

ENGAGING WITH THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND:

A CIVIL SOCIETY TOOLKIT

The toolkit is published by a civil society consortium
for stakeholders interested to engage with the
Green Climate Fund (GCF)



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Introduction	4
Chapter 1: About the Green Climate Fund	6
How did the GCF start?	6
What does the GCF want to achieve?	6
How is the GCF structured?	8
What are the key GCF policies and mechanisms?	9
What does the GCF say on civil society engagement?	9
Chapter 2: CSO engagement with the GCF	12
Why is civil society engagement in the GCF so important?	12
How can CSOs engage with the GCF?	12
► Tool: GCFWatch – a CSO-led tool to track GCF financed activities and policy decisions	15
► Case study: Building civil society capacities on the GCF	16
Chapter 3: The international structures and policies of the GCF	18
What is the GCF board?	18
What is the GCF secretariat?	21
How does the GCF board interact with civil society?	22
► Case study: Engaging with the GCF to demand ‘Gender-Just’ climate finance	23
Chapter 4: NDA and Focal Point – The GCF institutional structures at the national level	25
What is a NDA or a Focal Point?	25
How does the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme work?	30
What are current challenges for NDAs?	32
► Case study: SDG 13 CSO Platform in Ghana – Making civil society voices on the GCF heard	33
Chapter 5: AE and EE – the GCF implementing structures	36
What is an Accredited Entity?	36
How does the accreditation of entities work?	39
What kind of support does the GCF offer for obtaining accreditation?	40
What are current challenges in the accreditation process?	40
► Case study: Civil society accompanying the Adaptation Fund project in Senegal	42
Chapter 6: The GCF project pipeline – Developing funding proposals and concept notes	44
What are key features of the GCF project and programme portfolio?	44
How to develop a GCF project or programme proposal?	49
What are current challenges in the GCF project pipeline?	52
► Tool: Community consultations as a tool to engage locally in climate finance projects	54
► Case study: Developing a concept note for the GCF in Bangladesh	55
Chapter 7: Implementing GCF-funded projects and programmes	58
What are the key steps in project and programme implementation?	58
What if something goes wrong during implementation?	59
► Case study: Civil society take adaptation to the ground in South Africa	61
Chapter 8: Monitoring and Evaluating GCF-funded projects and programmes	63
How does monitoring and evaluation under the GCF work?	63
What are limitations of the GCF monitoring framework?	64
Why is participatory monitoring and evaluation so important for civil society?	64
► Tool: A Tracking tool for CSOs to monitor projects and policies of the Adaptation Fund	67
► Tool: CSO monitoring of mitigation projects	70
► Case study: Independent CSO assessment of the Adaptation Fund project in Ecuador	71
► Case study: Bolukiluki – a local monitoring system for REDD+ projects in DRC	72
► Tool: KoBo – a potential tool for data collection on GCF projects	73
Ways forward for CSO engagement	75
Useful resources on the GCF	78
List of figures	79
List of boxes	79
List of tables	79
Photo credits	79
List of abbreviations	80
The implementers of the project ‘CSO readiness for the GCF - focus Africa’	82

INTRODUCTION

“*The clear and present danger of climate change means we cannot burn our way to prosperity. We already rely too heavily on fossil fuels. We need to find a new, sustainable path to the future we want.*”

Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary General of the United Nations

For developing countries, adaptation to climate change and the realisation of low carbon economic growth is vital for achieving sustainable development. Within countries, the most vulnerable communities are in urgent need for financial support to build resilience against current and future impacts of climate change.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF), which hereafter will be mentioned as the ‘fund’, is one of the primary funding institutions of the international climate finance architecture under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. Designed to support significant efforts to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, the GCF started funding projects and programmes in developing countries around the world in 2015.

The GCF is expected to be a significant channel for distributing a significant portion of the 100 billion USD in annual climate finance that the developed countries have committed to mobilise by 2020; these funds will flow from a variety of public, private and innovative sources through many channels.

The overall goal of the fund, as defined in its Governing Instrument, is to contribute to the achievement of the ultimate objective of the

UNFCCC by promoting the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways. Its climate investments are placed in the context of sustainable development and secure additional economic, social, developmental and other environmental benefits while taking gender equality and other human rights considerations into account. The GCF aims to achieve this by providing support to developing countries, particularly those most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change impacts.

Encouraging civil society engagement

If the GCF is to live up to this objective, it is essential that civil society organisations (CSOs) from both developing and developed countries play a crucial role in its processes. When CSOs are engaged in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluating of GCF financed projects it is more likely that expected results, local needs and the fund’s objectives will be met through such an engagement. CSOs can choose different paths to engage with the GCF actively. They can:

- ▶ Build the capacities of other CSOs, local organisations, and the national institutions involved in the GCF;
- ▶ Facilitate dialogue around the GCF financed activities and claim their role as key stakeholders in national activities;
- ▶ Conduct advocacy and constructively provide technical inputs on the development of GCF policies and frameworks, and bring their expertise into the international discussion;

- ▶ Critically monitor and assess projects and programmes on the ground to track progress and potential impacts of GCF activities within vulnerable communities;
- ▶ Become part of the implementation structures of GCF funded projects and other events.

There are encouraging examples about civil society engagement in the GCF which have contributed to shaping its governance and impacts so far. However, many CSOs still know very little about the Fund and others with the capacity or knowledge to participate in its activities at the international, regional, national and/or sub-national level do not actively engage enough.

Why a toolkit on civil society readiness for the GCF?

Encouraging as well as building civil society readi-

ness for the GCF has emerged as a necessary step in contributing to a successful fund. This toolkit aims to provide civil society actors and their organisations, as well as any other stakeholders interested in the GCF, with relevant information, knowledge, and guidance on how to get involved with the fund. The first and second chapters provide an overview of the GCF as well as the possibilities for CSO engagement. The third one gives a detailed introduction into the main structures and policies of the institution, while the remaining chapters focus on the functioning of the project and programme elaboration, planning, implementation and monitoring cycle under the GCF. Throughout the toolkit, several examples of practical tools and case studies from civil society actors engaging in climate change and climate finance around the globe, are showcased in order to inspire and encourage CSOs in their engagement with the GCF at various levels.

Structure and overview of the toolkit

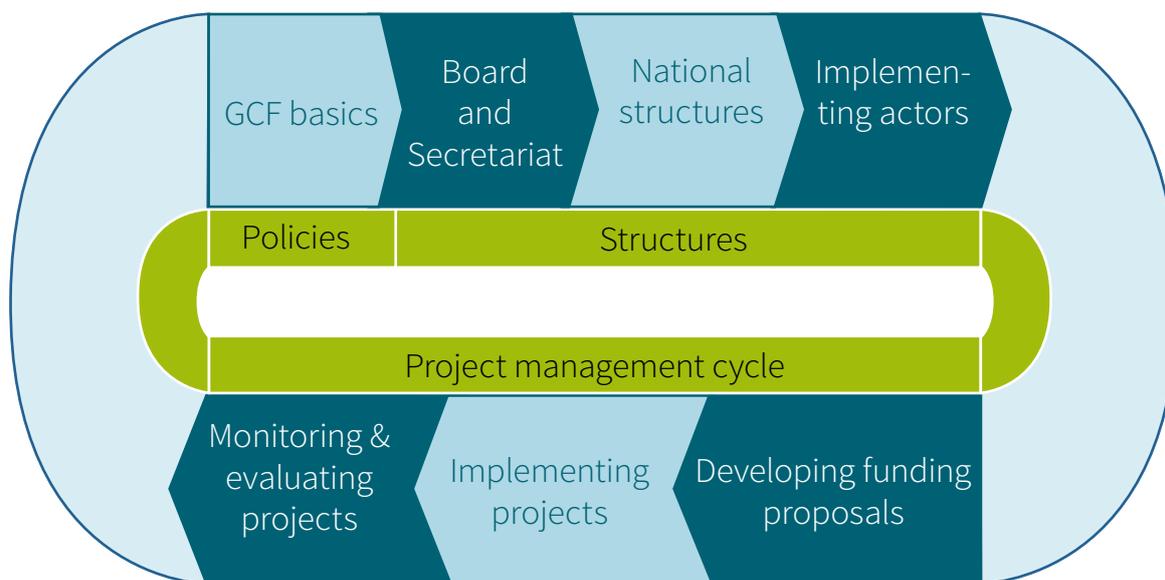


Figure 1: Structure and overview of the toolkit

ABOUT THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND

How did the GCF start?

In the run-up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15) in December 2009 in Copenhagen, there was a political agreement to establish the Green Climate Fund as a new fund under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This agreement was formalised one year later at the next climate summit (COP16) in Cancún in 2010. Following the elaboration and adoption of a Governing Instrument in 2011, that outlines the Fund's objectives and working modalities, the GCF board and secretariat took up their work in 2012 to establish the concrete rules of procedure of the fund and get it up and running. In late 2014, the Initial Resource Mobilisation (IRM) process of the GCF collected 10.3 billion USD from contributor countries, mainly developed ones. Later, in 2015, the GCF started granting accreditation to the first organisations and approving the initial funding proposals. Since then, the fund has been operational and fully functioning.

What does the GCF want to achieve?

As stated in paragraph 2 of the Governing Instrument, the GCF's overall objective is 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 the impacts of climate change." Thus, the GCF is designed to fund ambitious climate action. This entails a complex shift of policies, procedures and proposals with the ambition beyond what is already funded by existing multi-lateral and other climate funds.

An additional objective for the GCF is to specifically address the needs of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change effects; hence, the fund's target is to split its funding equally between mitigation and adaptation. Within the adaptation framework, it aims to spend at least 50 percent of its funding

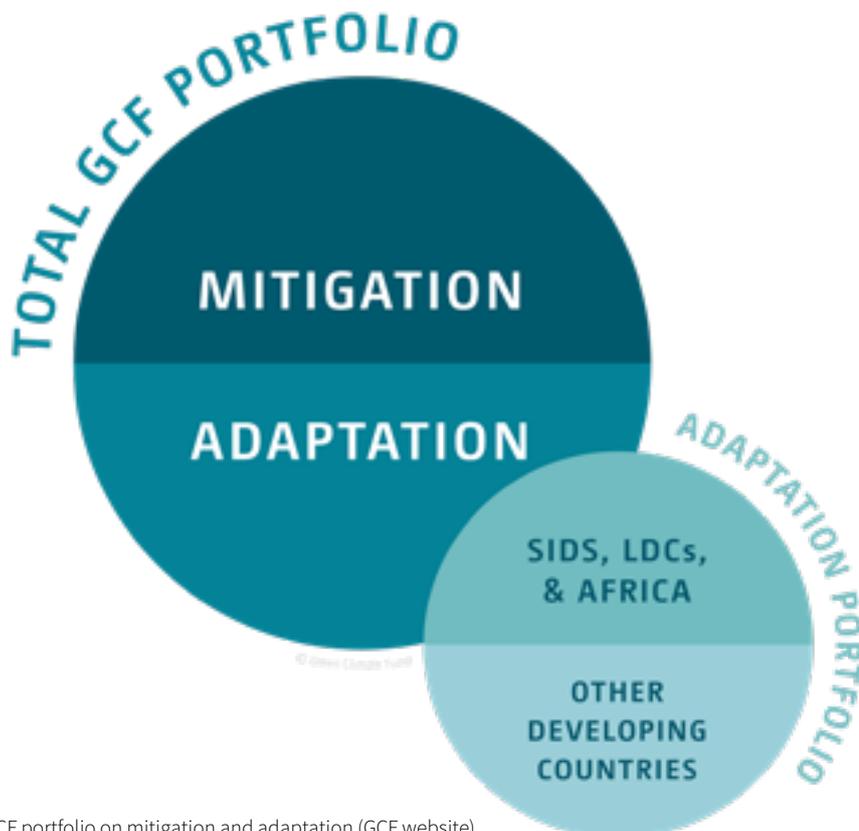


Figure 2: GCF portfolio on mitigation and adaptation (GCF website)

Developing countries as recipients of climate finance can access GCF funding in two ways through accredited entities:

Direct access: National or regional institutions from developing countries (both public and private) can get accredited to submit funding proposals directly to the GCF.

International access: Recipient countries can submit funding proposals via international accredited entities such as:

- ▶ Large multilateral organizations like United Nations institutions or multilateral development banks (MDBs),
- ▶ Developed country bilateral institutions like GIZ or KfW, or
- ▶ Private sector institutions such as commercial banks.

Box 1: Access modalities to GCF funding

on those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable, such as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and African countries (see Figure 2). The Fund has also established a Private Sector Facility (PSF), which serves as a specific avenue for enhancing the private sector engagement and to leverage additional funding for its climate-related projects and programmes.

Another key feature of the GCF is its country ownership and country-driven approach which places developing countries at the centre of defining national priorities and procedures for GCF funding. This includes the establishment of a Direct Access modality for developing countries in addition to an international access, which has become the standard procedure for most climate funds. Direct access enables national institutions to apply directly with their projects for GCF funding after becoming Accredited Entities (AEs) to the fund (see Box 1).



How is the GCF structured?

The structure around the GCF spans from the international to the national level (see Figure 3).

At the international level, the fund is administered by:

- ▶ The board: Formed of 24 members with equal representation of developed and developing country members (and one dedicated seat each for SIDS and one for a LDCs- Least Developed Country) who meets in person at least two times a year and decide on necessary policies and strategies, accreditation of entities, and allocation of funding to these entities implementing GCF activities, among others.
- ▶ The Secretariat: This is the fund's independent coordinating body responsible for day to day activities. It reports back to the board whose work and activities it also support.
- ▶ At the national level, the GCF operates through diverse actors and institutions, including:
 - ▶ National Designated Authorities (NDA) or national Focal points: They are the primary institutional contact point for the fund within a country and are in charge of coordinating national engagement and processes around its financed activities as well as stakeholder participation. If a country does not (yet) have a NDA, a person can be temporary appointed as a Focal Point to the GCF.
 - ▶ Accredited Entities (AE): They are national, regional or international organisations that become accredited with the fund so that they can elaborate and submit funding proposals for projects or programmes, and implement those approved in developing countries.
 - ▶ Executing Entities (EE): These are national governmental, non-governmental or private sector institutions selected by AE to support the implementation of GCF financed activities.

Actors engaging in the implementation of the fund's activities at the national level, such as the NDA or the

AEs, are held to account by the secretariat and the board in various degrees. The AEs are accountable to the secretariat on how well they accede to rules and procedures of the GCF. The same applies to NDAs and FPs with respect to readiness funding. However, the secretariat and board have no oversight function when it comes to how they implement country ownership guidelines. On another hand, the secretariat reports to and receives guidance from the board. The GCF, as a whole, is accountable and receives guidance from to the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC.

GCF structure – from international to national



Figure 3: GCF structure – from international to national

What are the key GCF policies and mechanisms?

The GCF has numerous policies guiding the operation of projects, programmes and activities it finances. Most relevant for CSOs are those that define key issues and offer opportunities to interact with GCF structures and procedures. There are three core policies, which set a human rights-based framing and act both as safeguards (“do no harm”) as well as imperative (“do good”) for the fund’s activities. This is the Environmental and Social Policy, which aims to guide the protection against environmental and social risks from funded projects and programmes.

Two others are the Gender Equality Policy, which aims to effectively promote gender equality to achieve more equitable and sustainable climate action results, and the Indigenous Peoples Policy, which helps the fund to specifically protect indigenous peoples and communities from negative impacts of its projects and activities, and to foster their access to its funding.

Additionally, the GCF has several policies, which are aimed at enhancing its transparency and accountability and provide important options for civil society to interact with its different bodies and structures. The Information Disclosure Policy (IDP) pursues the greatest degree of transparency in GCF activities through the effective and proactive dissemination of information to stakeholders and the public. The Guidelines for Country Ownership and Country Drivenness define roles and identify opportunities for all relevant actors involved in the implementation of GCF activities (NDAs, FPs, and AEs), including provisions for stakeholder participation. The Guidelines for Observer Participation cover the accreditation of observer organisations as well as observer participation in board meetings, including by Active Observers.

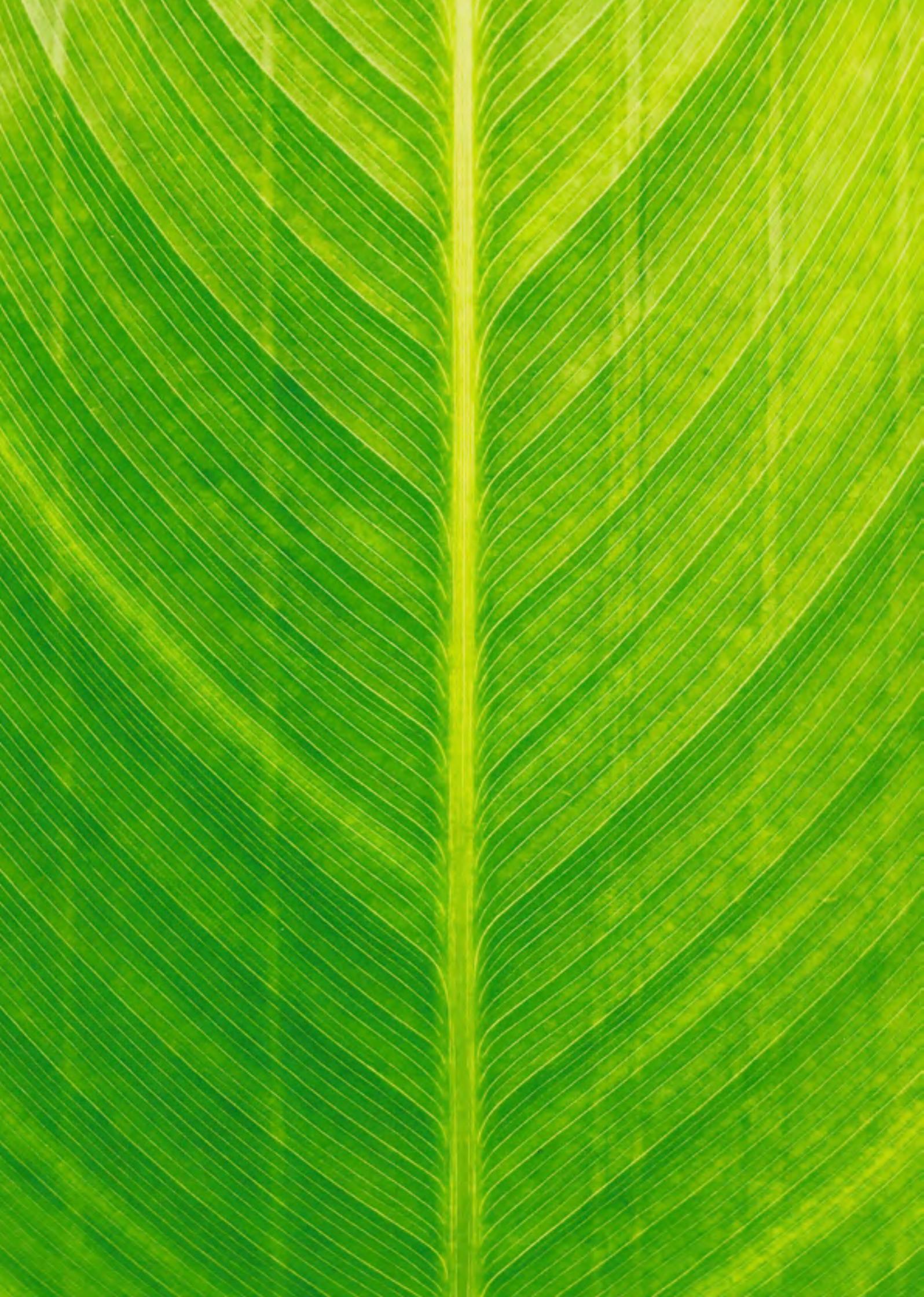
Lastly, and equally important, the GCF has a set of three independent accountability mechanisms with respective policies that safeguard the transparency, accountability, integrity and quality of its activities and procedures. The Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) serves as a complaint mechanism for potential negative impacts by GCF projects and activities.

The Independent Integrity Unit (IIU) oversees all issues relating to fraud and corruption as well as to the implementation of a Policy on the Protection of Whistle-blowers and Witnesses. The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of GCF project and programme portfolios.

What does the GCF say on civil society engagement?

Paragraph 71 of the GCF’s Governing Instrument recognises the importance of stakeholder input and participation. It requests the fund’s board to develop mechanisms to promote the input and participation of stakeholders, including private sector actors, civil society organisations, vulnerable groups, women and indigenous peoples, in the design, development and implementation of the strategies and activities to be financed by the fund.

