



GREEN  
CLIMATE  
FUND

Independent  
Evaluation  
Unit



## Senior Evaluation Consultant: Independent assessment of the GCF's SAP Pilot Scheme

**Date:** November 26, 2019

**Company:** Green Climate Fund

**Deadline:** 10 December 2019, 11:59 PM KST

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 aims to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change, while accounting for their needs and supporting particularly those that are vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. 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.

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEU) of the GCF, is mandated by the GCF Board under paragraph 60 of its governing instrument 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."

The IEU has several objectives:

- a. 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;
- b. Conducting periodic independent evaluations of GCF performance to objectively assess the results of the GCF and the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities;
- c. Providing evaluation reports to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement for purposes of periodic reviews of the Financial Mechanism.<sup>1</sup>

The IEU has a mandate for both discharging an accountability function and supporting a learning function.<sup>2</sup> These are central to the GCF being a learning organization as laid out in its Governing Instrument and its initial strategic plan.<sup>3</sup> The responsibilities of the IEU are as follows:

- d. Evaluation: The IEU will undertake independent overall, portfolio, country, thematic, programme evaluations that inform GCF strategic result areas.<sup>4</sup> The vision, criteria and guidelines for these will be laid out in the Independent evaluation policy.

The IEU is also mandated to independently peer review and attest the quality of GCF self- evaluation;

- e. 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 expected to also inform the

Executive Director of the Secretariat and other GCF stakeholders. The IEU will engage closely with the independent evaluation units of intermediaries and implementing entities of the GCF, including national designated authorities (NDAs) and accredited entities (AEs). It will provide support to catalyse learning and build and strengthen NDA and AE evaluation capacity. It will also provide guidelines and support evaluation-related research that helps produce rigorous evidence in GCF result areas;

f. 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. This includes recommending possible improvements to the GCF performance indicators and its initial results framework, after accounting for international experience and the results of evaluation;

g. Engagement: The IEU will actively participate in relevant evaluation networks to ensure that it is at the frontier of evaluation practice. The IEU will involve its own staff and staff from NDAs and AEs in evaluations wherever feasible and appropriate. In addition, the IEU will support knowledge hubs of low-emission and climate-resilient pathways.

h. More information about the IEU and its evaluations, TORs and mandate as well as publications relevant to this, can be found at [www.ieu.greenclimate.fund](http://www.ieu.greenclimate.fund).

### **Role**

GCF has introduced The Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme (SAP) as a way to apply for GCF Funding for smaller-scale projects or programmes. It is specifically designed for adaptation and mitigation initiatives that require a GCF contribution of no more than USD 10 million which have minimal environment and social risks.

Adopted during the 18th Board meeting of GCF in October 2017<sup>5</sup> the SAP intends to reduce the time and effort needed in the preparation, review, approval and disbursement procedures for proposals of certain activities, in particular small-scale activities. The simplifications are two-fold: The application process is simpler, requiring fewer pages and easier form-filling. There are dedicated templates for Concept Notes and full Funding Proposals; and

The review and approval processes are streamlined. These two simplifications should lead to a reduction in time and effort required to go from project conception to implementation (More details of SAP can be found in the fact sheet at:

[https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/194568/GCF in Brief Simplified Approval Process .pdf/e739cd34-85d0-4495-afa4-c955f74685ff](https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/194568/GCF+in+Brief+Simplified+Approval+Process.pdf/e739cd34-85d0-4495-afa4-c955f74685ff)).

As of November 14, 2019 after its twenty-fourth Board meeting, the GCF had approved 12 projects under SAP with the cumulative approved amount of approx. USD 140 million (GCF funded: approx. 105 million / Co-financing: approx. USD 35 million). Of these, five were approved at B.24 (Please refer to Annex I for the list of the approved SAP projects).

In decision B.18/06, the Board of GCF 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 will be completed within three months from its commencement"(decision (b)), and requested the Secretariat of GCF 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)).

According to decision B.18/06, the Secretariat of GCF has started conduct the review of SAP. At the same time, at its twenty-fourth meeting, the Board of GCF adopted that the IEU of GCF will conduct the rapid independent assessment of SAP<sup>6</sup> and requested the IEU to present the review of assessment undertaken by the Secretariat at its twenty-fifth Board meeting (B.25) with a view to informing the new strategy for SAP that will also be considered at B.25. This consultancy will however continue after B.25 to further deep dive into issues related to SIDS and adaptation that will be relevant for the these evaluations with an aim to feed recommendations into these IEU led evaluations.

