2020 Annual Climate Finance Readiness Seminar for Accredited National Implementing Entities (NIEs)

1-3 September 2020

Report

Introduction:

The Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat (the secretariat) hosted its 2020 global annual Climate Finance Readiness Seminar for accredited National Implementing Entities (NIEs), from 1-3 September 2020. Held as a virtual event, the seminar was attended by 27 of the Adaptation Fund (AF) 32 accredited NIEs and nearly 60 participants in total. The seminar is a closed event that facilitates a forum where the NIEs can engage in dialogue, learning and sharing among themselves and discuss policies and broader adaptation matters with the secretariat. This year's seminar agenda, which as in previous years was prepared by the secretariat in collaboration with the NIEs included discussions on best practice in sharing project successes, learning from responses to Covid-19, reaccreditation best practices, as well as information on project scale-up, innovation & learning grants. The meeting also served to further learning through the Community of Practice for Direct Access Entities (CPDAE).

Day 1 – Tuesday, 1 September 2020

Welcome and Introduction

The seminar began with welcome remarks and an introduction by Mikko Ollikainen, Manager of the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat. Mikko highlighted the significant challenges faced by the NIEs related to project implementation during the pandemic and the resilience shown by NIEs in their resourcefulness to carry out the projects. He highlighted some of the challenges NIEs were facing implementing projects such as organizing consultations, delays created due to restrictions on travel, the need for restructuring project activities among many others. He pointed out how projects can be robust enough and have resilience during these unprecedented times. He concluded by highlighting that the secretariat had also adapted the way it operates due to the pandemic and mentioned the recently completed virtual project portfolio monitoring mission in Costa Rica and that the secretariat would start preparing for future actions post implementation of AF's medium-term strategy from 2018 - 2022.

Session 1: Restructuring Ongoing Projects - Adaptive Management Approach in response to COVID19 Pandemic

This session focused on NIE experiences from NABARD, India and The Peruvian Trust Fund for National Parks and Protected Areas (PROFONANPE), Peru who discussed their challenges and practices on restructuring ongoing projects in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic without affecting the original adaptation objectives.

NABARD, India experience

Mr. Suri Babu provided an overview of NABARD's adaptive management approach in response to Covid-19 pandemic, the lessons learned, with a focus on issues and interventions needed for the future. He described the main sectors covered under AF's projects implemented by NABARD, namely: food security and agriculture, sustainable livelihood, water conservation, forest management, coastal and fisheries management. Mr. Babu also shared the adaptative management strategies that were adapted by NABARD's EEs and communities during the pandemic, especially,

IT enabled communications tools that facilitated ensuring continued contact and guidance to communities. Use of mobile phone enabled video meets/ chats with community and project advisors and e-learning courses were introduced for communities on management of livestock. He also highlighted the initiative by women's group in making masks at affordable prices to combat Covid-19, which demonstrated the resilience of communities to address emerging challenges apart from climate change challenges.

PROFONANPE, Peru experience

Ms. Claudia Godfrey shared that PROFONANPE's projects focus on the coastal ecosystem with their main goal being supporting the Peruvian government in the reduction of vulnerability in the coastal communities facing the impacts of climate change in the coastal marine ecosystems and its fishery resources. She explained the 4 main components of the project were 1) Interventions in pilot strategic sites to improve resilience of target coastal communities, 2) Efficient surveillance and prediction system supporting fisheries adaptive management, 3) Capacity building and KM system for implementing EBA and the EAF and, 4) Management policies, regulations and measures promoting resiliency. She explained that the most important challenges during Covid-19 were that most economic activities stopped and caused a huge recession. In response to these challenges, PROFONANPE established 6 adaptive management measures that included clustering of activities, especially consultancies hat helped reduce number of procurement processes and also reduced time and transactional costs; supporting the beneficiaries with safety equipment; organizing and supporting itinerary markets that encouraged empowering women; developing biosecurity protocols for the project; reprograming the AOP i.e. the number of travels and workshops being held and finally evaluating the timeline of projects.

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

Question: Where did the NABARD initiative to make face masks come from and was it a result of the pandemic? Was that activity funded by project or was it a personal initiative with a different source of fund?

Response by NABARD: This has not been guided or prompted by the executing entities (EEs) or NIEs. The idea came to the women project beneficiaries and they gave the idea to the EEs. These are women's groups and we call them self-help groups and they have access to bank credit and have a habit of saving. They have liquid cash available too due to internal savings at any point of time. EEs helped them in searching YouTube videos on how to make masks and the group started preparing it. They already had sewing machines available, so they learned and started preparing it. It was an entrepreneurial level initiative by the women's group. That is the type of resilience they have shown to meet the challenges.

Question: Regarding the pandemic, what's the strategy you implemented with certain contracts and with certain duration?

