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INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE GCF SIMPLIFIED APPROVAL PROCESS (SAP) PILOT SCHEME

APPROACH PAPER

February 2020

GREEN CLIMATE FUND
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION UNIT

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ABBREVIATIONS

AE	accredited entity
AMA	accreditation master agreement
CN	concept notes
CSO	civil society organization
DAE	direct access entities
DCP	Department of Country Programming
DMA	Department of Adaptation and Mitigation
ESAP	Environmental and Social Action Plan
ESS	environmental and social safeguards
FAA	funded activity agreement
FP	funding proposal
FPR	Forward-looking Performance Review of GCF
GCF	Green Climate Fund
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
iTAP	independent Technical Assessment Panel
LDC	least developed countries
NDA	national designated authorities
OPM	Office of Portfolio Management
PAP	project approval process
PPF	Project Preparation Facility
PSF	Private Sector Facility
PSO	private sector organization
RPSP	Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme
SAP	Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme
SIDS	small island developing states
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

A. THE GCF AND THE IEU

1. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a multilateral fund created to make significant and ambitious contributions to the global efforts to combat climate change. The GCF contributes to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. In the context of sustainable development, the GCF is expected to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways. It aims to achieve this by supporting developing countries to limit their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. The GCF is expected to pay attention to each country's unique needs and support those most vulnerable to climate change's adverse effects. The GCF is governed by a Board composed of an equal number of members from developed and developing countries. It is operated by an independent Secretariat headed by an Executive Director. There are three Independent Units that report directly to the GCF Board.
2. The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of the GCF is mandated by the GCF Board under paragraph 60 of its governing instrument to inform its decision making. Specifically, the governing instrument states "... the Board will establish an operationally independent evaluation unit as part of the core structure of the Fund. The head of the unit will be selected by, and will report to, the Board. The frequency and types of evaluation to be conducted will be specified by the unit in agreement with the Board."
3. The IEU has several objectives:
 - Informing decision-making by the Board and identifying and disseminating lessons learned, contributing to guiding the GCF and stakeholders as a learning institution, providing strategic guidance.
 - Conducting periodic independent evaluations of GCF performance to objectively assess the results of the GCF and the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities.
 - Providing evaluation reports to the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement for purposes of periodic reviews of the Financial Mechanism. The IEU has a mandate for both discharging an accountability function and supporting a learning function. These are central to the GCF being a learning organization as laid out in its Governing Instrument and its initial strategic plan.

¹ The responsibilities of the IEU are as follows (Annex III of Decision B.06/09):

- **Evaluation:** The IEU will undertake independent overall, portfolio, country, thematic, programme evaluations that inform GCF strategic result areas. The IEU is also mandated to independently peer review and attest to the quality of GCF self-evaluations.
- **Advisory and capacity support:** The IEU is required to advise the Board by synthesizing findings and lessons learned from its evaluations. These findings and lessons learned are also expected to inform the Executive Director of the Secretariat, Secretariat staff, and GCF stakeholders. It will also provide guidelines and support evaluation-related research that helps produce rigorous evidence in GCF result areas.
- **Learning:** The IEU will support the GCF in its learning function by ensuring that recommendations from independent evaluations are incorporated into the Secretariat's functioning and processes.
- **Engagement:** The IEU will actively participate in relevant evaluation networks to ensure it is at the frontier of evaluation practice. The IEU will involve its staff and staff from NDAs and AEs in evaluations wherever feasible and appropriate. Also, the IEU will support knowledge hubs of low-emission and climate-resilient pathways.

B. OBJECTIVE OF THE DOCUMENT

4. This document presents the approach the IEU proposes using to assess the performance of the Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Pilot Scheme. The SAP Pilot was approved in Decision B.18/06 (October 2017) with the objective to introduce simplifications (based on best practices) to the GCF project cycle for a particular set of projects: less than \$10 million of GCF contribution, low to minimum environmental and social risks and proposals that are ready to be scaled up.
5. As of the last Board meeting (B.24, November 2019), 12 SAP projects had been approved for an amount of USD 105 million in GCF contribution and USD 35 in co-financing. There is currently a pipeline of 80 proposals at different stages of the SAP process. The decision that established the SAP Pilot required that it should be reviewed by the Secretariat (“Secretariat Review”) after two years or after funding of USD 80 million is approved through this process. The Secretariat Review is expected to be presented at B.25 (March 2020).
6. At B.24, the GCF Board requested the IEU to conduct an independent assessment of the SAP Pilot Scheme² with a view both to inform the Board on the performance of the SAP and to support the SAP’s further development. Given a Secretariat document discussing this topic will be considered at B.25, the IEU’s assessment consists of two parts:
 - *An initial assessment of the Secretariat’s Review* (to be shared with the Board at B.25).
 - *An overall independent assessment of the SAP pilot* (to be presented to the Board at B.26).
7. This paper presents the IEU’s approach for the independent assessment it will conduct of the SAP as well as the approach for the critical assessment of the Secretariat’s review.
8. As background for the IEU assessment, the IEU’s GCF-wide Forward-looking Performance Review of GCF (FPR) (as of July 2019)³ contained conclusions relevant to this review:
 - The approval time for the six projects approved using the SAP process and eligibility criteria as of 28 February 2019 is similar to that for the regular GCF project approval process (PAP): eight months versus nine months, respectively.
 - SAP proposals went through a similar review (Secretariat and iTAP) and approval channels as funding proposals (FPs).
9. Hence, the IEU assessment of the SAP Pilot has the double purpose of critically assessing the Secretariat Review of the SAP Pilot Scheme and independently assessing the pilot. The validation of the Secretariat Review will be achieved through a critical assessment of the evidence that supports the findings and recommendations. The IEU will conduct an independent assessment of the Pilot that evaluates its objectives, design and implementation and the value added by applying such evaluation methods as interviews, document reviews and field visits. IEU will carry-out a benchmarking exercise that compares the GCF SAP Pilot with fast-track processes in other organizations. IEU’s activities will extract lessons for further improvements or changes to the GCF SAP and for the GCF as a whole.

² DECISION B.24/06 relative to the adoption of the Work programme and budget of the IEU (Document GCF/B.24/12/Rev.01)

³ *IEU, Forward-looking Performance Review of the GCF, July 2019.*

10. The IEU will submit preliminary findings of the Secretariat Review around mid-February 2020, in time for B.25. The draft IEU’s independent assessment will be prepared by mid-April 2020, while the final report will be prepared for mid-May and presented at B.26 (July 2020).
11. The current document is organized as follows: first, it describes the SAP Pilot by introducing its objectives, key features and processes; second, it presents the key findings and recommendations from the Secretariat Review; third, it examines the SAP Pilot’s current portfolio and pipeline; fourth, it introduces the approach, framework, key questions and methods for data collection and analyses the IEU assessment will use; and fifth, it details the proposed work plan for the IEU assessment.

C. BACKGROUND ON SAP PILOT

1. OBJECTIVE OF THE SAP

12. The GCF approved the Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme (SAP) in Decision B.18/06 (October 2017), with the objective *“to apply best practices to reduce the time and effort needed in the preparation, review, approval and disbursement procedures for proposals of certain activities, in particular and small-scale activities”* that promote and support scalable and transformational actions, in support of the GCF mandate. The decision also states that *“unless specifically modified [...], all other relevant GCF policies apply as usual to the Pilot-Scheme”*.

2. ELIGIBLE FUNDING

13. The pilot sought to achieve its objective by simplifying access to GCF funding for a certain group of GCF-eligible adaptation and mitigation proposals that:
 - *“[A]re ready for scaling up and have the potential for transformation, promoting a paradigm shift to low-emission and climate-resilient development.”*
 - Require *“a GCF contribution of no more than USD 10 million”*.
 - Have *“environmental and social risks and impacts . . . classified as minimal to none”*.⁴

The third criterion refers to activities that fall under the environmental and social safeguards (ESS) risk category C or I-3. Activities with these characteristics are project-specific, but the **following list of activities that are likely to fall within these categories** is included in the description of the pilots:

- Capacity development, planning support, institutional development, advisory services, communication and outreach, household-level facilities and production within an already built-up area and with no additional footprint (basic post-harvest processing, rainwater harvesting, pico- to micro-scale renewable energy, retrofit renewable energy systems and energy efficiency and conservation, agroforestry, and small-scale climate-resilient agriculture).
- Early warning and other monitoring systems, response planning support.
- In-situ rehabilitation of existing public facilities, including maintenance and upgrading where waste will not be an issue, small-scale rural and urban community projects, village-level agricultural water supply and drainage (including smallholder farm irrigation such as drip irrigation, shallow wells, etc.), rural energy, small-scale

⁴ Decision B.18/06 Annex X.

