond activity completion.

- (d) **Sustainability:** whether readiness support produces durable institutional capacity, coordination systems, and climate finance capabilities beyond individual grants or personnel changes.

12. These categories are used as an analytical device rather than as a formal evaluative framework. They help explain why certain issues have persisted across RPSP phases despite successive reforms. The report therefore focuses not only on what Readiness 3.0 changes in design, but also on whether those changes appear likely to affect the conditions that have historically made RPSP difficult to operationalize, use, evidence and sustain. The references at the end of this document lists documents reviewed, including selected comparative sources.

III. RPSP as an evolving instrument

Origins and positioning

13. The RPSP was launched in 2014 as the GCF's primary instrument for supporting developing countries to plan for, access, programme, and use climate finance by strengthening institutional capacities, governance mechanisms, and planning and programming frameworks. Its mandate is rooted in the GCF Governing Instrument (2011) and was operationalized through Board decision B.08/11. It is the largest and most comprehensive readiness initiative among peer programmes globally, with cumulative readiness approvals reaching over USD 580 million as of May 2026.

14. The RPSP has operated under three broad strategic phases. The initial phase, referred to here as Readiness 1.0, covered the establishment and early operation of the programme from 2014 to 2018. Readiness 2.0 introduced a more formal strategy, theory of change, results framework, and stronger emphasis on partnerships, knowledge management, and results. Readiness 3.0, covering 2024–2027, introduces country- and DAE-windows, the GCF Liaison Officer scheme, country platforms, a revised RRMF, and multi-year programming. A transition period, called Readiness 2.5, took place in 2024–2025. While planning for Readiness 3.0, the Readiness team continued using 2.0 procedures and processes until mid 2025.

Table 1. Main features of Readiness 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0

PHASE	PERIOD	MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS
Initial Readiness Phase 1.0	2014–2018	Establishment of the RPSP; NDA strengthening, accreditation support, country programming and adaptation planning.
Readiness 2.0	2019–2021 Strategy extended to the end of 2023	Introduction of a formal strategy, theory of change, results framework, and stronger emphasis on partnerships, knowledge management and results.
<i>*Readiness 2.5 – 'Transition period'</i>	<i>2024–mid 2025</i>	<i>Continued use of Readiness 2.0 procedures, templates, and processes despite the new Readiness Strategy for 2024–2027 already in place.</i>
Readiness 3.0	2024–2027	Introduction of country- and DAE-windows, Liaison Officer mechanism, country platforms, revised RRMF, and multi-year programming.

15. While RPSP mandate has remained broadly consistent in its orientation towards NDA strengthening, direct access, country programming, adaptation planning, and pipeline

development, each strategic phase has introduced adjustments in objectives, modalities, and results expectations. These adjustments reflect changing country needs, implementation experience, institutional priorities, and evaluative learning.

A recurring value proposition problem

16. From its early phases, RPSP carried a broad mandate rooted in the GCF Governing Instrument and successive Board decisions. Board decision B.05/14 positioned readiness support as a mechanism for promoting country ownership and access to funding, including support for country programmes, in-country institutional capacities, NDA/focal point functions, multi-stakeholder consultation, and entities' ability to meet standards for direct access. Board decision B.08/11 operationalized the programme, confirming access for all developing countries and establishing an allocation floor for the small island developing States (SIDS), least developed countries (LDCs) and African States. Subsequent Board decisions, including B.11/04 and B.13/32, reinforced expectations around timely disbursement, simplified access, country programming, institutional strengthening, and pipeline development.²

17. This early mandate positioned RPSP as more than simply a capacity-building facility. It was expected to help countries organize their engagement with the GCF, strengthen national institutions, enable coordination and consultation, support country programming, and facilitate direct access. As the programme evolved, these functions became increasingly linked to wider expectations around climate finance access, project pipeline development, complementarity with other GCF instruments, and country-led planning. The 2018 IEU evaluation already described RPSP as evolving from a narrower remit into a broader instrument supporting country-driven pipelines of transformational projects, while later IEU evidence on country ownership and PPF further underscores the links among readiness, national planning, direct access, pipeline foresight, and project preparation.^{3,4,5}