Response by PROFONANPE: What we did was we identified each topic we did in each country. First of all, we did an analysis of all information to begin clustering. For instance, we have an activity related to identification of policies for improvement or the identification of best

practices in adaptation for fisheries. And next activity was to identify incentives for the implementation of these best practices. We grouped these two independent contracts in one single contract that oversaw development of policies and implementation of the incentives as well. This means we have 1 single contract rather than 2, 1 single consultancy rather than 2, and 1 single contract we have to provide follow up on during this process of product creation. We have 7 packages now. In life of project, we had 42 product or services that we need to contract. Hence by reducing this number, the transactional cost reduced to implementing only 7. This strategy is very helpful so work with the technical secretariat of the project where ministry of production participates with the ocean research institute in Peru, and together they validated this grouping. Now we are having the Terms of Reference approved. We hope this helps us reduce the terms of delays that have already happened from the beginning of project because of the pandemic.

Question: Before making these adjustments, did you seek approval from the Adaptation Fund secretariat, or you would inform them after making adjustments?

Response by PROFONANPE: We haven't made any changes to the project. The only thing we implemented is a new strategy to do the contracts to reduce time frame. We experienced project delays because we work with Ministry of Production which suffered due to political changes. Also due to pandemic we were halted this year for 107 days since March 15. We can't do normal activities given that Peru is one of the countries that has been hardest hit by the pandemic. So, in the report we have done, the strategies are within the Adaptation Fund project performance report tab where we report the risks, this is what we informed what we have done. So there has been no need for a permission as such, no.

Response by NABARD: There was no structural change or diversion of funds as far as NABARD projects are concerned. Everything done like the mask making was at the initiative of the entrepreneurs or project beneficiaries and there was no specific fund allocation on that. It came as a spontaneous response to the challenges. Maybe in future projects there could be some sort of contingency provided to meet this type of unforeseen challenges.

Question: Where did the funds come from in terms of safety equipment used in the PROFONANPE project?

Response by PROFONANPE: We required safety equipment through our own funding. We tried to guarantee as an institution and also complied with safeguards to handle this situation with the highest standards of security for population. To the extent that artisan fisheries stopped for these 107 days. We were implementing projects in the field, we not only had to take care of compliance with the project activity but in terms of safeguards, we have a responsibility to our beneficiaries. So, it is part of our institutional budget has been covering some of these activities. Time was required for the development of some of these protocols like the biosecurity protocol.

Session 2: AF guidance on requests for project revisions during implementation

Ms. Martina Dorigo, program analyst at the secretariat presented AF's project results framework changes at the output level, outcome level and option for changes in output or outcome indicators

and associated targets and provision for financial changes. She also highlighted from concrete projects on how material change is calculated. She also explained the Fund's policy outlined in its operational policy and guideline (OPG) Annex 7 that provides provisions for end changes which may occur in the implementation arrangements of a project.

Ms. Dorigo also explained that certain unforeseen changes were beyond the control of the implementing entities (IEs) and that in cases where project start or implementation was delayed, then AF's Policy for Project/Program Delays should be consulted as it provides guidance on how unforeseen challenges may be handled. She concluded by highlighting the adaptive management options to manage project issues, which include better planning and reporting; using midterm-review to implement adjustments in the project and; regular communication with the AF secretariat for any clarification and reporting implementation issues.

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

Question: I have 2 questions. First one is regarding request in changes for disbursement schedule, normally this is because of delays in budget execution and project implementation, so you request an extension. My question is, can this make a change in the request for disbursement? Can NIEs make a change in disbursement schedule and is it implicit that the disbursement schedule will be modified? And my second question is regarding the previous seminar that there is a chance that NIE supports the execution or supports the work done by the EEs. I understand there is a limit in the administrative fee. Can you remind me of this and if this requires a request to the Adaptation Fund? Or if the implementing entity can do this?

Question: In the project budget plan there is an item that has to do with the execution expressed in percentages. Everything has to do with expenses and salaries, and with regards to our experience, we realize that salaries dedicated to staff are not competitive. So, the staff we recruit is junior staff so in terms of recommendation, I don't know if the AF can provide us with input or suggestions. There are some activities that have to be integrated like communication or other things, so I would like to ask for a recommendation from the Adaptation Fund.

Response: Regarding the first question on changes in disbursement in schedules, one of the reasons for project extension is delay in budgetary execution. When you have significantly low budget execution, it is not possible to have the next funds disbursement made smaller than what was reflected in the project disbursement schedule. Instead, if project execution is very low, you can formally ask for a variation in the disbursement schedule, but this does not automatically include making modifications in terms of the execution fee. In regard to the situation in which IE and NIE support the work of executing entities depends on the cost you are having in doing this additional work. If the costs are small, there are different arrangements for implementation. If costs are major, then you should send us a form of request to make changes in the implementation arrangements.

