



GREEN
CLIMATE
FUND

Independent
Evaluation
Unit



IEU Newsletter

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Committing ourselves to be faster and better!

I write this while sitting in Madrid and getting ready to talk about the GCF with many colleagues and friends in the climate world, at COP25.

A key highlight for the IEU this year was preparing and submitting the Forward-looking Performance Review (FPR) of the GCF to the Board. This was one of the most ambitious and far-reaching evaluations that any evaluation office could have undertaken. A large part of the challenge was to deliver a highly credible report that would independently and fairly assess the GCF for its past years while also providing guidance for potential pathways for it to follow in the future. We were aware of the review's visibility. We were equally aware of the

deep political context we were working in. Additionally, we were keen that the FPR be a useful evaluation, especially since the GCF was considering its first new strategic plan since the initial resource mobilization period, as well as gearing up for a \$10 billion replenishment.

Quite rightly, people were asking what the GCF has done in its first five years and what it can commit itself to in the next five.

In this context, we are proud to say the FPR is a highly used and cited evaluation, commended and endorsed by a variety of stakeholders and used alike by the Board, the Secretariat, and by the larger GCF ecosystem.

Our messages in the FPR, stayed close to the letter of the Governing Instrument of the GCF, but also emphasized the importance of the spirit of the instrument, namely, to focus

on strengthening business processes and quality of implementation; to redirect attention to adaptation and seize the opportunity to be an innovative leader in climate finance; to be innovative *and* impactful with mitigation investments; and, to delegate authority to those who are going to be accountable.

These are also the messages my colleagues and I are delivering at high-level outreach events, such as the 25th Conference of the Parties in Madrid, Spain.

I will write my notes from Spain, in the new year, but until then, my team (#IEUdreamteam) and I wish you a safe and a less climate variable 2019 and 2020.

Dr. Jyotsna Puri (Jo)

Head of the Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund

IEU at the 24th meeting of the GCF Board

The twenty-fourth meeting of the GCF Board discussed a number of items directly related to the IEU.

Secretariat management response to the Forward-Looking Performance Review of the GCF

Following IEU's submission of the FPR at B.23, the Secretariat delivered its official response at B.24. The Secretariat welcomed the final report of the FPR, which provides critical insights into the GCF's performance during its initial resource mobilization (2015–2018). The Secretariat of the GCF recognized the recommendations for the potential they hold for delivering greater impact and have started to incorporate these measures in its new strategic plan for 2020-23.

Independent Evaluation Unit 2020 Work Plan and Budget

In her presentation to the Board, IEU Head Jo Puri discussed the IEU's six planned evaluations for 2020. These include (i) An independent assessment of the environmental and social safeguards system of the GCF (ii) The Learning Oriented Real-Time Impact Assessment Programme; (iii) An independent assessment of the GCF's adaptation-related investments; (iv) A

study of GCF effectiveness in small island developing states (v) An independent synthesis of GCF's accreditation process, and (vi) A rapid assessment of the GCF's simplified approval process.

Jo also presented IEU's 2020 plans for capacity building and advisory services; uptake, communications and partnerships; and building and strengthening the IEU.

The Work Plan, along with its 2020 budget of USD 5,581,985, was approved by the Board. The full document is available on the IEU website. In approving the workplan, several Board members noted the value of the work that the IEU was doing.

Annual Report of the Independent Evaluation Unit for 2019

Jo presented the IEU's Annual Report for 2019 to the GCF Board. The Head of the IEU noted a number of key successes for IEU in 2019. These included undertaking useful, credible, and high-quality evaluations and delivering them in a timely manner. These included evaluations of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, the Results Management Framework, the GCF's Country Ownership Approach, the GCF's Environmental and Social Safeguards, and the

Forward-Looking Performance Review. Jo also commended the rest of her team for how well they planned and executed their roles: the IEU's disbursement rate in 2019 was 92% (in 2018, it was 88%).

During the year, the IEU has also expanded its capacity. In addition to recruiting three new staff, the IEU DataLab and GIS group are providing excellent support by building fit-for-purpose databases and supporting high-quality analytical work.

Other achievements in 2019 included completing two evidence gap maps on forestry and adaptation.

An important feature of IEU's 2019 output was its training and capacity-strengthening work for accredited entities, national designated authorities, and the GCF Secretariat.

The IEU's uptake and communications team was productive, delivering more than 116 communication products and increasingly producing materials in French and Spanish.

Independent Evaluation of the Green Climate Fund's Country Ownership Approach

This item was deferred by the Co-chairs until B.25. The full report of the evaluation is available on the IEU website.

Evaluation of GCF's Country Ownership Approach

Country ownership is a core GCF principle, as reflected in the GCF Governing Instrument. IEU's evaluation of GCF's country ownership approach examined four questions:

1. How does GCF conceptualize and operationalize country ownership?
2. How does GCF contribute to country leadership and engagement?
3. How effective is GCF in building institutional capacity (in countries and in itself) for country ownership?
4. How effective is GCF in using its business model for supporting country ownership?

