



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/PPRC.25/44
27 September 2019

Adaptation Fund Board
Project and Programme Review Committee
Twenty-Fourth Meeting
Bonn, Germany, 7-9 October 2019

Agenda Item 12

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON INITIAL SCREENING/TECHNICAL
REVIEW OF LEARNING GRANT PROPOSALS**

Background

1. This document presents to the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) of the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) an overview of the grant proposals submitted by National Implementing Entities (NIEs) to the Board at its thirty-third meeting in March 2019 in the first review cycle for learning grants, and to the current meeting. It should be noted that due to lack of time at its thirty-third meeting, the Board could not conclude the discussion on the recommendations by the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) to document AFB/PPRC.24/43. The proposal presented in that PPRC document has been resubmitted to the current meeting and has been considered as a submission by the NIE to the current meeting. The current document therefore presents the consolidated process of screenings and technical reviews undertaken by the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat (the secretariat) based on the resubmitted proposal and the proposals received and assessed in the current meeting.

2. The analysis of the proposals mentioned above is contained in a separate addendum to this document.

Funding window for learning grants

3. At its thirtieth meeting, the Board adopted the medium-term strategy (MTS) for the Fund through decision B.30/42, and subsequently approved the implementation plan for the strategy at its thirty-first meeting. At this meeting, the Board decided:

(a) *To approve the implementation plan for the medium-term strategy for the Fund for 2018–2022 contained in the Annex I to document AFB/B.31/5/Rev.1 (the plan);*

(b) *To request the secretariat:*

(i) *To facilitate the implementation of the plan during the period 2018–2022;*

[...]

(iii) *To prepare, for each proposed new type of grant and funding window, a specific document containing objectives, review criteria, expected grant sizes, implementation modalities, review process and other relevant features and submit it to the Board for its consideration in accordance with the tentative timeline contained in Annex I to document AFB/B.31/5/Rev.1, with input from the Board's committees;*

[...]

(Decision B.31/32)

4. At the thirtieth-second meeting of the Board, the secretariat had presented document AFB/B.32/9 which outlines the objectives, review criteria, expected grant sizes, implementation modalities, review process and eligibility criteria for learning grants. Having considered the proposed approach, application process, review criteria and features of the learning grants as set out in document AFB/B.32/9, the Board decided:

- (a) *To make learning grants available for national implementing entities between financial year 2019 and financial year 2023 up to a maximum of US\$ 400,000 per year as direct transfers from the resources of the Adaptation Fund Trust Fund;*
- (b) *That the learning grants would not count against the country cap approved by the Board in decision B.13/23;*
- (c) *To approve:*
 - (i) *The features and implementation arrangements of the learning grants as set out in document AFB/B.32/9; and*
 - (ii) *The application form, review criteria and review template for the learning grants as set out in annexes II, III and IV of document AFB/B.32/9;*
- (d) *To request the secretariat to issue a call for proposals for learning grants in accordance with the tentative timeline set out in the annex to document AFB/B.31/5/Rev.1 and the budget pursuant to (a) above;*
- (e) *To request the secretariat to develop and present to the Board at its thirty-third meeting:*
 - (i) *A standard legal agreement for learning grants;*
 - (ii) *Notification templates for project start and project completion for learning grants;*
 - (iii) *Monitoring and evaluation templates for learning grants; and*
 - (iv) *A results framework for learning grants;*
- (f) *To request the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) of the Board to review learning grant proposals and make recommendations to the Board in line with other grant approval procedures approved by the Board; and*
- (g) *To request the secretariat to report to the Board annually on the implementation progress for learning grants through the annual performance report; and*
- (h) *To request the secretariat to present to the PPRC at its twenty-fifth meeting an analysis of the project review cycle for learning grants, with potential options, for its consideration.*

(Decision B.32/38)

5. In accordance with decision B.32/39, Subparagraph (e), the call for learning grant proposals was issued in July 2019 and eligible national implementing entities (NIEs) were given the opportunity to submit proposals.