This mandate has only been partially fulfilled so far, since important guidelines to improve the participation of stakeholders, such as policies on observer participation, gender equality and social inclusion, are still missing. Nevertheless, its prominence in the Governing Instrument shows that the Fund itself is aware that the effectiveness of living up to its ambitious mandate depends on the inclusion of wider range of stakeholders in its proceedings and accomplishments.





CSO ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GCF

Why is civil society engagement in the GCF so important?

In the multi-level set-up of the GCF, CSOs are essential in different ways. They can help to hold GCF institutions accountable to their goals and policies, which can help achieving higher credibility of results. They can push for vulnerable communities to be included in the local and international GCF processes so that their interests can be voiced and their needs heard. Moreover, civil society can support the development of funding proposals that are adjusted to the local social, cultural and political contexts.

They can identify and support synergies with learnings from other climate finance funds due to the large and diverse CSO networks active around the globe. The involvement of civil society can contribute to the implementation of more legitimate, effective and cost-efficient GCF projects and policies.

How can CSOs engage with the GCF?

Despite some existing challenges including the complexity of the GCF language and its modalities, the limited access to GCF information and knowledge, and the lack of capacity support or resources to engage with the Fund, there are a number of opportunities for civil society to engage in GCF related activities and processes. CSOs have a key role to play in contributing their knowledge, experience and expertise from the ground to the GCF and its policies, and to advocate for ambitious funding proposals that truly benefit the most vulnerable and marginalised communities. CSOs can help ensure that the fund's resources reach the beneficiary communities by holding implementing entities to account, while also demanding transparency, good governance of GCF resources and better outcomes. Equally, they can find ways to get involved in the implementation of these activities at sub-national, national, regional and international levels.

Capacity building and awareness raising

A key task is to build the capacities of national and local actors on the GCF. This includes CSOs, but also government institutions, NDAs, AEs, EEs and other actors. By conducting capacity building activities to strengthen stakeholders' understanding of the GCF modalities, CSOs can place themselves as a key player engaged in the fund's activities and processes. A mix of different capacity building formats can include meetings and workshops bringing together people from different backgrounds to foster mutual learning. This can be combined with spreading specific and more in-depth information on the GCF via publications, websites or newsletters.

CSOs can use diverse communication channels to raise awareness and various tools to build capacities around the fund. Through their work, they can serve as advocates for multilateral climate finance in their countries, regions or even globally. This could help raising the GCF's profile and be critical in shaping a positive public opinion of and national support for the fund, while also reaching out to new stakeholders and potential donor countries.

Facilitation and dialogue – voicing community and CSO demands

In many countries, country programming and building ownership on the GCF is still ongoing, including for GCF readiness activities. This offers an opportunity for CSOs to become part of these processes and engage in identifying national priorities as they relate to the GCF or support the development of country programmes that allow strategic priorities' alignment with the fund. CSOs may engage and interact with a variety of national authorities and institutions implementing GCF financed activities. They can advocate for direct access among eligible AEs. In some cases, they can be allowed to contribute to annual reviews of the GCF portfolio in countries or to participate in consultative processes with other relevant actors.

Advocacy – providing technical inputs and raising political demands

Civil society can advocate for the quality of funding proposals to be submitted to the GCF by voicing their concerns vis-à-vis NDAs, FPs or AEs and using different opportunities to influence the way GCF funding is used. Advocacy can target for instance:

- ▶ The establishment and implementation of sound and robust GCF policies which put a particular focus on information disclosure, transparency, human rights, social inclusion, gender equality and stakeholder participation. CSOs can put pressure on NDAs by asking them to implement these policies at national level. In some areas like stakeholder participation where the GCF only provides recommendations as they are part of the country ownership, CSOs can demand high standards from the NDAs or FPs in this regard.
- ▶ The accreditation of direct access entities in their countries or regions, in order to benefit both country ownership and national capacities. CSOs can strategically advocate for an increase number in direct access entities and recommend potential entities to their NDAs under that modality.
- ▶ The development of high quality and ambitious GCF projects and programmes during which CSOs can collaborate with AEs, NDAs and other national actors in critically assessing whether funding proposals will truly contribute to the Fund's objectives. They can include the views and inputs from diverse stakeholders, including the views from those directly affected by the proposed activities. CSOs can also advocate for AEs to grant these communities and stakeholders, including civil society, access to any established structure (group, panel or committee) responsible for elaborating project proposals. This would allow their views, expertise, knowledge and experience to be reflected in the GCF financed activities and define roles for them and other actors in the implementation and monitoring phases, hence contributing to ownership.



Monitoring – accompanying implementation and tracking results

Civil society can play a critical and constructive role in monitoring the implementation of GCF projects and programmes, while also assessing their outcomes. In such a role, national CSOs could link up with the international CSO community active in the GCF and work with other actors in the region in order to share learnings and experiences. They can additionally monitor stakeholder participation in these activities, and assess whether they:

- ▶ Deliver on the promised objectives of the Fund and target the most vulnerable groups;
- ▶ Adhere to the fund's policies as well as their own environmental and social management plans;
- ▶ Include gender action plans and strategies to promote meaningful stakeholder participation;
- ▶ Provide information in a timely manner, in local languages and through accessible channels; and
- ▶ Offer an avenue for filing complaints if communities are affected by the GCF financed activities.

They can put pressure on the NDA or FP to not issue a no-objection letter to problematic funding proposals that could potentially harm local communities, that did not undertake adequate stakeholder consultations during their elaboration, or those that do not meet the GCF criteria. They may also make NDAs or FPs aware when things do not happen as planned during the implementation phase.

Implementation – becoming a key GCF player

AEs can cooperate with CSOs to implement GCF projects or programmes. In such a scenario, AEs can engage CSOs as Executing Entity (EE) in implementation to learn from CSOs' specific expertise, skills, knowledge or on-the-ground experience. In other cases, CSOs may be recruited to provide specific services in a GCF project or programme as a delivery partner. Moreover, they can apply for accreditation with the GCF to become AEs themselves if they meet the fund's requirements-including fiduciary, environmental and social standards. This generally requires a substantial investment from these CSOs, but it can be part of a long-term strategy to access climate finance and new capacities and knowledge. However, in doing so, CSOs need to be aware that this may create a potential conflict of interest that can limit their ability to play other pertinent civil society roles.

Building up CSO coordination from local to international level

Accompanying the GCF at different levels needs a long-term engagement with a high level of coordination due to its complexity and technical aspects. Having a solid basis for effective networking and coordination among CSOs with different backgrounds and expertise can enable that local and national organisations bring in their knowledge of the specific local circumstances, as well as their connection to local communities and other national institutions. They can provide the credibility to the international advocacy efforts and take a direct

influence on the GCF activities and projects through their involvement and by bringing back learnings from the global community. International organisations often support local and national groups with their expertise and resources in order to bring the combined learnings and knowledge to influence the GCF policies and frameworks. Thus, CSOs can benefit from each other's respective strengths, in turn improving their own effectiveness.

Success stories from the international GCF CSO Constituency

At its eighth meeting in Barbados in October 2014, the GCF board discussed and approved policies for contributions to the Fund's Initial Resource Mobilization. While several members from developed countries were in favor of allowing contributor countries to earmark (target) their financial pledges to certain sectors or thematic areas (e.g. private sector or mitigation projects only), civil society successfully lobbied against such an option and received support from many developing country members. In the end, and despite some insistence, the board agreed to drop off the paragraphs mentioning targeting in the policies before approving the decision.

Civil society also successfully stopped the approval of the funding proposal, 'Biomass Energy Programme in the South Pacific' submitted by the Korea Development Bank (KDB) at the twentieth board meeting. CSOs conducted an analysis of the project and found a number of deeply problematic issues, including the baseline calculation which rather than reducing CO2 emissions would have actually increased them. Civil society also strongly voiced their concerns to some board members, and publicly disseminated a joint letter opposing the approval of the proposal. Ultimately, the KDB withdrew the proposal.



Box 2: Success stories from the international GCF CSO Constituency



GCFWatch – a CSO-led tool to track GCF financed activities and policy decisions

Promoting the meaningful participation of diverse types of stakeholders in the GCF requires enabling environments and existing structures that can facilitate such an engagement. The topic of climate finance as well as the understanding of the GCF itself can be very complex for civil society actors, hence limiting the roles they can play in making GCF funding accessible and impactful. That is why creating simple and useful tools which support CSOs to become part of the GCF are crucial.

In response to that necessity, a number of CSOs joined forces and initiated GCFWatch, a civil society led online portal that shares information on GCF financed projects, programmes and other activities, tracks policies and decisions by the Fund's board, monitors countries' financial pledges, as well as promotes and accelerates civil society readiness to the Fund. The portal additionally facilitates CSO understanding on the GCF processes and modalities, while also contributing to peer learning among the different actors involved. By tracking in-country progress around the Fund financed activities on a regular basis, GCFWatch generates relevant information, knowledge, updates and other contents that are disseminated among civil society and other GCF stakeholders. Key features of the tool are:

- ▶ **The Project Tracker** which tracks the various funding proposals approved by the GCF board during its meetings, and comprises policy decisions and other important documents from the Fund,
- ▶ **The resources section** where useful publications pertinent to CSO readiness can be accessed and downloadable free of charge, such as a compendium of CSO-written interventions prepared during board meetings,
- ▶ **The definitions of key terms** used in the GCF language to enhance their understanding, and

- ▶ **The latest news and blog articles** around recent developments around the GCF, which are regularly published.

Given the need for a coordinated approach in sharing information, knowledge, capacity support, peer exchange and engagement opportunities around the Fund, the CSO-led portal has an established steering committee which oversees its coordination and monitors its implementation. Members include representatives from well-known CSOs from both developed and developing countries such as the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC), Aksi!, Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL), World Resources Institute (WRI), ActionAid, CARE International, Germanwatch, BothENDS, Tebtebba, among others. Besides, an Advisory Council mainly composed of the Regional Nodes from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America and other regions, facilitates outreach activities as well as the generation of contents to feed into the tool. These nodes are hosted by CSOs acting as focal points of the portal in their regions. They are expected to reach out to stakeholders who can help analyse the GCF projects and policies to feed the board decision-making processes, and to compile key information from their regions related to the Fund activities. Any CSO and stakeholder interested in the GCF and seeking capacity support for their engagement and readiness can contact the nodes.

Since its launch, GCFWatch has received support from Heinrich Boell Foundation, the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (iCSC) and from the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany (BMU) through Germanwatch.



More about GCFWatch:

www.gcfwatch.org

Building civil society capacities on the GCF

In many countries, the national processes around the GCF are picking up the paces. With active AEs to the GCF, international funding for adaptation, different climate projects and programmes funded through multilateral entities as well as GCF readiness and preparatory support channelled via NDAs or FPs, a lot is happening. Yet very often there is no inclusive stakeholder engagement to enhance understanding of the GCF operation and processes and therefore promote equitable access to the Fund resources. Moreover, in many places CSOs still know very little about the GCF and a national CSO engagement strategy does not exist.

To bridge this gap, the project “CSO readiness for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) – Focus Africa” seeks to scale-up existing CSO capacities and strengthen the engagement of civil society actors in the GCF processes at national, regional and international level.

- ▶ In **Kenya**, Care International and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance conducted a series of two-day capacity building workshops in Kisumu, Mombasa and Nairobi to raise awareness and share knowledge on the GCF structures and modalities in the country. In these workshops, plenary and breakout group discussions were utilised to share information about the fund in simplified infographics and flyers. Participants were also directed to various online resources (such as the GCFWatch) that routinely share GCF related information.
- ▶ In **Malawi**, CISON ECC’s activities in the project focused on networking and capacity building. A national workshop assessing the state of play on the GCF in Malawi was an important forum for networking, coordination, collaboration and information sharing between and among CSOs, development partners such as UNDP, academia, and media. It served to establish effective communication channels with government institutions and GCF implementing authorities such as the NDAs, potential AEs and other relevant actors in the field of climate finance in Malawi. The creation of a CSO email listserv has also enhanced information sharing related to GCF among CSOs.
- ▶ In **Morocco**, Association des Enseignants des Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre (AESVT) organised national capacity building workshops for CSO representatives and also raised awareness on climate finance at regional level in Marra-

kech, Tanger Tétouan, Al Hoceima and in the Souss Massa region as these included (potential) locations for climate finance projects. It also conducted a study on the AE, the Agence de Développement Agricole (ADA) and organised dialogue meetings with the NDA and the entity.

Through these national level GCF engagements, CSOs have made significant progress in raising awareness on the Fund, setting up national CSO frameworks and platforms, and entered into dialogue with their NDAs, FPs and implementing entities. All this is vital for the national GCF processes.

Lessons learnt:

1. Enhancing meaningful CSO participation in the GCF national processes and engagement with NDAs, AEs and other accredited entities is a critical activity in national readiness processes.
2. The first step in CSO engagement is capacity building and information sharing. It is crucial to keep in mind that knowledge sharing and learning activities should not only be confined to urban area but rather should reach out to rural environments and the community level where many CSOs are active.

Recommendations:

1. With the complexity of the GCF structures and operations, learning and sharing sessions should be designed to foster an open discussion, encourage mutual learning by actors with different backgrounds and expertise. Take advantage of the national and international events to interface with relevant government and CSO stakeholders on the GCF.
2. Use different channels to spread information. Workshops are a good tool for a face-to-face dialogue and building trust among actors. Promoting the use of social media in sharing GCF information can be a cost-effective way to quickly reach out to a wider audience.



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THE INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES AND POLICIES OF THE GCF

What is the GCF board?

The GCF is governed by a board which is independent and in charge of overseeing the fund's management. The board operates under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC to which it is accountable. This means that the COP receives an annual report from the GCF and in return formulates guidance to the fund that both the board and the secretariat have to consider.

The board is a non-permanent body, meaning that it does not sit daily, but instead meets periodically, as discussed below, to undertake its work. The board's membership changes regularly as members serve a term of three years and are eligible to serve additional terms as determined by their constituency. The board consists of 24 members, with equal representation of developed and developing countries at 12 seats each. Each board member has an alternate who is entitled to participate in board meetings but without a voting right. When a board member is absent, the respective alternate member participates in the board proceedings on their behalf with the right to vote. The respective constituencies, or regional groups within constituencies, as defined by the United Nations, select members and alternate members of the GCF board. Developing country members are selected in a way that ensures a balance between all relevant regions and other representations within their constituency. This includes three members from the Asia-Pacific region, three from African states, three from Latin America and the Caribbean, one from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), one from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), one from a developing country not in the named constituencies or regional groups. Additionally, one member rotates between developing country parties included in the listed constituencies or regional groups. Paragraph 13 of the Governing Instrument report also provides that the board will have two co-chairs, one from a developed country and the other from a developing country, who are elected from within its membership to serve for a period of one year.

What are the specific tasks of the board?

As a non-resident body, the board conducts its work in the lead up to and during its meetings, which serve as the official platform for decision-making. The Rules of Procedure allow board members to meet in person at least twice every year at the fund's secretariat headquarters in Songdo, Republic of Korea, or at an alternate location agreed in advance. Additionally, regular meetings may be held by way of videoconference or teleconference during which, as for physical meetings, the board can make decisions.

During their meetings, board members take decisions using a consensus-based approach. The Rules of Procedures provide that the board shall develop procedures for adopting decisions in the event that all efforts at reaching consensus have been exhausted. However, the board has not yet come to an agreement on these procedures, thus, currently if there is no consensus some decisions are deferred to future meetings.

A full list of GCF Board members and alternate members

for the term 2019-2021 is here.

<https://tinyurl.com/yxcurk5r>

The different constituencies within the Board include:

- ▶ Developing country parties from the African States
- ▶ Developing country Parties from the Asia-Pacific States
- ▶ Developing country Parties from the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) States
- ▶ Developing country parties from Least Developed Country (LDCs) parties
- ▶ Developing country parties from Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- ▶ Developing country parties not included in the regional groups and constituencies stated in paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the board
- ▶ Developed country parties

Box 3: Who are the GCF board members and alternates

Board members fulfil the following specific tasks during their meetings:

- ▶ Decide on new policies, strategies, and necessary frameworks or assess existing ones;
- ▶ Approve new Accredited Entities (AEs) that can receive GCF funding;
- ▶ Approve new funding proposals for projects and programmes;
- ▶ Review the work of the Secretariat and the independent units of the Fund, and
- ▶ Make decisions on other relevant matters, such as the selection of the Fund's Executive Director; approval of evaluations, budgets, and work plans; admission of observer organisations from civil society and the private sector; appointment of officials such as members of the Accreditation Panel (AP) and independent Technical Advisory Panel (iTAP); selection of heads of the independent units, setting agenda items for each meeting, among other tasks.

What are the working structures supporting the work of the board?

The Rules of Procedures allow the GCF board to establish committees who are composed of board members and/or alternate members. They assist the board in its decision-making and work independently under the board's overall authority and direction. There are the following committees:

- ▶ Accreditation Committee: Provides policy guidance to the board on accreditation-related matters.
- ▶ Budget Committee: Provides guidance on matters related to administrative, financial and budget matters.
- ▶ Ethics and Audit Committee: Provides guidance on issues of conflicts of interest, confidentiality, ethics and integrity, financial management, procurement and other audit functions as they relate to the board.
- ▶ Investment Committee: Provides guidance on investment criteria and indicators related matters.

- ▶ Risk Management Committee: Provides guidance on GCF risk management and compliance, and its underlying policies, guidelines and tools, such as the Risk Management Framework (RMF).

It should be noted that these committees conduct their work via email exchange, conference calls or in person, for example on the sidelines of GCF board meetings or other UNFCCC events. They usually have an equal number of board members from the developed and the developing country constituency and self-select a chairperson.

The board may also establish, on permanent or temporary basis, technical and expert panels to assist in the performance of its functions. Supported by external independent technical experts, they generally serve advisory functions only, thus supporting the board to make decisions on specific matters. The two main permanent panels are:

- ▶ The Accreditation Panel (AP): Consisting of six members, it advises the board on matters related to the accreditation of entities to the GCF. The AP is responsible for conducting an independent assessment on accreditation proposals in accordance with its terms of reference and mandate.
- ▶ The independent Technical Advisory Panel (iTAP): Comprised of six members with a wide variety of specialised technical expertise, the iTAP supports the secretariat and board by conducting independent technical assessments and reviews of funding proposals against the GCF's investment criteria, and gives clear recommendations. The assessment and recommendations of the iTAP of all project proposals are published in the lead up to board meetings.

In addition, the board can decide to set up specialised advisory groups, i.e. the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), which advises the GCF on the engagement and mobilisation of the private sector finance in its activities and includes some selected members of the board. Other advisory panels can be set-up by the secretariat, for example to support the implementation of a core policy such as the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group to be set up in 2019.



The Independent Units

There are three independent units whose set-up is mandated under the Governing Instrument. They are tasked to support the transparency and accountability of all fund activities by monitoring, evaluation and reporting on problems or issues arising from GCF policies, procedures as well as GCF financed activities, projects and programmes across developing countries and assist the fund in improving as a continuously learning institution. Independent from the secretariat with separate budgets and leadership, they are accountable to the board and largely overseen by the Ethics and Audit Committee.

► The Independent Redress Mechanism: The IRM serves as the independent accountability mechanism for the GCF and, among other objectives, works to provide redress to affected communities. It receives complaints from any person, group or community alleging that they have been or may be affected negatively by a GCF project or programme. If the complaint is eligible, the IRM can then proceed to problem solving or a compliance investigation in an effort to remedy the harm. Importantly, the IRM also can initiate its own investigations if it receives information that a GCF project has adversely impacted or may impact a person or group or people. It also allows developing countries to file a request if a funding proposal has been denied approval by the GCF board, and then, if the complaint is eligible, it conducts an investigation and makes recommendations to the board, investigates to determine whether the GCF has complied with its relevant procedures.

► The Independent Integrity Unit: This body is expected to protect the fund's zero-tolerance of fraud and corruption. It has several key policies of importance for civil society, such as the Policy on the Protection of Whistle-blowers and Witnesses, which empowers anyone covered by its provisions to report suspicions of wrongdoing in good faith and without fear of retaliation so that the GCF can effectively protect its interests, resources, and mission by detecting and mitigating financial and reputational risks as early as possible. The IIU also enforces a recently approved Protection Against Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Policy applying to all GCF funded activities and partners. The unit can investigate GCF staff, AEs, EEs, or other actors connected to the fund's activities.

