



ADAPTATION FUND



Technical Evaluation  
Reference Group  
ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/EFC.26.b/Inf.1  
10 October 2020

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Ethics and Finance Committee  
Twenty-sixth Meeting  
Bonn, Germany (held virtually), 15-16 October 2020

**TECHNICAL EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP  
OF THE ADAPTATION FUND (AF-TERG)  
WORK UPDATE REPORT**

## Background

1. The Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) endorsed an Evaluation Framework for the Fund at its thirteenth meeting (March 2011 - Decision B.13/20.a). This framework was developed in accordance with international standards in evaluation; it includes evaluation principles and criteria and two overarching objectives. The final version of the Evaluation Framework<sup>1</sup> was amended as per decision B.15/23 including the insertion of the evaluation function entrusted to the GEF IEO for an interim period of three years. On March 11, 2014, the Director of the GEF IEO withdrew the GEF IEO as the interim evaluation function of the Fund.

2. Having considered the comments and recommendation of the EFC, the Board decided at its thirty-first meeting in March 2018:

- a) *To approve the terms of reference of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) as contained in Annex III to the report of the Board (AFB/B.31/8);<sup>2</sup>*
- b) *To approve the amendment to the terms of reference of the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) as contained in Annex IV to the report of the Board (AFB/B.31/8);*

[...]

*(Decision B.31/25)*

3. The Board appointed the Chair of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG) through decision B.32-33/15. In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the TERG contained in Annex III to the report of the thirty-first meeting of the Board (AFB/B.31/8) and approved by the Board through decision B.31/25, the Chair of the AF-TERG shall attend the meetings of the EFC as ex-officio member and report to the Board through the EFC as frequently as deemed appropriate. At the twenty-fifth EFC meeting the Chair of the AF-TERG made an oral report on the latest developments for the new body.

4. On June 4, 2020, the Board approved, through inter-sessional decision B.35.a-35.b/29, the strategy and work programme of the AF-TERG contained in Annex 1 of the document AFB/EFC.26.a-26.b/3.<sup>3</sup> Through intersessional decision B.35.a-35.b/27 the Board approved the proposed two-year budget to cover the costs of the operations of the AF-TERG and its secretariat for fiscal years 2021 (FY21) and 2022 (FY22).<sup>4</sup> The AF-TERG strategy and work programme takes a longer-term planning perspective covering FY21 to FY23 for the work items, and FY21 to FY22 budget-wise.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Evaluation\\_framework.pdf](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Evaluation_framework.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/AFB.B.31-final-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AFB.EFC\\_.26a-26b.3-AF-TERG-Strategy-and-Work-Programme\\_final\\_4May2020.pdf](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AFB.EFC_.26a-26b.3-AF-TERG-Strategy-and-Work-Programme_final_4May2020.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AFB.EFC\\_.26a-26b.1.Rev\\_.1\\_Admin.-budget-FY21.pdf](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AFB.EFC_.26a-26b.1.Rev_.1_Admin.-budget-FY21.pdf)

5. The approved multiyear work programme responds to the broad mandate and the three functions of the AF-TERG: evaluation, advisory and oversight. The work elements laid out in the work programme will be managed and implemented in three workstreams that broadly correspond to the three functions of the AF-TERG. The advisory and oversight functions will span the three workstreams, while the evaluation function is embedded in Workstream 1:

Workstream 1: Conducting Strategy and Programme Evaluations;

Workstream 2: Enhancing Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Capacity and Tools;

Workstream 3: Co-generating Evaluative Knowledge and Insights.

6. The AF-TERG had a facilitated forward-looking year-in-review reflection session on 20 May 2020, resulting in a number of recommendations and the start of a prioritization exercise to improve internal work processes.

## Introduction

7. As part of the reporting to the EFC, the AF-TERG is introducing this work update report format that will be used to report to the EFC in conjunction with the oral presentation by the Chair of the AF-TERG as frequently as deemed appropriate. The report covers the work that the AF-TERG has been conducting since June 2020, when the Board approved the AF-TERG Strategy and Work Programme, feeding into its long-term outcomes being:

- MEL knowledge is absorbed and used by the Fund and its partners at all levels to influence and enhance impact and increase resources for adaptation activities;
- Relevance and quality of AF projects, programmes, policies, processes and performance are enhanced;
- Adaptation Fund behaviour to enhance climate change adaptation has improved.

