



GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND

Independent
Evaluation
Unit



IEU

Newsletter

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Dear IEU friends and colleagues,

Despite IEU conducting its operations online for most of 2020,

and often in widely different time-zones, the IEU united unlike ever before to combat COVID's challenges. As our 2020 Annual Report testifies, the IEU completed its required 2020 evaluations and operational goals, as is particularly acknowledged in the Annual Report's foreword, with GCF's 2020 Co-Chairs, Sue Szabo and Nauman Bashir Bhatti, commending the IEU's achievement and noting IEU's important role:

By evaluating GCF operations, actions and policies, the IEU informs the GCF of the internal adjustments necessary to transform the existing, outdated paradigms used to combat the climate crisis.

In mid-March, the GCF held its twenty-eighth Board Meeting (B.28) online, producing several concrete outcomes. The B.28's provisional agenda included four IEU items: the 2020 annual report, the second performance review of the GCF for the GCF-1 programming period, the Evaluation Policy for the GCF and several recent and new IEU evaluations, all of which are

discussed in greater detail in this newsletter. The IEU's extensive presence in the B.28 provisional agenda and among Secretariat submissions is evidence of the unit's proactive pre-meeting engagement with stakeholders of the GCF ecosystem, the GCF Secretariat and the Board.

Despite the fact that IEU items for B.28 remained unopened, many of the key findings and recommendations of IEU evaluations were quoted and reflected in both the deliberations of the Secretariat and Board members and relevant board meeting documents. This shows the usefulness of our evaluative work in which we take pride as one of the GCF's accountability units that is mandated to inform the Board's decision-making and disseminate lessons learned.

One of IEU's key activities before B.28 was a technical session for the Evaluation Policy for the GCF, presenting the draft policy together with the Secretariat. In this technical session, the IEU and the Secretariat responded to comments by the wider Board. The IEU also participated in a Co-Chairs session on evaluations, where we presented all IEU evaluations submitted between 2019 and 2020.

Just before B.28, the IEU also published its evaluation summary

briefs in Spanish. This is part of our efforts to serve the needs of the global GCF stakeholders better. In addition to Spanish, efforts are underway to translate these evaluation summary briefs into French and Arabic.

Through several innovative internal initiatives, the IEU ensures it remains a relevant, vibrant and, most importantly, a leading player in climate change evaluation. As in 2020, the IEU meets weekly to look at its evaluations: to compare approaches, gain insights from others, and learn new *tools* and different ways to deal with common challenges.

The role of innovative, uniquely configured data is now fundamental to IEU delivering evaluations with evidence-based findings and recommendations. Two recent and critical weapons in the IEU's data armoury are, firstly, its increasing ability to understand and analyse last mile behavioural challenges that make or break climate actions and, secondly, spatially layered, clearly defined geographical data that delves deeper to find previously unseen causal linkages to climate change and possible solutions. These and other innovations will increasingly distinguish IEU evaluations in 2021 and beyond.

Thank you.

Andreas Reumann, IEU Head a.i.

GCF twenty-eighth Board meeting

Despite COVID-19 constraints requiring the GCF to conduct B.28 online, the IEU participated keenly in a number of activities before and during the meeting. The following provides an overview of relevant IEU's evaluations, side-events, stakeholder meetings and other B.28-related activities.

IEU evaluations

Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS). This review of the GCF's interim ESS assesses the potential for mainstreaming GCF's environmental and social considerations. It recommends developing ESS standards commensurate with GCF's climate mandate and developing a stakeholder engagement policy, among others. The evaluation is transmitted to the Board as a '[Between Board Meeting](#)' (BBM) decision ahead of B.28 for approval. The [full evaluation report](#) and its [2-page](#) and [4-page](#) summaries are available on the IEU microsite.

Independent Evaluation of GCF's Country Ownership Approach. This evaluation examines the GCF's success in integrating country needs and ownership into GCF's policies. Key recommendations include clarifying country ownership definitions and ensuring it becomes a requirement rather than an indication of the proposal quality. As with the ESS/ESMS evaluation, the IEU's COA review was transmitted to the [Board as a BBM decision](#). The [full evaluation report](#) and its [2-page](#) and [4-page](#) summaries are available on the IEU microsite.

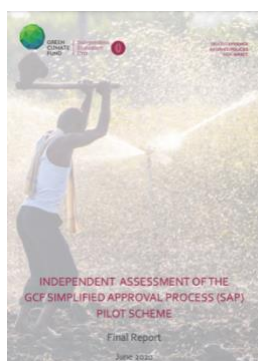
Independent Assessment of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process (SAP) Pilot Scheme. The IEU found that SAP approval is not much faster than the GCF's regular project approval processes (365 days versus 399 days) and has not translated into simplified requirements for project proponents. The [assessment and its proposed Board discussion](#) are available on the GCF [B.28 page](#).

