



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/B.36-37/1
17 September 2021

Adaptation Fund Board

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO SYNTHESIS OF ADAPTATION
FUND FINAL EVALUATIONS BY THE
TECHNICAL EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP OF THE
ADAPTATION FUND (AF-TERG)**

Background

1. At its thirty sixth meeting the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) considered and approved the synthesis of the Adaptation Fund final evaluations and five recommendations for the cohort of 17 evaluation reports analyzed, as presented by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) in document AFB/EFC.27/8.

2. In its decision B.36/32, the Board decided :

- (a) *To take note of the executive summary of the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations and five recommendations for the cohort of 17 evaluation reports analysed, as presented in document AFB/EFC.27/8;*
- (b) *To request the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat and the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) to consider the five recommendations when updating relevant frameworks/policies, templates and guidance and when planning and implementing evaluations;*
- (c) *To request the secretariat, in communication with the AF-TERG as necessary, to prepare a management response to the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations, for the consideration of the Board during the intersessional period between its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh meetings.*

(Decision B.36/33)

3. As mandated by the Board decision B.36/33, the secretariat prepared this comprehensive management response which provides detailed response to each finding and recommendation of the AF-TERG contained in document AFB/EFC.27/8.

4. This report provides an overall management response, identifies areas in which the secretariat disagrees with the report, provides an update on actions already being done to address some of the recommendations, and includes a detailed annex with specific responses to each finding.

Overall management response and reflections on recommendations

5. Overall, the secretariat welcomes the key findings and recommendations of the synthesis report and notes the overall positive findings in the report including, among others, (i) the overall satisfactory rating¹ of the first series of completed projects/programmes, (ii) the high compliance rate (70%) with the Fund guidelines for final evaluations and (iii) that most reports (82%) were based on evidence and used of evidence or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data.

6. The secretariat also notes that many of the recommendations contained in document AFB/EFC.27/8 align with actions already taken by the Fund through its results-based management work and ones currently being discussed for further implementation including, among others, (i) the Fund's recent effort to consistently and regularly update its results-based management guidelines and reporting templates as part of its objective to ensure effective and comprehensive reporting of project results by implementing entities, (ii) the ongoing development of the Fund's evaluation policy by AF-TERG in collaboration with the secretariat and (iii) the

¹ AFB/EFC.27/8 paragraph 15, Aggregate performance ratings of completed projects.

recent update of many of the Fund's policies including the gender policy and action plan, environmental and social policy as well as the ongoing capacity building towards national implementing entities through the Fund's readiness programme.

7. The secretariat is committed to explore areas for improvement and learning from the report's findings and proposed recommendations. However, it is important to convey the following points for consideration by the Board:

- a. Replicability and scaling up: Several sections of the report raise the low emphasis on scaling up and replicability in implementing entity (IE) project final evaluation reports. While the secretariat recognizes that scale-up and replicability are positive outcomes and important elements for projects funded by the Adaptation Fund as stated in the Operational Policies and Guideline (OPG) and its Annex 5 "Project/Programme Proposal Template", it is important to note that in accordance with the Fund's mandate, these are not included in project eligibility or review criteria or required otherwise, and hence should not be presented by the report as a compliance evaluation element as currently structured in the methodology and reported in the findings. This aspect of replicability and scaling up could be considered as a recommendation that the Board may want to consider as part of strategic discussion for the Fund.
- b. Contribution to Fund strategic outcomes: Although the report recognizes that the Fund's core indicators were not established when the projects highlighted in this report were approved, it goes on to state that *"both relevance of project outcomes and project results were seldom linked to the Fund strategic framework"*. The secretariat disagrees with this finding and would like to clarify that these projects were fully aligned with the Fund's results framework in place at the time of their approval and included in project reporting documents (PPR).
- c. Policies and guidelines: While the secretariat welcomes the recommendations (4 and 5) calling for regular update of policies and guidelines, it would like to recall that the Fund has consistently and regularly updated its policies and guidelines as part of its effort to ensure efficiency and better access by countries and entities. For example, the Fund has updated, on multiple occasions, its results framework, recently approved the updated gender policy and action plan, regularly updated its project-related templates, including reporting and review sheets, etc.
- d. Terminal evaluation guidelines and related documents: Many of the findings and recommendations raised are related to terminal evaluation guidelines and results presentation. The secretariat is in agreement that there is room for improvement, but it believes this recommendation should be jointly implemented by the secretariat and TERG whose expertise and support, under its advisory function, is sincerely welcome to help improve the Fund's evaluation guidelines; including the ongoing work related to the Fund's new evaluation policy. The secretariat remains available to work with TERG under the Board guidance to address the related findings and recommendations.