⁵ Decision B.18/06 Annex X.

infrastructure (including rehabilitation, maintenance and upgrading), small-scale watershed management and rehabilitation, climate-resilient agriculture, habitat restoration and rehabilitation, soil and water conservation, forest management activities and agroforestry.

14. SAP **excludes** projects that have risk factors that would require additional information:

Projects and/or programmes that include known “risk factors” that would require additional information and more detailed due diligence and consultations by the relevant entities shall not be eligible for the pilot notwithstanding that it meets the criteria set out in Category (a) of eligibility. The “risk factors” include (although not limited to):

- *Activities with potential resettlement and dispossession, land acquisition, and economic displacement issues.*
- *Activities that may affect indigenous peoples.*
- *Activities within protected areas and areas of ecological significance, including critical habitats, key biodiversity areas, and internationally recognized conservation sites.*
- *Activities that may affect cultural heritage and physical, cultural properties.*
- *Activities with critical infrastructure (like dams, water impoundments, coastal and riverbank infrastructure) that would require further technical assessment and safety studies.*
- *Activities that may generate waste, including hazardous waste and pollutants and require further studies on management, minimization and control, and compliance to country and applicable international environmental quality standards.*
- *Activities that may adversely affect working conditions and health and safety of workers or potentially employ vulnerable categories of workers.*
- *Activities that may involve trans-boundary impacts, including those that would require further due diligence and notification to downstream riparian states.*
- *Activities that have associated facilities and require further due diligence of such associated facilities.⁶*

3. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

15. Entities eligible to apply for SAP include already accredited entities (AEs). Additionally, national designated authorities (NDAs) and focal points may submit concept notes (CNs) in the SAP process. This is the case even if NDAs and focal points submitting CNs are not accredited, or if the CN is not associated with an AE.⁷ Under the SAP pilot, the aim is for 50 per cent of the approved funding proposals (FPs) to be submitted by direct access entities (DAEs)⁸. According to Decision B.18/06 Annex X, the Secretariat is expected to encourage and support DAEs to prepare proposals that would qualify for SAP under the SAP criteria (however, goals for this were not specified).⁹

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/how-we-work/sap>

⁸ Decision B.18/06 Annex X.

⁹ *Ibid.*

4. KEY FEATURES

16. The SAP pilot aimed to set up simplifications around two dimensions:

- 1) A simpler application process, that requires fewer pages and has forms that are easier to fill (compared to the FP template), and dedicated templates for CNs and FPs.
- 2) Streamlined review and approval processes.

17. According to the decision¹⁰ on establishing the Pilot, the SAP process should include the following features:

4.1 Project screening and further development

7. The Pilot Scheme will require the submission of a Concept Note (CN). The Concept Note shall set out a summary of the project or programme and details relating to the project size, the proposed extent of the GCF's participation and the environmental and social risks and impacts of the project or programme. The Secretariat will develop a simplified Concept Note template for this purpose as soon as possible.

8. The Secretariat will put in place the structure and process for review of proposals with target schedule and completion dates of reviews and report to the Board on the implementation of the structure and process by B.19.

9. The Concept Note may be submitted at any point during the operation of the Pilot Scheme and shall be accompanied by the results of the environmental and social risk screening that identify project-related environmental and social risks and impacts and their proposed mitigation measures.

10. Such screening by the entities will be conducted against standardized screening form which shall be developed and published by the Secretariat, and which shall be supplemented by explanation on how the screening form should be completed by entities and how the screening will be conducted.

11. An Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP) may also be required that will describe the actions necessary to carry out the mitigation measures including timelines for their implementation, continuing consultations and engagement, monitoring and reporting, and actions to develop further the institutional environmental and social management system where gaps are identified. The ESAP will also identify any additional studies and work that will need to be carried out by the entity post approval stage and prior to the execution of relevant activities. The result of the environmental and social risk screening and the ESAP, as required, will allow the Secretariat to confirm the level of risk and the environmental and social safeguards requirements of the activities proposed for GCF financing and will be attached as a covenant to the Funding Proposal, becoming binding on the approval of the project. All environmental and social risks and impacts are to be checked by the Secretariat.

12. Upon receipt of the Concept Note and related documentation, the Secretariat shall first assess the eligibility of the proposed project or programme and the relevant entity. Concept Notes which satisfy the eligibility criteria set out in sections II and III shall then be developed into funding proposals.

13. Entities whose Concept Notes are eligible and whose screening has concluded in a positive determination shall be invited to submit a Funding Proposal for the Secretariat's review.

¹⁰ Decision B.18/06 Annex X.

14. *The Funding Proposal will follow a simplified format based on the updated project approval process and using a template that will be developed by the Secretariat for this purpose.*

15. *Funding proposals will include a pre-feasibility study, and be screened in relation to the environmental and social risks and impacts, stakeholder engagement undertaken, and grievance redress mechanisms, which will be put in place.*

16. *The entity proposing the project or programme will need to provide a summary of consultations and a stakeholder engagement plan including activity-level and entity-level grievance redress mechanisms following the guidance and standard format to be provided by the Secretariat.*

17. *The review of safeguards will take into account the results of the environmental and social risk screening and the ESAP, as required.*

18. *In addition, the Secretariat will provide technical support on how to complete Funding Proposals to relevant entities through the use of any appropriate means.*

4.2 Project review

19. *It is expected that the entity will conduct all relevant due diligence for the project or programme prior to the submission of a funding proposal.*

20. *The Secretariat will carry out its second-level due-diligence based on the simplified set of documents. The Secretariat will confirm the risk category of the project or programme activity. The Secretariat will confirm during project or programme assessment that all activities are consistent with the risk categories adopted.*

21. *Proposals under this Pilot Scheme will be subject to iTAP review on a rolling basis. This review will be based on the simplified set of documents.*

22. *Simplified financial and other terms shall be included with the Funding Proposal.*

23. *Pilot projects assessed with minimal to no ESS risks do not have ESS disclosure requirements by the submitting entities.*

4.3 Project approval

24. *Funding Proposals whose approval is recommended by the Secretariat shall be submitted to the Board for consideration during its regular meetings, until such time as a process for approving Funding Proposals under this Pilot Scheme through in-between Board meetings is adopted by the Board.*

4.4 Post Approval

25. *The Secretariat will implement the full post-approval process for approved Funding Proposals, in an expedited manner where possible, including in relation to the clearance of any conditions, and disbursements.*

4.5 Implementation

26. *The list of items attached as conditions and covenants to the project or programme will be implemented by the entity and monitored by the Secretariat*

27. *Any changes to project or programme design and implementation arrangements will trigger a project or programme restructuring process that will include re-assessment of project or programme risks and compliance with relevant GCF policies.*

28. *A robust monitoring system will be put in place to assist projects or programmes reach compliance, where possible gaps exist. This robust monitoring system may also build capacity*

of the entities to meet GCF standards and to be able to put forward full proposals in the future. The Secretariat will develop this monitoring system for the simplified approval process in this regard.

5. GCF PROJECT CYCLE AND SAP PROCESSES

18. Figure 1 below presents the differences between the cycle that GCF proposals go through (project approval process, PAP) and those that follow the SAP modality. The GCF regular project cycle currently includes nine steps, one of which (the CN) is optional. This illustration of the project cycle is based on the text of Decision B.18/06 and information found on the GCF website, but some of the details may not correspond to the current situation.
19. Until December 2019, the processing of proposals using the SAP modality was managed by a small team within the Secretariat, embedded into the Division of Mitigation and Adaptation (DMA). As of January 2020, the team has been moved to the Division of Country Programming (DCP), without any changes in responsibilities. The SAP team is responsible for coordinating SAP processes and SAP-related capacity-building and for developing the Online Submission System (OSS) and guidelines for project development. Once the decision is made that a CN or FP could use the SAP modality, the proposals are assigned to task managers from the DMA or from the Private Sector Facility (PSF) as relevant. Task managers are expected to review the SAP proposals with shorter target times. The SAP proposals are discussed by the GCF senior management and the investment committee in a similar way as PAPs. iTAP members review the SAP proposals and provide their recommendations to the Board for approval. The Board follows the same process for SAP and PAP proposals for approval and makes its decisions at its regular meetings. After approval, the SAP projects follow the same process as PAPs.

