

Toolkit for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions



*Açaí juçara workshop in Três Cachoeiras, Rio Grande do sul, Brazil.
(Photo by Tiago Meirelles)*



Technical Evaluation
Reference Group
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Acronyms



AF	Adaptation Fund
AF-TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund
CI/EWS	Climate information and early warning systems
ExPost-EAI	Sustainability Framework for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions
FCAS	Fragile and conflict-affected state
IE	Implementing Entity
MTR	Mid-term review
QA/QC	Quality assurance/quality control
QCA	Qualitative comparative analysis
The Fund	Adaptation Fund
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToS	Theory of Sustainability
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. About this toolkit



Welcome to the toolkit designed for the ex post evaluation of adaptation-related projects and programmes. This comprehensive guide is intended to support Implementing Entities and evaluation contractors to better understand the requirements of ex post evaluations of the Adaptation Fund projects and programmes.

The aim of conducting an ex post evaluation outlined in this document is threefold:

- 1. Assess changes in project outcomes:** Evaluate how project outcomes have evolved from the final evaluation to the ex post assessment conducted three to five years after the project's administrative closure.
- 2. Identify sustainability conditions:** Determine the conditions that have enabled the project's adaptation outcomes to be sustained over time.
- 3. Analyze contribution to resilience:** Explore how sustained outcomes are enhancing the resilience of the broader system.

Ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund projects help to understand how interventions contribute to building resilience and adapting to climate change in developing countries, considering the complex range of influencing factors.

The resources in this toolkit are designed to guide users through the requirements and logical steps for initiating, planning, managing, and learning from the evaluation of Adaptation Fund projects after completion. It provides a structured approach to evaluating the sustainability of adaptation interventions and outlines each step of the evaluation process, from preparation to the use of the evaluation results. The document clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Adaptation Fund partnership in conducting ex post evaluations and specifies the content needed in the evaluation report, as well as the procedures for its submission. Additionally, the toolkit describes the rating scales used to assess the sustainability of project outcomes over time, based on specific criteria observed during the evaluation.

Whether you are an Implementing Entity, evaluation contractor, or other stakeholder interested in assessing the sustainability of adaptation projects, this toolkit offers valuable guidance and practical tools to enhance your evaluation process. It is a living document, designed to evolve over time based on insights gained from ongoing evaluations.

2. Background

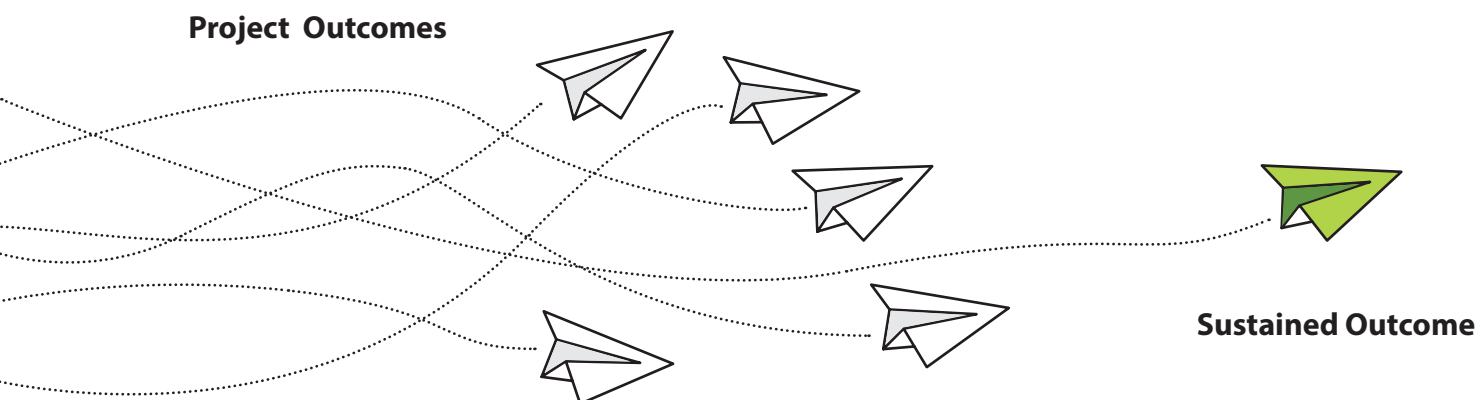


Ex post evaluations of adaptation interventions are a rarity among funders, despite their valuable potential for learning and improving future climate resilience. Key challenges include limited funding allocated mainly to initial monitoring and evaluation, difficulties in measuring long-term impacts, and logistical issues in accessing post-project data. Additionally, there is often a preference for investing in new projects rather than evaluating completed ones, which hinders opportunities for learning and improvement.

In 2022, recognizing this gap, the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) embarked on a pioneering initiative: a series of ex post evaluation pilots aimed at deriving critical insights from completed Adaptation Fund projects and programmes.

As a result of these pioneering efforts, the AF-TERG has developed a Sustainability Framework for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions (ExPost-EAI). The framework has been designed for assessing changes in the project outcomes from the time of the final evaluation to the time of the evaluation ex post, that is, three to five years after the project's administrative closure.

For Adaptation Fund (AF) projects, impacts are understood as the adaptation benefits generated by the project. These may include increased climate resilience and reduced climate risks through changes in a system's vulnerability, exposure, and/or adaptive capacity. The Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions (ExPost-EAI) Framework further helps identify the conditions that have sustained a project's adaptation outcomes over time and how these sustained outcomes contribute to the system's resilience.



3. Understanding ex post evaluation



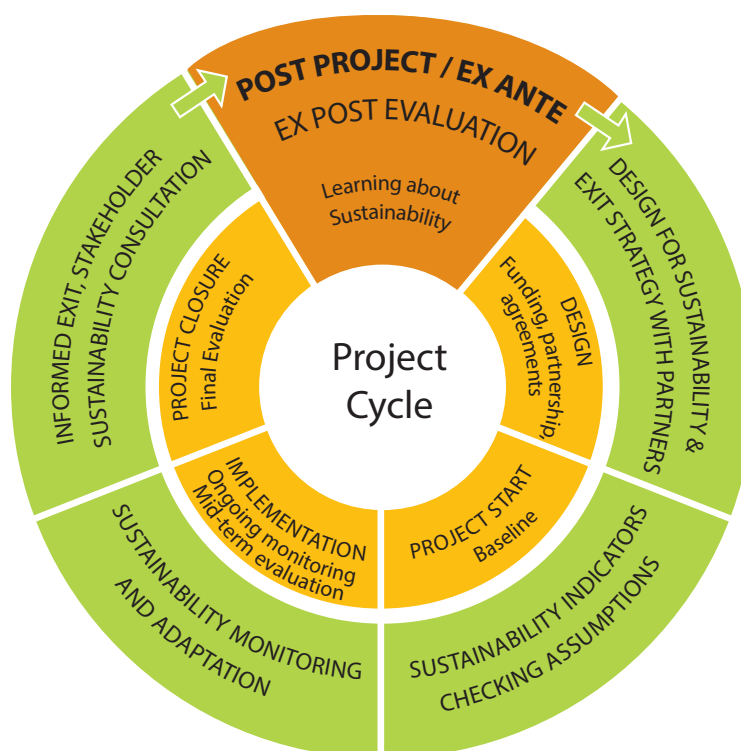
What is ex post evaluation?

Ex post evaluation refers to the assessment conducted after a project or intervention has been completed. Its primary goal is to evaluate the extent to which the project's objectives were achieved and to analyse the factors that contributed to or hindered the project's outcomes (OECD, 2023).

This type of evaluation is closely tied to the concept of **sustainability**, which concerns whether the benefits of the intervention continue or are expected to continue over time (OECD 2021). Unlike assessments conducted at the end of a project, which often involve estimating the likelihood of sustainability based on predictive factors, ex post evaluation specifically examines the actual continuation of benefits over a period of time following the project's completion.

Figure 1 outlines the relationship between ex post evaluation and different phases of the project cycle, ensuring that lessons learned contribute to ongoing improvements in development practice.

Figure 1. Embedding ex post evaluation and sustainability in the project cycle



Source: Adapted from Cekan J. (2016)

Why are ex post evaluations crucial for adaptation projects?

As the need for faster, more responsive, and adaptable processes to achieve resilient development pathways grows, capturing insights from past interventions becomes essential. However, we often lack evidence on what worked and why it worked – particularly under constantly changing conditions. Decision-makers and practitioners need this information to design better policies, interventions, and programs, enabling greater transparency and a clearer understanding of the trade-offs and risks involved.

While mid-term and final project evaluations provide snapshots of immediate successes, ex post evaluations are especially pertinent in climate change adaptation due to the evolving nature of environmental conditions and community resilience. They provide insights into whether adaptation measures continue to address current and emerging challenges, ensuring that interventions remain relevant.

Ex post evaluations of adaptation interventions offer a multitude of benefits for various stakeholders involved in climate adaptation efforts. These benefits include:

- **Learning and improvement:** ex post evaluations provide an opportunity to reflect on the project's outcomes, successes, and shortcomings. This reflective process allows stakeholders to identify lessons learned and areas for improvement in future projects.
- **Enhancing accountability:** ex post evaluations contribute to increasing upwards accountability to donors and decision-makers, as well as downwards accountability to the intended project participants, fostering transparency and trust in the implementation process.
- **Understanding impact:** ex post evaluations help understand the actual impact of the project over time and identify any unintended impacts that may have arisen over time. This information is especially valuable for understanding the project's adaptation benefits given the gradual development of adaptive capacity and resilience. Ex post evaluations allow for assessing medium-term impacts that may not have been immediately apparent during implementation, as well as understanding how early project outcomes contribute to long-term adaptation goals.

- **Improving project design and management:** the findings from an ex post evaluation can inform the design, strategy, and management of future adaptation projects. Whether it's about allocating resources, adjusting strategies, or replicating successful approaches, the evaluation provides valuable insights to guide these decisions.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Engaging stakeholders in the ex post evaluation process fosters dialogue, builds trust, and strengthens relationships. It demonstrates a willingness to listen to feedback and engage in collaborative efforts for continuous improvement.
- **Evidence-based reporting:** Ex post evaluations generate evidence-based reports that can be used for internal reporting purposes, external communication, and meeting reporting requirements of donors or regulatory bodies.
- **Improving transparency in reporting:** Ex post evaluations contribute to increasing transparency and generating essential information for country-level reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, facilitating informed decision-making at the global level.