The IEU carried out the first fund-wide forward-looking performance review of GCF (FPR) and completed the final report of FPR in July 2019<sup>7</sup>. The FPR found out that the approval time for the six approved SAP projects as of February 28, 2019 was similar to normal Funding Proposals (FPs): eight months versus nine months respectively, and SAP proposals went through similar approval channels as FPs. IEU's rapid independent assessment of SAP will need to analyze the current approval process of SAP and SAP portfolio while validating the on-going review of SAP by the Secretariat. It will also need to benchmark the SAP against similar modalities in other similar organizations with a view to informing how the SAP can be faster, better and smarter in design, delivery, disbursement and likely impacts. [Please see Annex I with a listing of GCF's 12 SAP projects.]

IEU's rapid independent assessment of SAP will assess the following possible questions but not limited to:

- Is the SAP truly simplified?
- Does it provide easy access?
- Is it well suited to the needs of countries and to the size of change that it seeks to bring about?
- Are the processes commensurate with the overall objectives of this project modality? What can be done to ensure transparency, predictability and speed in SAPs?
- What can be done to design and deliver SAP better?
- Have SAP projects that have been approved by the Board met the overall remit of SAP?
- Are the current design and objectives of SAP projects meeting these objectives?
- What can we learn from other organizations?

#### **Duties and responsibilities**

- Under the overall guidance of the Head of the IEU, and in close consultation with senior staff of the IEU (who will be co-authors on the assessment report) the consultant will undertake the rapid assessment of SAP. S/he will be responsible for but not limited to:
- Design the framework to be used to assess the findings and lessons learned, from a wide range of GCF and other materials and develop an evaluation matrix outlining the inputs (data, sources, reports<sup>8</sup> needed to properly inform the assessment and accordingly agree on a final report outline;
- Finalize, in close consultation with the IEU, an approach paper for the assessment of SAP;
- Review and critically appraise existing documents and evidence related to SAP;
- Collect the existing data available on SAP through IEU DataLab and the relevant divisions at GCF;
- Engage with the ongoing review of SAP by the Secretariat of the GCF and validate the review;
- Analyze the efficiency of the current approval process of SAP and the effectiveness of the current SAP portfolio to present initial/emerging findings;
- Schedule and conduct on-/off-site interviews with relevant stakeholders both internal and external to the Fund, including very close consultation with the IEU team to inform the assessment;
- Undertake field missions as may be required
- Schedule and conduct online surveys to relevant stakeholders if necessary;
- Utilize Board and other GCF and IEU documents involving SAP, and inform the assessment with data collected through the consultations and interviews;
- As a bench-mark, consider from the literature outside the GCF, including that from other multilateral organizations, think tanks, civil society, academia, and the grey literature;
- Propose recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of SAP, with a view to role in the Strategic Plan of GCF 2020-2023 (note: THE STRARGIC PLAN WILL NOT BE FINALLY APPROVED AT LEAST UNTIL B.25. SO YOU CAN ONLY SEE POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS);
- Draft an assessment report, to include lessons learnt with wider applicability;
- Inform the findings to other IEU's evaluations planned in 2020 (i.e. Evaluation of GCF's investment to Small and Islands Developing States and/or Adaptation Approach)
- Support the development of communication products on the assessment

Drawing from the above, the following deliverables are expected, at the minimum:

- Draft and final approach paper for the assessment, outlining the scope and methods
- Review of documents identified as relevant for the assessment (to be developed with the IEU and also through consultations)
- Interviews with stakeholders identified
- Field reports/studies
- Close communication with the IEU (including weekly or fortnightly calls, increasing in frequency towards the end)
- Presentation of the list of emerging/initial findings from the rapid assessment to the IEU
- Draft report of the assessment
- Presentation of final report
- Final report of the assessment
- Contribution to IEU communication products

*\*The selected consultant is expected to work closely with a Junior Evaluation Consultant who will be selected separately by IEU and provide day-to-day guidance to her/him.*

*\*The selected consultant is expected to work closely with IEU DataLab which can provide existing data available of SAP (i.e. the information of each SAP funding proposal and the record of each SAP funding proposal approval process).*

