



ADAPTATION FUND

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Adaptation Fund Board  
Ethics and Finance Committee  
Twenty-ninth Meeting  
Bonn, Germany (Hybrid meeting), 5-6 April 2022

Agenda Item: 5 c)

**PROGRESS UPDATE ON EX POST EVALUATIONS AND  
EMERGING LESSONS FROM PHASE 2 (ON-GOING)  
TECHNICAL EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP  
OF THE ADAPTATION FUND (AF-TERG)**

## Background

1. At the twenty-eighth meeting (October 2016), the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) decided to request the secretariat to:

*[...]*

*Propose, at the twentieth meeting of the PPRC, options for how post-implementation learning and impact evaluation could be arranged for Adaptation Fund projects and programmes, taking into account ongoing discussions on the evaluation function of the Adaptation Fund, as well as Phase II of the evaluation.*

(Decision B.28/32, October 2016)

2. Pursuant to the Board Decision B.28/32, the secretariat developed a document (AFB/PPRC.20/30), which presented three options for how ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund projects and programmes could be arranged. The three options presented in the document were as follows:

*I. The Evaluation Function of the Adaptation Fund would conduct the ex post assessments.*

*II. The ex post evaluation would be conducted by independent evaluators but selected by the Implementing Entity (IE).*

*III. An external third party selected by the Adaptation Fund could perform the ex post evaluation.*

3. With consideration to the Board decision to approve the option of re-establishing a long-term evaluation function for the Fund through a Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG) (Decision B.30/38), and to the comments and recommendations of the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC), the Board decided:

*a) To convey the assessment of the two options to the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG), once it is operational, which will subsequently report to the Board on its preferred option; and*

*b) To request the AF-TERG to take into account the above discussion in the PPRC.*

(Decision B.31/24, March 2018)

4. The Board approved the Strategy and Work Programme document (AFB/EFC.26.a-26.b/3)<sup>1</sup> of the AF-TERG between the first and second parts of the thirty-fifth meeting (Decision

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/strategy-and-work-programme-of-the-adaptation-fund-technical-evaluation-reference-group-af-terg-2/>

B.35.a-35.b/29), which includes ex post evaluations during the indicative three-year evaluation work programme.<sup>2</sup>

5. The AF-TERG provided the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) with a progress update on ex post evaluations at its twenty-eighth meeting (AFB/EFC.28/Inf.4)<sup>3</sup> in October 2021, to update the Board on Phase 1 progress on ex post evaluations and future piloting.

## Introduction

6. The purpose of this document is to update the Board on progress for the ex post evaluation work implemented by the AF-TERG. It describes the approach taken and highlights preliminary lessons that are emerging based on piloting of ex post evaluation methodology in Samoa.

7. The AF-TERG work on ex post follows a multiphase process, including:

- Phase 1 (completed): which consisted of developing an innovative Fund-specific framework to conduct ex post evaluations, given the relative novelty of climate change adaptation portfolio and the limited body of work on ex post evaluation for adaptation. This phase also shortlisted five completed projects as pilots for ex post evaluation.
- Phase 2 (on-going): is training evaluators and main project stakeholders on methods and testing guidance and methods from Phase 1 in at least two pilots.
- Phase 3 (planned): proposes to continue ex post evaluations over time, informing approaches, methods, and systems within the Fund.

8. The three phases build on AF-TERG foundational work (Phase 0) implemented in FY20: an ex post evaluation study and an evaluability assessment of the Fund's portfolio, whose findings were summarized in document AFB/EFC.26.b/Inf.2.

9. The AF-TERG is now implementing Phase 2 of the ex post work, which consists of piloting ex post evaluations on the following projects:

- **Samoa** (UNDP, 2013-2018) Enhancing resilience of coastal communities to climate change.
- **Ecuador** (WFP, 2011-2018) Enhancing resilience of communities to the adverse effects of climate change on food security, in Pichincha province and the Jubones river basin.