In this regard we expect for implementation cost not to go over the maximum ceiling in any project or program. Execution costs are capped at 9.5% of the total project and program cost and may include travel and office facilities, direct cost of administration of day to day activities for projects, staffing costs, any other project related activity expenditure like monitoring and

evaluation and costs related to drafting progress reports and financial reports, consultation with project stakeholders like meeting and workshops, and any type of communication and travel. This is specified in AF operational policies and guidelines (OPGs). The secretariat reviews the requests for changes to projects on a case by case basis because during the implementation of the project we need to agree on such management expenses to approve them as guided by the OPGs.

Question: Can NIEs use AF funds to provide safety equipment/support to beneficiary communities? For example, interest earned on project bank accounts. Especially if the absence of this safety gear will significantly hamper project implementation?

In the case that we have made savings in some areas in the Project Management Costs (such as salaries), are we able to use this savings to cover other costs with the project delivery; such as an increase in office support budget line or specialists costs?

Response: Interest on project funding held in the bank as per the Fund policy should be used to implement the project. This is part of the Project Performance Report (PPR). Whilst during Covid-19 we understand there is need to cover additional activities like safety equipment, unfortunately AF's policy does not allow for the interest to be used only for that. The interest is for project itself and can reallocate the funding as needed. For the safety equipment, entities can consider acquiring these as part of the procurement process you do for the project. If you want to have a separate activity dedicated only to that, then you might need to request the secretariat to review that. Should you decide to add a dedicated activity in the project for the safety equipment like additional budget or additional activities related to that, which might be sizable then you need to check with us if it falls under the project minor or major change. If it goes beyond the budget allocation, then it will fall under major change.

Question: If there could be a bit more clarity on Direct Project Services (DPS) and Request for Direct Project Services (RDPS)?

Response: DPS is a situation when an IE would need to cover a part of the execution. This pertains mainly to procurement and payment management and in this case the IE would need to submit a formal request for revision in implementing arrangement to the secretariat.

Session 3: Reaccreditation and NIE Reorganization

This session focused on NIE experiences from DIPROSE, Argentina and Agencia chilena de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AGCID), Chile as well as the AFB Secretariat on how to get reaccredited and the process of reorganization and the impact of reorganization of an NIE on project implementation and re-accreditation.

Reaccreditation: Grace period, Implication of accreditation expiration and IE reorganization

Ms. Silvia Mancini, Operations Officer at the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat highlighted the key decisions the board made during its meetings regarding reaccreditation. A key message to

NIEs was that the secretariat would continue to send out notification letters to accredited entities 18 months prior to the expiration of the entity's accreditation. She explained that the IE is strongly recommended to submit its re-accreditation application and supporting documentation through the online accreditation system 12 months prior to its accreditation expiry date. In addition, the IE is strongly recommended to achieve re-accreditation within three years from its accreditation expiry date.

Finally, she described circumstances that may warrant IE reorganization, such as 1) Dissolution or division, 2) Merger or affiliation with another entity and 3) Acquisition of or by another entity. She explained that reorganization affects the Fund's project implementation operation (such as amendment to legal agreement, disbursement of AF grant, responsibilities and liabilities related to AF project etc.) and accreditation/re-accreditation operations (i.e. Re-organized entity is eligible to pursue re-accreditation process as it is deemed as successor IE or it needs to pursue 'accreditation' as a new IE applicant).

IE reorganization experience by DIPROSE, Argentina

Ms. Milagros Castro Rios presented the timeline of the work of DIPROSE since its first accreditation in March 2012. She discussed their project that was approved in April 2013, executed on October 2013 and completed in 2018 with administrative closing in 2019. She outlined the process of how they made official request to begin the reaccreditation process in 2017 and why the review process took 2 years for reasons that included changes in the DIPROSE office, changes in the ministry structure and providing corresponding translation to the funds to name a few, until DIPROSE was able to adjust to the requirements. She also focused on the political and administrative changes that took place such as changes in national administration in Argentina to the ministry of Agri-industry and finally highlighted the advantages and lessons learnt in these 2 years and on being re-accredited once again by AF.

IE reorganization experience by AGCID, Chile

Ms. Violeta Leiva presented the timeline of the work of AGCID since its official accreditation and the challenges it faced during its re-accreditation process such as language barriers, keeping institutional knowledge after change of team and government and explaining relevance of undergoing the whole process to new National Authorities due to administrative and political and institutional changes. She also outlined the difficulties with regards to working on gender and socio-environmental Safeguards. She further highlighted the advantages of tools provided by AF that helped with the re-accreditation process and the positive impact re-accreditation has on NIEs.

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

Question: Can you continue to implement AF project up to 3 years without seeking re-accreditation? What if no further tranches are outstanding? Also, what if during this 'grace' period, you complete project implementation, why would NIE take on the rigors of then going through re-accreditation?

