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Simplified Approval Process

Annexes (Volume II) of the Independent Evaluation
of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process

September 2025



GREEN CLIMATE FUND
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION UNIT

Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Simplified Approval Process

ANNEXES TO THE FINAL REPORT – VOLUME II

09/2025

© 2025 Green Climate Fund Independent Evaluation Unit
175, Art center-daero
Yeonsu-gu, Incheon 22004
Republic of Korea
Tel. (+82) 032-458-6450
Email: ieu@gcfund.org
<https://ieu.greenclimate.fund>

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First Edition

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Citation

The citation details for this evaluation are as follows:

Independent Evaluation Unit (2025). *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Simplified Approval Process*. Annexes to the Final report – Volume II (September). Songdo, South Korea: Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund.

Credits

Head of the GCF Independent Evaluation Unit: Andreas Reumann

Task manager: Martin Prowse – Evaluation Specialist, Marco D'Errico – Impact Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Unit

Editing: Greg Clough

Layout and design: Giang Pham, Josephine Wambui Ngala

Cover design: Therese Gonzaga

A FREE PUBLICATION

Printed on eco-friendly paper

FOREWORD

This volume II contains the detailed annexes that provide the supporting evidence, methodology, and supplementary materials underlying the evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Simplified Approval Process presented in the final report (volume I). The evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in the final report.

These annexes are intended to enhance transparency, allow for independent verification of findings, and provide additional depth for readers seeking comprehensive detail beyond the main report. They document the rigorous approach taken in data collection and analysis throughout the evaluation process.

The volume II serves multiple audiences: researchers and analysts seeking detailed methodology and data; practitioners interested in comprehensive case studies and stakeholder perspectives; and oversight bodies requiring full documentation of the evaluation's evidence base. The annexes allow readers to examine the foundation upon which the evaluation's conclusions rest and to conduct their own analysis of the materials gathered.

The evaluation team is grateful to all Green Climate Fund staff, implementing entities, and stakeholders who provided access to information and participated in consultations that made these detailed materials possible. Their contributions enabled the comprehensive documentation presented in these annexes.

This volume is designed to be used in conjunction with the volume I, which contains the authoritative findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Accredited entity
AF	Adaptation Fund
AGN	Africa Group of Negotiators
AP	Accreditation Panel
APR	Annual performance report
B.26	The twenty-sixth meeting of the Board
CAHMP	Central Asia Hydromet Modernization Project
CAWA	Climate Adaptation in Wetland Areas
CBNRM	Community-based natural resource management
CBO	Community-based organization
CCCP	Community Climate Change Project
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CN	Concept note
CNAAS	Compagnie Nationale d'Assurance Agricole
COE	Challenging Operating Environments
COMLECC	Comités Locaux de l'Environnement et du Changement Climatique
CSE	Centre de Suivi Écologique
CSO	Civil society organization
DAE	Direct access entity
DGM	Dedicated grant mechanism
EbA	Ecosystem-based adaptation
ED	Executive Director
EDA	Enhancing direct access
EIF	Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia
ESS	Environmental and social safeguards
FAA	Funded activity agreement
FEDP	Fragility, Emergencies and Displaced Populations Policy
FIP	Forest Investment Programme
FMCN	Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.
FP	Funding proposal
FPR	Forward-looking Performance Review
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility

IAE	International accredited entity
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
INP	Institut National de Pédologie
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
IRMF	Integrated results management framework
LDC	Least developed country
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MAR	Management action report
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situations
MHEWS	Multi-hazard early warning system
NDA	National designated authority
NEA	National executing agency
NSC	National steering committee
PAP	Project Approval Process
PAPIL	Projet d'Appui à la Petite Irrigation Locale
PICSA	Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture
PIF	Project identification form
PKSF	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation
PPF	Project Preparation Facility
PSAA	Project-specific accreditation approach
R4	World Food Programme's rural resilience initiative
RBP	Results-based payments
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
RFP	Request for proposals
RPSP	Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme
SIDS	Small island developing State
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

ANNEXES

Annex 1. ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES ON SIMPLIFIED ACCESS TO CLIMATE FINANCE

A. INTRODUCTION

Efforts to simplify access to climate finance are often framed in institutional or procedural terms. Yet economic perspectives provide a complementary lens for understanding the motivations and constraints that shape the interactions between funds, accredited entities (AEs), and recipient countries. This annex applies three economic approaches—supply and demand, transaction costs, and contract enforcement—to explore structural factors that influence simplified access, drawing on established literature and climate finance-specific analysis.

B. MANDATES AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Article 9.9 of the Paris Agreement outlines how operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention, of which the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is one, shall aim to ensure efficient access to financial resources through simplified approval procedures and enhanced readiness support for developing country Parties, especially for the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), in the context of their national climate strategies and plans. This is reflected under paragraph 31 of the Governing Instrument, where it is stated that the GCF is required to provide simplified and improved access to funding, including direct access, basing its activities on a country-driven approach. In this context, the GCF is also required to encourage the involvement of relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups and addressing gender aspects.

The advance unedited version of COP29's guidance to the GCF (decision -/CP.29) from Baku, Azerbaijan, requests the GCF Secretariat to continue to streamline and simplify access to funding by reducing median times taken during the second replenishment of the GCF for the standard proposal approval process (PAP) and the simplified approval process (SAP) proposals from review to first disbursement, relative to the first replenishment, with an emphasis on reducing processing time for funding proposals (FPs) in line with the *Strategic Plan for the Green Climate Fund 2024–2027*.¹

Economics provides a rich toolbox from which to understand how climate funds and entities enter into transactions and how these can be structured to improve simplified access. There are three approaches we apply to this evaluation based on our knowledge of the current literature on climate finance alongside long-standing insights on transactions and contracting. These three approaches are introduced moving from the most closely connected to the day-to-day operations of the GCF – the supply of and demand for climate finance – to two approaches which are at a higher level of abstraction: namely, transaction cost approaches and theories of contract enforcement.²

¹ Green Climate Fund, “Strategic Plan for the Green Climate Fund 2024–2027.”

² Allowing the reader to abstract from the day-to-day operations of the GCF is important as it highlights how incentives to deliver climate successful projects are not solely based on contractual arrangements – such as the observance and enforceability of funded activity agreements – but include broader market trends and the capability of entities, especially

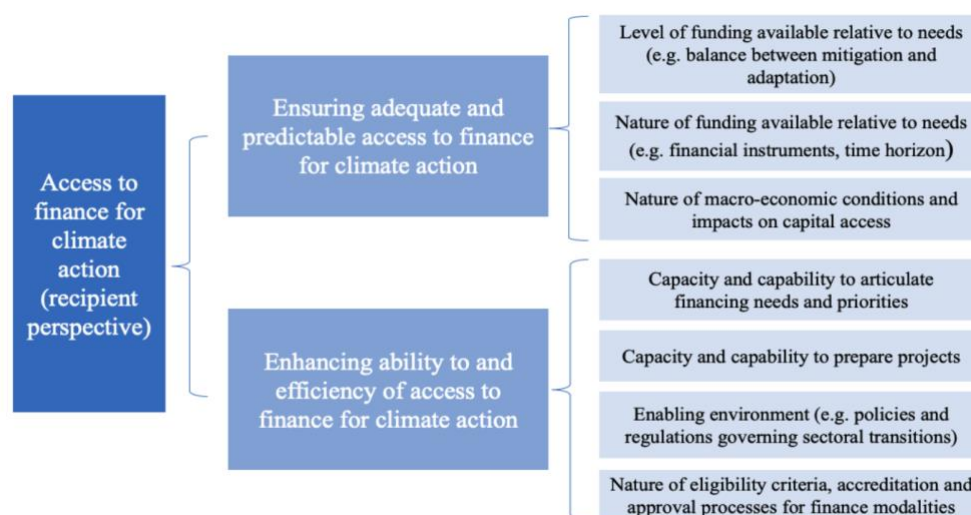
C. SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF CLIMATE FINANCE

The first of these takes a common sense look at the supply and demand of climate finance.

Osuna usefully separates out the supply of adequate and predictable climate finance into (i) levels relative to needs, (ii) the nature of funding relative to needs, alongside (iii) an important enabling environment of macroeconomic conditions and the impact these have on supply (see Figure A - 1)³. On the demand side, Osuna differentiates between:

- The capability to articulate financing needs and priorities
- The capability to prepare project proposals
- The eligibility criteria, accreditation and approval process for the financial modalities
- A facilitating enabling environment

Figure A - 1. Access to climate finance – a recipient's perspective



Source: Osuna, *Accessing UNFCCC-linked multilateral climate funds: lived experiences*.

D. TRANSACTION COST APPROACHES

The second, transaction cost approaches, helps us to understand the sometimes fraught

relationships between entities and the GCF. It highlights how all markets, including the market for climate finance, include actors with limited information, limited ability to process information and actors who are opportunistic. In other words, markets for climate finance contains actors that suffer from information limitations (here consider communication challenges for some direct access entities (DAEs) in LDCs), actors who are unable to process all the information available to them (consider the complexity of GCF ever-changing requirements) and that markets for climate finance contain actors who are opportunistic and seek self-interest with guile. The market for climate finance is no different in these respects to other markets.

direct access entities which the SAP explicitly aims to support, to deliver successful projects in a changing market environment. These abstractions also illustrate how solutions to delivering successful climate projects can be gleaned from experience in other markets.

³ Osuna, *Accessing UNFCCC-linked multilateral climate funds: lived experiences*.

Within markets, including the market for climate finance, entering into transactions can be more complicated than entities envisage, and doing so can be hazardous and can lead to considerable losses. Attempts by economic actors to try to reduce or minimize these potential losses result in transaction costs. A long time ago, Williamson⁴ identified two main forms:

- **Ex ante transaction costs.** These include the costs of finding a trading partner, negotiating terms, drafting and completing an agreement. In the GCF context, we could consider these as getting accredited with an effective accreditation master agreement (finding a trading partner), drafting and completing an FP approved by the Board and completing an effective funded activity agreement (FAA) (negotiating terms).
- **Ex post transaction costs.** These include the costs of implementing and monitoring the agreement (delivering the project and submitting monitoring reports such as annual performance reports (APRs) and midterm evaluations), the costs to settle a dispute and prevent delays (including any project restructuring) as well as the spillover costs on the entities' wider activities and pricing levels due to any complications and delays.

Transaction costs are the greatest in thin and imperfect markets such as the market for climate finance. Indeed, it is arguable the market for climate finance is characterized by market failure where the limited exchange between market participants reduces market clearing, limits mitigation, adaptation and innovation, at the same time as increasing the vulnerability of citizens in developing countries.

The level of transaction costs for participants within the market for climate finance are primarily defined by three transaction characteristics – uncertainty, asset specificity and the frequency of exchange.

- **Uncertainty** refers to having incomplete information on current and future market conditions, such as changes in the supply of climate finance, and the probability the other party will engage in opportunistic behaviour.
- **Asset specificity** refers to the extent to which the entity's internal resources and assets have a sole or limited range of practical and economically useful applications.
- **Frequency of exchange** which is simply the frequency of the successful delivery of agreed requirements and completion of contracts.

In many established markets, economic institutions and practices have been created to reduce transaction costs, in particular, to reduce uncertainty, to ensure market participants can specialize and invest in specific assets, and to increase the frequency of exchange.⁵ These institutions and practices go beyond legal systems to include trade associations, grading and standards systems, informal codes of conduct, certification procedures. Such institutions do not eliminate the risks associated with market exchange, but they can limit the transaction costs that market participants face.

In many markets, participants, whether sellers or buyers, often seek to reduce transaction costs through integrating across nodes of that specific value chain. If it is cheaper for an actor to produce a specific product or deliverable compared to purchasing it in an uncertain and unreliable market with the possibility of substantial losses, then actors often integrate forwards or backwards to do so.⁶ Doing so reduces the likelihood of deceit and deception, provides the actor with greater

⁴ Williamson, O., "Transaction cost economics: The governance of contractual relations."

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The equivalent in climate finance is an AE deciding to operate as an executing entity as well or vice versa.

certainty regarding the quality and quantity of product it will receive, allows investment in specific assets, and encourages repeated exchange between market participants.⁷

E. CONTRACT ENFORCEMENT APPROACHES

The third conceptual approach we apply within this evaluation is the notion of contract enforcement. Theories of contract enforcement focus on the incentives to honour contracts once they have been signed and the relationship with market conditions. This perspective is often applied when there is a future pipeline of requirements by one party and delivery of products by the other party, as stipulated in a contract. We can use the example of an effective FAA here. Incentives to honour contracts include legal redress, as well as the alignment between the contents of the contract and changing market conditions. At every point in time market participants constantly assess the costs and benefits of breaking a contract. If market conditions change unexpectedly, such that the benefits of delaying or breaking the contract are greater than the losses for one party, then exchange can be delayed and the contract may not be honoured on time or not at all.⁸

Figure A - 2 illustrates the concept of the “self-enforcement range” in contracts. In this diagram, the vertical axis represents the value of project deliverables to the climate fund (Actor 2), while the horizontal axis represents the capital and capability profile of the AE (Actor 1). At the agreed contract price of P_0 , the entity commits to deliver a specified pipeline of activities under the FAA. If there is a reduction in the overall supply of climate finance, the value of that contract rises for Actor 2, since the price is fixed before the supply shock. However, if the reduction is extreme, the entity (Actor 1) may no longer have the institutional capacity to deliver, leading to hold-ups, restructuring, or cancellation. Conversely, in an oversupply scenario, the fund (Actor 2) may find similar projects available at lower cost, creating incentives to breach the contract. The shaded area between P_0^A and P_0^B represents the “self-enforcement range”: the set of conditions under which both actors’ incentives remain aligned, and contracts are most likely to be honoured.

The ability of the entity to deliver the stream of project deliverables depends not only on the contents of the contract but the relation to the wider climate finance landscape. If the reduction in the global supply of climate finance means the value of the project only moves to P_1^A in Figure A - 2 and no further, the changed financial landscape does not outweigh the capital and capability profile of the entity (illustrated as K_1^A), and the stream of project deliverables is honoured. However, above P_0^A the limited supply of climate finance does outweigh the capital and capability profile for Actor 1 (illustrated as above K_0^A), and there is likely to be a contract breach and hold-ups. Gow et al. refer to the range within which contracts will be completed as the “self-enforcement range”.⁹ This is illustrated in Figure A - 2 as between P_0^A and P_0^B .

Extreme changes in market conditions can provide incentives for market participants to renege on contractual agreements. Figure A - 2 illustrates the scenario when there is an oversupply of climate finance and the lower value limit of the self-enforcement range, beyond which it becomes beneficial for Actor 2 (the climate fund) not to meet the terms of an agreed contract with a fixed price, set of deliverables and payment tranches. In this situation, due to the oversupply of climate finance, the value of the agreed project drops markedly, and it is more beneficial for the climate fund to transact with other entities who have similar projects but can deliver for a lower

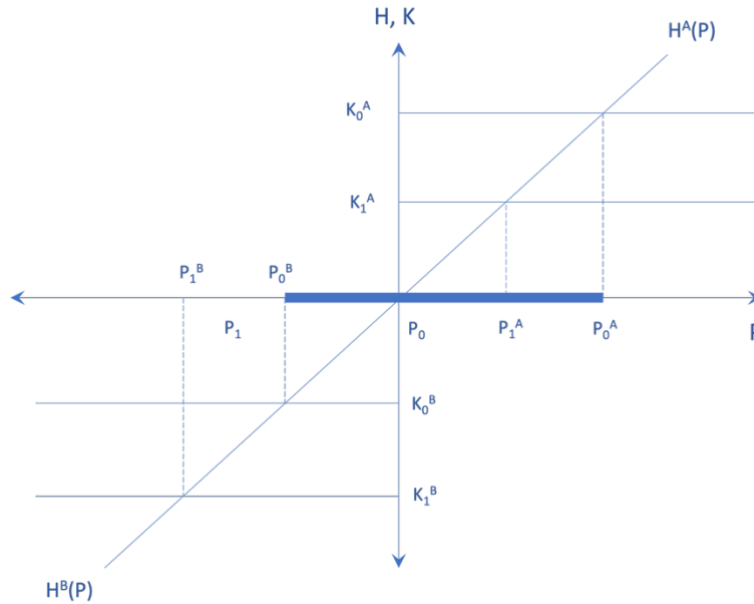
⁷ Consider the frequency of AEs acting as executing entities within SAP projects and PAP projects.

⁸ There are, of course, a range of political and institutional reasons why AEs default on projects apart from market conditions.

⁹ Gow et al., “How private contract enforcement mechanisms can succeed where public institutions fail: The Case of Juhosucor A.S.”

price. Thus, at P_1^B it is optimal for Actor 2 (the climate fund) to breach the contract with the changes to its capital and capability profile illustrated as K_1^B .

Figure A - 2. Self-enforcement range in contracts

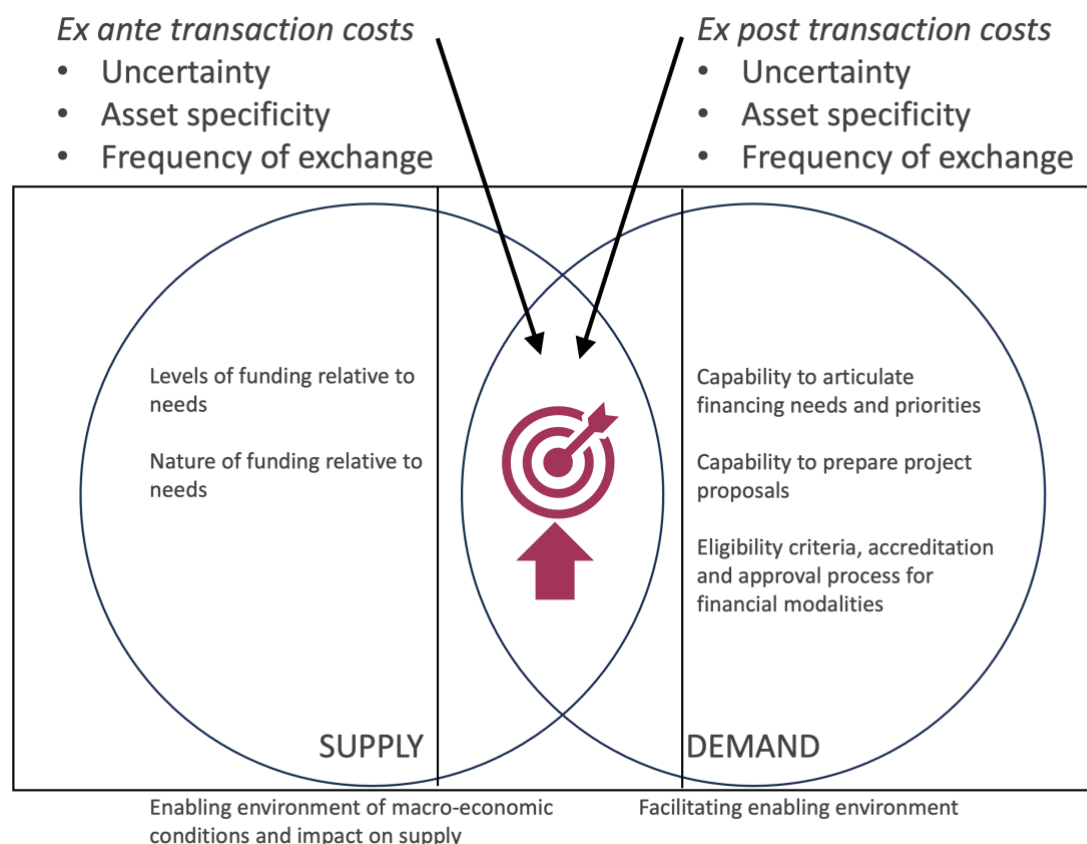


Source: Adaptation of Figure 1 from Gow et al., “Private contract enforcement”.

The key point to note here is that **incentives to deliver climate projects are not solely based on contractual arrangements but include broader market trends as well as the capability of entities to deliver in a new market environment**. Two issues stem from this: (i) DAEs in developing countries may be particularly exposed to changed climate finance funding conditions, and (ii) Project contracts can be designed to limit the likelihood of hold ups and contract defaults by increasing the self-enforcement range of contracts.

Figure A - 3 illustrates the **contextual framework** applied in this independent evaluation by combining in a straightforward and simple manner the three frameworks proposed by Williamson, Gow et al., and Osuna.

Figure A - 3. Contextual framework applied in this evaluation



Source: Based on Williamson, “Transaction cost economics”, Gow et al., “Private contract enforcement”, and Osuna, “Multilateral climate funds”.

Figure A - 4 then applies this framework descriptively to the current climate finance context. It highlights potential channels through which the current climate finance context may influence the transaction costs incurred by climate funds as well as entities.¹⁰ Using the case studies included in this evaluation, Table A - 1 interprets this theoretical framework with a real-world example.

Table A - 1. Climate finance context using the example of World Food Programme's rural resilience initiative (R4)

Climate funds (GCF)	AE (WFP and local partners)
<i>1. Uncertainty.</i> R4's pre-specified bundle (risk-reduction assets, weather-index insurance, savings, prudent credit) reduces <i>technical</i> uncertainty ex ante (what is being financed, how it is delivered), which shortens the number of iterations required in principle to review a proposal for approval. <i>Where uncertainty persists</i> procedural ambiguity within the GCF, how many review rounds are required, what kinds of background data is required to make the climate case for the project, and rigid post-approval “material change” limitations—	R4 lowers <i>technical</i> uncertainty by relying on tested agronomic practices, actuarial structures, and savings modalities. In SAP 007, however, residual uncertainty reappeared through procurement delays (automated weather stations), gaps in local radio contracting, and political disruption during elections, all of which stalled delivery.

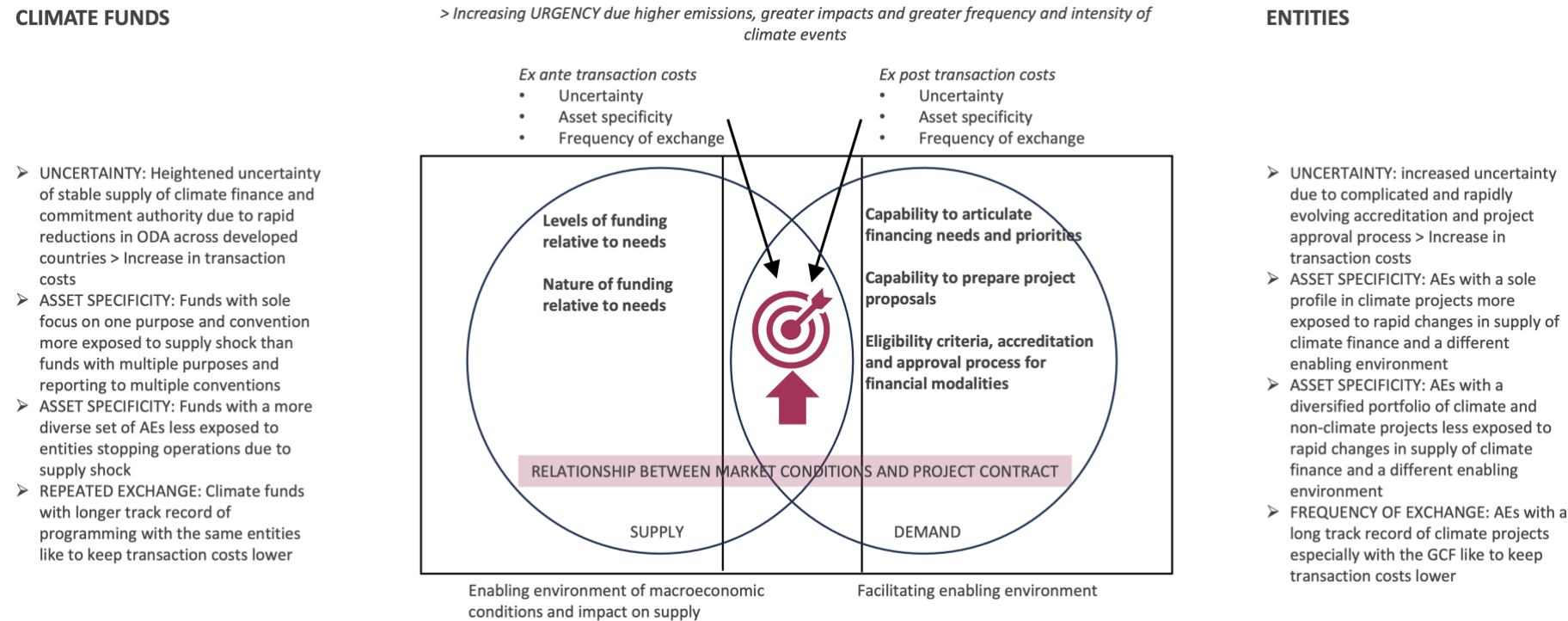
¹⁰ For example, it can be argued as the GCF has paused re-accreditation, the transaction costs of doing business with GCF have been lowered and, once accredited, AEs only face transaction costs associated with developing and delivering projects for which they receive AE fees.

Climate funds (GCF)	AE (WFP and local partners)
reintroduces uncertainty and delay both before approval and after.	
2. <i>Asset specificity</i> . The Secretariat's review systems and Board workflows are largely undifferentiated, and SAP proposals undergo a similar level of scrutiny. This creates fixed costs that are not significantly lower, even for tested frameworks. Volume I Box 5–1 describes the extensive back-and-forth in terms of questions about the proposal that eroded time advantages otherwise expected for a proven approach.	R4 invests in highly specific capabilities—insurance administration partnerships, climate-services platforms (e.g. platform for real-time impact and situation monitoring), and village savings systems. These are not easily redeployed elsewhere. In SAP007, this specificity became a liability when the weather index insurance underperformed and required restructuring, creating hold-ups because adjustments needed GCF approval.
3. <i>Frequency of exchange / repeated dealings</i> . With WFP, repeated interactions and a known model widen the “self-enforcement range”: expectations are clearer, and the cost of opportunism rises for both sides (relational capital). This is exactly the point of the self-enforcing zone drawn from Gow et al.	Replication across countries (Ethiopia → seven other countries; Senegal FP049; SAP007 Zimbabwe; SAP011 Mozambique) increases the number of exchanges and learning-by-doing. In Zimbabwe, repeated training cycles for savings groups, climate services, and anticipatory action widened the relational capital between WFP and communities, which typically reduces transaction costs over time.
<i>Ex ante versus ex post costs</i> . Ex ante, a framework like R4 should compress design and negotiation; ex post, costs climb again if adaptive tweaks must return to the Board. (Volume I: “delays arise not only before approval but also after...material change”).	Ex ante, the templated R4 model reduced design and negotiation costs by building on a known approach. Ex post, however, costs mounted when insurance uptake declined and the component had to be redesigned, requiring formal restructuring with the GCF. This illustrates how lack of delegated authority increases ex post costs even in proven frameworks.

Note: WFP = World Food Programme

This real-world example looking at the WFP R4 (SAP 007) is a success case: replication lowers technical uncertainty; frequency builds trust; specificity is managed inside a framework; and enforcement is helped by repeated exchanges between different parties. Where SAP procedure reintroduces uncertainty (many review rounds) or centralizes adaptation (Board-level approvals required for “material changes” in project design), ex post costs rise and the self-enforcement range narrows—precisely the bottlenecks the WFP practitioners described. This is why the final report (volume I) highlights the utility of framework approaches and the importance of delegated authority (for both approval and in-implementation adjustments).

Figure A - 4. Intersection between climate funds and entities implementing solutions



Source: Author’s interpretation from Williamson, “Transaction cost economics”, Gow et al., “Private contract enforcement”, and Osuna, “Multilateral climate funds”

Annex 2. EVOLUTION OF THE GCF'S SIMPLIFIED APPROVAL PROCESS

This annex examines how the SAP modality has evolved from its initial mandate to its current operational form. The analysis follows four phases: (i) the origins and design intent in GCF's founding instruments and early Board decisions; (ii) early implementation and critical assessments; (iii) reform deliberations leading to major policy changes; and (iv) the current framework following decision B.32/05. Evidence draws on GCF Board records, the Independent Evaluation Unit's (IEU) *Independent Assessment of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Pilot Scheme* (hereunder referred as "SAP2020 evaluation"), and management responses. The focus is on whether successive adaptations have addressed the SAP's core objective—simplifying access for small-scale, low-risk projects, particularly from developing countries with limited institutional capacity.

A. ORIGINS AND DESIGN INTENT (2007–2017)

The Governing Instrument (para. 53) mandated "simplified processes for the approval of proposals for certain activities, in particular small-scale activities,"¹¹ reflecting early recognition that the standard GCF approval process risked imposing disproportionate transaction costs on smaller interventions. Developing country constituencies—especially SIDS—were active in shaping this agenda.¹² Advocacy by their Board members, notably Samoa's representative, helped secure Board attention to operationalizing simplified procedures that could address the capacity constraints of SIDS and other vulnerable countries.

The SAP Pilot Scheme was launched through decision B.18/06 (October 2017) with defined parameters: requests up to USD 10 million, Category C under the environmental and social safeguards (ESS) framework, and potential for scaling or replication.¹³ At least 50 per cent of SAP resources were to go to DAEs¹⁴. This framework sought to make access less burdensome while maintaining fiduciary and safeguard standards. The size and risk limits were intended to enable faster, less resource-intensive reviews, while the replication criterion aimed to support proven interventions with potential for wider transformational impact.

B. EARLY IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT (2017–2020)

Early implementation revealed a substantial gap between the SAP's design intent and its operational reality. By early 2020, only 13 projects had been approved—16 per cent of all approvals in this period but just 3 per cent of total GCF funding. This limited uptake signalled that the intended simplification had not translated into widespread use, particularly among the constituencies it was designed to serve.

Portfolio analysis showed under-representation of SIDS, LDCs, and African States with limited institutional capacity—despite their central role in advocating for the modality. This raised early

¹¹ Green Climate Fund, "Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund," 2011, para. 53.

¹² Green Climate Fund, "GCF Board approves first simplified approval process project."

¹³ Green Climate Fund, "Decisions of the Board – eighteenth meeting," decision B.18/06.

¹⁴ Green Climate Fund, "Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme."

questions about whether the parameters set under decision B.18/06 had effectively addressed the procedural and institutional barriers faced by these groups.

A Secretariat self-review (November 2019) offered a comparatively optimistic outlook, projecting that modest procedural adjustments could cut processing times by up to 124 days for low-risk projects if approvals occurred between Board meetings, and by 136 days for Category C projects if authority were delegated to the Executive Director (ED). These estimates implied that time savings could be achieved without altering the core design.

In contrast, the SAP2020 evaluation provided a more critical assessment. While acknowledging that the Secretariat had embedded the pilot into the operational framework and developed SAP-specific templates, the evaluation found no material streamlining of requirements or acceleration of processing times—the central value proposition of the modality.¹⁵

The evaluation identified structural issues: SAP projects followed the same Board cycle, were subject to all GCF standards and investment criteria, and lacked dedicated key performance indicators to align internal incentives with simplification goals. As a result, review timelines remained comparable to the regular project cycle.

Evidence also indicated limited value addition relative to the Fund's mandate or AEs' expectations. Many SAP projects closely resembled regular FPs, with proponents typically having prior GCF experience—suggesting that the modality had not broadened access for less-experienced entities.

The absence of a clear strategic framework compounded these challenges. Without guidance on how SAP procedures should contribute to transformational impact, eligibility criteria were applied inconsistently, and projects often duplicated rather than complemented other climate finance mechanisms.

The dual assessments presented fundamentally different perspectives on SAP's challenges and solutions. While the Secretariat's analysis suggested that procedural reforms could unlock significant efficiency gains, the IEU's assessment pointed to more comprehensive design and implementation issues that required reconsideration of the modality's purpose and operational framework. This difference in emphasis set the stage for the extensive Board deliberations that would dominate SAP discussions over the subsequent two years.