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<sup>2</sup> The original Terms of Reference (ToR) for ex post evaluations provides more details on the background for the ex post work and can be found in the Phase one report for ex post project sustainability evaluation. This report is available on the AF-TERG website at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/publications/evaluations-and-studies/ex-post-evaluations/>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/progress-update-on-ex-post-evaluations-af-terg/>

10. Both ex post evaluation pilots aim to test methods and evaluate the sustainability of project and the ultimate aim of resilience by answering the following questions:

- How sustainable are project outcomes over time since project completion?
- How are sustained project outcomes climate resilient?

## **Phase 2: progress update on processes**

11. Phase 2 of the ex post work is divided in several stages: initial engagement with the Implementing Entity (IE) and evaluator; preparation of training materials; training with evaluator and in-country counterparts on ex post evaluation methods; a co-creation process with country stakeholders (including IEs) to choose outcomes to evaluate; fieldwork; and production of the ex post evaluation report.

12. The AF-TERG recruited national evaluators to conduct the evaluation pilots. Based on recommendations provided by the contacted IEs, and following a competitive process, Ms. Karen Komiti and Ms. Monica Ribadeneira Sarmiento were hired to conduct the ex post evaluations in Samoa and Ecuador respectively.

13. At the time of writing, evaluators and interested project staff from both projects have been trained and they are applying the training. Fieldwork is completed in Samoa and about to start in Ecuador. This allows the AF-TERG to draw preliminary lessons on processes and to adjust its methodological approach going forward.

## **Emerging lessons from testing the methodology in Samoa**

14. The ex post pilot in Samoa is the first in a series of pilot ex post evaluations of strategically selected projects that have closed 3-5 years before. It focuses on the Adaptation Fund project “Enhancing resilience of coastal communities of Samoa to climate change” (ERCC). The project was implemented between 2013 and 2018 with the objective of strengthening the ability of coastal communities to make informed decisions on climate change-induced hazards and to undertake concrete adaptation actions through 3 interlinked components:

- Component 1 focused on the review and update of Community Integrated Management (CIM) Plans which are community-based plans focused on adaptation response planning for individual villages
- Component 2 focused on the implementation of physical assets and structures for climate proofing, flood protection and shoreline protection measures

- Component 3 focused on securing the institutional and capacity improvements to enable full realization of the benefits under Components 1 and 2, by capturing key lessons learned and building capacity to ensure their sustainability.

### Ex post design and implementation

15. The Samoa ex post evaluation started at the end of October 2021 and covered a period of five months, carried out in different stages: review of project documentation, selection of outcomes to evaluate ex post; field visit and data collection; data analysis and report write-up.

16. A key design feature of the ex post methodology is the adoption of an approach of co-creation. This involved working closely with country stakeholders in the choice of the outcomes to be assessed and selection of sites for evaluation. The ex post evaluation team selected seven project infrastructures that aim to protect against flooding, storm surges and coastal erosion and assessed their sustainability and resilience to climate change. This choice was informed by a number of factors: measurable outcomes were only available for asset-related outcomes; and the availability and quality of project data, timing and budgets. The decision also encompassed national stakeholders learning priorities, taking into account previously mentioned conditions.

17. Training was another significant feature of the Phase 2, based on stakeholder learning priorities. The training was aimed at the in-country evaluator, the former IE, and executors of the evaluated projects. Other national and regional stakeholders were welcomed, as well as anyone interested in learning about ex post evaluations and this project. The training was delivered online over three days. The AF-TERG developed a comprehensive training consisting of presentations, worksheets on key concepts, entry and exit surveys, as well as voluntary quizzes to test understanding. The AF-TERG undertook considerable desk review, testing, and reshaping of training materials. It scrutinized each output for clarity, comprehensiveness and usability. The training content also drew on the (internal) guidance on methods prepared during Phase 1 of the ex post work. The guidance was shaped to address previous research on the quality and availability of data at project level.

18. In addition, the AF-TERG suggested several new tools to help the evaluators conduct their ex post evaluations and trace the impact to the Fund's adaptation outcome. These innovations include: (a) A Theory of Sustainability to explore the anticipated sustainability at ex post for specific outcomes and outputs; (b) the ex post verification of sustainability ratings that were made at final evaluation in the field; (c) the use of new qualitative methods to assess sustainability of outcomes; and (d) the use of a new framework to assess resilience of sustained outcomes.