Response by AF Secretariat: If the IE is implementing a project but has not submitted the re-accreditation application by the date of expiration, it needs to ask for a grace period before the completion of the project or within 3 years from its accreditation expiry date. The trustee will not disperse additional funds to projects unless the entity has a status of accredited. If the entity does not submit the application, then it runs the risk to be in the status of not being accredited so that's the reason why the grace period provides flexibility by the board to safeguard project implementation. The reaccreditation process specially must be a revised version of the accreditation process. The accreditation panel (AP) can operate in French and Spanish and AF has translated the application forms into French and Spanish and will continue to translate all policies and guidelines, including the e-learning course on accreditation and reaccreditation.

During project implementation after fund disbursement there is a risk liability in terms of project closure. So, it is important to ask for a grace period if the entity decides not to be reaccredited. In terms of that decision, the experience of the secretariat has been that all the IEs have not only asked for re-accreditation, but some have even gone to a second reaccreditation. The understanding is that reaccreditation is important in that institutional capacity building continues to be part of the community. We did a study on capacity gaps and there have been important lessons learnt in terms of the reaccreditation process. At the secretariat level, we are keeping constant communication to facilitate this process and make it smooth to preserve liability and responsibility up to the end of the project cycle.

Question: Why did the re-accreditation process for AGCID take 2 years to be completed? Was it due to changes at AGCID or delays from the Adaptation Fund?

Response by AGCID: At least one year was due to change in NIE staff so we had to start from scratch, and we didn't make the proper transfer between the person that left and the new person that came on board on what had to be done. And secondly, going over documents takes some time and the Chilean legislation had also changed and we had to declare those changes in the legislation as well. The actual template that asked for information had to be translated to be given to finance and legal team who were giving the information afterwards. At that time, a summary or abstract of what we are doing had to be done in English at that time, but I understand this has changed and I think it is very good because it took a lot of time for us to explain the forms.

Response by DIPROSE: I think it is very difficult to explain who is responsible for the delays. Changes in the DIPROSE office delayed the process along with changes in ministry structure and providing corresponding translation to the funds. Also, to request legal opinions within the ministry and at the level of the attorney general which involves different organizations within national public administration, and all of this involves delays. These are process of change and compiling of information and translation takes up time. Not everybody is so familiar with the AF withing the various state organizations as well, so this is just part of the process.

Question: Your first accreditation was 2012 -2017 and then you initiated the reaccreditation in 2017. Is it not in conflict with what Mancini outlined?

> Response by AGCID: I can't say as I got to the position in 2017. It may be that we did it and the very last days we would have sent the letter but I'm not sure.
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> Response by AF Secretariat: There was a submission of intent to start the reaccreditation and the workflow was done within the 12 months of the submission of reaccreditation. So, all was done within the timeline.

Day 2 – Wednesday, 2 September 2020

Session 1: Projects' achievements

This session focused on NIE experiences from DIPROSE, Argentina and Centre de Suivi Écologique (CSE), Senegal who discussed their project achievements and drew lessons from the Adaptation Fund completed projects.

Experience sharing by DIPROSE, Argentina

Ms. Milagros Castro Rios presented the DIPROSE project achievements and lessons learnt in project adaptation and resilience in family agriculture in light of climate change. She outlined that the project was carried out from 2013-2018 and highlighted the 3 main pillars, namely: 1) adaption and climate change resilience pillar (includes access to water, risk transference to two island program for insurance program, best practices for agriculture), 2) strengthening for agricultural climate information, and, 3) generate scales and capabilities strengthening and enhancing scales and capabilities. key lessons and best practices included that good project design helps in facilitating good project execution and the technologies for the project and the beneficiaries identified were all well selected. This was due to high participation of both local beneficiaries and organizations from the sector in drafting the design of the project. She focused on the importance of having a strong distribution of results throughout the lifecycle of the project to keep the stakeholders motivated. Finally, she highlighted a strong component of the project was promoting local knowledge and usage of technology in the agricultural field which also ensured empowerment of women.

Experience sharing by CSE, Senegal

Ms. Aissata Sall highlighted the importance of adaptation technologies and to maximize approaches and impact that guarantee sustainability. CSE's project of coastal adaptation to the effects of climate change was the first Adaptation Fund financed project. She highlighted challenges presented by climate change such as coastal erosion and the involvement of the government and the AF to counter such problems and protect agricultural land, with 3 executing projects at the government level since 2014. She highlighted that the project was executed under direct access modality and pointed out the advantage that the modality allows the national institutions to implement projects to develop scales and capabilities in all areas. Ms. Sall further highlighted on technologies that were not highly developed to combat salinity and efforts in developing social engineering. The technologies implemented started to bear fruit in those areas and allowed integration of other technologies.

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

Question: Can you explain again the platform for accessibility of weather information?

