



ADAPTATION FUND

7 December 2020

Adaptation Fund Board

Accreditation Panel Recommendation on the Fast-Track Re-accreditation of the Department of Environment (DoE) of Antigua and Barbuda as a National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund

Having reviewed the fast-track re-accreditation application of the Department of Environment (DoE), the Accreditation Panel recommended that DoE be re-accredited as a National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund.

A summary of the review is presented in Annex I below.

Re-accreditation Decision:

Having considered the recommendation of the Accreditation Panel and following the fast-track process approved by Decisions B.32/1, the Adaptation Fund Board decided to re-accredit ***the Department of Environment (DoE) of Antigua and Barbuda*** as a National Implementing Entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund for five years, as per paragraph 38 of the operational policies and guidelines for Parties to access resources from the Adaptation Fund. The accreditation expiration date is 6/12/2025.

Decision B.35-36/5

ANNEX I: REPORT OF THE ACCREDITATION PANEL ON AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT (ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA) FOR FAST TRACK RE-ACCREDITATION AS A NATIONAL IMPLEMENTING ENTITY (NIE) OF THE ADAPTATION FUND

Background

The Department of Environment (DoE) under the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Environment of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda (GoAB) has the core mandate of sustainable environmental protection and management. It performs this function through regulation and implementation of environmental policies of the government, as well as various multilateral agreements on environment and climate change. DoE is the national focal point of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. After its initial start as an advisory commission to the GoAB on environmental issues in the late 1980s, the Historical, Conservation and Environmental Commission was transformed into the Environment Division in 1996 through a cabinet decision. Following the Environmental Protection Management Act 2015 (EPMA 2015), the ED was transformed into DoE. The Act conferred DoE the authority and autonomy to develop, coordinate and implement innovative and cost-effective programs on climate change adaptation and mitigation. This was unchanged with the replacement of the EPMA 2015 with a new EPMA 2019. The Act established, and DoE is operationalizing, the financial mechanism – the Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund to implement these responsibilities.

DoE was accredited as a national implementing entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund in August 2015. It was subsequently accredited with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in October 2017, with conditions, under a fast-track process, in view of it being an AF-accredited NIE. Some conditions have been fulfilled and closed while others, which relate to GCF-funded programs/projects and not directly related to the AF accreditation criteria, are still in progress. DoE is eligible for fast-track re-accreditation under AF Board Decision B.28/38.

Assessment against the fast track re-accreditation criteria

The assessment for fast-track re-accreditation has, in accordance with Board Decisions B.28/38 (Fast-track re-accreditation of implementing entities accredited with the Green Climate Fund), B.34/3 (Updated Re-accreditation Process) and B.32/36 (Accreditation Standards Related to Anti-Money-Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism), focused on the following criteria:

- ❖ **The Fiduciary Standard related to the legal status** - The Panel notes that there has been no change to the legal personality of DoE and that it continues to have the authority and capacity to receive funds, to enter into contracts or agreements with international organizations, and serve as a plaintiff or defendant in a court of law. The repeal of the EPMA 2015 and its replacement with the EPMA 2019 did not affect the legal status of DoE. On the basis of these elements, the ***Panel concludes that DoE continues to meet this criterion.***
- ❖ **Policies and Framework to deal with financial mismanagement and other forms of malpractice** - The Panel is satisfied that DoE commits to and has maintained a policy of zero tolerance towards fraud, financial mismanagement and other forms of malpractice; adopted policies and practices to deter and detect such behavior; and has the commitment and the capability to receive reports of such behavior, have them objectively reviewed and

take appropriate action where the behavior is confirmed. As a government entity, the framework for DoE's commitments to anti-fraud and corruption policy are based on an extensive set of national laws and which DoE has adapted to its circumstances in an effort to meet international and multilateral requirements. In maintaining its own hotlines (operated by the Complaints Officer), DoE continues to rely on the mainly civil service profile of staff and relative accessibility of the public complaints mechanisms in a small island developing state. DoE's internal investigation function while still evolving has demonstrated its capability to successfully handle an actual case. DoE also relies on the national laws, government policies and mechanisms to discipline staff and to sanction third parties found to have engaged in prohibited practices. It has supplemented the government's framework, procedures and measures for anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) with its own internal measures which it was able to demonstrate during the application process. On the basis of these elements, the **Panel concludes that DoE continues to meet this criterion.**

- ❖ **Commitment by the entity to apply the Fund's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy** - DoE has undertaken to comply with the AF Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy with respect to AF projects. This commitment is supported by an environmental policy framework under which DoE has established a set of core environmental standards, a process for screening and categorizing environmental risk (consistent with DoE's Enterprise Risk Management Policy). The Environmental Protection Management Act 2019 passed by the Parliament of Antigua and Barbuda provides the basis of DoE's environmental policy framework. Social safety standards are encapsulated in various existing GoAB laws, policies and directives (Gender equality, Non-discrimination, Protection of livelihoods and housing, Stakeholder information and consultation) and they have been extracted from these to form, together with the environmental standards, DoE's Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Policy. DoE has approved a technical manual and updated its Strategic Plan, both of which will serve as the vehicle for operationalizing the ESS Policy.

With regards to gender, DoE's policy formalizes its commitment to mainstreaming gender nationally and achieving gender sensitivity in all its activities, pursuant to the national framework on gender. It lays out a clear set of principles and objectives that demonstrate its commitment to promoting social gender and sustainable development through its projects to ensure environmental, socio-economic and gender benefits. As a government department, DoE's Gender Policy aligns with the GoAB's "gender policies, priorities and principles aimed at protecting gender, human rights, and the environment" encapsulated in the nation's Constitution and relevant legislation, as well as international conventions to which Antigua and Barbuda is party. The policy is operationalized through embedding the DoE Gender Officer in project management, and coordinating with the Directorate of Gender Affairs in the Ministry of Social Transformation and Human Resource Development. On the basis of these elements, the **Panel concludes that DOE continues to meet this criterion.**

- ❖ **Mechanism to deal with complaints on environmental and social harms and gender harms caused by projects/programs** – The EPMA 2019 provides the authority of the DoE to set up and operate its projects/programs complaints mechanism. The Panel is satisfied that DoE has maintained the commitment and the capability to receive, have independently reviewed and take remedial action where appropriate on complaints regarding environmental, social and gender harms caused by its projects and programs. The mechanism is versatile, accessible and has been recently streamlined to include a

video feed on the website with instructions on accessing the various options for submitting complaints. The mechanism has demonstrated its effectiveness in receiving complaints and taking remedial action. On the basis of these elements, the ***Panel concludes that DOE continues to meet this criterion.***

- ❖ **Assessment of the implementing entity’s performance regarding project/program implementation.** Two Project Progress Reports (PPRs) have been submitted on the AF project under implementation by DoE and have been rated “satisfactory”, confirming that there are no serious implementation issues on the part of the entity. On this basis, the ***Panel concludes that DOE continues to meet this criterion.***

Recommendation

The Accreditation Panel recommends that DoE be re-accredited as a National Implementing entity (NIE) of the Adaptation Fund.