19. The fieldwork consisted in administering qualitative community participatory tools, Focus Group Discussions (FDG), one-on-one Key Informant Interviews (KII), transect walks and field observation.

### Emerging Lessons from Phase 2 process

The pilot of the ex post methodological approach in Samoa has provided a rich set of lessons that will inform adjustment of the approach for future ex post work. A few of these lessons are highlighted below:

20. **The selected projects and IEs were receptive to the pilot evaluation.** Selection of projects for the pilot ex post evaluation were based on criteria, including countries' availability and the willingness of IEs to participate in ex post evaluation. The piloting IE responded positively to the idea of participating in the ex post evaluations, seeing them as an opportunity to learn. It took consistent follow-up to account for COVID-19 safety, timing/availability, and ensure understanding of the exercise.

21. **Co-creation significantly facilitated stakeholder participation.** The training and preparation of the fieldwork followed a co-creation process. The structure and content of the training aimed to engage the evaluator and country stakeholders directly. They participated in both the choice of the outcome to evaluate and the evaluation site, based on country stakeholders' learning priorities and interest. The processes of training, preparation of fieldwork, followed by co-creation of the evaluation approach with project stakeholders has been important for stakeholder engagement. The structure and content of the training aimed to engage the evaluator and country stakeholders directly. This enabled stakeholders to participate in both the choice of the outcome to evaluate and the evaluation site, based on country stakeholders' learning priorities and interest.

22. **Mapping exercises were useful in identifying key stakeholders.** The approach enabled country-participants to identify candidates for key informant interviews based on who benefited from the evaluated assets. This process also aimed to determine their relative power and interest in the generation and sustainability of project outcomes at and since project exit; and key climate disturbances (acute shocks and longer-term chronic changes) affecting and affected by the targeted outcome

23. **M&E data availability was a major constraint and needed adapted methodologies.** This included lack of quality M&E data in documentation (missing or absent baseline information, missing or incomplete ToCs, logframes that do not allow the capture of change for each component, etc.). These learnings also highlight the issue of how the Fund might improve its MEL processes to ensure more robust and available data for ex post. Lessons from the fieldwork show that timing and budget of the evaluation also influenced methods, potentially impacting the quality of findings.

24. **The absence of a Theory of Change at project design was a limitation to assessing sustainability.** The review of the project results framework showed that there was no Theory of Change (ToC) at project design and that data at output-level was captured in the project. It also showed that there were no indicators or measures that enabled the capture of change in the entire project results framework. There was also no maintenance of the monitoring matrices after project implementation.

**Next steps**

25. The field work for Samoa has been completed and has provided detailed findings for each of the seven infrastructure sites. The findings, which are under internal review by the AF-TERG, suggest that all seven infrastructures have addressed vulnerabilities and enhanced the adaptive capacities of communities regarding shoreline (coastal) and flood (wetland) hazards. Climate and natural events will however continue into the future with progressive severity, and the evaluation has shown that communities are still vulnerable to multiple hazards. Observations and findings on the Samoa project are under discussion with the relevant stakeholders that participated in the evaluation. The AF-TERG expects to finalize the report in the next few months and share this with the EFC.

26. In general, the pilot has provided provisional lessons for standards of evaluation, data quality and information retention needed for ex post evaluations. It also informs on considerations for project selection and fieldwork for Phase 3.

27. The co-creation process has shown that engaging stakeholders was one valuable aspect of ex post evaluations. In general, the process helped uncover lessons about project evaluability and readiness for ex post. In one important lesson, the quality of project data and data retention influenced the choice of outcome to evaluate and the methods used. The quality of findings for ex post evaluations will be hampered without sufficient data availability and strong data quality.

28. Phase 2 will continue with the work in Ecuador. Lessons from the fieldwork in both pilots will be consolidated. The team will make an assessment of these lessons and how they could be incorporated in the development of the final methodology that will be used in Phase 3, to begin a series of ex post evaluations in the future. This will be presented and discussed with the EFC in the context of the AF-TERG's future work program and budget.