### **Timeline**

The assessment will involve in part a desk study and may involve some field work (one or two country visits before 21st of February), but also need close engagement and communication of the consultant with the IEU, and the GCF Secretariat as well as other stakeholders such as Accredited Entities and NDAs to collect primary data through stakeholder interviews. The estimated length of the work is spread over January 2020 to July 2020. The work needs to be completed latest by the middle of May 2020 to early June 2020, with follow up through June to July 2020. The timeline for this study is as expected to be as follows:

- January 1, 2020: Commencement of consultancy assignment and start of the assessment work (the start date is subject to change due to procedural issues).
- January 20, 2020: Finalize draft of approach paper and propose plan for implementation; start of review and consultations.
- One or two visits for a week each to work with IEU and undertake consultations with GCF during January. The visit for a week each could also be consolidated into one visit for ten working days, when the consultant is expected to be working at the Songdo offices of the IEU.
- Possible country visits (one by senior consultant and one by junior consultant. IEU staff may or may not go along)
- February 15, 2020: Presentation of draft initial/emerging findings to IEU/GCF and receiving IEU comments.
- Submission of report for consideration by the Board for B.25 on Feb 21.
- Middle of March, 2020: Initial findings of the assessment are expected to be presented at 25th meeting of the Board of the GCF.
- March 15, 2020: Zero draft report finalized, sent to IEU/GCF for review and comments.
- March 30, 2020: Comments on the zero-draft received from the IEU.
- April 20, 2020: The report finalized and submitted to the IEU.
- May 20, 2020: feedback and comments received, validated, and report further reviewed
- June 2020: The findings and recommendations from SAP assessment are expected to be incorporated into the other evaluations.
- June to December 2020: Continuous socialization of methods and results is expected.

The above timeline is expected, and subject to change to accommodate procedural and emerging issues. The final timeline will be determined taking into account the confirmed date for the 25th and 26th meeting of the Board of the GCF. **The consultant will work closely with the IEU during initial finding presentation as well as final drafting stage, which are expected to be iterative.**

#### **Required experience and qualifications**

- (a). Advanced degree in economics, public policy, international development, or related fields;
- (b). At least 15 years of solid experience in providing strategic advice, implementing, conducting evaluations or reviews on programmes and projects, most desirably within the climate change and climate finance areas;
- (c). Good knowledge of other multilateral climate institutions so a benchmarking study can be done rapidly;
- (d). Outstanding writing skills including a strong track record of publications in areas relevant to GCF;
- (e). Direct expertise on the GCF will be highly valuable;
- (f). Excellent ability to critically appraise different layers of evidence including programmes/projects, frameworks, modalities, themes, processes and policies, and information from evidence reviews to inform the assessment, and to design a framework to extract the key findings and lessons learned;
- (g). Excellent ability to conduct the portfolio analysis and time-lag process analysis with bench-mark studies and database searches mainly through use of qualitative review methods;
- (h). Proven knowledge of mainstream evaluations and monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
- (i). Able to commit to produce a highly credible, very well written assessment report within the budget and period requested, and to take into consideration IEU feedback at multiple stages;
- (j). **Availability to travel to Songdo, Korea for up to 3 times (or another suitable location of mutual convenience) and at times of mutual convenience, but within the above timeline;**
- (k). Ability to take at least one country travel if needed;
- (l). Commitment to ensuring that weekly or fortnightly skype calls are undertaken to keep the IEU/GCF team up-to-date on progress and discuss advancement on the assessment study.
- (m). **Given the limited timeframe, willingness and availability to work with the IEU managers over holiday times (e.g. Christmas/end of year).**

In addition to the above qualities, the following will be desirable:

- Ability to exercise good judgment, meet tight deadlines and maintain required productivity without compromising quality;
- Should be passionate about delivery, results driven and should be able to trouble shoot;
- Ability to work independently and efficiently with limited guidance in a deadline-driven environment;
- Fluency in English is essential; knowledge of another United Nations language is an advantage.

#### **How to apply**

Interested candidates are required to provide the following:

1. A statement of interest that highlights the experience and capacity to undertake the assessment.
2. CV highlighting experience or advanced understanding of program, process and portfolio evaluations.
3. Max 1-page brief note clearly stating the key elements and approaches needed to design this assessment, the key considerations to be made, and the information required.
4. **A statement committing on the ability to undertake the review within the time stated, that includes the availability to remain engaged (at least in great part) during holiday periods.**

Financial proposal and breakdown of costs. Any travel will be coordinated directly by the GCF. Applications from women and nationals of developing countries are strongly encouraged. To apply, please click [here](#).