C. REFORM PROCESS AND BOARD DELIBERATIONS (2020–2022)

The divergent conclusions of the SAP2020 evaluation and the Secretariat's self-assessment set the stage for an extended Board reform process, beginning at the twenty-sixth meeting of the Board (B.26) (August 2020) when the Board formally considered both assessments alongside the Secretariat's management response.¹⁶

Reform discussions intensified at B.28 (March 2021) with the presentation of a consolidated SAP reform package, including the SAP2020 evaluation, management response, and the Secretariat's *Further development of the simplified approval process* document prepared in response to B.25/08¹⁷. The Secretariat proposed procedural adjustments—revised activity cycles, increased funding thresholds, and expanded eligibility—that it believed could address performance gaps without fundamentally altering the SAP design.

¹⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Assessment of SAP*.

¹⁶ Green Climate Fund, "Decisions of the Board – twenty-sixth meeting."

¹⁷ Green Climate Fund, "Further development of the simplified approval process."

Written constituency feedback revealed persistent divergence on key elements. The Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN) opposed mechanisms for approvals between Board meetings and resisted delegating approval authority to the ED, citing risks to developing country participation in decision-making.¹⁸

The AGN strongly supported raising the SAP funding ceiling to USD 50 million, arguing that the existing USD 10 million cap constrained the ability to deliver transformational adaptation interventions, especially by scaling up proven approaches from other climate funds.¹⁹

Across constituencies, four main reform themes emerged:

- **Funding thresholds:** split between advocates of gradual increases and those calling for substantial adjustments.
- **Documentation requirements:** general support for simplification, but disagreement on the depth and applicability across project types.
- **Governance and transparency:** calls for greater active observer involvement and scrutiny of intersessional decision-making processes.
- **Support for DAEs:** broad agreement on maintaining dedicated support for DAEs, particularly smaller institutions with limited GCF experience.²⁰

At B.30 (October 2021), the Secretariat tabled GCF/B.30/06, incorporating earlier feedback, the SAP2020 evaluation, and updated strategic mandates.²¹ The paper demonstrated the Secretariat's effort to reconcile conflicting positions but also underscored entrenched divides—particularly around governance safeguards versus procedural efficiency.

By this point, constituency alignments had hardened. The AGN maintained its opposition to in-between-meeting approvals and to expanding eligibility to Category B/I-2 projects, reflecting concern that SAP could lose its “simplified” character without improving developing country oversight. The LDC Group, in contrast, prioritized faster procedures, supported higher risk categories, and endorsed threshold increases, viewing efficiency gains as essential to meeting urgent adaptation needs.²²

Many developed country Board members backed delegation of authority to the ED, citing Secretariat fiduciary capacity and a desire to reduce transaction costs for smaller-scale projects.²³

Across groups, there was recognition that SAP had not fully addressed the capacity constraints of smaller DAEs. The Secretariat committed to implement any updated procedures within 12 months of Board approval, signalling acknowledgement of the urgency to resolve persistent access barriers.²⁴

The deliberative process culminated at B.32 (May 2022), where the Board considered the main SAP update paper and three substantive addenda providing comparative approval process analysis, constituency feedback summaries, and consultation records²⁵. The volume and breadth of

¹⁸ Green Climate Fund, "Written feedback received on draft document titled 'Further development of the simplified approval process'."

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Green Climate Fund, "Update of the simplified approval process."

²² Green Climate Fund, "Response matrix for Board comments received on the draft document 'Update of the simplified approval process'."

²³ Green Climate Fund, "Summary of the bilateral consultations on the update of the simplified approval process."

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Green Climate Fund, "Update of the Simplified Approval Process"; Green Climate Fund, "Update of the simplified approval process - Addendum I"; Green Climate Fund, "Update of the simplified approval process - Addendum II"; Green Climate Fund, "Update of the simplified approval process - Addendum III".

documentation reflected the SAP update's evolution from a technical reform item to a forum for wider debates about GCF operational efficiency, governance balance, and the Fund's role in improving access to climate finance for developing countries.

D. THE UPDATED SAP AND RECENT CHANGES (2022–PRESENT)

Decision B.32/05 represented a negotiated compromise among Board constituencies, combining procedural adjustments with operational safeguards to address performance gaps identified in earlier evaluations.^{26 27} The update preserved the SAP's original low-risk orientation while introducing measures to expand its reach and address persistent administrative barriers.

The most prominent change was raising the SAP funding ceiling from USD 10 million to USD 25 million.²⁸ This directly addressed developing country concerns that the original cap constrained the scale and ambition of adaptation projects, particularly those requiring substantial upfront investment for transformational impact. The Board retained the ESS Category C limitation and rejected proposals to expand eligibility to Category B/I-2 projects, reflecting a continued preference for low-risk processing.

Procedural simplifications were also adopted to reduce entry barriers. These included a mandate to streamline concept note (CN) templates while retaining the two-stage process.²⁹ This change sought to lower administrative burdens without weakening appraisal of eligibility and strategic alignment.

The decision responded to a key SAP2020 finding by introducing SAP-specific key performance indicators from the 2023 work programme.³⁰ The absence of such metrics had previously limited institutional incentives to prioritize SAP processing. The Board also reaffirmed its target for at least 50 per cent of SAP approvals to originate from DAEs over time, sustaining the modality's core focus established under B.18/06.

Following B.32/05, the Secretariat launched a package of operational reforms to deliver on simplification and acceleration commitments. Capacity-building initiatives targeted DAEs, national designated authorities (NDAs), and private sector AEs, and included the release of *Programming Guidelines for the Simplified Approval Process*,³¹ the *Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Technical Guidance Compendium* (with sector modules on agriculture, water, and energy efficiency),³² *Simplified Approval Process (SAP) funding proposal preparation guidelines: A practical manual for the preparation of SAP proposals*,³³ and standardized proposal templates.³⁴

Documentation requirements were further differentiated from those applied to regular proposals. SAP projects could be submitted with pre-feasibility rather than full feasibility studies, and economic/financial annexes were no longer mandatory for public-sector projects.³⁵ These adjustments directly addressed AEs feedback that SAP documentation had previously mirrored regular proposal requirements, undermining its "simplified" proposition.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Assessment of SAP*.

²⁸ Green Climate Fund, "Update SAP."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Green Climate Fund, "Programming guidelines for the Simplified Approval Process."

³² Green Climate Fund, "Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Technical Guidance Compendium."

³³ Green Climate Fund, "Simplified Approval Process (SAP) funding proposal preparation guidelines: A practical manual for the preparation of SAP proposals."

³⁴ Green Climate Fund, "Report on the activities of the Secretariat," GCF/B.34/INF.07, 2022.

³⁵ Ibid.

The independent Technical Advisory Panel (iTAP) review process was restructured to reduce both the time and transaction costs of assessment. SAP proposals are now reviewed by two iTAP members rather than the full panel, without mandatory AE calls, and with feedback provided primarily as targeted recommendations.³⁶ The aim was to preserve quality assurance while limiting procedural delays.

Internal review processes were similarly streamlined. Climate Investment Committee reviews for SAP are now conducted via email rather than in-person meetings, a change identified by multiple interviewees as one of the most effective efficiency gains in the update.³⁷

Post-approval processes—previously indistinct from those for regular proposals—were adapted with standardized SAP-specific templates to maintain fiduciary oversight while reducing implementation-phase administrative demands.³⁸

The Secretariat worked to implement these changes within the 12-month deadline set by B.32/05, providing periodic progress reports to the Board.³⁹ Delivery required cross-divisional coordination and the production of tailored operational tools, training materials, and procedural guidance.⁴⁰

³⁶ Based on key informant interviews carried out in the SAP2025 evaluation process.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Green Climate Fund, "Decisions of the Board -- thirty-second meeting of the Board, 16–19 May 2022."

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Based on key informant interview consultations during SAP2025 evaluation process.

Annex 3. PREVIOUS IEU EVALUATIVE EVIDENCE

This annex provides an overview of existing evaluative evidence based on previous IEU evaluations (apart from the SAP2020 evaluation which directly informs this evaluation approach and contents). Fifteen evaluations were reviewed:

- 1) Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP2018)
- 2) Independent review of the Green Climate Fund's results management framework (RMF2018)
- 3) Forward-looking performance review of the Green Climate Fund (FPR2019)
- 4) Independent evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Country Ownership Approach (COA2019)
- 5) Independent Synthesis of the Green Climate Fund's Accreditation Function (ACCRED2020)
- 6) Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Environmental and Social Safeguards and the Environmental and Social Management System (ESS2020)
- 7) Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in Small Island Developing States (SIDS2020)
- 8) Independent Rapid Assessment of the Green Climate Fund's Request for Proposal Modality (RFP2021)
- 9) Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Approach to the Private Sector (PRIV2021)
- 10) Independent Evaluation of the Adaptation Portfolio and Approach to Green Climate Fund (ADAPT2021)
- 11) Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the Least Developed Countries (LDC2022)
- 12) Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund (SPR2023)
- 13) Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the African States (AFR2022)
- 14) Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the Green Climate Fund (DA2022)
- 15) Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Energy Sector Portfolio and Approach (ES2023)

A set of keywords was agreed upon with the evaluation team and Python script was used for extracting key segments from the evaluation reports using this predefined set of keywords. The Python script was designed to identify and extract occurrences of these keywords from each evaluation report. If multiple predefined keywords appeared within the same paragraph, the script would extract the entire paragraph to maintain context and capture the exact page number where each keyword is found. If a keyword was not found in a particular paragraph, the code would skip to the next paragraph and the output would highlight how "No keyword was found." The extracted text was subsequently copied into an Excel matrix, coded according to the evaluation criteria relevant to the assessment of the SAP. ChatGPT Premium was used in drafting the final output by evaluation criteria based on quotes from evaluation reports found in the Excel matrix.

Keywords used include "Simplified Approved Process", "streamlined", "SAP", "Access modality", "Simplified Access Modality", "Easier Access", "Modality", "Simplification", "Simplified Approval

Process (SAP)", "SAP criteria", "SAP eligibility", "SAP project", "SAP funding", "SAP proposal", "SAP guidelines", "SAP framework", "SAP application", "SAP review".

Following are key findings related to SAP by evaluation criteria from the above evaluations.

A. RELEVANCE

The SAP was introduced to enhance access to climate finance by streamlining procedures for small-scale, low-risk projects. It was designed to respond to the needs of beneficiaries, global climate priorities, and institutional objectives by reducing approval times and procedural complexities, particularly for LDCs, SIDS, and African States⁴¹. The SAP's design reflects an effort to align with the capacity constraints of national and regional entities, ensuring that they can access funds without facing the administrative burdens of the standard approval process⁴². The global relevance of the SAP is underscored by its role in supporting urgent adaptation and mitigation needs, particularly in vulnerable countries where climate action is most needed⁴³. The SAP modality directly aligns with national and institutional climate strategies, reinforcing country-driven priorities and enhancing the ability of developing nations to implement impactful and time-sensitive projects. Furthermore, by targeting projects with minimal environmental and social risks, the SAP mechanism integrates into the GCF's broader mandate for scaling climate finance while safeguarding environmental and social standards⁴⁴.

However, while the SAP's objectives are widely recognized as relevant, its implementation has faced challenges in effectively reducing barriers to finance. The SPR2023 found that the SAP has not yet fully realized its potential in accelerating access to funding or expanding the reach to a more diverse set of stakeholders.⁴⁵ While intended as a fast-track financing mechanism, evaluations indicate that procedural bottlenecks and approval inefficiencies persisted, limiting its ability to respond dynamically to evolving country needs⁴⁶. Despite these limitations, the SAP retains its potential relevance in fostering climate innovation. The ES2023 noted that the SAP can serve as an incubator for piloting and adapting proven climate solutions in new contexts, allowing for flexible, country-driven implementation.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, challenges remain in its practical accessibility, particularly for SIDS, where institutional barriers continue to hinder effective engagement with the SAP process.⁴⁸

B. EFFECTIVENESS

The AFR2022 highlighted the original intent of SAP to “reduce the time and effort needed for SAP proposal preparation and review”⁴⁹. This was to be achieved, in part, by identifying small-scale

⁴¹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Country Ownership Approach*, 73.

⁴² Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the Least Developed Countries*, 54.

⁴³ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Adaptation Portfolio and Approach of the Green Climate Fund*, 15.

⁴⁴ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Forward-Looking Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund*, 158.

⁴⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund*, 103.

⁴⁶ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in the African States*, 114.

⁴⁷ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Energy Sector Portfolio and Approach*, 125.

⁴⁸ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in Small Island Developing States*, 75.

⁴⁹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *AFR2022*, 54.

activities that could be scaled and replicated in coordination with other climate finance mechanisms. However, in practice, the streamlined approach has not necessarily translated into significant time savings. The ES2023 found that while the review and appraisal of SAP proposals theoretically take approximately 149 days, in reality, the process averages 214 days, which is not substantively faster than the 190-day time frame for standard FPs.⁵⁰

Findings from the SPR2023 reinforce this, stating that “the SAP process has not yet meaningfully reduced the burden of project preparation or improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the GCF project cycle, as the overall submission requirements and review processes are only marginally simplified relative to the proposal approval process.”⁵¹ The FPR2019 further supports this, noting that “approval time for the six approved SAP projects was similar to FPs (eight months versus nine months, respectively)⁵²”.

A particular concern is that the SAP does not provide an agile and simplified process tailored to the needs of DAEs. The DA2022 found that “the SAP, as a process for small- to medium-sized projects, does not provide an agile and simplified process for potential DAE projects. The GCF’s existing CN, and FP processes do not treat DAEs differently than international accredited entities [IAEs] in supporting them through the development, approval, and implementation of project proposals, despite the GCF’s prioritization of direct access.”⁵³ This suggests that the SAP, as currently structured, does not align with the GCF’s goal of enhancing direct access, particularly for DAEs.

This challenge is further amplified in LDCs. The LDCs evaluation found that “While the SAP was designed to streamline the proposal process for countries with limited capacity and lower accreditation levels, LDCs have yet to reap the benefits of the SAP.”⁵⁴ Moreover, it states that the process “has neither shortened nor simplified the process for LDCs.”⁵⁵ These findings suggest that SAP has not effectively addressed the structural and capacity barriers that limit LDCs’ ability to access climate finance.

Additionally, the country ownership evaluation found that in four of the seven cases where SAP was applied, “the approval process has not been any faster than for the average regular funding proposal.”⁵⁶ This calls into question the extent to which the SAP delivers on its intended objective of accelerating access to climate finance.

Despite these challenges, some evaluations acknowledge that SAP has succeeded in reducing procedural complexities. The accreditation synthesis noted that “The SAP has successfully streamlined procedures, reducing approval times significantly, thereby enabling quicker project initiation and response to climate challenges.”⁵⁷ However, this perspective appears to be at odds with the broader body of evidence, which indicates that SAP’s effectiveness is still constrained by policy and procedural bottlenecks.

For SIDS, the SAP’s responsiveness to urgent climate challenges has also been questioned. The SIDS evaluation mentioned that “The GCF’s project approval processes (PAP), including the simplified approval process (SAP), are widely perceived as too long to be considered responsive to

⁵⁰ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ES2023*, 93.

⁵¹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SPR2023*, 103.

⁵² Independent Evaluation Unit, *FPR2019*, 152.

⁵³ Independent Evaluation Unit, *DA2022*, 20.

⁵⁴ Independent Evaluation Unit, *LDC2022*, 95.

⁵⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *LDC2022*, 21.

⁵⁶ Independent Evaluation Unit, *COA2019*, 73.

⁵⁷ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Synthesis of the Green Climate Fund’s Accreditation Function*, 76.

the urgency of climate change in SIDS.”⁵⁸ Given the vulnerability of these countries, delays in accessing climate finance have significant implications for their resilience and adaptation efforts.

While refinements to SAP continue to be considered, including measures to increase the number of projects processed annually, the adaptation evaluation suggested that “With measures to further refine the simplified approval process (SAP), this could reach the higher end of the range and include 20–25 SAP projects per year.”⁵⁹ However, increasing the number of approvals without addressing the underlying inefficiencies may not necessarily lead to improved outcomes.

C. EFFICIENCY

The SAP was introduced as a means of fast-tracking project approvals compared to the GCF’s traditional PAP. However, an evaluation of the SAP’s processing times suggests that while the SAP is faster than the PAP, its review timeline remains lengthy relative to expectations. On average, the SAP takes approximately 263 days (eight months) for approval, whereas the PAP takes around 430 days (14 months).⁶⁰ While this represents a notable reduction, the absolute time frame still falls short of the expected efficiency gains envisioned at the SAP’s inception.

Furthermore, an assessment of the SAP during GCF-1 indicated that the processing duration has not consistently improved over time. In fact, findings from the SPR2023 highlighted that the mean processing time for SAP proposals has slightly increased, while PAP processing times have trended downward.⁶¹ This suggests that, despite its intended simplifications, SAP projects are still subject to procedural bottlenecks that constrain efficiency gains.

Despite being marketed as a simplified approval mechanism, the SAP process has introduced additional procedural steps that affect efficiency. Notably, the requirement for CNs for all SAP proposals adds an extra stage compared with regular GCF processing, which does not universally mandate this step.⁶² While CNs may help improve project quality and alignment with GCF investment criteria, they also contribute to extended processing times.

Moreover, findings indicate that SAP requirements have not been significantly reduced compared to other modalities. An evaluation of GCF approval processes found that when SAP and request for proposals (RFPs) were used, the procedural requirements did not decrease, nor did processing times improve^{63 64}. This raises concerns about whether the SAP effectively meets its objective of simplifying access to funding, particularly for entities with limited administrative capacity.

While the SAP process was expected to optimize resource use, evaluations provide mixed findings on its ability to deliver cost-effective outcomes. On one hand, the ACCRED2020 highlighted that the SAP process maintains meticulous financial oversight, ensuring that funds are used prudently despite an expedited process.⁶⁵ However, in terms of overall efficiency, the ES2023 found that there is no significant difference in the speed of project origination, review, and approval between the SAP and the PAP.⁶⁶ This suggests that while SAP maintains financial diligence, its procedural

⁵⁸ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SIDS2020*, 25.

⁵⁹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ADAPT2021*, 57.

⁶⁰ Independent Evaluation Unit, *AFR2022*, 114.

⁶¹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SPR2023*, 105.

⁶² Independent Evaluation Unit, *LDC2022*, 101.

⁶³ Independent Evaluation Unit, *FPR2019*, 149.

⁶⁴ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Rapid Assessment of the Green Climate Fund’s Request for Proposal Modality*, 53.

⁶⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ACCRED2020*, 54.

⁶⁶ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ES2023*, 92.

efficiency does not always translate into faster disbursements or quicker project implementation compared to the standard PAP process.

The SAP process has been assessed within sectoral and regional evaluations to determine whether it effectively accelerates project approval. Findings from the ES2023 indicated that SAP has not led to significantly faster project origination, review, or approval when compared to PAP.⁶⁷ Similarly, evidence from the SIDS portfolio found that while SAP has been useful for channelling resources to outer island communities, it has not consistently led to faster fund disbursement.⁶⁸

D. COHERENCE

The coherence within the broader GCF framework and the wider climate finance architecture has been an area of both progress and challenge. One key element of coherence is the extent to which SAP avoids duplicating existing climate finance mechanisms and, instead, builds synergies with complementary funding sources. The evaluation found that while SAP operates in alignment with GCF's broader goals, there is a need for further integration with other funding modalities to ensure a seamless approach across the Fund's financing mechanisms. The accreditation synthesis noted that "SAP operates in coherence with GCF's broader goals and works in tandem with other funding mechanisms, avoiding duplication and enhancing synergies."⁶⁹

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in ensuring that SAP enhances rather than complicates the overall GCF ecosystem. The adaptation evaluation identified gaps in engagement with other climate funds and financing institutions beyond the Adaptation Fund (AF), limiting the potential to fully leverage existing financial and technical capacities.⁷⁰ This is further reinforced by findings from the country ownership evaluation, which emphasized the need for greater alignment between SAP and country-driven strategies to avoid parallel and disjointed implementation efforts.⁷¹

Furthermore, while some SAP projects demonstrate strong complementarity with existing initiatives, others have raised concerns regarding regional replication without full strategic alignment. For example, the African States evaluation highlighted that SAP019, "Gums for Adaptation and Mitigation in Sudan", is being expanded to eight other countries under the Great Green Wall initiative, demonstrating successful scaling-up through SAP. However, the evaluation noted the risk of repetitive efforts and the need for a structured approach to regional replication.⁷²

At the institutional level, SAP's coherence with other GCF modalities remains an area for improvement. The energy evaluation found that the project-specific accreditation approach, while promising in fostering innovation, has yet to be fully operationalized to create effective linkages between SAP and other funding modalities such as RFPs.⁷³ Similarly, the Second Performance Review emphasized the need for policy revisions to further integrate SAP with the Fund's strategic directions, particularly in relation to private sector engagement and adaptation investment criteria.⁷⁴ Despite these structural and operational challenges, efforts have been made to enhance coherence within SAP. The integration of ESS within SAP was identified as a positive step, ensuring that SAP

⁶⁷ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ES2023*, 92.

⁶⁸ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SIDS2020*, 75.

⁶⁹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ACCRED2020*, 33.

⁷⁰ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ADAPT2021*, 58.

⁷¹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *COA2019*, 211.

⁷² Independent Evaluation Unit, *AFR2022*, 129.

⁷³ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ES2023*, 125.

⁷⁴ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SPR2023*, 46.

projects align with GCF's overarching policy framework.⁷⁵ However, the evaluation also pointed out that while SAP considers ESS requirements, further efforts are needed to ensure that these safeguards do not become barriers to accessibility for DAEs.

E. IMPACT

The impact of the GCF SAP has been observed across multiple dimensions, particularly in its ability to generate both anticipated and unanticipated results, with varying degrees of success in meeting its overarching objectives. The SAP has facilitated direct engagement with developing countries by streamlining approval procedures; however, its ability to scale innovation and meaningfully reduce administrative burdens remains uneven. One of the more visible impacts of the SAP is its contribution to climate resilience through enhanced climate information systems. For example, in Liberia, under SAP018, "Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Liberia", the provision of weather radars to Roberts International Airport has led to a sustained shift in local capacity. The airport has assumed responsibility for the operation and maintenance of these radars, capitalizing on revenue-generating opportunities linked to their usage.⁷⁶ This outcome, though not explicitly anticipated in the original theory of change, demonstrates an adaptive and localized response to project sustainability.

Similarly, the SAP's role in expanding beneficiary reach has been noted in adaptation interventions. In Georgia (FP068) and the Republic of Armenia (SAP014), projects focused on early warning systems and forestry initiatives, respectively, have collectively reached approximately 7 million beneficiaries.⁷⁷ However, anomalies in beneficiary calculations suggest potential overestimations, such as in Liberia (SAP018), where indirect beneficiaries reportedly exceed the national population.⁷⁸ These findings highlight the challenges in measuring SAP's true impact while pointing to the need for improved methodologies in beneficiary attribution. Despite the SAP's intentions to increase the participation of DAEs, evaluative evidence suggests that this objective remains partially met. The SAP has indeed attracted a higher percentage of DAEs than the regular PAP, yet it has fallen short of its 50 per cent target for SAP-approved projects originating from DAEs.⁷⁹ The shortfall implies that while the SAP may facilitate access, systemic barriers within DAEs—such as limited technical capacity and financial readiness—continue to hinder a more profound paradigm shift in direct access.

The SAP's potential to leverage co-financing and catalyse private sector involvement has also been noted. Evaluations indicate that SAP projects demonstrate significant multiplier effects by attracting additional sources of finance, an impact that is particularly relevant for countries with constrained fiscal space.⁸⁰ However, limitations on SAP funding caps have inadvertently confined LDCs to low-risk, grant-based financing windows, restricting opportunities for larger-scale, transformative private sector engagement.⁸¹

In the context of technological and market innovation, the SAP remains underutilized. While its design seeks to pilot and demonstrate new climate solutions, its uptake has been slower than

⁷⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Environmental and Social Safeguards and the Environmental and Social Management System*, 222.

⁷⁶ Independent Evaluation Unit, *AFR2023*, 124.

⁷⁷ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ADAPT2021*, 148.

⁷⁸ Independent Evaluation Unit, *AFR2023*, 149.

⁷⁹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *DA2022*, 73.

⁸⁰ Independent Evaluation Unit, *ACCRED2020*, 79.

⁸¹ Independent Evaluation Unit, *LDC2022*, 101.

anticipated.⁸² The SAP's limited reach within SIDS further underscores this point. Despite the expectation that SAP would streamline access for SIDS, only three SAP projects have been approved within this group, prompting concerns about whether the modality is effectively serving its intended audience.⁸³ The SAP has also catalysed institutional learning and adaptive management within GCF's broader programming. Adjustments to the SAP process, coupled with the implementation of the DAE action plan, are expected to enhance adaptation programming and refine the approval mechanism to better accommodate the needs of recipient countries.⁸⁴ However, evaluations have cautioned that while the goal of SAP is widely recognized, its ability to streamline processes meaningfully and attract a different category of proponents has yet to be fully realized.⁸⁵ While the SAP has produced noteworthy results, particularly in local institutional ownership, co-financing leverage and adaptive responses, its broader systemic impact remains constrained by persistent challenges in scalability, direct access engagement, and private sector mobilization. The evolving nature of SAP implementation underscores the need for continuous refinement and targeted reforms to fully harness its potential as a catalytic mechanism for climate finance delivery.

⁸² Independent Evaluation Unit, *ES2023*, 140.

⁸³ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SIDS2020*, 76.

⁸⁴ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SPR2023*, 138.

⁸⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *SPR2023*, 103.

Annex 4. SAP2020 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

This annex presents the recommendations of the SAP2020 evaluation which remain relevant today. It tracks Secretariat responses, and the IEU management action report (MAR) and subsequent developments up to 2025.

A. PART I. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GCF BOARD

Recommendation 1a: Develop a strategy for SAP while focusing on processes that accelerate and simplify the project cycle, and so respond (also) to guidelines from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Governing Instrument.

A strategy for SAP should expand (through clear and practical guidance) the scope of the SAP modality to include proposals that bring value to the GCF through, for example:

- Financing innovation of approaches and implementation modalities (i.e., early stages of proof of concept).
- Proposals from countries that are engaging the GCF for the first time.
- Clarity of what scale-up means in relation to the GCF mandate and most importantly how evidence from the previous experiences should be incorporated and how new evidence and learning should be collected.
- Proposals that respond to urgent climate change issues, in particularly from SIDS and LDCs. Focus on learning and developing evidence so projects are truly “ready for scale up”.

Secretariat response ⁸⁶	IEU MAR assessment ⁸⁷	Developments	Comments
Partially agree The Secretariat welcomes this recommendation, however, it considers that the elements suggested for this strategy should be framed under an overall “SAP programming guidance” that enables AEs, and in particular	Low Decision B.32/05 paragraph 8 (c) states that the Secretariat will develop SAP programming guidance to guide the GCF, NDAs and AEs on how to identify interventions that can (1) finance innovative approaches and implementation modalities; (2) clarify what scaling up means in the context of the SAP; (3) identify the opportunity to unlock private sector finance; and (4) promote the	Since 2022, Secretariat produced revised SAP FP template, appraisal toolkit (2021), technical guidelines (water, agriculture), and “SAP in Brief”. No consolidated	Secretariat outputs focused on guidance materials rather than a strategy. Broader strategic direction remains undefined.

⁸⁶ Green Climate Fund, “Secretariat Management Response to the Independent Assessment of the Green Climate Fund’s Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Pilot Scheme.”.

⁸⁷ Independent Evaluation Unit, Management Action Report on the Independent Assessment of the GCF’s Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme.”

Secretariat response ⁸⁶	IEU MAR assessment ⁸⁷	Developments	Comments
DAEs, to submit high quality SAP proposals. Therefore, this would be a task fully within the mandate and the expertise of the Secretariat. Action: The Secretariat will develop a “SAP programming guidance”, with all the elements outlined by IEU’s 1a recommendation, as part of its 2021 delivery plan for SAP.	use of the SAP to address urgent climate change needs in developing countries, particularly in SIDS, LDCs and African States. The Secretariat confirmed it has developed terms of reference for a consultancy firm to support the drafting of the SAP programming guidelines under the Secretariat’s supervision. While the Board has mandated the development of this guidance, the process is at a preliminary stage. The IEU thus rates the progress as “Low”.	“SAP programming guidance” document published.	

Recommendation 2a: Simplify the review criteria for the SAP and develop different and tailored investment criteria.

As recommended by the FPR, several investment criteria should be considered as minimum (entry) requirements for GCF proposals. In particular, in the case of SAP modalities, key criteria that should be considered are: “ready for scale up”, implementation feasibility, innovation and climate rationale. This would enable SAP projects to be truly different, bring strong value-added and address specific GCF priorities.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Partially agree The Secretariat agrees that innovation, implementation feasibility, scaling up potential and climate rationale are important appraisal factors for SAP proposals. They are already included in the appraisal of SAP proposal as subcriteria under the impact potential and paradigm shift potential criteria of the GCF investment framework which applies to SAP, and their analysis can be further strengthened as recommended by the IEU. However, from the experience of the Secretariat in appraising PAP and SAP FPs, the Secretariat has not completed its own	Low The management response did not indicate any action that addresses the IEU recommendation to simplify the SAP’s review criteria. Additionally, in GCF/B.32/05, the Secretariat underlined that the recommendation to develop tailored investment criteria was directed at the Board. The document indicates that while the Secretariat had considered trying to evaluate the potential for SAP-specific investment criteria in the GCF investment framework and related documents, these papers had their own mandate (para. 22). As best can be determined from publicly available information, the assessment was not pursued. The Secretariat underscored that it followed the Board’s directions, as received via decision B.32/05, and consultations with the Board during the preparation of the SAP policy. The Secretariat emphasized that the Board specifically indicated all existing GCF project-related policies will apply to the SAP,	No further formal developments beyond B.34. SAP continues under full PAP-like investment framework.	SAP review criteria remain undifferentiated from PAP, limiting intended simplification.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
assessment to verify if a simplification of the investment criteria for SAP would lead to tangible efficiency gains the preparation and/or review of SAP projects and programmes without compromising the expected quality of the Secretariat and iTAP assessments.	including the existing investment framework and its six investment criteria.		

Recommendation 3a: Approve the four crucial elements of the Board decision that have not yet been implemented, namely: simplified financial terms, approvals in the absence of Board meetings, iTAP review on a rolling basis and a robust monitoring system.

These features of the SAP modality decision are considered critical for accelerating and simplifying the project cycle.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Agree The Secretariat agrees that approvals in absence of Board meetings will increase the efficiency of the approvals of the SAP projects/programmes. The Secretariat also agrees that performing the iTAP (and Secretariat) reviews on a rolling basis is an important element to ensure a meaningful reduction of the SAP approval time. The Secretariat considers a robust monitoring system at the SAP project/programme implementation stage, an additional safeguard that further support the simplification of the preparation and review stages of the SAP approval cycle.	Medium The Secretariat outlined a proposed update of the SAP in GCF/B.32/05. The document addressed three of the four crucial elements of Board decision B.18/06 and highlighted in the IEU's recommendation 3a. The document proposed that (i) the approval of SAP FPs be accelerated through the introduction of no-objection approval of SAP proposals without a Board meeting, (ii) the Secretariat and iTAP review SAP FPs on a rolling basis, (iii) the Secretariat develop SAP-specific results-based monitoring and reporting systems, based on the GCF's integrated results management framework. However, the Board-approved update did not include the first of these changes, reemphasizing that SAP FPs will be considered at Board meetings (annex IV to decision B.32/05). Furthermore, the update SAP did not mention any simplification of the financial terms included in SAP FPs. In its response to this MAR, the Secretariat stated that there are no specific simplifications in the preparation or review of SAP FPs that can be achieved through a change of the financial terms for SAP compared to PAP, as decision B.09/04, which describes the	Rolling iTAP reviews operationalized; monitoring tied to integrated results management framework (IRMF). No delegation for approvals outside meetings; financial terms unchanged.	Progress uneven across elements; simplification constrained by governance and policy requirements.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
	Fund's financial terms, is a procedural determination on the tenure, rates, and fees that GCF applies to loans and grants. The IEU reemphasizes that Board decision B.18/06 on the SAP pilot scheme states that "simplified financial and other terms shall be included with the Funding Proposal" (annex X, para. 22). It further notes that GCF/B.32/05 does not address this crucial element nor does it articulate the reason behind this omission.		