Overall, ex post evaluations play a crucial role in not only assessing the sustainability of adaptation interventions but also in informing future strategies and actions towards climate resilience.

Objectives and evaluation questions

The aim of conducting an ex post evaluation of adaptation-related projects and programmes outlined in this document is threefold:

1. To assess changes in project outcomes – both positive and negative – from the final evaluation to the ex post evaluation conducted three to five years after the project's administrative closure.
2. To identify conditions that contributed towards – or detracted from – sustaining the project's adaptation outcomes over time.
3. To analyse ways through which the sustained outcomes are contributing to the system's resilience.

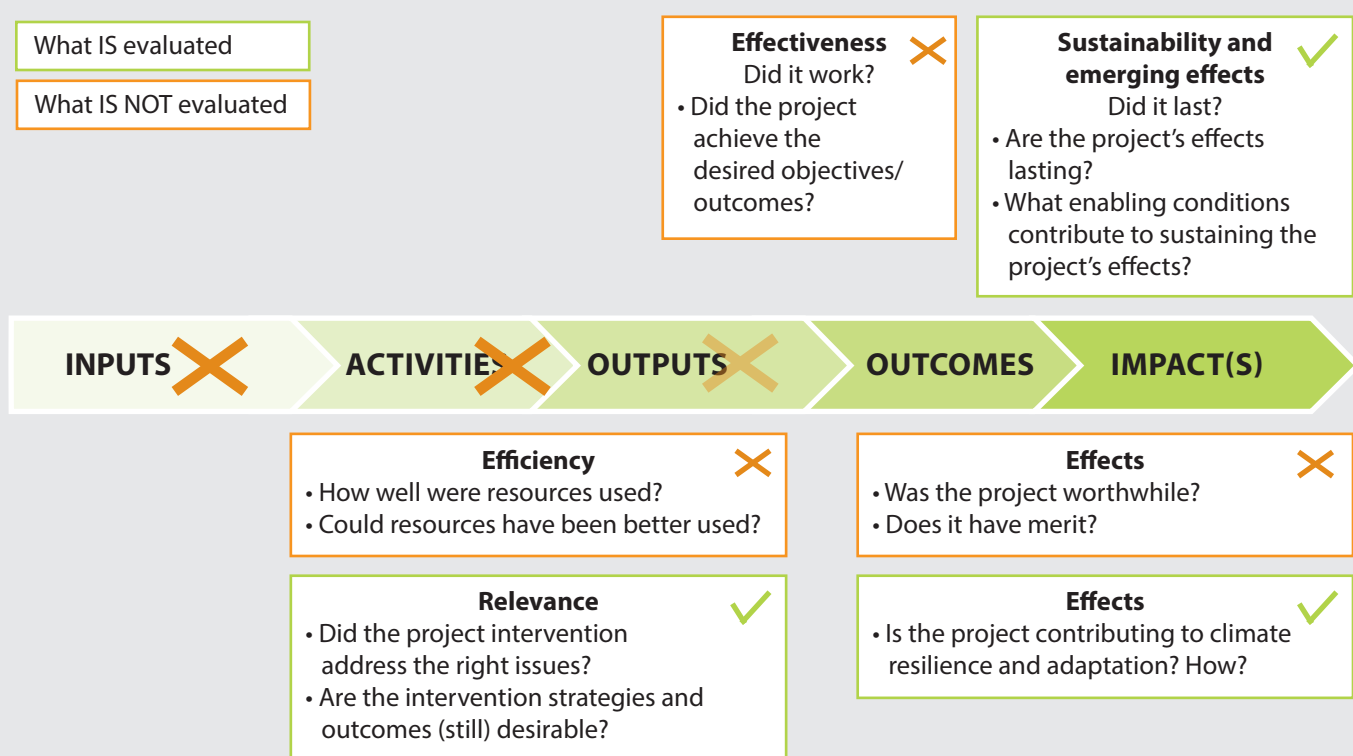
The high-level evaluation questions that the ex post evaluation is designed to answer are the following:

1. Have the project outcomes been sustained since completion?
2. Which factors have contributed towards – or detracted from – sustaining the project’s adaptation outcomes over time?
3. How do the sustained outcome characteristics contribute to the system’s resilience?

Ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund projects focus on understanding how project interventions contributed to sustained adaptation benefits within a complex set of influencing factors, rather than aiming to establish a direct causal link between the project and outcomes.

During this ex post evaluation process, the sustainability prospects (and rating) provided in the final evaluation are reassessed. While the sustainability rating at the time of the final evaluation is an estimate predicting the likelihood of outcomes being sustained over time, the ex post sustainability rating verifies the actual persistence of project outcomes, specifically which adaptation outcomes have endured since the project’s completion.

Figure 2. Understanding ex post evaluation: what is evaluated ex post?



When to conduct ex post evaluations?

Ex post project evaluations should be conducted under specific conditions and time frames to ensure they are effective and meaningful. The timing of these evaluations should consider factors such as the project's nature, objectives, and the expected duration of its net benefits, among other considerations.

The AF-TERG evaluates adaptation to climate change interventions three to five years after project completion, which entails both challenges and opportunities. Challenges arise due to the long-term nature of adaptation processes, which include temporal lag in impacts, complex causal pathways, uncertainty in responses, and the gradual development of adaptive capacity and resilience (see Section 7. Limitations and challenges for a more detailed description). These factors necessitate longitudinal data collection and adaptive evaluation methods to accurately assess the sustained effectiveness and resilience-building aspects of adaptation projects.

Conducting evaluations after three to five years allows for assessing medium-term effects that may not be immediately apparent during project implementation (or shortly thereafter) and understanding how initial project outcomes contribute to long-term adaptation goals. Secondly, this period strikes a balance between capturing early results and allowing for longer-term changes to manifest, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of how adaptation interventions interact with evolving environmental, social, and economic contexts. Lastly, this time frame is intended to mitigate challenges related to changes in stakeholder engagement over time, recollection bias, and accessing reliable data several years after project closure.

This selection window does not imply that evaluators should rule out an ex post approach for projects that have been closed longer than five years, nor should it discourage an evaluation team from returning to a project more than once. The timing of AF-TERG ex post evaluations reflects its programming, which currently supports one to two ex post evaluations per year. However, there are examples of organizations that return to a project site repeatedly after closure (JICA 2024a, JICA 2024b). Evaluating adaptation interventions over the long term is encouraged. These types of evaluations can provide valuable information on the duration of adaptation benefits and the climate hazards and resilient outcomes that may only emerge over a longer time horizon.

4. Sustainability Framework for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions



The Sustainability Framework for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions (ExPost-EAI) is a structured method for evaluating the sustainability of adaptation interventions, crucial for improving future projects and programmes and ensuring they effectively help developing countries build resilience and adapt to climate change. It enables the identification of factors that may have enhanced or diminished the project's long-term impacts and provides insights into how project interventions have contributed to a system's resilience. Based on this analysis, the relevance of the project outcomes to the Adaptation Fund's strategic objectives can be assessed.

The ExPost-EAI framework structures the evaluation process around the **human and environmental system** in which the project was implemented and where its net adaptation benefits are expected to manifest. The boundaries of this system are usually established during the project's design phase and can be physical, conceptual, or temporal. These boundaries may also shift over time. During the evaluation phase, clearly defining the system allows evaluators to determine which environmental, climatic, social, economic, and political components fall within its scope and which do not. This, in turn, helps establish the boundaries of the assessment.

Within the human and environmental system, **adaptation interventions** implemented by the project are defined as measures aimed at reducing climate change risks, typically achieved by enhancing a system's resilience, adaptive capacity, and/or reducing its vulnerability and exposure. Following the Theory of Change, Adaptation Fund projects generate outputs – immediate results or products of project activities. These outputs contribute to achieving adaptation outcomes, which, in Adaptation Fund projects, represent improvements in resilience, reduced vulnerability, and enhanced adaptive capacity within targeted systems.

During the project's final evaluation, evaluators assess quantitative and qualitative indicators established to measure progress towards adaptation outcomes. This includes determining whether indicators were fully met, partially met, or not met.

In the subsequent **ex post evaluation**, these indicators are reassessed to track changes in their status since the final project evaluation. This process verifies the sustainability of project outcomes by identifying which adaptation