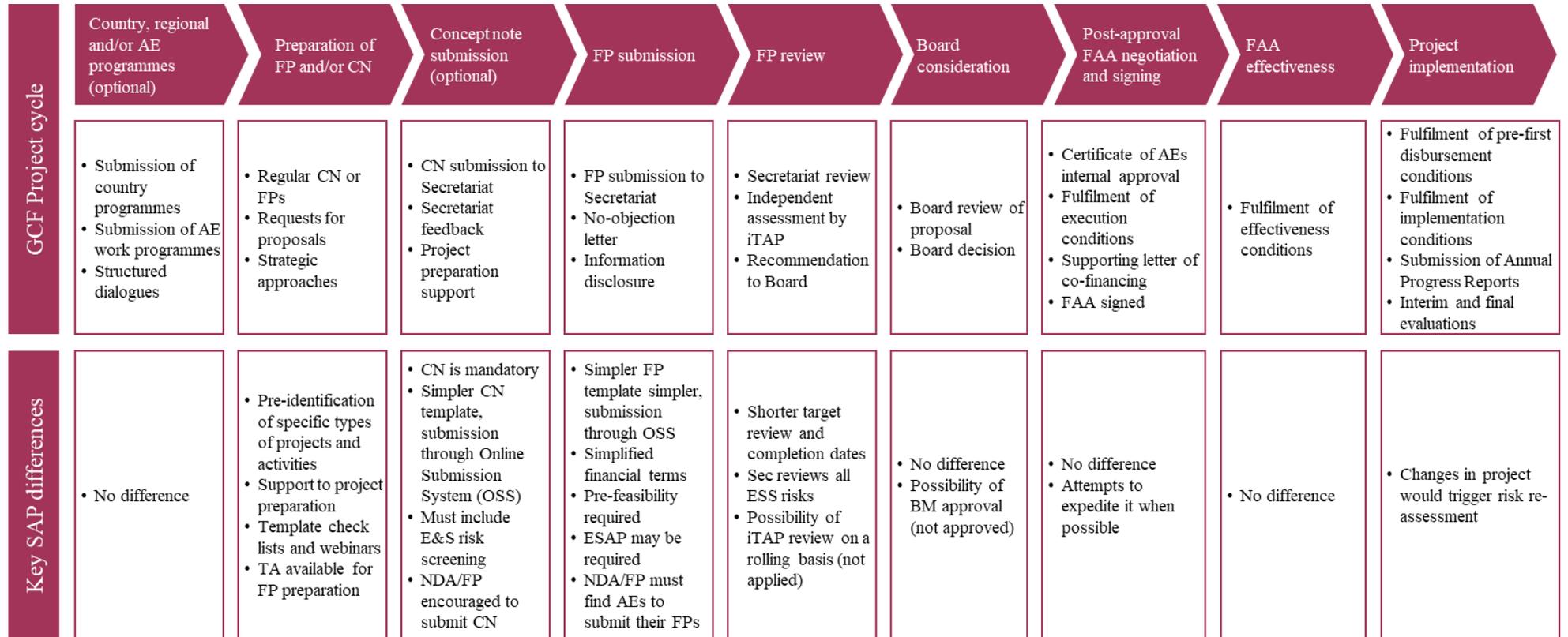


Figure 1. GCF project cycle and key differences for SAP process¹¹

¹¹ The GCF Project cycle and its description is extracted from *Figure VIII-1. Overview of the Fund's project cycle* in the IEU's Forward-looking Performance Review. The information on key SAP differences is drawn from Decision B.18/06 along with information drawn from the GCF website but may not illustrate how the SAP is currently applied.

6. SECRETARIAT REVIEW OF THE SAP PILOT

20. In decision B.18/06, the GCF Board decided “*that the Pilot Scheme shall be reviewed two years from its operationalization, or when the aggregate amount of approvals under the Pilot Scheme reaches USD 80 million of GCF financing, whichever is earlier.*” This review (“Secretariat Review”) was to be completed within three months from its commencement”(decision (b)), and requested the GCF Secretariat to “*report back to the Board upon completion of the review specified in paragraph (b) above, with recommendations based on the outcome of such review to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process, and to consider expanding the type of eligible activities and increasing GCF funding*” (decision (iii) of (c)). The Secretariat has completed a review of the SAP. This review is expected to be considered at B.25.
21. The recommendations from the Secretariat’s review of the SAP, in brief and according to the different areas examined, include: (please refer to the full document for details):

Project design, origination and policy alignment.

- A revised SAP technical assistance programme can be designed with a closer link to country programming and priorities on the one hand, and the requirements of the project on the other.
- The SAP modality should seek closer alignment between country programmes, RPSP, technical assistance, and SAP outcomes.
- The SAP processes should offer more training for capacity and knowledge building, including webinars and face-to-face workshops, to be organized at the margins of country missions, and partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

Development of proposals (concept notes, funding proposals).

- The Secretariat will continue with the development and simplified access to materials using a multi-media approach (traditional, social), webinars, and dedicated dialogue at the country level. Increase the availability of materials in local languages.
- The Secretariat will further consider additional streamlining of the documentation by reducing the requirement for non-essential steps and annexes and reduce inconsistencies in reviewed material and in follow-up questions.
- The Secretariat will enhance support to DAEs by establishing closer links between SAP, RPSP, PPF. Plan SAP-related technical assistance.

Project internal and external reviews.

- The review process will be streamlined to be consistent with the given templates and annexes, in order to reduce inconsistencies in reviewed material and in follow-up questions.
- The Secretariat will consider using a firm or group of consultants devoted specifically to the independent assessment of the SAP funding proposals in order to free up the time of the (regular) iTAP for more complex, riskier and financially larger projects and programmes.
- The Secretariat should increase the capacity of staff and external reviewers dedicated to SAP to reduce review times, in particular in the context of a growing SAP pipeline.

Approval process

- The Secretariat should (a) develop a process which includes a delegated authority for approval of resources for SAP projects and programmes that present no to minimal environmental and social risks and (b) provide for a SAP-dedicated in-between Board meetings approval process, which is compatible with the current GCF approval policies, for SAP projects and programmes that present limited risks while still excluding known risk factors.

Post-approval

- The Secretariat should provide independent (consultant) legal support to DAE, for example in the context Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme.
- The Secretariat should expand the implementation of the pre-FAA draft templates across all AEs in order to have a document that is ready for signature already at the time of approval.

Horizontal issues: ESS categorization and eligibility.

- The Secretariat should provide streamlined environmental and social screening, with risk mitigation plans that can be monitored on a regular basis during implementation.
- The Board should decide if the SAP modality should include proposals with limited environmental and social risks, with no land acquisition, land rights disputes, limited construction and other known, mitigable risk factors.

Horizontal Issues: SAP and the private sector.

- The further development of private sector proposals via SAP could benefit from several of the incremental efficiencies recommended in this review, e.g. in operationalizing PSAA, expanding the risk categorization, simplifying and shortening the approval process by introducing an in-between Board meeting, SAP-specific approval mechanism, and consideration of delegated authority for SAP with certain features.
- The Secretariat should build the capacity of private sector entities in the use of SAP in intermediated finance, in private equity, and in mixed participation funds, with the possibility of raising the threshold for private-sector SAP and to include SAP proposals with a limited environmental and social risk profile.

Horizontal issues: Accreditation framework

- The Secretariat should strengthen the pre-origination phase of SAP proposals with enhanced integration of SAP training in the Readiness and Preparatory Programme and GCF country and regional engagements. A future GCF project-specific accreditation approach (PSAA) could also further support proposals from NDAs, focal points and potential national DAEs.

7. CURRENT SAP PORTFOLIO AND PIPELINE

22. As of November 14, 2019, after its twenty-fourth Board meeting (B.24), the GCF had approved 12 projects under the SAP pilot scheme with the cumulative approved amount of approximately USD 140 million. This represents GCF commitments for USD 105 million, with USD 35 million of co-financing. Of these 12 projects, five were approved at B.24. Table 1 contains a list of GCF projects approved under the SAP process as of B.24 (Nov. 2019).