Recommendation 4a: Consider delegating authority to the ED for the approval of SAP-type projects following the current experiences of authority delegation at the GCF for certain funding operations (Project Preparation Facility (PPF) and Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP), decisions, etc.).

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Agree The Secretariat agrees with this recommendation on the delegation of authority to the ED for approval of SAP projects as this will have considerable efficiency gains in shortening the approval cycle.	Low The update SAP states that the approval of SAP projects lies with the GCF Board (decision B.32/05, table 1, stage 6.1). There is no delegation of authority to the ED on this matter. The delegation of authority to the ED was discussed at B.28, B.29 and B.30. Consultations with Board members indicated there was not enough consensus to support this approval option and thus it was not addressed in the update SAP adopted at B.32.	No further action since 2022. Delegated approval remains unadopted.	Delegation of SAP approvals remains politically sensitive and unresolved.

B. PART II. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GCF SECRETARIAT

Recommendation 2b: Simplifying requirements – the Secretariat should:

- Enhance the clarity of guidance on review criteria with clear definition for the Secretariat and iTAP.
- Better define key GCF concepts related to the SAP modality, such as climate rationale, scaling up and innovation, and clarify how to consistently demonstrate, measure and review them.
- Further simplify documentation requirements for proposals, particularly from the SIDS and LDCs, and when proposals relate to urgent climate change impacts.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Agree The Secretariat agrees with this recommendation and will work on providing guidance on the review criteria for SAP projects through a specific appraisal toolkit. The Secretariat is planning to further strengthen its technical assistance to SIDS and LDC countries to improve their access to SAP finance, in particular through their DAEs. However, while the Secretariat deems that further simplification on the documentation requirements for SAP proposals is still marginally feasible, it considers that such further simplification should benefit all GCF eligible developing countries and should not be restricted to SIDS and LDC countries only. Action: as recommended by the IEU, the Secretariat will update in the course of 2021 the existing SAP knowledge products for the AEs (such	Medium Since the publication of SAP2020, the Secretariat published two technical guidelines for SAP proposals, one on water security (October 2020) and the other on agriculture (February 2021). Additionally, the Secretariat compiled on the nine existing technical guidelines in an SAP technical guidance compendium which was published in September 2021. All guidelines are available on the GCF website in English, French and Spanish. Additionally, the Secretariat translated the iLearn module on 'Developing GCF FPs for the Simplified Approval Process (SAP)' to French, Spanish and Arabic in Q3 and Q4–2020. The Secretariat also completed the SAP appraisal toolkit in November 2021 which was endorsed by the Senior Management Team in January 2022. The toolkit was subsequently revised to be consistent with the revised SAP FP template and other IRMF-related changes. The Secretariat indicated the toolkit would be published as an annex to the full version of the GCF appraisal guidance which is expected to be published by September 2022. The IEU notes that, as of 5 July 2022, the GCF appraisal guidance did not include the SAP review toolkit in annex VII as stated. The toolkit will also be sent to all AEs and NDAs by Q4–2022. As the review toolkit is pending publication, the IEU is unable to provide an assessment of the guidance provided in the document	SAP appraisal toolkit and technical guidelines developed 2020–22. Some posted online; updates patchy.	Simplification occurred in parts, but remains incomplete and inconsistently applied.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
as the SAP FP guidelines) to better clarify the guidance on GCF concepts related to the SAP modality. It will also develop as part of its 2021 plan a toolkit for the appraisal of the SAP FPs by the Secretariat and the iTAP that, as recommended will provide clarity on review criteria.	and its alignment with recommendation 2b. However, the IEU notes that the GCF appraisal guidance states that the SAP review toolkit will be used to confirm the completeness of the SAP proposals. The IEU further notes that the toolkit aims to guide the Secretariat staff and consultants towards a streamlined appraisal process. It also aims to provide clarity to the AEs of the type and quality of information that is expected in each section of the SAP CN/FP and annexes. The IEU underlines that the document is, however, not intended for use by the iTAP. In addition, the IEU notes that it is unclear whether the SAP review toolkit will be used by consultants contracted under RFPs no. 2021/005. The Secretariat highlighted that decision B.32/05 mandate several actions to simplify the documentation requirements for SAP. The Secretariat stated that the SAP CN is now optional and will be further reduced. The Secretariat also underscored that it would develop guided FP templates for fast-tracking and scaling up. The Secretariat further indicated that the simplification actions listed in the update SAP would be implemented and delivered within 12 months from Board approval (by May 2023).		

Recommendation 3b: Acceleration:

- Focus on developing processes for the post-approval stages of the SAP project cycle that are SAP-ready rather than imitating PAP.
- Develop and enforce transparent and predictable business standards for every step of the SAP process.
- Provide consolidated one set of comments for each CN and FP rather than providing proponents with multiple rounds of comments.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Agree The Secretariat agrees with the recommendation, and it will work on the implementing the suggested	Substantial The Secretariat indicated that the SAP standard operating procedures were updated in 2020. The updated standard operational procedures (SOPs) clearly define the average time required for each step of the SAP review. The Secretariat indicated	Rolling reviews implemented; SAP SOPs clarified. Post-approval templates and monitoring guidance still under	Acceleration partially advanced, with improved transparency, but full streamlining remains pending.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
actions. Action: this IEU recommendation will be addressed by developing specific guidance for the AEs on SAP on the post- approval stage as part of the 2021 SAP delivery plan. The Secretariat has revised its internal SAP standard operating procedures that more clearly define the service time expected for the processing of SAP reviews. This shall increase the transparency and business predictability of the SAP for AEs and countries. The standard operating procedures also address the expected modality to share technical feedback with the AEs in way that, as recommended by IEU, will consolidate comments in “one-go”.	that the SAP SOPs are currently being redeveloped to further streamline and simplify the review of SAP CNs and FPs. Additionally, the update SAP approved by the Board in decision B.32/05 made a series of provisions for SAP-specific post-approval processes. Regarding pre-first disbursement processes, the Secretariat proposes to expedite the clearance of FAA conditions, develop clear timelines for the fulfilment of conditions related to FAA execution and effectiveness, apply standardized fiduciary and operational conditions to the extent possible, and develop standardized and fit-for- purpose post-approval templates (para. 10). According to the decision, SAP FP packages are recommended to include certificates of internal approvals from the AEs, and the Secretariat should aim to execute FAAs at the Board meeting at which they are approved (or promptly thereafter) (annex IV to decision B.32/05, para. 10). Furthermore, the Secretariat will also develop guidance and templates for the AEs on building a results-based monitoring and reporting system for SAP projects (annex IV to decision B.32/05, para. 10). The Secretariat confirmed it has developed terms of reference for a consultancy firm to support the development of the results-based monitoring and reporting guidance. The Secretariat expects to proceed with the procurement of a firm over August-September 2022. The Secretariat stated that, as per the effectiveness and transition arrangements noted in the update SAP, all changes will be delivered within 12 months of Board approval of the policy (by May 2023). While there has been progress on addressing recommendation 3b, the above-mentioned post-approval templates, and monitoring and reporting guidance and templates have not yet been developed.	development as of 2022.	

Recommendation 4b: Include a capacity development programme (small, and fast approval) to support DAEs on how to apply the simplified and accelerated procedures and the GCF key concepts within the RPSP or other instruments. Further strengthen current activities supported by the SAP team. There is a continued need to support entities when preparing proposals, particularly for new ones. The quality-at-entry of the proposals will dramatically increase if the proponents have the capacity to respond to GCF requirements, processes and concepts.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Agree The Secretariat agrees with the recommendation, and it takes action to work in coordination with RPSP to develop the suggested programme, building on the knowledge products, trainings and e-learning already developed and available to AEs and NDAs for the SAP. Action: The Secretariat will develop, as part of its 2021 delivery plan, a fully-fledged SAP capacity-building programme tailored to the needs of DAEs and work with the RPSP and its delivery partners to transfer knowledge and expertise to DAEs.	Substantial The 2021 and 2022 work programmes of the Secretariat (GCF/B.27/04 and GCF/B.30/09, respectively) mention the following key deliverables for the Division of Country Programming: • Develop and update knowledge products for PPF, SAP and enhancing direct access (EDA), including e-learning, technical guidelines, webinars and training events (GCF/B.27/04, para. 105). • Develop and update knowledge products for readiness, PPF, SAP and EDA, including e-learning, technical guidelines, webinars and training events, and well as contributing formalization of learning loops for the Readiness Programme (GCF/B.30/09, para. 112). Notably, the iLearn module on developing GCF FPs for SAP was translated into French, Spanish and Arabic in Q3 and Q4–2020, thus enhancing its accessibility to DAEs. Webinars on the SAP were also held throughout 2022. These included a webinar which was held for AEs in early 2022 to provide further details on the SAP update. It will hold more webinars for the remainder of 2022 and in 2023. The Secretariat underscored it continued to hold bilateral meetings with AEs and NDAs regarding the SAP, and that the SAP was featured in regional dialogues during 2021 and 2022. However, the Secretariat clarified that its updates to knowledge products were delayed because the SAP policy was not being considered for approval by the Board in 2021. In 2022, following the approval of the update SAP at B.32, the Secretariat began updating its SAP knowledge products, including the SAP FP guidelines (by the end of 2022), SAP technical guidelines (by the end of 2022), and the SAP in brief (updated in July 2022).	Training and guidance materials updated. Webinars and regional dialogues continued through 2022.	This recommendation received consistent attention; capacity support became integrated into broader readiness activities.

Recommendation 5b: Take a tailored approach to the private sector. Within an SAP modality/modalities strategy, including a separate substrategy for attracting the private sector. The Secretariat should consider how the SAP modality/modalities are applicable to the private sector context.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Agree The Secretariat agrees with this recommendation. Action: By mid-2021, the Secretariat aims to develop specific technical guidance on SAP and the private sector.	Low Decision B.32/05, annex IV states that the Secretariat will develop an SAP programming guidance. The programming document will guide the GCF, NDAs and AEs in identifying interventions that can identify the opportunity to unlock private sector finance. The Secretariat indicated it has developed terms of reference for a reputed firm to support the drafting of the SAP programming guidelines under the Secretariat's supervision. The Secretariat is expected to proceed with the procurement of the firm over August – September 2022. While the Board decision requested the development of this guidance, the process is still at a preliminary stage. Consequently, the IEU rates the recommendation as low.	No evidence of a distinct SAP private sector strategy published since 2022.	Recommendation remains unfulfilled; private sector engagement under SAP not developed.

Recommendation 6b: Develop KPIs for GCF and Secretariat performance that incentivize the processing of proposals and projects through the SAP modality/modalities (i.e. intra-institutional incentives for task managers).

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
Agree The Secretariat agrees with this recommendation. Action: The Secretariat will propose SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timebound) performance indicators in the GCF-1 workplans that can also be included in the PMDS of the relevant staff to incentivize the timely and effective processing of SAP proposals.	High The Secretariat's 2022 work programme and budget (GCF/B.30/09) included two SAP-specific KPIs, namely: (1) the total number and volume of SAP proposals submitted to iTAP, and (2) the percentage of SAP proposals reviewed within target services standards, including CNs and FPs. As indicated in GCF/B.32/05, these KPIs were intended as a baseline and will be reviewed annually (para. 11(b)). Furthermore, all approved KPIs in the annual Secretariat's work programme are reflected in the relevant Secretariat's staff annual delivery plans. Consequently, achieving the KPIs is embedded in individual and divisional annual performance evaluations (para. 49). Board decision	Board decision B.32/05 requested progressively ambitious KPIs starting in 2023; Secretariat work programmes reflect these.	KPIs became institutionalized, representing the clearest area of follow-up.

Secretariat response	IEU MAR assessment	Developments	Comments
	B.32/05 further requests that starting in 2023, the Secretariat include granular and progressively ambitious KPIs for the SAP, including for post- approval stages.		

Annex 5. IMPUTATION METHODOLOGY FOR REGRESSION FRAMEWORK

To address missing observations in our analysis of differential performance between SAP and PAP projects, we employed a group-conditional median imputation approach, therefore accounting for group-heterogeneity. For key temporal variables (CN to FAA duration, FP to FAA interval, FP approval to FAA period, and FAA execution to effectiveness time frame) and financial performance metrics (disbursement rate, maturity rate, expenditure rate, and beneficiary funding), missing values were imputed using the respective group-specific (SAP or PAP) median values. This method was selected over mean imputation to mitigate the influence of outliers in the skewed distributions observed in project lifecycle data, particularly given the relatively small sample of SAP projects ($n = 49$). The conditional approach preserves the heterogeneity between project categories, maintaining the distinctive patterns that characterize each modality. Comparison of descriptive statistics pre- and post-imputation demonstrates minimal distortion in the underlying distributions; the central tendencies, dispersion parameters, and relative differences between SAP and PAP projects remain consistent across the imputed dataset. Importantly, sensitivity analyses conducted on both the original and imputed samples yield substantively identical coefficient estimates and significance levels across all model specifications, suggesting that our findings regarding the relative performance of SAP projects are robust to the treatment of missing data. This methodological approach enabled us to incorporate an additional 41 observations into our analytical sample, enhancing statistical power while maintaining the integrity of the observed empirical relationships.

Annex 6. ALTERNATIVE IDENTIFICATION STRATEGIES AND LIMITATIONS

Our empirical investigation employed several alternative identification strategies that yielded inconclusive results, informing our ultimate methodological choices. We initially tested a comprehensive approach utilizing the full spectrum of investment categories rather than focusing exclusively on health and well-being, and vulnerable communities. This expanded analysis incorporated all self-reported investment allocations across distinct sectoral categories, including energy production, low-emission transport, buildings and appliances, forestry and land-use, infrastructure and built environment, and energy efficiency. Similarly, we explored disaggregated financial performance metrics beyond the composite indicators presented in our main results, examining variations in mitigation versus adaptation funding streams. However, these expanded specifications failed to reveal statistically significant or economically meaningful patterns beyond those captured in our primary models, suggesting that the SAP modality's effects are most pronounced in specific targeting dimensions rather than broadly distributed across investment categories.

In an effort to detect potential non-linear relationships or complex interaction effects that might elude traditional regression approaches, we fitted machine learning techniques including Decision Trees and Random Forest models. These models were fitted to predict various project timeline metrics (e.g., months from CN to FAA, FP receipt to FAA, approval to FAA, and FAA execution to effectiveness) using SAP status and our full set of control variables. Despite the theoretical capacity of these algorithms to capture complex patterns, the predictive performance was quite disappointing, with low correlation coefficients between predicted and actual values across all timeline variables. Visualization of these predictions against actual outcomes revealed substantial dispersion without systematic patterns, suggesting that either the SAP designation lacks strong predictive power for project timelines when controlling for other factors, or that the limited sample size constrained the algorithms' ability to detect subtle patterns.

To ensure the robustness of our findings, we conducted several diagnostic tests and alternative specifications. We implemented tests for heteroskedasticity using both Breusch-Pagan and White's tests, confirming the appropriateness of our standard error estimates. Additionally, we performed heterogeneity analysis to identify and control for potential subgroup effects that might confound the relationship between SAP status and our outcome variables, systematically testing for differential impacts across project size categories, regions, and implementing entity types. To address concerns regarding unobserved heterogeneity, we employed models with additional fixed effects and conducted sensitivity analyses using different sets of control variables. While these robustness checks occasionally affected the statistical significance of certain coefficients, the most consistent and robust findings remained the positive impact of SAP on investments targeting vulnerable communities and the health and well-being result areas, as well as the reduction in time between FP approval and FAA effective date in the base model specifications.

Several limitations warrant acknowledgement in our analysis. First, despite our careful group-conditional median imputation strategy, the necessity of imputing missing data introduces potential measurement error, though our sensitivity analyses indicate that results remain consistent between imputed and non-imputed samples. Second, the relatively modest sample size of SAP projects (n = 49) compared to PAP projects (n = 239) limits statistical power, particularly for detecting small

effect sizes. However, this limitation primarily affects external validity rather than internal validity, as our findings remain representative of the existing portfolio of GCF projects implemented under the SAP modality. Finally, our reliance on self-reported categorization of investment allocations by AEs introduces the possibility of reporting bias, as entities may have strategic incentives to classify investments in ways that align with institutional priorities or reporting requirements. Despite these limitations, the consistency of our findings across multiple model specifications and robustness checks suggests that our core conclusions regarding the impact of SAP on project targeting and financial execution remain well-supported by the available evidence.

Annex 7. BENCHMARKING COMPARISON MATRICES

GCF: *Simplified Approval Process (SAP)* – simplified and improved access to funding and improve the efficiency and timeliness in the design, review, approval and disbursement procedures for small-scale proposals

GEF: *Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)* – adaptation financing for LDCs, supports national adaptation programmes of action and broader adaptation priorities

AF: *Enhanced Direct Access (EDA)* – enables national entities to directly manage adaptation projects up to USD 5 million.

CIF: *Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM)* – grants under the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) specifically for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in pilot countries.

Global Fund: *ATM Challenging Operating Environment Policy (COE)* – policy and processes adapted for fragile and conflict-affected contexts to simplify and accelerate grant processes

GAVI: *Fragility, Emergencies and Displaced Populations Policy (FEDP)* – tailored processes to support immunization in fragile and emergency settings with streamlined access

Table A - 2. Macro features of comparator funds

Macro feature	GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
Year established	2017 (GCF B.18/24)	2001 (operational 2002)	2015 pilot decision	2010 (DGM design; first approvals 2015)	2016 policy adoption	2018 policy adoption
Administering institution	GCF Secretariat	GEF Secretariat hosted by World Bank (WB)	AF Board, Secretariat hosted by GEF	CIF (WB trustee; IBRD)	Global Fund Secretariat (independent foundation under Swiss law)	Gavi Secretariat (public-private partnership)
Target beneficiaries	Developing countries' small-scale climate projects via AEs	LDC governments and agencies implementing adaptation priorities	National implementing entities (NIEs) in developing countries with direct access accreditation	IPLCs in FIP pilot countries	Health ministries and civil society organizations (CSOs) operating in fragile/conflict settings	National immunization programmes in fragile, emergency, and displacement contexts
Financial instruments	Primarily grants; also concessional loans/equity	Grants only	Grants only ($\leq$ USD 5M per project)	Grants only	Grants (core GFATM* modality)	Grants (core Gavi modality)
Funding size/ceiling per project	$\leq$ USD 25 million GCF contribution	No explicit ceiling; typically USD 1–10M	USD $\leq$ 5 million per EDA project	Country DGM ~USD 4–6M total, individual subgrants usually $\leq$ USD 100k	Varies by grant, no specific ceiling under COE policy	Varies by grant; FEDP applies flexibility within Gavi's standard country ceilings
Overall fund size (latest available)	~USD 18B approved (SAP is subset)	USD 1.7B cumulative pledges	~USD 1.25B total AF portfolio	USD 80M allocated to DGM (phases I and II)	USD 78B approved cumulatively	USD 30B mobilized since 2000
Access modality	AEs (DAEs or international AEs) submit proposals	Agencies submit via GEF implementing partners	Direct access through accredited NIEs managing funds	National steering committees (NSCs) with executing agencies under multilateral development bank supervision	Country Coordinating Mechanisms submit proposals; COE policy adapts processes	Ministries of Health and partners submit; FEDP enables streamlined decision-making

Macro feature	GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
Risk appetite/ Eligibility risk category	Category C only (minimal/no risk)	Wide (LDCF follows GEF safeguards; Category B or C common)	Allows moderate/high risk if safeguards managed	Low-moderate risk activities; multilateral development bank safeguards apply	Varies by grant; COE focuses on risk management in fragile contexts	N/A (health systems support; focuses on operational flexibility in fragile settings)
Geographic coverage	All GCF eligible developing countries	LDCs only (currently 46)	All developing countries eligible for AF with accredited NIEs	FIP pilot countries only (initial 8, later expanded to ~13)	~130 countries; COE policy applicable to fragile/conflict- affected contexts	57 Gavi-eligible countries; FEDP applies in fragile, emergency or displacement settings
Key simplification or streamlining feature	Shorter templates, capped proposal length, promises of faster review	Tailored to LDC adaptation priorities with streamlined approval versus GEF standard projects	Direct access with full control by national entity over funds and project decisions	Community-driven grant selection with country-level NSC governance	Adapted grant processes with greater flexibility in COEs	Flexible funding and processes tailored for emergencies and displacement

Source: Adaptation Fund, “Guidance Document for the Adaptation Fund Enhanced Direct Access Pilot Mechanism;” Adaptation Fund, “Projects & Programmes;” Climate Investment Funds, “Design and Implementation Plan for DGM;” Climate Investment Funds, “Annual Report 2018 DGM;” Climate Investment Funds, “How we work;” Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, “Fragility, Emergencies, Refugees Policy;” Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, *Progress Report 2023*; Global Environment Facility, “LDCF and SCCF;” Global Environment Facility, “LDCF;” Green Climate Fund, “B.18/06: SAP FP approval;” Green Climate Fund, “Update SAP;” Green Climate Fund, “Portfolio Dashboard;” The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, “Global Fund Policy on COE;” The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, “Results Report 2022.”

Note: * GFATM = Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

Table A - 3. Governance and decision-making structures across comparator funds

	GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
Governing body	GCF Board (24 members; equal developed/developing country representation)	GEF Council (32 members; 16 from developing countries, 14 from developed, 2 from economies in transition)	AF Board (16 members; 7 developing, 2 LDCs/SIDS, 2 annex I, 2 annex II, 3 others)	Country NSCs with IPLC majority; Global Steering Committee gives overall guidance	Global Fund Board (20 voting members: 10 implementer, 10 donor; plus non- voting CSO, private sector foundations)	Gavi Board (28 members including implementing countries, donors, WHO, UNICEF, WB, CSOs, private sector, foundations)

	GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
Decision-making model	Consensus preferred; formal voting rarely invoked; Board approves SAP projects	Decisions by consensus or, if needed, 60 per cent double-majority voting (donor and recipient)	Board decisions by consensus; EDA proposals approved as regular projects	NSCs decide DGM grants by majority vote; Global Steering Committee oversees learning but does not approve projects	Board decisions by consensus or two-thirds majority; COE policy approved as operational policy	Board decisions by consensus; FEDP adopted as policy guideline
Secretariat role and autonomy	GCF Secretariat manages review process; no approval authority for SAP; facilitates Board decision-making	GEF Secretariat screens proposals, coordinates with agencies, but Council approves funding	AF Secretariat (hosted by GEF) screens/reviews proposals; no final decision authority	National executing agencies (NEAs) implement projects under NSC guidance; CIF Admin Unit provides coordination; WB trustee supervises	Secretariat manages grants, monitoring, Board support; applies COE flexibilities	Secretariat manages funding, proposal review, Board processes; FEDP through guidelines
Role of CSOs	Observers participate in Board meetings; no voting rights	CSOs are observers in Council; can intervene but not vote	CSOs participate as observers; in some countries NIEs are CSOs	Strong: IPLC organizations form majority of NSCs and Global Steering Committee	Board includes 3 CSO voting seats (NGOs, communities, affected)	CSOs have Board seats and advisory roles (e.g. civil society constituency)
Role of private sector	Private sector observers on Board; AEs can include private entities	Private sector participates mainly via co-financing; no formal Council seat	Limited; mainly public sector NIEs, though private NIEs are eligible	Minimal; NEAs often NGOs; private sector has no direct governance role	Strong: Board includes private sector delegation; many implementer partners are private	Strong: Private sector donors (e.g. Gates Foundation) and manufacturers represented on Board

Source: Adaptation Fund, “Enhanced Direct Access Pilot Mechanism;” Adaptation Fund, “Governance;” Climate Investment Funds, *Annual Report 2018: DGM*; Global Environment Facility, “GEF Council;” Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, “Fragility, Emergencies, Refugees Policy;” Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, “Gavi Board;” Green Climate Fund, “Update SAP;” Green Climate Fund, “Governance;” The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, “Global Fund Policy on COE;” The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, “Global Fund Governance Handbook.”

Note: EECA = Eastern European and Central Asian; IBRD = International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; UNICEF = United Nations Children’s Fund.

Table A - 4. Operational scale of comparator funds

	GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
Secretariat staff size	Managed by GCF Secretariat (>300 staff); no dedicated SAP unit published	Part of GEF Secretariat (~250 staff); no separate LDCF team	Managed by AF Secretariat (~30 staff); no EDA-specific staff	Coordinated by CIF Admin Unit + CI global team (~3–5 staff)	Integrated within Global Fund Secretariat (~1,180 staff, 2024); no COE unit	Integrated within Gavi Secretariat (~500 staff); no FEDP unit
Operational budget (annual)	No separate budget; part of GCF core admin budget USD 110.5M in 2025)	No separate budget; funded via GEF core + trustee fees (~3–4%)	FY26 Board + Secretariat admin budget USD 14.87M (AF-TERG and trustee separate)	One-off USD ~80M total; no annual replenishment	No separate COE budget; COE countries receive ~USD 1.1B/year average	No separate FEDP budget; ~USD 50M/year allocated within core funds
Average award size per project	~USD 13.5M GCF funding per SAP project	~USD 5M per LDCF project	~USD 5–6M per EDA pilot	~USD 5.25M per country DGM	Highly variable; COE grants range <USD 5M to >USD 150M	Varies; ~USD 1–20M depending on emergency/context
Number of projects, programmes	49 SAP projects approved (through B.41)	423 LDCF projects (2002–2024)	4 EDA pilots approved	12 country DGMs + 1 global DGM	~90 grants under COE across 29 countries	~20 countries supported under FEDP since 2017
Countries reached	~30 countries	46 LDCs (global LDC coverage)	4 countries (Costa Rica, South Africa, Antigua and Barbuda, Federated States of Micronesia)	12 countries (FIP pilot countries)	29 COE countries	~20 countries with fragility/emergency support
Average approval timeline	~12 months from concept to approval	~24–28 months	~6–12 months	~6–12 months to approval; longer to disbursement	~9–12 months; full implementation may take longer. Timelines may be faster in emergency contexts (TERG, 2017).	Emergency approvals ~1–2 months; routine ~6+ months
Approval frequency, cycle	Approved at GCF Board meetings	Biannual Council work programme	AF Board meetings (2–3x/year)	One-time approval per country (2015–	Main 3-year cycle + rolling emergency	Biannual Board approvals + rolling

GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
(3x/year)	approvals		17)	approvals	emergency approvals

Source: Adaptation Fund, “Enhanced Direct Access Pilot Mechanism;” Adaptation Fund, “Projects and Programmes;” Climate Investment Funds, “Annual Report 2018: DGM;” Climate Investment Funds, “How we work;” Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, “Fragility, Emergencies, Refugees Policy;” Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, *Progress Report 2023*; Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office, *OPS7 Report*; Global Environment Facility, “LDCF;” Independent Evaluation Unit, *SAP2020*; Green Climate Fund, “Update SAP;” Green Climate Fund, “Portfolio Dashboard;” Technical Evaluation Reference Group, *Study Area 3*.

Table A - 5. Procedural simplification, capacity support and operational model

	GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
Concept note	Yes; highly recommended CN before FP submission for eligibility screening and guidance	Yes; project identification form (PIF) required for full-sized projects; medium projects can skip	Optional; CN enables formulation grant but full proposal can be submitted directly	No CN at fund level; local proposals submitted to country NEA	No CN; uses tailored funding requests replacing concept stage	No separate CN; applications adapted to country fragility context
Full proposal requirements	Simplified FP template max 20 pages; minimal annexes for low-risk projects	Detailed full project document post-PIF, with standard GEF requirements	Standard AF FP with additional EDA management and selection details	Short proposals for <USD 50k; longer FP for larger grants	Tailored forms with reduced requirements for COE continuation or emergency	Adaptive applications; reduced documentation and flexible co-financing
Review process	Secretariat screens; iTAP reviews; Board approves in regular sessions	Secretariat reviews PIF; Council approves; CEO endorses	Secretariat and Project/Programme Review Committee’s review; Board approval at biannual meetings	NSC reviews and approves local grants	Technical Review Panel reviews with adapted criteria; Grant Approval Committee recommends; Board approves	IRC reviews routine proposals; Secretariat fast-tracks emergencies
Approval timeline	~12 months median; faster than regular GCF processes	~24–28 months total; PIF to CEO endorsement	~6–12 months; dependent on Board meeting cycles	~6–12 months to approve; community disbursement often faster	~8–12 months normal; weeks for emergency approvals	~6 months routine approvals; ~1–2 months for emergencies
Eligibility criteria	AEs; ≤USD 25M GCF; minimal risk	LDCs only; adaptation projects	AF-accredited NIEs; ≤USD 5M; direct	IPLC organizations in FIP countries;	COE-classified countries; retains	Fragile or emergency-affected

	GCF SAP	GEF LDCF	AF EDA	CIF DGM	Global Fund COE	Gavi FEDP
	Category C only	linked to national adaptation programmes of action or national plans	national management required	grants managed by NEA	disease eligibility rules	Gavi countries; needs-based eligibility
Capacity, preparation support	SAP team provides preparation support; Readiness and Project Preparation Funding also available upon prior application	Project Preparation Grants (~USD 50k) available for full proposals	Project Formulation Grants up to USD 50k offered	Strong capacity support via NEAs and global knowledge exchanges	No formal project preparation grant; technical assistance and flexible partner implementation support	Additional technical assistance via partners; operational and system strengthening funds support
Key process innovation	Streamlined template; rolling iTAP review; reduced documentation burden	Streamlined GEF cycle; equitable country allocation caps introduced	Devolved subgrant decision-making to national entities	Community-led review and approval processes; direct access	Operational flexibilities; adapted risk management and reporting	Context-driven tailored processes; integrates humanitarian-development nexus
Core operational model	Rolling submissions; Secretariat manages review with no delegated approvals; designed as “fast-track”, but within existing Board approval system	Country caps; limited GEF Agencies propose projects; Council approves PIFs; CEO endorses FPs; focuses on equitable LDC allocation	National entity-led programmes; Board approves umbrella EDA proposal; country committee selects and manages subgrants with no further Board review	Community-driven grants; NSC of IPLC reps selects projects; NEA implements; funded under FIP country envelope	Flexible grant applications; adapted reviews; approvals follow standard Technical Review Panel / Grant Approval Committee process with special COE criteria and risk tolerance	Tailored proposals for fragile contexts; partners implement; flexible approval pathways to maintain immunization in emergencies or protracted crises

Source: Adaptation Fund, “Enhanced Direct Access Pilot Mechanism;” Adaptation Fund, “Instructions for Preparing a Request for Project Funding;” Climate Investment Funds, “DGM Operational Guidelines;” Climate Investment Funds, *Annual Report 2018: DGM*; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, “Fragility, Emergencies, Refugees Policy;” Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, “FEDP Policy;” Global Environment Facility, “Project Cycle Policy;” Global Environment Facility, “LDCF;” Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office, *OPS7 Report*; Green Climate Fund, “GCF in Brief: SAP;” Green Climate Fund, “Update SAP;” Independent Evaluation Unit, *SAP2020*; The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, “Operational Policy Note: COEs.”