Response by DIPROSE: Actually, that was one of the weak points. Farmers are highly vulnerable and don't always access information through web platform. This information is available for technical people working in the territory which allows them to better assist farmers in decision making. This region did not have precise local information and the project did facilitate that to the platform. The information in the platform goes beyond simple weather forecast and goes into soil, humidity levels, much more technical information available for the technicians. The work was having technicians incorporate this information in their assistance to the farmers. Work still needs to be done to make this information more widely available for the local beneficiaries. We are establishing priorities in terms of current activities as the pandemic highlights that certain communities are isolated. So, we are focusing on communicating isolated regions so they too can have access to such information.

Question: I wanted to know how do you ensure that throughout the different levels of government institutions, you actually have a successful project with involvement at all levels, and you will have replicability and scalability nationwide?

Response by DIPROSE: From the coordinating team, we sought to generate these types of networks. I believe that along those lines though periodic meetings and reports to keep updated at the highest levels of political decision making both within DIPROSE and within the ministry and organizing institutions, the national institute of agricultural technology have a very strong territorial network they also supported us during the execution and implementation of many other programs including this AF project.

Session 2: Best practice in disseminating and sharing project success stories: Group discussion with 2 break out groups moderated by communications and knowledge management staff

Participants were divided into 2 groups to discuss best practices from their individual country experience and the groups identified the following best practices in disseminating and sharing project successes:

- Use of multimedia tools, newsletter, stories, brochures, podcasts and blogs to disseminate best practices and sharing success stories. Media talks coupled with site visits and discussions with beneficiaries to identify their contributions to these results, along with highlighting project milestones and achievements.
- Regular project management meetings at government level with executing entities & teams on the ground and improving coordination between AF and NIEs communication teams.
- Communication strategies consisting of virtual activities (e.g. webinars where projects shared results with a wide reach; virtual field visit where farmers share what they did with other farmers through WhatsApp.

- Use of online platforms and social media such as Twitter and Facebook to share video footage, pictures and interviews and exchanges with local beneficiaries as part of the regional initiative

Session 3: Transformative technologies for adaptation

Mr. Ho-Sik Chon, Adaptation Specialist at the Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN), presented an overview of technology trends in climate change adaptation, access to technology for climate change adaptation through the CTCN technical assistance, and case studies of the CTCN's intervention in Asia-Pacific. He highlighted that so far 100 countries are receiving technical assistance, 206 technology transfer interventions have taken place as of 28 August 2020, and there is an increase in multi-country requests. He outlined 7 key technology trends in climate change adaptation, namely: 1) Innovation, 2) Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), 3) Urban adaptation/resilience, 4) Cross-sectoral approach, 5) Bottom-up approach, 6) Women & Gender, youth, indigenous community, and, 7) SDGs, COVID-19, Build Back Better.

In addition, Mr. Chon described three categories of climate change adaptation technology, namely:
- Hardware: Hard technology
- Software: 1) Capacity and processes involved in the use of technology, 2) Knowledge and skills and 3) Education and training
- Orgware: Ownership and institutional arrangements of the community or organization where the technology will be used

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

Question: If you could please explain how we could benefit from the CTCN support?

Response: CTCN support is at the early stage. If you can't find the right technology or if you don't know that the technology is feasible in your country, those kind of services can be provided by us and help develop big funding proposal, or we can also help increase your capability based on the capacity building workshops and training. These can be carried out in collaboration with our network members. So, most of our cases, there is a brief explanation on each of our technical assistance with the list of activities on our website. Our technical assistance is related to increasing the capacity and knowledge of technology to community and government. Our maximum budget is $250,000 and within the budget, we can give these kinds of technical assistance and the results can be used for further funding opportunities to replicate in local areas or smaller communities.

Question: I could not hear well the process to submit a proposal, could you mention the process? The technical assistance comes through the network members only. Or could it be from another technical organization in the Country?

Response: Our process is mainly country driven. The applicants first need to contact their national focal points. Our website has the template for the technical assistance request for the national focal points of your country. The NDE will check the national priority and then submit the request to CTCN if request is related to national priority. CTCN will review and if request

is eligible, CTCN will collaborate with the NDE and the applicant to develop the technology transfer plans. If the NDE of your country and proponent agree, then CTCN will go to further process to find relevant network members to implement the technical assistance base on the technology transfer plan. Yes, the technical assistance comes through network members. We mainly collaborate with network members who are located also in developing countries. If private sector or other organizations want to collaborate with CTCN in the technical collaboration process, they need to first be network members.

Question: This technical assistance will be funded by the CTCN? It is full grant support provided by CTCN with no cost to recipient?

Response: Yes, when we develop this assistance, the fund is provided by CTCN.

Question: Is there an eligibility process carried out by the CTCN to approve the request? Could you give an idea of the amount approved by CTCN? And how long do TA projects commonly last?