18. The 2018 RPSP evaluation by the IEU did not characterize this evolution as inappropriate. Rather, it emphasized the need for clearer strategic choices, including a defined vision, strategy, niche, targets, expected results, and comparative advantage. In particular, the evaluation asked what "readiness" meant for the GCF, whether the programme was preparing countries for GCF finance or climate finance more broadly, and how the GCF would know when a country was "ready".⁶ The 2023 RPSP evaluation returned to a similar issue, finding that the RPSP remained highly relevant and strategically important, but that, as a "work-in-progress", its value proposition was still insufficiently developed and not universally shared within the GCF and among stakeholders. It recommended clarifying the programme's value proposition and business case and anchoring it more clearly within the GCF's wider strategic directions and modalities, including PPF, Private Sector Facility, accreditation, and other instruments.⁷

19. This value proposition problem therefore appears less as a question of whether RPSP's mandate was too broad, and more as a question of strategic and operational specification. RPSP was expected to serve several important functions – country ownership, institutional strengthening, capacity development, direct access, country programming, pipeline development, complementarity, and learning – but the relationships among these functions were not always sufficiently prioritized, sequenced, operationalized, or evidenced. The issue

² Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme* (2018).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Country Ownership* (2025).

⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Project Preparation Facility* (Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2026).

⁶ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme* (2018).

⁷ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme* (2023).

was, therefore, not simply that RPSP has multiple functions, but that the relationships among those functions were often under-specified.⁸ When the programme's role is unclear, actors may use it differently, expectations may diverge, and the programme risks being assessed against ambitions that have not been fully operationalized.

What Readiness 3.0 addresses and reframes

20. Readiness 3.0 can be understood as an effort to translate RPSP's broad and evolving mandate into a more structured operating model. The Readiness Strategy 2024–2027 streamlines the programme from five to three objectives, with a stronger focus on broader climate finance (not just GCF resources) coordination and sequencing, paradigm-shifting pipeline development and implementation, knowledge-sharing and learning. It also aligns readiness support more explicitly with the updated Strategic Plan for the Green Climate Fund 2024–2027 (USP-2), including climate programming, direct access, investment planning, and enhanced access to GCF resources.⁹

21. This reform responds to issues identified in the 2018 and 2023 RPSP evaluations by the IEU. The 2023 RPSP evaluation found that, although the programme had made progress since the 2018 evaluation, the 2019–2021 Strategy had not fully established RPSP's value proposition in the GCF value chain. It also revisited the 2018 recommendation that RPSP defines its vision, strategy, niche, targets, and what it means for a country to be "ready".¹⁰ Readiness 3.0 therefore appears to address the value proposition issue by narrowing the programme architecture and linking readiness more directly to country programming, direct access, pipeline development and results.

22. A major feature of this reframing is the shift towards longer-term and more differentiated modalities. The Strategy introduces country and DAE modalities, with planned readiness resources allocated to both country support and DAE support. It also retains the Board-mandated floor of 50 per cent of readiness support for particularly vulnerable countries, including SIDS, LDCs and African States. These changes respond to long-standing concerns that broad access to readiness resources has not always translated into equitable or effective use, especially for countries and entities with more limited institutional capacity.

23. Readiness 3.0 also gives more explicit priority to direct access. The Strategy vision emphasizes strengthened programming capacities, enabling environments, investment planning, and enhanced access to GCF resources through a focus on climate programming and direct access. This is significant given the direct access synthesis finding that direct access is central to GCF's mandate but has been operationalized largely through accreditation, with continuing questions about whether existing support instruments, including RPSP and PPF, are sufficiently differentiated and effective for DAEs.

24. Pipeline development is another area where Readiness 3.0 marks a clear shift. The Strategy notes that pipeline development has remained below 10 per cent of readiness funds and argues for increasing the allocation to pipeline development to help build the programming base for USP-2 targeted results. It also identifies fragmentation, gaps in coherence, and duplicative application and approval processes under the previous objective structure. This suggests that the new Strategy is not only increasing emphasis on pipeline development but also attempting to address the way readiness functions have become compartmentalized.