Annex 8. INTERNAL COHERENCE OF SAP VIS-À-VIS OTHER GCF MODALITIES

	Simplified Approval Process (SAP)	Regular Project Approval (PAP)	Project Preparation Facility (PPF)	Readiness Programme	Project-Specific Accreditation (PSAA)	Enhanced Direct Access (EDA)	REDD+ results-based payments (RBP)
Purpose	Fast-track window for small (<USD 25M) high-impact projects via streamlined review and documentation. ¹	Mainstream funding channel for all project sizes/themes, without special streamlining (primary GCF modality covering bulk of funding). ²	Provides dedicated support for developing full FPs (fills design-stage gap, complementing SAP's focus on ready-to-implement projects). ³	Strengthens institutional capacity, planning, and pipelines in countries (parallel support mechanism to enhance access, complementing project funding under SAP/PAP). ⁴	Expedited one-project accreditation pathway to broaden partner access (addresses entry barriers beyond SAP's project-level scope by focusing on entity vetting). ⁵	Devolves funding decisions to national entities for country-owned small grants or loan programmes (goes further in direct access than SAP's centralized project approval). ⁶	Incentivizes and rewards achieved forest emission reductions via ex-post payments (specialized results-based scheme outside SAP's ex-ante project funding approach). ⁷
Eligibility	Any developing country AE; proposal must require ≤USD 25M GCF funding and pose minimal environmental/social risk (Category C). ⁸	Any AE with appropriate accreditation level; no specific size or risk restrictions (open to micro through large projects, as per entity accreditation scope) (GCF, 2011). ⁹	AEs (priority to DAEs and microsmall projects) with a GCF-cleared CN can request support. ³ Each PPF grant ties to one prospective funding proposal.	All UNFCCC developing countries via their NDA (or focal point). Grants delivered through NDAs or their nominated delivery partners; includes support for strengthening DAEs. ¹⁰	Entities not yet accredited to GCF that meet GCF standards and obtain an NDA nomination/no-objection. Capped at one approved project per entity under the pilot (GCF, 2023b). ¹¹	DAEs nominated by their countries (national/regional public agencies, private sector or NGO) with relevant accreditation (grant-award or on-lending functions) can submit EDA proposals. ⁶	National REDD+ countries with UNFCCC-verified results (completed REDD+ readiness and implementation phases) for 2013–2018 are eligible to apply under the pilot. ⁷
Funding type	GCF financing instruments (grants,	Full range of GCF funding	Grants for project preparation activities	Grants (capacity-building and	Mirrors standard FP instruments for	Typically GCF grants to the DAE,	RBPs (ex-post reward for

	Simplified Approval Process (SAP)	Regular Project Approval (PAP)	Project Preparation Facility (PPF)	Readiness Programme	Project-Specific Accreditation (PSAA)	Enhanced Direct Access (EDA)	REDD+ results-based payments (RBP)
	concessional loans, guarantees or equity) as applicable – same range of instruments as in PAP. ⁹	instruments (grants, loans, equity, guarantees) determined by project needs and risk profile. ⁹	(e.g. feasibility studies, ESMS/gender assessments, business plans). Non-reimbursable support, not part of project financing itself. ³	technical assistance). Not investment financing – readiness funds are non-reimbursable support to enable future projects. ¹⁰	the project (e.g. can blend grants/loans as appropriate); PSAA mainly reduces accreditation transaction costs rather than altering funding types. ⁵	which then onward disburses as small grants or loans to local actors. Requires DAE capability for grant-award and/or on-lending mechanisms. ⁶	verified emission reductions, priced at USD 5 per ton CO ₂). No repayment obligation; proceeds often expected to be reinvested in climate actions. ⁷
Ceiling/Size	GCF contribution capped at USD 25M per project (initial pilot cap was USD 10M, later increased). ⁸ Total project size (including co-finance) generally in micro/small category	No fixed funding cap – accommodates medium and large projects beyond SAP's limit. Many proposals exceed tens or hundreds of millions in GCF funding (e.g. multi-country programmes). ²	Up to USD 1.5M per request. ¹² Typically one PPF grant per project concept. Higher amounts exceptional and subject to Board approval if ever required.	Up to USD 1M per country per year for general readiness support (e.g. NDA strengthening, strategies). ¹⁰ An additional cumulative USD 3M per country is available specifically for national adaptation plan development. ¹³	No specific limit on project size – pilot allows proposals of any scale (micro to large) since entity capacity is assessed case-by-case. ¹¹	Initial pilot envelope of USD 200M for at least 10 pilots (implying ~USD 20M average project size). ¹⁴ In practice, only ~25% of this envelope was utilized as of 2022. ⁶	Pilot programme size USD 500M (2017–2022). ⁷ A country cap was applied (e.g. max ~30% of funds per country) to ensure broad distribution. Individual RBP funding amounts depend on volume of emissions reduced and the USD 5/ton price.
Review and approval	Secretariat screening and iTAP assessment, following a simplified proposal template. However, final approval is by the GCF Board at formal	Standard GCF project cycle: optional concept review, full proposal review by Secretariat and iTAP, then Board	Secretariat reviews PPF applications (must align with an endorsed CN). Approvals are made by the Secretariat under ED delegated	Secretariat evaluates readiness proposals on a rolling basis. Grants are approved by the	Combined assessment process: entity capacity review (parallel to accreditation, by Accreditation	EDA proposals undergo the usual GCF due diligence (Secretariat and iTAP) and require full Board approval. Unique	Proposals submitted during a limited RFP window and assessed with a dedicated scorecard

	Simplified Approval Process (SAP)	Regular Project Approval (PAP)	Project Preparation Facility (PPF)	Readiness Programme	Project-Specific Accreditation (PSAA)	Enhanced Direct Access (EDA)	REDD+ results-based payments (RBP)
	meetings (no delegated authority under the pilot). ¹⁵	consideration and approval at regular Board meetings. ¹⁰ This is the baseline process that SAP aimed to streamline.	authority, outside of Board meetings (expediting support). ¹²	GCF ED (under Board-approved framework) without Board vote on each request, and then implemented via NDA/partner agreements. ¹⁰	Panel [AP]) occurs simultaneously with FP review (by Secretariat/iTAP). Both accreditation and project are approved together by the Board in one step under the pilot. ¹¹	to EDA, the approved DAE then allocates funding to subprojects domestically via country-level decision-making bodies, rather than individual subproject approval by GCF. ⁶	(including carbon, non-carbon benefits and safeguards). Approved by the Board as per normal cycle, albeit reflecting ex-post results instead of ex-ante project plans. ⁷
Timeline	Envisioned as faster than regular cycle; in practice SAP has often taken 1–2 years from concept to approval, similar to PAP timelines. ¹⁵ Ongoing efforts aim to improve speed.	Follows GCF's standard timeline: typically multi-stage development and Board approval process that can span around 18–24 months for many proposals (varies by project complexity). ¹⁵	Rolling application – PPF requests can be submitted any time. Approval and disbursement generally occur within a few months of submission, significantly quicker than full FPs. ¹²	Continuous programme – no fixed cycles. Readiness grants are usually approved on a rolling basis year-round. Preparation to approval is faster and less formal than investment projects, though implementation can extend over 1–2 years or more. ⁴	Aims to compress accreditation + proposal timeline. The pilot is limited to 3 years (Apr 2023–Mar 2026), with up to 10 PSAA projects to be processed per year. ¹¹ Actual approval times expected to be shorter than the separate accreditation plus PAP sequence	Launched in 2015 but progressed slowly – the pilot remained open for several years. By 2022 only three EDA projects were approved, reflecting challenges in pipeline uptake. ⁶ EDA thus did not provide a rapid access route, despite its intent to empower local decision-making.	Five-year pilot window: 2017 through end of 2022, during which eligible countries could submit RBP proposals (GCF Board, 2017b). Several funding decisions were made between 2018–2020 before the pilot's funding was exhausted, after which the Board began considering integrating RBP into regular programming.

	Simplified Approval Process (SAP)	Regular Project Approval (PAP)	Project Preparation Facility (PPF)	Readiness Programme	Project-Specific Accreditation (PSAA)	Enhanced Direct Access (EDA)	REDD+ results-based payments (RBP)
Distinctive feature	Simplified application and review process – shorter proposal templates (≈20 pages) and fewer annexes, aiming to reduce complexity and accelerate approval for smaller projects. ⁸ Emphasizes scalability and paradigm shift potential despite the reduced documentation.	Comprehensive, full-scale PAP. Serves as the default modality with the most extensive due diligence and documentation requirements, against which SAP's “simplification” is measured. ¹⁶ All fiduciary, ESS, gender and investment criteria are addressed in detail.	Upstream project development support tool. PPF directly funds the preparation of project proposals (feasibility studies, environmental/social assessments, etc.), thereby strengthening the quality of SAP/PAP submissions and helping lower-capacity AEs develop bankable projects. ³	Dedicated capacity-building and preparatory support instrument. Readiness operates outside the project cycle to build the necessary enabling environment, skills, and strategic frameworks – ensuring countries and DAEs can better utilize SAP and other GCF funding opportunities. ⁴	One-off, project-specific accreditation pilot. Allows new or niche entities to bypass the lengthy institutional accreditation queue and access GCF for a single project. The trade-off is a time-bound accreditation valid only for that project, intended to reduce entry barriers while maintaining standards. ⁵	Locally driven funding pilot. EDA features devolved decision-making: once the GCF approves an overall envelope, local committees decide on myriad small projects. This fundamentally increases country ownership and flexibility compared to SAP, which still requires each project to go through centralized approval. ⁶	Performance-based payment scheme. Unlike SAP (which funds inputs/activities), RBP disburses funds only after verified climate results are achieved. This modality directly ties funding to outcomes and utilizes UNFCCC-established REDD+ monitoring and safeguards frameworks, distinguishing it from GCF's upfront financing approaches. ⁷

Source:

¹ Green Climate Fund, “Decision B.18/06: Policy matters related to the approval of funding proposals: Simplified approval process for certain small-scale activities.”

² United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Report of the GCF to the COP (FCCC/CP/2024/3)*.

³ Green Climate Fund, “Project Preparation Facility Guidelines.”

⁴ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme*.

⁵ Green Climate Fund, “Decision B.31/06: Matters related to accreditation.”

⁶ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Synthesis of Direct Access in the GCF*.

⁷ Green Climate Fund, “B.18/07: Policy matters related to the approval of funding proposals: Request for proposals for REDD-plus results-based payments.”

⁸ Green Climate Fund, “Simplified Approval Process.”

⁹ Green Climate Fund, “Governing Instrument for the Green Climate Fund.”

¹⁰ Green Climate Fund, “Decision B.08/11: Revised programme of work on readiness and preparatory support.”

¹¹ Green Climate Fund, “Project-Specific Assessment Approach.”

¹² Green Climate Fund, “B.13/21: Funding proposals: Project Preparation Facility.”

¹³ Green Climate Fund, “B.13/09: Matters related to guidance from the Conference of the Parties: Adaptation planning processes.”

¹⁴ Green Climate Fund, “B.10/04: Additional modalities that further enhance direct access: Terms of reference for a pilot phase.”

¹⁵ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Assessment of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme*.

¹⁶ Independent Evaluation Unit, *Forward-Looking Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund*.

Note: ESMS = environmental and safety management system; REDD = reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Annex 9. CASE STUDIES

These case studies were designed to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and transformational potential of the SAP compared to the PAP projects.

The study employed a purposive sampling approach with two key criteria:

SAP project selection: From the universe of 49 approved SAP projects, we identified those that explicitly described in its proposal an earlier project which the initiative aimed to scale up. Among those projects that fit this criterion, we included the seven projects with three APRs in order to assess results achieved.

PAP comparator selection: Regular approval process projects were selected based on: (i) roughly equivalent financial size to SAP projects (under USD 10 million GCF contribution), (ii) ESS Category C classification, and (iii) thematic and geographic comparability where possible.

Data collection and analysis

Project profile: For each project, publicly available GCF data was used to describe its main characteristics, including results areas where the project contributes.⁸⁸

Implementation timeline: Public GCF data were used to compare four stages in the project processing timeline: (i) CN receipt to FP submission; (ii) Proposal submission to Board approval; (iii) Board approval to signing FAA; and (iv) FAA to first disbursement of fund. These points were mapped using an identical scale to facilitate a visual comparison between cases.

Document review: For each selected project, we systematically analysed:

- The original project proposal
- Predecessor project documentation (evaluations, completion reports) where available
- APRs
- Midterm evaluations (where available)

AI-assisted case study development: A standardized prompt was used to guide ChatGPT 4o to produce an analysis of project documents. The prompt specified an analysis covering: (i) project origins and predecessor connections, (ii) objectives and SAP-specific design features, (iii) implementation progress with indicator performance analysis, and (iv) impact assessment with explicit evaluation of SAP value-add compared to standard procedures.

Analytical framework

The case studies assess effectiveness by comparing each project's stated objectives with results achieved, using performance indicators and evaluation data to examine delivery against intended outcomes. Efficiency is analysed through design and implementation features associated with the SAP modality, including simplified safeguards, limited budget, and streamlined procedures.

Transformational potential is examined through links to predecessor initiatives, evidence of scale-up or replication, and engagement with national institutions to support policy integration and sustainability.

⁸⁸ Projects approved before March 2021 followed the GCF's initial results management framework, which did not require standardized tagging of result areas. In March 2021, Board Decision B.28/01 adopted the integrated results management framework, mandating explicit result area identification and harmonized indicators for impacts, outcomes, and outputs in project proposals. As a result, several PAP case studies do not indicate which result areas they contribute to.

Quality assurance

Each case study was reviewed for factual accuracy, citation verification, and analytical coherence.

Limitations

The case study methodology relies on available project documentation and these are self-reported, both through APRs and midterm evaluations which are contracted by the AE. APRs vary significantly in quality and comprehensiveness across projects. Gender disaggregated data was not available for review. Not all case studies have available midterm evaluations, limiting assessment of higher-level outcomes. There is also a significant lag between when a midterm review is received by the Secretariat and when it is cleared for outside review. Midterm reviews are not available on the public-facing GCF platform and must be requested from the Secretariat. The AI-assisted approach, while enabling efficient processing of large document sets, required careful validation of outputs against source materials.

Conclusions

The case study analysis reveals few systematic differences between SAP and PAP projects in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, or transformational potential. This suggests that the SAP successfully maintained project quality while streamlining procedures. Both modalities demonstrate comparable success rates in achieving planned results, with most projects meeting or exceeding key performance indicators despite implementation challenges common across the portfolio—including procurement delays, COVID-19 disruptions, and coordination difficulties with national institutions. The efficiency analysis shows that both SAP and PAP projects operate within similar cost-per-beneficiary ranges and face comparable timeline pressures, though SAPs appear to benefit from slightly faster implementation startup due to their streamlined approval processes.

Perhaps most significantly, both SAP and PAP projects demonstrate strong foundations built on prior experiences and lessons learned from predecessor initiatives. The case studies reveal a consistent pattern of institutional learning, with projects like Peru's FP001 building on debt-for-nature swap experiences, Senegal's FP003 incorporating lessons from the earlier *Projet d'Appui à la Petite Irrigation Locale* (PAPIL) project, and multiple WFP projects (FP049, SAP007, SAP011) representing iterative development of the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative model. This validates the SAP approach: it recognized projects that were already demonstrating success under the regular process and created a more efficient pathway for similar interventions, without compromising the fundamental project design principles that made them effective in the first place.

The key differentiator appears to be procedural rather than substantive: SAPs enabled faster deployment of proven approaches without compromising project quality, particularly valuable for scaling tested interventions where extended approval processes could diminish relevance or urgency. The similarity in project characteristics, performance, and outcomes between the two groups reveals an important temporal artefact: many of the PAP projects analysed were essentially "proto-SAPs"—projects that would have been excellent candidates for simplified approval had that modality existed at the time of their submission.

Project no./ modality Country	Project name	AE ESS Category Theme Board approval	GCF funding (USD M) % disbursed (as of Apr 1, 2025)	Expected results (beneficiaries direct/indirect) (tCO ₂ avoided)
FP001 PAP Peru	Building the Resilience of Wetlands in the Province of Datem del Marañón	Profonanpe (DAE) Category C Cross-cutting B.11	6.24 100%	20,413 2.6M
FP003 PAP Senegal	Increasing the resilience of ecosystems and communities through the restoration of the productive bases of salinized lands	CSE (DAE) Category C Adaptation B.11	7.61 73%	20,769/109,035
FP023 PAP Namibia	Climate Resilient Agriculture in three of the Vulnerable Extreme northern crop growing regions (CRAVE)	EIF (DAE) Category C Adaptation B.14	9.50 100%	8,000/13,000
FP024 PAP Namibia	Empower to Adapt: Creating Climate-Change Resilient Livelihoods through Community-Based Natural Resource Management	EIF (DAE) Category C Adaptation B.14	10.00 100%	15,500/61,000
FP049 PAP Senegal	Building the climate resilience of food insecure smallholder farmers through integrated management of climate risk (R4)	WFP (IAE) Category C Adaptation B.18	9.98 96%	405,000/121,500
FP067 PAP Tajikistan	Building climate resilience of vulnerable and food insecure communities through capacity strengthening and livelihood diversification in mountainous regions	WFP (IAE) Category C Adaptation B.19	9.27 100%	50,000/70,000

Project no./ modality Country	Project name	AE ESS Category Theme Board approval	GCF funding (USD M) % disbursed (as of Apr 1, 2025)	Expected results (beneficiaries direct/indirect) (tCO ₂ avoided)
SAP007 SAP Zimbabwe	Integrated Climate Risk Management for Food Security and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe focusing on Masvingo and Rushinga Districts	WFP (IAE) Category C Adaptation B.23	8.86 79%	50,000/52,000
SAP008 SAP Bangladesh	Extended Community Climate Change Project-Flood (ECCCP-Flood)	PKSF (DAE) Category C Adaptation B.24	9.68 100%	90,000/100,000
SAP009 SAP Lao PDR	Building resilience of urban populations with ecosystem-based solutions	UNEP (IAE) Category C Adaptation B.24	10.00 49%	74,600/825,000
SAP011 SAP Mozambique	Climate-resilient food security for women and men smallholders in Mozambique through integrated risk management	WFP (IAE) Category C Adaptation B.24	9.25 82%	48,000/0
SAP015 SAP Côte d'Ivoire	Promoting zero-deforestation cocoa production for reducing emissions (PROMIRE)	FAO (IAE) Category C Mitigation B.26	10.00 64%	5.5M
SAP022 SAP Uzbekistan	Enhancing Multi-Hazard Early Warning System to increase resilience of Uzbekistan communities to climate change induced hazards	UNDP (IAE) Category C Adaptation B.28	10.00 78%	11,296,000/ 32,390,000

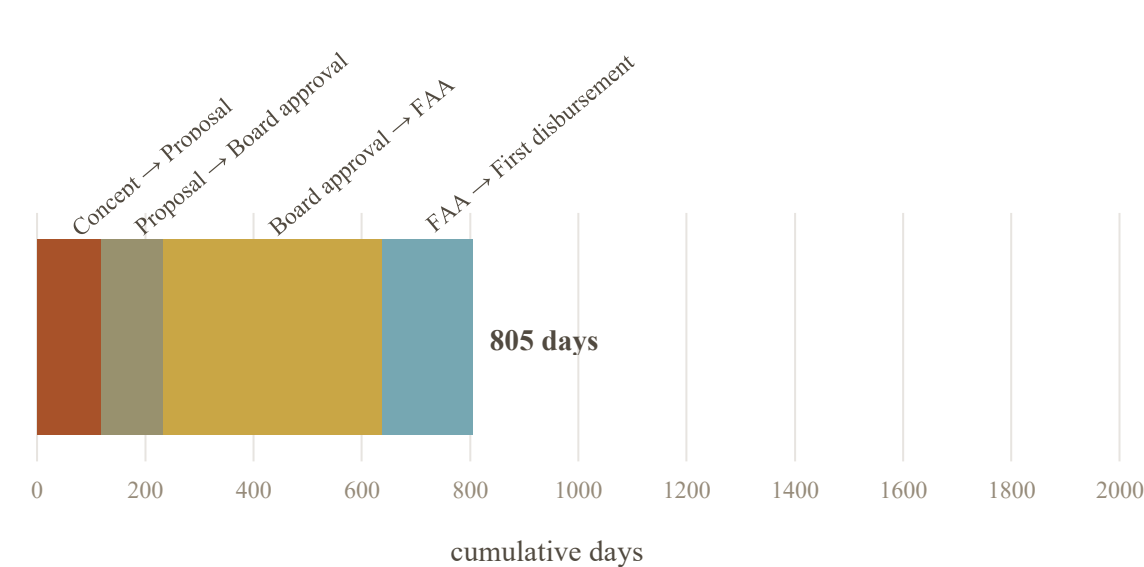
Project no./ modality Country	Project name	AE ESS Category Theme Board approval	GCF funding (USD M) % disbursed (as of Apr 1, 2025)	Expected results (beneficiaries direct/indirect) (tCO ₂ avoided)
SAP023 SAP Mexico	River Restoration for Climate Change Adaptation (RIOS)	FMCN (DAE) Category C Cross-cutting B.28	10.00 83%	63,294/865,634 2.4M

Note: CSE = Centre de Suivi Écologique; EIF = Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; FMCN = Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C.; PKSf = Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation; UNEP = United Nations Environment Programme; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme

FP001 BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF WETLANDS IN THE PROVINCE OF DATEM DEL MARAÑÓN, PERU

GCF Project ID	FP001
Implementation period	5 November 2015 – 31 December 2024
AE	PROFONANPE
GCF financing	USD 6.24 million
Total project investment	USD 9.11 million
Project type	Cross-cutting
ESS Category	C
Number of direct beneficiaries	20,413
Number of indirect beneficiaries	Not explicitly stated
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	2.6m MtCO ₂ eq (over 5 years)

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

FP001 was developed following a debt-for-nature swap agreement implemented in the *Datem del Marañón* province between 2005 and 2018, executed by the PROFONANPE as a DAE, which provided it experience in community-based environmental governance and laid the groundwork for

this project.⁸⁹ Additional motivation arose from stakeholder discussions during COP20 which took place in Lima in 2014, which prompted exploration of GCF support for peatland conservation.⁹⁰ The project's climate rationale is based on the existence of Amazonian peatlands in the area, which store an estimated 3.78 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent and are increasingly at risk due to climate change and extractive pressures.⁹¹ This ecosystem is vulnerable to extreme events such as drought, floods or heatwaves that threaten both local biodiversity as well as the livelihoods of 120 Indigenous communities.⁹² The intervention aims to address the underlying causes of deforestation through participatory land-use planning, biobusiness development as well as governance reforms.⁹³ The project's low environmental and social risk (Category C), budget below USD 10 million, and community-based model made would have made this a suitable SAP project had that modality been an option when this project was developed.

Project objectives and design features

The project comprises four components: (1) institutional capacity-building for land-use planning and climate governance; (2) strengthening community institutions for natural resource management; (3) promoting sustainable biobusinesses; and (4) enhancing knowledge and monitoring systems.⁹⁴ Its core climate objectives are to reduce 1.3 MtCO₂eq, improve resilience to climate impacts, and enhance livelihoods across 338,000 ha of peatlands and forest.⁹⁵ The target population includes 20,413 people from 120 Indigenous communities representing seven ethnic groups.⁹⁶ The project is implemented by Profonanpe, a DAE, with co-financing from the Government of Korea to support solar energy use in biobusinesses.⁹⁷ The design emphasizes culturally appropriate engagement, participatory governance, and integration of traditional ecological knowledge.⁹⁸

Implementation and performance overview

During the first phase (2017–2019), project implementation lagged due to coordination issues, low execution rates, and the withdrawal of USD 1.2 million in KOICA funds.⁹⁹ Adaptive management introduced in late 2019—such as field team restructuring and enhanced supervision—improved execution.¹⁰⁰ By December 2023, the project had placed 399,857 ha under improved management and established three Environmental Conservation Areas, including Sasipahua (81,812 ha).¹⁰¹ Sixty-one biobusinesses had been created, involving 874 members (46 per cent women), with 494,758 tCO₂eq emissions avoided through reduced deforestation.¹⁰² However, delays persisted in integrating local governments into planning processes and in deploying photovoltaic systems due to political instability.¹⁰³ Early monitoring challenges included poorly defined indicators and lack of systematized data collection that prompted the midterm evaluation to recommend establishing a

⁸⁹ Profonanpe, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2023 – FP001* (Lima, Peru: Profonanpe, 2024), 3. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp001-annual-performance-report-cy2023-projects-programme-approved-under-pmfs-v.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 2, 4.

⁹² Ibid., 4.

⁹³ Ibid., 5, 6.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 5–7.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 6, 8.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁹ KOICA stands for Korea International Cooperation Agency. See Godfrey Ruiz, *Interim Evaluation Report: Building the Resilience of Wetlands in the Province of Datem del Marañón–FP001*, Internal report (Profonanpe, 2021), 6.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Profonanpe, APR 2023 – FP001, 3–6.

¹⁰² Ibid., 7.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 5–8.

more strategic monitoring and evaluation system.¹⁰⁴ A no-cost extension to 2024 was approved to consolidate achievements and complete outstanding activities.¹⁰⁵

Transformational elements

FP001 reports strong engagement with national and regional institutions, including the approval of the *Datem del Marañón* Local Climate Change Plan and territorial zoning files for several Indigenous nations.¹⁰⁶ Possible replication or scale-up could occur via different pathways described in policy proposals submitted to the regional government as well as co-investment from national programmes such as the Fondo de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Social (the social cooperation fund in Peru set up to support poor and vulnerable communities).¹⁰⁷ The project's biobusiness model has been expanded across 61 enterprises with solar energy pilots in three communities.¹⁰⁸ Learnings have been disseminated through different project publications and experience reports to inform future programming.¹⁰⁹ Despite early challenges, the project has contributed to a provincial-scale conservation strategy and helped institutionalize community-based climate governance practices.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Godfrey Ruiz, *Interim Evaluation Report: FP001*, Internal report (Profonanpe, 2021), 6–7.

¹⁰⁵ Profonanpe, *APR 2023 – FP001*, 6.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 4–6.

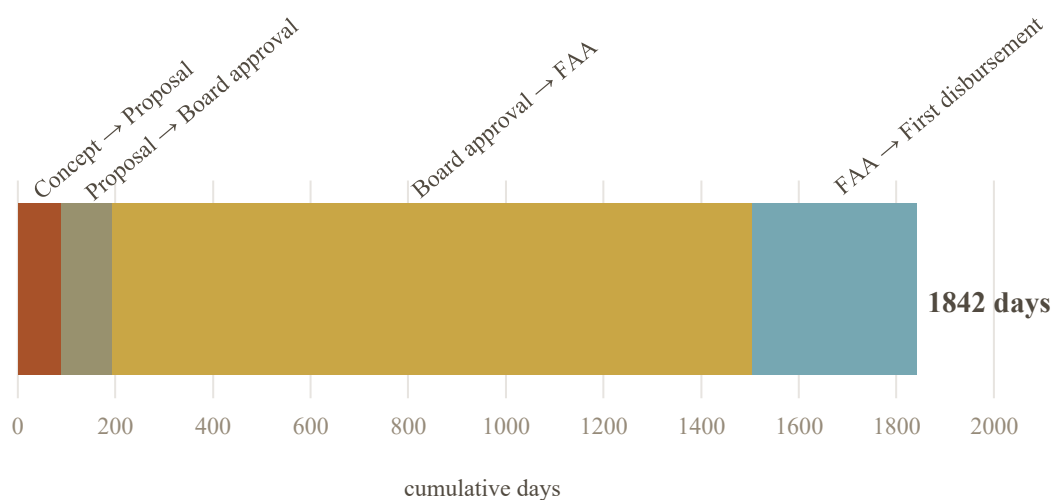
¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3–5.

FP003 INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE RESTORATION OF THE PRODUCTIVE BASES OF SALINIZED LANDS

GCF Project ID	FP003
Implementation period	5 November 2015 – 13 February 2026
AE	Centre de Suivi Écologique (CSE)
GCF financing	USD 7.61 million
Total project investment	USD 8.16 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	B
Number of direct beneficiaries	20,769
Number of indirect beneficiaries	109,035
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	Not specified (adaptation project)



Project origins and rationale

FP003 was developed to address widespread land salinization in the Fatick and Foundiougne districts of Senegal, an area significantly affected by climate change-related phenomena including

seawater intrusion, decreased rainfall, and increased evaporation rates.¹¹¹ Approximately 265,000 ha—representing 33.6 per cent of the land in the Sine Saloum region—has been degraded due to salinity, leading to decreased agricultural productivity and heightened food insecurity.¹¹² Prior efforts such as the PAPIL¹¹³ constructed anti-salt dikes with limited sustainability due to inadequate community ownership and maintenance mechanisms.¹¹⁴ The project rationale is structured around three IPCC¹¹⁵-identified barriers: biophysical (soil and water salinity), institutional (limited coordination and policy coherence), and socioeconomic (low adaptive capacity among rural populations).¹¹⁶ The proposed interventions aim to address these barriers through community participation, institutional strengthening, and dissemination of technical solutions like salt-tolerant crops and soil amendment practices.¹¹⁷

FP003 might have been submitted as an SAP had that modality been in place at the time, given its limited financial size and moderate ESS risk. Similar to later WFP-supported projects SAP 007, FP003's infrastructure investments were limited to the rehabilitation of ponds and watering points, warehouses, compost platforms and the planting of mangroves as a reforestation initiative. The project builds on lessons from earlier initiatives (PAPIL) and was designed to be replicable and locally manageable.

Although the project was approved by the GCF Board in 2016, implementation did not begin until 2018 due to the late signing of the FAA in March 2018.¹¹⁸ The reasons for this long delay in project startup are not specified in the documentation.

Project objectives and design features

The project's objective is to strengthen the resilience of ecosystems and local communities to salinization by restoring productive land and institutional capacity.¹¹⁹ It is implemented by the CSE as the AE, with three Senegal-based executing entities: the Institut National de Pédologie, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the Réseau Africain pour le Développement Intégré. The intervention targets the Fatick and Foundiougne districts, involving activities such as development of geospatial salinity maps, establishment of local climate change committees, promotion of salt-tolerant seed varieties, construction of water management infrastructure, and creation of local climate adaptation plans.¹²⁰ Anticipated benefits include improved food security, diversified incomes, enhanced soil productivity, and institutional capacity at local levels.¹²¹ As a

¹¹¹ Centre de Suivi Écologique, "FP003: Increasing the Resilience of Ecosystems and Communities through the Restoration of the Productive Bases of Salinized Lands," Funding proposal (Dakar, Senegal: Centre de Suivi Écologique, 2015), 10. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-fp003-cse-senegal.pdf>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ *Projet d'Appui à la Petite Irrigation Locale* (Support Project for Small-Scale Local Irrigation), a government-led initiative in Senegal that constructed anti-salt dikes and small irrigation infrastructure to combat land salinization in the Sine Saloum region. While PAPIL demonstrated localized success in reclaiming salinized lands, its interventions faced sustainability challenges due to limited community ownership and maintenance capacity.

¹¹⁴ Sénégal (2008), *Projet d'appui à la petite irrigation locale (PAPIL) – Rapport d'évaluation finale* (Dakar: Département de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural, Dakar), 49.

[https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Senegal -
Projet d'appui a la petite irrigation locale PAPIL - Rapport d'évaluation.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Senegal_-_Projet_d_appui_a_la_petite_irrigation_locale_PAPIL_-_Rapport_d_evaluation.pdf).

¹¹⁵ IPCC stands for Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

¹¹⁶ Centre de Suivi Écologique, "FP003 Funding Proposal," 7–12.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Centre de Suivi Écologique, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2020 – FP003* (Dakar, Senegal: Centre de Suivi Écologique, 2021), 5. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp003-annual-performance-report-cy2020.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ Centre de Suivi Écologique, "FP003 Funding Proposal," 1.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹²¹ Ibid., 6–8.