Response: We have our evaluation indicators when we receive the request from developing countries. We have eligibility and prioritization indicators. If it is eligible then we will reach out to the NDE that this is approved for the process. We reach out to the national focal point or NDE and first acknowledge the receipt. Then we finalize if we will support this or not based on our evaluation criteria. Regarding the amount approved, we have a maximum budget of $250,000 and if we consider it to be more than that, then we will try to use your request to other funding opportunities like GCF funding. Duration of technical assistance is usually 12 months but these days due to COVID-19 we try to extend our contract with our network members. It can be flexible based on the state of progress of the technical assistance.

Question: Does the CTCN Support consider the funding cap allocated to Accredited Entities before approving the request from accredited entities?

Response: There is no national cap or any cap for accredited entities. When you say accredited entities, for us it is national designated entities (NDEs) so our maximum budget of $250,000 is for the one technical assistance.

Question: The $250,000 is the cap per country, or per project?

Response: We don't have any country cap. The $250,000 is maximum for one technical assistance funded by our self.

Day 3 – Thursday, 3 September 2020

Session 1: Notification of open windows for AF small grants on innovation, learning, project scale-up and readiness grants for the 2020 calendar year

The session discussed the various grants under the AF medium-term strategy (MTS) 2018-2022 which include (i) innovation grants (ii) learning grants, and (iii) project scale-up grants.

Innovation for Climate Change Adaptation

Ms. Saliha Dobardzic, Senior Climate Change Specialist at the AF highlighted the urgency for accelerating innovation in the context of increased climate change impacts and resilient COVID-19 recovery. The Fund's MTS established the Innovation Facility with the objective to:
a) roll out successful innovations;
b) scale up viable innovations;
c) encourage and accelerate innovations; and
d) generate evidence of effective and efficient innovation in adaptation.

She further highlighted pioneering adaptation with over US$ 100 million invested in areas of disaster risk reduction, food security, agriculture, water and coastal management, rural and urban development, forests and ecosystem-based adaptation. The Allocation per region is Africa (40%); Asia Pacific (26%); Latin America and Caribbean (30%) and Eastern Europe (4%). She presented the two grant mechanisms outlined in the MTS, namely the small grant mechanism (up to $250,000) and large grant mechanism (up to $5 million).

Overview of Learning Grants

Ms. Cristina Dengel, the AF Knowledge Management Officer, presented learning grants as a mandatory component of AF funded projects and explained expectations from the Fund. She provided clarification on how to apply and the implementation arrangements of the Learning Grants. She highlighted the main objectives of the learning grants, namely: transferring knowledge from one NIE to another; transferring knowledge from NIEs to the wider climate finance adaptation community; and developing knowledge and guidelines through partnerships. She outlined the eligibility criteria for accessing the learning grant and the maximum cap of the grant: up to US$150,000 per project; with a target of US$400,000 per year.

Readiness Programme for Climate Finance

Mr. Farayi Madziwa, the AF Readiness Coordinator highlighted the goals and purpose of the readiness grants along with the upcoming deadlines to apply for the grant and the application process and the approved readiness grants to date (42 readiness grants approved as of September 1, 2020). He further outlined the planned events under the readiness programme from October-December 2020. Ms. Ishani Debnath, Readiness consultant at the AFB secretariat described the individual grants available under the readiness program along with their eligibility criteria and funding cap. The grants available were:
- South-South Cooperation (SSC) Grants
- Technical Assistance Grants for the environmental and social policy and gender policy (TA-ESGP)
- Technical Assistance Grants for the gender policy (TA-GP)
- Project Formulation Assistance (PFA) Grants

Discussion and Q&A on innovation grants

Question: How much is CTCN involved in the project cycle from identification to closure? Can countries which have already exhausted their 10 million envelopes qualify for this funding?

Response: The role of CTCN is limited to the MIE Aggregator modality. This is a funding window for those who are not accredited with the Adaptation Fund. CTCN is serving as the Executing Entity for the Aggregator implemented by UNEP. In case you are interested in what they will do, you can find the project proposal here. Both Innovation Small Grants for NIEs and the Large Grants (that are accessible to all IEs) are outside of the country cap. Therefore, even if a country has already reached the cap, it could still receive these grants.

Question: Have there been current proposals evaluated by the board? Or in case not, when could we expect resolutions by the board with respect to innovation grants proposals?

Response: Innovation grants are discussed at the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) of the AF Board and then require AFB Approval. For the innovation proposals that have been previously submitted and that have not received a decision yet, we expect the decision to be finalized on September 21st.

Question: Any difference between regular projects and innovation projects? if yes, kindly clarify?

Response: Innovation grants are different from regular projects in the sense that innovation grants allow to focus specifically on innovation and is an opportunity to ideate, adapt and scale innovative approaches, tools and technologies. However, this is not to say that regular project cannot have innovative practices. In fact, many regular projects have innovative approaches, but it may not be the "focus" of the project.

Question: Can a NIE apply for an innovation grant before the bigger adaptation fund concept (under the $10 million country cap) has been approved?

