



GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND

Independent
Evaluation
Unit



APPROACH BRIEF

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

CONTEXT

As part of its Board-approved 2025 workplan, the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) is undertaking an Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Simplified Approval Process.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Adopted during the eighteenth meeting of the Board (B.18) in October 2017 and updated at B.32 in 2022, the Simplified Approval Process (SAP) intends to provide simplified and improved access to funding and improve the efficiency and timeliness in the design, review, approval and disbursement procedures for small-scale proposals.

This evaluation builds on the IEU's independent assessment of the GCF's SAP Pilot Scheme in 2020, by assessing the value added by the updated SAP in providing simplified access and meeting the needs of developing countries.

The evaluation is structured around five evaluation criteria:

1. COHERENCE



The degree to which the SAP operates alongside other internal GCF modalities and policies to achieve strategic goals and objectives (internal coherence) and the level of consistency, complementarity, harmonization and coordination it has with other climate funds (external coherence), ensuring SAP adds value while not duplicating effort.

2. RELEVANCE



The degree to which the GCF's SAP is fit-for-purpose, sufficiently targeted and agile in meeting the needs of developing countries, with an emphasis on the extent to which the objectives, design and operationalization of the Policy respond to and adapt to institutional needs.

3. EFFECTIVENESS



The degree to which the SAP successfully delivers on its mandate to streamline and speed up effective programming of climate including explaining the factors driving or hindering successful implementation and the extent to which the SAP achieves its objectives and expected results.

4. EFFICIENCY



The extent to which the SAP modality delivers results using minimum financial and human resources and in a timely fashion compared to feasible alternatives in the GCF context.

5. IMPACT



The extent to which the SAP has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

SCOPE

This independent evaluation assesses whether the SAP modality provides easier and simpler access to the GCF, whether it is suited to the needs of countries, and whether it is suited to the size and depth of change that it seeks to bring about. Through benchmarking, the evaluation reviews how simplified access policies, standards, and modalities fit within the business models and context of the comparator institutions.

METHODS

The evaluation methods include:

- **Desk review:** The evaluation will conduct (i) a document review of GCF strategies, policies, standards, manuals and guidance documents (ii) a literature review of academic and grey literature, synthesizing approaches to enhance the evaluation framework (iii) selective and explicit use of large language models to enhance the rigour of qualitative data analysis while optimizing the time and resources required for the manual review of sources.
- **Benchmarking:** Benchmarking and landscape analysis will look at the business models of comparable institutions and comparing how key multilateral organizations implement simplified access modalities, highlighting their unique features and strengths. The benchmarking will identify differentiating factors and standard practices in our sister climate funds as well as two comparator vertical funds.
- **Secondary data analysis:** The evaluation will summarize key variables, such as median approval time and funding disbursements, to establish baseline comparisons. It will conduct analyses of variance (ANOVA) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to assess differences between SAP and equivalent Project Approval Process' (PAP) projects as well as non-parametric tests, where appropriate.
- **Online survey of AEs:** The team will conduct an online survey of AE representatives to obtain a broad view of different entities' experiences and opinions. The evaluation team will craft questions for the online survey based on early responses from workshops, key informant interviews and the desk review. The questionnaire will be piloted before its launch.
- **Key informant interviews:** To ensure an objective and in-depth response, the evaluation will conduct semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions to prevent bias and avoid leading respondents. Interviews will encourage informants to share their perspectives, experiences, examples and insights. Respondents will be sampled based on their designation, mandate, authority, and function.
- **Workshops:** Prior to key informant interviews, short workshops will be conducted to gather initial observations and attitudes among GCF personnel regarding the GCF's SAP access modality. To ensure a variety of views, the evaluation team will invite relevant stakeholders from across the organization to ensure a range of experience, contract type and gender.

OUTPUT AND TIMELINE

The evaluation will use a purposive, stratified sample of seven(7) SAP and six(6) comparable PAP projects to identify common success factors and challenges.

Following IEU's Board-approved workplan, the evaluation's inception phase will commence in January 2025, followed by data collection between February and March. The analysis and drafting of the factual draft is set to occur between April and May, while the conclusions and recommendations will be developed in May. The final evaluation report will be submitted in time for the forty-second meeting of the GCF Board (B.42).

CONTACT THE IEU

Independent Evaluation Unit
Green Climate Fund
175, Art center-daero, Yeonsu-gu

Incheon 22004, Republic of Korea
☎ (+82) 10-3458-6476
✉ ieu@gcfund.org