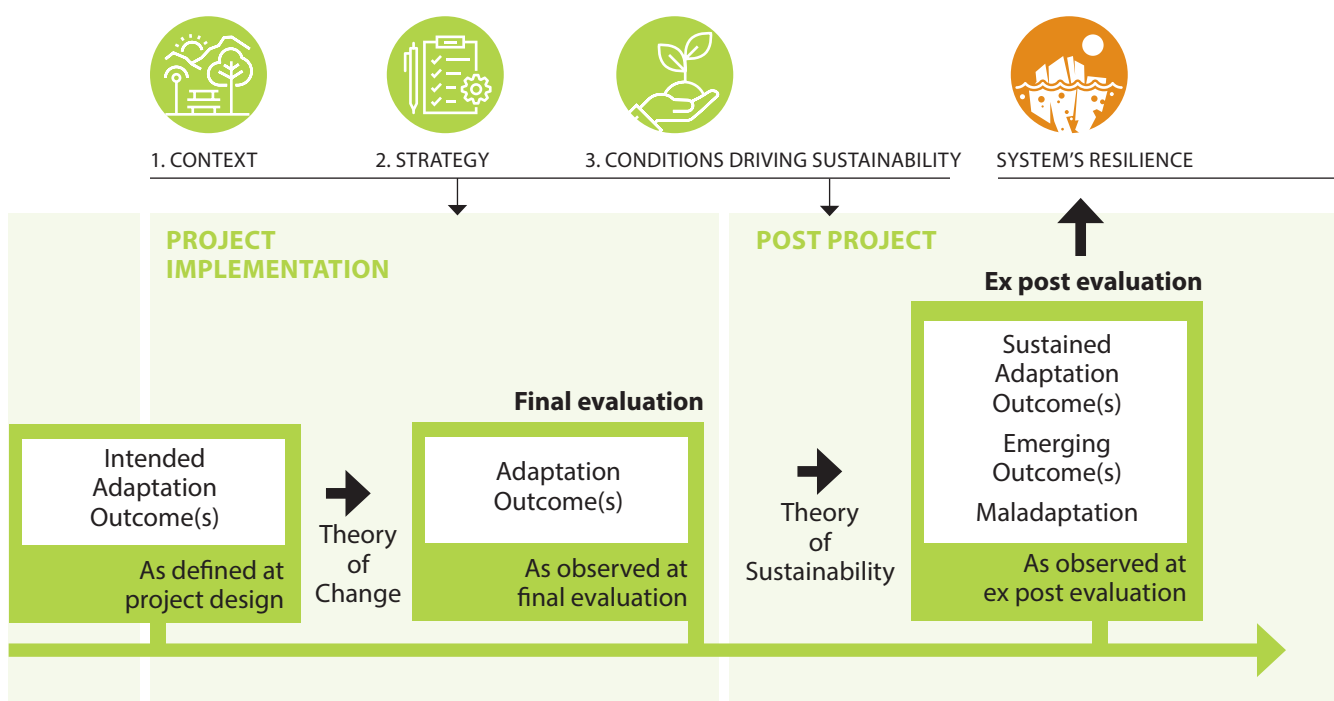
outcomes have persisted since project completion.¹ Additionally, the assessment examines the conditions that have either supported or hindered the long-term sustainability of these outcomes.

Once the adaptation outcomes sustained at the point of the ex post assessment are identified, their contribution to increase the system's resilience is described using selected resilience attributes. **Resilience** is understood as “the capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure”(IPCC, 2021).

In summary, an ex-post evaluation using the ExPost-EAI framework begins by identifying which outcomes have been maintained since project completion. It then examines the factors that have either supported or hindered their sustainability and assesses how these sustained adaptation outcomes contribute to the overall resilience of the system.

Figure 3 presents the main elements of the ExPost-EAI framework, which are further explained in this section and detailed in **Appendix A**.

Figure 3. The Sustainability Framework for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions (ExPost-EAI)



1. This contrasts with assessing sustainability at project completion, where the sustainability rating is an estimate based on various factors predicting the likelihood of outcomes being sustained over time.

Sustainability of project outcomes

An ex post evaluation is usually conducted three to five years after the project's final evaluation, during which changes are anticipated to have taken place. Over time, certain project outcomes may have diminished or ceased, while others may have expanded. Some outcomes could have resulted in unintended consequences or maladaptation. The evaluation may also reveal emerging outcomes, such as instances where stakeholders pursued new pathways to sustain the project outcomes or achieved entirely new outcomes that were not initially planned by the donors and implementers. The ExPost-EAI framework evaluates changes in the project outcomes from the implementation phase – including **intended adaptation outcomes** and those observed **at project completion** (final evaluation) – to the time of the ex post evaluation, **assessing sustained** and emerging outcomes, as well as potential **maladaptation** (see Figure 3).

Adaptation outcomes are evaluated through project output and outcome indicators. Thus, it is essential to evaluate the availability and quality of data early in the process to determine whether a project is suitable for an ex post evaluation and meets the criteria for evaluability. This topic is further discussed in Section 6 (Phase 1) of this document.

Sustained adaptation outcomes observed ex post represent a snapshot in time and should not be equated with definitive project success or predictive of future outcomes. Instead, they provide valuable insights into the medium-term impacts of the project, which may not have been fully evident during initial implementation. This helps in understanding how the initial project's outcomes contribute to long-term adaptation goals. Furthermore, evaluating sustained and emerging outcomes enhances our understanding of how adaptation interventions interact within evolving environmental, social, and economic contexts.

Key aspects for assessing sustainability

An additional purpose of the evaluation is to identify conditions that have contributed towards – or detracted from – sustaining the project's adaptation outcomes over time. Following the ExPost-EAI framework, these are categorized into:

- 1. Context:** includes reviewing the characteristics of the human-natural systems where the project was implemented and assessing changes

in conditions after the project's final evaluation that influenced the sustainability of adaptation outcomes. Particularly relevant are climate-related risks and their impacts on the system that motivated the project strategic adaptation and resilience objectives.

2. Project strategy: includes reviewing project design and strategy, noting any relevant changes during implementation, and becoming familiar with project performance and sustainability projections at final evaluation. The ex post evaluation also examines the project's final evaluation, sustainability plan, and exit strategy (if available) to gain insights into identified risks, planned mitigation measures, and assumptions regarding the sustainability of outcomes at project completion. These insights are then compared and tested against evidence gathered during the ex post evaluation process.

3. Conditions driving sustainability: involve assessing conditions that uphold the adaptation benefits generated by the project and comparing them to anticipated conditions at the final evaluation. The same approach is also used to identify barriers to sustainability for outcomes that were observed at final evaluation but were not sustained since, or whose impacts diminished over time.

These conditions manifest across various levels (individual, institutional, community, ecosystem, etc.) and can be classified into the following categories²:

- a) Stakeholders' **ownership** of project outcomes and interventions.
- b) Development and maintenance of **capacities**
- c) Development and maintenance of **partnerships**.
- d) Availability of tangible and intangible **resources**

Contribution to the system's resilience

Once the sustained adaptation outcomes and their key supporting factors have been identified, the ExPost-EAI framework examines how they support the system's resilience. It is worth noting that the resilience of the project itself is not evaluated ex post³.

2. These categories are comparable to the "Sustainability and Exit Strategies Conceptual Framework" developed by Coates & Kegode (2012). The underlying hypothesis of their framework for ex post evaluations is that project impacts depend on the continued delivery of the following factors: (1) motivation, (2) resources, (3) capacity, and (4) linkages.

3. The ExPost-EAI framework examines resilience through a project as opposed to resilience of a project.

The pathways through which the sustained adaptation outcomes contribute to the system's resilience are described in terms of the following characteristics⁴:

- 1. Scale:** effects on the temporal or spatial scale needed for human-natural systems to maintain or change their functions and structures in the face of climate disturbances.
- 2. Redundancy:** effects on the availability of resources, means, or options to support climate resilience.
- 3. Diversity & inclusion:** effects on the variety of actors and inputs working/interacting towards common goals and the extent to which the project outcomes support equity and inclusiveness.
- 4. Flexibility:** effects on the system's agility in responding to uncertainty, effectively tackling challenges, and seizing opportunities that may arise from change.
- 5. Connectedness & feedback loops:** on communication lines, access to information or partnerships to respond or adapt to shocks or stressors.

Evaluators should prioritize specific elements of the framework based on project objectives, characteristics, resource availability, and evidence to inform the evaluation process.

Further details on the assessment of these key aspects are provided in **Appendix A.**

Box 1. Relevance

The Adaptation Fund Evaluation Criteria defines relevance as “the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, and global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. Relevance also refers to the intervention's consistency with country-driven priorities.”

It can be argued that if an intervention remains relevant over time, it is more likely to be sustained. This relevance could be either directly through the intervention itself or indirectly through new pathways through which emerging outcomes continue to support resilience efforts.

By analyzing the key aspects of sustainability – especially changes in the context since project closure – alongside the contribution of sustained outcomes to system resilience, we can assess the ongoing relevance of the project's effects in the ex post context.

4. Adapted from Ospina & Kumari Rigaud (2021).

5. Sustainability rating for ex post evaluations of adaptation interventions



Determining a project's direct impact and attributing outcomes specifically to its interventions is not a realistic goal for an ex post evaluation. External factors such as economic shifts, political changes, or environmental conditions can influence a project's outcomes, making it difficult to isolate the effects of the project itself. Due to this, ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund projects explore the causal contribution of project interventions to the system's adaptive capacity along with other elements. That is, the ex post evaluation does not seek to establish a direct causal link between the project and the sustained adaptation outcomes but rather explores how the intervention played a role amid a constellation of other influencing factors.

The contribution of the project to adaptation processes will be assessed based on the elements of the ExPost-EAI framework. The ratings will be on a six-point scale (highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory) as detailed in Table 1, which includes descriptions of the expected level of evidence. In many cases, evidence may not align perfectly with any of the rating descriptions. Consequently, a rating will be assigned based on the description that most accurately reflects the available evidence.

Sustainability ex post is defined as the extent to which the project's adaptation benefits to the environment and communities **have continued** beyond the project's life, and are supported by resources, partnerships, capacities, and ownership across various levels (e.g. individual, institutional, community, and ecosystem).

Table 1. Sustainability rating for ex post evaluations of adaptation Interventions

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The project's contributions to adaptation benefits for the environment and/or communities exceed the initially expected outcomes. Complementary, there may be unintended positive benefits of the project. There are sufficient resources, partnerships, capacities, and local ownership of activities that sustain positive benefits.
Satisfactory (S)	The project's contributions to adaptation benefits for the environment and/or communities meet the initially expected outcomes. Complementary, there may be unintended positive benefits of the project. There are sufficient resources, partnerships, capacities, and local ownership of activities that sustain positive benefits.

Rating	Description
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Only some of the project's adaptation benefits to the environment and communities persist. Complementary, there may be unintended positive benefits of the project for the environment and/or communities. There may not be sufficient resources, partnerships, capacities, and local ownership of activities to sustain all positive benefits.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Only some of the project's adaptation benefits to the environment and communities persist. Additional resources, partnerships, capacities, and local ownership of activities are needed to sustain positive results. Some of the project outcomes are maladaptive - meaning they have led to unintended negative effects on the environment and/or communities, potentially increasing vulnerability to climate change, exacerbating existing issues, or creating new risks.
Unsatisfactory (U)*	The project's contribution to adaptation benefits for the environment and/or communities is minor. There are insufficient resources, partnerships, capacities, and local ownership of activities to sustain positive results. Some of the project outcomes are maladaptive - meaning they have led to unintended negative effects on the environment and/or communities, potentially increasing vulnerability to climate change, exacerbating existing issues, or creating new risks.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)*	The project's adaptation benefits for the environment and/or communities do not persist. The project has resulted in maladaptation, meaning it has inadvertently increased the vulnerability to climate change, exacerbated existing problems, or created new risks.
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow assessment of the sustained outcomes.