25. Finally, Readiness 3.0 revises the results and learning architecture. The Strategy commits the Secretariat to revising the Readiness guidebook and simplifying and streamlining the results management framework in line with the revised objectives and intended outcomes.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Green Climate Fund, *Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme Strategy 2024–2027*.

¹⁰ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme* (2023).

It also anticipates annual reporting through the readiness results management and introduces the Readiness Knowledge Bank as a mechanism for sharing data, information, knowledge, tools and guidance.

26. Readiness 3.0 can therefore be understood as an attempt to reposition RPSP from a broad readiness support facility towards a more structured instrument for enabling climate finance – from GCF and also from other sources and partners. This is a design-level strategy shift rather than, at this stage, an evidenced outcome. It suggests that readiness is increasingly being framed not only as preparation for engagement with the GCF, but as support for the capacities, institutions, priorities, entities and pipelines through which countries access and use climate finance from any source, including GCF. This points to a central issue for the current evaluation: not only whether Readiness 3.0 introduced reforms, but whether those reforms are beginning to change the operating conditions that have historically shaped RPSP performance. The following section examines these operating conditions as they appear across the evidence base, focusing on implementation, use, evidence, and sustainability.

IV. Persistent operating conditions and what remains under-evidenced

27. Across the 2018 and 2023 RPSP evaluations, the RPSP Strategy 2024–2027, adjacent IEU evidence, and inception interviews, several recurring issues appear less as isolated technical or procedural problems than as persistent operating conditions. Earlier RPSP evaluations identified challenges such as approval or disbursement delays, transaction costs, unclear roles, uneven country ownership, weak outcome evidence, and fragile and scant capacity gains. Across evaluation cycles, these challenges suggest a deeper pattern: many of the issues affecting RPSP performance are not only discrete problems to be fixed, but conditions that shape how readiness support is implemented, used, evidenced and sustained. This interpretation builds on, rather than replaces, the earlier evaluation findings.

28. Readiness 3.0 responds to many of these conditions through revised RPSP objectives, modalities, guidance, templates, digital systems, country- and DAE-windows, Liaison Officers placement scheme, and a revised RRMF 2. However, because implementation is nascent, it is not yet clear whether these reforms are changing the underlying conditions through which readiness support operates in practice. Table 2 is the main synthesis product of this section. It distinguishes between the surface problems identified in prior evidence, the deeper operating conditions associated with these problems, the Readiness 3.0 response, and what remains under-evidenced.

Table 2. Recurring operating conditions and Readiness 3.0 responses

OPERATING CONDITION	SURFACE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED IN PRIOR EVIDENCE	DEEPER OPERATING CONDITION	READINESS 3.0 RESPONSE	WHAT REMAINS UNDER-EVIDENCED
Implementation	Delays, procedural complexity, unclear roles, coordination burdens	Delivery depends on multiple systems, actors, processes, and Secretariat/regional arrangements that need to work together predictably	Revised Readiness guidebook, templates, GCF Partners Portal, new modalities including Liaison Officers placement scheme, and Secretariat/regional arrangements	Whether reforms reduce complexity or create new burdens
Use	Uneven country ownership, differentiated access barriers, variable NDA/DAE capacity	Formal access does not ensure substantive demand articulation, strategic use, or equitable ability to navigate readiness support	Country window, DAE window, country platforms, GCF Liaison Officer placement scheme, vulnerable country allocation	Whether countries and entities can articulate substantive demand and use RPSP strategically
Evidence	Weak outcome evidence, unclear contribution to pipeline and direct access	Readiness contribution is difficult to evidence because effects are indirect, sequenced, cumulative, and often dependent on other GCF modalities	RRMF 2.0, country-level outcome scale, more streamlined indicators, standardized deliverables	Whether results systems can evidence quality, contribution, learning, and institutional change
Sustainability	Capacity gains vulnerable to turnover, consultant dependence, weak institutionalization	Capacity support may remain attached to grants, individuals, or external providers rather than becoming embedded in institutional policy and processes	Longer-term (multi-year) windows/modalities, embedded support, medium-term planning	Whether capacity is retained and institutionalized beyond individual grants and personnel changes

29. The distinction between technical problems and operating conditions matters for interpreting Readiness 3.0. Whereas a technical problem can often be addressed through a new procedure or template, an operating condition is more structural, concerning institutional arrangements, capacities, incentives, relationships, and evidence systems that shape whether those technical fixes may work in practice. At the time of drafting this Lab Report, about 20 grants had been approved under Readiness 3.0, and proposal and logframe information had been compiled for these grants. This provides a useful baseline for analysis and helps the evaluation identify what Readiness 3.0 is becoming in practice, but not yet whether the underlying operating conditions have changed. Further evidence will be needed to assess implementation, contribution, and sustainability over time.