► The Independent Evaluation Unit: The IEU provides thorough evaluations of GCF policies, project implementation and procedures and thus helps the GCF to be a continuously learning institution seeking improvements. First IEU evaluations of GCF programmes and procedures have paid particular attention to the inclusion of civil society stakeholders in implementation as well as how gender considerations have been incorporated. One key IEU policy is the Evaluation Policy aimed to guide the evaluation of projects and programmes in addition to the evaluations carried out by the implementing actors. While civil society has been consulted in the process of developing such a policy and the draft policy acknowledges the role of civil society organisations, it does not have yet a clear procedure for CSO engagement.



What is the GCF secretariat?

The GCF secretariat is responsible for the daily management of the Fund's activities. An Executive Director appointed by the board heads the secretariat with the assistance of a deputy executive director and a senior management team. Since the operationalisation of the fund, three executive directors have led the secretariat, which has grown significantly over the last years and as of June 2019 has over 200 staff members. There are also several consultants who support the secretariat in conducting its duties as well as provide technical assistance across countries and regions where projects and programmes are elaborated and implemented. For instance, the GCF has regional advisors who are consultants that play a regional coordination role, including in the planning and organisation of multi-stakeholder engagement events such as the regional structured dialogues.

What are the specific tasks of the secretariat?

The secretariat plays a crucial role in the operations and functioning of the GCF. It facilitates any decision by the board and implements them; the secretariat also steers the process around the development and review, approval of project proposals and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluating projects receiving GCF funding. This requires close collaboration across the regions and countries with AEs and NDAs, which creates a significant workload for the secretariat staff in terms of coordination, consultation and engagement in several languages.

There are six offices and five divisions, within the secretariat. The most relevant for CSOs are:

- ▶ Division of Country Programming (DCP): Coordinates the fund's readiness and [reparatory support programme, assists developing countries to access funding by improving their readiness, and accompanies the accreditation process, especially from direct access entities. The DCP also supports the elaboration of country programmes for national ownership of the GCF, and encourages the national and regional engagement of stakeholders in the fund's activities.
- ▶ Portfolio Management Unit (PMU): Handles the monitoring of GCF projects. It gives guidance

Since its establishment, the GCF Secretariat has been led by three Executive Directors (ED), with the current Deputy ED serving as ED ad interim several times:

- ▶ H la Cheikhrouhou (June 2013–February 2016)
- ▶ Javier Manzanares ED ad interim (February 2016–December 2016)
- ▶ Howard Bamsey (January 2017–July 2018)
- ▶ Javier Manzanares ED ad interim (July 2018–April 2019)
- ▶ Yannick Glemarec (April 2019–Present)

Box 4: The Executive Directors of the GCF

to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) components in funding proposals. It also engages in regular monitoring of GCF projects on issues such as climate impact and safeguards (ESS and gender) and publishes annual portfolio performance reports (PPR).

- ▶ Division of Mitigation & Adaptation (DMA): Collaborates with the DCP and the Division of the Private Sector Facility (DPSF), as well as the AEs to provide expertise and technical support in the individual result areas of both climate change adaptation and mitigation. The DMA additionally reviews and assesses the pipeline of funding proposals for adaptation and mitigation activities, and assists developing countries and AEs in their readiness efforts to access GCF funding.
- ▶ Division of External Affairs (DEA): Is responsible for the external communication, including the website and social media management, media relations, and outreach activities. It also has the task of building and managing strategic partnerships, the relationships with contributors to the GCF and other stakeholders such as civil society. The division is also managing the logistics for all GCF-organised events (e.g., structured dialogues, board meetings, stakeholder workshops).

How does the GCF board interact with civil society?

Board members gather to make decisions on new policies and important matters or assess existing ones, approve funding proposals and AEs and review the work of the secretariat and its independent units. The GCF board has some basic Guidelines for Observer Participation. While a more elaborated policy is still pending approval by the board, there is a semi-operational policy in place through existing observer participation practice setting core expectations for all board work. The board also allows representatives of accredited CSOs and private sector organisations, who are admitted as observers, to attend its meetings. Among these observers, two representatives, one each from developed and developing countries, are elected through a self-selection process as Active Observers. They represent civil society voices in all board proceedings, for a term of two years. The board meetings are also webcasted. During board sessions, observers are only allowed in the board room at the invitation of the board, such as technical experts, accredited entities (AEs) and guests. The board can also discuss in closed or executive session without public participation.

am available on the GCF website. During such a participation, CSO representatives who are not attending the meetings in person can engage and interact with the GCF CSO Constituency through online means, hence allowing them to support and contribute to the board discussions.

- ▶ Use board meetings to engage with board members, alternate members and their advisers, and raise concerns on decisions or make constructive proposals through the two Active Observers.
- ▶ Engage with the GCF CSO constituency to get information and analysis on board decisions and be able to contribute to policy discussions with relevant information from the national level.
- ▶ Take part in the GCF Regional Structured Dialogues organised by the GCF secretariat annually.
- ▶ Interact with the GCF secretariat, e.g. by filing an information request under the Information Disclosure Policy (IDP) to iap@gcfund.org or by taking part in regularly organised webinars.
- ▶ Support local communities to file a complaint under the Independent Redress Mechanism (RIM) via irm@gcfund.org or make the secretariat aware of any issues arising from GCF activities.

Some ideas for CSO engagement:

- ▶ Observe GCF board meetings, either through attending them physically or through the live stream

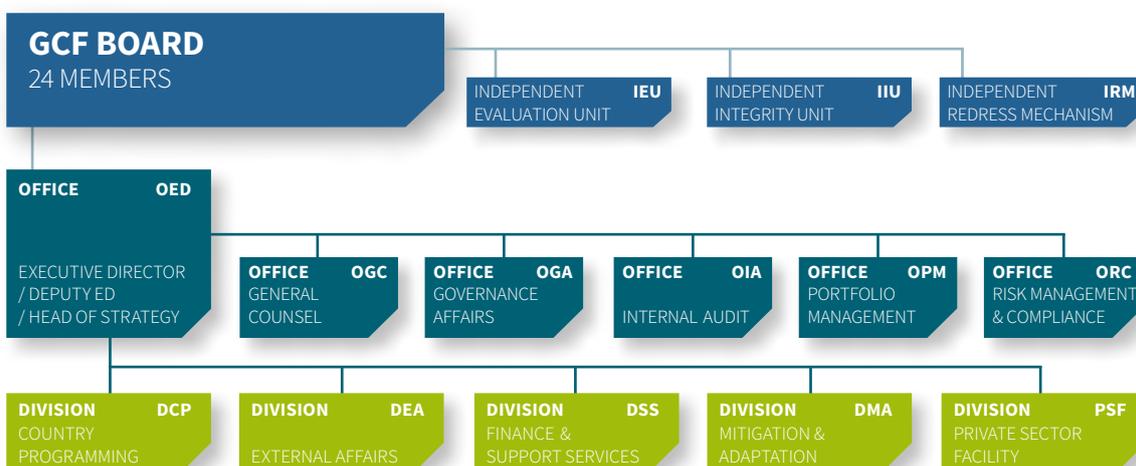


Figure 4: Institutional structure of the GCF board and secretariat (GCF website)

Engaging with the GCF to demand ‘Gender-Just’ climate finance

While there is a well-coordinated group of Civil Society Organisation observers monitoring GCF processes via board meetings, a consistent participation of grassroots women from the global south is significantly lacking. As a consequence, there is a lack of information channels, particularly at regional and national levels, to provide inputs from a gender perspective into project proposals and potential accredited entities, and/or to develop tools and methodologies for tracking local access and participation.

In response, the Women’s Environment & Development Organisation (WEDO) and BothENDS, as a member of the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), launched the Women Demand ‘Gender-Just’ Climate Finance with support from the Wallace Global Fund in August 2017. The joint initiative aims to build capacity and knowledge of women and gender advocates to track, monitor and, most importantly, influence the projects and financial flows of the GCF in multiple ways. The initiative includes women’s rights and climate finance webinar series to take a deep dive into important aspects of the climate financing architecture, with the aim of ensuring this money reaches local women’s groups, that projects are designed to respond to the needs of communities, and that the work of the GCF respects human rights. As engaging civil society through regional coordination mechanisms is fundamental to the initiative’s goals, regional GCF Gender Monitors were established across Latin America, the Asia-Pacific and Africa. The initiative first supported three regional monitors to attend a GCF board meeting in February 2018, and by the October 2018 board meeting, the monitor team had expanded to four monitors, with both an Anglophone and Francophone monitor serving Africa. Through these board meetings, the monitors have deepened their understanding of the dynamics of the GCF and envisioned what activities they could catalyse upon returning home. During the meetings, they support the international GCF CSO Constituency in analysing and developing positions on policies, projects, and potential entities to be accredited.

In May 2018, the monitors launched the GCF Regional Gender Groups, networks of civil society members interested in the GCF and gender related issues. These groups serve as points of connectivity and coordination by digitally gathering members to learn about the GCF, share information on board proceedings, and provide feedback on the Fund’s policies, accredited entities and projects—particularly those from their specific region. Organisations engaged in the regional groups encompass a wide variety in terms of size, scope, and

resources. From grassroots women’s organisations to organisations focused on climate change working at a regional level, the monitors are creating additional spaces for organisations to collaborate on the GCF. The monitors have identified particular methods of building the knowledge, composition and access of their groups. In Africa, for example, the language barrier has been tackled by conducting the group in both French and English along with the designation of a country monitor position, enabling individual civil society members to take the lead on contacting their NDAs and discovering more information about the projects in the pipeline for their respective countries. In Asia-Pacific, a key entry point has been connecting with civil society monitoring of development banks such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which is an AE to the GCF, and collaborating on workshops within that organizing space. In Latin America, bringing a gender lens into regional climate change work and looking forward to integrating a monitoring function, following up on GCF projects being implemented, has contributed to the group’s organising.

Lessons learnt:

1. The highly technical nature of the GCF requires specific resources for both capacity building among civil society and dedicated staff time for understanding, communicating and commenting on various documents.
2. Connecting and collaborating with any other civil society organisations in your country or region interested in the GCF is incredibly valuable, as these connections can create access to NDAs or accredited entities and allow for the burden-sharing of analysis, among other benefits.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a short and succinct pitch for why the GCF matters in your region or area of work; civil society members articulating their understanding of the GCF’s significance to their activities and mission is critical for building engagement among peer organisations and groups.
2. Find ways to engage groups and individuals who do not and likely will not participate in board meetings to cultivate greater civil society engagement at all levels. Stakeholders in the local and/or national context of climate and gender action need voices in the GCF processes.



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<https://wedo.org/>



NDA AND FOCAL POINT – THE GCF INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

What is a NDA or a Focal Point?

A National Designated Authority serves as the national liaison institution in a developing country for the country's engagement with the GCF. If a country only has a Focal Point, it is the main GCF's contact point. It is responsible for coordinating the fund's national activities, supporting direct AEs and those national or regional entities seeking accreditation as direct access entities and communicating with the GCF. This means that each country interested in receiving GCF funding needs to establish a NDA or nominate a Focal Point. While many countries only have a FP, several others have transitioned from having a FP to having an established NDA in place. The GCF does not decide which institution becomes a NDA or which official becomes a FP, as this authority lies with the respective country. Each country also gets to decide on the location and structure of their NDA as well as how it should operate and be governed.

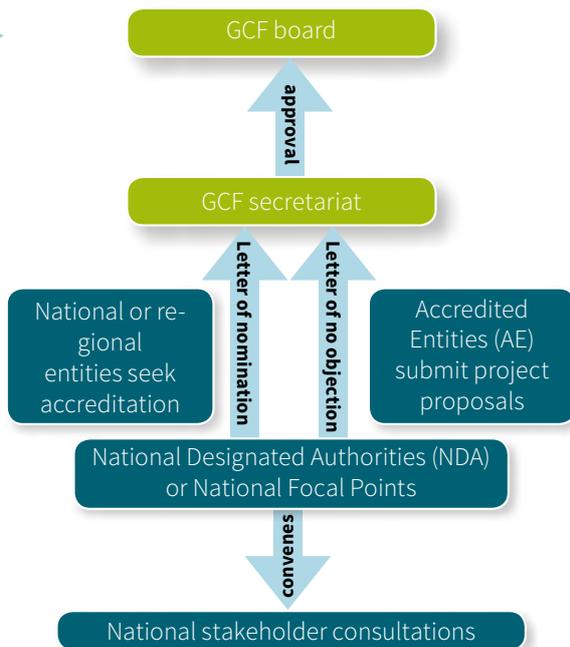


Figure 5: How the NDA or focal point interacts with key GCF actors

What differentiates a NDA from a FP?

A NDA is a government institution, such as a department or unit within a ministry. Most often, such institutions are located in the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Environment, but it could also be another ministry involved in economic and sustainable development policies or planning. The essential criterion is that it has to have the ability to influence government policies on climate change, energy, sustainability and the environment. The NDA should be able to play a coordinating role that brings together different government actors and other stakeholders associated with the GCF objectives.

A Focal Point can be a person within a government institution responsible for all matters related to the GCF and for representing the Fund in their country. That person can be nominated to carry out the tasks of the NDA while the country is in the process of selecting one.

Which capacities should a NDA or FP have?

- ▶ In its best practice guidelines, the GCF lists a number of capacities that a NDA should have in order to effectively perform its tasks. They include:
- ▶ Knowledge of national climate change priorities, strategies and planning;
- ▶ Ability to contribute to and to elaborate national development plans and strategies;



More informations:

_ Find a list of NDAs and Focal Points on the GCF website here

www.greenclimate.fund/countries

- ▶ Expertise in climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- ▶ Knowledge of and contact with the relevant institutions and stakeholders in the country;
- ▶ Capacity to coordinate and hold multi-stakeholder consultations;
- ▶ Ability to conduct monitoring and evaluation according to GCF standards; and
- ▶ Knowledge of other relevant funding mechanisms (e.g. multilateral, bilateral, regional or national) that are active in their country.

Either the NDA or FP should have these capacities. Otherwise, these capacities can be addressed or acquired by cooperating closely with other national actors, including CSOs.

What are the key tasks of a NDA or FP?

In its Guidelines for Country Ownership and Country Drivenness, which are directed at the NDAs and FPs, the GCF sets the overall framework for the different tasks. They designate clear roles and identify opportunities for all relevant actors involved in the implementation of GCF activities (NDAs, FPs, AEs and other multiple stakeholders, such as other government agencies, the private sector, civil society, women and Indigenous Peoples groups). While they set ground rules for stakeholders' participation, including civil society, in the GCF funded activities at the country level, and support the development of country programmes which strengthen that engagement, they are recommendations, not mandatory policies to be followed (and thus defer for example from mandatory stakeholder engagement procedures directed at AEs).

The NDA or the FP has the responsibility to set the political and institutional framework for the GCF in their respective country. This translates into five different tasks that position the NDA or FP at the centre of the national activities and processes around the Fund (see Figure 5).

Task 1: Strategic oversight aligned with national priorities: The NDA or the FP should ensure that the

Key roles and functions of NDA and focal point designated by countries.



Figure 6: Key roles and functions of the NDA or focal point

activities funded by the GCF in their countries correspond to national priorities. Thus, the GCF wants each developing country to set its funding priorities within its own comprehensive strategies on climate change mitigation and adaptation. The NDA or the FP should therefore, make sure that funding proposals align with the national plans and strategies (see Box 2). The National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are a key process in this context as they serve as the forum to define priorities in the field of adaptation and receive additional support from the GCF also specifically supports. If a country does not have any national plan or strategy developed yet, the NDA or FP should facilitate the process of elaborating one, focusing on low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

Task 2: Convene national stakeholders: The NDA or the FP should hold national consultations with relevant stakeholders, including other government ministries, local governments, CSOs, local communities, private sector and financial actors, about GCF activities. While these stakeholder consultations are not mandatory, the GCF encourages NDAs and FPs to convene consultations as an essential part of identifying national priorities regarding the Fund. It also offers best-practice guidance for stakeholder consultations. The GCF proposes setting up a national multi-stakeholder process as part of systematic country coordination. Such a process should be guided by the following criteria:

Which national plans and strategies are relevant to the GCF?

- ▶ National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) aim to identify the medium- and long-term adaptation needs of developing countries; they develop and implement the corresponding strategies, projects and programmes along with any need for financial assistance. Through its Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme (RPSP), the GCF financially supports the development of NAPs.
- ▶ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are developed by all Parties to the Paris Agreement to indicate their efforts to reduce

national greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. They summarise domestic plans and the financial support needed to implement them.

- ▶ Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LEDS) should lay out the necessary steps to full decarbonization for each sector and the required financial resources to implement them, in line with the Paris Agreement's long-term goal of keeping the global temperature rise below 1.5°C.
- ▶ Other relevant policies are green growth strategies, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) and National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).

Box 5: Relevant national plans and strategies for the GCF

- ▶ They should not be a one-off activity. Instead, multi-stakeholder consultation should be set up as a continuous process that allows for the following up on agreements, receiving continuous updates and having regular assessments of the progress achieved.
- ▶ They should be inclusive and engage all relevant actors. The GCF explicitly mentions that vulnerable groups, women and indigenous peoples should be included in the stakeholder consultations, as they are and will continue to be the groups most affected by climate change.
- ▶ They can be integrated into already existing mechanisms of coordination and multi-stakeholder engagement and can be linked to other relevant national consultation processes.
- ▶ For project and programme development, the Environmental and Social Policy also requires a process for stakeholder engagement and disclosure of information.

These guidelines encourage developing countries to establish a process for stakeholder engagement for both the elaboration of national strategic frameworks and the development and

monitoring of concrete projects funded by the GCF. Such a process could take place in meetings, workshops and other forums where different actors can potentially meet regularly. These processes can review progress against results frameworks, discuss best practices and challenges, identify opportunities for enhancing coherence and integrate lessons learned into relevant plans and priorities.

Task 3: Nomination letters for direct access: The NDA or the FP should support institutions and organisations seeking accreditation with the GCF, in particular those coming from the sub-national, national and regional level which can qualify as direct access (see Box 3), and therefore need a nomination letter from their respective NDA or FP.

Task 4: No-objection letters for projects and programmes: Each funding proposal submitted to the GCF needs a letter of no-objection from the NDA or the FP of the country or countries where it will be implemented. Without such a letter, the funding proposal will not be considered by the board for approval. Similarly, the NDA needs to issue a no-objection letter for any applications for financial support for project development under the Project Preparation Facility (PPF).



What is the direct access modality?

The direct access modality is designed to help developing countries exercise ownership of climate finance and better integrate it in their national climate action plans. The GCF board has taken several decisions to foster direct access, including the decision to prioritise national direct access entities for accreditation; hereby, granting countries funding support to seek accreditation, commissioning an analysis of measures to facilitate increasing the amount of direct access funding proposals in the GCF pipeline, and making secretariat support available to direct access entities. This supports happens through various means, including:

- ▶ The Project Preparation Facility targets direct access accredited entities in moving innovative project ideas from concept to formal submission.
- ▶ The Enhancing Direct Access pilot programme includes additional modalities to strengthen countries' decision-making authority over climate finance, and enhance multi-stakeholder engagement.
- ▶ The Simplified Approval Process (SAP) simplifies and streamlines the approval of certain small-scale projects, particularly from direct access entities, hence reducing the documentation needed to submit as part of funding proposals and streamlining the review and approval process.

The GCF has published a factsheet explaining how direct access works, which is available here.

<https://tinyurl.com/y5z6da8t>

Task 5: Approval of readiness support: The NDA or the FP can access or facilitate access to the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme for its country. This is a funding programme to enhance country ownership and access to the GCF by providing resources for strengthening the institutional capacities of NDAs or FPs as well as direct access entities to efficiently engage with the Fund.



How does the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme work?

As of April 2019, the GCF board has approved a total of 154 million USD under the Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme of which around 50 million USD have been disbursed. It offers support in five different areas (see Figure 7):

1. Establishing and institutional strengthening of NDAs or FPs;
2. Developing Strategic frameworks including the preparation of country programmes, the identification of strategic investment priorities and taking stock of existing strategies such as NDCs or NAPs;
3. Support for accreditation and to AEs, through for example an institutional gap assessment for direct access entities;
4. Development of programme and project proposals with a focus on activities for large proposals or country-level project scoping;
5. Information sharing, experience exchange and learning, including regional workshops with NDAs or FPs and other stakeholders.