* Note: Currently, Adaptation Fund projects with no reported results at the time of project completion are not recommended for a full ex post evaluation.

6. The evaluation process



An ex post evaluation diverges from the conventional evaluation process in the sequencing of activities and structure. Instead of initially setting detailed purposes and objectives, an ex post evaluation begins by assessing the feasibility of evaluating a project or project portfolio, considering the availability and quality of information necessary for conducting such an assessment. Further details about the planning and implementation of the ex post evaluation process based on the ExPost-EAI framework are detailed in this section.

The planning and implementation of an ex post evaluation is organized into five steps, as illustrated in Figure 4. For each step of the evaluation process, different tools and methods may be used, some of which are suggested in this document. An effective ex post evaluation, aiming for a robust retrospective outlook, necessitates the utilization of diverse methods and perspectives. The triangulation of multiple methods and input from various stakeholders will strengthen the reliability of findings and ensure the quality of data, particularly when qualitative data is involved. As such, the evaluation team is encouraged to incorporate additional tools and data sources as needed.

The ex post evaluation should involve active participation from various stakeholders and, whenever possible, adopt a co-creation approach. The evaluators should strive to engage project stakeholders at every stage of the evaluative process, from the initial preparation and design, e.g., by collaboratively shaping the evaluation questions and validating or reconstructing the Theory of Change, to jointly executing field validation activities, and finally, sharing learnings. Box 2 lists opportunities for co-creation during the evaluation process.

Figure 4. The five steps of the ex post evaluation toolkit

01	02	03	04	05
 PREPARATION • Project evaluability assessment • Implementing Entity engagement • Commissioning the evaluation • Formative work • Kick-off and stakeholder engagement meeting	 DESKWORK • Project documentation review • Revisit the Theory of Change. • Interviews with Key Stakeholders • Define the scope of the evaluation	 FIELDWORK DESIGN • Site and sample selection • Data collection procedures and instruments • Field mission and plan logistics • Field mission schedule <u>Deliverables:</u> ✓INCEPTION REPORT	 EXPOST MISSION, DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING • Fieldwork • Data analysis • Report preparation <u>Deliverables:</u> ✓EVALUATION REPORT ✓EVALUATION SUMMARY ✓PRESENTATION OF RESULTS (PPTX or similar)	 DESSEMINATION AND LEARNING • Presentation of results to stakeholders. • Posting the ex post evaluation summary and report on the AF-TERG website • Translation of evaluation summary to relevant languages. • Utilization of ex post results and lessons learned to refine approach and inform future programming.

Box 2. Co-creation as part of the ex post evaluation process

The Adaptation Fund employs a co-creational approach to the ex post evaluations of its projects and programmes. This approach emphasizes collaborative design and implementation of evaluations, leveraging the expertise and perspectives of diverse stakeholders to generate robust evidence and ensure strong ownership throughout the process.

Key opportunities for co-creation include:

- 1. Preparation phase:** the evaluation team discusses with the client and main stakeholders the learning needs. They jointly define the evaluation questions and scope and agree on the best methods and approaches to evaluate specific project outcomes.
- 2. Deskwork:** secondary information is complemented and validated by interviews with key stakeholders.
- 3. Fieldwork design:** the evaluation team, with support of relevant stakeholders prepares the field mission by co-designing the appropriate approach and methods given the available resources and information.
- 4. Fieldwork execution:** (former) project staff accompanies the evaluation team. Evaluation team uses participatory approaches to collect data and information from project beneficiaries.
- 5. Reporting:** draft report is shared with relevant stakeholders for feedback. Feedback from relevant stakeholders is incorporated into the final evaluation report.
- 6. Dissemination and learning:** collaborate and plan for targeted knowledge products and sharing and learning of results and analysis.

Phase 1. Preparation

Project evaluability assessment

The screening of projects is a necessary step to identify those projects that are best suited for conducting an evaluation ex post. Relevant criteria to assess during the screening process include the time passed since project closure, data availability and quality, safety conditions for conducting fieldwork, stakeholders' interest and willingness, and financial and technical feasibility, among others.

For AF projects, the AF-TERG is responsible for conducting the project evaluability assessment. This is done each year, as new projects enter the time frame in which they become eligible for ex post evaluation. The methodology used by the AF-TERG for prioritizing (pre-selecting) Adaptation Fund projects for ex post evaluation is outlined in Appendix B.

The AF-TERG reports to the AF Board on the results of this assessment as part of its annual update reports. These reports allow for valuable lessons to be learned from projects that are not selected for ex post evaluation.

Box 3. Project information / data archiving

It is highly recommended that Implementing Entities **archive all project data and information for five years following project closure in an accessible, identifiable location**. This should include disaggregated data to track field sites, participants, stakeholders, and other relevant monitoring and evaluation (M&E) information. Doing so not only ensures that secondary (background) data is available to support potential ex post evaluation, but it is good practice as part of accountable project management.

Implementing Entity engagement

When the Implementing Entity of a project differs from the entity commissioning the evaluation, such as in the case of ex post evaluations carried out by the Adaptation Fund, it becomes essential to involve them beforehand and secure their cooperation. Without their endorsement, conducting an ex post evaluation would not be advisable or meaningful, as they are among the primary stakeholders who will benefit from the evaluation outcomes.

Notifying the Implementing Entity about the potential ex post evaluation and obtaining their approval may take time, depending on their administrative processes. Therefore, it is important to allocate sufficient time for this step in the planning process.

Commissioning the evaluation

The ex post evaluation should be carried out by an independent evaluation team. The recommended minimum team composition for evaluations commissioned by the AF-TERG includes an international evaluator, a national evaluator, and a project manager. This team is complemented by an AF-TERG focal point that oversees the evaluation process.

When contracting for the ex post evaluation, the Terms of Reference (ToR) become the cornerstone document in the evaluation process and should therefore clearly outline the conditions, scope, and expected outputs of the evaluation.

For ex post evaluations it is particularly important to include specifications regarding the timing of the fieldwork to align with the timing of the final evaluation,⁵ time requirements for training the evaluation team (including both local and international evaluators) on the ExPost-EAI framework, and the specific language proficiency required for the country in question. Indicative ToR for conducting ex post evaluations commissioned by the AF-TERG can be found in Appendix C.

Programme and project evaluations must be commissioned through an open and transparent procurement process. When the AF-TERG commissions evaluations, they adhere to the Adaptation Fund Evaluation Policy and World Bank Group procurement procedures.

Useful resources:

- [Adaptation Fund Evaluation Policy - Commissioning and Managing an Evaluation.](#)

5. Timing is especially important in agriculture, forestry, and food security projects, where seasonality will affect what evaluators observe.

Formative work

Formative work will take place at various stages of the evaluation process, and it will include training of the evaluation team, the (former) project staff, Implementing Entities, and other stakeholders. It will be an important step in increasing the buy-in and support from all stakeholders. Formative work will further serve to achieve a more even understanding of the ex post evaluation process, the ExPost-EAI framework, and the specific methods and tools to be used during the evaluation exercise.

Key points in time to conduct formative work include during the “kick-off and stakeholder engagement” (see below) and in preparation for the fieldwork. During the fieldwork design it is particularly relevant to make sure that the evaluation team, including the national evaluator(s), are properly trained to conduct ex post evaluations using the ExPost-EAI framework.

Kick-off and stakeholder engagement

After securing the support and participation of the IE, an orientation process should be carried out between the evaluation team and relevant stakeholders to define the scope and anticipated outputs of the evaluation and clarify key concepts. This step is crucial for two main reasons. Firstly, ex post evaluations are infrequent, and for that, a common understanding of their scope and requirements should not be assumed. Ensuring clarity in the evaluation framework for assessing the sustainability of adaptation interventions (ExPost-EAI framework) among all stakeholders is imperative before commencing the evaluation. Secondly, this stage provides an opportunity to understand the stakeholders’ interests and expectations regarding the evaluation exercise.

For projects and programmes supported by the Adaptation Fund, key participants in this phase include the AF-TERG focal point, the evaluation team, the IE, and (former) project staff. Additionally, representatives from the executing entity or the government as well as members of the AF secretariat may also be involved.

Because ex post evaluations take place some years after project completion, key project stakeholders might no longer be associated with the IE. In such cases, the evaluation team should seek to engage these stakeholders and encourage their participation in the evaluation process whenever feasible. Alternatively, technical project staff members who are still part of the organization may possess valuable insights that can contribute significantly to the evaluation.

Box 4. Stakeholders' expectations and pre-evaluation questions:

- ✓ Remind them of overall ex post evaluation objectives.
 - What are the learning priorities for the Implementing Entity? National stakeholders?
 - What other things could be learned from the evaluation? How?
 - How will the evaluation process and findings be used and by whom?
 - Who will use the evaluation data in the future and how will that influence retention and dissemination, from local levels to international?
- ✓ Other interests or lessons learned for current or future programming?

Phase 2. Deskwork

Phase 2 begins with a thorough review of project documents, which serves as a foundation for planning and conducting the ex post evaluation. Additional steps include revisiting the Theory of Change (ToC) and conducting initial interviews with key stakeholders. These steps are carried out iteratively, allowing the evaluation team to progressively understand the changes that have occurred since the project's conclusion.

By the end of this phase, the evaluation team will have a solid understanding of the project logic and underlying assumptions about sustainability. It will have gathered initial information about changes since project completion, reported status of project outcomes, and mapped key stakeholders. This information will then be validated during the fieldwork (Phase 4).

Project documentation review

The revision of project documents is an essential basis for planning and conducting an ex post evaluation. It should include the project document and the final (terminal) evaluation. The review of the final evaluation document provides key insights into the achieved project outcomes, along with the sustainability rating and projections. The ex post evaluation aims to verify whether these projections have held true over time. This process will guide the design of interviews with key stakeholders during deskwork and the design of the fieldwork, both of which will focus on assessing and validating the sustainability ratings and projections outlined in the final evaluation.