Table 1. GCF Projects Approved through SAP (as of B.24 and disbursement as of Dec. 2019)

REF.	PROJECT NAME	AE	GCF FUNDING	COUNTRY	AMOUNTS DISBURSED
SAP001	Improving rangeland and ecosystem management practices of smallholder farmers under conditions of climate change in Sesfontein, Fransfontein, and Warmquelle areas of the Republic of Namibia	EIF (DAE)	USD 9.3 million	Namibia	USD 3.8 million
SAP002	Climate services and diversification of climate-sensitive livelihoods to empower food insecure and vulnerable communities in the Kyrgyz Republic.	WFP	USD 8.6 million	Kyrgyzstan	n/a
SAP003	Enhancing climate resilience of the water sector in Bahrain	UNEP	USD 2.3 million	Bahrein	USD 0.9 million
SAP004	Energy Efficient Consumption Loan Programme	XacBank (DAE)	USD 10 million	Mongolia	USD 2 million
SAP005	Enhanced climate resilience of rural communities in central and north Benin through the implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) in forest and agricultural landscapes	UNEP	USD 9 million	Benin	n/a
SAP006	Building resilience of communities living in landscapes threatened under climate change through an ecosystem-based adaptation approach	EIF (DAE)	USD 8.9 million	Namibia	n/a
SAP007	Integrated Climate Risk Management for Food Security and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe focusing on Masvingo and Rushinga Districts	WFP	USD 8.9 million	Zimbabwe	n/a
SAP008	Extended Community Climate Change Project-Flood (ECCCP-Flood)	PKSF (DAE)	USD 9.7 million	Bangladesh	n/a
SAP009	Building resilience of urban populations with ecosystem-based solutions in Lao PDR	UNEP	USD 10 million	Lao PDR	n/a
SAP010	Multi-Hazard Impact-Based Forecasting and Early Warning System for the Philippines	Landbank (DAE)	USD 10 million	Philippines	n/a
SAP011	Climate-resilient food security for women and men smallholders in Mozambique through integrated risk management	WFP	USD 9.3 million	Mozambique	n/a
SAP012	Inclusive Green Financing for Climate Resilient and Low Emission Smallholder Agriculture	IFAD	USD 9.5 million	Niger	n/a

23. The average GCF financing per project is USD 8.78 million, while co-financing ranges from zero (SAP003) to USD 11.5 million (SAP004). Out of these 12 projects, five were submitted by DAEs (42 per cent), representing 45 per cent of SAP commitments and 75 per cent of planned co-financing. Only one of the projects is a mitigation project (SAP004), one is a cross-cutting project (SAP012), and the rest are adaptation projects. SAP004 is also the only project approved with a private sector entity to date (DAE, XacBank/Mongolia). GCF contributions are grants to all projects approved under SAP except for SAP004 for which it provides a senior loan (and a grant).
24. Out of 12 projects, five (42 per cent) focus on least developed countries (LDCs), six (50 per cent) are in African countries, and one in a small island developing state (SIDS; Bahrein). The most frequently targeted impact areas are:
- Most vulnerable people and communities (10 projects)
 - Health, well-being, food and water security (9 projects)
 - Ecosystem and ecosystem services (4 projects)
25. The other impact areas are targeted by either one or two projects, while no project currently targets low-emission transport.
26. Regarding the timeline for approving SAP projects (Figure 2), the trend is still inconsistent, but the latest Board meeting saw the largest number of approvals to date. According to the SAP team, one additional GCF project under the SAP pilot is expected to be considered at B.26 (March 2020).

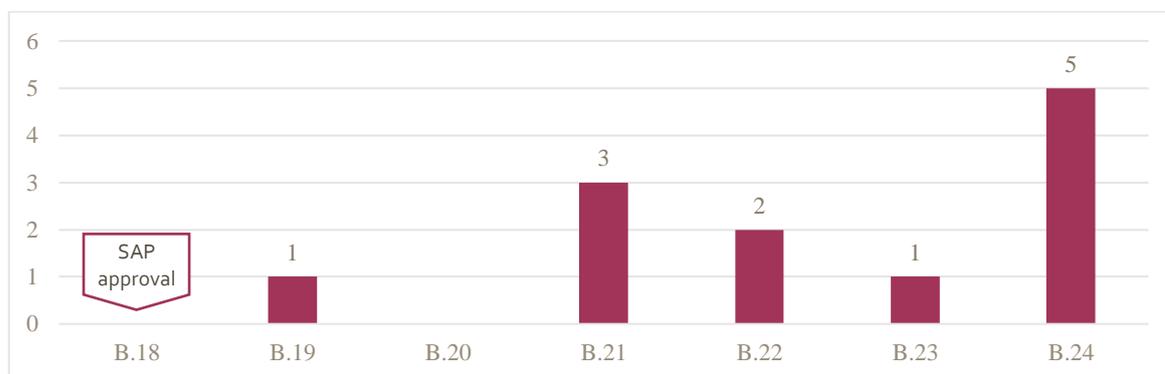


Figure 2. Number of approvals through SAP per Board meeting

27. Among projects approved through the SAP pilot, five were officially under implementation (funded activity agreement [FAA] effective) as of December 20, 2019, and three had received their first disbursement in 2019. Most of the seven projects not yet under implementation were approved in 2019. Of the projects that do not have an effective accreditation master agreement (AMA), three are with the same AE (World Food Programme – WFP).

Table 2. Status of FPs approved through SAP (as of December 20, 2019)

PROJECT	STATUS
SAP001	Effective FAA - First Disbursement
SAP002	Pending FAA - AMA not effective
SAP003	Effective FAA - First Disbursement
SAP004	Effective FAA - First Disbursement
SAP005	Effective FAA - No Disbursement

PROJECT	STATUS
SAP006	Effective FAA - No Disbursement
SAP007	Pending FAA - AMA not effective
SAP008	Pending FAA
SAP009	Pending FAA
SAP010	Pending FAA - AMA not effective
SAP011	Pending FAA - AMA not effective
SAP012	Pending FAA

28. There are currently 80 projects in the SAP pipeline.

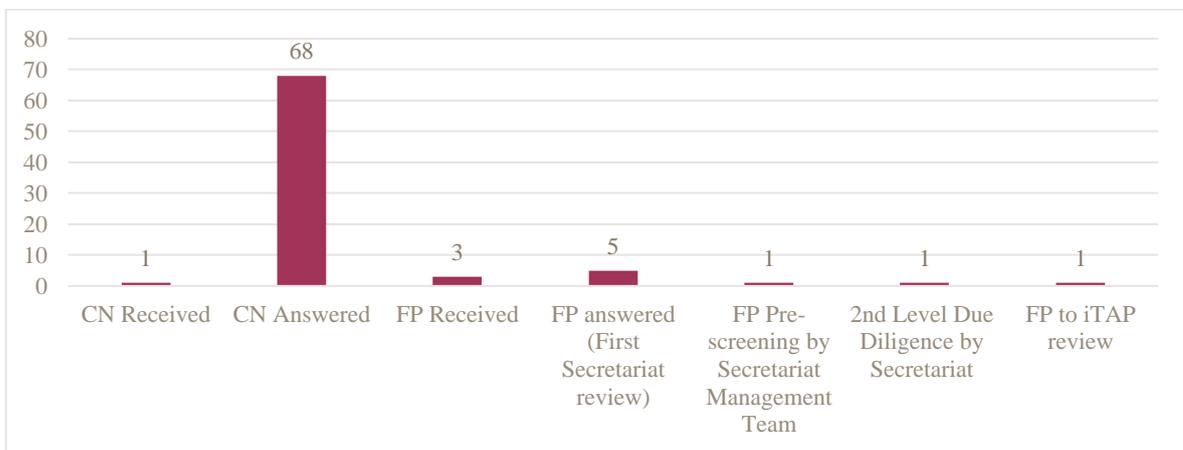


Figure 3. Stages of projects in the SAP pipeline (as of Dec. 20, 2019)¹²

29. Within this pipeline, 44 per cent of projects are submitted by DAEs, 38 per cent are submitted by international AEs, and 19 per cent do not have an AE yet. Most projects are either adaptation projects (31) or cross-cutting (41), with eight projects being mitigation projects. Ten of the projects in the pipeline are private sector initiatives.

D. OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE IEU ASSESSMENT

30. The independent assessment by the IEU has two main objectives, as requested by the Board:

- 1) To undertake a critical assessment of the review of the SAP pilot prepared by the GCF Secretariat.
- 2) To provide an independent assessment of the SAP pilot.