Conclusion and next steps

8. The management response to the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations and proposed recommendations as approved by the Board will be implemented by the

secretariat in accordance with the proposed timeline indicated in Annex 1. The secretariat will report regularly to the Board on the management response's implementation, with the next update to be expected in October 2021 as part of the report on the activities of the secretariat.

9. The secretariat will continue its collaboration with AF-TERG to integrate lessons learnt described in the synthesis report as well as further elements of next evaluations report to be conducted on the Fund's portfolio.

Annex I: Detailed response to each finding of the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations

	Overall finding	Secretariat position	Management response
A	Compliance with the Fund guidelines for final evaluations was high (with an average compliance level of 70 per cent with the criteria)	Agreed	The secretariat welcomes this finding and remains committed to provide further guidance needed for IEs to conduct a final evaluation in compliance with the Fund's policies and guidelines.
B	Most reports (>70 per cent) were found to be easy to understand, comprehensive, and concise, yet about 50 per cent did not have a clear presentation of results.	Agreed	The finding is well noted and will help to improve the terminal evaluation guidelines. The secretariat remains available to work jointly with TERG to improve the evaluation guidelines (TE and MTR guidelines to be developed) to address this issue.
C	Reports were based on evidence (82 per cent), described applied methodologies (65 per cent) and made use of evidence or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data (82 per cent). However, evaluations seldom assessed the quality of data (29 per cent).	Agreed	The finding is well noted. The secretariat is committed to improve and enhance the quality of data collected and reported by IEs. The secretariat remains available to engage with TERG as part of the ongoing development of the Fund's evaluation policy and through other collaboration work to address issues related to the quality of data in the future.
D	Performance ratings were well substantiated, apart from M&E ratings	Partially agreed	The overall finding is well noted. A further clarification is needed to understand the issue raised on M&E ratings. The report is unclear about these ratings as highlighted in footnote 17 which states that " <i>M&E ratings were often more contrasted than other criteria because of how</i>

			<i>the identified shortcomings were rated</i> ". The secretariat remains available to work with AF-TERG to better understand the issue raised and identify options to address similar issues related to rating in the future
E	No significant difference was found between the evaluation and the review ratings at the portfolio level, but the small size of the portfolio (n=17) prevented any meaningful comparative analysis	Partially agreed	The finding is well noted. However, it is important to note that the very limited size of portfolio analysed does not allow a full analysis of Fund's portfolio, as highlighted by the report that <i>"the small size of the portfolio (n=17) prevented any meaningful comparative analysis"</i> . The secretariat looks forward for a more robust analysis in future synthesis reports as the portfolio matures further.
	Proposed recommendations	Action by the secretariat	Timeline
1	Link results back to a robust results framework	As recognized by the synthesis report, <i>"Over the past few years, the Fund secretariat has tried to clarify the results framework, as well as reporting guidelines and Project Performance Report templates. These developments might have an impact on (the evaluation of) more recent projects"</i> . The secretariat will continue its effort to clarify its reporting guidelines and update regularly its template to ensure projects reporting and evaluation meet the Fund's requirements. The new evaluation policy currently being developed by AF-TERG in collaboration with the secretariat provides an opportunity to address this recommendation.	Ongoing

2	Make quality of data a centerpiece to understand the validity of results	Quality of data, including the use of qualitative data at baseline to support validity of results, is mainly addressed by IEs. The secretariat is committed to explore ways to address the data quality issues as part of its guidance to IEs and review of projects. New projects will be reviewed to make sure baseline data are strong enough to support adaptation impacts during final evaluations. In addition, KM components of new projects will be scrutinized to ensure learning and adaptive management are integrated in each project.	Ongoing and starting from next review cycle
3	Enhance guidelines to help improve evaluation reports	Although not mandated by the Fund's operational policies and guidelines (OPG), the secretariat will encourage implementing entities to integrate a theory of change in newly submitted projects in addition to logical framework as currently mandated by the Fund's strategic results framework.	Ongoing
4	Improve consideration of gender in guidelines	The secretariat is actively working on the development of guidelines for implementation of the new gender policy.	Ongoing. Development of guidelines for implementation of the updated Gender Policy started in late July 2021 with the tailored survey targeting the IEs, Designated Authorities, and AF NGO Network. The survey results will be considered in developing the gender guidelines which is expected to start in September 2021
5	Review guidelines regularly	The secretariat is regularly updating the Fund's guidelines and reporting templates as evidenced by the recently updated project performance report templates, the project review sheet, the policy for project and programme delays, etc.	Ongoing. The current development of Fund's evaluation policy by TERG in collaboration with the secretariat will help clarify issues related to mid-

			term and terminal evaluation guidelines.
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