Response: Yes, this is because Innovation grants fall outside of the window for regular projects. There is no eligibility requirement that requires a regular project to be approved prior to submitting an innovation grant proposal. The only eligibility is NIEs applying for innovation grants have an accreditation status of "Accredited"."

Question: What about if an on-going project in a way having an innovation and need more funding to develop it more, the NIE could request that budget?

Response: Learnings from the pilots can be used to innovate in wider systems, apply the innovation to other locations, or develop the innovation as part of a portfolio of adaptation interventions.

Question: Has the date been scheduled for the training workshop for the preparation and training of Innovation Grants?

Response: We are now launching e-learning on innovation in French and Spanish. This will be available within the next 1-2 weeks. The e-learning will be self-guided so anyone can take it whenever they want.

Question: Hello, is the A.F, large grant mechanism under innovation funding opportunities, i.e. the USD 5 million, over and above the specific NIE country cap?

Response: Yes, all MTS grants, including innovation grants are above the cap

Question: Will Grants for Project Formulation Assistance be available for Large Innovation Projects?

Response: The grants for project formulation assistance are available only for the concrete projects/programs under the $10 million cap.

Discussion and Q&A on learning grants

Question: Can a NIE submit more than one learning grant project during the year?

Response: That has not been the case so far but given that it is outside the project cap yes it can.

Question: I notice learning grants are for projects that have reached midpoint, what if an NIE has not yet implemented a projects but has practical lessons from fund processes such as the accreditation process, can they not be eligible into to share their lessons with the wider adaptation community?

Response: Unfortunately, no, this is one of the requirements approved by the board, so it has to reach a midpoint, or it has to have submitted at least 1 PPR. The reason for this is that learning grants are supposed to find its activities that build upon the knowledge build as part of the implemented projects so it can't be on accreditation and it has to be on project implementation.

Question: Are learning grants eligible for already finished projects?

Response: Yes, learning grants eligible for already finished projects as long as the activities build upon the knowledge produced as part of the implementation of the project.

Discussion and Q&A on readiness grants

Question: Is there any cap (number of entities to be supported) for NIE to apply for readiness grants especially in the area of south-south cooperation?

Response: There is no cap as to the number of candidate entities that can be supported by an accredited NIE through S-S Cooperation grants. As long as that candidate NIE has not yet received support for accreditation through a South-South grant, it can apply through the accredited NIE. We have had as many as 3 countries supported by a single accredited NIE.

Question: Is the updating of existing policies eligible for technical assistance grants? example: gender policy, environmental protection. what is the functional link of this process with the community of practice for direct access entities (CPDAE)?

Response: Yes, the technical assistance grants can be used to update existing policies. Readiness grants are available to all accredited NIEs. Whether they are part of the community of practice or not, these are standing grants available to all accredited NIEs. The community of practice is an initiative that is started and driven by NIEs and there are other resources available through them to only the members of the community of practice. Claudia Godfrey from PROFONANPE (Peru), who is the current CPDAE chair will give an update on the community of practice later on in the afternoon.

Question: Is it planned to launch a Readiness package call of proposal to support potential NIEs on developing manuals and procedures and set up committees?

Response: The readiness package grant is still in the pilot phase following which, the secretariat will report back to the Board and the Board will decide on the next steps, if any, to be taken regarding the package and its availability to NIEs.

Session 2: Scaling-up of project activities

Mr. Farayi Madziwa presented an overview of the Identification, design and assessment (including vulnerability assessment, feasibility assessment and other studies) of scale-up potential. He highlighted that the grant is available to the NIEs up to a maximum of US$100,000 per project and outlined the objectives of the grant in supporting an evidence-based approach to scaling-up (planning, assessment, capacity enhancement, stakeholder consultation, public and private partnerships, etc.).

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

Question: Is it possible that an NIE that has already received funding from another donor other than the Adaptation Fund on an adaptation project can submit a request for scaling up?

Response: The grant is intended to scale AF funded projects only. Projects solely funded from other donors with no AF funding are not eligible for the AF scale-up grant.

Question: Does the scaling up need to be in the same area as the AF project completed? Or Can it be the same theme but in a different area?

Response: The location for scale-up will be determined by the NIE and based on needs and context so it is up to the NIE. What is important is a clear description and outline of the objective, justification, benefits and other criteria outlined in the application form for the proposed scale-up.

Question: Any further clarification on being sure who will fund the scaling up project (do you mean commitment letter from Donor or just to have the donor in mind? Refer to the magnitude of the work to be done under scaling up grant, is the grant sufficient?

Response: The requirement is not a commitment letter from donors who will fund the actual scale-up, but the idea is to provide us with an overview of what is going to happen to the project and who may potentially fund it. We need information on who the NIE is engaging with in terms of providing resources for the actual scale-up if anyone, to give context to the extent of that engagement and the status of resource securement, so we don't necessarily need a commitment letter. But if discussion goes to the extent that there is a commitment letter, then it will be useful to include it in the application.