31. The purpose of the IEU assessment will be to inform and recommend actions for Board and Secretariat consideration in the development of the next phase of the SAP. The assessment will bring to the Board evidence and recommendations on how to simplify the processes to access

¹² Source: IEU DataLab

the GCF. The IEU assessment will focus on the following areas (considering the relevant IEU evaluation criteria in each of the areas):

1. **Critical assessment of the Secretariat review.** The IEU assessment will look at the extent to which the findings are unbiased, evidence-based, relevant, and sufficient to inform the recommendations. Also, the IEU will explain how the Secretariat Review was used in the development of the draft document for further development of the SAP for Board discussion.
 2. **Implementation of the SAP pilot.** The IEU assessment will evaluate if the projects approved follow SAP processes and eligibility criteria and satisfy the mandate of the GCF. This relates to the **efficiency** and **effectiveness** of the SAP pilot and how the **scalability** criterion was applied.
 3. **Value-added of SAP.** The IEU assessment will explore the design and implementation of the SAP pilot and its intent to reduce the time and effort, such as processing time, of a certain type of GCF project. The assessment will consider if the SAP process is meeting its objectives and supporting scalable, transformational projects. The assessment will also consider if the SAP pilot improved the capacity of AEs (and DAEs in particular) to prepare FPs. Of interest are the SAP pilot's **relevance**, **country ownership**, and **innovativeness**.
 4. **Benchmarking** the SAP pilot with other similar processes. The assessment will compare the GCF's SAP pilot with other similar fast track, simplified processes used by other comparable organizations. The lessons learned will be considered for incorporating into a future SAP.
 5. **Learning to improve** the GCF project cycle. The assessment will determine if any lessons learned from the implementation of the SAP pilot could apply to other GCF projects.
32. The IEU assessment will build on the Secretariat review (while providing a critical assessment of this review) and provide recommendations for the Secretariat and the Board on how the SAP can be faster, smarter, and better.

E. ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

1. SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

33. This assessment will cover the SAP from its adoption in 2017 and will include data until the end of March 2020, including GCF projects that have gone through the SAP process and will potentially be approved at B.25 (March 2020) and those in the SAP pipeline (as of the same date). It will also critically review the draft and final reviews of the SAP prepared by the Secretariat along with the Secretariat's proposal for further development of the SAP. Both are expected to be presented at B.25.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

34. The IEU team will structure the assessment's analytical framework in line with the main areas previously identified and include specific questions to guide it. A more detailed assessment framework is provided in the evaluation matrix, Appendix 1, which details the sources of data, methods of collection, and analysis for each question.

Table 3. Questions of the IEU assessment of the SAP

1. Critical assessment of the Secretariat review
1.1. How relevant is the methodological approach used to assess the SAP and respond to the Board request?
1.2. To what extent are the review's findings unbiased, relevant and supported by evidence?
1.3. To what extent are the recommendations of the review supported by evidence from the findings?
1.4. What type of changes would the proposed recommendations make to the performance of the SAP?
1.5. How was the review used in the development of the draft document presented to the Board for further development of the SAP process?
2. Implementation of the SAP (efficiency and effectiveness)
2.1. Have SAP projects approved so far met the overall remit of SAP, according to the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50% DAEs)
2.2. Compared to the PAP, are the time and effort needed for the preparation, review, approval, and disbursement reduced?
2.3. Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from those for PAP?
2.4. How are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework?
2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP?
3. Value-added of SAP
3.1. Have AEs (particularly DAEs and Private Sector Organizations - PSOs) improved their capacity to access the GCF by using the SAP pilot? How have the Project Preparation Facility (PPF) and the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP) (as well as other TA provided) supported AEs, NDAs, and focal points applying through SAP?
3.2. Is the SAP modality relevant to the needs of countries and the size of change that the GCF seeks to bring about, including scalability and transformational change?
3.3. Does the SAP provide value-added for processing GCF projects through the SAP pilot for adaptation projects, vulnerable countries, Africa, SIDS, LDCs, and for DAEs?
3.4. How does the SAP modality fit (or not) into the overall theory of change of the GCF?
3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?
4. Benchmarking
4.1. Are there comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sectors?
4.2. How does the SAP compare with them regarding eligibility, processes, governance, and results achieved?
5. Learning to improve the GCF project cycle
5.1. What experiences and lessons from the pilot can be transferred to improve the SAP in the future, particularly concerning transparency, predictability, processing times, effort, documentation and clarity of criteria/eligibility, and contribution to the overall TOC of the GCF, particularly through supporting scalable/transformational projects?

5.2. Can any of these experiences and lessons be transferred to improve processes and documentation of regular FPs?

5.3. How can existing GCF technical assistance to countries (RPSP, PPFs) and agencies be improved to support the access to GCF through SAP modalities?

3. AUDIENCE

35. The primary audiences for this assessment will be the Board and the Secretariat, who will be responsible to develop and implement any subsequent stages of the SAP or any simplified processes for accessing the GCF. Some of the lessons and experiences from the SAP pilot could also help improve the PAP projects.
36. Secondary audiences include organizations that have used or are considering using the SAP, such as AEs (particularly DAEs), non-accredited entities, NDAs, and focal points. This includes both public and private sector organizations.
37. Other climate finance institutions, as well as the development finance sector, are also important audiences who should always learn from experiences to improve the speed of approving and implementing projects in support of the urgent climate crisis.
38. Finally, this assessment contributes to transparency and to learning for the GCF, and as such, concerns all the GCF stakeholders.

4. METHODOLOGIES TO BE USED IN THE ASSESSMENT

39. The assessment will use a mixed-methods approach combining data collection tools such as interviews and focus groups to reach as many stakeholders as possible. Of special interest are stakeholders that have experience with the SAP modality and can compare it with other processes within and outside GCF. The team is also planning to conduct reviews of (i) documentation about expanding the preparation of GCF projects and programme, (ii) Board decisions and Secretariat procedures and guidelines relevant to the SAP modality, and (iii) documents from other institutions concerning their fast track project modalities. Also, the team is planning to visit one country that has experience with the SAP modality. All this data will be analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure the strength of trends across identified different stakeholders and within particular constituencies (e.g. SIDS, LDCs, DAEs, private sector, etc.).
40. Given that the Secretariat has recently conducted a review of the SAP using similar approaches, the IEU team will review the data collected and build on it, where possible and relevant.

a. Validation of the Secretariat review of the SAP pilot

41. As indicated above, the Board asked the IEU to validate the review conducted by the Secretariat, which is intended for presentation at B.25, as background to the Board discussion on how to improve the simplification processes of accessing GCF funding.
42. Two areas will be assessed:
 - 1) Are the methodological approaches used relevant, unbiased, sufficient, and appropriate?
 - 2) Are findings and recommendations backed by strong evidence (with the above qualities)?
43. The IEU team will prepare a document (preliminary findings) that addresses these two questions. This document will be shared, in draft format, with the Secretariat, for clarification and feedback before the review is finalized. Once finalized, the IEU assessment will be shared with the Board at its B.25 meeting.

b. Data collection

44. The following data collection methods will be used.

i. Document review

45. A document review will allow the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The IEU team will review all relevant GCF documentation about SAP, such as Board decisions, documents prepared by the Secretariat, project and programme level documentation for CNs and FPs for SAP along with their annexes, and the reviews by iTAP and Secretariat. Documents from regular GCF CN and FP processes (also referred to as PAP) may also be reviewed, as a comparison. The team will also collect documentation from other organizations that have processes comparable to the SAP for a benchmarking exercise.
46. The FPR (as well as background and supporting documents) will be closely reviewed since it provides important assessments about the GCF and the PAP project cycle. Other evaluations conducted by the IEU will be used where relevant. These will include reports from previous country visits conducted by the IEU that have been validated by NDAs. It is important the IEU team considers and differentiates what are considered as systemic issues with the GCF (e.g. cumbersome project cycle, compliance culture about policies, under-representation of DAEs, diversity of GCF's use of financial instruments) and what pertains to SAP in particular.
47. The IEU team will review the draft and final reviews of the SAP pilot conducted by the Secretariat, along with their recommendations for further development of the SAP before they are submitted to the Board in March 2020. The data collected by the Secretariat team will be reviewed, used, and developed where considered relevant and of high quality.

ii. GCF project and programme data

48. The team will review IEU DataLab aggregated data for GCF projects and programmes processed through PAP and SAP channels. The database in the IEU DataLab contains information on many fields, such as types of project profiles (topics, countries, types of AEs, sector, etc.), status in the project cycle, timelines, reviews from the Secretariat and iTAP, and more. The IEU team will search for data related to the time and resources used for processing projects and programmes as well as data from iTAP and Secretariat reviews. The team will also look for any information on capacity-building resources used to support project development under SAP, such as RPSP or PPFs.
49. Furthermore, the team will conduct a more in-depth review of the 12 projects approved so far to assess how the SAP eligibility criteria were applied, particularly concerning the ESS category and the scaling/transformational investment criterion.
50. One group of proposals that should be reviewed in detail are CN and funding proposals that have stayed in the SAP pipeline for lengthy, unexplained periods.

iii. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups

51. The IEU team will conduct phone and in-person semi-structured interviews and focus groups with a sample of GCF stakeholders, particularly stakeholders who have experience with the SAP process or other fast track approaches. Another group to be emphasized includes DAEs that have applied the SAP modality and a sampling of those that have not. Within this group, private sector representatives will be considered, given the importance of the private sector to the GCF. The team will make sure that findings and conclusions from semi-structured interviews and focus groups are analysed and indicate whether the participants had experience with the SAP modality (or similar project fast track modalities). It is always important to emphasize the need to put the SAP into context and compare it with other procedures.