In practice, the Readiness Programme can fund different types of activities:

- ▶ Training for NDA staff or the FP in project and programme development, international procurement, accounting, oversight, planning, monitoring and evaluation processes.
- ▶ Covering the costs for external short-term consultants hired to support the NDAs or the FPs in implementing their tasks.
- ▶ Technical assistance for developing strategic priorities for engagement with the GCF, programme and project oversight and stakeholder engagement as well as dialogue with implementing entities.
- ▶ Costs for inter-ministerial coordination processes and stakeholder meetings. These include costs for workshops, technical support and tra-

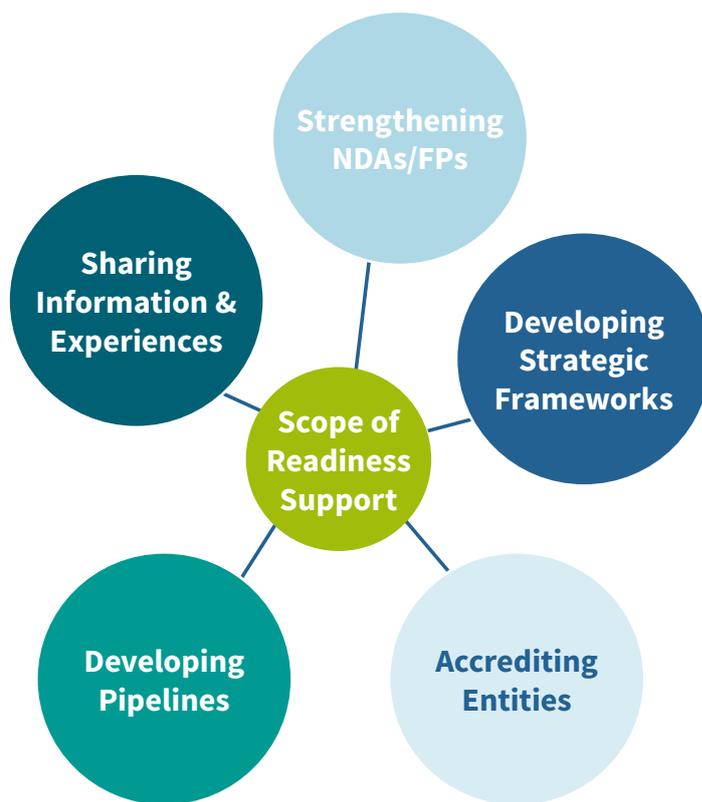


Figure 7: Scope of focus of the Readiness Programme

velling. There is an annual limit of a maximum of three inter-ministerial meetings and an annual cap of 100,000 USD for stakeholder meetings.

- ▶ Communication materials including printing, communication and information technology (IT) costs.

The GCF provides the following funding amounts under the Readiness Programme:

1. Up to 1 million USD per country per year may be provided under the programme (except for support to the elaboration of National Adaptation Plans. Of this amount, NDAs or FPs may request up to 300,000 USD per year to help establish or strengthen their roles and meet the fund's requirements. The rest of that amount can be distributed within the other areas of support, including on accreditation related activities and project or programme development.
2. An additional maximum of 3 million USD per country has been allocated under the programme for the formulation of NAPs and/or other adaptation planning processes by NDAs or FPs. Each country can access this support only once.

These resources may be provided in the form of grants or technical assistance. While all developing countries can access the programme, the GCF aims for a floor of 50 percent of the readiness support allocated to particularly vulnerable countries, including LDCs, SIDS and African States.

How to access the Readiness Programme?

Resources under the programme can be accessed through the submission of proposals over several years. This offers flexibility for developing countries to use the programme in a way that best fits their specific needs and priorities. As the coordinating actor, the NDA or the FP can either receive the readiness support itself or can designate Delivery Partners that will implement the readiness activities on their behalf.

The NDA or the FP have to submit a readiness proposal to the GCF Secretariat, along with a budget and a procurement plan. Delivery Partners can support the NDA or FP in filling out the proposal. The GCF Country Dialogue Specialist and Regional Advisor of the relevant country and region should also be copied on the submission request.

Once the proposed readiness activity has been approved, the GCF enters into an agreement with the NDA, FP or the selected delivery partner. After the agreement has come into effect, the beneficiary can implement the readiness activities and should report to the GCF Secretariat on an agreed schedule.



Delivery Partners may be multilateral organisations or other international, regional, national, sub-national, and public or private institutions selected by the NDA or FP to implement activities approved under the Readiness Programme.

They provide services such as the development of readiness request proposals, implementation and supervision of activities, fiduciary management, progress reporting, and project or programme completion and evaluation. Delivery Partners should meet the financial management capacities requirements of the GCF.

Source: GCF Readiness Programme Guidebook
<https://tinyurl.com/y34m272h>

Box 6: Delivery Partners of the GCF financed activities

Country Dialogue Specialists are GCF secretariat staff responsible for building the fund's relationships with developing countries, particularly through the country NDA, FP, national institutions, and other stakeholders. They coordinate awareness raising, support national implementing institutions in their capacity building and facilitate access to the Fund's resources, such as through the Readiness Programme.

Regional Advisors are located across the regions and support developing countries and AEs in developing robust work programmes for the GCF. They also coordinate the GCF Regional Structured Dialogues which are held across regions.

Learn more about in the GCF country profiles
<https://www.greenclimate.fund/countries4m272h>

Box 7: GCF Country Dialogue Specialists and Regional Advisors

What are current challenges for NDAs?

The challenges that NDAs face vary depending largely on the country, region or institution. However, there are a few that have appeared across different countries. Most of the NDAs lack the knowledge and the understanding of the GCF processes and modalities; most of them engage with the GCF for the first time after being nominated as NDAs. In addition, most NDAs that have been nominated by their countries do not necessarily have knowledge about climate change or climate finance related issues.

Many NDAs are Ministries of Finance that have limited experience and/or knowledge about climate change related matters, for instance, what a good adaptation project should look like. The NDA's role in some countries lays on individuals rather than on institutions, which creates very weak country ownership of the GCF process and limited stakeholder engagement.

Permanent changes within national institutions hosting the NDAs also affect their stability, as in most countries the personnel of the NDA or the person appointed as FP change when a new minister or director comes in. In addition, there are language barriers, which still limit their performance as most of the GCF information and

documentation is in English, including board meetings which are conducted in that language as well.

The lack of capacity of the NDAs to play their roles is mirrored into a weak multi-stakeholder approach in the NDA work and activities (e.g. absence of cross-ministerial collaboration, some NDAs want to control the entire process alone, etc.). There is no or only poor engagement of other relevant stakeholders in the NDA work and activities, hence limiting the active participation of key actors such as civil society and the private sector.

In sum, there is still a huge need to build the capacities of NDAs and FAPs in order to strengthen the roles they should be playing within the GCF structures which could happen e.g. through the GCF Readiness Programme.

Some ideas for CSO engagement:

- ▶ Establish a good and regular contact with your respective NDA or Focal Point (find out who they are in the GCF country profiles).
- ▶ Engage into dialogue with the NDA or FP to request your space to participate in any existing stakeholder processes at national level, for the identification of national priorities, development of a country programme which identifies strategic priorities for engagement with the Fund and lists project priorities and the NAPs.
- ▶ Lobby for a specific seat for civil society within the national mechanisms or structures handling GCF matters and resources, e.g. a task force, panel, group or steering committee.
- ▶ Make proposals to the NDA or FP on potential candidates for GCF accreditation under the direct access modality, and suggest ideas for funding proposals of concept notes.
- ▶ Monitor national implementation of GCF policies by the NDA and feed them back to the international CSO community.



SDG 13 CSO Platform in Ghana – Making civil society voices on the GCF heard

Under the GCF programme for readiness and preparatory support, NDAs or FPs play a key role in enabling the Fund to pursue a country driven approach to and promote and strengthen effective engagement of relevant institutions and stakeholders at the country level. In Ghana, the NDA has set up a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) as a multi-stakeholder decision-making mechanism providing advice on how to implement the NDA's work and enhance its mandate. In 2017, CSOs have successfully advocated for the NDA to grant observer rights to civil society in the TAC.

Civil society has been uniting in Ghana under the SDG 13 CSO Platform, which focuses on climate change related issues. Members gather at least once every three months and have discussions that embrace different views, coalitions, alliances, and partnerships in an open and dynamic space. The platform identified the TAC as the central institution to increase CSO engagement around the GCF in Ghana as it facilitates decisions around which funding proposals or concept notes should be submitted to the GCF on behalf of the country. Co-chaired by the ministries of finance and environment, the TAC includes representatives from other ministries (gender, land & natural resources, agriculture and local government), national commissions (development, energy, forestry) as well as the private sector and civil society. After a first analysis, the SDG 13 CSO Platform realised that parts of civil society felt their NDA-selected representative did not sufficiently represent civil society. Rather than exacerbating the historical divisions within civil society by demanding from the NDA to remove the current representative from the TAC, the platform decided to demand for an additional representation on the Committee, as it found out that a provision in the TAC Operational Manual allows it.

Members also exerted public pressure on the NDA, through publications, blogs and media involvement. In addition, a second approach was oriented towards dialogue and direct lobbying the NDA and TAC members who were invited to platform meetings during which interactions helped to avoid

confrontation. In September 2018, the NDA publicly acceded to the SDG 13 CSO Platform demands, announcing that henceforth all Ghanaian CSOs with GCF Observer Status shall be allowed to observe TAC meetings. The Committee even opened for the possibility of an additional civil society representative to be elected. This allows the over 100 member organisations to engage with the NDA activities and become a critical part in the decision-making processes around the GCF at the country level.

Lessons learnt:

1. Every national context is different and therefore civil society should take the time to analyse their local and national context, then select their advocacy and lobbying approaches accordingly.
2. Ensuring that CSO representatives within national GCF structures really come from civil society is crucial to make stakeholder engagement work. Otherwise, it can create mistrust and limit CSO engagement with the NDA.

Recommendations:

1. Seek to understand what unites civil society and why the government should accede to CSO demands. Once you find it out, focus your advocacy and demands on those strengths.
2. Advocacy needs to build trust with the NDA and other GCF stakeholders to succeed in a sustainable way. While confrontational advocacy can be necessary under some circumstances, aim for a division of roles within civil society and combine public pressure with internal lobbying to increase your impact.



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AE AND EE – THE GCF IMPLEMENTING STRUCTURES

What is an Accredited Entity?

The GCF does not directly implement projects or programmes itself, but channels its funding through Accredited Entities. These are private or public, non-governmental, sub-national, national, regional or international organisations that meet the GCF standards and are granted accreditation by its board to be eligible to receive GCF funding for approved proposals. This means that only AEs can apply for funding from the GCF. In its efforts to have a wide variety of implementing actors that can cover the different aspects of its mandate and objectives, the GCF distinguishes two types of AEs:

- ▶ Direct access entities private or public sub-national, national or regional institutions and organisations nominated by their NDAs or FPs that can directly access GCF funding;
- ▶ International access entities: public, private or non-governmental institutions and organisations such as United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, private financial institutions and development cooperation agencies which can access GCF funding.

Regional direct access and international access entities can implement projects and programmes in one or more developing countries with GCF funding. In contrast, national direct access entities can only propose projects for and implement in their respective countries. A significant number of international access AEs are active in the different world regions where they collaborate with NDAs or FPS and national governments.

What are Executing Entities?

Executing Entities are institutions or organisations, including some from civil society that implement GCF projects or programmes under the oversight of AEs. They do not need to be accredited by the GCF, but instead are chosen by and cooperate directly with the AEs in charge of the respective funding proposals. The GCF requires AEs to conduct a due diligence screening of EEs and to

establish the necessary processes so they can ensure that EEs also adhere to the Fund's standards.

What are the tasks of AEs?

AEs are the central organisations managing and facilitating the project or programme implementation in one or several countries within a specific region. This includes ensuring the accountability and compliance with the GCF's safeguards by the project or programme activities. For projects or programmes implemented by EEs or other national partners, the AE oversees the implementation and management of the project or programme. AEs are also in charge of managing all project-related financing, which in addition to GCF funding can include co-financing and leveraged additional capital from both public and private sector actors, such as government entities or commercial banks. AEs can either use the funding provided by the GCF for direct project implementation or as financial intermediaries pass on funding via a range of financial instruments (grants, concessional loans, equity and guarantees, for use by other organisations

How does the GCF classify the different types of AEs?

Beyond the access modality, the GCF also distinguishes AEs based on a number of other criteria that entities need to comply with to become accredited. These classifications are defined in the GCF's fit-for-purpose accreditation approach. This intends to match types of activities funded by the GCF with the capacities the organisation need to have to follow the GCF rules and requirements.



More information:

The GCF currently has 88 AEs:

38 national direct access,
13 regional direct access,
37 international access

See their full list on **GCF Website**

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/how-we-work/tools/entity-directory>

Classification according to project or programme size

AEs are classified based on the size of projects or programmes they can apply for and the volume of funding they can manage, ranging from micro (up to 10 million USD) to large (more than 250 million USD). The volume refers to the overall budget, including both GCF funding and co-financing. However, AEs can request an upgrade of their accreditation category, and if they can show that they meet the requirements of the higher project or programme size.

Classification according to fiduciary standards

The fiduciary standards that AEs need to comply with depend on the role they are playing in handling GCF funding. This implies that:

- ▶ All AEs must comply with the basic fiduciary standards on key administrative and financial capacity, transparency and accountability.
- ▶ Most entities are also eligible to receive GCF funding for project and programme implementation. In this case, the GCF assesses the project management capacities of the organisation or institution seeking accreditation.
- ▶ If an AE intends to act as a financial intermediary, the Fund makes an assessment of whether

the applicant has the capacity to exercise the necessary oversight of the entities that will access the funding it gives out and if they can hold them accountable according to the defined fiduciary standards.

Classification according to the level of environmental and social risks

AEs also are classified based on the level of environmental and social risks that can be associated with the funding proposals they submit to the board. In practice, this means that an AE that can implement micro projects with low risk and only apply for grants does not have to fulfill the same standards as an AE handling large projects with high risk and mobilizing private capital. Funding proposals also use the same risk-categorisation (see Table 1).

In its definition, the GCF makes a distinction between the different types of financial transactions. For projects and programmes that AEs implement themselves or together with EEs, the risks are classified in category A to C. For AEs acting as financial intermediaries, i.e. bypassing on grants, loans or blending GCF funding with other capital such as from the private sector, the risks are defined as Intermediation-1 (I-1) (high risk) to Intermediation-3 (I-3) (minimal to no risk).

Type of risk	Definition
A/I-1 (high)	Activities with potential significant negative (adverse) environmental and/or social risks and/or impacts that are diverse, irreversible, or unprecedented.
B/I-2 (medium)	Activities with potential limited adverse environmental and/or social risks and/or impacts that are few in number, generally site-specific, largely reversible, and readily addressed through mitigation measures.
C/I-3 (low)	Activities with minimal or no adverse environmental and/or social risks and/or impacts

Table 1: Classification of GCF accreditation according to the level of risks (GCF's Fit-for-purpose Accreditation Approach)

What are the key policies of the GCF AEs need to comply with?

Entities that want to become Accredited Entities have to show their ability to comply with them, ensure that they are reflected in the funding proposals they elaborate and want to implement with GCF funding, and then ensure that they are complied with in the implementation of those projects and programmes.

► **Environmental and Social Policy:** The policy articulates how the GCF integrates environmental and social considerations into its decision-making and operations to effectively avoid, mitigate, or manage potential risks and impacts and improve outcomes of its funded projects and programmes while carrying out its mandate relying on a set of Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS). Currently the GCF uses the IFC's performance standard as interim safeguards. The GCF is in the process of developing its own ESS, including through consultations with CSOs and other stakeholders. They will accompany the ESP and form a critical part of the GCF's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS).

► **Gender Equality Policy:** One goal of the GCF is to ensure that GCF resources contribute to gender equality as well as the empowerment of women and youth. In its interim gender policy from 2015, the GCF has committed to ensuring that all GCF investments contribute to gender equality as well as women empowerment by mandating a separate gender and social impact analysis for every project, ideally accompanied by a project-specific gender action plan. A further upgrade to the policy to focus even stronger on non-binary gender approaches and the intersectionality of gender equality and other aspects of social inclusion to achieve more equitable and sustainable climate action results is discussed.

► **Indigenous Peoples Policy:** In early 2018, the GCF approved a policy to ensure the rights of and engage indigenous peoples and communi-

ties in the design, development and implementation of its financed strategies and activities. By applying international best practice standards and principles, including most prominently the concept of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), the policy aims to empower indigenous peoples and communities, who would be affected by GCF projects and activities, to be active agents in order to examine, control, eliminate and reduce potential negative impacts of the fund's activities on them. This would be achieved in a consistent way, while also improving outcomes for these actors, and promoting their access to the benefits of the projects and programmes. The GCF is additionally working on developing guidance related to implementing the policy and on establishing an Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group.



ACCREDITATION PROCESS:

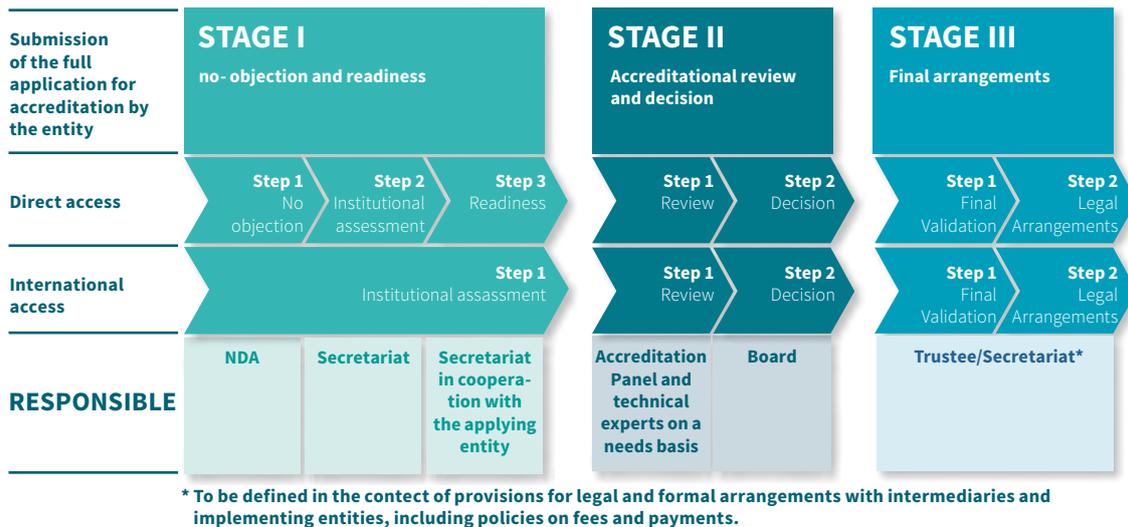


Figure 8: Different stages for GCF accreditation

How does the accreditation of entities work?

For the accreditation process, the GCF works with an Online Accreditation System (OAS) where the application of the organisations or institutions interested in becoming an AE is managed. Before starting the official process, an organisation or institution can start by filling in the online self-assessment tool to see if it meets the minimum requirements of the GCF (see Box 6). The accreditation process to become an AE is made up of different stages (see Figure 7).

Submission and review of accreditation proposals

Following the self-assessment, the accreditation proposal has to be submitted on the GCF website through the online accreditation system. In this stage, national or regional organisations and institutions applying as direct access entities need to present a nomination letter from their NDA or FP. Regional applicants can decide, without any guidance, which NDA or FP to approach within the countries they want to operate in to obtain a nomination letter. International entities do not need such a letter. To obtain a nomination letter, the applicant needs to present the NDA or FP with proof of legal registration, and evidence of its basic fiduciary procedures, environmental and social safeguards, and gender policy. A concept note on the type of funding proposals that would be submitted to the GCF on behalf of the country is required as well. Once the application is submitted, the two stages of the review process can begin:

Review by the GCF secretariat: In this first stage, the GCF secretariat screens the accreditation proposal and checks if the mandate of the applicant is in line with the GCF's and its objectives. It also conducts a check on whether the application contains enough information on the organisation or institution's systems, policies, procedures and guidelines to safeguard projects against financial, environmental, social and gender risks. In its review, the GCF secretariat may prioritise certain types of applications, for example from national or private sector institutions from developing countries, and review them more quickly than other applications received, such as from multilateral institutions.