DAE-led project, FP003 aligns with national strategies while emphasizing local ownership through participatory planning and implementation.¹²²

Implementation and performance overview

By 2023, 18 out of 22 project activities had reached at least 50 per cent implementation, prompting a two-year no-cost extension to February 2026 to address infrastructure delays.¹²³ Key achievements included training 555 producers—197 of them women—in salinity management techniques and introducing salt-tolerant rice varieties. Twelve local resource management agreements were finalized to manage 3,405 ha of forest, and Comités Locaux de l'Environnement et du Changement Climatique (COMLECCs) were formed and trained across all municipalities.¹²⁴ There were delays in the application of fertilizer on degraded lands and procurement affected components related to pond construction, warehouse development, and compost platforms.¹²⁵ Adaptations included revised procurement strategies and training plans, phased implementation, and reallocation of timelines for infrastructure.¹²⁶ Performance data shows strong results in institutional outcomes and seed dissemination (85 per cent), moderate progress in mangrove reforestation (50 per cent), but serious underperformance in other areas such as fertilizing and infrastructure.¹²⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic, particularly between March and June 2021, was cited as a major cause of early delays, alongside procedural hold-ups in feasibility validation and procurement.¹²⁸

Transformational elements

The project leveraged previous experiences from the PAPIL initiative and partnered with the Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles to scale up salt-tolerant rice varieties across multiple communities.¹²⁹ Institutional engagement was strengthened through the local resource management agreements as well as through the six COMLECCs, which created participatory governance mechanisms for land and water management.¹³⁰ Knowledge generated under FP003—such as geo-referenced salinity maps and community climate plans—were designed for public dissemination via a centralized GIS platform.¹³¹ National institutions such as the Institut National de Pédologie (INP) were heavily involved in technical activities, including the development of compost platforms, pastoral rangeland plans, and feasibility studies for infrastructure works.¹³² While replication beyond the project area is not explicitly documented, it quite likely occurred through the integration of project learning into local governance frameworks.¹³³ The inclusion of participatory training, demonstration plots, and COMLECC-led adaptation planning points to a systems-level transformation in how local resilience is built and maintained in the Senegalese context.¹³⁴

¹²² Ibid., 3.

¹²³ Centre de Suivi Écologique, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2023 – FP003* (Dakar, Senegal: Centre de Suivi Écologique: 2024), 7. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp003-annual-performance-report-cy2023-projects-programme-approved-under-pmfs-v.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 8–9.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 9–10.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Centre de Suivi Écologique, “FP003 Funding Proposal,” 5; Centre de Suivi Écologique, *APR 2023 – FP003*, 7.

¹²⁹ Centre de Suivi Écologique, *APR 2023 – FP003*, 7.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 5.

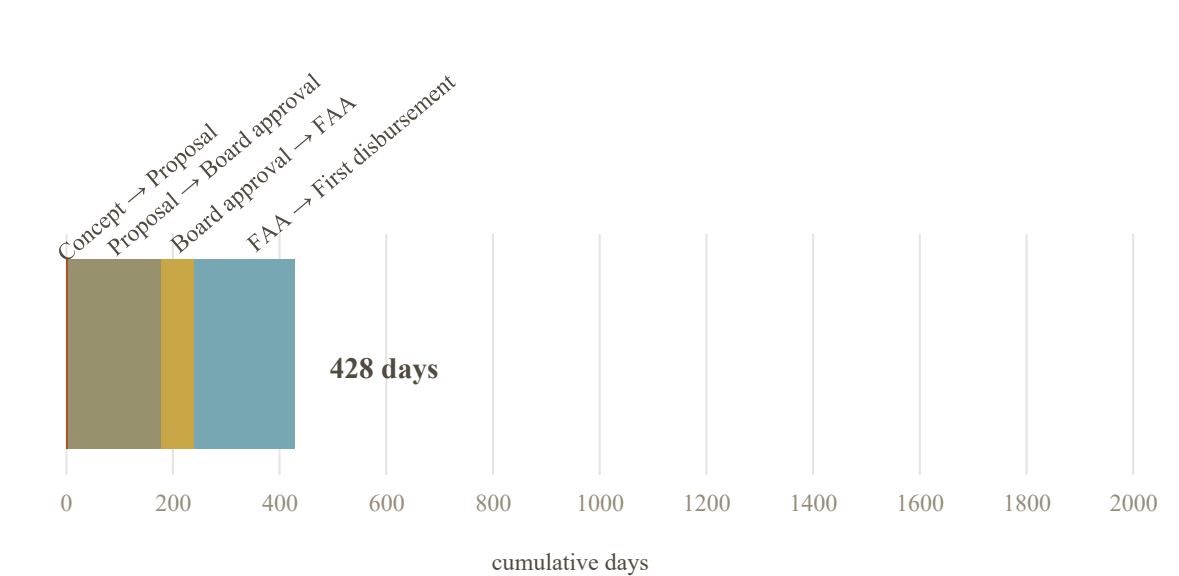
¹³³ Ibid., 8.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 7–9.

FP023 CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE IN THREE OF THE VULNERABLE EXTREME NORTHERN CROP-GROWING REGIONS (CRAVE)

GCF Project ID	FP023
Implementation period	14 October 2016 – 14 March 2024
AE	Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia (EIF)
GCF financing	USD 9.5 million
Total project investment	USD 10 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	C
Number of direct beneficiaries	8,000
Number of indirect beneficiaries	13,000
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	Not applicable

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

The CRAVE project was developed in response to high vulnerability to climate change in Namibia’s northern crop-growing regions, particularly Zambezi, Kavango East, and Kavango West, where

rain-fed agriculture is dominant and food insecurity is widespread.¹³⁵ The intervention aimed to strengthen adaptive capacity and reduce exposure to climate risks by scaling-up tested practices such as conservation agriculture (minimum tillage, crop rotations, cover crops), microdrip irrigation for small-scale horticulture, off-grid solar pumping systems for irrigation and post-harvest storage, and emerging efforts around index-based crop insurance.¹³⁶ It built on national strategies including the Namibia Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme and the Revised National Agriculture Policy of 2015.¹³⁷ Project beneficiaries are smallholder farming households in the three poorest regions of Namibia.¹³⁸ The project was categorized as environmental and social risk category C and would have qualified as a SAP, based on its limited scale, grant modality, and low-risk profile had that modality existed at the time.

Project objectives and design features

The project aimed to reduce rural food insecurity and vulnerability to climate risks while improving the adaptive capacity of smallholder farmers in three target regions through three components:

- 1) institutional strengthening through a climate-resilient agriculture centre.
- 2) field-level implementation of conservation agriculture and insurance pilots.
- 3) promotion of off-grid solar energy for irrigation and food preservation.¹³⁹

The EIF served as both AE and executing entity in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform.¹⁴⁰ The project specifically targeted small-scale farmers, with attention to gender inclusion. Activities included establishment of demonstration plots, procurement of conservation agriculture equipment, and training programmes for farmers and extension officers.¹⁴¹ The project worked in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, the University of Namibia, the national Agro-Marketing and Trade Agency, and AgriBusDev, an agency supporting irrigation and smallholder commercialization to enhance sustainability and national ownership.

In terms of project design, CRAVE shares many characteristics with the WFP-implemented R4 project design.

Implementation and performance overview

By the end of 2022, a total of 2,157 hectares of land had been prepared using conservation agriculture techniques, supporting 719 households.¹⁴² A cumulative 859 farmers (440 female and 419 male) adopted conservation agriculture practices, and 903 individuals were trained in horticulture and post-harvest techniques.¹⁴³ The project facilitated market linkages for dryland farmers, enabling 2,000 farmers to register with national grain marketing systems.¹⁴⁴ A pilot micro crop insurance scheme informed the development of a national index-based insurance product launched in 2022 by the Namibia Special Risks Insurance Limited, with technical support from the

¹³⁵ Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, “FP023: Climate Resilient Agriculture in Three of the Vulnerable Extreme Northern Crop Growing Regions,” Funding proposal (Windhoek, Namibia: Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, 2016), 4. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-fp023-eif-namibia.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 10.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 5–6.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 14.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 17.

¹⁴² Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2022 – FP023* (Windhoek, Namibia: Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, 2023), 4. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp023-annual-performance-report-cy2022-v.pdf>.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

WB.¹⁴⁵ The midterm review noted “minor shortcomings” but rated implementation as satisfactory and highlighted delays in procurement, staff coordination issues, and limited cultural acceptance of new techniques as challenges.¹⁴⁶ One demonstration site was cancelled due to land disputes, and saline water quality at another site required installation of a mini reverse osmosis system.¹⁴⁷ Indicators linked to infrastructure targets were generally met or exceeded, while production-related indicators were affected by pests and weather variability.¹⁴⁸

Transformational elements

A notable example of scaling was the project’s contribution to the national Namibia Agricultural Insurance Scheme, launched in 2022 by the Namibia Special Risks Insurance Limited with WB support. Lessons from CRAVE’s pilot microinsurance scheme were incorporated into Namibia Agricultural Insurance Scheme, which now offers index-based crop and livestock insurance to farmers nationwide.¹⁴⁹ The Mashare Climate Resilient Agriculture Centre of Excellence, established through CRAVE, became an operational centre for training and applied research, supporting over 300 farmers and embedding four postgraduate research programmes in partnership with the University of Namibia.¹⁵⁰ The Centre began generating revenue through facility rentals and other services, creating a financial base for ongoing operations beyond project closure.¹⁵¹ A sustainability and exit strategy was completed, ensuring that demonstration sites, institutional partnerships, and market linkages would remain active after the end of GCF funding.¹⁵² Through these mechanisms, several core project innovations — particularly index-based insurance, conservation agriculture techniques, and solar-powered irrigation — have been integrated into national programmes and are continuing to spread beyond the original project scope.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, *Midterm Review Report: Climate Resilient Agriculture in Three of the Vulnerable Extreme Northern Crop Growing Regions (FP023)*, Internal report (Windhoek, Namibia: Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, 2021), 33–36.

¹⁴⁷ Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, *APR 2022 – FP023*, 5.

¹⁴⁸ Environment Investment Fund of Namibia, *Midterm Review Report: FP023*, 4–6.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 5.

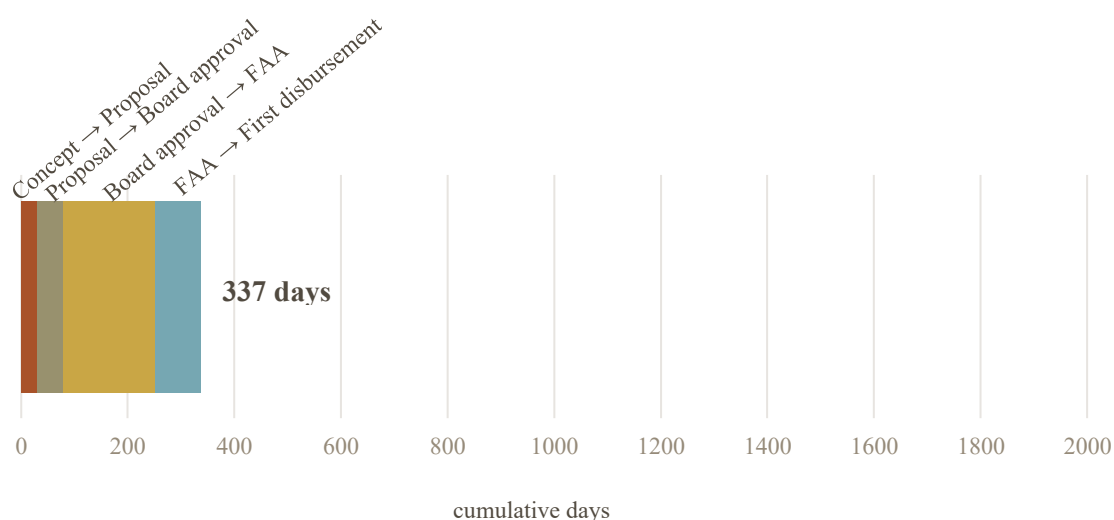
¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

FP024 EMPOWER TO ADAPT: CREATING CLIMATE-CHANGE RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN NAMIBIA

GCF Project ID	FP024
Implementation period	14 October 2016 – 1 November 2022
AE	Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia
GCF financing	USD 10 million
Total project investment	USD 10 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	C
Number of direct beneficiaries	15,500
Number of indirect beneficiaries	61,000
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	Not applicable

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

FP024 project was developed based on over two decades of experience with Namibia's community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programme, which supported over 200,000 rural residents through 82 conservancies and 32 community forests covering approximately 160,000

km².¹⁵⁴ While the CBNRM model was effective in promoting conservation and sustainable development, it lacked specific mechanisms for addressing climate risks, such as recurrent droughts, crop failures, and biodiversity loss.¹⁵⁵ The project rationale emphasized Namibia's vulnerability to climate change, with over 70 per cent of the population depending on climate-sensitive livelihoods and facing persistent drought and high temperature variability.¹⁵⁶ To address these challenges, the project proposed to enhance resilience by building awareness, strengthening institutional capacity, and providing direct access to adaptation finance for rural communities.¹⁵⁷

FP024 was approved as one of the first pilots under the EDA window which aimed to devolve decision-making about funding to the local level, to “deliver financial resources directly to local communities where the impact of climate change is experienced”.¹⁵⁸

The EIF established a dedicated grant facility specifically targeted at community-based adaptation initiatives through three investment windows: (i) ecosystem-based adaptation, (ii) climate-resilient agriculture, and (iii) climate-proof infrastructure. A key feature of the EDA design was that local community-based organizations (CBOs) were empowered to apply directly for grants from the facility. The EIF provided oversight and ensured that proposals were Category C (low ESS risk) and aligned with adaptation priorities, but the decision-making and control of implementation rested with the communities themselves.¹⁵⁹ According to the final evaluation, this marked “a significant paradigm shift” because CBNRM communities in Namibia were able to access climate finance “directly in their own right” for the first time, rather than through externally-led programmes.¹⁶⁰

The project would have been suitable for the SAP modality had this modality existed at the time due to its limited budget (USD 10 million), focus on Category C interventions, and use of streamlined, community-driven grant procedures.¹⁶¹

Project objectives and design features

The objective was to empower communities within the CBNRM framework to increase climate resilience through awareness, institutional strengthening, and access to adaptation finance.¹⁶² The programme had two components:

- Awareness-raising and organizational development support to eligible CBOs.
- A grant facility that these CBOs could apply to.

All funded activities were required to comply with ESS Category C.¹⁶³ The project was implemented by the EIF, a DAE. The design ensured local ownership through the use of established CBO governance structures and direct fund access.

¹⁵⁴ Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, “FP024: Empower to Adapt: Creating Climate-Change Resilient Livelihoods through Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Namibia,” Funding proposal (Windhoek, Namibia: Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, 2016), 5–8.

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp023-annual-perforformance-report-cy2022-v.pdf>.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 9–10.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 13–14.

¹⁵⁸ Chapeyama, O., *Midterm Review Report: Empower to Adapt (FP024)*, Internal report (Windhoek, Namibia: Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, 2020), 6.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 21.

¹⁶⁰ Mfuné and Thekwane, *Final Independent Evaluation Report: Empower to Adapt (FP024)*. Windhoek, Namibia, 2023), 59. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp024-final-independent-evaluation-report.pdf>.

¹⁶¹ Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, “FP024 Funding Proposal,” 3–5, 12.

¹⁶² Ibid., 11.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 14.

Implementation and performance overview

By the end of 2020, the project had awarded 31 grants, exceeding its target of 30, with 8 in agriculture, 4 in infrastructure, and 19 in ecosystem-based adaptation.¹⁶⁴ Beneficiaries reached totalled 96,000 people, surpassing the original goal of 76,000.¹⁶⁵ By the end of 2021, the number had further increased to over 104,000 beneficiaries.¹⁶⁶ The local climate monitoring system was piloted in 33 conservancies and community forests, using an enhanced Event Book System.¹⁶⁷ Despite COVID-19 restrictions, 16 grant projects were completed and handed over in nine regions by late 2021.¹⁶⁸ The midterm review noted that targets may have been set too low, given the project's high-performance levels.¹⁶⁹ Challenges included early administrative delays and restrictions on field operations during the pandemic.¹⁷⁰ Nonetheless, adaptive management strategies, including online engagement and staggered fieldwork, were used to sustain momentum.¹⁷¹

Transformational elements

FP024 marked the first time that CBOs in Namibia's CBNRM network were able to access and manage climate adaptation finance directly.¹⁷² Built on long-standing CBNRM institutions, the project introduced climate-focused components and devolved grant mechanisms, creating "a significant paradigm shift" in local development finance.¹⁷³ The final evaluation noted that the EDA approach empowered CBOs not only to design and implement projects, but also to develop long-term capacities for locally led adaptation.¹⁷⁴ Dissemination of project lessons at national events, through media, and via the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism created a pathway for broader replication.¹⁷⁵ The local climate monitoring system institutionalized in 33 conservancies and community forests further embedded adaptation awareness and decision-making tools at the community level.¹⁷⁶ With 31 adaptation projects implemented across 12 regions, FP024 demonstrated a decentralized model that could inform future community-driven climate finance efforts in Namibia.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁴ Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2020 – FP024* (Windhoek, Namibia: Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, 2021), section 2.1.

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp024-annual-performance-report-cy2020.pdf>.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Chapeyama, *Midterm Review Report: FP024*, 21.

¹⁷⁰ Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, *APR 2020 – FP024*, section 2.1.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷² Chapeyama, *Midterm Review Report: FP024*, 21.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Mfuné and Thekwane, *Final Evaluation Report: FP024*, 50.

¹⁷⁵ Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, *APR 2020 – FP024*, section 2.1.

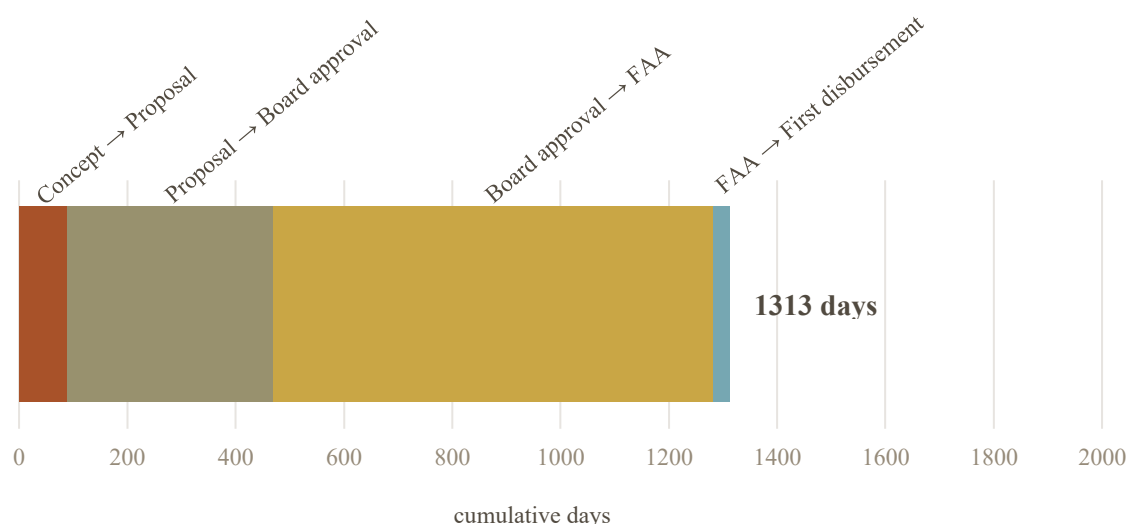
¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷⁷ Mfuné and Thekwane, *Final Evaluation Report: FP024*, 37.

FP049 BUILDING THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF FOOD INSECURE SMALLHOLDER FARMERS THROUGH INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF CLIMATE RISKS (R4 RURAL RESILIENCE INITIATIVE)

GCF Project ID	FP049
Implementation period	2 October 2017 to 14 October 2024
AE	United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
GCF financing	USD 9.98 million (grant)
Total project investment	USD 9.98 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	C
Number of direct beneficiaries	405,000
Number of indirect beneficiaries	121,500
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	N/A

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

The foundation of FP049 is the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, piloted by the WFP from 2011 to 2019 in the regions of Tambacounda and Kolda. This earlier initiative, funded by the United States Agency for International Development, demonstrated improved food security and resilience outcomes for participating farmers, and laid the groundwork for scaling the initiative with GCF

support.¹⁷⁸ The project was designed in response to Senegal's pronounced vulnerability to climate shocks, including erratic rainfall, land degradation, and salinization, all of which significantly impact rural, subsistence farming livelihoods.¹⁷⁹ The intervention logic adopts an integrated risk management framework comprising four components: risk reduction through assets and climate services; risk transfer via weather index insurance; risk reserves through savings groups; and prudent risk-taking mechanisms such as access to credit via cereal banks.¹⁸⁰ The project focuses on five target regions—Kaffrine, Kolda, Tambacounda, Fatick, and Kaolack—selected for their exposure to climate risks and high levels of food insecurity.¹⁸¹ FP049 was approved at the same GCF Board meeting that established the SAP, otherwise it would have been an appropriate SAP project given its Category C (low environmental and social risks) and limited budget of USD 9.98 million.

The project experienced a two-year delay between Board approval and FAA signature. No explanation for this delay is provided in the available documentation.

Project objectives and design features

The project aims to enhance the climate resilience of 45,000 smallholder households, equivalent to 405,000 individuals, by delivering four integrated risk management tools:

- climate-resilient asset creation and climate-smart agricultural training.
- delivery of mobile- and radio-based weather information and advisory services.
- provision of weather index insurance through the Compagnie Nationale d'Assurance Agricole (CNAAS), with premium co-financing.
- promotion of savings and access to loans via savings groups and Village Cereal Banks.¹⁸²

Implementation involved a broad partnership, including government agencies responsible for climate services and agricultural insurance (ANACIM, CNAAS), rural development programmes (PROVALE-CV, PASA LuMaKaf), national NGOs working in climate resilience and livelihoods (La Lumière, Caritas, SYMBIOSE), and a private sector partner specializing in digital communications and financial services (Jokalandé).¹⁸³ The project also supports technical integration of climate risk tools into Senegal's national social protection systems.¹⁸⁴ FP 049 was WFP's first GCF project. As the AE, WFP provided overall project management, financial oversight, technical guidance and project monitoring, reporting and evaluation, while also playing a central role in coordinating national partnerships and facilitating institutional learning between government agencies and local actors.¹⁸⁵

Implementation and performance overview

By the end of 2023, the project had enrolled the full target of 25,000 households: 12,000 in 2020 and an additional 13,000 between 2022 and 2023.¹⁸⁶ Despite early disruptions caused by the COVID-19

¹⁷⁸ World Food Programme, "FP049: Building the Climate Resilience of Food Insecure Smallholder Farmers Through Integrated Management of Climate Risk, Funding proposal (Rome, Italy: World Food Programme, 2017), 10. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-fp049-wfp-senegal.pdf>

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 6–8.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁸² Ibid., 6–9.

¹⁸³ WFP, "FP049 Funding Proposal," 20; Bana, Zakari Saley, and Mathilde Henry, *Interim Review of the Project (FP049): Building the climate resilience of food insecure smallholder farmers through integrated management of climate risks (the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative) in Senegal*, Internal report (May 2022), 6.

¹⁸⁴ WFP, "FP049 Funding Proposal," 9.

¹⁸⁵ WFP, "FP049 Funding Proposal," 3; Bana and Henry, *Interim Review of FP049*, 5–7.

¹⁸⁶ WFP, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2023 – FP049* (Rome, Italy: WFP, 2024), section 2.1. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp049-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

pandemic and later inflationary pressures linked to the Ukraine crisis, implementation continued across all five regions, albeit with adaptations.¹⁸⁷ The project exceeded several targets, including the number of farmers receiving insurance (139 per cent of target) and trees planted (177 per cent of 2023 target).¹⁸⁸ However, it fell short on others, for example only 32 per cent of the planned low stone barriers for soil and water conservation were constructed.¹⁸⁹ The original plan to offer credit to farmers through “*warrantage* loans” (that is, using stored grain as collateral) was dropped due to high interest rates. Instead, the project shifted to strengthening village cereal banks and linking them with savings groups to improve farmers’ access to credit.¹⁹⁰ A midterm review conducted in 2022 found that the project remained broadly on track despite challenges, with notable progress in community asset creation, delivery of climate services, and insurance uptake.¹⁹¹ Gender equity goals were achieved or surpassed, with 89 per cent of savings group participants being women and increases reported in their access to credit and business opportunities.¹⁹²

Transformational elements

FP049 marks a key step in the evolution of the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, an integrated risk management model first pioneered by Oxfam America and WFP in Ethiopia, and later adapted in Senegal with United States Agency for International Development’s funding between 2011 and 2019.¹⁹³ The project scaled this approach from small pilot areas in Tambacounda and Kolda into five regions across Senegal, with the explicit goal of moving beyond isolated projects towards embedding climate risk management into national systems. The transformational element lies not only in geographic scale-up but in institutionalization: FP049 brought national partners—CNAAS (insurance), ANACIM (climate services), and SE/CNSA (social protection)—into the delivery model, laying foundations for sustainable integration of climate services, weather index insurance, and savings-led financial inclusion into government programmes.¹⁹⁴ The interim review found positive shifts in household resilience but emphasized that long-term impact depends on continued institutional strengthening.¹⁹⁵ Practical tools and delivery mechanisms were designed for scalability, using mobile platforms and local networks to reach farmers. While no follow-on GCF investment is recorded, FP049 demonstrated how donor-funded pilots can transition into national policy frameworks—an example now informing similar efforts in the region.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ WFP, *APR 2023 – FP049*, section 2.4.3.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ WFP, *APR 2023 – FP049*, section 2.1.

¹⁹¹ Bana and Henry, *Interim Review of FP049*, 4–15.

¹⁹² WFP, *APR 2023 – FP049*, section 4.2.

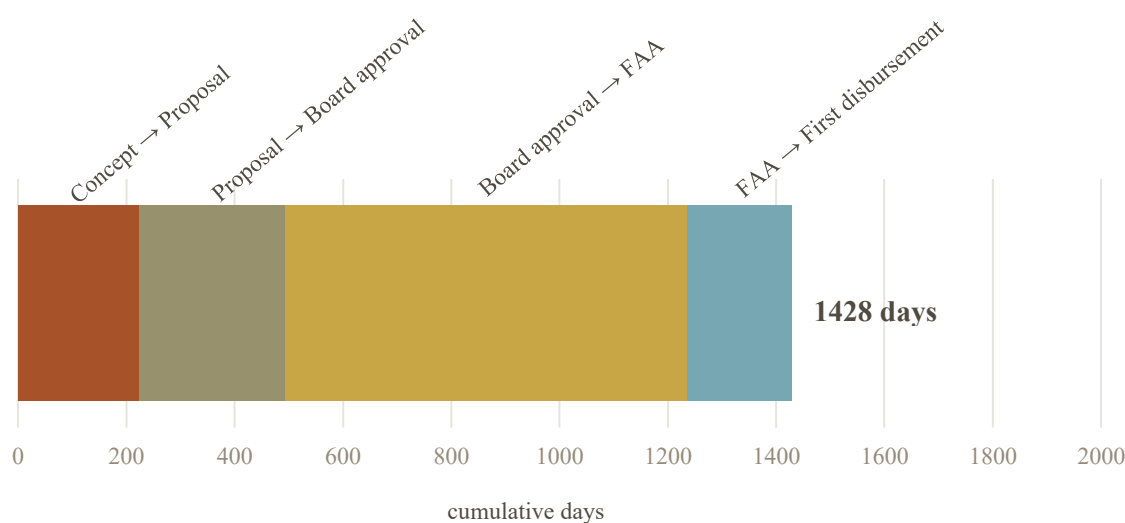
¹⁹³ WFP, “FP049 Funding Proposal,” 10.

¹⁹⁴ WFP, *APR 2023 – FP049*, section 2.1.

¹⁹⁵ Bana and Henry, *Interim Review of FP049*, 14–15.

FP067 BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF VULNERABLE AND FOOD INSECURE COMMUNITIES THROUGH CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION IN MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS OF TAJIKISTAN

GCF Project ID	FP067
Implementation period	1 March 2018 to 7 March 2025
AE	United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
GCF financing	USD 9.27 million (grant)
Total project investment	USD 9.97 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	C
Number of direct beneficiaries	50,000
Number of indirect beneficiaries	70,000
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	N/A



Project origins and rationale

FP067 was developed in response to Tajikistan's high vulnerability to climate change, particularly in mountainous regions where over 70 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for

livelihood, and 97 per cent of arable land is degraded.¹⁹⁶ The project identified Rasht Valley, Khatlon, and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast as priority areas as among Tajikistan's most exposed to climate-related hazards—glacial melt, extreme weather events, and land degradation—compounded by poverty, food insecurity, and limited adaptive capacity.¹⁹⁷

The project draws on WFP Tajikistan's experience conducting integrated context analysis and climate vulnerability assessments to inform a shift from reactive assistance to proactive climate adaptation programming.¹⁹⁸ While the project draws on WFP's broader resilience programming, it does not follow the standard R4 Rural Resilience Initiative model. Unlike R4 projects, which focus on integrated climate risk management through insurance and financial services, FP067 emphasizes institutional capacity-building, rehabilitation of community assets, and diversification of livelihoods in fragile mountainous areas.¹⁹⁹

A two-year delay between Board approval and FAA signature was caused primarily by protracted legal negotiations and internal review processes.²⁰⁰

Project objectives and design features

The project is designed around two core components: (i) strengthening institutional and community capacity for climate risk management, and (ii) enhancing resilience of vulnerable households through livelihood support and market access.²⁰¹ Key activities include training for the national hydrometeorological agency, rehabilitating irrigation and water systems, promoting agroforestry and renewable energy technologies, and providing marketing support to Dehkan farms.²⁰²

The project is implemented by the WFP with the Committee for Environmental Protection as the national executing agency and supported by local NGOs.²⁰³ The project delivers benefits by improving household food security through rehabilitated irrigation and water systems, supporting income diversification via agroforestry and small-scale renewable energy installations, and enhancing the use of localized climate information through farmer training and strengthened national forecasting services.²⁰⁴

Implementation and performance overview

By the end of 2023, the project had reached 35,927 direct beneficiaries (49.3 per cent female) and 61,145 indirect beneficiaries (50 per cent female), corresponding to 72 per cent and 87 per cent of updated midterm targets, respectively.²⁰⁵ In 2023, 112 trainers were trained in Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA), 310 Dehkan farms received production and marketing training, 109 km of irrigation canals and 21 drinking water systems were rehabilitated, and 7 hectares of agroforestry were established.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁶ WFP, "FP067: Building Climate Resilience of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Communities Through Capacity Strengthening and Livelihood Diversification in Mountainous Regions of Tajikistan," Funding proposal (WFP, 2017). <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-fp067-wfp-tajikistan.pdf>.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 10–13.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 13.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 3.

²⁰⁰ Bhanja et al., *Mid-Term Review Report – FP067: Building Climate Resilience of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Communities Through Capacity Strengthening and Livelihood Diversification in Mountainous Regions of Tajikistan*, Internal report (September 2023).

²⁰¹ WFP, "FP067: Funding Proposal," 3.

²⁰² WFP, *APR 2024: FP049*, 6–7.

²⁰³ WFP, *APR 2024: FP049*, 5.

²⁰⁴ WFP, *APR 2024: FP049*, 6–7; Bhanja et al., *Mid-Term Review Report – FP067*, 9.

²⁰⁵ WFP, *APR 2024: FP049*, 24.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 6–7.

By the end of 2023, the project had reached 3510–13,927 direct beneficiaries and 61,145 indirect beneficiaries, surpassing the revised midterm targets of 26,000 and 35,000, respectively.²⁰⁷ Project indicators related to the delivery of usable climate information to communities and to the strengthening of household resilience capacities exceeded targets, while progress on achieving broader adaptation benefits and on building institutional capacity remained below target.²⁰⁸

The midterm review observed effective financial management and alignment with the theory of change, but noted delivery challenges and limited synergies between components.²⁰⁹ Delays were attributed to delays related to the FAA signing and pandemic-related constraints.²¹⁰ The project remains on track for completion by March 2025.

Transformational elements

FP067 builds on WFP Tajikistan's foundation of resilience programming by advancing a more proactive, adaptation-focused approach.²¹¹ The project has succeeded in influencing national policy processes by strengthening the capacity of the Committee for Environmental Protection and supporting the integration of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management plans into District Development Plans across target regions.²¹² Mechanisms for replication include a growing cadre of trained district-level trainers, as well as the production of brochures, radio programmes, and other materials to disseminate lessons learned nationally.²¹³ In response to the midterm review, WFP has committed to further scaling community-based approaches and improving coordination between project components during the final implementation phase.²¹⁴ Through its focus on linking localized climate information to household decision-making, strengthening public institutions, and embedding climate adaptation into local planning, FP067 offers a model for resilience-building in mountainous contexts that could inform similar efforts in other LDCs.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 24.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 24, 31.

²⁰⁹ Bhanja et al., *Mid-Term Review Report – FP067*, 9–10.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

²¹¹ WFP, “FP067: Funding Proposal,” 13.