7. At its thirty-third meeting the Board had expressed that it would like to consider proposals for small grants under the medium-term strategy (MTS) at its regular meetings. The proposals submitted therefore followed the regular review cycle for concrete adaptation projects and programmes.

8. The secretariat received proposals for learning grants and reviewed them as explained below.

Learning grants submitted by national implementing entities

9. Three proposals were submitted to the secretariat by accredited NIEs with the total requested funding amounting to US\$ 427,290. The proposals were submitted by the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE) of Senegal.

10. Only one proposal was eligible to be considered and the details of this proposal is contained in the following PPRC document:

AFB/PPRC.25/45 *Proposal for learning grant for Senegal*

11. The proposal submitted by Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE) of Senegal included US\$ 6,993 or 4.89%¹ in Implementing Entity (IE) management fees and US\$ 5,000 in audit costs. The submitted learning grant proposal is not in compliance with the Fund's policy for IEs that provide execution services as detailed in Annex 7 of the Fund's operational policies and guidelines (OPGs), and with Board Decision B.17/17, subparagraph (f) to cap execution costs at 1.5% for projects/programmes implemented and executed by the same entity.

12. The total funding requested is within the funding limit per project outlined in document AFB/B.32/9 and approved by the Board through decision B.32/38.

Table 1: Project learning grant proposals submitted to the 34th Adaptation Fund Board meeting

Country	NIE	Financing Requested (USD)	IE Fee (USD)	IE Fee, %	Execution Cost (EC) Cost	EC, %
Senegal	CSE	\$149,993	\$6,993	4.89%	\$5,000	3.6%*
Total		\$149,993	\$6,993	4.89%	\$5,000	3.6%*

- This amount exceeds the cap of 1.5% for execution costs

The review process

13. In accordance with Decision B.32/38 by the Board, the secretariat issued a call for proposals for learning grants and screened and prepared technical reviews of the submitted proposals in line with other small grant approval procedures approved by the Board. Two proposals were submitted

¹ The implementing entity management fee percentage is calculated compared to the project budget including the project activities, before the management fee.

to the current review cycle in response to the call for proposals, both deemed ineligible for funding, and a second proposal was resubmitted to the current meeting as the Board could not conclude discussions on that proposal as stated above.

14. In line with the Board request at its tenth meeting, the secretariat shared the initial technical review findings with the IEs that had submitted the proposals and solicited their responses to specific items requiring clarification. Responses were requested by e-mail, and the time allowed for the IEs to respond was one week. The IEs were also offered the opportunity to discuss the initial review findings with the secretariat by telephone.

15. The secretariat subsequently reviewed the resubmissions by the IEs and their responses to the clarification requests, and compiled comments and recommendations that are presented in the addendum to this document (AFB/PPRC.25/42/Add.1).

16. The resubmitted proposal did not furnish adequate information to provide a firm understanding of the Implementing Entity's goal for the learning grant proposal submitted and did not provide a clear picture of how the different proposed learning activities are additional to the knowledge and learning activities produced under the CSE projects funded by the Adaptation Fund. It also did not offer a clear explanation of the sustainability of proposed activities post grant.

17. Whilst all relevant information on the depth and quality of information required is presented in the screening review sheet for learning grants approved by the Board at its twenty-second meeting through decision B.32/38, based on the proposals received during the current review period, it is proposed that IEs could benefit from further guidance on the required information.

18. The Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) may wish to consider expanding the information available to NIEs by updating the following documents related to the submission and review of learning grants:

- a) The application form
- b) The project review template

The application form

19. Proposed updates to the application include expanding sections of the initial form to guide Implementing Entities on the required content for submission of learning grant proposals to the Board. It is also proposed to include a guidance to the application form, titled: Instructions for preparing a request for learning grant funding from the Adaptation Fund, which provides an explanation to each of the sections in the application form. Included in the guidance to the application form is also a template for the letter of endorsement by the Designated Authority to the Fund, specific to learning grants. The proposed updated application form is presented in Annex I to the current document.