Review by the Accreditation Panel and decision by the GCF Board: If the application is complete and has passed the initial review by the Secretariat, the Accreditation Panel reviews it. The panel and the secretariat then make a recommendation to the board for consideration. The board takes its decision during a formal meeting that representatives from the applying institution or organisation may attend in order to answer questions or address critical concerns raised by board members or Active Observers from civil society or the private sector.



Online self-assessment tool:

The GCF offers a self-assessment tool for organisations or institutions interested in starting the accreditation process. This is an anonymous online questionnaire that gives an impression of what accreditation entails and if they meet the minimum requirements. Access the tool on GCF Website: <https://tinyurl.com/y2z9pfvl>

Stage 1
Stage 2

Entering a legal agreement with the GCF

Once a new AE has been approved, the GCF enters into a legal agreement with the entity as a precondition to actually start developing and submitting funding proposals. This agreement is called an Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA). It is mandatory to sign this agreement before the entity can start receiving GCF funding. Once an organisation has become an AE, it remains accredited for five years before having to apply for re-accreditation. It is during that time that an entity can apply for an upgrade in its accreditation classification. During their application for reaccreditation, the AEs need to show how their overall portfolio is aligned with climate goals, to prove that they have shifted their investment portfolio and not just limited their climate-related activities to the GCF funded projects.

Fast-track accreditation for AEs

The GCF offers a fast track accreditation for organisations or institutions that were accredited by:

- ▶ The Global Environment Facility (GEF),
- ▶ The Adaptation Fund (AF), or
- ▶ The Directorate-General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid of the European Commission (DG DEVCO).

These entities only need to fill out an application form addressing specific GCF requirements that have not been assessed under the other funds above.

What kind of support does the GCF offer for obtaining accreditation?

Under its Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, the GCF offers support to sub-national, national and regional organisations applying to become direct access entities. The Programme includes resources and capacity for activities such as:

- ▶ Information exchange between institutions interested in accreditation and/or learning from each other's experiences undergoing the process;

- ▶ Conducting an institutional gap analysis of applicants against the fiduciary standards and ESMS and GCF's gender policy or developing a personalised readiness and preparatory support plan;
- ▶ Building up the institutional capacities of AEs to better comply with GCF standards; and
- ▶ Developing project and programme proposals according to GCF standards and regulations.

What are current challenges in the accreditation process?

The GCF's accreditation process has had two main challenges of a very different nature. However, both are closely linked to the question of how well the GCF can live up to its promise to be a transformational fund that does not continue with a "business-as-usual" approach.

Complicated accreditation framework is a challenge for smaller actors

Since the GCF has started granting accreditation to organisations or institutions, one challenge has been a very time and resource consuming application procedure. The estimated timeline for the two-stage review is up to three months for fast-track applications and up to six months for other applicants. Experience has shown that it takes even longer – up to two years in some cases – despite the availability of readiness support. Another aspect of this challenge is that the complicated accreditation procedure and its rigorous standards require a very high level of understanding of the fund's policies and regulations. It may mean that organisations or institutions need to develop or put in place additional policies, and for some, it may even mean that they need to make significant changes in their bylaws and/or institutional setups to comply with the GCF requirements.

With such complex standards and required resources, successfully completing the accreditation process has been easier for large institutions like multilateral development banks, international organisations, United Nations (UN) agencies,





or development cooperation agencies as compared to smaller institutions and organisations from developing countries. To counter this, the fit-for-purpose approach, the fast-track accreditation process, or the temporary prioritization in the review of certain types of applications has facilitated the accreditation of national and regional direct access entities, especially those that are already accredited under other climate funds. Yet, providing assistance to these AEs remains an important priority to realise the principle of direct access to GCF resources and thus strengthening the fund's country ownership as well as national capacities.

Nevertheless, accreditation can also support capacity building of national and regional AEs. Having successfully gone through the accreditation process means that the institutional and policy frameworks of newly accredited DAEs are significantly strengthened and assessed against an internationally recognised standard. This is an important step to allow for the shift away from international access (dominant for most climate finance providers) and overreliance on international agencies to empowered national institutions and frameworks.

Accreditation strategy and controversial accreditation decisions

The GCF has been working on an accreditation strategy that the board discussed in September 2018. This includes whether the fund should explicitly exclude certain types of institutions from accreditation. Among the particularly critical issues is whether the GCF should accredit export credit agencies or if they should aim for a different type of cooperation with them. In addition, the fund has made some controversial decisions on accreditation under its international access mo-

dality, with some controversial banks like Deutsche Bank, Crédit Agricole or Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ becoming AEs even though they have a record of investing in fossil fuels, other questionable investments, or tax evasions. CSOs active in the GCF have criticised such decisions for sending the wrong signal and contradicting the GCF's ambitious goals and investment criteria. Under the GCF's Monitoring and Accountability Framework, AEs as part of their re-accreditation efforts after 5 years, are supposed to be held accountable for the progress they have made in shifting their entire portfolio, not just selected projects undertaken with the GCF, away from the use of fossil fuels and toward climate resiliency. With re-accreditation efforts to start for the first GCF AEs in 2020, the fund is working to operationalise this accountability provision in a timely fashion.

Some ideas for CSO engagement:

- ▶ Get in touch with national, regional and international AEs active in your country and find out if they are already planning, developing or implementing GCF projects or other financed activities.
- ▶ If your country does not have a direct access AE, look for potential candidate institutions that you can support in the accreditation process and link them up with the NDA or FP.
- ▶ If you have a specific GCF-related expertise, propose your services to AEs or under the Readiness Programme as a delivery partner.
- ▶ Act as a facilitator between AEs/EEs and local communities and other stakeholders to support their engagement in GCF projects and other activities in the respective country or region.



Civil society accompanying the Adaptation Fund project in Senegal

Senegal is the first country to receive the Adaptation Fund (AF) resources for the project “Adaptation to coastal erosion in vulnerable areas in Senegal” back in 2010. ENDA Energie, a Senegalese CSO, has accompanied the project from early implementation until its completion, and has continued engaging with the various implementing actors in different ways.

The Centre de Suivi Écologique (CSE), the National Implementing Entity (NIE), realised the project with the Ministry of Environment’s Department of Environment and Classified Institutions (DEEC), Green Senegal and Dynamique Femmes, respectively a CSO and a community-based organisation (CBO), as the executing entities. The activity aimed to help vulnerable communities in the localities of Joal, Saly and Rufisque to become better resilient to coastal erosion by fighting against soil salinity with anti-salt dikes, building coastal protection facilities, adopting legislative and institutional measures and strengthening the adaptive capacity of coastal communities. From the beginning ENDA identified the need to create enabling environments for the local people to be fully involved in the planned activities and to have specific roles as important stakeholders in this process.

The organisation, which had previous advocacy experience to demand that civil society is integrated in the coordination of environmental activities, soon established good relationships with the CSE and other major national stakeholders engaged in executing the project. This contributed to a close collaboration between them, hence placing ENDA in a position of facilitator of dialogue between implementing actors and beneficiary communities. ENDA was also keen to monitor the project and to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors in the area of participatory monitoring and evaluation, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are established to guarantee the involvement of the locals and that the funding resources contribute to the objectives for which they were allocated by the AF.

While regular interactions and communications were maintained with the CSE and DEEC at the national level, ENDA particularly worked with Green Senegal and Dynamique Femmes in conducting stakeholder workshops to increase CSO aware-

ness and involvement on the project. The CSO also assembled demands and expectations from the populations in the project sites, especially in Joal and Rufisque, and brought them to the attention of the NIE and executing actors. In its monitoring role, ENDA frequently shared updates on progress around the project’s implementation during community consultations and by using other means such as blogs or shadow reports. It advocated for a transparent and inclusive process and had the possibility to provide advice and technical support to the CSE and Dynamique Femmes, which participated to strengthen its engagement with these institutions and played a key part in the AF project outcomes. On several occasions, ENDA has been invited to share its experience with others either during AF board meetings or at other international conferences focusing on adaptation to climate change.

Lessons learnt:

1. The gathered experience showed that a decentralised approach to adaptation works well and especially when civil society and beneficiary communities are part of the implementation.
2. The diversity of the key players ensures credibility through the management control and transparency in such a participatory approach. However, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of local communities and improve communication.

Recommendations:

1. Enhance your knowledge and expertise in the topics you work on, especially when interacting with the national actors implementing the project you monitor. This would enable your organisation to be considered as an asset by these actors, which may then maintain a permanent collaboration with you.
2. Create a mechanism that facilitate feedback between the local people and beneficiaries and the implementing entities. This would make it easy for you to identify and voice their concerns, demands and expectations, while also facilitating their support to your activities.



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THE GCF PROJECT PIPELINE – DEVELOPING FUNDING PROPOSALS AND CONCEPT NOTES

What are key features of the GCF project and programme portfolio?

In providing financial and capacity support to developing countries, especially to those that are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, the GCF has defined the rules and criteria to guide its project and programme portfolio in order to operationalise its overall objective. The GCF has identified eight impact areas through which the Fund aims to deliver major mitigation and adaptation benefits.

For mitigation, the shift to low-emission sustainable development pathways shall be achieved through:

- (1) Low-emission energy access and power generation,
- (2) Low-emission transport,
- (3) Energy efficient buildings, cities and industries, and
- (4) Sustainable land use and forest management.



For adaptation, the GCF aims to achieve increased climate-resilient sustainable development through:

- (1) Enhanced livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, communities, and regions,
- (2) Increased health and well-being, and food and water security,
- (3) Resilient infrastructure and built environment to climate change threats, and
- (4) Resilient ecosystems.

To translate these strategic impact areas into projects and programmes, the GCF works with a **Results Management Framework (RMF)** that is based on a results chain. This illustrates how a specific project or programme fits into the overall GCF model. Combined with the **Performance Measurement Framework (PMF)**, it represents the basis for each GCF project or programme. The PMF sets out the corresponding indicators against which the funding proposal's progress can be monitored during its implementation. How such a results chain can be translated into an adaptation project or programme log frame is illustrated in Table 3 below.





Results Chain Level	Initial Logic Model for Adaptation
Paradigm shift objective	Increased climate-resilient sustainable development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased resilience and enhanced livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, communities, and regions ▶ Increased resilience of health and well-being, food and water security ▶ Increased resilience of infrastructure ▶ Improved resilience of ecosystems
Programme/ project outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Government institutional and regulatory systems for climate-responsive development planning ▶ Generation and use of climate information in decision-making ▶ Adaptive capacity and reduced exposure to climate risks ▶ Awareness of climate threats and risk-reduction processes
Programme/ project outputs (Examples)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Knowledge of climate threats and coping mechanisms ▶ Knowledge and awareness of climate-resilient options and technologies ▶ Sector planning and coordination and information-sharing ▶ Water and soil management ▶ Climate-proofing of infrastructure
Activities (Examples)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Train, share experiences, revise/develop policy/standards ▶ Identify and promote flagship themes ▶ Transfer experience and technologies, with emphasis on “green” solutions ▶ Identify and scale-up effective community-based adaptation ▶ Establish knowledge hubs
Input	Grants, concessional loans

Table 2: Results chain as illustrated from a GCF Project Toolkit by Acclimatise/IIED/ICCAAD (Acclimatise, 2017)

The GCF investment criteria

The GCF has six investment criteria with which all projects and programmes need to comply:

1. Impact potential: This defines the potential of a project or programme to achieve the Fund's objectives and results areas. It is translated into two core indicators: for mitigation it is the total tons of avoided or reduced carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂ eq.) per year; and for adaptation it is the total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries and their share of the total population, as it describes how many people will be protected against the negative consequences of climate change.

2. Paradigm shift potential: This describes the potential to catalyse impact beyond a one-off project or programme investment. The GCF is looking for the following types of projects and programmes: (1) Proposals that have the potential for being scaled up and replicated in other places and by other actors; (2) proposals that can promote innovative solutions as well as learning and knowledge creation; (3) proposals that can contribute to creating an enabling environment; and, (4) proposals that can contribute to establishing an appropriate regulatory framework and policies at the local, regional or national level.

3. Sustainable development potential: In order to show the potential to provide wider benefits, a project or programme needs to demonstrate that it has expected environmental, social, health and economic co-benefits as well as gender impacts. These co-benefits may include job creation (economic), access to education (social), improved soil quality or biodiversity (environmental) or the empowerment of women and contribution to gender equality. The project should also highlight how it contributes to the achievement of one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. Needs of the recipient: There are several dimensions to this criterion. For adaptation proposals, it describes the scale and intensity of the vulnerability of the country and the project be-

neficiaries to climate change impacts. Another aspect is the economic and social development level of the country and beneficiaries, including particularly vulnerable population groups or communities, as well as the need to strengthen institutions and implementation capacity in the respective country. Finally, the existence of alternative sources of financing for the project or programme is an important factor.

5. Country ownership: A GCF funded project or programme needs to prove its country ownership and capacity to implement the activities mainly by detailing how it is aligned with strategic national objectives and priorities defined in national plans such as climate change policies and plans, NAPs or NDCs. This can include having the project listed as a potential activity or having project intervention opportunities contained in the plans.

6. Efficiency and effectiveness: Through an economic and financial analysis, a project or programme needs to show that it has a financially viable model and is cost-effective and efficient. It needs to establish a financial structure that corresponds to objectives and planned activities. It should also demonstrate how best practice or technologies are implemented in the funding proposal.



What different types of project and programme categories exist?

The GCF clusters its project and programme portfolio along three specific criteria:

1. The access modality: This first distinction is about whether the funding proposal is submitted through a direct or an international access modality;

2. The budget size: There are four budget sizes ranging from micro (up to 10 million USD) to large (more than 250 million USD) (see Figure 8);

- ▶ Micro (XS): up to 10 million USD
- ▶ Small (S): between 10 and 50 million USD
- ▶ Medium (M): between 50 and 250 million USD, and
- ▶ Large (L): more than 250 million USD

3. The risk category: In addition, projects and programmes are also differentiated according to their risk category, which captures their potential environmental and social risks or impact (see Table 2).

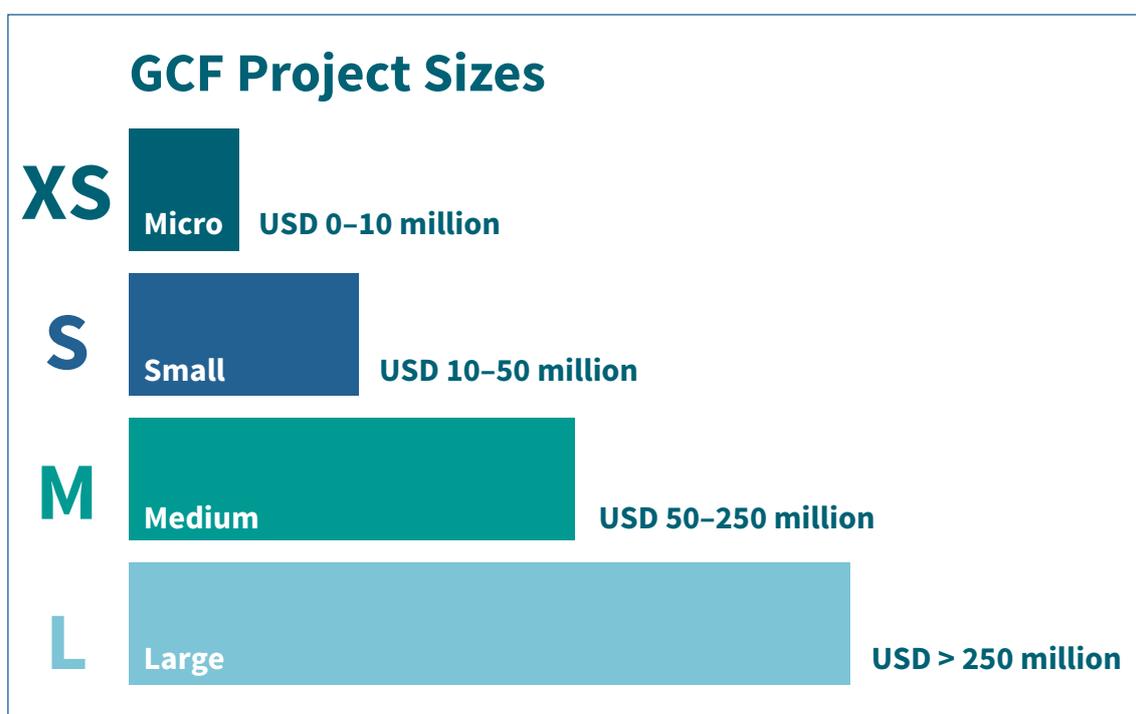


Figure 9: GCF project/programme sizes and categories (GCF website)

What are the financing instruments under the GCF?

The GCF has different options for financial instruments that can be utilised by AEs. Apart from grants which do not have to be repaid, they can also include concessional loans, i.e. loans with better conditions than normal market-loans, which are the core of the work of development banks. In addition, the GCF can also fund results-based payments where payments are made based on the emissions reductions achieved

under the project, as is already practiced in REDD+ projects. Within the range of instruments and modalities potentially funded by the GCF are also public-private partnerships, blending of public and private capital or advance market commitments. The different instruments are not mutually exclusive, as many projects or programmes involve a mix of different financial instruments utilised (such as grant elements in addition to loans). The most commonly used are the following:

Grants	Grants are resources generally channelled to fund investments without the expectation that the money be repaid. Often, they are used to complement other instruments, such as concessional loans, to maximise the impact of investments.
Concessional lending	This option applies when financing at market terms is not available or would make the investment unviable. Concessional lenders generally consider the existing debt levels and capacity to repay the loan recipient before extending financing to them.
Guarantees	These instruments are commitments in which a guarantor undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a borrower to a lender in the event of non-performance or default of its obligations by the borrower, in exchange for a fee. Guarantees can cover the entire investment or just a portion of it. They are risk mitigation instruments.
Equity investments	Equity is an investment into a project or asset to leverage debt and achieve better returns. Equity is used when the probability of failure of the investment is high, but there is a probability of success and, therefore, of return to the equity holder.

Table 3: Some of the most used financing instruments under the GCF

Which opportunities are there for submitting funding proposals to the GCF?

The GCF accepts funding proposals on a rolling basis. In addition, it regularly issues requests for proposals to cover specific gaps within its project and programme portfolio. There are a number of specific windows established under the Fund through which requests for proposals are published:

1. The Private Sector Facility (PSF) was established by the GCF as a tool to enhance the engagement of the private sector in its activities and processes, and leverage additional funding for climate related projects and programmes. The Micro- Small-, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME) Pilot Programme is part of the PSF and targets Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) by using public finance to fund local private sector actors. For this programme, the GCF sends out a request for proposals.
2. The Enhancing Direct Access Programme has been designed to provide direct access accredited entities with opportunities to move beyond the financing of individual projects towards a

more comprehensive and stakeholder-driven programmatic approach. Through the programme, an allocation of 200 million USD has been made available for 10 pilot funding proposals.

3. The Mobilizing Funding at Scale Pilot Programme aims to catalyse private climate capital, unlock private sector finance in developing countries, and mobilise investment. 500 million USD is allocated under this window to identify innovative, high-impact projects and programmes that contribute to capital investment in low-emission and climate-resilient development.

4. The Simplified Approval Process Pilot Scheme was recently launched by the GCF to enhance direct access by supporting smaller-scale projects or programmes particularly from AEs, NDAs, or FPs and their partners from the most vulnerable countries that have limited capacities and resources to elaborate bigger funding proposals. The SAP encourages direct access entities to submit concept notes via the online submission system (OSS) or via their respective NDA or FP.

How to develop a GCF project or programme proposal?

For the development of a project/programme proposal seeking funding from the GCF, there are two options. The first being a one-step process where an applicant directly develops a full funding proposal and submits it to the GCF for consideration. The second option is a two-step process, where a concept note is developed and submitted for feedback before a full funding proposal drawing on the feedback received from the GCF secretariat is elaborated by the AE. While a concept note is voluntary, most AEs follow the two-step process as it is generally recommended and the feedback received helps improve the full proposal to better align with GCF criteria, which increases its chances of being approved.

Developing a and submitting a concept note

AEs, potentially together with EEs, can develop a project or programme idea and voluntarily submit a concept note to the GCF secretariat. The NDA or FP should be consulted at this stage for its

endorsement and approval of the concept. NDAs or FPs can also submit their own concept notes without the involvement of an AE. Following the submission, the GCF Secretariat conducts a first review and can either endorse the concept note, send it back with feedback and the possibility of resubmitting a revised version, or reject it.