²¹² WFP, *APR 2024: FP049*, 6.

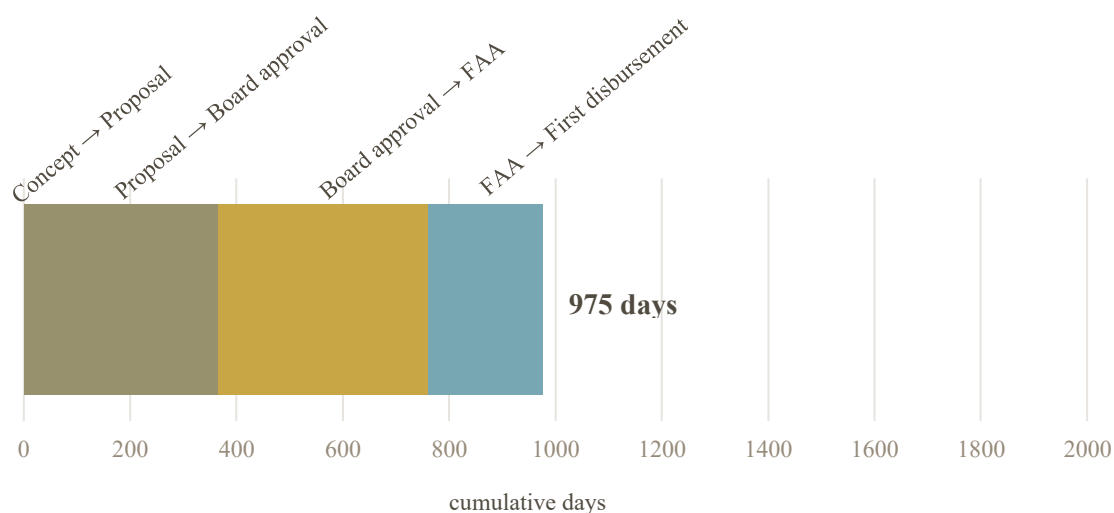
²¹³ Ibid., 5.

²¹⁴ Bhanja et al., *Mid-Term Review Report – FP067*, 10; WFP, *APR 2024: FP049*, 6.

SAP007 INTEGRATED CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT FOR FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS IN ZIMBABWE (MASVINGO AND RUSHINGA DISTRICTS)

GCF Project ID	SAP007
Implementation period	8 July 2019 – 2 August 2026
AE	United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
GCF financing	USD 8.86 million
Total project investment	USD 10.06 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	Category C (minimal or no adverse impacts)
Number of direct beneficiaries	50,000
Number of indirect beneficiaries	52,000
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	N/A (adaptation project)

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

SAP007 builds on the rural resilience initiative (R4) concept developed through a partnership between the WFP and Oxfam America that first piloted in Ethiopia in 2011.²¹⁵ The R4 approach subsequently expanded beyond Ethiopia to Senegal, Malawi, Zambia and Kenya, with the aim of

²¹⁵ WFP, “The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative.”

strengthening vulnerable communities' resilience through integrated climate risk management strategies.²¹⁶ The proposal for Zimbabwe, targeting Masvingo and Rushinga districts, asserted these regions were highly vulnerable to climate shocks, particularly droughts, due to reliance on rain-fed agriculture.²¹⁷ The original concept for GCF consideration was developed through the regular approval channel and was only transformed into a SAP when this channel became available (the date of CN receipt and FP submission are the same). The proposal review and approval processes were delayed as WFP found it impossible to provide robust localized climate data at the subnational level to substantiate vulnerability claims (key informant interviews). The proposal was eventually approved as an SAP leveraging low environmental and social risks (Category C) and its modest budget of USD 8.86 million grant request.²¹⁸

Project objectives and design features

SAP007's strategy is to enhance climate resilience in rural communities through integrated risk management approach that includes tailored climate and weather information delivered to participants, asset creation to support "drought-proofing" farms, weather index insurance, and improved market access.²¹⁹ The project engages national institutions such as Zimbabwe's Meteorological Services Department, Zimbabwe's Agricultural Technical and Extension Services, and the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, to build local capacity and ownership.²²⁰ Direct beneficiaries include 50,000 individuals, with an additional 52,000 indirect beneficiaries, who are expected to benefit from improved food security, income diversification, and economic stability.²²¹ The project design explicitly prioritizes replication and scalability through its partnership approach, as well as community-driven resilience strategies, which aligns with the GCF's investment criteria to achieve wide and transformative change through modest financing to promote efficient and rapid implementation.²²²

Implementation and performance overview

By the end of 2023, SAP007 was significantly advanced in implementation. National weather forecasting capabilities had been advanced to deliver climate advisories to thousands of farmers in a timely fashion.²²³ Community resilience was strengthened through the creation of climate adaptation assets such as nutrition gardens, watershed management structures as well as diversified non-farm income-generating activities.²²⁴ Beneficiary participation in financial inclusion increased with 6,740 individuals joining 696 different community village savings and lending groups.²²⁵ However, the weather index insurance component encountered significant implementation challenges, notably farmer mistrust and affordability concerns, necessitating the programme's integration into Zimbabwe's national agricultural insurance scheme.²²⁶ Insurance uptake indicators have lagged, reflecting persistent structural and economic barriers primarily due to limited farmer familiarity with insurance concepts, complex product design, and affordability barriers that have made difficult for

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ WFP, "SAP007: Integrated Climate Risk Management for Food Security and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe Focusing on Masvingo and Rushinga Districts," Funding proposal (Harare, Zimbabwe: WFP, 2019), 3.
<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-sap007-wfp-zimbabwe.pdf>.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ WFP, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2023 – SAP007* (Harare, Zimbabwe: WFP, 2023), 15.
<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap007-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., 16.

²²⁶ Ibid., 18.

poor farmers to engage confidently with these novel risk management tools.²²⁷ The midterm evaluation emphasized the need to enhance awareness and trust-building around insurance services.²²⁸

Transformational elements

SAP007 demonstrates a model that integrates multiple resilience-building strategies into a single, streamlined approach, enabled by the SAP modality's simplified procedures.²²⁹ The project did not simply deliver isolated activities but packaged together weather advisories, asset creation, savings groups, and insurance into a single, holistic risk management system that helped farmers make better decisions, protect their livelihoods, and invest confidently.²³⁰ While insurance uptake lagged, the R4 approach itself shifted mindsets towards proactive planning rather than crisis response.²³¹ There is evidence that because of existing prior GCF approvals of the R4 approach (FP 049 discussed above) existing institutional knowledge and documented procedures truncated the preparation cycle for Zimbabwe's SAP project.²³² SAP's streamlined approval allowed WFP to deploy tested R4 methods rapidly in Zimbabwe's high-risk districts without long delays.²³³ This efficiency is critical where climate threats intensify annually, and conventional approval processes could possibly have rendered the intervention obsolete before it even began. The project's clearest transformational potential lies in its integrated risk management approach explicitly embedded within national systems so that farmers have a foundation on which to strengthen resilience beyond the project time frame.²³⁴

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Béné et al., *Mid-Term Evaluation Report: R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Zimbabwe*, Internal report (Rome, Italy: WFP, 2023), 45.

²²⁹ WFP, "SAP007: Funding proposal," 3.

²³⁰ WFP, *APR 2023 – SAP007*, 20.

²³¹ Béné et al., *Mid-Term Evaluation Report: Zimbabwe*, 45.

²³² Independent Evaluation Unit, *Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme*, Final Report (Songdo, South Korea: Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2021), 124.

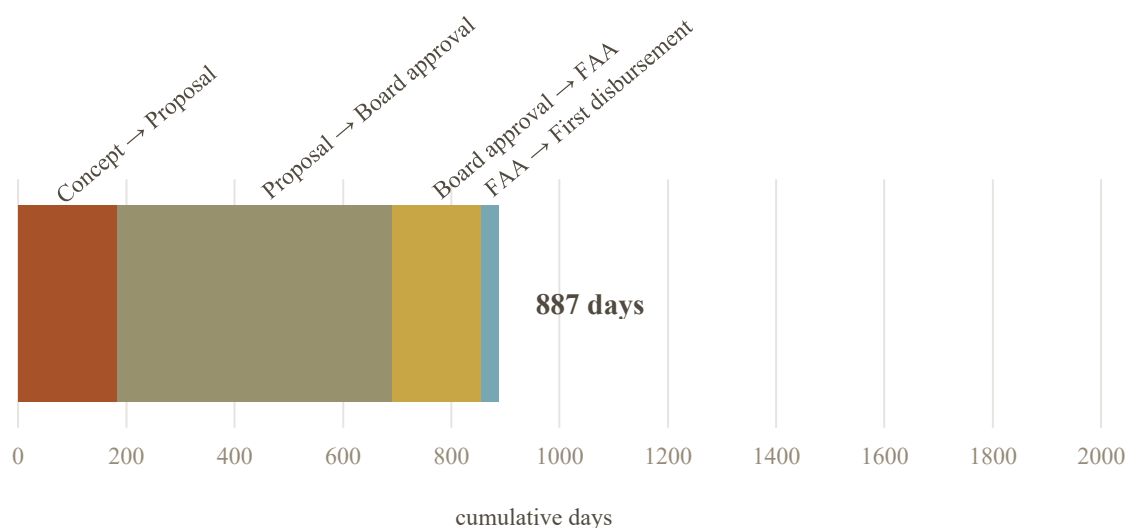
²³³ WFP, "SAP007: Funding proposal," 3.

²³⁴ WFP, *APR 2023 – SAP007*, 22.

SAP008 EXTENDED COMMUNITY CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT-FLOOD (ECCCP-FLOOD)

GCF Project ID	SAP008
Implementation period	May 2020 – May 2024
AE	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
GCF financing	USD 9.68 million
Total project investment	USD 13.33 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	Category C
Number of direct beneficiaries	90,000
Number of indirect beneficiaries	450,000
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	Not applicable (Adaptation project)

Mitigation				Adaptation		
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities
						Transport



Project origins and rationale

The Extended Community Climate Change Project-Flood (ECCCP-Flood) emerged from lessons learned through the earlier successful Community Climate Change Project (CCCP), designed to help vulnerable communities in Bangladesh adapt to increasing flood risks exacerbated by climate

change.²³⁵ The project focuses specifically on "chars," which are low-lying, temporary islands formed from river sediments, often inhabited by some of the country's poorest and most flood-prone populations. These areas are especially vulnerable to flooding, erosion, and extreme weather events, severely impacting the livelihoods and safety of residents. ECCCP-Flood addresses these risks through proven adaptation methods such as elevating the foundations ("plinth-raising") of homes and communal structures above typical flood levels, ensuring that families have safe and dry shelter during floods. It also promotes climate-resilient agriculture practices to sustain livelihoods amid recurrent flooding. Despite the SAP typically enabling quicker project approvals, ECCCP-Flood experienced delays exceeding a year between proposal submission and final approval, mainly due to procedural revisions required by the GCF to ensure compliance with its funding and safeguard criteria.²³⁶

Project objectives and design features

ECCCP-Flood aims to build community resilience in flood-prone areas through four targeted interventions: elevating household foundations above flood levels, constructing flood-resistant housing, installing water and sanitation facilities that remain functional during flooding, and introducing agricultural practices adapted to recurring floods.²³⁷ The project is managed by the PKSf, a DAE, which oversees implementation and coordination. PKSf partners with nine local non-governmental organizations as implementing entities who carry out project activities on the ground, directly engaging community members.²³⁸ The project targets 20,000 households (approximately 90,000 people) living on riverine islands frequently inundated during seasonal floods. It has prioritized improvements in living conditions, sanitation, and sustainable agricultural practices.²³⁹ The SAP modality is suitable for ECCCP-Flood due to its relatively low environmental risks, modest budget request (USD 9.68 million) and streamlined approval processes.²⁴⁰ The project design is based on repeatedly-tested methods from previous successful development and climate resilience projects in Bangladesh, ensuring its activities can be easily replicated and expanded to similar vulnerable regions facing recurring flood risks.²⁴¹

Implementation and performance overview

By 2023, ECCCP-Flood had made substantial progress towards its planned objectives. 98 per cent of targeted homesteads were elevated above flood levels, preventing displacement of beneficiary households during seasonal floods.²⁴² Installation of flood-resilient tube wells and climate-resilient latrines reached 97 per cent completion, improving access to safe water and sanitation and reducing waterborne diseases.²⁴³ Agricultural interventions achieved high adoption rates, with all targeted households planting flood-tolerant rice and wheat varieties and 93 per cent cultivating vegetables on sandbars ("chars") where the households live.²⁴⁴ Loan distribution for climate-resilient housing

²³⁵ World Bank, *Implementation Completion and Results Report: Community Climate Change Project*, Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2017), iii. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/277981504638164950/pdf/ICR00004072-08222017.pdf>.

²³⁶ Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, "SAP008: Extended Community Climate Change Project–Flood (ECCCP–Flood)," Funding proposal (Dhaka, Bangladesh: Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, 2019), 4–5. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-sap008-pksf-bangladesh.pdf>.

²³⁷ Ibid., 10.

²³⁸ Ibid., 15.

²³⁹ Ibid., 6.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 4.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 8.

²⁴² Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2023 – SAP008*, (Dhaka, Bangladesh: Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, 2024), 4. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap008-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

reconstruction reached 84 per cent of beneficiaries²⁴⁵. Implementation was initially delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions but accelerated from 2022 onwards with proactive replanning.²⁴⁶ The midterm evaluation observed that interventions were tested by moderate flood events during implementation, and beneficiary households reported significantly reduced economic losses and improved food security compared to control households, indicating the model's effectiveness under real flood conditions.²⁴⁷ The evaluation also highlighted improved institutional capacity among local implementing NGOs, which enhanced delivery quality and strengthened community trust.²⁴⁸

Transformational elements

ECCCP-Flood shows how practical, locally driven solutions can reduce the risks faced by people living in some of Bangladesh's most flood-prone areas. By elevating homes, building flood-resilient toilets and water points, and introducing farming techniques suited to frequent flooding, the project has improved safety, incomes, and food security for tens of thousands of people.²⁴⁹ It built directly on approaches tested in the earlier CCCP, demonstrating that these models can be expanded to reach more households when delivered through local NGOs coordinated by PKSf.²⁵⁰ The project also strengthened the skills of local institutions, enabling them to plan and support climate adaptation activities more effectively.²⁵¹ These results align with the GCF's aim of funding adaptation projects that not only protect lives and livelihoods but also build lasting systems for resilience. ECCCP-Flood's experience shows that with clear targeting and strong local partnerships, relatively small investments can deliver tangible and lasting benefits for communities facing growing climate threats.²⁵²

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 4.

²⁴⁶ Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2021 – SAP008* (Dhaka, Bangladesh: Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, 2021), 4. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap008-annual-performance-report-cy2021-v.pdf>.

²⁴⁷ Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services, *Interim Independent Evaluation of Extended Community Climate Change Project-Flood (ECCCP-Flood)* (Dhaka, Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services, 2023), xi–xiv. https://pksf.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/SAP008_Interim-Independent-Evaluation-Report_ECCCP-Flood_Revised-3rd-round_clear-version_291023.pdf.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., xi.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., xi–xiv.

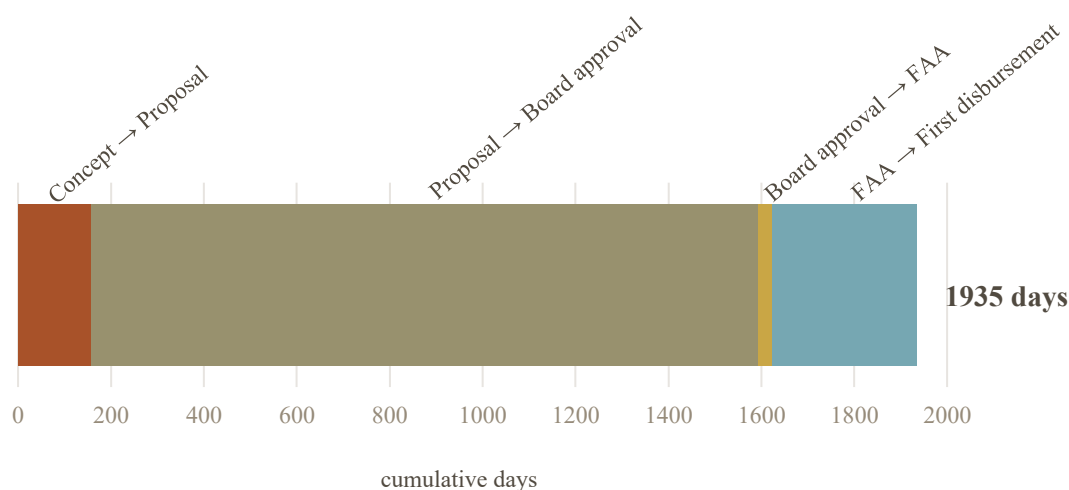
²⁵⁰ Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, “SAP008 Funding proposal,” (Dhaka, Bangladesh: Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, 2019), 8.

²⁵¹ Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services, *Interim Evaluation of ECCCP-Flood*, 2023, xi.

²⁵² Ibid., xiv.

SAP009 BUILDING RESILIENCE OF URBAN POPULATIONS WITH ECOSYSTEM-BASED SOLUTIONS IN LAO PDR

GCF Project ID	SAP009
Implementation period	14 November 2019 to 8 June 2025
AE	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
GCF financing	USD 10 million
Total project investment	USD 11,500,000 (including co-financing)
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	Category C
Number of direct beneficiaries	74,600
Number of indirect beneficiaries	825,000
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	Not applicable



Project origins and rationale

The SAP009 project originates directly from experiences with the GEF-funded "Climate Adaptation in Wetland Areas" (CAWA) project, which tested participatory climate change vulnerability assessments and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) measures in rural wetland areas of Savannakhet

and Champasak provinces from 2014 to 2020.²⁵³ EbA involves "the sustainable management, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems to provide services that help people adapt to climate change," focusing on enhancing natural resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate-related impacts.²⁵⁴ CAWA demonstrated that while EbA measures effectively addressed rural climate vulnerabilities, their integration into broader policy frameworks and urban planning remained limited.²⁵⁵

SAP009 transitioned the EbA approach from rural settings to urban contexts by targeting cities—Vientiane, Pakse, Savannakhet, and Paksan—that face significant flood risks exacerbated by rapid urbanization, inadequate infrastructure, and unmanaged land development.²⁵⁶ The leap from rural to urban settings was justified by recognizing that urban wetlands similarly provide critical ecosystem services such as flood mitigation, water purification, and biodiversity support, directly benefiting urban populations.²⁵⁷

Significant delays between the initial proposal submission and Board approval (approximately 4 years) were primarily due to extended processes in refining the project design, aligning it more closely with GCF requirements, and integrating detailed feedback from technical reviews aimed at ensuring effective translation of rural EbA experiences into robust urban implementation frameworks.²⁵⁸ The SAP modality was suitable for this initiative given its low-risk, streamlined procedures, ESS Category C classification, and alignment with SAP's limited budget threshold.²⁵⁹

Project objectives and design features

The project aims to reduce urban flood risks by restoring wetlands and urban streams in four Lao cities through nature-based solutions such as replanting native vegetation, re-establishing natural water flows, and clearing blocked waterways.²⁶⁰ UNEP, as the AE, oversees compliance with GCF standards, manages reporting, and provides technical expertise, including ecosystem valuation studies and development of the EbA Knowledge Hub with the National University of Laos.²⁶¹ The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment coordinates national planning and policy, while provincial offices implement activities locally. The National University of Laos delivers training and supports curriculum design, and civil society groups such as the Lao Women's Union engage communities to ensure vulnerable groups are included in planning.²⁶² Direct beneficiaries, mainly urban residents near wetlands, benefit from reduced flooding, healthier local environments, and opportunities for new livelihoods connected to rehabilitated ecosystems.²⁶³ The lengthy approval process was partly due to the need to adapt the ecosystem-based adaptation approach—previously tested by FAO in rural wetlands under the CAWA project—to urban settings, requiring extensive

²⁵³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Mid-Term Review of FAO-GEF Project GCP/LAO/022/LDF: Climate Change Adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) in Lao PDR* (Vientiane, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2021), 7. https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/GEFDocuments/9fa8c925-df7c-e811-8124-3863bb2e1360/MTR/MidtermReviewMTR_GEFID-5489-MTR-FAO-Lao%20PDR.pdf.

²⁵⁴ United Nations Environment Programme, "SAP009: Building Resilience of Urban Populations with Ecosystem-based Solutions in Lao PDR," Funding proposal (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme, 2019), 6. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/building-resilience-urban-populations-ecosystem-based-solutions-lao-pdr>.

²⁵⁵ FAO, *Mid-Term Review of CAWA*, 6–7.

²⁵⁶ UNEP, "SAP009: Funding proposal," 4.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ UNEP, *Annual Performance Report: Building Resilience of Urban Populations with Ecosystem-based Solutions in Lao PDR, CY2022 (SAP009)* (Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP, 2022), 5.

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap009-annual-performance-report-cy2022-v.pdf>.

²⁶² UNEP, "SAP009: Funding proposal," 4.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

technical revisions to ensure feasibility, alignment with SAP's streamlined modality, and readiness for implementation.²⁶⁴

Implementation and performance overview

Project implementation faced significant delays due to disbursement procedures, COVID-19 restrictions, and persistent recruitment and procurement challenges.²⁶⁵ While the APR 2022 states that approximately 80 per cent of capacity-building activities were completed,²⁶⁶ reporting across APRs remains fragmented, with limited evidence of systematic delivery or impact of these trainings.²⁶⁷ Key activities such as physical restoration of wetlands remain behind schedule.²⁶⁸ Procurement delays continued into 2023 and were compounded by low technical and operational capacity at provincial levels, high staff turnover, and late approval of annual workplans.²⁶⁹ Despite partial establishment of management committees and planning processes, core indicators related to national policy integration and ecosystem restoration have not been reported as achieved.²⁷⁰ Overall, project progress appears inconsistent and performance reporting lacks sufficient detail to confirm achievement of intended milestones.

Transformational elements

The project set out to demonstrate that EbA models developed in rural wetlands could be effectively applied in urban settings, representing a significant shift in flood management approaches in Lao PDR.²⁷¹ This transformation depends on whether institutions in cities can integrate natural solutions into urban planning, a challenge given that urban governance structures differ greatly from rural community management frameworks.²⁷² While the project established management committees for some wetlands and initiated participatory planning, it remains unclear from the APRs whether these committees have sufficient mandate or capacity to drive long-term change.²⁷³ UNEP has supported knowledge creation through ecosystem valuation studies and the establishment of the EbA Knowledge Hub, but documentation does not specify how far this knowledge has been embedded within municipal or national systems.²⁷⁴ National institution engagement included partnerships with the National University of Laos and UN-Habitat, but replication mechanisms or policy integration remain incomplete or unreported.²⁷⁵ The transformational promise of SAP009 thus hinges on whether these early institutional and knowledge foundations can translate into practical, scalable urban flood management solutions beyond the life of the project.²⁷⁶

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ UNEP, *Annual Performance Report: Building Resilience of Urban Populations with Ecosystem-based Solutions in Lao PDR, CY2020 (SAP009)* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2021), 5. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap009-annual-performance-report-cy2020.pdf>; UNEP, *Annual Performance Report: Building Resilience of Urban Populations with Ecosystem-based Solutions in Lao PDR, CY2021 (SAP009)* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2022), 5. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap009-annual-performance-report-cy2021-v.pdf>.

²⁶⁶ UNEP, *Annual Performance Report: Building Resilience of Urban Populations with Ecosystem-based Solutions in Lao PDR, CY2022 (SAP009)* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2023), 5. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap009-annual-performance-report-cy2022-v.pdf>.

²⁶⁷ UNEP, *APR 2022 SAP009*, 5; UNEP, *Annual Performance Report: Building Resilience of Urban Populations with Ecosystem-based Solutions in Lao PDR, CY2023 (SAP009)* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2024), 5. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap009-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

²⁶⁸ UNEP, *APR 2023 SAP009*, 5.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ UNEP, "SAP009: Funding Proposal," 4.

²⁷² Ibid., 6.

²⁷³ UNEP, *APR 2023 SAP009*, 5.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

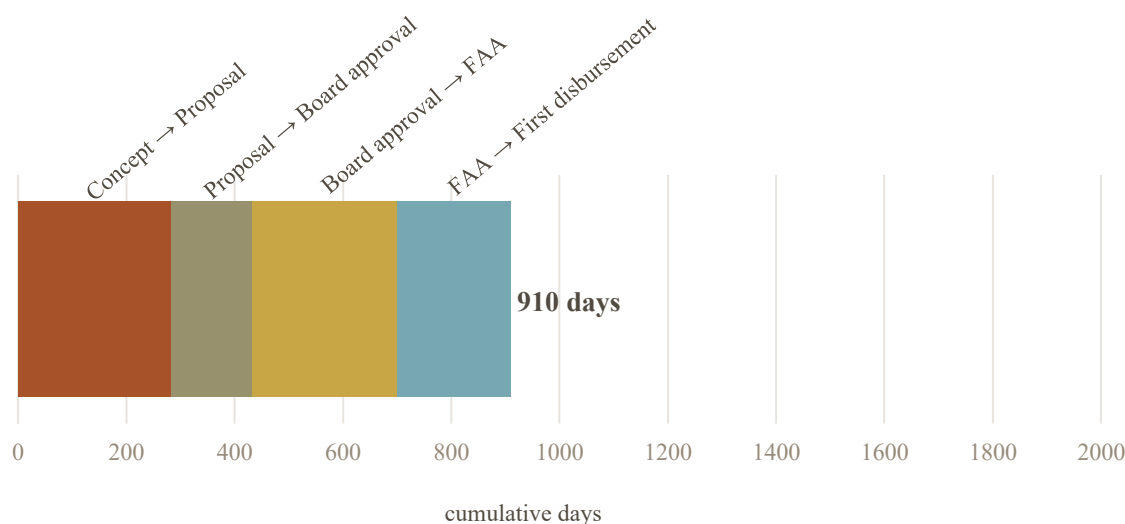
²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ UNEP, "SAP009: Funding Proposal," 4.

SAP011 CLIMATE-RESILIENT FOOD SECURITY FOR WOMEN AND MEN SMALLHOLDERS IN MOZAMBIQUE THROUGH INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT

GCF Project ID	SAP011
Implementation period	March 2020 – February 2025
AE	World Food Programme (WFP)
GCF financing	USD 9.25 million
Total project investment	USD 10 million
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	Category C (minimal or no adverse impacts)
Number of direct beneficiaries	16,000 households (approx. 80,000 individuals)
Number of indirect beneficiaries	160,000 individuals
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	N/A (adaptation project)

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

The SAP011 project builds on the WFP's long-running R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, first introduced to the GCF in Senegal as FP049 and later scaled through SAP007 in Zimbabwe before

this third iteration in Mozambique.²⁷⁷ FP049, approved in 2015, piloted integrated climate risk management in Senegal.²⁷⁸ SAP007 was subsequently approved at the B.23 in July 2019 to implement R4 in Zimbabwe.²⁷⁹ SAP011 followed at the B.24 in November 2019 to extend the R4 model into Mozambique.²⁸⁰ All three projects apply the same integrated model combining risk reduction, microinsurance, savings, and credit for smallholder farmers.²⁸¹ SAP011 was submitted as a USD 9.25 million Category C grant under the SAP modality designed for streamlined approval,²⁸² and required over one year between CN submission in September 2018 and Board approval in November 2019; reasons for this timeline are not specified in available documentation.²⁸³

R4 addresses the increasing climate risks faced by food-insecure communities through a comprehensive risk management framework that integrates four complementary strategies: risk reduction via asset creation and climate-resilient agricultural practices; risk transfer through microinsurance covering weather-related shocks; prudent risk-taking supported by microcredit and livelihood diversification; and risk reserves through structured community savings groups.²⁸⁴

Mozambique, particularly vulnerable to climate-related events such as drought, floods, and cyclones, experiences significant agricultural and food security challenges due to its dependency on rain-fed farming. In response, SAP011 directly addresses these vulnerabilities in Tete Province, where climate variability, including changing rainfall patterns and prolonged dry spells, significantly undermines agricultural productivity. The project leverages R4's proven model to provide targeted, replicable, and scalable adaptation solutions tailored to the local context, aiming to sustainably enhance resilience and food security for smallholder communities.²⁸⁵

Project objectives and design features

The SAP011 project aims to reduce smallholder vulnerability to climate risks through a package of interventions that include climate-resilient agriculture and watershed restoration, enhance adaptive capacity using integrated risk-management tools and market-based opportunities, and inform adaptation planning through improved climate information services.²⁸⁶ Planned components include establishing 550 farmer clubs for conservation agriculture, rehabilitating community watersheds, delivering index-based microinsurance products, forming village savings and loans groups, and providing PICSA to guide farmer decisions.²⁸⁷ Despite the different names for these components, the package of interventions in SAP 011 is the same as for SAP 007 and FP 049.

The project is implemented by the WFP as the AE, working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Land and Environment.²⁸⁸ Field implementation partners include ACEAGRARIOS, a technical agency within the Ministry of Agriculture focused on rural extension services; Kulima, a Mozambican NGO specializing in community development, food

²⁷⁷ WFP, *R4 Rural Resilience Initiative: Annual Report 2017* (Rome, Italy: WFP, 2017), 10.

²⁷⁸ <https://wfp.tind.io/record/59589?v=pdf>; WFP, "SAP011: Climate-Resilient Food Security for Women and Men Smallholders Through Integrated Risk Management," Funding proposal (Maputo, Mozambique: WFP, 2019), 15. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-sap011-wfp-mozambique.pdf>.

²⁷⁹ WFP, *R4 Annual Report 2017*, 10.

²⁸⁰ Green Climate Fund, "SAP007 Project," accessed July 2025. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/sap007>.

²⁸¹ GCF, "SAP011 Project," accessed July 2025. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/sap011>.

²⁸² WFP, "SAP011: Funding proposal," 15.

²⁸³ Ibid., 3.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 5.

²⁸⁵ WFP and Oxfam America, *R4 Rural Resilience Initiative Quarterly Report, January-March 2019*. (Rome, Italy, 2019), 5–6. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/r4-rural-resilience-initiative-quarterly-report-jan-mar-2019>.

²⁸⁶ WFP, "SAP011: Funding proposal," 4–5.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 4.

²⁸⁸ WFP, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2023 – SAP011* (Maputo, Mozambique: WFP, 2024), 44. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap011-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

²⁸⁹ WFP, "SAP011: Funding proposal," 19.

security, and livelihood strengthening; and the Christian Council of Mozambique, a faith-based umbrella organization supporting community mobilization and capacity-building.²⁸⁹ The project targets 16,000 smallholder households (approximately 80,000 people) directly and an additional 160,000 indirect beneficiaries through improved risk management, financial access, and climate-resilient practices.²⁹⁰ Project design mandates that community committees maintain at least 51 per cent female membership to ensure equitable participation and leadership.²⁹¹

Implementation and performance overview

Implementation began in July 2021 after an inception workshop, focusing first on forming farmer clubs for conservation agriculture and establishing village savings and loans groups to improve financial inclusion.²⁹² By December 2023, the project had trained over 12,000 smallholder farmers—59 per cent women—in Conservation Agriculture practices such as minimum tillage, crop rotation, and soil cover, resulting in yields that were reported to have doubled compared to traditional farming methods.²⁹³ The project also introduced a weather-index microinsurance product covering 4,240 households, designed to protect farmers against drought by triggering payouts based on rainfall measurements; the premium cost paid by farmers was reduced to encourage uptake, resulting in increased participation by women farmers in particular.²⁹⁴ Village savings and loans groups formation reached 280 groups with a total of 12,000 members, providing basic financial services, while post-harvest management training reached 7,000 farmers alongside distribution of 280 hermetic (airtight) storage silos to reduce grain losses.²⁹⁵

Despite these achievements, progress on diversifying livelihoods remained far below expectations, with only about 9,400 households recorded as adopting alternative or additional livelihood activities by 2023 compared to a target of 32,000.²⁹⁶ The project's planned watershed rehabilitation activities had not yet been systematically reported, limiting evidence of progress in landscape-scale natural resource management.²⁹⁷ Implementation challenges cited in the APR included procurement delays, weak private sector partnerships, and heavy reliance on WFP-led structures, raising concerns about the sustainability and scalability of project results without stronger integration into government systems and local markets.²⁹⁸

Transformational elements

SAP011 represents the third GCF investment supporting the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative after pilots in Senegal (FP049) and expansion to Zimbabwe (SAP007), all of which aimed to integrate climate risk management into smallholder farming systems.²⁹⁹ In Mozambique, the project has demonstrated elements of transformation by institutionalizing climate risk management approaches within government extension services and farmer networks. For example, district extension officers now disseminate monthly climate information bulletins to over 3,400 farmers using PICS channels to inform agricultural decisions.³⁰⁰ The Ministry of Land and Environment has used project-generated climate-risk data to finalize “Local Adaptation Plans” in Changara and Marara districts,

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 31.