Question: Will the scaling up projects be based on the success of the project?

Response: The short answer to that is yes because it has to be evidence based. It has to be based on tangible evidence that the need to scaling-up is because of these successes.

Session 3: NIE experiences on scaling-up AF projects

This session focused on NIE experiences from MoE, Rwanda and CSE, Senegal who discussed their experiences on scaling up Adaptation Fund projects and challenges they encountered during implementation of the project scale-up grant.

NIE Experiences on scaling-up AF projects – MoE, Rwanda

Mr. Innocent Musabyimana presented an overview of the project's mid-term evaluation, process they went through to identify potential funding sources and the challenges they encountered during the implementation of the grant and how they maximized the impact through the project design.

NIE Experiences on scaling-up AF projects – CSE, Senegal

Ms. Aissata Sall of CSE, Senegal presented a summary of the general mission of CSE, the escalation strategy, resource mobilization and success measures, as well as lessons learned from the project evaluation and its perspectives.

Session 4: Launch of training on Innovation

Presentation 4.1: An overview of AF training modules for formulating Innovation Small Grant Proposals

Ms. Alyssa Gomes, Projects Consultant at the AFB secretariat, gave a presentation which focused on innovative small grants training, with an emphasis on the examples and the types of innovation available by the Fund along with guidance to navigating the website and accessing the application form. She reported on practices from Ivory Coast, Colombia and Zambia and outlined the different stages of innovation pathways presented in the two modules.

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

> Question: Is the Innovation Grant over and above the AF country allocation grant
>
> Response: Yes. It is outside of the country cap
>
> Question: When is the large innovation grant expected to be launched?
>
> Response: The dates have not yet been finalized. We will post on the AF website soon.
>
> Question: Is the innovation training available to all and how to take it? Is there a link?
>
> Response: It is immediately available in English on the AF website to all. It will also be available in French and Spanish in the next 1-2 weeks.
>
> Question: Any project preparation facilitation for large innovation grant?
>
> Response: No, we don't have through the AF a project preparation funding or that kind of financial support for preparing proposal. But we do have a training and we are planning to hold live training. When MIE aggregators are launched, there will be a series of training and we are in discussion on which of those training may be of interest to our NIEs. MIE aggregators are not targeting NIEs but is targeting organizations outside of our accredited IEs. But still as UNDP and UNEP have prepared the aggregators for launch, they are in process of putting together some support and we would like to work out with them a way to support our NIEs through those same support channels. We will be in touch by email to announce when our training is available to you and any other opportunities and dates of live training.

Session 5: Community of Practice for Direct Access Entities (CPDAE)

The Chair of the CPDAE, Ms. Claudia Godfrey Ruiz (PROFONANPE, Peru) provided an update on the CPDAE, including completion of the development of the governance charter; the Action Plan; and provided an explanation of how to join the Community. She highlighted the purpose of the community to generate space to learn and share experiences and lessons and have better access to funding to face climate change. She outlined the impact COVID-19 had on CPDAE activities due to delays emerging from the country lockdowns and economic recession. She highlighted that the immediate next steps for the CPDAE Committee would be to complete the proposal for funding the CPDAE action plan in part, and to find the National Designated Authority (NDA) that is going to be the proponent to submit the proposal to the GCF on behalf of the community.

Discussion and Question and Answer (Q&A)

> Question: How do we access forms to be part of the community of practice?
>
> Response: Send an email to the current Chair of the CPDAE Committee, Ms. Claudia Godfrey Ruiz. A joining Letter Template is available on the AF website here, which can be completed and sent via email to the CPDAE Chair.

> Comment by NIE participant: We want to support the relevance of this approach of the community of practice, because in Niger, we have joined forces with an accredited entity (IFAD) at the GCF, to obtain funding of 11.5 million dollars although we are not yet accredited to the GCF, and this community could greatly help in the mobilization of resources and especially in the context of South-South cooperation. Because it includes within its financial organizations that can also make their contribution by co-financing and benefit from the implementation experiences of other implementing entities.

Session 6: Closing Remarks

The seminar closed with concluding remarks by Mikko Ollikainen, Manager of the AFB secretariat. He thanked everyone for their participation and their engagement in the breakout groups, despite joining at challenging time zones. He highlighted the practical challenges due to COVID-19 coupled with the climate changes. He outlined the Fund's activeness in addressing the challenges both at the level of policy and portfolio to minimize hassle as much as possible. Further he pointed out how the Fund would like to take these challenges into the new programing like innovation approaches. As a last word, he highlighted the importance of NIEs as ambassadors for the Adaptation Fund through their networks and expressed appreciation for their efforts to raise awareness on the activities of the Fund. He urged everyone to continue to stay safe during these unprecedented times.