Developing and submitting a full funding proposal

If the concept note is endorsed, the project or programme idea can be developed into a full and detailed funding proposal. Then this proposal is submitted to the GCF Secretariat along with a no-objection letter from the respective NDA or FP. Apart from a detailed description of the project, the proposal contains a number of additional documents as annexes. For projects or programmes applying under the SAP, the requirements for these additional documents are reduced.

At this stage of the process, the AE has to conduct the safeguards:

- An **ESS screening**, which aims to evaluate the risks associated with the project to ensure that the activities avoid negative environmental and social impacts, while at the same time, enabling equitable access to expected benefits, in particular to vulnerable groups including women, children, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups. The risk categorization also determines the environmental and social documentation that needs to be provided as part of the funding proposal. For instance, the screening checks whether the project or programme includes large infrastructure, is located in biodiversity conservation areas, or is likely to lead to resettlement of people or to negative impacts on the water or air quality. If negative consequences cannot be avoided, plans to reduce and manage them need to be in place.



Figure 10: Overview of funding proposals pipeline and different actors involved (GCF website)

- ▶ A **Gender Assessment and Action Plan** which includes a review of gender integration and transformation in proposed project interventions, such as equity and equality concerns between men and women that might arise during and after the project or programme's implementation. This should be translated into a gender action plan that describes gender-related activities and includes gender disaggregated targets, indicators and a budget.
- ▶ An **Indigenous Peoples Policy**, where AEs should obtain the consent of potentially affected people, in particular indigenous peoples as obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent is a GCF requirement, prior to any activity taking place. AEs should also establish a grievance mechanism to receive and address complaints from people negatively impacted or potentially impacted by the GCF-financed project or programme.

AEs are also required to develop stakeholder engagement plans to submit with the funding proposal. These plans should be aligned with GCF requirements for stakeholder participation during project or programme development, including stakeholder consultations that should happen during development of the funding proposal and the ESS screening. Furthermore, information on

the proposal should be published in a way that is accessible for all the different stakeholders, i.e. in a language and format that can be understood by potentially affected people.

Review and decision on funding proposals

Once the funding proposal is completed and accepted in the first review stage, the Secretariat and the independent Technical Advisory Panel (iTAP) review the proposal. This includes a due diligence analysis as well as a review of whether the funding proposal's compliance with the ESP and ESSs, gender policy, and financial policy, as well as other relevant GCF policies. A review of how well the funding proposal meets the investment criteria is also conducted. Following these reviews, the iTAP and the Secretariat make a recommendation to the GCF board about whether or not to approve the proposal for funding.

The board makes its decision during a formal meeting, during which representatives from the AE attends in order to answer questions or address critical concerns that board members and Active Observers from civil society or the private sector may raise. At this stage, the board can also recommend funding the proposal with conditions that should be met prior to disbursement of the funds and these conditions can address concerns raised by board members or Active Observers.





How does the GCF support the development of funding proposals?

The GCF offers two types of support for the development of funding proposals, which is both time and resource consuming. Through its Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, the Fund provides capacity and financial assistance for the development of concept notes and full funding proposals to national and regional direct access AEs, which can request this support via their respective NDA or FP. It is important to note that international AEs cannot benefit readiness support from the GCF.

In addition, the GCF has established a Project Preparation Facility (PPF), which is designed specifically for project and programme development. Support from the PPF can be requested after the concept note has been approved by the GCF Secretariat. This support is open to all AEs, but direct access entities applying for a funding proposal below 10 million USD in the micro or small size category are given a preference. The PPF can additionally

support feasibility or pre-feasibility, environmental, social and gender studies, risk assessments and indicator development. This is provided in the form of a grant with a maximum of 1.5 million USD per project or programme. AEs apply for PPF support in consultation with the NDA or FP and with support from the GCF Secretariat. They can submit their application together with a no-objection letter from their respective NDA or FP.

What are current challenges in the GCF project pipeline?

In practice, most international AEs take the decisions on their priority countries for GCF engagement in their central offices and only rarely in the developing country itself. This includes the decision if they want to apply for GCF funding and if yes, what thematic priorities they have. This limits the possibilities for CSOs to engage with international AEs and actively propose ideas for GCF funded projects. Very often regional or national AEs are more open to suggestions from CSOs.



There is a need for more transparency of the GCF pipeline of projects and programmes, as can be seen in comparison with the Adaptation Fund (see Table 4). The GCF does not offer the disclosure of all documents related to funding proposals from the pipeline to facilitate independent access and assessment of their quality during the project preparation phase. The process of submitting and reviewing concept notes is not transparent nor are concept notes discussed at GCF board meetings. In fact, the process happens solely as an interaction between the AE (or NDA or FP) and the Fund's Secretariat. The concept notes are made public on the GCF website and can be accessed on the country pages, but without specific notifications on the submission of new ones. The practice of publishing the documents relating to safeguards varies. The environmental and social assessments should be publicly disclosed, including on the GCF website. The gender assessments and action plans of approved projects and programmes are provided in the GCF library. In contrast stakeholder engagement plans are not

always made public on the GCF website within the project portfolio. They can be provided by the AEs when requested, but this is dependent on the AEs willingness. Finally, there is no formal mechanism that allows public constructive and critical comments and feedback on funding proposals by relevant stakeholders, including civil society, before their submission to the GCF secretariat.

Some ideas for CSO engagement:

- ▶ Support the AEs in conducting stakeholder consultations during the development of a project proposal.
- ▶ Critically assess and comment project concept notes and proposals in your country and share these comments with the international CSO community and the NDA.
- ▶ Publicly support proposals from Direct Access Entities when they are up for approval by the GCF board.
- ▶ Cooperate with an AE to develop a project idea and/or cooperate with them as an Executing Entity in an existing project.

	Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Adaptation Fund (AF)
Publication of all funding proposals related documents	GCF publishes concept notes and funding proposals without annexes on its website. Some concept notes that are marked confidential are not published.	AF publishes full funding proposals including the environmental and social screening
Transparency of progress in the funding proposals pipeline	No systematic approach to reporting on the progress of funding proposals in the pipeline by the GCF secretariat	Each funding proposal is allocated a number on which the AF secretariat reports on progress in the approval process during Board meetings
Public commenting of funding proposals	No formal public commenting option (however, civil society and private sector observers organize themselves informally to submit comments)	Both concepts and full funding proposals are posted online for public review and comment before the AF Secretariat has completed the screening and technical review process
Observer interventions during Board meetings on funding proposals	There is an opportunity for Active Observers from civil society and the private sector organizations to make critical and constructive interventions on funding proposals during Board meetings, but only when the Board allows them to do so	While they cannot intervene on each funding proposal, CSO observers can make general statements during Board meetings on funding proposals during a CSO Dialogue organized with the Board at its meetings
Funding proposals approval	The GCF board approves funding proposals individually based on the iTAP recommendations, but there has been cases of proposals being approved as one package	Funding proposals are approved individually by the AF board, based on the recommendations from the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC)

Table 4: Comparison of transparency in the projects pipeline of the GCF and AF

Community consultations as a tool to engage locally in climate finance projects

Consulting local stakeholders is an approach that enables the participation of community and helps involve the local population in certain projects and processes. Community consultations provide the opportunity to listen to the opinions and needs of the local stakeholders affected by or interested in such projects and processes, and should ideally lead to them voicing their concerns, ideas, and recommendations towards the implementing and executing entity, with the aim of incorporating their suggestions.

There are different methods of community consultation. Some methods include a broader group of participants while leaving the consultation on a rather superficial level. Other methods can only involve smaller numbers of participants but offer the advantage of in-depth discussion of particular issues, such as personal benefits or losses through the project. What all of these types of consultation have in common is that they should always be conducted in the language of the people living in the community. While this requires more efforts in terms of translating documents, it ensures the participation of all groups of the community. Below are four approaches:

Surveys and Poll can help finding answers to simple questions when a larger group of participants is needed. Peoples' opinions will be gathered through clear questions by post, mail, telephone or face-to-face gatherings.

Advantage: The random selection of this method can provide a representative picture of the community members' opinions. The method is known by most people, one can reach many participants and can be aimed at a certain group.

Challenge: It can be more resource intensive, inflexible in terms of answer possibilities. The sample could be too small or biased and no discussion of other issues might be possible.

Deliberative Opinion Poll involves a representative sample of the population which is selected, contacted and informed, then afterwards invited to a discussion or meeting. Here the selected individuals participate based on their initial knowledge and are later being asked to take part in a poll.

Advantage: Many participants can be reached, they can consider the information given to them

in advance and there is room for discussion.

Challenge: The method is rather unknown, it doesn't give space for participants' own ideas and suggestions, the information given is limited and the participation might be limited for instance due to a lack of time.

Community Gatherings are a good method for hearing different points of views from locals, enabling discussions and solution finding. They are held as a discussion among locals and other individuals, with the possibility of having an expert presentation. Led by an interviewer, a group of individuals meets up to discuss a particular issue, and it is advisable to have a facilitator moderating and guiding the discussion. Community gatherings can take place in the form of stakeholder workshops, focus group discussions or community hearings for example..

Advantage: It allows in-depth-discussion, gives room for participants' own suggestions/ideas and can value local knowledge.

Challenge: Results depend of the representation attending the consultations. It is important to include all community groups and make sure that the voices of the most vulnerable people as well as all genders are included.

Observations give the opportunity to get additional insights from an independent point of view. They should be used jointly with one or more of the other approaches, since initially the community's opinion is being excluded.

Advantage: They are especially helpful if community members are unwilling to discuss specific issues or in order to get acquainted with the situation. They can bring results which are independent from individual opinions and give the possibility to work more focused on certain important issues.

Challenge: The exclusion of use of local knowledge and direct involvement of community members, as well as the possible misinterpretation of observed behavioural patterns are pitfalls that are likely to occur.



Source:

More than just words – A guide to effective community consultations

<https://tinyurl.com/y5bfk52v>

Developing a concept note for the GCF in Bangladesh

The Adibashi communities, an ethnic minority living in the high Barind Region in Northwest Bangladesh, are disproportionately marginalised and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and do not have access to climate finance available within the country or from international sources. Creating a non-governmental organisation-led (NGO) project in cooperation with an Accredited Entity can help to change this.

Since 2008, Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) focuses its work in Bangladesh on the social inclusion of the Adibashi communities and started to pilot approaches on how to increase the resilience of ethnic minority communities to impacts of climate change in 2015 in partnership with UNDP-Bangladesh. The experiences gained led to a cooperation between UNDP as AE and HEKS/EPER as Executive Entity (EE) in developing a Concept Note for a GCF project on “Strengthening drought-resilience of ethnic minority communities in north-western Bangladesh”. The project approach is to enhance access to cultural-sensitive risk information, climate resilient livelihoods, educational opportunities, and health services. It also includes an advocacy component promoting the representation of ethnic minorities in decision making processes on climate change. The 6 years project will be implemented by HEKS/EPER together with Enfants du Monde (EdM) as a responsible party and national NGOs. The process took altogether two years and invol-

ved several steps. HEKS/EPER participated in a national Learning Hub Event by the NDA for Bangladesh in October 2016. It submitted a project idea for the Bangladesh’s Country Programme for the GCF which was endorsed by the NDA and listed in Pipeline A for the Country Project Preparation. As part of a free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) a community consultation process was conducted in 2018 to develop assumptions and test hypothesis of the project. Part of the concept note was the elaboration of a prefeasibility study. The concept note was submitted to the NDA for their feedback and to receive a no-objection letter. The major outcome of the initiative so far is the submission of a final concept note and prefeasibility study to the GCF secretariat. The decision if the concept note is accepted and the project proposal can be submitted under the SAP is still outstanding.

Lessons learnt:

1. The process of acquiring funding from GCF is a very rigorous and comprehensive and to reach the stage of a fully developed concept note already required a considerable amount of time and financial resources from HEKS/EPER as an Implementing Entity.
2. The GCF submission processes are still evolving and can change during the process and there are often no templates, e.g. on how to structure a pre-feasibility or feasibility study.

Recommendations:

1. Participate in national events organised around the GCF to liaise with the NDA and other relevant stakeholders in Bangladesh and to be informed about the possibility to submit a project proposal to the GCF through the NDA.
2. Submit a project idea to the NDA during the development of the GCF country programme as this can serve as a backing for your project proposal.



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IMPLEMENTING GCF-FUNDED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

What are the key steps in project and programme implementation?

Entering a legal agreement with the GCF

Once the board has approved a funding proposal, the GCF and the AE responsible for the implementation sign a Funded Activity Agreement (FAA), which provides the legal framework for the operation. As soon as the FAA becomes effective and the AE has fulfilled, if applicable, all the necessary conditions under which the proposal was approved, the first disbursement from the GCF can take place. Similar to the accreditation and programme development, the time required between the approval of a funding proposal and the first disbursement varies. This time lapse explains the significant difference between the number of funding proposals approved and the number of those under implementation.

GCF funding committed:

5 billion USD

GCF funding volume under implementation:

2 billion USD

(GCF Website, as of June 2019)

Setting up national steering and coordinating structures

In order to coordinate implementation of an approved funding proposal, AEs usually take several initial steps to set up a coordinating structure in the form of a steering committee or similar platform. Besides overseeing implementation and advising the implementing actors, this body acts as a decision-making one to ensure that the proposal delivers its outputs and achieves its outcomes. The steering committee generally consists of representatives from government agencies, partner organizations, and, in some cases, civil society and directly affected communities.

Typical tasks include periodically reviewing progress and evaluations, facilitating implementation, and providing guidance to the implementing structures, e.g., by approving work plans, budgets and any major changes in implementation. This coordinating structure could additionally include representatives from other implementing partners selected by the AEs, like EEs and Delivery Partners.

Additionally, regular stakeholder consultations can and should take place throughout implementation, though the format may differ in each phase. During the design phase of a project or programme, consultations are essential to involve targeted beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders in the planning of the activities. Throughout the implementation, stakeholders can contribute to reviewing the progress of the project or programme. Requiring and encouraging ongoing consultations and engagement is a way for the GCF to explicitly promote the input and participation of stakeholders in its financed activities.

The fund has proposed criteria for stakeholder consultations, which also apply to project and programme implementation. These stakeholder consultations should already occur in the elaboration of funding proposals and should continue through their implementation as an established process that allows follow-up on agreements, continuous sharing of updates on progress, and conducting regular assessments on achievements. The consultations should as well involve all relevant actors, including vulnerable groups, women and indigenous peoples as they are often the most affected potential beneficiaries.

Reporting on project and programme progress and outcomes

During the implementation of GCF projects and programmes, AEs are required to submit several types of reports to the Fund that provide important information on their progress. The first is an Incepti-

on Report, which aims to review and sequence activities and, if necessary, to adjust the work plan and implementation schedule of the funded activities. Secondly, the Annual Performance Reports (APRs) provide updates on the status of implementation of each activity and compare indicators against targets. The APRs should also indicate challenges or problems encountered during implementation and the measures taken to mitigate them, as well as identify lessons learned, but none have been made public as of June 2019. Furthermore, there are mid-term and final evaluation reports, which assess the project's or programme's progress and the outcomes of implementation.

What if something goes wrong during implementation?

The GCF offers two main avenues to raise and address any issue or concern that may arise at the international level.

Requesting information

As a first step, civil society and other stakeholders can request information and related documenta-

tion on projects and programmes in line with the Fund's proactive Information Disclosure Policy (IDP). The policy recognizes the need to ensure public access to information and makes it available to the public either as a routine course of action or upon request in an effective and timely manner. It also establishes an Information Appeals Panel (IAP) that can receive complaints from people related to lack of compliance with this Policy or denial of an information request. The IDP has four principles:

- ▶ Maximizing access to information: The GCF will publish all documents and information concerning its activities as long as there is no legal obligation to keep it confidential.
- ▶ Having limited exceptions: Exceptions should be narrow and clearly defined. For example, these exceptions include information about personal data, legal aspects, accreditation and certain financial matters.
- ▶ Simple and broad access to information: Information must be accessible to a broad range of stakeholders, be cost-efficient, and there should be clear procedures and timelines for handling requests for information.
- ▶ Explanations of decisions and right to review: If a request for information is denied, the GCF has to explain the reasons why and ensure that the IAP is available to review the decision to deny that request if requested.

How to fill a request for information disclosure:

- ▶ The GCF offers a standard Information Disclosure Request Form on its website, which can be completed and submitted to the GCF's Information Disclosure Team at: disclosure@gcfund.org.
- ▶ If the request is denied, an appeal to the IAP can be completed and submitted to: iap@gcfund.org.
- ▶ The GCF website regularly publishes previous information disclosure requests and the responses they have given.





Some ideas for CSO engagement:

- ▶ Become part of the project coordinating structures under the AEs, if such structure exist.
- ▶ Support the inclusion of representatives from the communities where funding proposals are located in the projects and programmes planning and implementing structures.
- ▶ Critically accompany potentially harmful projects or programmes and create public awareness if any problem occurs, with the options to report back to the GCF if needed.
- ▶ Contact the AE to get more documents and information on the funding proposal, e.g. on the ESS, gender policy or stakeholder consultations, and feel free to raise any concerns.
- ▶ If you want to find out more about the project/programme, fill an information disclosure request (disclosure@gcfund.org), and if it is denied, make an appeal to the IAP.
- ▶ Support local communities and beneficiaries (potentially) affected by any harmful project or activity funded by the GCF to fill a request under the IRM (irm@gcfund.org).

Filing a formal complaint on a project

In this regard, the Fund has established the IUU to receive concerns related to integrity issues and the Independent Redress Mechanism which is designed to receive complaints and potentially provide redress for impacted people. For this, the GCF tries facilitate easy access also for local communities. A complaint can be sent via mail or email, via an online form or through a voice or video recording. It can be filed either in English or the local language. There are no formal requirements on the content.

But it should include contact details of the person or community filing the complaint, the project or programme in question, as well as a description of how the complainants has been or may be negatively impacted by the project or programme. It should also mention if the request should be treated with confidentiality and why. If this is the case, the GCF's Policy on the Protection of Whistle-blowers and Witnesses aims to ensure that whistle-blowers and witnesses are able to report free from fear of retaliation.



Civil society take adaptation to the ground in South Africa

South Africa has a National Implementing Entity (NIE) under the Adaptation Fund which is implementing a small grants project in South Africa. This project shows the roles that civil society actors have played in supporting the project to respond successfully to local climate impacts and in building the institutional capacity of grant recipients.

The AF board in 2015 approved a grant of 2,442,682 USD for the project “Taking adaptation to the ground: a small grants facility for enabling local level responses to climate change in South Africa” implemented by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). One of the features of the project has been a piloted “Enhanced Direct Access” mechanism that helped empower national institutions with the autonomy to identify and fund local adaptation projects with the support received from the AF. The project has issued 13 grants of around 100,000 USD, under three categories (climate smart agriculture; climate resilient livelihoods and climate-proof settlements), to local organisations, largely local NGOs. The projects were located in the two pilot districts of the Namakwa District Municipality in the Northern Cape Province and the Mopani District in Limpopo Province, in South Africa. The financed activities enabled the engagement of civil society actors throughout their implementation. Indigo development & change, a member of the South African Adaptation Network, has engaged with and monitored the Small Grants Facility (SGF) since its inception.

A mid-term evaluation of the SGF project in mid-2018 highlighted some of the main achievements and challenges. It estimated that 1,155 direct beneficiaries had been reached, with more anticipated as some projects were still to be approved at the time. NGOs played an important role in the project, both as grant recipients working with local community beneficiaries, and in the roles of Executing Entity and Facilitating Agencies, who provide local support to grant recipients. While the project intended to build the institutional capacity of grant recipients as part of the project outcomes, it was also a challenge that this capacity was required in order to successfully access this grant funding in the first place. Frequent field visits by facilitating agents were needed to assist recipients. Another challenge in the project included the initially highly detailed and technical demanding reporting requirements.



red of grant recipients to meet AF reporting requirements.

Lessons learnt:

1. The project has illustrated that mechanisms that make small granting available to civil society actors can be a successful way to channel climate funding to those most vulnerable.
2. The inclusion of a CSO representative at the level of the NIE Steering Committee and on the Project Advisory Group (PAG) for the SGF project has contributed to an active civil society representation within national climate decision-making structures.

Recommendations:

1. Build relationships with decision-makers and implementers in order to enable successful engagement of civil society actors and their inclusion in decision-making processes.
2. Ensure that capacity support is built into project design to enable local civil society actors to participate in project implementation and adequately meet reporting requirements.