²⁹¹ WFP, *APR 2023 – SAP011*, 44.

²⁹² Ibid., 6.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 7.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 6.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 7.

²⁹⁹ WFP, “SAP011: Funding proposal,” 15; WFP, *R4 Annual Report 2017*, 10; GCF, “SAP007 Project.”

³⁰⁰ WFP, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2021 – SAP011* (Maputo, Mozambique: WFP, 2022), 42.

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap011-annual-performance-report-cy2021-v.pdf>.

indicating integration of project tools into national planning systems.³⁰¹ A pilot seed-and-insurance bundling model was launched in 2023, embedding microinsurance premiums within seed purchases through agro-dealers to enhance market-based risk transfer mechanisms.³⁰² However, despite these important system-level changes, challenges remain in expanding diversified livelihoods at scale, with uptake falling short of targets, and in reducing reliance on WFP-led delivery without deeper private sector or local institutional ownership.³⁰³ In the context of Mozambique's exposure to droughts and rainfall variability, these partial advances demonstrate incremental but not yet comprehensive transformation in building resilient rural livelihoods.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ WFP, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2022 – SAP011*. (Maputo, Mozambique: WFP, 2023), 8.
<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap011-annual-performance-report-cy2022-v.pdf>.

³⁰² WFP, *APR 2023 – SAP011*, 24.

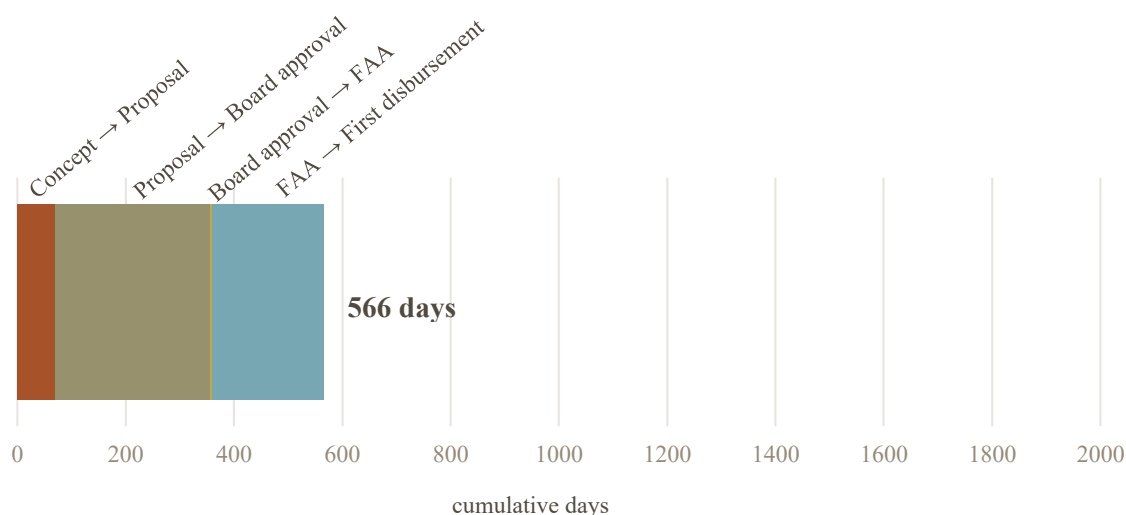
³⁰³ Ibid., 7.

³⁰⁴ WFP, “SAP011: Funding proposal,” 4.

SAP015 PROMOTING ZERO-DEFORESTATION COCOA PRODUCTION FOR REDUCING EMISSIONS (PROMIRE)

GCF Project ID	SAP015
Implementation period	2021–2026
AE	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
GCF financing	USD 10 million
Total project investment	USD 11,754,000 (including co-financing)
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	Category C
Number of direct beneficiaries	7,550
Number of indirect beneficiaries	600,000 smallholder farmers
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	5.5 m tons of emissions avoided

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

Between 1990 and 2015, Côte d'Ivoire lost approximately 250,000 ha of forest annually, with agriculture responsible for 62 per cent of the loss and cocoa alone accounting for 38 per cent of that

figure.³⁰⁵ While cocoa farms do store some carbon, converting forests for cultivation leads to significant greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss, underscoring the need for sustainable land-use approaches.³⁰⁶ The global REDD+ framework incentivizes countries to protect and restore forests while promoting sustainable agriculture.³⁰⁷ The PROMIRE project builds on the successful pilot in La Mé (2017–2019), funded by the French Development Agency, focused on sustainable land-use practices, participatory forest management, and zero-deforestation cocoa production. The initiative involved close engagement with the Coopérative des Producteurs de Cacao Biologique de la Mé and succeeded in demonstrating the viability of organic, low-emission fair-trade cocoa agroforestry models without further deforestation.³⁰⁸

SAP015 was designed to scale-up the La Mé project expanding to Agnéby-Tiassa and Sud-Comoé, regions of Côte d'Ivoire which are also characterized by both high cocoa production and rapid forest loss, with plans to scale agroforestry across 3,650 ha of farms and restore 1,500 ha of degraded forests.³⁰⁹ The project was submitted as a SAP proposal and approved by the GCF Board on 21 August 2020—nearly one year after proposal submission—and became effective on 19 February 2021, despite the solid features of its pilot foundations and institutional capacity.

Project objectives and design features

PROMIRE aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while improving rural livelihoods by transforming cocoa production systems in Côte d'Ivoire.³¹⁰ Its objectives are twofold: first, to finalize and operationalize the country's REDD+ system³¹¹, and second, to implement practical changes on the ground by supporting farmers to adopt low-carbon farming and land management practices in 30 villages.³¹² To achieve these goals, the project will assist smallholders to convert 3,650 hectares of conventional cocoa farms into agroforestry systems that integrate native trees with cocoa, while also restoring 1,500 hectares of degraded forest land.³¹³

FAO leads implementation in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, while national agencies provide extension services, forestry expertise, and land tenure support so that farmers receive training, tree seedlings, and assistance with land registration.³¹⁴ The project works with three cocoa cooperatives—one in each of the three targeted regions—to strengthen their business capacity and market links, targeting 7,550 smallholder farmers (30 per cent women) and indirectly benefiting up to 600,000 people in surrounding communities through improved environmental and economic conditions.³¹⁵

³⁰⁵ FAO, *Côte d'Ivoire: Promouvoir la résilience des moyens de subsistance ruraux et des forêts grâce à la mise en œuvre de la REDD+ (PROMIRE) – Funding Proposal* (Rome, FAO, 2020), section A.12.

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap015-fao-cote-divoire.pdf>.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., section A.11.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., sections A.11, A.23.

³¹⁰ Ibid., section C.3.

³¹¹ REDD+ is a global framework for reducing deforestation and forest degradation that also enables Côte d'Ivoire to receive results-based payments from international climate funds for verified emission reductions. See Ibid., section A.11.

³¹² FAO, *Midterm Evaluation Report – PROMIRE (SAP015)*, Internal report (Rome: FAO, 2024), §30.

³¹³ Ibid., §29.

³¹⁴ FAO, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2021 – SAP015*. (Rome: FAO, 2022), section 1.7.

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap015-annual-performance-report-cy2021-v.pdf>.

³¹⁵ FAO, "PROMIRE Funding Proposal," section E.1.2.

Implementation and performance overview

By December 2023, the project had converted 1,394 hectares of cocoa farms to agroforestry systems, exceeding its midterm target of 1,200 hectares by 16 per cent.³¹⁶ In contrast, only 165 hectares of degraded forest had been restored, achieving just 33 per cent of the midterm target of 500 hectares.³¹⁷ Greenhouse gas emission reductions stood at 1,823,268 tCO₂e by the end of 2023, representing 37 per cent of the final target of 4,866,409 tCO₂e (note: no explanation is provided in available documentation for why progress is below target).³¹⁸ The APR 2021 reported that despite COVID-19 restrictions and a government reshuffle delaying inception activities, implementation adjustments allowed mixed online and in-person meetings to reduce costs and maintain momentum.³¹⁹ Procurement delays, particularly due to vehicle shortages, were reported in 2022 and 2023 but were partially addressed by introducing quarterly procurement plans to speed up acquisitions.³²⁰ The midterm evaluation concluded that while agroforestry targets were being met, progress was limited in forest restoration, knowledge management, and gender inclusion, recommending stronger efforts to achieve balanced results across components.³²¹

Transformational elements

PROMIRE was designed as the first operational phase of Côte d'Ivoire's REDD+ strategy, aiming to demonstrate how climate finance can support sustainable cocoa production while reducing deforestation.³²² It builds directly on the La Mé REDD+ pilot (2017–2019), which tested agroforestry models integrating native trees with cocoa to maintain yields while restoring environmental services.³²³ Under PROMIRE, these models have been scaled up from a handful of pilot villages to 30 target villages across three cocoa-producing regions, reaching over 1,300 hectares converted by 2023.³²⁴ The project also established three regional REDD+ committees to coordinate planning and monitoring, although the midterm evaluation found that their operability remains limited and requires further strengthening before national scale-up can occur.³²⁵ A sustainability plan has been endorsed by major cocoa buyers, including Export Trading Group, Beyond Beans, and the ECOM Agroindustrial Corp. Ltd., signalling private sector interest in sourcing zero-deforestation cocoa beyond the project period.³²⁶ While the evaluation notes mixed progress across components, PROMIRE's experience provides the government with a tested jurisdictional approach that combines farmer-level incentives, institutional coordination, and private market linkages to reduce deforestation in the cocoa sector.³²⁷

³¹⁶ FAO, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2023 – SAP015* (Rome: FAO, 2024), 51.

³¹⁷ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap015-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

³¹⁸ FAO, *Midterm Evaluation Report – PROMIRE (SAP015)*, para. 70.

³¹⁹ FAO, *APR 2023 – SAP015* (Rome, 2024), 26.

³²⁰ FAO, *APR 2021 – SAP015* (Rome, 2022), 27.

³²¹ FAO, *APR 2023 – SAP015* (Rome, 2024), 37.

³²² FAO, *Midterm Evaluation Report – PROMIRE (SAP015)*, para. 95.

³²³ FAO, “PROMIRE Funding Proposal,” section E.5.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, section A.11.

³²⁵ FAO, *APR 2023 – SAP015* (Rome, 2024), 51.

³²⁶ FAO, *Midterm Evaluation Report – PROMIRE (SAP015)*, para. 67.

³²⁷ FAO, *Annual Performance Report: Calendar Year 2022 – SAP015* (Rome, FAO, 2023), 6.

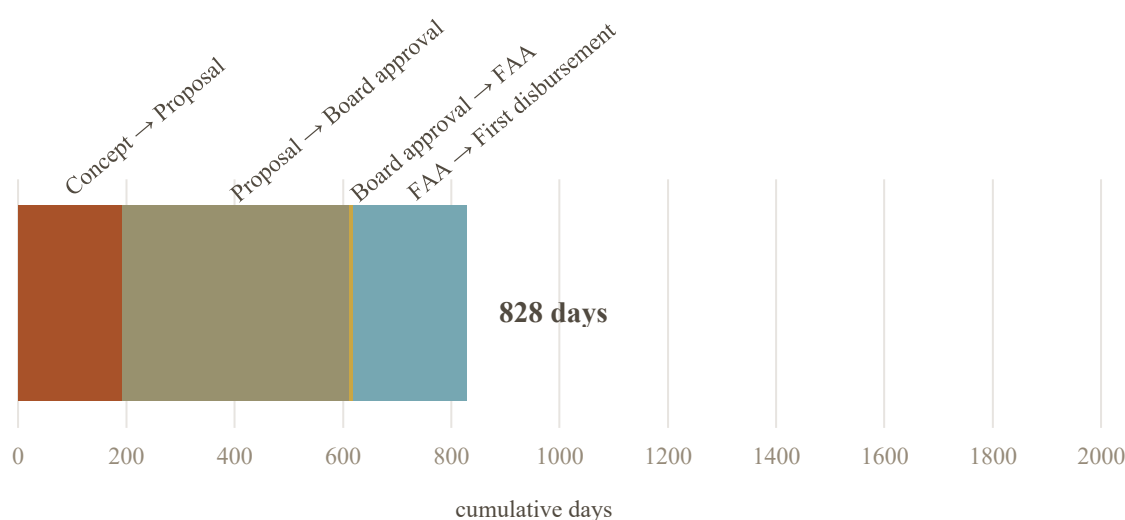
<https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap015-annual-performance-report-cy2022-v.pdf>.

³²⁸ FAO, *Midterm Evaluation Report – PROMIRE (SAP015)*, para. 95.

SAP022 ENHANCING MULTI-HAZARD EARLY WARNING SYSTEM TO INCREASE RESILIENCE OF UZBEKISTAN COMMUNITIES TO CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED HAZARDS

GCF Project ID	SAP022
Implementation period	19 March 2021–19 July 2027
AE	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
GCF financing	USD 9.99 million
Total project investment	USD 40.64 million (including co-financing)
Project type	Adaptation
ESS Category	Category C
Number of direct beneficiaries	11,296,000
Number of indirect beneficiaries	32,390,000
Expected CO ₂ equivalent reduction	Not applicable (adaptation project)

Mitigation				Adaptation			
Buildings, cities, industries and appliances	Ecosystems and ecosystem services	Energy generation and access	Forest and land-use	Health, food and water security	Infrastructure and built environment	Livelihoods of people and communities	Transport



Project origins and rationale

Uzbekistan faces growing climate risks, particularly from floods, mudflows, droughts, and extreme temperatures, which are increasing in frequency and severity under climate change.³²⁸ The Ferghana Valley, a densely populated and economically critical region, experiences annual losses of up to 3 per cent of GDP in some provinces due to flooding.³²⁹ The country's early warning system remains limited, focusing on hazard-based forecasts without localized, impact-based approaches or effective last-mile dissemination.³³⁰

SAP022 builds on the Central Asia Hydromet Modernization Project (CAHMP), which improved regional forecasting capacity but revealed significant gaps in Uzbekistan's national infrastructure, technical modelling capabilities, and community preparedness systems.³³¹ The project was proposed to close these gaps by expanding monitoring networks, installing automated weather stations, and enhancing risk communication to protect vulnerable communities.³³² Despite infrastructure components, SAP022 is classified as Category C because activities involve minimal environmental and social risks, limited to small-scale equipment installation without significant land disturbance or resettlement requirements.³³³ The FP took over a year to reach Board approval due to extended technical reviews, revisions to align with SAP eligibility criteria, and coordination across multiple national agencies.³³⁴

Project objectives and design features

SAP022 aims to enhance Uzbekistan's multi-hazard early warning system (MHEWS) to reduce vulnerability to climate hazards.³³⁵ Component 1 focuses on strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks, including drafting new legislation to define roles and responsibilities in early warning, integrating climate risk data into national planning, and formalizing coordination protocols between Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), Uzhydromet, and regional authorities.³³⁶ Component 2 involves upgrading the hydrometeorological observation network by installing 24 automated weather stations, Doppler radar, river flow monitoring systems, and modern data processing hardware and software.³³⁷ Component 3 aims to improve end-user access to warnings through public education campaigns, installation of information boards in communities, development of mobile apps, training for local responders, and translation of warnings into accessible formats, including sign language.³³⁸

UNDP, as the AE, provides technical oversight, fiduciary management, and procurement support to ensure compliance with GCF requirements.³³⁹ MES serves as the national executing entity responsible for project implementation and coordination among government partners.³⁴⁰

³²⁸ United Nations Development Programme, "SAP022: Enhancing Multi-Hazard Early Warning System to Increase Resilience of Uzbekistan Communities to Climate Change Induced Hazards," Funding proposal (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2020), 11. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-sap022.pdf>.

³²⁹ Ibid., 12.

³³⁰ Ibid., 13.

³³¹ WB, *Implementation Completion and Results Report: Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project (P120788)* (Washington D.C: WB Group, 2023), 7.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099112923140020861/txt/BOSIB045d7ba110500b01606a62746c1573.txt>;

UNDP, "SAP022 Funding Proposal," 13.

³³² UNDP, "SAP022 Funding Proposal," 13.

³³³ Ibid., 33.

³³⁴ Ibid., 3.

³³⁵ Ibid., 9.

³³⁶ Ibid., 18–19.

³³⁷ Ibid., 19–20.

³³⁸ Ibid., 20–21.

³³⁹ Ibid., 4.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

Uzhydromet leads technical implementation of forecasting and monitoring upgrades and manages the new observation infrastructure.³⁴¹ The project targets 11,296,000 “direct beneficiaries,” defined as residents in the districts where early warning coverage will be improved, while the entire national population of 32,390,000 is considered “indirect beneficiaries” due to expected nationwide improvements in forecasting capacity.³⁴² The documents do not specify whether all direct beneficiaries will receive targeted services or are simply covered by upgraded systems.³⁴³

Implementation and performance overview

By the end of 2023, the project had completed 68% of its activities and disbursed 89 per cent of funds received from GCF.³⁴⁴

Project implementation formally began in July 2021 following FAA effectiveness, with inception workshops held in early 2022.³⁴⁵ Initial delays were attributed to administrative bottlenecks, including protracted approval of project documents and recruitment processes.³⁴⁶ By the end of 2023, Component 2 showed strongest progress, exceeding infrastructure targets with installation of 25 automated weather stations compared to the planned 24, alongside Doppler radar and acoustic river flow profilers.³⁴⁷ However, performance in Component 1 was limited; while a legal framework for MHEWS coordination was drafted and approved, no documented evidence indicates substantial institutional strengthening outcomes beyond regulatory revisions.³⁴⁸ Component 3 lagged significantly: community awareness activities reached only a fraction of planned beneficiaries, with limited data provided on actual numbers trained, informed, or effectively engaged.³⁴⁹ Despite the claimed 11,296,000 direct beneficiaries and 32,390,000 indirect beneficiaries, project documents do not specify how many individuals have received services, training, or direct support to date.³⁵⁰

Transformational elements

SAP022 builds on the CAHMP, which improved regional forecasting capacity but identified national-level gaps in Uzbekistan’s infrastructure, technical modelling, and community warning dissemination.³⁵¹ The project aims to shift Uzbekistan from hazard-based to impact-based early warning, integrating monitoring infrastructure with institutional frameworks and community communication systems.³⁵² According to the midterm evaluation, infrastructure upgrades under Component 2 are progressing well, with weather stations and Doppler radar installed, but Components 1 and 3 show weaker results, with limited progress reported in institutional capacity strengthening and community awareness activities.³⁵³

The project cites replication potential in other Central Asian countries based on Uzbekistan’s experience with automated weather station installation, Doppler radar deployment, and training

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid., 28.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ UNDP, *Annual Performance Report CY2023: Enhancing Multi-Hazard Early Warning System to Increase Resilience of Uzbekistan Communities to Climate Change Induced Hazards (SAP022)* (New York: UNDP, 2024), section 2.1. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap022-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ UNDP, *Annual Performance Report CY2021: Enhancing Multi-Hazard Early Warning System to Increase Resilience of Uzbekistan Communities to Climate Change Induced Hazards (SAP022)* (New York: UNDP, 2022), sections 2.1 and 2.6.

³⁴⁷ UNDP, *APR 2023 SAP022*, section 2.3.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., section 2.4.

³⁵¹ WB, *Results Report: Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project*, 7; UNDP, “SAP022 Funding Proposal,” 13.

³⁵² UNDP, “SAP022 Funding Proposal,” 6, 13.

³⁵³ Ibid., 7.

modules developed under the project.³⁵⁴ National institutional engagement has included MES and Uzhydromet, with a new legal framework approved for early warning coordination.³⁵⁵ A regional workshop hosted in Tashkent in 2022 disseminated project lessons to neighbouring countries.³⁵⁶ However, the documents do not provide evidence of broader transformational impacts to date beyond infrastructure expansion and legal framework approval.³⁵⁷ The midterm evaluation concludes that “progress is uneven across components,” and recommends increased focus on institutional coordination and community-based activities in the remaining implementation period.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴ UNDP, *APR 2023 SAP022*, section 2.3.

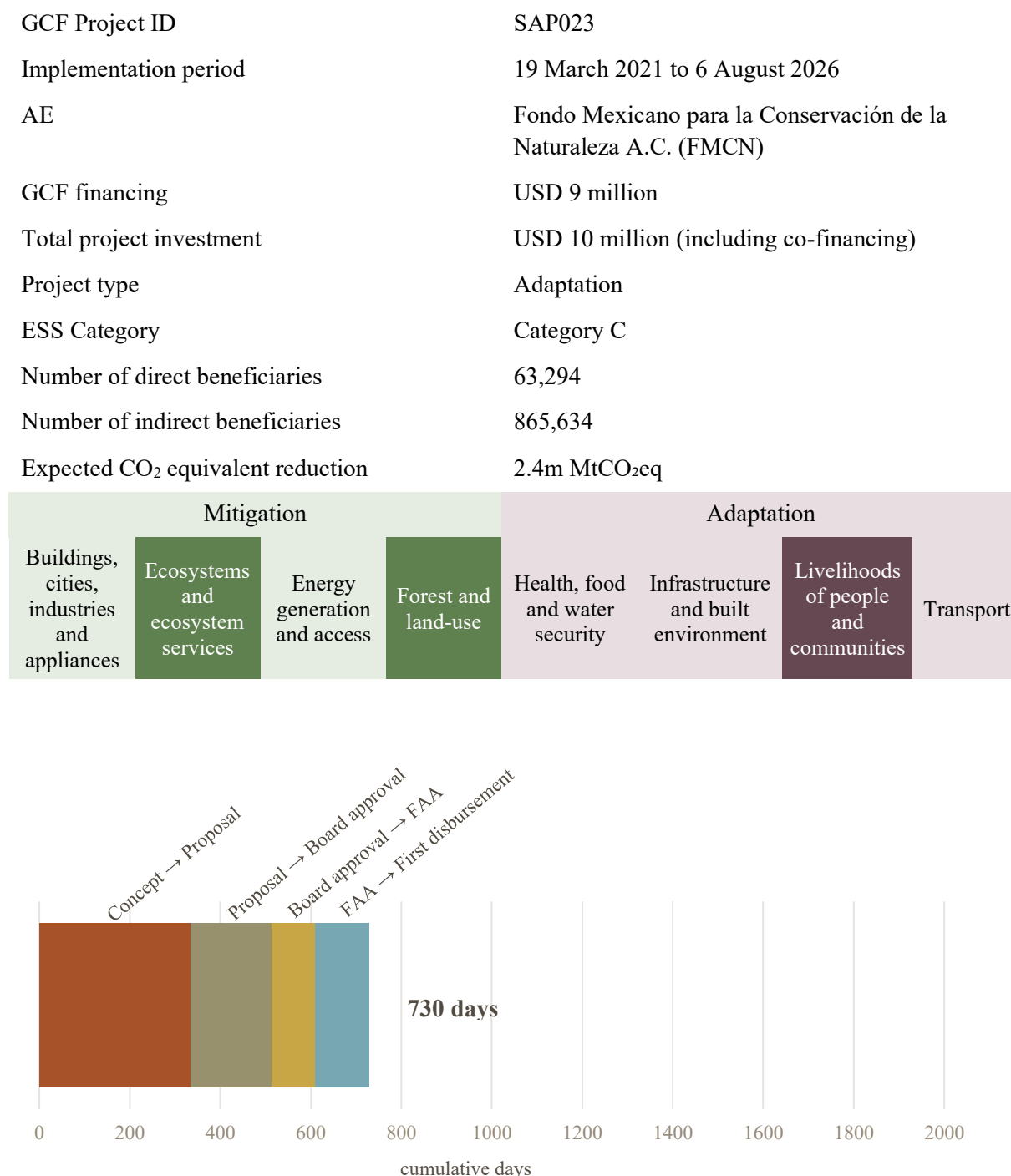
³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ UNDP, *SAP022 Midterm Report*, 7; UNDP, *APR 2023 SAP022*, section 2.3.

³⁵⁸ UNDP, *SAP022 Midterm Report*, 7.

SAP023 RIVER RESTORATION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (RIOS)



Project origins and rationale

The RIOS project (SAP023) is implemented by the FMCN, a Mexican non-profit that manages conservation funding and implements environmental projects with local organizations.³⁵⁹ The

³⁵⁹ Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza A.C., (2021). “SAP023: River Restoration for Climate Change Adaptation (RIOS),” Funding proposal (Mexico City, Mexico: Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, 2021), 4. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/funding-proposal-sap023.pdf>.

project addresses worsening droughts, floods, and water scarcity in Mexican river basins, which threaten rural livelihoods and ecosystem stability.³⁶⁰ It follows an earlier GEF project implemented from 2013 to 2019, which aimed to restore degraded land, improve water management, and protect biodiversity in coastal watersheds.³⁶¹ In that earlier project, ecosystem restoration involved planting native trees along rivers and reforesting degraded slopes to stabilize soil,³⁶² sustainable land-use promoted farming practices that reduced erosion, and biodiversity conservation protected habitats for native species through these integrated actions.³⁶³ Lessons learned included the importance of strengthening local governance, participatory monitoring, and financing mechanisms such as environmental trust funds.³⁶⁴

The RIOS project is not an extension of the GEF project but replicates its model in new watersheds in Jalisco and Veracruz.³⁶⁵ It applies the same ecological corridor and restoration approach to address climate risks in these areas, aiming to restore riparian zones to reduce flood and drought vulnerability and improve water retention in the landscape.³⁶⁶ Although building directly on methods proven in the earlier project, preparation from CN to proposal took over a year.³⁶⁷ Available documents do not explain this preparation timeline.

Project objectives and design features

The RIOS project aims to improve climate resilience in two river basins in Mexico by restoring degraded river ecosystems. Its four main components are: restoring riverbanks with native vegetation, training communities to monitor climate risks, attracting investment in sustainable land-use, and developing a national river restoration policy. EbA in this context involves practical measures like planting trees along riverbanks to reduce erosion and flooding while supporting biodiversity.³⁶⁸

The project is managed by the FMCN. Two regional funds – Fondo Noroeste and Gulf of Mexico Fund – oversee activities in Jalisco and Veracruz respectively.³⁶⁹ These regional funds work with local CSOs that implement restoration and training activities on the ground. Technical assistance providers develop training materials and monitoring systems. The National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change leads work on the national river restoration strategy.³⁷⁰

The project targets 5,000 direct beneficiaries and 32,000 indirect beneficiaries, with a focus on communities whose livelihoods depend on river ecosystems.³⁷¹ Training includes specific modules to ensure participation by women and Indigenous groups.³⁷²

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 5.

³⁶¹ WB, *Implementation Completion and Results Report: Coastal Watersheds Conservation in the Context of Climate Change Project (P131709)*, Washington D.C.: WB, 2019), 5.

³⁶² https://publicpartnershipdata.azureedge.net/gef/GEFDocuments/2c9e7d01-df7c-e811-8124-3863bb2e1360/Roadmap/TerminalEvaluationTE_4792-P131709-2019-ICR-WB-Mexico.pdf.

³⁶³ Ibid., 11.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 18.

³⁶⁶ FMCN, “SAP023 Funding Proposal,” 5.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 4–5.

³⁶⁸ Green Climate Fund, “SAP023 Project,” (2021), 2.

³⁶⁹ FMCN, “SAP023 Funding Proposal,” 5.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.

³⁷¹ FMCN, *Annual Performance Report CY2022: SAP023 River Restoration for Climate Change Adaptation (RIOS)*. (Mexico City, Mexico: FMCN, 2023), section 2. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap023-annual-performance-report-cy2022-v.pdf>.

³⁷² FMCN, “SAP023 Funding Proposal,” 5.

³⁷³ FMCN, *APR 2022 SAP023*, section 2.

Implementation and performance overview

By the end of 2023, the RIOS project had restored 372 hectares of riparian areas, exceeding its midterm target of 300 hectares and putting it on track to reach its final goal of 600 hectares.³⁷³

Training participation also surpassed expectations, with over 1,400 individuals completing climate adaptation modules by 2023.³⁷⁴ According to the midterm evaluation, activities implemented directly by FMCN and its regional partners progressed well, especially restoration and training.³⁷⁵

However, institutional and policy components lagged behind. The national river restoration strategy remained under development, with no draft submitted to government counterparts by the end of 2023.³⁷⁶ The midterm evaluation noted that coordination among federal institutions was complex and time-consuming, delaying broader policy endorsement.³⁷⁷ It reported that while FMCN had strong delivery systems for restoration activities, it faced challenges in engaging government actors to align diverse interests at national level.³⁷⁸

Key performance indicators showed mixed results: hectares restored and training participation exceeded midterm targets,³⁷⁹ but indicators on policy advancement and investment mobilization remained behind schedule.³⁸⁰ The midterm evaluation concluded that delays in institutional processes, rather than technical or delivery capacity, were holding back progress in policy development.³⁸¹

Transformational elements

SAP023 applies the river restoration model from the earlier GEF project to new watersheds, showing that the approach can work in different ecological and social contexts.³⁸² The midterm evaluation noted that this project is adding structured community-based climate monitoring, which was not a focus in the earlier model.³⁸³

While restoration activities are progressing, broader change has been limited. The planned national river restoration strategy remained incomplete by the end of 2023.³⁸⁴ According to the midterm evaluation, the approach has not yet influenced national policies or funding decisions.³⁸⁵

Overall, SAP023 is refining technical delivery and demonstrating scale-up feasibility, but institutional adoption remains the key gap for transformational impact.³⁸⁶

³⁷³ FMCN, *Annual Performance Report CY2023: SAP023 River Restoration for Climate Change Adaptation (RIOS)* (Mexico City, Mexico: FMCN, 2024), section 2.4. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/sap023-annual-performance-report-cy2023.pdf>.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., section 2.3.

³⁷⁵ Ratner et al., *Mid-Term Evaluation: River Restoration for Climate Change Adaptation (RIOS) Project*. Internal report (Mexico City, Mexico: FMCN, 2024), 12.

³⁷⁶ FMCN, *APR 2023 RIOS*, section 2.3.

³⁷⁷ Ratner et al., *Mid-Term Evaluation RIOS*, 16.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 27.

³⁷⁹ FMCN, *APR 2023 RIOS*, section 2.4.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ratner et al., *Mid-Term Evaluation RIOS*, 27.

³⁸² WB, *Results Report P131709*, 11; FMCN, "SAP023 Funding Proposal," 5.

³⁸³ Ratner et al., *Mid-Term Evaluation RIOS*, 12.

³⁸⁴ FMCN, *APR 2023 RIOS*, section 2.3.