Further documentation may include baseline reports, annual reports, mid-term review (MTR), project board/steering committee membership and meeting notes, participant lists for trainings, project-related social media archives, press releases, and engineering documentation and permits for any project-supported infrastructure as well as sampling frames, Theory of Change and any exit strategy documentation, among others.

The project documentation review will help:

- To gather data and information on the different elements of the ExPost-EAI framework.
- To assess the quality and quantity of available information.
- To identify further relevant stakeholders to interview.

- To identify missing information that might be collected via stakeholder interviews during the fieldwork or other means.

Revisiting the project's Theory of Change

The **Theory of Change (ToC)** provides the basis for the evaluation of a project's underlying logic and results. In cases where no explicit ToC exists in project documents, evaluators will construct one ex post using information gleaned from project documents and stakeholder consultations.

The process of revisiting and refining the ToC to assess the sustainability of project outcomes ex post is known as developing a **Theory of Sustainability (ToS)** (Cekan J., 2023). The ToS is a reflective and analytical process aimed at understanding how the project's logic, sustainability strategies, risks and underlying assumptions may have evolved over time. The ToS is informed by findings from the desk review – particularly end-of-project documents – and initial interviews with key stakeholders.

As part of this process, the evaluation team will analyse the following key elements:

- **Mapping project results and impact pathways:** Identifying project outputs, outcomes, intermediate states, and intended long-term adaptation impacts, as well as the causal pathways leading to these impacts. Both explicit and implicit assumptions will be highlighted.
- **Determining the expected duration and development of project outcomes:** Assessing the longevity of project outcomes after closure and estimating the timeframe required for their full realization is essential. Some outcomes that were not immediately visible at project closure may already be emerging by the time of the ex post evaluation. For example, the success of reforestation efforts can typically be evaluated only after approximately three years, once seedlings have taken root and begun contributing to ecosystem restoration. Similarly, certain perennial crops require a comparable period to start producing, meaning their contribution to income generation may only become evident after several years.
- **Analysing sustainability conditions and risks:** Assessing the conditions, risks, and influencing factors that may support or hinder the continuation or consolidation of project outcomes. This includes determining whether certain activities, partnerships, resources, and

capacities need to be maintained post project to sustain results.

- **Stakeholder mapping:** Identifying key stakeholders and their roles in sustaining project outcomes.

During the ex post evaluation, the ToS will help refine evaluation questions, define the methodological approach, and identify additional data requirements. As part of the fieldwork, information gathered during the desk review will be validated through stakeholder consultations and on-the-ground assessments.

Box 5. Useful tool: stakeholder mapping

Draw a stakeholder map of organizations likely to sustain the results:

- ✓ including partnerships, capacities, and resources to be sustained, how design and exit enabled this (e.g. who took over implementation ex post?)
- ✓ capacity, commitment and structure of institutions assuming responsibility post project.
- ✓ what conditions/inputs internal to the project implementation that were assumed at exit changed since closure?

Interviews with key stakeholders during deskwork

Interviews with key stakeholders will be conducted remotely during this phase and in-person during the fieldwork. Stakeholders for Adaptation Fund projects and programmes generally include the Fund's Designated Authorities, Implementing Entities, and various local partners. These local partners may encompass groups such as youth, women, individuals with disabilities, researchers, civil society organizations, and private sector representatives, among others.

The main purpose of these interviews will be:

- To inform about the ongoing evaluation purpose and scope.
- To gather data and information on the different elements of the ExPost-EAI framework, particularly changes since the final evaluation and current status.
- To inquire about new sources of information and stakeholders for potential interviews.

Besides the sustained outcomes that are identified during this phase, relevant information on emerging outcomes and maladaptation might be captured during the engagement with stakeholders or during the fieldwork. Similarly, questions related to conditions driving sustainability and how the outcomes are contributing to generate resilience in the system will be fully addressed only after the fieldwork.

Box 6. Key questions to key stakeholders explored during deskwork and validated through fieldwork:

- Which activities or outcomes have lasted and are still functioning? How have they changed since project completion?
- What assumptions were made at or after project closure?
- What were the unexpected outcomes, including any instances of maladaptation?
- What emerging outcomes have occurred, including new paths to achieving positive results?
- How has the sustainability of outcomes been affected by shocks, stresses, or underlying systems?
- How accurate were the sustainability ratings, and what level of confidence can be placed in them?
- What lessons can be learned for future project designs to enhance sustainability and resilience?

In preparation for the interviews with key stakeholders, a questionnaire should be prepared by the evaluation team.

Define the scope of the evaluation

Next, the high-level evaluation questions outlined in Section 3 of this document should be refined to align closely with the scope and characteristics of the project undergoing the ex post evaluation.

Evaluating all project outcomes ex post may not always be feasible. Some anticipated outcomes may not have materialized, for example, due to insufficient progress during project implementation. Additionally, some short-term project outcomes may no longer be observable at the time of the ex post evaluation⁶.

6. An example of projects with short-term outcomes are those focused on immediate relief aid, such as distributing emergency food supplies and temporary shelter. In contrast, adaptation projects aimed at bolstering system resilience primarily target medium and long-term outcomes.

It might also be the case that there is insufficient data to support an ex post evaluation of a given outcome [see Box 7] or time or budget constraints.

Understanding these factors early on helps the evaluation team determine the appropriate level of effort required to collect evidence during the fieldwork phase. Negative outcomes or those that have become irrelevant over time may have limited available evidence. While it remains crucial to comprehend the factors hindering the sustainability of these outcomes to identify project design weaknesses and improve future effectiveness, the fieldwork effort dedicated to them is likely to be less intensive.

Evaluators should consider the level of effort for the assessment of specific project outcomes based on the following considerations:

- Availability and quality of data, prioritizing measurable outputs.
- Methodological considerations, i.e. what is traceable in a reasonable timeframe.
- Sustainability at exit or prospects of sustainability (e.g. sustainability ratings and assumptions).
- Interest and learning priorities of stakeholders.

Box 7. Dealing with lack of outcome data

It is not uncommon for final evaluations to lack information on the effectiveness of project outcomes. This may occur for various reasons, such as the absence of outcome-level indicators or because outcomes related to long-term impacts or systemic changes need more time than the project duration to manifest or be adequately assessed. Additional reasons may include challenges in data gathering/availability during project monitoring and evaluation and difficult-to-quantify outcomes, such as shifts in social norms or attitudes.

In such cases, the revisiting/reconstructing the Theory of Change can be valuable to establish connections among observed adaptation outputs at final evaluation, the intended adaptation outcomes, and the sustained and emerging adaptation outcomes, including maladaptation assessed during ex post evaluations.

Further methods for data collection that can be used for dealing with lack of outcome data are presented under Phase 3 “Fieldwork design”.

Phase 3. Fieldwork design

Ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund projects include field visit⁷. The fieldwork should be designed to validate sustained adaptation outcomes, assess changes in the context since project closure, and identify factors that have either supported or hindered the continuation of adaptation benefits. Additionally, the fieldwork should aim to capture any emerging outcomes – unexpected or new results stemming from the project intervention – as well as any instances of maladaptation, or unintended negative consequences. See Section 4 and Appendix A for a detailed description of these key aspects.

Site and sample selection

The selection of the sites to visit and population/communities/organizations to engage with in order to gather feedback will be done by the evaluation team based on the consultation process and review of project documentation conducted in Phase 1 as well as any GIS analysis (if conducted).

Sampling techniques to be used for selecting sites and groups may be random (e.g. systematic, stratified), semi-random, or non-probabilistic (e.g. purposive sampling, snowball sampling, quota). Box 8 outlines relevant factors to consider for site and sample selection when using non-probabilistic methods.

The evaluation team should describe the site and sample selection procedures in the **evaluation criteria matrix**, including the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria; the process for selecting the sample; if applicable, how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of sample for generalizing results.

7. An exception are fragile and conflict-affected countries. In those cases, a remote ex post evaluation is advised.

Box 8. Relevant factors to consider for site and sample selection when using non-probabilistic methods

✓ **Concentration:** when time and resources are limited, the evaluation may opt to focus on higher concentration areas, i.e. areas in which it is expected a high concentration of outputs and/or project beneficiaries. Guiding questions: Where are the project areas, and where were the activities located? Where are the most sectoral participants concentrated?

✓ **Isolability:** If similar projects were implemented in the same area during or after the project, it becomes difficult to isolate the individual effects of each project. As such, when selecting evaluation sites, it is crucial to ensure that project outcomes can be differentiated by specific characteristics, results, or timeframes.

✓ **Vulnerability:** The AF mandate is to support country-driven adaptation projects and programmes that produce concrete and tangible results for the most vulnerable communities. Ex post evaluation should, whenever feasible, engage communities and groups that are vulnerable to the climate risk the project contributed to address. They may include civil society, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, among others (Adaptation Fund, 2022. p. 24).

Data collection procedures and instruments

There is an array of possible methods for collecting data for ex post evaluation, and their selection depends on factors such as the project context, outcome characteristics, and the availability and quality of data.

Different methodologies from which specific methods and tools may be drawn from include the following: rapid rural appraisal, sustained and emerging impacts evaluations; contribution analysis; most significant change; outcome harvesting; qualitative comparative analysis (QCA); propensity score matching; among others. Appendix F summarizes these approaches and provides further resources.

Table 2 offers an overview (not exhaustive) of qualitative and quantitative methods and tools for data collection, categorized based on their applicability for analysing various types of changes within the evaluated system. Appendix G describes these methods in further detail.

Table 2. (Non-comprehensive) overview of methods and tools for data collection

Elements/ Methods	QUALITATIVE						QUANTITATIVE	
	Semi-structured interviews	Direct observations	Resource and social mapping	Rankings and matrices	Most-significant change/ Historical narration	Case studies	Quantitative surveys	Geospatial methods
Space	..	:	:			:	:	:
Time	..		:			:	:	:
Flow	..		:	..	..	:	:	
Decision	..			..	..	:	:	
Gender	..			..	..	:	:	
Preference/ perceptions	..		..	..	..	..	..	
Valuation of resources	..					..	..	..