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MONITORING AND EVALUATING GCF-FUNDED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

How does monitoring and evaluation under the GCF work?

Monitoring and evaluation plays a key role in tracking the GCF's progress in moving towards its overall goal and in assessing the different criteria laid out in its investment framework and other guiding policies and frameworks. This is relevant both for the learning and accountability of the fund. Accordingly, the GCF Governing Instrument states that it is designed to be a continuous learning institution and that funded programmes and projects as well as other activities will be regularly monitored for impact, efficiency, and effectiveness in line with the rules and procedures established by the board. It also recognises the importance of participatory monitoring by explicitly encouraging the involvement of stakeholders in monitoring.

How does the GCF organize M&E of its financed activities?

The GCF is currently developing an evaluation policy in order to guide the work of the IEU and the evaluation of projects, programmes and other supported activities. The proposed policy (in its 2018 version) includes two types of evaluations:

(a) self-evaluations by the implementing entities and

(b) independent evaluations conducted either by the IEU or by independent evaluation divisions of the AEs themselves. Such evaluations can be mid-term or final, and real time or ex-post evaluations or impact assessments. The policy would enable evaluations at different stages, including at the project and programme level, across strategies, countries, portfolios, sectors, themes, and existing processes, as well as for the overall performance of the GCF itself.

The Fund considers the following criteria in conducting its evaluations:

- ▶ Evaluations along the five criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of projects and programmes) defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD);
- ▶ Coherence in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities;
- ▶ Gender equity and social inclusion;
- ▶ Country ownership of projects and programmes;
- ▶ Innovativeness in result areas;
- ▶ Replication and scalability; and,
- ▶ Unexpected results, both positive and negative.

The evaluation policy also proposes rules for public disclosure of the evaluations. All evaluations conducted by the IEU will be published on the GCF website, including the management responses and action plans based on the recommendations of such evaluations. Other relevant evaluations conducted by other actors, e.g. AEs, NDAs, FPs, etc., will be published according to their own disclosure policies.



What are limitations of the GCF monitoring framework?

While the framework lays out the evaluation and reporting procedures that AEs need to follow, the proposed M+E system has several weaknesses. The way the monitoring and reporting is currently set is overly reliant on self-reporting by the AEs, including through their Annual Performance Report (APR) for each project under implementation. Currently, those APRs are not made public, although CSOs engaging at the Fund level continuously advocate for their publication toward increased transparency and accountability with the opportunity for local CSOs to check statements made by the AE on implementation progress. In addition, while the GCF proposes rules for M&E in its policy, it allows AEs to follow their own rules and procedures if they have already established some. Such an “equivalency approach” bears the problem that it creates the possibility of carve-outs, loopholes, and alternate and often weaker standards. Instead, the GCF should firmly establish a comprehensive framework and approach for all GCF-related evaluations and clearly state the primacy of the GCF rules over individual AE evaluation policies. Weaker approaches should not be condoned because AEs fail to have the appropriate standards in place, or lack capacity, instead the GCF should offer support through capacity-building via readiness activities, particularly for Direct Access entities, some of which might initially lack articulated evaluation procedures.

Furthermore, the draft policy acknowledges the role of civil society organisations, but does not include, at this stage, a clear approach for the engagement of CSOs or affected people, communities, and right-holders in the evaluation process under the GCF. This concerns in particular the triggering of evaluations, providing input to their design and implementation, and the collection of necessary evidence. Thus, there is an urgent need for continuous advocacy to ensure that these stakeholders will be actively engaged in the monitoring and evaluation of GCF financed activities, using participatory and citizen-led approaches.

Why is participatory monitoring and evaluation so important for civil society?

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is defined as a process through which stakeholders at various levels engage in the monitoring and/or evaluation of a particular project, programme, activity, or policy, while also sharing control over their related content, process and results, and engaging in taking or identifying corrective actions. The GCF is explicit in promoting the involvement of relevant stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector in its financed activities and board proceedings, but while this should comprise the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes across developing countries, examples of this level of engagement have not yet emerged.





Correspondingly, the fund also encourages AEs to use participatory monitoring by involving these stakeholders in the project and programme cycle. The GCF further requests NDAs and FPs to organise country portfolio reviews involving project beneficiaries, local stakeholders and communities affected by the activities it funds. PM&E is crucial as it also is a core contribution to generating key learning about how climate change affects people and their livelihoods, creates awareness on these issues, suggests new policy and adequate measures towards better stakeholder participation, and helps reflect on how to improve continually local strategies for increased resilience and mitigation objectives.

PM&E is additionally relevant to civil society because it helps enhance their understanding of the GCF's complexity and modalities, and increases their knowledge of climate-focused projects and programmes, while making it clear to them how these activities are funded, the impacts they create, and how they affect communities and societies. PM&E also enables civil society to become aware of and able to use existing M&E tools in their work and to play a key part in ensuring accountability

and transparency of implementing actors across developing countries with the view to achieve good impacts of GCF funded activities. It is therefore crucial that CSOs use PM&E approaches to advocate at all levels for ambitious activities, funding proposals and policy measures that are consistent with the GCF objectives. CSOs can use PM&E to strengthen community ownership of GCF activities and thus increase their sustainability.

Some ideas for CSO engagement:

- ▶ Become part of official monitoring structures or bodies at project level through the AE or EE.
- ▶ Support the inclusion of representatives from the communities in any monitoring and evaluation efforts by the AEs and/or the GCF.
- ▶ Take part in annual reviews of the GCF portfolio in countries.
- ▶ Conduct independent CSO monitoring and assessments of GCF funded projects or programmes.



Examples of CSO monitoring and tracking initiatives:

The Adaptation Fund NGO Network (AFN)

Initiated by Germanwatch, it is a coalition of CSOs and interested stakeholders from developing countries following the development of the Adaptation Fund (AF) and its projects and activities. It strives to have a sustainable dynamic influence on policies and to engage civil society. The network believes in the opportunity to contribute to a successful implementation of projects funded by the AF across developing countries, for the benefits of those people and communities particularly vulnerable to climate change. The network directly supports a number of CSOs, with a focus on direct access countries, by increasing their capacity to track AF-funded projects and monitor all relevant issues throughout their implementation period. Find more information about the AFN at:

<https://af-network.org/>

The Adaptation Finance Accountability Initiative (AFAI)

This is a project by several CSOs including the World Resources Institute (WRI), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and Oxfam. The AFAI helps governments, civil society organizations and citizens to better leverage climate

te funds in building resilience by analysing adaptation finance flows within countries, supporting civil society-led efforts to track adaptation finance and improve transparency, and developing more effective, accountable climate-responsive budgeting processes. The project is currently active in different countries including Uganda, Zambia, the Philippines and Nepal.

Find more information at:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6pvp639>

The Views from the Frontline (VFL)

This initiative of the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) is implemented as a forward-looking monitoring process that supports inclusive people-centred approaches to disaster risk reduction (DRR). As a global CSO monitoring initiative that involves the mobilization of over 500 organizations across 69 countries, it leads a participatory local monitoring process measuring the progress around the implementation of the United Nations Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and governments' efforts in strengthening community resilience.

Find more information at:

<https://www.gndr.org/programmes/vfl.html>

Box 8: Some CSO-led M&E initiatives on climate change

Tool

Tool: A tracking tool for CSOs to monitor projects and policies of the Adaptation Fund

The GCF continuously learns from the AF, which supports developing countries by enhancing their resilience to climate change and pioneering a direct access modality to its resources. Since the first AF-funded project in 2010, many best practices and useful knowledge have emerged within the AF as an institution and among CSOs engaged in its activities. GCF stakeholders can learn from these actors and duplicate some of the tools and approaches they use in many areas, such as for monitoring purposes. A specific example is the Tracking Tool developed by the Adaptation Fund NGO Network (AFN), which provides CSOs and interested stakeholders following the development of the AF and its financed activities with a suitable “social feedback mechanism”. In their work at country level, they can use the tool to monitor AF projects, programmes and other processes and to ensure that beneficiaries from these activities are included and can have a stronger voice. The instrument is divided into two thematic parts:

The three Interplay Principles

The principles (see Table 6) assess the level of interplay between different implementing and

financing entities of adaptation projects and processes. They represent a set of factors and questions to detect how communication and cooperation on adaptation is organised between these stakeholders on a structural level. This attributes-based approach enables an in-depth evaluation of all the particular aspects of interplay that are evaluated individually in order to provide an intelligible access to the results gathered.

The seven Principles of Good Adaptation

Defined by Southern Voices, these principles (see Table 5) help assessing the current state of adaptation policies and frameworks in a specific country regarding good adaptation practices, with a particular focus on National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and the AF-funded projects and programmes.

They also provide a common standard for the evaluation of these projects, which follows a similar methodology as the evaluation undertaken by the Interplay Principles. The principles further provide a set of indicators that specify the degree of civil society engagement as well as how transparency, participation and the inclusion of the most vulnerable populations is achieved in local and national decision-making processes.



Joint principles criteria for tracking adaptation by the Southern Voices programme

Criteria	Examples of monitoring aspects
The formulation, implementation and monitoring of adaptation plans is participatory and inclusive.	Multiple stakeholders (including, but not limited to civil society, sub-national governments, research institutes, academia, private sector, and indigenous peoples) participate in defining options and priorities as well as in implementation and monitoring.
	The knowledge and experience of local communities and indigenous peoples are incorporated. Plans are publicized in ways that local people can understand and engage with.
Funds for adaptation are utilized efficiently and managed transparently and with integrity.	A body in which civil society is represented periodically monitors the implementation of plans and their financing.
	Adaptation funding is made available through a transparent process of allocation.
	A mechanism to safeguard against initiatives that might have negative impacts is put in place.
All involved actors have defined responsibilities and appropriate resources to fulfil them.	The adaptation plans carry the authority to enable the different implementing actors to work in a coordinated manner.
	Local level adaptation plans are guided by mechanisms to ensure coherence with national adaptation policies.
Local adaptation plans are developed through approaches that build resilience of communities and ecosystems.	Communities affected by climate change participate in defining options and priorities.
	Local adaptation plans are formalized and integrated into the development priorities of local administrations.
The resilience of groups who are most vulnerable to climate change is promoted.	Plans and policies address the issues affecting different groups of women, men, boys and girls.
	Groups of people who are vulnerable to social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions are identified and targeted.
	Initiatives promote social equity and cohesion while protecting people's livelihoods.
There is appropriate investment in the building of skills and capacities for adaptation, as well as in physical infrastructure.	Adequate resources are made available for raising public awareness and education about climate change.
	Investment plans contain targets for developing human capacities, natural capital, and physical infrastructure.
	The capacities of local people and their structures are developed in ways that contribute to the empowerment of individuals and communities.
Plans and policies respond to evidence of the current and future manifestations and impacts of climate change.	Adaptation plans consider how exposure to climate-related stresses and extremes is affecting existing vulnerabilities.
	Vulnerability, exposure and adaptation scenarios are based on the best available science and evidence from the ground.
	Interventions are modified as new information becomes available.
	Climate information is made accessible to enable adaptive decision making by all stakeholders.

Table 5: Joint Principles for tracking adaptation by the Southern Voices Programme

The “Interplay Principles” developed by the Adaptation Fund NGO Network (AFN)

The “Interplay Principles” for tracking progress of projects and programmes of the Adaptation Fund (AF) provide a systematic framework that can be used as a relevant monitoring tool to track the results of GCF funding within specific beneficiary country. These principles, once adapted to the GCF, could consist of three core elements:

1. Consistent rationale behind the geographic and thematic engagement:

- ▶ Do the countries have a strategic and consistent rationale in their thematic and geographic engagement of different entities under the GCF?
- ▶ Has there been a coherent identification of national priorities that GCF projects can build upon (i.e. an assessment of vulnerabilities and the development of adaptation activities responding to these vulnerabilities on a sectoral and geographic level or the identification of key sectors for climate change mitigation and a corresponding set of measures, including both concrete projects and political frameworks and incentives which are able to generate a lasting change)?
- ▶ Is there a division of labour between the different AEs working within the country and with other climate related funds?

2. Harmonization of different climate finance operations:

- ▶ Is there effective communication between different actors, in particular the NDA or Focal Point, the AEs and other government actors and stakeholders including from civil society and the private sector?
- ▶ Do the different actors achieve a synergy effect of joint action and the exchange of information, experiences and lessons learned among stakeholders, e.g. during national stakeholder consultations, country reviews or the GCF’s Regional Structured Dialogues?
- ▶ Has the country prepared national plans, in particular NAPs and NDCs that are aligned with the GCF objectives?
- ▶ Is there communication between the government and non-governmental actors, i.e. is there any formal or official platform existing in the country which brings these actors together?

3. Alignment on the national level:

- ▶ Is there efficient coordination between different actors (NDA, Focal Point, AEs, national ministries, climate change committee or task force, etc.) around GCF financed activities?
- ▶ Is there a strong political leadership to drive the process on the GCF and climate finance forward in a coordinated manner?

Table 6: “Interplay Principles” developed by the Adaptation Fund NGO Network (AFN)

How does the tool work?

AFN member organisations are provided with a template that builds on the two types of principles to help them identify a broad range of aspects in their respective country, which still need to be improved to increase the impact of adaptation measures as well as stakeholder engagement. The tool offers a comprehensible approach for the systematic evaluation of a country’s state of play on the issue.

Following data collection with the template, an analysis is generated and it integrates a variety of factors, which allow an in-depth approach to relevant aspects of effective adaptation. As a result, the tool enables local actors to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of national and sub-national structures of adaptation and strengthens their ability to formulate practical recommendations, based on the findings of the tracking.

Despite identified possibilities to improve the current version of the tool, several users have described it as a helpful instrument to gain deeper insights into the topic of resilience and to influence positively the process of good adaptation. It is a useful instrument to generate data with the objective to enhance the international architecture for adaptation to better assist the most vulnerable in adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change. This contributes to giving civil society a voice and to participate to the meaningful inclusion towards better monitoring and transparency of AF financed activities.



Source:

Tracking Adaptation: Not An Easy Task
<https://af-network.org/5263>

CSO monitoring of mitigation projects

For climate change mitigation, there are currently no common and well-tested criteria that were elaborated by CSOs and that can be used as a basis for monitoring GCF projects and programmes. However, a CSO initiative for an independent monitoring of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) has defined some criteria which can also be proposed as guiding questions for monitoring under the GCF:

- ▶ Are the funded projects and programmes consistent with GCF's guiding principles and the criteria for GCF funding?
- ▶ Are the funded activities in line with national priorities and planning, as formulated for instance under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), if any, or the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)?
- ▶ Do the projects and programmes lead to a transformation of the energy systems toward low-carbon development, e.g. through the promotion of renewable energies (RE)? Would these activities not been implemented without GCF funding? What are the planned versus rea-

lised RE capacities, what is the distribution on types of RE (solar, wind, biogas, hydro, etc.), the share of small-scale and decentralised RE projects and the regional distribution of RE capacities (urban/rural)?

- ▶ How do the projects and programmes contribute to sustainable development and what kind of benefits are being delivered? Does it improve energy access, electricity generation, and avoidance of greenhouse gases (GHG)? Does it create co-benefits for the local communities, e.g. job creation, improved state of the environment, health and education?
- ▶ Has there been a participation of CSOs and marginalised groups in decision making processes around the projects or programmes?



Source:

Engaging with the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)

<https://germanwatch.org/en/16631>



Independent CSO assessment of the Adaptation Fund project in Ecuador

The example of the independent assessment of an adaptation project in Ecuador highlights how CSOs can monitor and evaluate the project's benefits and impacts on the beneficiary communities and the changes occurring at the community level.

The Adaptation Fund project „Enhancing resilience of communities to the adverse effects of climate change on food security, in Pichincha Province and the Jubones River basin“ implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) as a Multilateral Implementing Entity (MIE) started in 2011. It was executed by the Ministry of Environment in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, the Decentralised Government of the Pichincha Province and the Public Consortium of the Jubones River Basin. The WFP served as funds manager and was responsible for monitoring and reporting aspects, and provided thematic guidance to other implementers. The project aimed to strengthen the resilience and food security of 120 food insecure and vulnerable communities located in the Pichincha province and the Jubones River Basin. It focused on securing access to water by involving communities in determining the types of infrastructure they wished for their protection from water-related climate impacts. Biological measures and natural resource conservation were also elaborated based on community adaptation plans.

The Ecuadorian NGO Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano conducted an independent assessment of the project for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The methodology chosen for the assessment included visits to some sites where adaptation measures were implemented, conducting small workshops guided by specific questions, and interviews with beneficiaries. The NGO assessment happened in parallel to the official final evaluation commissioned by the WFP.

The assessment showed several achievements by the project, such as improved quality of life of people, support to community irrigation systems for subsistence crops initially and with marketing projections in Cayambe. There was a strong community

ownership of the project. Some locals in the community even donated or sold their land for the water reservoirs and neighbouring communities replicated the same measure with their own resources. During the project design and implementation, there was a good coordination between local governments, communities, the different ministries involved and the WFP. The assessment also pointed out some weaknesses in the activity. This includes for instance delays in starting implementation after the initial conversations with communities, which led to a decreased participation as many communities thought they were deceived. In addition, the results of the vulnerability/risk studies and the prioritised adaptation measures did not always show a clear link. The community often prioritised measures responding to their immediate needs (sometimes development needs rather than adaptive capacity).

Lessons learnt:

1. Talking to the communities can provide sound information of the actual changes in their lives and could contribute to an increased level of participation in the project.
2. Independent assessments of climate finance projects by CSOs can serve as a basis to cross-check the official evaluations and to enter into dialogue with the implementing entities.

Recommendations:

1. Enter into dialogue with the MIEs in an early stage of the project and assessment to ensure that results from the CSO assessments are taken up in their evaluations and in the design of follow-up projects.
2. Exchange with other CSOs on their own assessments of other projects to identify trends which can be fed back to the international decision-making on climate finance (board level).



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Bolukiluki – a local monitoring system for REDD+ projects in DRC

Natural resource management in general and forest projects for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in particular should respect and protect the rights of the local communities living in and around the project sites. However, the reality of local communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is that they are very often not included in the planning and implementation of these projects.

They face heavy restrictions on their rights to enter the territories and the resources they live from and thus suffer from increased poverty. In addition, they experience severe human rights violations by guards working for the projects. REDD+ projects are often imposed on local communities without their consent or proper consultation in line with the concept of free, prior and informed consent. It is important for CSOs to set up independent monitoring system to accompany these projects.

In DRC, the CSO Actions ‘pour la promotion et la protection des peuples et espèces menacés’ (APEM) together with the Rainforest Foundation UK has set up a monitoring system to document human rights violations to the communities. It has trained 13 members of local civil society in the provinces of Mai Ndombe, Tshuapa, Tshopo and Kasai to conduct fact finding missions within local communities living around REDD+ projects and natural protected areas and to document the impacts of these projects.

A tablet-based tool called Bolukiluki enables the interviewers to collect qualitative and quantitative data, e.g. on the level of consultation and participation of the local communities in REDD+ projects, the degree to which the benefits promised to the communities have actually been realised, the impacts of the protected areas on livelihood assets and the human rights violations by guards. The information is collected via focus group discussions, individual interviews and using local villages’ registries as well as registries assembling information on human rights’ incidents.

As of June 2019, six of such missions have been successfully completed with about 600 people interviewed in more than 25 villages. The collected data was shared with the project managers of the REDD+ projects and other protected areas as well as the project donors. Due to the collected data and the documented incidents, a judicial inquiry on the violations by the guards was initiated.

Lessons learnt

1. The Bolukiluki is an example of a CSO monitoring system where well documented cases of human rights violations can put pressure on project managers, local and national government agencies and international donors to take action on human rights violations which are otherwise not followed up.
2. CSO monitoring systems should work well for data collection in the field. The advantage of the use of tablets instead of paper is that it is easy to use with data that can be collected simultaneously in different places and can be transferred and analysed in “real time”. It also offers more options for data analysis. A weak internet connection can be a limitation because the data cannot be transferred directly or the transfer is interrupted.

Recommendations:

1. Set up your own monitoring systems that can work offline in the field and are collected on a shared, but safe platform for data analysis. Use digital devices that the people collecting the data are familiar with as this reduces errors in the application.
2. Think ahead about what you want to document, but keep your system flexible so that you can adapt it during the fact finding missions and document impacts and information you have not foreseen.