V. Selected lessons from adjacent readiness and capacity-building initiatives

30. Both the 2018 and 2023 RPSP evaluations recognized that readiness support operates in a crowded climate finance ecosystem. The 2018 evaluation noted multiple readiness initiatives and common delivery partners across programmes, while the 2023 evaluation used a systems lens to consider RPSP in relation to other readiness programmes and wider climate finance systems. A key comparative observation was RPSP's unusual scale and scope compared to other readiness programmes. The purpose of this Lab Report's use of comparators is not to benchmark RPSP comprehensively, but to identify selected lessons that may help clarify design choices around accompaniment, direct access, pipeline development, country coordination and learning. These lessons are used selectively and interpretively, recognizing that RPSP's mandate, scale and institutional location within the GCF make direct comparison with other initiatives imperfect. The following discusses learnings from three evaluative sources: the Adaptation Fund (AF) Readiness Programme, the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub evaluation, and the NDC Partnership. A summary table of comparative learning concludes this section.

31. **The Adaptation Fund Readiness Programme Final Evaluation (2026):** This evaluation reinforces that direct access support cannot be treated as complete once an entity is accredited. While the evaluation found some evidence that readiness support strengthened technical capacities relevant to direct access, it also found variability in whether support translated into accreditation, inclusion of key groups, and successful access to project funding. It further identified a possible "pipeline problem" in the transition from readiness to substantial project funding. For RPSP, this is directly relevant to the DAE window under Readiness 3.0, which treats direct access as a continuing capacity pathway rather than a one-off accreditation milestone. Under this modality, DAEs may access support over a four-year period, in coordination with NDAs and aligned with country priorities, to strengthen accreditation, programming, proposal development, reporting, safeguards, gender and social inclusion, procurement, monitoring, evaluation and related systems. The common lesson is that direct access requires support for entities to use accreditation effectively: to originate projects, prepare viable proposals, manage implementation requirements, and sustain access to climate finance over time.¹¹

32. The AF evaluation also points to the importance of tailoring readiness support to institutional and country contexts. It finds that effective capacity-building depends on understanding local institutional arrangements, power dynamics, and decision-making processes, and that generic guidance may be insufficient, particularly for LDCs and SIDS. This is directly relevant to Readiness 3.0's differentiation agenda, especially the question of whether new modalities can respond to varied country and entity capacities rather than applying a uniform model of readiness support.¹²

33. **The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub Final Evaluation (2021):** This evaluation provides a useful comparator because its model relies on embedded, in-country climate finance advisers rather than grant support alone. The evaluation found the Hub to be highly relevant for small and vulnerable States, partly because it was seen as responsive to Member needs and offered embedded technical assistance. Advisers contributed to identifying finance sources, guiding countries on access requirements, developing concept notes and proposals, preparing successful proposals, and strengthening coordination, liaison, and partnerships. This supports broader lessons for RPSP: readiness support may need to function

¹¹ Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group, *Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund Readiness Programme*.

¹² Ibid.

as accompaniment, helping countries and entities navigate climate finance systems in practice, rather than only providing grant resources or procedural guidance.