Responses should be analysed that consider if the respondent has had direct experience with SAP.

52. The team is aware the Secretariat has already conducted numerous interviews for the review and, therefore, will seek to target the most relevant respondents and questions. To this end, the IEU team will review the interview notes prepared by the consultant that conducted the Secretariat Review and use them to develop complementary interview guides. Confidentiality conditions established for those interviews will be preserved.
53. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected members of:
 - GCF Secretariat staff: the SAP team and selected staff members from the Division of Mitigation and Adaptation (DMA), the Office of Portfolio Management (OPM), the Private Sector Facility (PSF), the Division of Country Programming (DCP), Office of the General Counsel (OGC), Team working on accreditation, and the Office of the Executive Director(OED).
 - Staff from the GCF independent units: the IEU, the Independent Redress Mechanism and the Independent Integrity Unit.
 - GCF Board members/alternates.
 - Members of iTAP and representatives of the Accreditation Panel.
 - NDAs from countries that have SAP projects in the pipeline (at different stages, from CN to implementation), with particular attention to NDAs from GCF priority countries.
 - AEs and accreditation candidates that have SAP projects in the pipeline, as well as executing entities involved in an SAP project, with particular attention to DAEs, to private sector entities and entities involved in projects in GCF priority countries.
 - Representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) and private sector organizations (PSOs) at the global and the country level and including observers to the Board.
 - Where relevant, representatives from other organizations with processes similar to the SAP, including representatives from their independent evaluation offices, where an evaluation of those procedures has been performed.
54. Some of these interviews may be combined and held as focus groups, to generate more in-depth discussions and for time efficiency.

iv. Analysis of on-line survey conducted by Secretariat

55. The IEU team will review the on-line survey conducted by the Secretariat in the context of their review of the SAP pilot and decide how much of this survey will be used in the IEU assessment. One of the critical steps in using the data is to ensure responses are discriminated according to the type of experience the respondent had (or not) with SAP.
56. The team prefers not to burden respondents again with similar questions through an online survey but to focus on conducting interviews and focus groups, and to go deeper into the findings of the on-line survey.

v. Country visits

57. The IEU team will visit one country with projects approved through SAP or in the SAP pipeline to collect more in-depth information and perspectives about country experiences with SAP, and if possible, compare these experiences with those of projects developed under PAP. The team will also consider information collected during country visits in the context of IEU evaluations, particularly, the FPR, and the evaluations of country ownership and ESS.

58. Several criteria will determine the country selected:

- Countries with projects that have special characteristics for the SAP pilot, for example, with CN or funding proposals or approved projects presented by DAEs or in LDCs/SIDS/Africa.
- The SAP pipeline (CN and funding proposals) and approved projects will be considered to enhance learning about the SAP pilot.
- Some countries will be excluded from consideration for potential country visits, for example, because they were recently visited by the IEU teams in the context of other evaluations.

Table 4. Criteria applied to select the country visit

A. EXCLUSION CRITERIA	
1. The country has already been visited more than once in the context of an IEU evaluation in the last two years	Bangladesh, Mongolia, Namibia, and Senegal
2. Exclusion for logistical reasons (access, security, language, etc.)	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger, Iran, etc.
B. PREFERENCE CRITERIA	
1. High number of approved national projects through SAP by DAE	Bangladesh, Mongolia, Namibia, Philippines
2. High number of approved national projects through SAP	2 projects: Namibia 1 project: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Haiti ¹³ Exclusion: countries with recently approved projects by international AEs cannot be visited, as there will be no local teams to meet. This excludes Zimbabwe (B.23), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Niger (B.24), Haiti (possibly B.25)
3. High number of national projects in the SAP pipeline by DAEs	4 projects: Kenya 2 projects: Rwanda, Senegal
4. High number of national projects in the SAP pipeline	4 projects: Kenya 3 projects: Democratic Republic of the Congo 2 projects: Bhutan, Brazil, Costa Rica, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda, Vanuatu

59. The most relevant countries for visits are therefore by order of preference:

¹³ To be reviewed at B.25

- Kenya, with four SAP in the pipeline, all with the same national DAE, and a large PAP pipeline.
 - The Philippines, with one project approved through SAP, with a DAE, and one SAP in the pipeline with the same DAE.
 - Other countries with one SAP approved: Bahrain, Benin, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines.
 - Rwanda, with two SAP in the pipeline with a DAE, and one with an International AE.
60. Given GCF priority countries in Africa and the extent of the experience with SAP, the team has concluded that visiting **Kenya** and its four proposals in the pipeline present a good option. Also, the team will follow up with interviews with representatives of the AEs that implemented approved projects in Namibia, Mongolia, Bangladesh, and the Philippines.
61. The country visit will have a duration of three to four days and include interviews (or focus groups) with:
- NDA or focal point representatives.
 - DAE staff and teams working on projects.
 - Other actors involved in the SAP process, such as consultants and technical specialists, especially with regards to ESS. and
 - Other relevant national stakeholders as relevant.

vi. Visit to GCF headquarters/Songdo

62. The team will meet in Songdo to interact with IEU and Secretariat staff. The visit will take place early in the process and will primarily aim at interviewing Secretariat staff and working with the IEU DataLab on the available data. Also, this visit will generate draft reports on the IEU review of the Secretariat Review of SAP and the IEU assessment approach paper.

c. Data analysis

63. Data analysis will use a mixed-method approach whereby:
- A **qualitative** analysis of interviews, notes and documents review will be combined with
 - A **quantitative** analysis of the portfolio, survey responses, and project cycle analysis, with relevant comparisons to the non-SAP GCF portfolio.
64. Data will always be verified, validated, and triangulated, and any findings will be confirmed by one or more valid sources. Triangulation will also involve using evidence from multiple sources to obtain a good variety and depth of perspectives. The analysis will be structured around the key questions that the assessment seeks to answer.
65. The quantitative analysis of the portfolio will be used to extract the following type of information:
- Overview of the characteristics of the portfolio (the type of AE, project size, focus areas, priority countries, etc.)
 - Mapping of the process and of timelines for approvals.
 - Project reviews conducted by Secretariat and iTAP (if applicable).
 - Comparison of all of the above with PAP.

A **benchmarking** exercise will be undertaken to compare the SAP pilot to other fast-track project processes in other relevant entities. It will focus on comparing eligibility criteria, processes, governance, and results achieved. This will take place in four stages:

1. Identification of desirable criteria for comparators.

2. Research and identification of comparators.
3. Data collection on comparators (mentioned in the previous section), initially desk-based, and potentially to be completed by interviews.
4. Analysis of results and identification of possible implications for SAP.

F. WORK PLAN, TIMELINES AND DELIVERABLES

Step/task	January				February				March					April				May			
	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25
Phase I: Validation of GCF Secretariat Review (by the end of February)	B25																				
Provide initial comments on consistency and coherence of data, findings, and recommendations																					
Review of methods, data collection, and data used, comparison with findings from IEU evaluations, particularly FPR																					
Initial interviews with GCF Sec SAP staff and one operational team that have experience with SAP during a visit to GCF Headquarters																					
Preliminary findings for B25																					
Critical review of the Secretariat review included in IEU Assessment																					
Phase II: IEU Assessment of GCF SAP	B25																				
Draft approach paper																					
Final approach paper																					
Review and critically appraise existing GCF relevant documentation																					
Collect, review and analyze existing data available on SAP through IEU DataLab and analysis																					
Interviews of stakeholders within and outside GCF																					
Review of an online survey conducted in the context of Secretariat Review																					
Short field visits (3-4 days) to a total of 2 countries																					
Triangulation and analysis of data collected from desk reviews, IEU DataLab, interviews, online survey																					
Review relevant documentation from other institutions with fast track processes conduct comparative analysis. May include some interviews, as relevant																					
Prepare zero draft report																					
Prepare final draft report																					
Management/ Continuous activities	B25																				
Contribute to IEU communication products																					
Communication and coordination with IEU (at least once a week, incl. kick-off meeting)																					

Legend

D: Deliverable	S: Visit to Songdo	C: Country visit	(Working period)
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. ASSESSMENT MATRIX

QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	DATA SOURCES	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS
1. Critical assessment of the Secretariat review			
1.1. How relevant is the methodological approach used to assess the SAP and respond to the Board request?	Document review Interviews with SAP team and reviewer	Secretariat SAP review and online survey notes Board decisions Interview	Qualitative and quantitative, triangulation of different sources, comparison with IEU evaluations, including in FPR
1.2. To what extent are the findings of the review supported by evidence, unbiased, and relevant?	Document review, pipeline review Interviews with SAP team and reviewer	Secretariat SAP review and online survey SAP projects and pipeline data, other IEU evaluations, including FPR Interview notes	Qualitative and quantitative, incl. comparison with IEU evaluations, including FPR
1.3. To what extent are the recommendations of the review supported by evidence from the findings?	Document review Interviews with SAP team and reviewer	Secretariat SAP review and online survey SAP projects and pipeline data Interview notes	Qualitative relationship between findings and recommendations
1.4. What type of changes would the proposed recommendations make to the performance of the SAP?	Document review, pipeline review Interviews with GCF Sec, independent units, and AEs	Secretariat SAP review and online survey SAP projects and pipeline data Interview notes	Qualitative and quantitative, including modeling of effects of recommendations
1.5. How was the review used in the development of the draft document presented to the Board for further development of the SAP process?	Document review Interviews with SAP team and reviewer	Secretariat SAP review SAP projects and pipeline data Draft Board document for further development of the SAP Interview notes and online survey	Review of draft Board document and comparison with Sec SAP review document

QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	DATA SOURCES	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS
2. Implementation of the SAP			
2.1. Have SAP projects approved so far met the overall remit of SAP, according to the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50% DAEs)	<p>Reviews of project documents and data (approved and pipeline).</p> <p>Interviews with Sec (OGC, OPM, ORC, DCP, DMA, PSF), iTAP, independent units, AEs, NDAs, with focus on those with direct experience with SAP, Board members or alternates</p> <p>DataLab project information data</p> <p>Country visits</p>	<p>Board decisions, project documents, Secretariat and iTAP reviews, SAP proposal pipeline data, time stamps</p> <p>Interviews notes and online survey</p> <p>Country visits notes</p>	<p>Review of project documents, including reviews by Sec and iTAP. SAP approved and pipeline projects analysis</p>
2.2. Are time and effort needed for the preparation, review, approval, and disbursement reduced compared to PAP?	<p>Document review</p> <p>DataLab project cycle data for SAP and PAP projects (approved and pipelines)</p> <p>Interviews with Secretariat (OGC, OPM, ORC, DCP, DMA, PSF), iTAP, independent units, AEs, accreditation candidates, NDAs, with focus on those with direct experience with both SAP and PAP</p> <p>Country visits</p>	<p>Board decisions, Secretariat reports to Board, Board documents, other Secretariat documents on implementation modalities, project documents, time stamps</p> <p>Interviews notes</p> <p>Country visits notes</p>	<p>An estimate of time and level of effort (preparation and reviews). Compare between PAP and SAP project cycles and level of reviews.</p>
2.3. Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from PAPs? How different is the portfolio of projects processed through SAP from that of projects processed through PAP (e.g. distribution according to regions, results areas, financial instruments, private/public, GCF priority countries)?	<p>Review of SAP document</p> <p>Interviews with Secretariat (OGC, OPM, ORC, DCP, DMA, PSF), iTAP, independent units, AEs, accreditation candidates, NDAs, CSO/PSO representatives</p> <p>Country visits</p>	<p>Board decisions, Secretariat documents (esp. Guidance documents)</p> <p>Interview notes</p> <p>Country visits notes</p>	<p>Qualitative assessment of document review, interviews, and online survey perceptions.</p>

QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	DATA SOURCES	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS
2.4. How are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework?	Review of project documents and reviews by Sec and iTAP of the investment criteria, Interviews with Secretariat, independent units, NDAs, AEs, Board members or alternates, CSO/PSO representatives Country visits	Project documents, Secretariat and iTAP reviews, Board reports, Annual Progress Reports Interview notes Country visit notes	Analysis and aggregation of investment criteria for SAP projects and comparison with PAP
2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)	Project document Interviews with Secretariat, iTAP, independent units, NDAs Country visits	Project documents, Secretariat and iTAP reviews, Board reports, Annual Progress Reports (approved both through SAP and PAP) Interview notes Country visits notes	Analysis of key results indicators (targets, expected or actual results) per project, and aggregated. Comparative analysis with PAP
3. Value-added of SAP			
3.1. Have AEs (particularly DAEs and Private Sector Organizations - PSOs) improved their capacity to access the GCF by using the SAP pilot? How have PPF and RPSP (as well as other TA provided) supported AEs, NDAs, and FPs applying through SAP?	Document and data review Interviews with Secretariat (esp. PPF and RPSP staff), NDAs, AEs (esp. DAEs and PSOs), with a focus on those with projects in SAP pipeline, CSO/PSO representatives Country visits	Secretariat documents on capacity-building, RPSP, and PPF data, incl. reports to Board Interview notes and online survey Country visits notes	Mixed (incl. mapping of capacity-building activities, comparison with non-SAP support). Evolution of DAEs portfolio after SAP
3.2. Is the SAP modality relevant to the needs of countries and the size of change that the GCF seeks to bring about?	Document and data review Interviews with Secretariat staff (DCP, DMA, PSF), iTAP, NDAs, Board members or alternates, CSO/PSO representatives Country visits	Documents on national priorities (country programmes, NDCs, other), project documents Interview notes Country visits notes	Qualitative analysis on alignment with the NDCs and other climate change strategies at the country level.
3.3. Does SAP provide value-added for processing GCF projects for adaptation in priority	Document and data review	Project documents and pipeline data, external documents/papers Interview notes	Mostly qualitative – whether SAP has helped priority countries and esp. DAEs in

QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	DATA SOURCES	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS
countries (African states, SIDS, LDCs) and DAEs?	Interviews with Secretariat staff, NDAs, AEs (esp. from African countries, SIDS, and LDCs and DAEs), CSO/PSO representatives Country visits	Country visit notes	processing adaptation projects.
3.4. How does the SAP modality fit (or not) into the overall theory of change of the GCF?	Document and data review Interviews with Secretariat staff, iTAP, AEs, Board members or alternates, CSO/PSO representatives Country visits	Project documents and pipeline data Interview notes Country visit notes	Mostly qualitative, reviewing alignment with GCF mandate and ToC
3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?	Document review Interviews with Secretariat staff, iTAP, AEs, NDAs, Board members or alternates, CSO/PSO representatives Country visits	Project documents, iTAP reviews Interview notes Country visit notes	Mostly qualitative about the strength of the SAP in the implementation of scalable and transformational projects.
4. Benchmarking			
4.1. Are there comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sectors?	Document review	General documentation about development finance from a selected group of comparable organizations (TBD)	Presentation of how these other organizations use fast track project processing mechanisms.
4.2. How does the SAP compare with them with regards to eligibility, processes, governance, and results achieved?	Document review Interviews as required to fill information gaps	Documents about specific development finance mechanisms Interview notes	Comparative analysis
5. Learning to improve the GCF project cycle			
5.1. What experiences and lessons from the pilot can be transferred to improve SAP in the future, particularly around transparency, predictability, processing times, effort,	Document review Interviews	IEU assessment findings, Secretariat review findings Interview notes	Qualitative of the findings from the IEU assessment that are applicable or

QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	DATA SOURCES	DATA ANALYSIS METHODS
documentation and clarity of criteria/ eligibility, and contribution to the overall TOC of the Secretariat, particularly through supporting scalable/ transformational projects?			transferrable to the GCF PAPs
5.2. How can existing GCF technical assistance to countries (RPSP, PPFs) and agencies be improved to support the access to GCF by simplifying processing modalities?	Document review Interviews	IEU assessment findings, Secretariat review findings Experiences from comparable organizations Interview notes	Qualitative assessment of experience from SAP pilot and other relevant organizations.

APPENDIX 2. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PER TYPE OF STAKEHOLDER

A. GCF SECRETARIAT

Depending on the specific Secretariat department met, more specific questions should be asked, in particular about operational aspects

2. Implementation of the SAP

- 2.1 To date, are SAP projects approved effectively meeting the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50 per cent DAEs)
- 2.2 Are time and effort needed for the preparation, review, approval, and disbursement (each should be discussed separately) reduced compared to PAP?
- 2.3 Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from PAP?
- 2.4 How are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework?
- 2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)

3. Value-added of SAP

- 3.1 a) Have you observed improvements in the capacity of AEs (and in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF by using the SAP? / Would you say that the SAP has enhanced the capacity of AEs (in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF?
- 3.1 b) What type of support have AEs, NDAs, and FPs received from the GCF while preparing a project through SAP? How (if at all) has it contributed to their capacity to prepare a proposal through SAP? Were there any specific needs that were not addressed?
- 3.2 a) Is the SAP relevant to the needs of the countries? Why would countries use SAP to access the GCF and address their climate change issues?
- 3.2 b) Is the SAP relevant to the size of change the GCF seeks to bring about?
- 3.3 a) Does SAP provide value-added for processing GCF projects for adaptation in priority countries (African states, SIDS, LDCs) and DAEs?
- 3.3 b) What about mitigation?
- 3.4. How does the SAP modality fit (or not) into the overall theory of change of the GCF?
- 3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?