Independent Synthesis of the Green Climate Fund's Accreditation Function examines GCF's accreditation function, a key element in GCF's business model. It suggests GCF clarify the accreditation function's expected achievements and incentivize capacity-

building in direct access entities, among other things. The evaluation was submitted for B.28 and is [available on the GCF website](#), along with the [Secretariat's response](#).

Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's investments in Small Island Developing States. This report assesses the GCF's investments in SIDS, asking if the GCF business model can meet the SIDS' unique and urgent climate actions and if these investments cater to the SIDS's potential for transformation. The evaluation and accompanying proposed Board decision is [available on the GCF website](#), along with the [Secretariat's response](#).

Independent Evaluation of the Adaptation Portfolio and Approach of the Green Climate Fund. This evaluation examines the GCF's achievements in meeting developing countries' adaptation needs. Among many conclusions, the report notes that the adaptation portfolio is dominated by small projects, with only four out of 67 funded GCF adaptation proposals being programmes. The GCF's adaptation portfolio is mostly grant financed and concentrated around IAEs, with 6 IAEs receiving 50% of all adaptation finance. The evaluation recommends, among other things, that the GCF promote efficiency by pursuing greater coordination of adaptation efforts with NDAs, AEs and local stakeholders at the national and regional level, and by using its convening power and ability to share lessons learned with other climate funds and actors across the GCF ecosystem. The evaluation was submitted ahead of B.28 and is [available on the GCF B.28 webpage](#) along with the [Secretariat's response](#).



Evaluation Policy for the GCF. At the Board's request, the IEU has developed a GCF-wide evaluation policy and also clarified and delineated roles and responsibilities together with the Secretariat. The draft policy sets out the GCF's evaluation approach, identifies the types of evaluations the GCF conducts and defines stakeholder roles in these evaluations. As a GCF-wide policy, it guides the Secretariat, the IUs, accredited entities and national designated authorities and focal points. The IEU and the Secretariat held a technical session with the Board in February, where they recorded Board comments and updated the policy for inclusion [in the B.28 agenda](#).

This evaluation policy provides an important step for the evaluation and learning function of the GCF. It also provides the basis for the IEU to join the United Nations Evaluation Group as a full member. The IEU is currently an observer to this group. IEU obtained observer status in 2017 and joined the Strategic Objective group for UNEG 2017/2018 Costed Work Plan.

B.28 Side-events for IEU's adaptation evaluation and evaluation policy attract interest. As part of the IEU's pre-B.28 outreach, it convened online presentations of its adaptation evaluation and GCF evaluation policy. The adaptation event allowed various stakeholders to discuss the evaluation's outcomes, including the GCF's position in adaptation finance and the private sector's role, among other issues. [A video of the side-event is available online.](#) The GCF evaluation policy side-event proved equally popular. Presenters and participants discussed the GCF's approach to and types of evaluations it conducts, among other topics. [A video of the side-event is available online.](#)

Both events attracted more than 50 stakeholders from the GCF, accredited and executing entities, national designated authorities, civil society and private sector organizations and other climate finance actors. Organizations represented included the FAO, UNDP, UNIDO, the Gabon National Climate Council, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada and the Bangladesh-based Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation.



The IEU side-event promoted awareness of its Independent evaluation of the adaptation portfolio and approach of the Green Climate Fund to a large and engaged audience.

Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund – Budget and Schedule. Possibly the most significant evaluation in the IEU's upcoming work schedule is the Second Performance Review of the Green Climate Fund (SPR). Covering the GCF-1 programming period, the review will analyse how effectively GCF programming and operations have evolved since the Fund's initial resource mobilization in delivering the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan's vision, objectives and priorities. The IEU, in consultation with the Budget Committee, prepared a multi-year budget and schedule. The budget was endorsed by the Budget Committee in time for B.28 publication of the budget

and schedule.

IEU 2020 Annual Report.

Also delivered for B.28 was the IEU's 2020 Annual Report. In a year overwhelmed by COVID, changes in staff size and composition and the inevitable re-tuning following the departure of the IEU's Head, the unit still managed to fulfil all its assigned tasks. A feature of the annual report was the foreword from the Co-Chairs, as quoted on the opening page.



The IEU prepared and submitted several evaluation reports, the GCF evaluation policy and its 2020 Annual Report for consideration at B.28. Each will be addressed at future Board meetings.