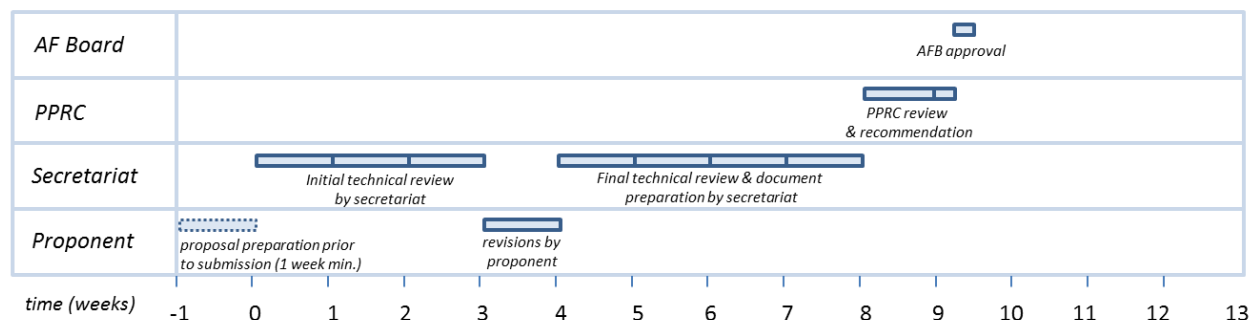
The project review template

20. Minor edits to the project review template are proposed to clarify the cap on execution costs as set by the Board at its thirteenth meeting through decision B.13/17 and to clarify the requirement for Implementing Entities to submit a breakdown of the budget for Implementing Entity management fee as outlined in the screening review sheet for learning grants. The proposed updated project review template is presented in Annex II to the current document.

Analysis of the review cycle

21. The review of the proposals was undertaken in line with the project/programme cycle steps outlined in the operational policies and guidelines (OPGs) of the Fund, and followed in principle, the 9.5-week timeline presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The regular project/programme review cycle (9.5 weeks from start of review to AF Board decision)



22. The PPRC may wish to consider the possibility of only reviewing learning grant proposals during the regular meetings of the Board. Since the funding window for learning grants is still new and the current submissions represent the second review cycle for the grants, following the regular review cycle of concrete projects and programmes, worked well because proponents were already familiar with the review process. In addition, considering proposals for learning grants during the regular meetings of the Board could be beneficial as any issues affecting concrete projects that the Board would discuss at its regular meetings could have implications on the decisions made by the Board for learning grants which are based on the concrete projects, and these implications could be discussed at the same meeting.

23. However, the PPRC may also wish to consider the possibility of intersessional review of learning grants to manage the workload of the Board and secretariat during each calendar year. In addition, the intersessional review could also be beneficial as the reports for project performance review (PPR) for concrete projects and programmes, which have mostly been presented during the intersessional review cycle, could provide information that may be useful to the Board's consideration of related learning grants for those projects.

Draft recommendation

24. The PPRC may want to consider the options for a process of reviewing learning grant proposals and make a recommendation to the Board.

25. The PPRC may also want to consider and recommend to the Board:

- a) To approve:

- (i) the updated application form for learning grants, the accompanying instructions for preparing a request for learning grant funding from the Adaptation Fund and the letter of endorsement template for the Designated Authority to the Adaptation Fund as presented in document AFB/PPRC.25/44;
 - (ii) the amended project review template for learning grants as presented in document AFB/PPRC.25/44
- b) To request the secretariat to notify all national implementing entities of the Board's decision, and to make available on the Fund website, the updated application form and accompanying instructions for preparing a request for learning grant funding from the Adaptation Fund and the letter of endorsement template for the Designated Authority to the Adaptation Fund.

ANNEX I: UPDATED APPLICATION FORM AND PROPOSED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE APPLICATION FORM

Application for a Grant to facilitate learning and knowledge sharing

The application template should be completed and transmitted to the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat by email or fax.

The overall goal of learning grants is to help encourage a culture of learning across institutions and help build the capacities of national implementing entities (NIEs).