4. Benchmarking

- 4.1. Do you know of any other comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sector? What about within GCF such as RfP, programs to AEs, etc.

5. Learning

- 5.2. What experiences from the SAP pilot can be transferred to PAP?
- 5.3. How can existing GCF technical assistance to countries (RPSP, PPFs) and agencies be improved to support the access to GCF through SAP?

B. INDEPENDENT UNITS

2. Implementation of the SAP

- 2.1 To date, are SAP projects approved effectively meeting the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50 per cent DAEs)
- 2.2 Are time and effort needed for the preparation, review, approval, and disbursement reduced compared to PAPs? For whom?
- 2.3 Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from PAPs?
- 2.4 How are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework?
- 2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)

4. Benchmarking

- 4.1. Do you know of any other comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sector? What about within GCF such as RfP, programs to AEs, etc.

C. BOARD MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

2. Implementation of the SAP

- 2.1 To date, are SAP projects approved effectively meeting the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50% DAEs)
- 2.4 How are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework?
- 2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)

3. Value-added of SAP

- 3.2 a) Is the SAP relevant to the needs of the countries? Why would countries use SAP as a way to access the GCF and address their climate change issues?
- 3.4. How does the SAP modality fit (or not) into the overall theory of change of the GCF?
- 3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?

4. Benchmarking

- 4.1. Do you know of any other comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sector? What about within GCF such as RfP, programs to AEs, etc.

5. Learning

- 5.2. What experiences from the SAP pilot can be transferred to PAP?
- 5.3. How can existing GCF technical assistance to countries (RPSP, PPFs) and agencies be improved to support the access to GCF through SAP?

D. ITAP AND ACCREDITATION PANEL

2. Implementation of the SAP

- 2.1 To date, are SAP projects approved effectively meeting the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50 per cent DAEs)
- 2.2 Are time and effort needed for the preparation, review, approval, and disbursement reduced compared to PAP? For whom?
Accreditation Panel: How does the accreditation process currently influence SAP implementation?
iTAP: Are SAP projects reviewed differently than PAP projects?
- 2.3 Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from PAP?
- 2.4 How are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework?
- 2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)

3. Value-added of SAP

- 3.1 a) Have you observed improvements in the capacity of AEs (and in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF by using the SAP? / Would you say that the SAP has enhanced the capacity of AEs (in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF?
Accreditation Panel: Does the existence of SAP influence accreditation decisions from AE candidates? Has encouraging NDAs to submit CNs resulted in increased interest for accreditation from NDAs? Is this something desirable?
- 3.2 a) Is the SAP relevant to the needs of the countries? Why would countries use SAP as a way to access the GCF and address their climate change issues?
- 3.2 b) Is the SAP relevant to the size of change the GCF seeks to bring about?
Accreditation Panel: Do AEs accredited for large projects tend to apply for smaller projects to be able to go through SAP?
- 3.4. How does the SAP modality fit (or not) into the overall theory of change of the GCF?
- 3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?

5. Learning

- 5.2. What experiences from the SAP pilot can be transferred to PAP?

E. NDAs AND FOCAL POINTS

2. Implementation of the SAP

- 2.1 To date, are SAP projects approved in your country effectively meeting the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50 per cent DAEs)
- 2.2 Are time and effort needed for the preparation, review, approval, and disbursement reduced compared to PAP? For whom?
- 2.3 Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from PAP?
- 2.4 As an NDA, how are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework (compared to other projects prepared in your country)?

- 2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality in your country, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)

3. Value-added of SAP

- 3.1 a) Have you observed improvements in the capacity of AEs (and in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF by using the SAP? / Would you say that the SAP has enhanced the capacity of AEs (in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF?
- 3.1 b) What type of support have AEs, NDAs, and FPs received from the GCF while preparing a project through SAP? How (if at all) has it contributed to their capacity to prepare a proposal through SAP? Were there any specific needs that were not addressed?
Did the NDA receive any specific support related to SAP?
- 3.2 a) Is the SAP relevant to the needs of the countries? Why would countries use SAP as a way to access the GCF and address their climate change issues?
Have you, as NDA, developed a CN (or considered doing so)? Why?
- 3.2 b) Is the SAP relevant to the size of change the GCF seeks to bring about?
- 3.3 a) Does SAP provide value-added for processing GCF projects for adaptation in priority countries (African states, SIDS, LDCs) and DAEs?
- 3.3 b) What about mitigation?
- 3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?

4. Benchmarking

- 4.1. Do you know of any other comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sector? What about within GCF such as RfP, programs to AEs, etc.

5. Learning

- 5.2. What experiences from the SAP pilot can be transferred to PAP?
- 5.3. How can existing GCF technical assistance to countries (RPSP, PPFs) and agencies be improved to support the access to GCF through SAP?

F. ACCREDITED ENTITIES AND ACCREDITATION CANDIDATES

Specific questions about projects prepared and operational aspects should be added on a case by case basis.

2. Implementation of the SAP

- 2.3 Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from PAPs?
- 2.1 To date, are SAP projects approved effectively meeting the SAP eligibility criteria? (e.g. less than \$10 million, scaling up, none to low ESS risks, 50 per cent DAEs) Was your project originally designed with these criteria in mind, or did you have to adapt it to access SAP?
- 2.2 Are time and effort needed for the preparation, review, approval, and disbursement reduced compared to PAP? For whom? Is this different enough from PAP? Would you do it again? Why?

- 2.4 In your opinion, how are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework? (how does this compare to PAP?)
- 2.5. What are the expected results from your GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)

3. Value-added of SAP

- 3.1 a) Has the use of SAP contributed to enhancing your capacities to access the GCF? If so, which capacities in particular? If not, why?
- 3.1 b) What type of support have you received from the GCF while preparing a project through SAP? How (if at all) has it contributed to your capacity to prepare a proposal through SAP? Were there any specific needs that were not addressed?
- 3.2 b) Is the SAP relevant to the size of change the GCF seeks to bring about?
- 3.3 a) Does SAP provide value-added for processing GCF projects for adaptation in priority countries (African states, SIDS, LDCs) and DAEs?
- 3.3 b) What about mitigation?
- 3.4. How does the SAP modality fit (or not) into the overall theory of change of the GCF?
- 3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?

4. Benchmarking

- 4.1. Do you know of any other comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sector? What about within GCF such as RfP, programs to AEs, etc.

G. CSOS AND PSOS

2. Implementation of the SAP

- 2.3 Are SAP eligibility criteria clear and distinct enough from PAPs?
- 2.4 How are projects processed through SAP fulfilling the GCF investment criteria framework?
- 2.5. What are the expected results from the GCF projects approved with the SAP modality, and how do they compare with GCF projects approved through PAP? (expected results include not only key indicators according to results areas but also scalability/ replicability/ transformational and paradigm shift)

3. Value-added of SAP

- 3.1 a) Have you observed improvements in the capacity of AEs (and in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF by using the SAP? / Would you say that the SAP has enhanced the capacity of AEs (in particular DAEs and private sector AEs) to access the GCF?
- 3.1 b) How (if at all) has the support received by AEs and NDAs for SAP contributed to their capacity to prepare a proposal through SAP? Were any specific needs not addressed?
- 3.2 a) Is the SAP relevant to the needs of the countries? Why would countries use SAP as a way to access the GCF and address their climate change issues?
- 3.2 b) Is the SAP relevant to the size of change the GCF seeks to bring about?
- 3.3 a) Does SAP provide value-added for processing GCF projects for adaptation in priority countries (African states, SIDS, LDCs) and DAEs?

- 3.3 b) What about mitigation?
- 3.4. How does the SAP modality fit (or not) into the overall theory of change of the GCF?
- 3.5. Are projects approved through SAP using the opportunity to support scalable transformational projects?

4. Benchmarking

- 4.1. Do you know of any other comparable fast track mechanisms that exist in climate, environment, and development finance in the public and private sector? What about within GCF such as RfP, programs to AEs, etc.

5. Learning

- 5.2. What experiences from the SAP pilot can be transferred to PAP?
- 5.3. How can existing GCF technical assistance to countries (RPSP, PPFs) and agencies be improved to support the access to GCF through SAP?

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