Source: Own, based on AFARD (n.d.), IEO-UNDP (n.d.) and Chandra (2010)

To the extent possible, the evaluation team should consider using mixed methods following a sequential approach: starting with qualitative inquiry followed by quantitative surveying to evaluate project outcomes comprehensively.

An ex post evaluation typically begins with **qualitative methods** to assess what has worked well (or not) within the project context. These methods help identify factors that support or hinder project sustainability, such as ownership, resources, capacities, and partnerships. They also explore both expected and unexpected outcomes, including potential impacts outside the boundaries of the project.

Following the qualitative phase, **quantitative methods** may be conducted to quantify the prevalence and significance of identified outcomes. This may be conducted through surveys, the use of Likert scales and open-ended questions to gather structured data on the extent and importance of project activities to community members. Quantitative tools may also be used to further explore emerging outcomes uncovered during the qualitative phase. The quantitative phase aims for statistical robustness and may be used to assess sustainability across genders, age groups, and geographic areas impacted by the project, including new partners involved over time.

In cases where data is lacking, more innovative forms of outcome data analysis should be considered. For example, geospatial and machine-learning/

AI-supported approaches can provide valuable insights, particularly when traditional data collection methods are insufficient.

The selection of data collection methods and procedures should be detailed in an evaluation criteria matrix⁸. This includes a discussion of data-collection instruments (e.g., interview protocols), their suitability for the data source, evidence of their reliability and validity, and any limitations. The description should include a clear explanation of how the key aspects of the ExPost-EAI framework will be evaluated, considered and analysed throughout the evaluation. It should further provide details of how data collection and analysis will integrate gender considerations, ensure that data collected is disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories (e.g. rich/poor, young/old), and employ a diverse range of data.

Field mission plan and logistics

The mission plan should include dates and locations of site visits, interview and meeting schedules, initial interview questions, and a list of stakeholders to engage. Decisions regarding key stakeholders to interview and sites to visit should be collaboratively made by the evaluation commissioner (AF-TERG), the evaluation team, and the Implementing Entity including (former) project staff.

Field mission schedule

The timing of the field mission is crucial as it directly impacts the selection of appropriate evaluation methods, and conversely, the chosen evaluation methods may influence the scheduling of the field mission. For instance, to observe certain types of sustained outcomes, the field mission should align with the time of year when these outcomes are typically observed.

For example, changes in land use, such as the expansion of agricultural areas for specific crops or the protection of certain ecosystems, may only be visible during certain seasons. Similarly, assessing tangible outcomes like the adoption rate of water cisterns to combat water stress is most effective when conducted during the season when these assets are actively being used.

Besides the above mentioned considerations, the timing of the field missions will be largely determined by the availability of the project team and other stakeholders.

8. See Annex 2 – Illustrative Evaluation Matrix in AF-TERG, 2024. Guidance Note: Inception Report. Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG), Washington, DC. Available at <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/inception-report/>

Box 9. Deliverable 1: Inception report

Evaluations commissioned by the AF-TERG require the evaluation team to present an inception report. This report summarizes the work conducted during the preparation phase (Phase 1), initial findings, the evaluation criteria matrix, the fieldwork design and data analysis (Phase 2).

The outline of the inception report of ex post evaluations of AF projects is presented in Appendix D.

Phase 4. Fieldwork execution, data analysis and reporting

Phase 4 marks a critical stage in the ex post evaluation process, where fieldwork, data analysis, and reporting come together to generate evidence-based insights. This phase begins with on-site visits designed to gather first-hand observations and strengthen stakeholder engagement, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of project outcomes. Data analysis then transforms collected information into meaningful findings, systematically assessing the sustainability of adaptation outcomes, the conditions influencing them, and their contribution to system resilience. The process culminates in the evaluation report, which synthesizes insights, validates conclusions through stakeholder engagement, and provides actionable recommendations.

Fieldwork

The main objective of conducting the site visits is to gather additional data and make first-hand observations to inform the ex post analysis, as well as strengthening the remote co-creation process already started with the project's stakeholders. The field visits of AF projects are planned by the evaluation team in coordination with the AF-TERG focal point, the Implementing Entity (IE), and (former) project staff.

Fieldwork is typically conducted by national evaluators who are familiar with the country's political, social and environmental conditions. During the visits, one former staff member from the project should accompany the evaluator(s) for introductions and context. This ensures that local courtesies are addressed and that introductions to all stakeholders are made.

The staff should not be present for any of the data gathering activities to ensure the credibility, utility, and subsequent utilization of an evaluation. It is crucial that external evaluator(s) maintain their independence and are perceived as independent throughout the evaluation process. However, the opinions of staff members during debriefs can be useful in providing further context.

Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of transforming the collected data into findings, which in turn form the basis for deriving conclusions and recommendations. This process follows the logic of the ExPost-EAI framework,

seeking to answer the questions of:

1. Which project outcomes have been sustained and which have not? Are there new emerging outcomes, including maladaptation?
2. Which factors have contributed towards – or detracted from – sustaining the project’s adaptation outcomes over time?
3. How do the sustained outcome characteristics contribute to the system’s resilience?

Sustained adaptation outcomes, emerging outcomes, and maladaptation

Evidence related to sustained adaptation outcomes, emerging outcomes, and potential maladaptation (Question 1) can be organized in a table. Table 3 outlines the structure for presenting evidence, including cases where the final project evaluation does not report on outcomes. In such cases, the evaluation team will link the intended adaptation outcomes to the outputs observed at the time of the final evaluation. They will then assess any changes in these outputs between the final and ex post evaluations, connecting those changes to sustained or emerging outcomes, as well as to intermediate states identified in the ToC. Complementary, Box 10 showcases an example on how, after field verification, it is possible to validate the ToC and track different outcomes.

Table 3. Tracing outcome sustainability ex post with and without measured outcomes available at final evaluation.

At design	At final evaluation		Ex post	
Intended adaptation outcome	Observed outputs	Observed outcomes	Sustained output	Sustained outcome, emerging outcome, maladaptation
Outcome 1	Output 1.1	Outcome 1 achieved	(Add evidence linking to outcomes and source)	Sustained Outcome 1 (Add evidence and source)
	Output 1.2		(Add evidence linking to outcomes and source)	
Outcome 2	Output 2.1	Not reported	(Add evidence linking to outcomes and source)	Sustained Outcome 2 (Add evidence and source)
	Output 2.2		(Add evidence linking to outcomes and source)	
(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)
			(Add evidence and source)	Emerging Outcome/ maladaptation (Add evidence and source)

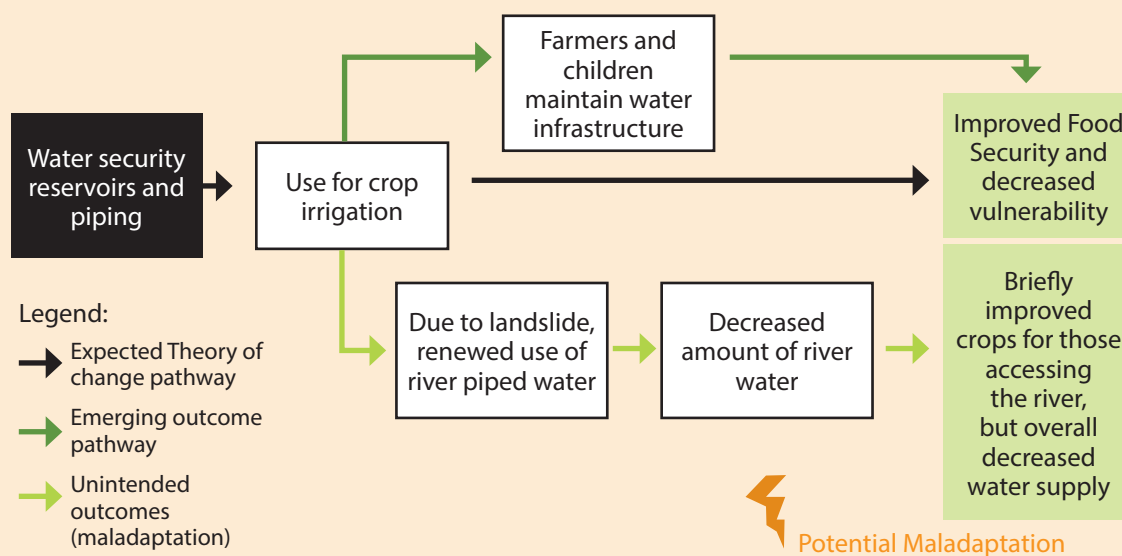
Box 10. Different pathways to outcomes: (simplified) example of an ex post evaluation in Ecuador

✓ The project's Theory of Change proposed that constructing water reservoirs and piping systems would increase the availability of water for crop irrigation. This, in turn, was expected to enhance food production during the dry season, diversify food consumption, and ultimately reduce vulnerability and food insecurity.

✓ Findings of the ex post evaluation show that, at one project site, the reservoirs significantly increased access to water, thereby enhancing the resilience of farmers to drought. Although the impact of the reservoirs on food security was not assessed directly (expected ToC).

At a second project site, the piping system was damaged by a landslide, and municipal authorities did not invest in its repair. As a result, residents living near the river reverted to using river water, while those farther away returned to relying solely on rainfall for food production (unintended outcome or potentially maladaptive).

In both sites, while municipal authorities were not always taking care of the water systems, participants knew how to maintain either the piping or the reservoirs. Some mentioned training their children to do so, which points to sustainability (emerging outcome).



Conditions that have contributed to sustain the project's adaptation outcomes over time

Findings related to conditions driving sustainability, including ownership, strategy, partnerships and resources (See Appendix A. Elements of the sustainability framework) can be organized in a table as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Sustainability analysis

Outcome	Sustainability assessment	Findings from desk review	Findings from fieldwork, including verification
Outcome 1	Ownership	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
	Resources	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
	Capacities	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
	Partnership	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)

Resilience analysis

Table 5 illustrates a structured approach to documenting evidence that supports findings on how the characteristics of sustained outcomes contribute to system resilience. See Appendix A. “Elements of the sustainability framework” for more information regarding each resilience factor.