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www.apemrdc.net



Tool

KoBo – a potential tool for data collection on GCF projects

The collection of data and the subsequent analysis can contribute to an effective tracking and monitoring of the GCF financed projects by civil society. One instrument CSOs can use for such a purpose is the KoBo Toolbox. As a free, open-source tool, it allows data collection in the field using paper or computers as well as with mobile devices such as mobile phones or tablets. It also offers different options such as: developing questionnaires, and linking the filled-in questionnaires and pictures taken to a specific location via GPS. CSOs can take

advantage of such a tool to support their needs for assessments, monitoring and other data collection activities. The toolbox can be particularly useful by civil society actors in field environments that are vulnerable and difficult to access and operate in due to climate change impacts.



More information:

More about KoBo Toolbox:
<https://www.kobotoolbox.org/>





WAYS FORWARD FOR CSO ENGAGEMENT

As the practical experience and examples collected in this toolkit shows, there are many different possibilities to become engaged in GCF-related processes and contribute the expertise, networks and capacities of each organisation to the wider CSO efforts. However, there are some key entry points which are highlighted here:

Engaging with the international GCF CSO Constituency around the GCF Board

Engaging with the international GCF CSO Constituency around the GCF board

Representatives of accredited CSOs from developed and developing countries that are admitted as observers are able to attend and participate in GCF board meetings. CSOs that are active in the GCF convene through an independent and self-led CSO constituency consisting of national, regional and international organisations and networks from all around the world. The network exclusively facilitates and coordinates CSO engagement in the Fund at the global level, with a key focus on the preparation for and participation in board meetings as well as drafting and submitting joint comments on proposed policies. The international network also reaches out to national groups with information sharing, requests for contributions and advice. Representatives from member organisations gather for online calls or preparatory meetings to elaborate strategies, discuss expectations for successful meetings and decisions as well as prepare joint CSO interventions and positions for delivery during board meetings and articulate joint CSO submissions in response to formal invitations to provides view and inputs on GCF policy formulation. Active Observers from civil society to the GCF board are self-selected following internal CSO guidelines from within the CSO constituency members.

Taking part in the GCF Regional Structured Dialogues

The GCF holds structured dialogues annually in different regions across the globe. Attended by ministers, representatives from governments and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private

sector, the dialogues build on practical knowledge and regional on-the-ground experiences. They serve as a strategic space to share knowledge about how to access and use GCF resources to address climate change across the regions. The GCF secretariat invites a number of CSO representatives to attend the dialogues. This offers an opportunity to interact with GCF stakeholders from their regions and to enhance their understanding of the Fund's procedures.

Entering into dialogue with the NDA or FP as the central national institution

CSOs should aim to establish a good contact with their respective NDA or FP and engage regularly in dialogue with them. They can support their efforts in forming national platforms or committees for multi-stakeholder engagement, involving all relevant actors. A strong representation of civil society and community-based organisations from areas where GCF projects are implemented is particularly important. NDAs and FPs can engage CSOs in GCF activities at the country-level, from developing national strategies to supporting direct access accreditation as well as elaborating, implementing and/or monitoring funding proposals. CSOs can lobby their respective NDAs to make stakeholder consultations mandatory for AEs and to encourage participatory monitoring. In their collaboration with NDAs or FPs, CSOs can advocate for good and ambitious GCF projects in their countries and regions. They can push for funding proposals that meet the GCF criteria and that are developed together with affected communities to ensure that they will also take part in the implementation.

Demanding quality in GCF funded activities from AEs

AEs are the key actors shaping the type of projects and programmes being implemented across developing countries with GCF funding. Therefore it is important for CSOs to establish a relationship with AEs and engage in a regular dialogue with them. CSOs can foster an exchange of experiences with

AEs and EEs by inviting them to CSO meetings, workshops, and other activities related to the GCF. This can enable CSOs to learn from AEs' experience and expertise and in return to feed theirs into AEs' activities, including experience they may have with other international climate funds like the AF or GEF. It is essential that CSOs advocate vis-à-vis AEs to create enabling environments where civil society and local communities can voice concerns and expectations and they can be taken into consideration in a meaningful manner. This includes access to and disclosure of information on funding proposals and other GCF activities in an understandable manner and language for local communities and stakeholders. A key role for CSOs can be supporting AEs in conducting stakeholder consultations and facilitating the inclusion of local communities in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of funding proposals. CSOs often have good contacts with local communities that can benefit AEs or EEs. This can help by reaching out to local leaders and other relevant actors in order to ensure better representation from communities in engaging with AEs. Sometimes communities may be more willing to voice their concerns to CSOs or to share with them their local and traditional knowledge. This in return could facilitate the AEs' interactions and collaboration with communities and beneficiaries.

Setting up independent CSO monitoring for GCF projects and programmes

Civil society can find creative ways for independently monitoring and ensuring effective evaluation of GCF activities. They can also prepare "shadow reports", organise citizen-led monitoring and host consultations to criticise projects and programmes' outcomes and results. CSO-led monitoring is crucial at three levels:

► **At project and programme level**, it can be useful to build up a systematic monitoring of the progress and results that can be used to complement the official monitoring and evaluation



undertaken by AEs and the GCF itself. This can be an important tool for tracking and preventing potential harm from financed activities. It additionally can help collect evidence on questions that CSOs may have, and that can be missing from other assessment reports, such as questions on adaptation or mitigation. There are several tools for PM&E, such as participatory mapping, that have been developed by different actors for diverse objectives and that CSOs can use and adapt to monitor GCF activities at the local level.

- **At country level**, CSOs can monitor the entire process around the implementation of GCF policies, the elaboration of concept notes and/or funding proposals in their countries and regions, from the idea to the finalised project or programme. Regular interactions with their respective NDA or AE responsible for the proposals can help make this possible.
- **At the international level**, the GCF board allows Active Observers at its meetings to make comments on applicant AEs and project proposals, even though this has been limited during several board meetings. This gives CSOs the opportunity to critically and constructively assess applications for AEs and project proposals. CSOs might use that chance to share their views on entities from their own country or region before the board takes its decisions. Prior to the meeting, they can also inquire with their NDA or FP about which entities or projects are seeking accreditation so that they can engage with them directly in advance. CSOs can raise any concerns directly or through open letters, coordinated joint CSO actions, or through Active Observers during board meetings.





Useful resources on the GCF

GCF Website	https://www.greenclimate.fund/home
Governing Instrument	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/1246728/Governing_Instrument.pdf/caa6ce45-cd54-4ab0-9e37-fb637a9c6235
Rules of Procedures	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/1246728/Rules_of_Procedure.pdf/9d55fae7-f4df-45fe-a3f3-754bc0d98e67
Climate Funds Update: The Global Climate Finance Architecture 2018	https://climatefundsupdate.org/publications/the-global-climate-finance-architecture-2018/
Board and alternates members	https://www.greenclimate.fund/boardroom/overview
Boardroom documents	https://www.greenclimate.fund/boardroom/board-meetings/documents
Information Disclosure Policy	www.greenclimate.fund/disclosure/policy
Observer Participation Guidelines	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/60328/Guidelines_for_Observer_Participation.pdf/88afd26d-1273-4428-aa88-4099d45fec2f
Observer directory	www.greenclimate.fund/how-we-work/tools/observer-directory/civil-society
NDA and FPs directory	https://www.greenclimate.fund/countries
AEs directory	https://www.greenclimate.fund/how-we-work/tools/entity-directory
More information on NDAs and FPs	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/194568/GCF_ELEMENTS_01.pdf/542c1610-81b4-40df-be62-025cef3d26d8
Regional Structured Dialogues	https://www.greenclimate.fund/what-we-do/dialogues
Investment Framework	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/24943/GCF_B.07_06_-_Investment_Framework.pdf
Environmental and Social Safeguards	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/114264/1.7_-_Environmental_and_Social_Safeguards.pdf/e4419923-4c2d-450c-a714-0d4ad3cc77e6
Indigenous Peoples Policy	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/953917/GCF_B.19_05_-_GCF_Indigenous_Peoples_Policy.pdf/ceb8ee3-c175-4f35-b847-e0a7cbf3e1dc
Readiness and Preparatory Support Guidebook	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/466886/Readiness_and_Preparatory_Support_Guidebook.pdf/9eea580f-a109-4d90-b281-c54695114772
Independent Evaluation Unit	https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/
Independent Redress Mechanism	www.greenclimate.fund/independent-redress-mechanism
Guide 101 – how to access the GCF	https://www.greenclimate.fund/gcf101
OSA tool for AE application	https://www.greenclimate.fund/how-we-work/getting-accredited/self-assessment-tool
GCF 101 on accreditation	https://www.greenclimate.fund/gcf101/getting-accredited/accreditation-process#step-preparing-an-application
Enhancing direct access – FAQs	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/466883/2016_EDA_FAQ.pdf/dd3000b6-3cc0-49c9-8cb7-72bb58651739
Projects and programmes portfolio	https://www.greenclimate.fund/what-we-do/projects-programmes
Monitoring & accountability framework for AEs	https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/76153/DECISION_B.11_10_-_Initial_monitoring_and_accountability_framework_for_accredited_entities.pdf/b06dddfe-2d18-4675-9d2f-d3e81de6ba99
Readiness Programme of the GCF	https://germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/Factsheet_GCF_for_Civil_Society.pdf
National Adaptation Policy assessment tool	http://www.southernvoices.net/en/documents/key-documents/63-jpa-assessment-tool-nov-2015-draft/file.html
CSO engagement with the GCF factsheet	https://germanwatch.org/en/16305
GCF Readiness Programme factsheet	https://germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/Factsheet%20GCF%20for%20Civil%20Society.pdf
GCFWatch – a tracking tool of the GCF	www.gcfwatch.org
CSO engagement with the GCF guide	https://www.bothends.org/uploaded_files/document/1CSO-guide_on_the_GCF_November_2016.pdf
Joining the GCF CSO Constituency listserv	https://groups.google.com/group/gcf-cso-list
Joining the South-South GCF CSO Constituency listserv	https://groups.google.com/group/south-south-on-gcf

List of figures

	Page
Figure 1: Structure and overview of the toolkit	05
Figure 2: GCF portfolio on mitigation and adaptation	06
Figure 3: GCF structure – from international to national	08
Figure 4: Institutional structure of the GCF board and secretariat	22
Figure 5: How the NDA or focal point interacts with key GCF actors	25
Figure 6: Key roles and functions of the NDA or focal point	26
Figure 7: Scope of focus of the Readiness Programme	30
Figure 8: Different stages for GCF accreditation	39
Figure 9: GCF project/programme sizes and categories	47
Figure 10: Overview of funding proposals pipeline and different actors involved	49

List of boxes

	Page
Box 1: Access modalities to GCF funding	07
Box 2: Success stories from the international GCF CSO Constituency!	14
Box 3: Who are the GCF board members and alternates	18
Box 4: The Executive Directors of the GCF	21
Box 5: Relevant national plans and strategies for the GCF	27
Box 6: Delivery Partners of the GCF financed activities	31
Box 7: GCF Country Dialogue Specialists and Regional Advisors	31
Box 8: Some CSO-led M&E initiatives on climate change	66

List of tables

	Page
Table 1: Classification of GCF accreditation according to the level of risks	37
Table 2: Results chain as illustrated from a GCF project toolkit	45
Table 3: Some of the most used financing instruments under the GCF	48
Table 4: Comparison of transparency in the projects pipeline of the GCF and AF	53
Table 5: Joint Principles for tracking adaptation by the Southern Voices Programme	68
Table 6: “Interplay Principles” developed by the Adaptation Fund NGO Network (AFN)	69

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List of abbreviations

ADA	Agency for Agricultural Development of Morocco	HEKS-EPER	Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz / Swiss Church Aid
ADB	Asian Development Bank	IAP	Information Appeals Panel
AFC	Africa Finance Corporation	ICI	International Climate Initiative
AEs	Accredited Entities	ICSC	Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities
AESVT	Association des Enseignants des Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre / Association of Teachers of Life and Earth Sciences	IDP	Information Disclosure Policy
AF	Adaptation Fund	IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
AFAI	Adaptation Finance Accountability Initiative	IIU	Independent Integrity Unit
AFC	Africa Finance Corporation	IRM	Initial Resource Mobilization
AfDB	African Development Bank	IRM	Independent Redress Mechanism
AFD	Agence française de développement / French Development Agency	IT	Information Technology
AFN	Adaptation Fund NGO Network	iTAP	independent Technical Advisory Panel
AMA	Accreditation Master Agreement	KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
AP	Accreditation Panel	KDB	Korea Development Bank
APEM	Actions pour la promotion et protection des peuples et espèces menacés / Actions for promoting and protecting threatened people and species	LDCs	Least Developed Countries
APL	Adaptable Programme Loans	LEDS	Long-term low greenhouse gas Emission Development Strategies
APRs	Annual Performance Reports	MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
AREI	Africa Renewable Energy Initiative	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
AWB	Attijariwafa Bank	MIE	Multilateral Implementing Entity
BMU	Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit / German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety	MoE	Ministry of Environment of Rwanda
BOAD	Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement / West African Development Bank	MOFEC	Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
CEE	Centres d'Éducation à l'Environnement / Environmental Education Centres	MSME	Micro- Small-, and Medium-Sized Enterprises
CI	Conservation International	NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
CIEL	Centre for International Environmental Law	NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
CISONECC	Civil Society Network on Climate Change	NAPAs	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
CSE	Centre de Suivi Écologique / Ecological Monitoring Center	NDAs	National Designated Authorities
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations	NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
CO ₂ eq	Carbon Dioxide equivalent	NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
CBO	Community Based Organisation	NEMA	National Environment Management Authority of Kenya
COP	Conference of the Parties	NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	NIE	National Implementing Entity
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa	OAS	Online Accreditation System
DCP	Division of Country Programming	ODI	Overseas Development Institute
DEEC	Department of Environment and Classified Settlements of the Ministry of Environment of Senegal	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
DG DEVCO	Directorate-General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid of the European Commission	OSS	Online Submission System
DMA	Division of Mitigation and Adaptation	PACJA	Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
DPL	Development Policy Loans	PAG	Project Advisory Group
DPSF	Division of Private Sector Facility	PM&E	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	PMF	Performance Measurement Framework
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	PMU	Portfolio Management Unit
ED	Executive Director	PPF	Project Preparation Facility
EES	Executing Entities	PPP	Public-private partnerships
EIF	Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia	PPR	Portfolio Performance Reports
EdM	Enfants du Monde / Children of the World	PPRC	Project and Programme Review Committee
ENDA	Environment and Development Action in the Third World	PSAG	Private Sector Advisory Group
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System	PSF	Private Sector Facility
EU	European Union	RE	Renewable Energy
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards	REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
FAA	Funded Activity Agreement	RMF	Results Management Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation	RMF	Risk Management Framework
FNEC	National Fund for Environment and Climate of Benin	SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent	SAP	Simplified Approval Process
FPs	Focal Points	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GAGGA	Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action	SGF	Small Grants Facility
GCF	Green Climate Fund	SIDS	Small Island Developing States
GEF	Global Environment Facility	SIL	Sector investment loans
GHG	Greenhouse gases	SGF	Small Grants Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit / German Corporation for International Cooperation	SMEs	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
GNDR	Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction	SSO	Sahara and Sahel Observatory
		TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
		UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
		UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
		UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
		VFL	Views from the Frontline
		WEDO	Women's Environment & Development Organisation
		WFP	World Food Programme
		WRI	World Resources Institute

EVERYONE IS

WELCOME



This toolkit is part of the project “CSO readiness for the GCF – focus Africa” implemented by the following organisations



Germanwatch

Germanwatch is an independent non-profit organisation whose mission is to promote actively North-South equity and the preservation of livelihoods. Together with its members and supporters as well as with other actors in civil society, Germanwatch advocates for sustainable development. Germanwatch focuses in particular on the politics and economics of the Global North with their worldwide consequences. Germanwatch works for fair trade relations, responsible financial markets, compliance with human rights, and the prevention of dangerous climate change. The organisation has teams of experts working on corporate accountability, education for sustainable development, financing for development, German and European Union (EU)'s low-carbon policy, international climate policy and world food, land use and trade. Using science-based analyses, Germanwatch informs the public, educates, advocates with decision-makers and informs consumers how they can support sustainable development through their actions.



CARE International

CARE is a global leader within a worldwide movement dedicated to saving lives and ending poverty. Through its vision, the organisation seeks a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live with dignity and security. CARE's mission is to work around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice.; in doing so, the key focus is to put women and girls in the centre because it is not possible to overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities. By providing assistance based on needs, regardless of race, creed or nationality while addressing the rights of vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls, CARE follows a set of programming principles in its emergency, rehabilitation and long-term de-

velopment work. These principles are aligned with those of many other humanitarian agencies, and include, among others, promoting empowerment, working in partnership with others, seeking sustainable results, ensuring accountability and addressing discrimination.



PACJA

A consortium of more than 1,000 organisations from 48 African countries that brings together a diverse membership drawn from grassroots, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, NGOs, trusts, foundations, indigenous communities, farmers and pastoralist groups, PACJA has a shared vision to advance a people-centred, right-based, just and inclusive approach to address climate and environmental challenges facing humanity and the planet. The network's tremendous growth of membership and mandate has necessitated a rethink of its governance, which seeks to accord more role to its base at sub-national/national level, through establishment of national platforms that will henceforth serve as pillars of action in countries and sub-national levels. This is consistent with the Paris Agreement and the Agenda 2030, which underscores the role of people and local communities in the achievement of their stated goals. PACJA believes in the capacity of citizens to articulate their specific needs and aspirations, and to work toward their access to decision-making processes.



ENDA Energie

ENDA Energie is an international NGO based in Dakar, Senegal and its main objective is poverty alleviation. ENDA Energie works on three priority themes: providing access to sustainable energy services for vulnerable groups, climate change and desertification, and sustainable development and green economy. The main working methods are the development and implementation of lobbying-advocacy strategies, awareness raising, support for commu-

nity-based adaptation measures and the promotion of a national dialogue on climate justice and capacity building. ENDA is actively engaged in national, regional and international climate processes with an important experience in coordinating CSO networks. ENDA also has many years of experience in bringing together various actors (private sector, state institutions, academics and civil society). The organisation sees itself as a space in which all relevant stakeholders - researchers, decision-makers, project developers and civil society actors - can work on problem solutions.



CISONECC

CISONECC is a Malawian member-based organisation that is comprised of local

non-governmental organisations, international NGOs, faith based organisations, networks and associations working on climate change and disaster risk management. CISONECC’s mission is to coordinate civil society organisations to have a desired impact in climate change and disaster risk management-related policies, practices and attitudes through research, advocacy, model projects, networking and capacity building. CISONECC lobbies and advocates for effective policies and programmes related to climate change and disaster risk management by engaging with the government as well as other national and international bodies and agencies. The network works through strategic alliances with other relevant CSOs and networks both at national and international levels to effectively advocate for climate change and disaster management policies. CISONECC has members with relevant knowledge on sustainable environmental management, climate change and disaster risk management.



AESVT

AESVT was founded in Morocco in 1994, as a network of environmental science teachers before growing into a civil society organisation. With the ultimate aim to raise awareness

among communities and local people on environmental education and sustainable development issues ; specific key intervention areas of the organisation include among others environmental education, education for sustainable and ecological transition, protection of natural resources and ecosystems, waste management, access to clean and affordable water, food security and energy. Over 2,000 members, 10,000 volunteers and 13 permanent staff work on a daily basis to educate and empower citizens on these goals as part of the CSO activities. In addition, a network of over 40 local representations and 19 Environmental Education Centres (Centres d’Éducation à l’Environnement, CEE) is active across the country. Activities carried out by AESVT have contributed to the enhancement of local civil society awareness on climate change issues.



Kasa Initiative

Kasa means “Speak out!” in a Ghanaian local language. The organisation’s vision is a society where citizens realise their rights in the governan-

ce of the environment and its natural resources. Kasa started its operation in 2008 as a civil society platform established by three international NGOs, one of which was CARE International. Kasa was initially conceived as a project to support civil society, research and media organisations to advocate in a concerted effort towards equitable access, responsive, accountable and transparent governance in the natural resource and environmental sector in Ghana; it now consists of seven networks, a coalition and a functional secretariat that coordinates its activities. The organisation has facilitated the consultation and collating of inputs from CSOs for the formulation of Ghana’s Forest Investment Program, which seeks to address the drivers of deforestation and catalyse transformational change by providing upfront investment to support the REDD+ strategy. In addition, it organises and coordinates the CSO annual review of the natural resource and environmental sector performance in the country since 2009.

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