34. At the same time, the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub evaluation also highlights sustainability risks associated with embedded advisory models. It found that long-term capacity-building effects were inconclusive; staff shortages and turnover reduced the effectiveness of “learning-by-doing”; exit and handover procedures were weak; and knowledge management was insufficient to sustain benefits after advisers left. The evaluation also found that results systems risked under-recognizing the broader capacity-building value of advisers when attention focused primarily on finance mobilized and pipeline figures. For RPSP, this suggests that country-facing support such as the GCF Liaison Officers or country platforms may add value, but only if accompanied by clear handover, institutional memory, learning, and mechanisms to effectively document results.¹³

35. **NDC Partnership Mid-Term Review (2024):** The review adds a useful comparator on country-led coordination. It finds that the Partnership’s country-driven, neutral-broker model is relevant because climate-related technical assistance, expertise, finance, and other resources often exist but are not deployed in a coordinated way. Its model is based on governments identifying NDC implementation priorities and support needs, with partners then aligning tailored support. For RPSP, this is relevant to country platforms, Liaison Officers, and medium-term programming as mechanisms intended to organize demand and align support around country priorities. However, the review also cautions that coordination does not occur automatically. Global-level alignment did not always translate to country-level coordination, in-country facilitators were critical but sometimes overburdened, and finance mobilization remained difficult where planning support was not connected to project preparation and investment pathways.

36. The review also found that results systems needed to move beyond reporting and accountability towards stronger use of data and evidence for continuous learning, a lesson directly relevant to RPSP’s revised results architecture under RRMF 2.0.

37. The three comparators reinforce a common lesson: readiness support is likely to be more useful when it moves beyond discrete capacity-building inputs towards sustained support for institutional pathways, coordination functions, proposal development, and learning. Table 3 summarizes these learnings.

¹³ Commonwealth Secretariat. *Evaluation of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub*.

Table 3. Summary table of select lessons

COMPARATOR INITIATIVE	MOST RELEVANT LESSON FOR RPSP	WHAT THE COMPARATOR SUGGESTS
Adaptation Fund Readiness Programme	Direct access requires more than accreditation	Direct access support needs to extend beyond accreditation to include project origination, proposal preparation, implementation capacity, safeguards, fiduciary systems, inclusion, and sustained institutional learning. The evaluation also points to a possible “pipeline problem” in moving from readiness support to substantial project funding.
Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub	Readiness may require accompaniment, not only grants	Embedded in-country advisers can help countries identify finance sources, develop concept notes and proposals, coordinate partners, and strengthen the wider climate finance ecosystem. However, sustainability depends on handover, knowledge management, institutional memory and capacity retention.
NDC Partnership	Country-led coordination is central to moving from plans to finance	Country-driven coordination models have governments articulate priorities and align partner support, but coordination does not happen automatically. In-country facilitation, partner alignment, project preparation, and learning systems are needed to move from plans to implementation and finance mobilization.

38. These comparators do not provide models for GCF RPSP to replicate directly, given differences in mandate, scale, and institutional architecture. Rather, they highlight design considerations relevant to Readiness 3.0 and suggest distinct approaches: direct access as a pathway, accompaniment as a delivery function, country coordination as an operating condition, and learning as a core feature of readiness support.

VI. Conclusion

39. **Conclusion 1: RPSP has evolved from a broad readiness support facility towards a more structured instrument for enabling climate finance access.** This Lab Report has traced the evolution of the GCF RPSP from its early mandate as a readiness support facility towards a more structured role in enabling climate finance access. Across the 2018 and 2023 RPSP evaluations, adjacent IEU evidence, inception interviews, and selected comparator experience, a consistent pattern emerges: RPSP has remained highly relevant and strategically important, but its effectiveness has depended on whether countries and entities can use readiness support to strengthen institutions, coordinate priorities, access finance, develop pipelines, and sustain capacity over time.

40. **Conclusion 2: The recurring issues identified across RPSP phases are not only technical problems but underlying operating conditions.** A central finding of this report is that several recurring issues in the RPSP evidence base – delays, procedural complexity, uneven country ownership, differentiated access barriers, weak outcome evidence, unclear pipeline contribution of RPSP, and fragile capacity gains as a result of RPSP grants and activities – are better understood as underlying operating conditions than as discrete technical problems. These conditions concern whether readiness support can be implemented through predictable systems, used strategically by countries and entities, evidenced in terms of contribution and learning, and sustained institutionally. This distinction matters because technical reforms such as new templates, guidance, modalities, and reporting requirements may improve specific

processes without necessarily changing the conditions that have historically shaped RPSP performance.