Table 5. Resilience Analysis

Outcome	Resilience assessment	Findings from desk review	Findings from fieldwork, including verification
Outcome 1	Scale	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
	Redundancy	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
	Diversity & Inclusion	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
	Flexibility	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
	Connectedness & feedback loops	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>	<i>(Add evidence and source)</i>
(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)

Evaluation report

The evaluation report stands as the most tangible product of the evaluation process. The evaluation team will draft the evaluation report, adhering to the report structure outlined in Appendix E.

Following its preparation, the AF-TERG focal point reviews the draft report, engaging other relevant stakeholders in the process. It is recommended to use a feedback matrix for systematically collecting, documenting, and

transparently sharing feedback with the evaluation team. Feedback primarily focuses on assessing the factual accuracy of statements, the logical coherence and presentation of evidence and adherence to the standards and approaches outlined in the inception report.

In addition to the formal written feedback, presenting and discussing the draft report's findings and recommendations with key intended users is essential. The main purpose of this participatory process is:

- to identify data gaps: engaging with stakeholders helps uncover missing or incomplete data that may need to be addressed to enhance the evaluation's accuracy.
- to craft relevant recommendations: key users provide valuable insights that inform the development of recommendations, ensuring they are practical and aligned with the project's context.

This collaborative approach promotes ownership of the evaluation findings and recommendations and ensures that these are comprehensive, actionable, and tailored to the needs of all stakeholders involved.

In addition to the formal written feedback process, various consultation formats facilitate dialogue between the evaluation team and key stakeholders, validating findings and refining recommendations throughout the evaluation process.

The finalization of the evaluation report requires agreement from the AF-TERG.

Box 11. Evaluations commissioned by the AF-TERG required for the evaluation team to present the following deliverables:

Deliverable 2: Evaluation report (see exemplary outline in Appendix E)

Deliverable 3: Evaluation summary

Deliverable 4: Presentation of evaluation results and recommendations

Phase 5. Dissemination and Learning

The dissemination and learning phase is a key component of the co-creative approach adopted by the ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund interventions. Stakeholders should be involved in sharing insights, discussing findings, and reflecting on lessons learned. By engaging relevant stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, Implementing and Executing Agencies, local communities, and other partners, this phase ensures that the evaluation process is not only about assessing results but also about collective learning and improvement. The co-creative aspect allows for diverse perspectives to shape the interpretation of the evaluation findings, making the learning process more inclusive, transparent, and relevant to all involved. Through collaborative discussions, stakeholders can jointly identify actionable recommendations, adapt strategies, and enhance future interventions, fostering a shared sense of ownership and accountability in the evaluation outcomes.

Target audiences for sharing evaluation results

Communities. Engaging with the communities that participated in the project being evaluated involves more than simply sharing the evaluation report; it requires meaningful dialogue and interaction with community members to ensure they understand the findings and implications for future actions. Translating evaluation results and learnings into local languages is crucial for ensuring inclusivity and accessibility. Additionally, consider involving illustrators and visual note designers to create visual summaries of the evaluation results, making complex information more accessible to community members.

Countries. Ensure that evaluation results are shared with relevant government agencies responsible for reporting on adaptation efforts. This can contribute to national-level learning, increased transparency in reporting, and inform future policy and programming decisions.

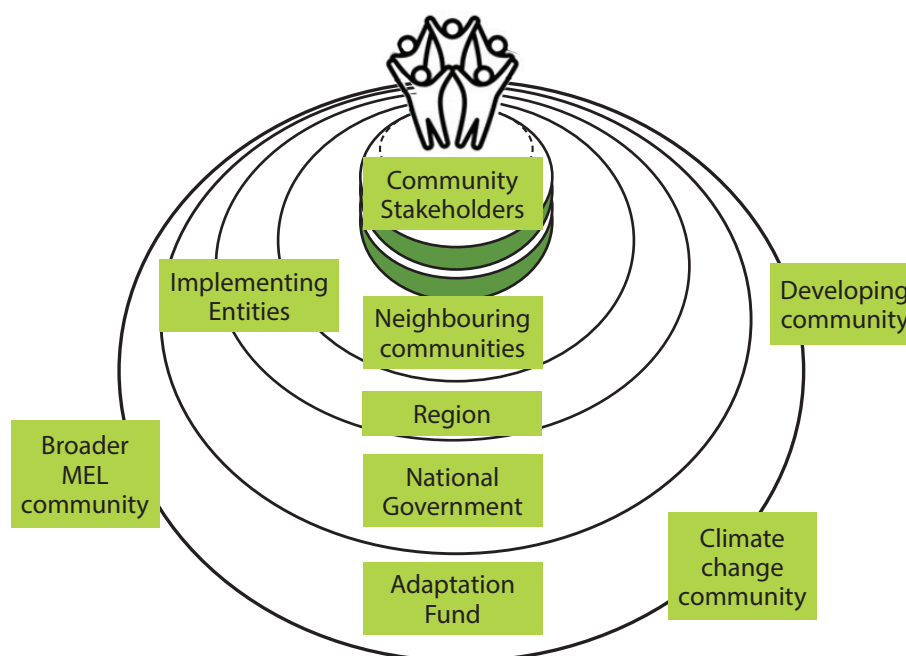
Implementing and executing agencies. Results help agencies understand what worked, what didn't, and why, allowing them to improve future project design and ensure sustainability. They also support decision-making and policy advocacy by demonstrating the medium to long-term effects of interventions, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of future climate adaptation efforts.

Adaptation Fund. As the commissioner of ex post evaluations, the Fund leverages key lessons and recommendations to enhance its support for

developing countries in implementing and accelerating adaptation efforts. These evaluations help inform the Fund’s strategies, strengthen collaboration with national partners, and facilitate the generation and dissemination of knowledge and evidence on effective and innovative adaptation actions and financing.

The evaluation and adaptation communities. Share evaluation findings with the broader evaluation and adaptation community through various knowledge-sharing platforms and events. This includes conferences, workshops, webinars, and online platforms dedicated to climate adaptation and evaluation. Disseminating results widely can contribute to collective learning and improve the effectiveness of future adaptation interventions. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Communities of learning from ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund interventions.



Dissemination and learning formats

In disseminating the results of ex post evaluations to different audiences, various formats can be utilized and combine to ensure accessibility and effectiveness:

Traditional formats such as written reports and presentations remain valuable for conveying detailed findings and recommendations. Additionally,

Interactive formats such as workshops, roundtable discussions, and webinars can facilitate deeper engagement and dialogue among stakeholders and

promote active engagement of stakeholders in learning processes to extract maximum value from evaluation results. Infographics, visual summaries, and multimedia presentations can help distill complex information into easily understandable formats, catering to diverse audiences.

Online platforms and repositories can serve as centralized hubs for accessing evaluation reports and other resources, enabling continuous learning and knowledge sharing.

In the case of the Adaptation Fund, the evaluation team will deliver the evaluation report, the evaluation summary, and a PowerPoint presentation with main findings and recommendations. The AF-TERG will organize a meeting for the presentation of the evaluation results and recommendations to the Implementing Entity by the evaluation team. This meeting should follow a reflective process conducive to learning from the evaluation exercise.

The AF-TERG is responsible for further sharing these documents alongside short communiqués, videos, webinars, knowledge cafés, infographics, social media, and other communication methods to enhance awareness of evaluation findings and recommendations. The format selection should be guided by the type of audience, preferences, and information needs.

Box 12. Guiding questions to facilitate effective dissemination of evaluation results

- Why does this information need to be communicated?
- What do the different audiences need to know? What would they like to know?
- Are there any special considerations or limitations to be kept in mind (e.g. patchy internet connection, language, high staff turnover)?
- When is the best timing for dissemination (e.g. upcoming strategy revision, new planning cycle)?

(Source: Austrian Development Agency, 2020)

7. Limitations and challenges of the ex post evaluation approach



Evaluating climate change adaptation interventions is a complex undertaking; evaluation interventions three to five years following completion adds an additional layer of challenges. In some cases, these limitations are logistical, and in others they reflect the theoretical complexity of adaptation.

The extended pilot phase of AF-TERG ex post evaluations provided an opportunity to identify these limitations and to work towards specific actions or longer-term changes to address them. The following table summarizes this ongoing work and provides an overview of the various limitations that are common in ex post evaluations.

Table 6. Common limitations in ex post evaluations and approaches to addressing them

Limitation	Possible approaches to addressing the limitation
Data quality and availability	
One of the most significant challenges is obtaining high-quality and relevant data long after the project has concluded. There may be issues with data completeness, accuracy, or consistency, especially if data collection was not a priority during the project implementation phase. Particularly recurrent is the absence of data on capacities, which is critical for assessing the sustainability of adaptation interventions. Similarly, missing data on physical assets, such as engineering plans or maintenance records, limits the evaluator's ability to assess the long-term effectiveness of grey infrastructure projects.	In the short term, evaluators focused on learning should screen potential projects for ex post evaluations with a view to their evaluability (see Criteria A in the selection criteria for evaluations in Appendix B). In the preparation phase (see Section 6), consultations with stakeholders can include questions about data archiving and availability; there are times when a former employee or local official may have data that was not archived by the organization managing the project following its closure. In the longer term, organizations should address this limitation at its source: project/programme design and M&E. Meaningful indicators and effective M&E systems, including data archiving, will result in projects and programmes that are highly evaluable.