Please type in the responses using the template provided. The instructions in the annex to the template provide guidance to filling out the template.

Complete documentation should be sent to:

The Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat
1818 H Street NW
MSN N7-700
Washington, D.C., 20433
U.S.A
Fax: +1 (202) 522-3240/5
Email: afbsec@adaptation-fund.org

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

~~Submission Date~~ **Date of receipt:**

Adaptation Fund Grant ID:

Country/ies:

National Implementing Entity:

Amount of Financing Requested (in U.S Dollars Equivalent):

B. Timeframe of Activity

Expected start date	
Completion date	

C. Proposed learning activities

C1. Describe the purpose of the learning grant (Maximum 100 words)

C2. Using the table below, describe the activities to be undertaken to share knowledge with other NIEs or the wider climate adaptation community or to develop knowledge/guidelines through partnerships **(Maximum 100 words for each activity)**

Proposed Learning Activities	Description of activities (please provide short description)	Expected output of the activities	Country/Institution to share/transfer knowledge with/to or to develop guidelines for, including NIE(s)	Requested budget (USD)*	Tentative timeline (Completion date)
Total project costs					
Implementing entity management fee requested**					
Total Grant Requested (USD)					

*Please also provide a detailed budget with budget notes, indicating the break-down of costs at the output level. Where an Implementing Entity (IE) management fee has been requested, the budget must include a budget with budget notes of the IE management fee

**The Implementing Entity Management Fee requested should be at or below 8.5 per cent of the total project/programme budget before the fee.

E. Implementing Entity

This request has been prepared in accordance with the Adaptation Fund Board’s procedures

Head of Implementing Entity	Signature	Date (Month, day, year)	Implementing Entity Contact Person	Telephone	Email Address

F. Record of endorsement on behalf of the government

Provide the name and position of the government official, Designated Authority (DA) of the Adaptation Fund, and indicate date of endorsement. The DA endorsement letter must be attached as an annex to the request.

<i>(Enter Name, Position, Ministry)</i>	<i>Date: (Month, day, year)</i>
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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING A REQUEST
FOR LEARNING GRANT FUNDING
FROM THE ADAPTATION FUND**

1. The objective of the Learning Grants is to transfer knowledge from one NIE to another, transfer knowledge from NIEs to the wider climate finance adaptation community or to develop knowledge and guidelines through partnerships.

Learning grant proposals must be clear on the expected output from use of the grant, the goal for learning and the rationale for the proposed learning activities.

PART A: PROJECT INFORMATION

DATE OF RECEIPT. Please leave this space blank. The Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat (the Secretariat) will fill in the date on which the proposal is received at the Secretariat.

ADAPTATION FUND GRANT ID. Please leave this space blank. The Secretariat will assign a number to your project internally.

COUNTRY. Please insert the name of the country requesting the grant.

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTING ENTITY. Please specify the name of the National Implementing Entity

AMOUNT OF FINANCING REQUESTED. Please fill the grant amount (in US Dollars equivalent) requested from the Adaptation Fund for this proposal.

PART B: TIMEFRAME OF ACTIVITY

Project start and completion dates help with monitoring of progress towards the target. Enter the expected project start date and completion dates in month and year format (DD/MM/YYYY). For learning grants, the date of first disbursement by the National Implementing Entity towards an activity related to the grant is considered the start date of the project.

PART C: PROPOSED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

C1: PURPOSE OF THE LEARNING GRANT. In 100 words or less, briefly explain the main objective of the learning grant. The project should be able to provide a clear description of the benefits of the proposed learning activities to the most vulnerable communities.

C2: LEARNING GRANT ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN. Using the provided table, provide a breakdown of activities. The table should present a logic flow of activities that will be implemented.

Include a detailed budget with budget notes, a budget on the Implementing Entity management fee use.

The proposal should include a detailed budget with budget notes indicating the break-down of costs at the activity level. In accordance with the Gender Policy of the Fund, the proposal should ensure that adequate resources are allocated in the project/programme budget for gender-responsive implementation. Examples of gender responsive budgets include provision for the involvement and capacity-building of women stakeholders as important actors in implementation. Where an Implementing Entity management fee has been requested, the budget must include a simple budget breakdown of the Implementing Entity management fee.