## Current work elements and their status

8. The current work elements as visible in Table 1 are those work elements in the approved work programme, that have either carried over from FY20 into FY21, that were initiated in FY21 or that are planned to commence in FY21 but have not yet started.

9. Not part of Table 1, but noteworthy; the AF-TERG Chair, Ms. Eva Lithman, stepped down 15 July 2020. TERG Member, Mr. Mutizwa Mukute took over as acting Chair and the process for the hiring of a new Chair was initiated, to be completed by the end of October 2020.

**Table 1: Current work elements and their status**

Work element	Status	Comment
<b>Annual Implementation Plan</b>	In progress	- Completed 6-month plan - To finalise 12-month plan by Dec 2020
<b>Development of AF-TERG operational guidance</b>	In progress	- Interpreted TERG principles in Strategy and Work programme to guide us in work implementation - Hiring organizational development consultant to assist
<b>Review/revision of the Evaluation Framework</b>	In progress	- Hired consultant in September - Setting up Project Working Group
<b>Co-learning and capacity building</b>	In progress	- Identified IE's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) needs / expectations and following up - Identifying NGO Network MEL expectations
<b>Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) mid-term review</b>	In progress	- Hired consultant in October - Setting up Project Working Group
<b>Studies and thematic evaluations (1)</b>	Not yet started	- To start in January 2021 after necessary consultations

<b>Ex post evaluations (1)</b>	Not yet started	-	To start in January 2021 after necessary consultations
<b>Evaluation synthesis</b>	In progress	-	To be completed in November 2020
<b>Sharing outreach and communication on evaluation results</b>	Completed	-	Completed identification of common challenges across three FY20 studies, which informed the AF-TERG Strategy and Work Programme
	In progress	-	Drafting two book chapters

10. Annual Implementation Plan. An annual implementation plan was developed to guide the implementation of the AF-TERG work programme. The first 6 months of that plan have been detailed with the remaining 6 months being laid out in broad brush strokes, to be further detailed by December 2020.

11. Development of AF-TERG operational guidance. The AF-TERG had a facilitated forward-looking year in review reflection session on 20 May 2020, resulting in several recommendations and the start of a prioritization exercise to improve internal work processes. This fed into the development of AF-TERG Operational Guidance by elaborating our work guiding principles and initiating the hiring process for an organizational and team development consultant.

12. Review / revision of the Evaluation Framework. A first element of work after approval of the AF-TERG strategy and work programme was the development of a terms of reference for the review and revision of the Fund's Evaluation Framework. The objectives are to: (1) identify and propose necessary revisions to the Fund's Evaluation Framework; and (2) produce a draft Evaluation Framework for the Fund to be presented to the EFC for its consideration with a view to its subsequent approval by the Board. AF-TERG Member, Mr. Mutizwa Mukute became the TERG focal point for the reviewing and revision work and a senior consultant, was hired in August 2020 to support the work. A data analyst is currently being hired to be part of the evaluation team.

13. Co-learning and capacity building. As part of continued co-learning the AF-TERG conducted a survey to identify NIE's evaluation challenges, needs and preferred ways of learning. In the response, administrative templates and forms are consistently raised as a main challenge in project design and development. Consultation suggests that in project implementation capacities, priorities and at times governance structures of executing entities are seen as main challenges. When it comes to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), implementing entity respondents indicate the main challenges to be of organizational nature in collaborating on M&E with the executing entities; guaranteeing consistency and timely delivery of reports, developing a culture of collecting, sharing and using data across all stakeholders involved, and issues related to security, access and wide geographical spread of locations. A facilitated discussion is planned for November 2020 with interested implementing entity stakeholders.

14. As part of continued co-learning a first consultation took place with the core members of the AF NGO Network, to be followed up with a wider consultation with their member base.

15. In line with the AF-TERG's desire for co-learning and to effectively serve the Board and produce fit-for-purpose evaluative products and advice, the AF-TERG is establishing project working groups (PWG's) for the review and revision of the Evaluation Framework, and the mid-term review of the MTS. These groups would bring various stakeholders together – including members of the Board, if possible – who bring different views and perspectives to the evaluative work element and processes of implementation.

The purpose of the PWG's would be to:

1. Bring the needs, expectations and perspectives of the groups they represent to the respective evaluative work element and implementation process;
2. Make suggestions on the most effective ways of engaging the different stakeholder groups to ensure their meaningful participation in the evaluative work element;
3. Provide specialized advice on the design and implementation of the evaluative work element;
4. Provide written and oral feedback, to be discussed with the team responsible for the evaluation work element, on the quality and relevance of the process of implementation and its outcomes;
5. Be available to the evaluation team as a sounding board.