³⁸⁵ Ratner et al., *Mid-Term Evaluation RIOS*, 27.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

Annex 10. CASE STUDY PROJECT ORIGINS AND ADAPTATION

Table A - 6. Scale-up continuum

Positioning for uptake → project origins & adaptation ↓	Stand-alone/Pilot	Learning-oriented	Designed for uptake	System-aligned
New concept	First-of-its-kind pilot with no prior model (more an NGO initiative)	Small pilots framed as experimental (more likely a GEF pilot)	Rare: untested models are seldom designed for immediate replication	Rare: immediate alignment unlikely for untested ideas
Inspired/loosely based	Draws on similar initiatives elsewhere, but substantially reinterpreted (could occur with AF or GEF small grants)	Draws on prior initiatives but with significant local adaptation (some parallels to the AF portfolio)	Adaptations of similar initiatives, with attention to learning, evidence prioritized for future uptake (more typical of GEF/AF)	Rare: projects loosely linked to a prior experience seldom scale-up
Adapted model	Adapts a tested approach but delivers it only as a small stand-alone project; no clear pathway to replication or institutional uptake	Based on a tested model implemented in a new context with strong emphasis on lesson sharing	Projects drawing on prior tested models, but tailored for local contexts, with explicit strategies for scaling-up	Integrated into policy or delivery systems; supported by budgetary or institutional commitments
Direct replication	Implements a proven model in a limited setting without explicit plans for expansion	Replication of a proven model while prioritizing internal learning (Lao PDR SAP009)	Replications of proven models with engagement of delivery partners to pave the way for integration into system	Scaled through government or anchor institutions; embedded into existing policies or systems

Table A - 7. Evidence of how case study projects map onto the scale-up continuum

Case study	Project lineage and adaptation evidence	Positioning for influence or uptake evidence
FP001	<u>Adapted model</u> • Originated from a “debt-for-nature swap” implemented in the same province from 2005–2018. • Developed by the same entity (Profonanpe), who designed both projects. • The GCF project retools the concept for climate finance, with new partners and a broader climate adaptation/mitigation lens.	<u>Designed for uptake</u> • Indigenous territorial zoning files were developed. • Local climate change plan adopted by provincial government. • Policy proposals submitted to regional government. • Collaboration with national funding bodies like Fondo de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Social mentioned, but actual co-implementation not confirmed. • Institutions engaged, but project was not implemented through formal national systems.
FP003	<u>Adapted model</u> • Built explicitly on prior interventions: “The project builds on lessons from earlier initiatives (PAPIL) and was designed to be replicable and locally manageable.” • PAPIL had limited sustainability due to poor community ownership — which FP003 explicitly seeks to address. • FP003 also scaled up tested salt-tolerant rice varieties developed by Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles.	<u>Designed for uptake</u> • Strong local institutional partnerships: INP, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Réseau Africain pour le Développement Intégré. • Participatory governance mechanisms via COMLECCs. • Created geo-referenced salinity maps, community climate plans, disseminated through a national GIS platform. • While national alignment is visible through technical institutions (e.g. INP), there is no confirmation of national policy or budget integration. • Learning tools and training for replication exist, but replication beyond the project zone is only implied, not documented.
FP023	<u>Adapted model</u> • Builds directly on Namibia’s Comprehensive Conservation Agriculture Programme and Revised National Agriculture Policy (2015). • References similarity with WFP’s R4 project design. • CRAVE pilots built on already tested interventions (e.g., microirrigation, conservation agriculture, solar, insurance). • The insurance pilot informed the national Namibia Agricultural Insurance Scheme launched in 2022.	<u>System-aligned</u> • Index-based insurance pilot scaled to national level. • National partnerships (Ministry of Agriculture, University of Namibia, Agro-Marketing and Trade Agency). • Created a Climate-Resilient Agriculture Centre of Excellence with postgraduate research and financial sustainability. • Completed a sustainability and exit strategy. • Integrated key innovations (insurance, irrigation, conservation agriculture) into national programmes.

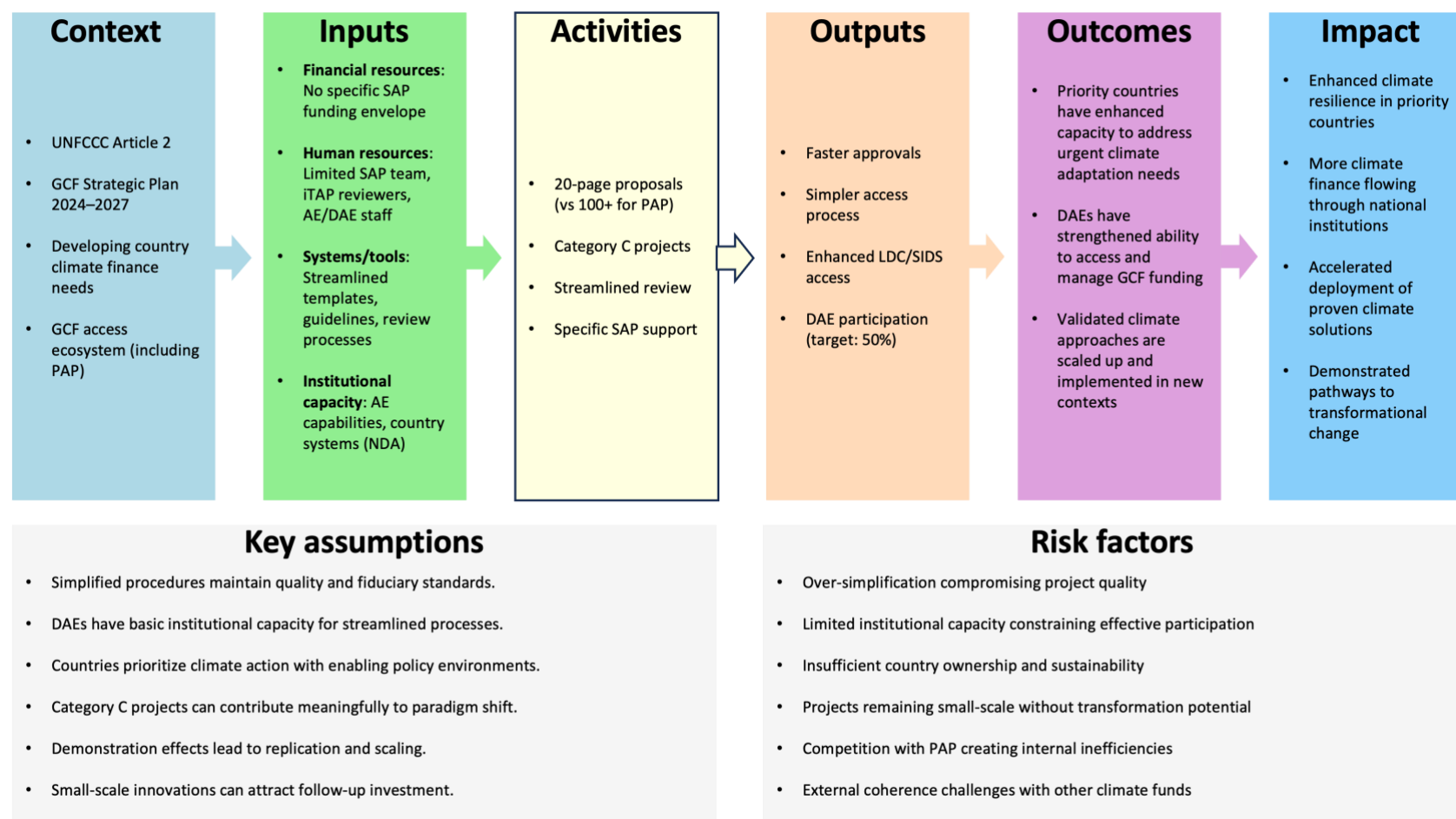
Case study	Project lineage and adaptation evidence	Positioning for influence or uptake evidence
FP024	<u>Adapted model</u> • Built squarely on 20+ years of Namibia’s CBNRM framework. • Adapted for climate finance by adding resilience focus and devolved access. • Introduced a grant facility for CBOs to propose and manage adaptation projects. • Introduced climate elements (local climate monitoring system, Category C safeguards, three adaptation windows).	<u>System-aligned</u> • The EDA modality intentionally devolved financial decision-making to CBOs. • Institutionalization of the local climate monitoring system in 33 conservancies. • National dissemination of lessons via the Ministry of Environment, media, and events. • Final evaluation called it a “significant paradigm shift.” • Created implementation pathways that could influence how Namibia manages future climate finance.
FP049	<u>Adapted model</u> • Rooted in the R4 Rural Resilience model, originally piloted in Ethiopia by WFP and Oxfam America. • This specific project scaled the model from prior pilots in Tambacounda and Kolda (2011–2019) to five regions in Senegal. • Added tools (e.g. climate-smart asset creation, weather-index insurance, savings groups) already tested.	<u>System-aligned</u> • Delivered through national institutions: ☞ CNAAS (insurance agency) ☞ ANACIM (climate services) ☞ SE/CNSA (social protection agency) • Integration of insurance, climate services, and financial tools into national delivery models was explicitly stated as a goal. • Delivery mechanisms (mobile, digital) were designed for scalability. • Project has influenced national policy frameworks despite no follow-on GCF investment.
FP067	<u>Adapted model</u> • Draws on WFP Tajikistan’s prior resilience programming, including integrated context analysis and climate vulnerability assessments. • However, it explicitly states that it does not follow the R4 model used in Senegal and Ethiopia. • Instead, the focus is on community-based asset rehabilitation, institutional capacity-building, and climate-informed planning — tuned to fragile, mountainous areas. • Activities such as PICS training, Dehkan farm support, and localized information systems appear novel for this setting.	<u>Designed for uptake</u> • Strong collaboration with the Committee for Environmental Protection and local NGOs. • Integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management into district development plans. • Replication mechanisms include trained local trainers and national dissemination via radio, brochures, and documentation. • Weaknesses remain in coordination and uptake across components, per midterm evaluation. • The project falls short of demonstrating national budget integration or

Case study	Project lineage and adaptation evidence	Positioning for influence or uptake evidence
		durable institutionalization, but some structures (e.g. local adaptation planning) are now embedded in district processes.
SAP007	<u>Direct replication</u> • This project is a direct outgrowth of the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, originally piloted in Ethiopia (2011) and then expanded to Senegal, Malawi, Zambia, and Kenya. • The SAP007 document states that the R4 model was applied in Zimbabwe using the same integrated approach, albeit with some tailoring. • Importantly, institutional familiarity from earlier R4 projects shortened preparation time, and the same components — weather index insurance, asset creation, advisories, village savings and loan associations — were reused.	<u>System-aligned</u> • Implemented through national institutions: Meteorological Services Department, Department of Agricultural Technical and Extension Services, and the Ministry of Environment. • Climate advisories institutionalized; farmers now receive regular, localized bulletins. • Weather index insurance encountered resistance, but is being integrated into Zimbabwe’s national agricultural insurance scheme. • Project used a community-driven model, paired with capacity strengthening and joint delivery mechanisms.
SAP008	<u>Direct replication</u> • ECCCP-Flood emerged from lessons learned through the earlier successful CCCP. • Uses the same basic model: plinth-raising, flood-resilient latrines, and climate-resilient agriculture — all previously tested. • Delivered by the same DAE, working with a network of NGOs. • The design was explicitly informed by CCCP impact evaluations and replicated successful components.	<u>Designed for uptake</u> • Implemented through a network of nine NGOs coordinated by PKSF, a direct access entity with strong national connections. • Project trained local institutions and improved delivery capacity (confirmed by midterm evaluation). • Replication potential emphasized: “These models can be expanded to reach more households when delivered through local NGOs coordinated by PKSF.” • But while it strengthens delivery capacity, there is no evidence that the approach is embedded into national budget systems or mainstream adaptation policy.
SAP009	<u>Adapted model</u> • The project is explicitly a follow-on from the GEF-funded CAWA project (2014–2020), which tested EbA in rural wetlands in two provinces. • SAP009 translates and adapts this rural approach to urban flood risk management in four cities. • The proposal underwent a long design phase (2015–2019) to align it with urban infrastructure challenges and institutional contexts.	<u>Learning-oriented</u> • Partnerships with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, provincial offices, National University of Laos, and UN-Habitat. • Creation of an EbA Knowledge Hub. • Management committees formed at wetland sites and local training delivered. • However, performance is lagging — restoration works delayed, institutional embedding unclear, replication mechanisms not

Case study	Project lineage and adaptation evidence	Positioning for influence or uptake evidence
		demonstrated. • APRs do not confirm uptake in policy or city planning systems.
SAP011	<u>Direct replication</u> • This is the third iteration of the R4 Rural Resilience model, following: ☞ FP049 (Senegal) – pilot ☞ SAP007 (Zimbabwe) – scaled version • SAP011 replicates the same integrated risk management package: asset creation, microinsurance, village savings and loan associations, and PICSA climate advisories. • Components are identical in function and structure, despite local adjustments in Tete Province (e.g., targeting, implementing partners).	<u>System-aligned</u> • Delivered in collaboration with two national ministries (agriculture and environment). • Extension officers now disseminate PICSA bulletins regularly to thousands of farmers. • Climate data generated by the project was used to inform local adaptation plans. • A pilot insurance-seed bundling mechanism launched with private agro-dealers. • However, implementation challenges persist: ☞ Limited progress on livelihood diversification ☞ Heavy reliance on WFP-led delivery ☞ Weak private sector partnerships • These factors suggest partial institutional embedding — stronger than “designed for uptake,” but not yet fully sustainable.
SAP015	<u>Adapted model</u> • PROMIRE builds directly on the 2017–2019 pilot in La Mé, funded by Agence Française de Développement, which demonstrated viable agroforestry models for organic, low-emission cocoa without deforestation. • Expanded from a handful of villages in La Mé to 30 villages across three cocoa-producing regions (Agnéby-Tiassa, Sud-Comoé, and La Mé itself). • Pilot involved the same cooperatives and government counterparts.	<u>System-aligned</u> • Tightly linked to national REDD+ strategy — positioned as the first operational phase. • Partnered with Ministry of Environment, and implementation via national extension and land agencies. • Private sector partners (ETG, Beyond Beans, ECOM) have endorsed a sustainability plan for market continuity beyond the project. • Established three regional REDD+ committees, though their functionality is still evolving. • The approach is being used by the government as a model for jurisdictional REDD+ implementation.
SAP022	<u>Adapted model</u> • SAP022 explicitly builds on the CAHMP, implemented regionally with	<u>Designed for uptake</u> • Component 1 supported the approval of a national legal framework to

Case study	Project lineage and adaptation evidence	Positioning for influence or uptake evidence
	WB support. • While CAHMP provided regional forecasting improvements, SAP022 extends and adapts those advances to national-scale gaps — specifically institutional frameworks, local communication infrastructure, and community outreach. • Project design included new institutional roles, new risk communication channels, and a shift from hazard- to impact-based warnings.	define roles in MHEWS across national agencies (MES, Uzhydromet, etc.). • Implementation led by national agencies, with UNDP support. • Significant infrastructure delivery success (weather stations, Doppler radar), but limited evidence of actual institutional or behavioural uptake to date. • Community engagement and awareness-raising (Component 3) significantly lagged, with weak data on who was reached and how. • Regional dissemination occurred (e.g., workshop in Tashkent), but systemic change not yet evidenced beyond legal reforms and installations.
SAP023	<u>Adapted model</u> • SAP023 explicitly builds on a prior GEF-funded watershed restoration project implemented from 2013 to 2019. • Applies the same ecological corridor approach (reforestation of degraded slopes, native species along riparian zones), but in new watersheds in Jalisco and Veracruz. • - Not simply copied — includes new features like community-based climate risk monitoring and national policy development components not present in the GEF predecessor.	<u>Designed for uptake</u> • Project delivery has been strong through FMCN and regional civil society partners. • A key goal was to inform a national river restoration strategy, led by National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change. • However, the policy component has stalled: no draft submitted to government by 2023; multi-stakeholder coordination proved slow and difficult. • Midterm evaluation: institutional alignment is the main area of underperformance, despite restoration targets being met.

Annex 11. THEORY OF CHANGE



Source: This ToC updates the SAP2020 evaluation ToC, incorporating SAP programming guidelines and technical guidance developed by the GCF Secretariat since B.32. The structure aligns with the current evaluation matrix, supporting assessment across coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact criteria.

Annex 12. SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Key informant interview Protocol

Background

KIIs are seen as a key methodology to answer all of the key evaluation criteria:

- **Relevance:** to explore the perspective and experiences of GCF staff, former staff and external stakeholders (NDAs, IAEs, DAEs, among others) on the design, and implementation of the GCF's SAP in the context of GCF funding activities. Not raised with comparator organizations.
- **Efficiency:** to explore their perspective on the efficiency of streamlined processes of the GCF's SAP and PAP modalities. With comparators, to learn what "tricks" to streamline processes had the most value.
- **Coherence:** to assess the alignment between GCF's SAP modality with wider internal policies and frameworks to achieve strategic goals and objectives, as well as lessons learned from simplified access modalities within other multilateral organizations.
- **Effectiveness:** to explore their perspective on the effectiveness and usefulness of the GCF's SAP with comparators, what trade-offs may have been experienced implementing simpler processes for lower-capacity entities.
- **Impact:** to explore their perspective on the impacts of SAP and PAP project portfolios. Not explored with comparators.

It is anticipated that each interview will last under one hour.

In-depth interview categories and rationale

Cohort	Plan	Given	Interview rationale
GCF Board Members, Alternates, and Advisers (including active observers like CSOs and private sector entities)	15	1	Focused on governance, strategic decision-making, policy and overall guidance. Particular interest in the balance between efficiency and accountability.
AP and iTAP	8	7	Directly involved in the approval process to ensure that projects meet high standards of quality, compliance and effectiveness. AP will focus on institutions and iTAP on the technical quality of projects.
Secretariat: offices and departments	30	32	Fluent about operational processes, project pipelines and fund management. Will have a particular insight into efficiency issues.
NDAs	8	0	Facilitate national approval processes, coordinate with other national climate efforts. Strong perspective on relevance and coherence.
AEs	11	16	Will have a broader perspective across various contexts, in-house expertise to prepare complex proposals.
DAEs	9	8	National actors leading localized project design with direct engagement to the GCF. The SAP was specifically designed to make the approval process easier for DAEs.
Executing entities	4	0	On-the-ground implementation of projects, practical challenges and impact. They can reveal whether SAP projects were well-

Cohort	Plan	Given	Interview rationale
			designed.
Comparator agencies/funds	0	9	Their experience offers comparative perspectives on the design and operationalization of streamlined processes, which can reveal strengths and weaknesses in SAP's approach and inspire potential improvements.
Total	85	73	

While contributing to the key evaluation questions, the specific open-ended questions posed to these different categories of respondents will be different taking into account this analysis of differing roles.

Interview process

Key informants in each of these cohorts will be identified by the IEU. Criteria for inclusion will be their experience with the SAP modality.

The IEU will invite key informants to participate as early as possible in the evaluation process given the challenges with arranging suitable times. Besides virtual interviews, as many key informants as possible will be contacted during the upcoming B.41 (February 17–20, 2025). In the invitation the relevant open-ended questions tailored to that person's cohort will be shared to improve preparation quality.

Stephen Perry will carry out many of the interviews always accompanied by a member of the IEU.

Open-ended questions will similarly relate to the key evaluation questions, but will be adjusted to account for the different perspectives different interview cohorts have (Annex I).

Interview formats tailored to the seven different cohorts will be used (Annex II).

To aid analysis notes will be parsed into statements and ideas, and transferred onto a digital platform organized by evaluation criteria. The resulting database retains "who said what" to ensure traceability, but all references in the report will be anonymized. Where references are made in the evaluation text to inputs they will refer only to the cohort who made them. When the evaluation has been finalized and published, the data will be deleted.

Table A - 8. Open-ended KIIs question topics, by cohort

Evaluation criteria	GCF Board Members, Alternates, & Advisers	AP and iTAP	Secretariat: offices and departments	AEs	DAEs	Designated authorities & government institutions	Executing entities	Comparator agencies/funds
Relevance	How effectively does the SAP modality address the Board's mandate to simplify access for developing countries?	How well do SAP's technical requirements balance simplification with maintaining project quality?	How does the SAP's design and operationalization respond to developing country needs compared to standard programming?	How does the SAP modality compare to other climate funds' fast-track mechanisms in meeting your needs?	To what extent does SAP address the specific challenges DAEs face in accessing GCF funding?	How well does the SAP align with your country's climate finance priorities and institutional capacities?	How does the SAP's project design approach affect implementation at the local level?	
Effectiveness	What factors have enabled or hindered the Board's ability to expedite SAP project approvals?	How has the streamlined technical review process affected project quality and climate impact?	What are the key bottlenecks in the SAP project cycle from submission to implementation?	How has SAP affected your project preparation time and costs compared to standard programming?	What specific aspects of SAP have improved or hindered your access to GCF resources?	How effectively does SAP enable country ownership in project design and approval?	What implementation challenges are unique to SAP projects versus standard GCF projects?	What trade-offs have you faced between streamlining access and maintaining standards?
Efficiency	How do SAP's human resource requirements compare to standard programming?	How has the simplified review process affected your assessment capacity and timelines?	What specific operational improvements have reduced processing time and resources for SAP projects?	How do SAP's transaction costs compare with other climate fund modalities you work with?	What aspects of SAP most effectively reduce your resource requirements for accessing GCF?	How do SAP's documentation and review requirements affect approval timelines?	How do SAP's implementation arrangements affect your project management costs?	What design features or process changes most reduced time and effort?
Coherence	How well does SAP complement	How do SAP's requirements align with	How effectively does SAP coordinate with	How does SAP complement your existing climate	How does SAP integrate with your	How does SAP coordinate with other climate	How does SAP align with other donor's	How do streamlining efforts fit within

Evaluation criteria	GCF Board Members, Alternates, & Advisers	AP and iTAP	Secretariat: offices and departments	AEs	DAEs	Designated authorities & government institutions	Executing entities	Comparator agencies/funds
	other GCF funding windows in achieving Fund objectives?	other GCF modalities and international standards?	other GCF instruments and processes?	project portfolio and other funding sources?	other climate finance access channels?	finance mechanisms in your country?	requirements and processes?	your fund's broader processes?
Impact	How has SAP influenced the Fund's ability to reach smaller-scale, local climate projects?	What differences do you observe in the climate impact potential of SAP versus standard projects?	What evidence exists of SAP's contribution to paradigm shift in access to climate finance?	What transformational changes have you observed from SAP projects in target communities?	How has SAP affected your organization's capacity to deliver climate action?	What systemic changes has SAP enabled in your country's climate finance landscape?	What lasting benefits have SAP projects created in local communities?	

Interview tool

Interview identification section

Date of interview: _____

Interviewer name: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Interviewee information

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Role/Position: _____

Stakeholder category: ☐ Board Member ☐ iTAP ☐ Secretariat ☐ AE ☐ Other: _____

Years of experience with GCF: _____

Interview format: ☐ In-person ☐ Virtual

Recording permitted: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Preamble: introduction and purpose

This evaluation seeks to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Green Climate Fund's Simplified Approval Process (SAP). The SAP was introduced to reduce the time and effort needed to approve smaller-scale projects while maintaining robust environmental and social safeguards. Your insights will help us understand the strengths and challenges of the current process and identify opportunities for improvement.

Ethical considerations and consent

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- You may decline to answer any question or end the interview at any time.
- Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for evaluation purposes.
- Any direct quotes will be anonymized in the final report.
- Data will be stored securely and accessible only to the evaluation team.
- Findings will be presented in aggregate form to protect individual privacy.

With your permission, I would like to record this interview to ensure accurate capture of your insights. The recording will be used only for transcription purposes and will be deleted once transcribed. Do you consent to:

1. Participating in this interview? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Including your name in the Annex of the report? ☐ Yes ☐ No

We expect the interview to last approximately 40 minutes. This will be a semi-structured discussion with open-ended questions that relate to the five criteria this evaluation is considering. We value your candid feedback and personal experiences. Remember: there are no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to ask for clarification at any time.

Key discussion topics

(Note: Customize questions based on stakeholder category)

Background: personal involvement with SAP projects/processes

1. Relevance

2. Effectiveness

3. Efficiency

4. Coherence

5. Impact

Post-interview notes

Key takeaways: _____

Follow-up required: _____

Additional comments: _____

Interview quality: ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

Data quality: ☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

Transcription status: ☐ Completed ☐ Pending

AE questionnaire

The survey aimed to capture the perspectives and experiences of AEs in engaging with SAP focusing specifically on its relevance, accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency and comparative value in relation to other streams of climate financing AEs were aware of.

The evaluation team crafted the questions for the online survey based on early responses from workshops, KIIs and the desk review. The questionnaire was piloted before its launch to ensure it was comprehensible and logical.

The online survey was distributed to all 145 AEs of the GCF, including direct national, direct regional and international AEs. The survey was disseminated via email on 25 February 2025, with responses accepted until 5 March 2025. In total, the survey generated 30 responses, representing a response rate of 20.6 per cent.

The questionnaire was administered using Google Forms, allowing for efficient collection and management of responses. Branching logic was applied within the online tool to streamline the respondent experience (e.g. answering “no” on question 4 exited the survey). Respondents were directed to follow-up questions only where relevant—for example, entities that had not engaged with SAP were asked to elaborate on barriers, while those with funded SAP projects were asked about project performance. In this annex, the full instrument is presented as a single clean tool, with all branching logic removed to provide a complete record of the questions asked.

Response options in the original tool were presented primarily as checkboxes, allowing respondents to select multiple applicable responses where appropriate. Open-ended text fields were included to allow qualitative elaboration of quantitative ratings.

Survey responses were automatically compiled in Google Sheets. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics to generate response frequencies and percentages, as reflected in the main evaluation report. Qualitative responses were reviewed and thematically coded to capture common themes and divergent views, which informed the narrative analysis of survey findings.

The following questionnaire represents the full survey tool as presented to respondents, with conditional questions integrated directly following their relevant parent question.

Interview tool

GCF-IEU Independent Evaluation of the Simplified Approval Process (SAP)

This questionnaire was distributed via an online form to accredited entities (AEs) participating in the evaluation. All branching logic has been removed; questions are presented sequentially.

—

Section A: Institutional profile

Q1. Does your organization mainly deliver:

- Public sector climate projects
- Private sector climate projects

Q2. What type of accreditation does your institution have with the Green Climate Fund?

- International Accredited Entity
- Regional Direct Access Entity
- National Direct Access Entity
- Other (please specify): _____

Q3. How do you describe your organization? (e.g. multilateral development bank, bilateral agency, UN organization, INGO, etc.)

- [Text response]

—

Section B: Engagement with the SAP

Q4. Is your AE aware of the Simplified Approval Process (SAP)?

- Yes, as a funded SAP project partner
- Yes, as a project developer
- Only to a limited extent
- No, not at all

Q5. In your view, is the SAP modality relevant and fit-for-purpose to meet the needs of developing countries?

(Scale from 1 to 5)

- 1 – Not relevant nor fit-for-purpose
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – Very relevant and fit-for-purpose

Q6. Very briefly, explain your rating:

- [Text response]

Q7. If you answered that your AE has not engaged fully with the SAP, what are your primary reasons? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of familiarity with the process
- Eligibility concerns
- Preference for alternative funding mechanisms
- Lack of clarity about SAP's processes
- Lack of internal capacity to meet application requirements
- Other (please specify): _____

Q8. Are there any other reasons not listed above for your limited engagement with the SAP?

- [Text response]

—

Section C: Accessibility, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Q9. How well does SAP meet the needs of your AE in terms of its accessibility and responsiveness?

(Scale from 1 to 5)

- 1 – Not at all fit-for-purpose
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 – Fully fit-for-purpose

Q10. Please briefly explain your rating (e.g. the strengths or challenges of SAP in your experience):

- [Text response]

Q11. Have SAP's objectives and design met your institutional needs over time?

- Yes, fully
- Yes, partially
- No, not really
- No, not at all

Q12. Please describe any changes to SAP that would better meet your institutional needs:

- [Text response]

Q13. Has SAP improved the timeliness of the project development and review cycle?

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, moderately
- No
- Don't know

Q14. If SAP has not improved timeliness, what are the main causes of delay? (Select all that apply)

- Lengthy application process
- High documentation requirements
- Unclear guidance
- Delayed GCF Secretariat responses
- Slow coordination with National Designated Authorities
- Limited internal capacity within your organization
- Challenges in meeting compliance requirements
- Other (please specify): _____

Q15. Compared to the GCF's Project Approval Process (PAP), how has SAP affected your AE's resource use to access GCF funding?

(For each type of resource, select one answer)

- Financial resources
- Many more resources
- Some more resources
- About the same
- A bit less
- Much less

Human resources

- Many more resources
- Some more resources
- About the same
- A bit less
- Much less

Q16. Please describe your experience regarding resource use:

- [Text response]

Q17. Do you have a funded SAP project?

- Yes
- No

Q18. Have your SAP-funded projects met their expected results?

- Yes, fully
- Yes, partially
- No, not really
- No, not at all
- Don't know

—

Section D: Comparative Value and Recommendations

Q19. To what extent does SAP add value compared to other GCF mechanisms (e.g. Project Approval Process, Requests for Proposals)?

(For each category, select one answer)

Speed of project development and review cycle

- No added value
- Some added value
- Significant added value

Accessibility to smaller entities

- No added value
- Some added value
- Significant added value

Flexibility of funding requirements

- No added value
- Some added value
- Significant added value

Q20. Do you have experience applying for project funding from other funds, including climate organizations?

- Yes
- No

Q21. If yes, to what extent does SAP add more value compared to simplified access modalities within other organizations?

(For each category, select one answer)

Speed of project development and review cycle

- No added value
- Some added value
- Significant added value

Accessibility to smaller entities

- No added value
- Some added value
- Significant added value

Flexibility of funding requirements

- No added value
- Some added value
- Significant added value

Q22. What specific aspects of SAP should be improved? (e.g. application process, approval timeline, reporting requirements)

Please share any suggestions you have to improve the Simplified Approval Process:

- [Text response]

—

End of Questionnaire

Annex 13.EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation criteria	Key evaluation question	Key evaluation subquestion
Coherence	EQ1. The degree to which the GCF's SAP operates alongside other internal modalities and policies to achieve strategic goals and objectives (internal coherence) alongside the consistency, complementarity, harmonization and coordination with other climate funds (external coherence), ensuring SAP is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort both internal and external to the GCF.	1.1. To what extent has the GCF's SAP operates alongside other internal modalities and policies to achieve strategic goals and objectives (e.g. the Updated Strategic Plan 2024-2027, 50x30)?
		1.2. How consistent, complementary, harmonized, and coordinated is SAP with other climate funds?
		1.3. How does SAP avoid duplication and ensure added value internally and externally?
Relevance	EQ2. To what extent is the GCF's SAP fit-for-purpose, sufficiently targeted and agile enough to meet the needs of developing countries, with an emphasis on the extent to which the objectives, design and operationalization of the SAP respond to and adapt to institutional needs?	2.1. To what extent is the SAP fit-for-purpose sufficiently targeted and agile enough to meet the needs of developing countries?
		2.2. To what extent do the objectives, design and operationalization of the SAP respond to and adapt to institutional needs currently and how have these evolved through time (e.g. regional presence, PSAA and Efficient GCF)?
Effectiveness	EQ3. To what extent has the GCF's SAP successfully delivered on its mandate to streamline and speed up effective programming of climate projects? What are the key factors driving or hindering the successful implementation of SAP? To what extent has SAP achieved its objectives and expected results?	3.1. To what extent has the GCF's SAP successfully delivered on its mandate to streamline and speed up effective programming of climate projects?
		3.2. What are the key factors driving or hindering the successful implementation of SAP?
		3.3. To what extent has SAP achieved its objectives and expected results?
Efficiency	EQ4. To what extent does the SAP modality deliver results using minimum financial and human resources and in a timely fashion compared to feasible alternatives in the GCF context?	4.1. To what extent does the SAP modality deliver results using minimum financial and human resources in a timely manner?
		4.2. How efficient are the processes of SAP compared to the PAP access modality? What are the different characteristics of the two portfolios?
		4.3. How do the financial and human resource requirements of SAP compare to feasible alternative in the GCF context?

Evaluation criteria	Key evaluation question	Key evaluation subquestion
Impact	EQ5. To what extent has the GCF's SAP generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?	5.1. What significant positive or negative, intended or unintended effects has SAP generated at a higher level?
		5.2. What outputs, outcomes, or impacts have been achieved through SAP compared to the PAP modality?
		5.3. How do stakeholders perceive the broader impacts of SAP in comparison to PAP?

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