Some of the evaluation's salient recommendations are that the GCF should:

- a) Generate and use a normative standard for country ownership that reflects a higher ambition than is current international practice.
- b) Make country ownership a minimum eligibility criterion for all GCF investments before they are assessed for other qualities.
- c). Encourage international accredited entities to co-develop and co-implement GCF investments jointly with nominated direct access entities and develop a strategy for these entities.
- d). Improve transparency by promoting the public release of relevant documents.

The IEU's report on the GCF's approach to country ownership is available on the IEU website



Internal and external capacity building

Internal: In November, two IEU team members attended the 2019 Annual American Evaluation Association Conference in Minneapolis, USA, where the theme of the event was "Paths to the Future of Evaluation: Contribution, Leadership, Renewal." Aemal Khan and Nayeon Kim participated in a session on environment program evaluation. They also led two sessions: a seminar on impact investing and climate impact bonds and a presentation on spatial analysis for impact evaluation.

External: In October 2019, the IEU delivered a day-long training workshop organized by the Secretariat's Division of Mitigation and Adaptation. The training introduced participants to the basics of impact evaluation and measurement. Thirty participants learned about designing impact evaluations for GCF projects, costing evaluations, and calculating evaluation sample sizes, which have critical implications for design and budget.

Spreading the word and building capacity

In November, as part of the IEU's LORTA programme, Viktoriya Khan from the IEU spent a week with a GCF project in Rwanda, "Strengthening climate resilience of rural communities in Northern Rwanda." Viktoriya delivered a capacity building workshop on LORTA's aims, expected outcomes, the role of stakeholders, a theory of change and impact evaluation methods.

Also in November, IEU's Solomon Asfaw traveled to the Honduras to support a GCF funded Central American Bank of Economic Integration (CABEI) project on setting up measurement and data systems. Activities included, among others, organizing a capacity building workshop with government and CABEI staff on impact evaluation, implementing impact evaluations and using a theory of change.

IEU and Rwanda Government sign Memorandum of Understanding

The IEU is proud to have signed an MoU with Rwanda's Ministry of Environment. The aim of the agreement is to disseminate the use of tools and methodologies for the application of the Learning-Oriented Real-Time Learning Assessment (LORTA). The cooperation will particularly emphasize theory-based counterfactual impact evaluation methods.

IEU Lunch Talks

IEU's popular monthly Lunch Talk continues to attract large, enthusiastic audiences. Topics covered in recent months include "Examining the effectiveness of adaptation and forest conservation interventions: A snapshot of evidence gap maps," "A capricious ally: How complexity is a problem and solution in the fight against climate change" and "Raising the bar: How multiple benefits pathways can boost climate ambition." Lunch Talk presentations and podcasts are available on the IEU website.



IEU's September Lunch Talk featured IEU's Solomon Asfaw explaining evidence gap maps.

Key engagement activities

IEU engaged with partners and stakeholders at a number of key events between September and December. One such event was September's International Development Evaluation Association's Global Assembly in Prague, the Czech Republic. IEU team members Jo Puri, Archi Rastogi, Solomon Asfaw and Courtland Mathews, led presentations on IEU's Learning-Oriented Real-Time Learning Assessment programme, evidence curation, impact investing, evaluating research for development, and building and evaluating leading organizations.

IEU was also present at September's Asian Evaluation Week in Kunming, China, where team members Giang Pham and Jo Puri led sessions on evaluations in complex settings and impact investing, and participated in a plenary panel on challenges for useful evaluations.

Outreach in October was also productive, with the Jo delivering a presentation at a GCF seminar on "Climate Landscape and Linkages to the GCF" in Songdo, and a keynote presentation at the Stanford University Social Innovation Review Conference in California. IEU staff member Andreas Reumann participated in a panel discussion on evaluating sustainability at the 19th Global Development Network Conference in Bonn, Germany.

In November, IEU's Martin Prowse participated in a UNFCCC-convened meeting in Bonn, Germany, titled the "Resilience Frontiers Initiative." The meeting examined ways to harness new technologies and emerging social trends for global resilience

Latest IEU blog posts

IEU's web site is increasingly attracting people keen to submit blogs. Recent topics include:

- Mitigating emissions and reducing air pollution
- A data what? How I learned to compile a data dictionary
- Will the climate strikes create impact?
- Often late and costs a pretty penny: Do impact evaluations meet the opportunity window?
- Climate impact bonds and the GCF

Coming Up

- IEU Lunch Talk: Impact Investing – Dr. Hyun S. Shin, January 2020 (TBC)
- Australasian Aid Conference, February 2020
- IEU Lunch Talk: Healthy People, Healthy Planet – Ania Grobicki, February 2020 (TBC)
- B.25, March 2020 – Board discussion of COA report; tabling of ESS, LORTA and activity reports