The Implementing Entity Management Fee requested should be at or below 8.5 per cent of the total project/programme budget before the fee.

The total grant requested should not exceed US\$150,000 per project/programme. As per the features and implementation arrangements for learning grants outlined in document AFB/B.32/9 approved by the Adaptation Fund Board through decision B.32/38, national implementing entities may request learning grants up to a maximum of US\$ 150,000 per project/programme. The grants do not count against the country cap.

PART E: IMPLEMENTING ENTITY CERTIFICATION.

Provide the name and signature of the National Implementing Entity Coordinator and the date of signature. Provide also the project contact person's name, telephone number.

PART F: LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT



ADAPTATION FUND

Letter of Endorsement by Government

[Government Letter Head]

[Date of Endorsement Letter]

To: The Adaptation Fund Board
c/o Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat
Email: afbsec@adaptation-fund.org
Fax: 202 522 3240/5

Subject: Endorsement for Learning Grant

In my capacity as designated authority for the Adaptation Fund in [country], I confirm that the above project proposal is in accordance with the government's national priorities in implementing adaptation activities to reduce adverse impacts of, and risks, posed by climate change in (select country).

Accordingly, I am pleased to endorse the above Learning Grant proposal with support from the Adaptation Fund. If approved, the project will be implemented by [national implementing entity].

Sincerely,

[Name of Designated Government Official]
[Position/Title in Government]

ANNEX II: UPDATED PROJECT REVIEW TEMPLATE

**ADAPTATION FUND BOARD SECRETARIAT TECHNICAL REVIEW
OF PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR LEARNING GRANTS**

PROJECT CATEGORY: **LEARNING GRANTS**

Country:

Implementing Entity:

Requested Financing from Adaptation Fund (US Dollars):

Reviewer and contact person:

Co-reviewer(s):

Implementing Entity Contact Person:

Review Criteria	Questions	Comments
Country Eligibility	1. Is the country that has an accredited entity Party to the Kyoto Protocol?	
Eligibility of IE	1. Is the project submitted through an Implementing Entity accredited by the Board?	
	2. Is the Implementing Entity already implementing a project/programme funded by the Adaptation Fund? If so, has this project/programme reached the mid-point in implementation and has a Mid-term Review or Evaluation (MTR/MTE) been submitted?	
Project Eligibility	1. Has the designated government authority for the Adaptation Fund endorsed the project?	

	<p>2. Are the proposed activities to support learning adequate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they reflect knowledge gaps and learning needs identified by the users? • Do they build on established “best practices” for project/programme learning? Are they based on shared resources and knowledge? • Do they address gender considerations and include concerns of the most vulnerable groups and communities? • Are they generated in an inclusive way? • Do they emphasize innovative, effective solutions and practices to adaptation that are viable on the ground? • Do they include expertise and knowledge of local stakeholders, whenever possible? 	
Resource Availability	1. Is the requested project funding within the cap for Learning Grants set by the Board?	
	2. If the implementing entity has requested, is the Implementing Entity Management Fee at or below 8.5 per cent of the total project/programme budget before the fee?	
	3. If the implementing entity has requested, are the Project/Programme Execution Costs at or below 9.5 per cent or if the NIE is also the execution entity, at or below 1.5 per cent of the total project budget (including the fee)?	
Duplication with AF project(s)/programme(s)'s learning activities	1. Do the proposed activities duplicate with the project/programme's learning activities as approved by the Board or do they duplicate activities financed from other sources of funding?	
Implementation Arrangements	2. Is the timeframe for the proposed activities adequate?	
	3. Is a summary breakdown of the budget for the proposed activities included? Is the proposed budget adequate and reasonable?	

	4. If an implementing entity management fee has been requested, is a budget breakdown on the implementing entity management fee use included?	
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Secretariat's Overall Comment	
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Date:	
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