The evaluation team will take advice from the PWG into account in the pursuit of the assignment while at the same time retaining its independence of judgement.

16. Medium-Term Strategy mid-term review. Terms of reference was developed in August 2020 for the mid-term review of the Adaptation Fund Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2022. The mid-term review will ask if the Medium-Term Strategy is fit-for-purpose in the context of the Fund's mandate and for the era the world and climate financing are in today and for the future. The mid-term review will also track the implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy, so far, identifying progress and recommend to the Board, possible course confirmation and correction and suggestions to be incorporated into the development of the next Medium-Term Strategy. AF-TERG Member, Mr. Claudio Volonte became the TERG Focal point for the mid-term review of the Medium-Term Strategy and a senior consultant, was hired in October 2020 to support the work. A data analyst is currently being hired to be part of the evaluation team.

17. Studies and thematic evaluations (1) / Ex post evaluations (1). Not initiated yet, but planned for the second part of FY21 are a thematic evaluation and an ex-post evaluation, the latter working from the foundation developed by a study commissioned in FY20 by the AF-TERG on ex-post evaluation.

18. Evaluation synthesis. The development of a final evaluation review / synthesis is ongoing and aimed to be completed by November 2020. This will be the first quality review of final evaluations reports, complying with the requirement – originally tasked to the EFC and Board Secretariat – to assess the overall quality of final evaluation reports according to a set a criteria described in Guidelines for Project/Programme Final Evaluations (AFB/EFC.5/.5).

19. Sharing outreach and communication on evaluation results. Two chapters in an edited volume are being developed as part of AF-TERG sharing and outreach. The edited volume is a

follow-up on the Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development, held in Prague, Czech Republic, in October 2019. One of the chapters will focus on the process of developing and applying an evaluability assessment framework, while the second chapter will focus on innovations in MEL of climate change adaptation. The launch of the publication is expected for July 2021.

20. The deliberative working papers resulting from the three studies were used to synthesize common challenges faced by the Adaptation Fund and adaptation evaluation practitioners. A document titled “Evaluating adaptation: common challenges identified across three commissioned studies” (AFB/EFC.26.b/Inf.2) will be presented at the twenty-sixth EFC meeting as information document, outlining five identified challenges and their implications for both Adaptation Fund stakeholders, and for the broader constituency of individuals and groups involved in the management and delivery of adaptation-focused MEL.

### Completed work (sub-)elements

21. Common Challenges identified across three studies (AFB/EFC.26.b/Inf.2). While the three studies were quite distinct, some common challenges faced by the Adaptation Fund and adaptation evaluation practitioners were identified. The briefing summarizes common problems that were apparent across all three studies, outlining the implications these challenges have for both Adaptation Fund stakeholders, and for the broader constituency of individuals and groups involved in the management and delivery of adaptation-focused MEL

- **Challenge 1:** Developing new MEL approaches for new MEL problems
- **Challenge 2:** Building MEL approaches that can work across contexts and systems
- **Challenge 3:** Strengthening MEL data management and use
- **Challenge 4:** Ensuring the genuine, substantive participation of all interest groups with MEL processes
- **Challenge 5:** Moving beyond accountability and strengthening MEL’s support for adaptive management and learning.

22. The five challenges are commonly faced when developing and implementing MEL approaches within any sector. However, these challenges are particularly significant for adaptation interventions; the pressures of climate change and adaptation are urgent and accelerating, yet there’s also an increasing recognition that depending on current and ‘legacy’ approaches to MEL will not be sufficient to generate data and learning quickly enough, nor in a way that can support the effective adaptive management of interventions. But adaptation interventions also offer a significant opportunity to address these persistent challenges in a comprehensive way. Many adaptation projects are unusually ‘data rich’, focused on – for example – the generation of new climatic data and the building of long-term monitoring infrastructure; adaptation projects also frequently work with groups and beneficiaries that invariably have deep insights into – for example – the functioning of ecosystems and the interdependencies between human populations and natural environments. To ensure that all this data and experience can be as valuable and influential as possible, MEL needs to become an integral part of adaptation project design, developed in parallel with – and indeed as part of – a project’s ‘core’ operations, rather than as an ‘add on’ activity.