Co-Chairs convene IEU-Board discussion

Prior to B.28, the IEU was invited to present four of its most recent evaluations in a consultation session convened by the Co-Chairs. The session served as an additional engagement opportunity for the IEU with the Board on the key findings and recommendations of its evaluations. The following summary is limited to capturing some of the comments made by the Board during the consultation.

- [Independent synthesis of the GCF's Accreditation Function:](#) Key responses from Board members included the GCF's need to develop an accreditation strategy separate from its Updated Strategic Plan and ensure more strategic selection of entities. The Board representatives also noted both the need for transparency, suggesting the GCF lacks visibility as a project donor and the need to base its assessment of accreditation and re-accreditation more strongly on how entities fit in with the GCF Mandate. The [full synthesis report](#) and its [2-page](#) and [4-page](#) summaries are available on the IEU microsite.

- [Independent assessment of the GCF's Simplified Approval Process pilot scheme:](#) Among many wide-ranging Board responses, positive mention was made of the increasing need and use of the SAP by the least developed countries, African States and direct access entities, although concern was expressed at the lengthy approval process. The Board members attending the session also queried why, according to the IEU evaluation, the SAP is failing its objectives regarding scope, value added, efficiency and scaling-up. The SAP's failure to address scaling-up was of particular concern, and it was acknowledged that the

Board needs to address the SAP's "ready for scaling up" criterion. The [full evaluation report](#) and its [2-page](#) and [4-page](#) summaries are available on the IEU microsite.

- [Independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the GCF's investment in Small Island Developing States](#): The main Board query focused on the GCF's project priorities and the project cycle, in contrast with the SIDS approaches. It was stated that GCF's project priorities are not aligned with the priorities of the SIDS governments and tend not to consider individual small island countries' individual environmental and climate change priorities. The [full evaluation report](#) and its [2-page](#) and [4-page](#) summaries are available on the IEU microsite.
- [The independent evaluation of the GCF's adaptation portfolio and approach](#): The Board's response to the IEU's evaluation focused mainly on its findings regarding the private sector's role. Concern was expressed that GCF's Private Sector Facility managed only two private sector projects in adaptation, accounting for a mere 0.6 per cent of GCF finance. Noteworthy is the evaluation finding that among the existing climate funds, the GCF has the strongest private sector focus and the greatest ability to scale projects, although the GCF is yet to utilise this opportunity fully. The [full evaluation report](#) is available on the IEU microsite.

Other B.28 items

Integrated Results Management Framework. A significant Secretariat document tabled during B.28 proposed the GCF establish an Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF) that would merge its results management framework with its performance measurement framework. Findings from the IEU's [2018 evaluation of the Results Management Framework](#) were noted during the B.28 deliberations.

Addressing gaps in the GCF portfolio for measurement. Another Secretariat B.28 submission was *Addressing gaps in the current portfolio for measurement*. The report suggests steps for remediating monitoring and evaluation gaps and improving GCF's capacity to report results credibly. The IEU's B.22 RMF review informs the Secretariat's recommendations, along with the Secretariat's assessment. The Secretariat's proposal was discussed at length, with several Board Members acknowledging the IEU's role in the process.

Discussion with the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF). During the B.28 period, PRIF invited

the IEU to present its [Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in SIDS](#). PRIF is an infrastructure development facility that partners with major bi- and multi-lateral donors operating in the Pacific by identifying infrastructure projects and acting as a knowledge hub to promote infrastructure solutions.

Social Media updates stakeholders on IEU's B.28 activities

During B.28, the IEU's suite of social media tools fully engaged with stakeholders, including Board Members, representatives of UN organizations such as UNDP and UNFCCC, multilateral development banks, evaluation and research networks, NGOs, human rights and youth networks. In the days before and during B.28, IEU Tweets earned 14.3k impressions. IEU's LinkedIn page witnessed an overnight increase on 15 March with a 200 per cent surge in unique desktop visitors and a 117 per cent leap in their mobile counterparts. Especially on LinkedIn, some of the regular visitors to the IEU's page include climate finance and M&E experts from various international organizations, funds and NGOs, including IFAD, FAO, NDC Partnerships, Fairtrade Africa, and Mercy Corps. Views on the IEU's YouTube channel passed the 2,500 mark during B.28 period and in recent weeks. The IEU's microsite saw a similar B.28 bump during the week before and during the Board meeting. The [adaptation evaluation](#) and [a blog on B.28 related data projections](#) were among the most viewed pages during this period.

Reflections of B.28



In a recently produced video, four members of the IEU reflect on B.28 and talk about their key takeaways, observations and lessons learned. The video is available on [YouTube](#) as well as on the IEU's microsite.