41. **Conclusion 3: Readiness 3.0 represents a significant design-level response to long-standing RPSP challenges, but current evidence does not yet show whether the underlying operating conditions are changing.** Readiness 3.0 responds to many underlying conditions identified by narrowing and reorganizing objectives, introducing country- and DAE-windows, strengthening links to direct access and pipeline development, incorporating differentiated support for vulnerable countries, and revising the results architecture through RRMF 2. These reforms suggest a shift from readiness as discrete grant-based support towards readiness as a more structured and integrated instrument for enabling country- and entity-led climate finance access. The first set of approved grants and their proposals and outcome logframe data provide a useful baseline for understanding how Readiness 3.0 is being translated into grant designs, but they do not yet show whether implementation systems are becoming more predictable, whether countries and DAEs can use RPSP more strategically, whether pipeline contribution can be traced more credibly, or whether capacity is becoming embedded in national and local institutions.

42. The key question is therefore not simply whether Readiness 3.0 represents a stronger strategy in design, but whether it is creating practical conditions through which countries and entities can access, use, and sustain climate finance more effectively. This distinction between design-level reform and practical change provides a basis for the next stage of the evaluation.

References

GCF and IEU reports

- Green Climate Fund. *Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme: revised strategy 2024–2027 — Addendum 1: Feedback from consultations with Board members and GCF stakeholders received on the draft document*. GCF/B.37/17/Add.01, 2023.
<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/16-rpsp-revised-strategy-2024-2027-feedback-consultations-board-members-and-gcf-stakeholders-gcf-b37.pdf>.
- Green Climate Fund. *Readiness Strategy 2024–2027*. Green Climate Fund, 2023.
<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/readiness-strategy-2024-2027.pdf>.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *A Synthesis Study on the Green Climate Fund: An Interim Deliverable under the Third Performance Review*. 2nd ed. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2025.
<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/260410-tpi-synthesis-study-v2-top.pdf>.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *GCF Readiness Evaluation 2026 Synthesis Report Draft v4.0*. Draft report. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2026.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme*. Evaluation report No. 16. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2023.
https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/rpsp-final-report_1.pdf.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Approach to Country Ownership*. Evaluation report No. 24. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2025.
https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/250915-coa-final-report-top-web_2.pdf.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme: Country Case Study Reports*. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2023.
<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/rpsp-country-case-studies.pdf>.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme*. Evaluation Report No. 1. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2018. <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/230321-rpsp-evaluation-main-report-2-column-top-web.pdf>.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Project Preparation Facility: Final report*. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2026.
https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/ppf-final-evaluation-report_0.pdf.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of GCF Investments in the Latin American and Caribbean States*. Evaluation report No. 20. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2024.
https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/lac2024-final-report_1.pdf.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the Green Climate Fund*. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2023.
https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/230331-da-final-report-top-web-isbn_0.pdf.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Independent Synthesis of the GCF's Gender Approach*. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2025.
<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/2025-ieu-gender-synthesis-4.pdf>.
- Independent Evaluation Unit. *Synthesis Note: An IEU deliverable for the Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme*. Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2023. <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/230309-rpsp-synthesis-report-top.pdf>.

Non-IEU reports / comparators

Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group. *Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund Readiness Programme: Final Report*. Adaptation Fund, 2026. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/AF_Readiness-Eval_FINAL.2_28.05.2026.pdf.

Commonwealth Secretariat. *Evaluation of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub*. Evaluation Series 120. Commonwealth Secretariat, 2021. https://comsec-web-static.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/inline/120%20-%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20Climate%20Finance%20Access%20Hub_with%20MR_0.pdf.

NDC Partnership. *Independent Mid-Term Review of the NDC Partnership's 2021–2025 Work Program*. NDC Partnership, 2024. https://ndcpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/independent-mid-term-review-ndc-partnerships-2021-2025-work-program.pdf?_cf_chl_f_tk=g9yxeUvP.jGnJ_dFmPWjA7tAHX3KC6Mxo_9K.79X1M8-1782948096-1.0.1.1-1Ik7CBKgziYNDWDI6OC.tvqeBjBiW7hHpctg7pFAR3I.