(continued)

Limitation	Possible approaches to addressing the limitation
Selection bias in project selection	
Poor project data quality and availability significantly hinder ex post evaluations, as they often force reliance on inferior data or render some projects unevaluable. To address this, the AF-TERG screens projects to meet minimum data standards, which causes a selection bias. Projects with more and better data are more likely to be evaluated, which limits the representativeness of the evaluations.	Clear communication of the results of the evaluation and its context are essential to reducing the risk that the evaluation audience may draw incorrect conclusions about the project tool as a whole. During the dissemination phase of the evaluation (see Phase 5), the context of the evaluation and how the project was selected should always precede the presentation of findings. It is very important to state that the intervention that was evaluated is not typical in that it exhibited a higher-than-average evaluation rating and had better data (if this is the case). AF-TERG presentations to the AF Board traditionally include the selection funnel and identify the number of projects in the selection window that were excluded due to insufficient results for study and/or insufficient data. In addition, the AF-TERG produces a synthesis of final evaluations of the projects that it funds, which can also communicate the broader picture of the sample population of projects as a whole.
Selection bias in sampling	
In practice, many ex post evaluations select sites non-randomly to meet certain criteria such as adequate capacity to support the evaluation or oversubscription to support random assignment – or satisfy certain distributional requirements such as mix of urban and rural sites. Furthermore, in the majority of cases, selected evaluation sites have the option to decline participation in the evaluation. All these factors can result in an unrepresentative sample of sites participating in the evaluation.	AF-TERG ex post evaluation prioritize learning about sustained adaptation outcomes, and sampling is done to maximize learning within logistical constraints. Communicating evaluation findings clearly (see Section 6) is important to ensure that the audience for the evaluation report understands the priorities of a given ex post evaluation and the limitations of the sampling approach that was used. Information may be included in the evaluation report on how the sites were selected and how their characteristics differed from the averages for the participating sites as a whole.
Time lag in outcomes	
Some effects of a project, particularly climate adaptation projects, often emerge over long periods. This time lag can complicate the evaluation process as the full effects might not yet be apparent within the timeframe of the evaluation. Long-term monitoring and sustained data collection efforts are necessary to capture the true effect of adaptation interventions.	The evaluation report should attempt to identify emerging outcomes, but it should also acknowledge this time lag. Long-term monitoring and data collection is encouraged to obtain a clearer picture of the duration of adaptation benefits. There are organizations that revisit interventions multiple times following project closure; this is probably the best way to track the project's effects over the long term.

(continued)

Limitation	Possible approaches to addressing the limitation
Stakeholder engagement	
Engaging stakeholders after the project has concluded can be challenging, as interest in the project outcomes might wane or stakeholders might have moved on to other projects or roles.	The evaluation team should seek to engage these stakeholders and encourage their participation in the evaluation process whenever feasible. Alternatively, stakeholders who are still part of the organization that oversaw the project may possess valuable insights that can contribute significantly to the evaluation. The evaluation team should be clear in communicating the potential benefits to the organization of an ex post evaluation. Using a co-creation approach (see Section 6, Box 2) can identify areas where the organization has a strong interest in learning and can increase buy-in in the evaluation process. In all cases, evaluators should be sensitive to the time and resource constraints of stakeholders who are contributing their time and expertise. The evaluation team should acknowledge this contribution, emphasize co-creation, and offer opportunities for learning to stakeholders (including training on ex post methodology) throughout the evaluation.
Attribution of adaptation benefits	
Determining the direct impact of a project and attributing outcomes specifically to the project interventions is not a realistic goal for an ex post. External factors such as economic shifts, political changes, or environmental conditions can influence the project's outcomes, making it difficult to isolate the effects of the project itself.	Causal inference in ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund projects usually explores the causal contribution of project interventions to the sustained adaptation outcomes along with other elements. The ex post evaluation does not seek to establish a direct causal link between the project and the sustained outcomes but rather explores how the intervention played a role amid a constellation of other influencing factors. The AF-TERG has incorporated this approach into the sustainability rating for its projects (see Table 1). In addition, an explanation of the difference between contribution and attribution is provided in AF-TERG evaluation reports and in all communications to the audience for the evaluation.
Changes in context	
The context in which the project was implemented might change by the time the ex post evaluation is conducted. Such changes can make it challenging to assess whether the project's benefits have been sustained over time or to understand the current needs and conditions of the target population. Furthermore, projects implemented in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) present unique challenges for ex post evaluations.	The project inception report (see Appendix D) provides an opportunity for the evaluators to present an overview on how the project context has changed following project closure, including changes in the frequency and intensity of climate hazards and significant social change (e.g. migration, disease outbreaks, and conflict). The volatile and unpredictable nature of FCAS environments requires specialized approaches to evaluation. In response to this challenge, the AF-TERG will conduct a pilot remote ex post evaluation of one of its projects implemented in a fragile state in 2025. This initiative aims to develop an approach for the safe evaluation of AF interventions in challenging contexts.

(continued)

8. Roles and responsibilities



Table 7. Roles and responsibilities in an ex post evaluation commissioned by the AF-TERG

Evaluation phase	Role of the independent evaluation unit	Role of the Implementing Entity (IE)
	Before starting the evaluation: ✓ Plan budget for ex post evaluation	At project closure: ✓ Submit terminal evaluation and project completion report to the Fund. ✓ Archive all project data and information for five years in an accessible, identifiable location.
Phase 1. Preparation		
Project evaluability assessment	✓ Select project(s) for ex post evaluations	
IE engagement	✓ Notify IEs	✓ Acknowledge the notification and appoint a focal point for the exercise.
Commissioning the evaluation	✓ Develop the ToR ✓ Commission the evaluation. ✓ Contracting process for evaluation team.	
Formative work	✓ Provide training/training materials to the evaluation team and IE	
Kick-off and stakeholder engagement	✓ Organize the kick-off meeting. ✓ Present the evaluation	✓ Identify key stakeholders for participation. ✓ Nominate Implementing Entities participant(s).
Phase 2. Deskwork		
Project documentation review	✓ Provide the evaluation team with relevant documentation.	✓ Provide the evaluation team with relevant project documentation.
Interview with key stakeholders	✓ Establish contact between the evaluation team and certain stakeholders.	✓ Facilitate the contact between the evaluation team and relevant stakeholders.
<i>All others</i>	✓ Provide quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) support for the evaluation team	✓ Interviews between the evaluation team and relevant IE staff members.
Phase 3. Fieldwork design		
<i>All</i>	✓ Provide QA/QC support for the evaluation team	✓ Communication between the evaluation team and the IE focal point for coordination of fieldwork activities.

(continued)

Evaluation phase	Role of the independent evaluation unit	Role of the Implementing Entity (IE)
Phase 4. Fieldwork execution, data analysis & reporting		
Fieldwork	✓ Provide QA/QC support for the evaluation team	✓ One representative of the IE should accompany the evaluation team to do the fieldwork.
Data analysis	✓ Provide QA/QC support for the evaluation team	-
Evaluation report	✓ Provide feedback to the evaluation report and other deliverables. ✓ Approve the evaluation report and other deliverables.	✓ Provide feedback to the evaluation report and other deliverables
Phase 5. Dissemination and learning		
Dissemination and learning	✓ Organize a meeting for the presentation of the evaluation results and recommendations to the Implementing Entity. ✓ Present the report recommendations in an information note or decision document to the Board. ✓ Incorporate learning into the ex post methodology and approach used by the Fund. ✓ Further sharing evaluation results in different formats and to different relevant audiences.	✓ Disseminate recommendations to relevant actors at the IE (i.e. M&E managers, learning officers, program managers, others). ✓ Support the AF-TERG in the dissemination of the results at the community level. ✓ Use the evaluation to inform their future work.

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Appendix A. Elements of the ExPost-EAI framework (Glossary)

Table 8. Elements of the Sustainability Framework for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions (ExPost-EAI)

Project outcomes		
Framework topic	Subtopic	Description
Outcomes at project design	Intended adaptation outcomes	Refers to the adaptation targets as defined during project/ programme design
Outcomes at project closure	Observed adaptation outcomes	Outcomes identified in the project's final evaluation. The analysis should include the assessment of whether the outcome achievements were commensurate with the ex-ante targets and the level of contribution of the project to its set adaptation objectives (project effectiveness). The observed adaptation outcomes are used as a benchmark for assessing the sustained outcomes.
Outcomes ex post	Sustained adaptation outcomes	Outcomes identified during the ex post evaluation. Outcomes that the project contributed to generate and that are sustained by assets (tangible gains, benefits) and capacities (resources, capabilities) that can be evaluated for sustainability. Given the gradual nature of adaptive capacity and resilience development, some outcomes may not be immediately visible at project closure but could already be unfolding at the time of the ex post evaluation. For instance, the success of reforestation efforts can only be assessed a few years later – typically around three years – when seedlings have survived and begun contributing to ecosystem restoration. Similarly, certain perennial crops may take at least three years to start producing, meaning their impact on income generation only becomes evident over time.
	Emerging outcomes	Unexpected or new results that stem from the project intervention, which may extend beyond the scope of adaptation. This includes looking at ways in which participants utilized their resources to continue the project's efforts. Such findings can provide valuable insights into how to motivate sustainable practices in future interventions.
	Maladaptation	Unintended negative results that emerged as a consequence of the project/programme interventions that lead to increased vulnerability, exacerbate existing problems, or create new risks in the long term. Negative social and ecological impacts may manifest beyond the boundaries of the system where the intervention was implemented. For example, deforestation in one region affecting water availability downstream, gentrification due to conservation projects displacing local populations, and cultural impacts of land-use changes on Indigenous communities.

(continued)

Sustainability		
Framework topic	Subtopic	Description
Context The evaluation team will define the main characteristics of the system in which the project operated, its boundaries (physical, conceptual, or temporal), and changes in conditions since project closure. This includes describing the underlying vulnerabilities and how these have been or are being impacted by climate change.	Human systems	Positive and negative social, economic, and political conditions and dynamics that influenced the projected sustainability of the adaptation outcome(s).
	Natural systems	Any relevant environmental/ natural conditions, dynamics and interactions, including between living species, natural resources, and climate, and their impacts on human systems that directly or indirectly affected the sustainability of the adaptation outcomes. It should include the identification of climate-related risks and their impacts on the system that motivated the project strategic adaptation and resilience objectives and that directly or indirectly informed the sustainability of project outcomes.
Strategy The evaluator will review and summarize the project design and strategy, relevant changes during project implementation as well as project performance and sustainability projections at final evaluation.	Adaptation objectives	The project objectives, the expected adaptation and resilience benefits of the project, and the expected contribution to the Fund's strategic results framework (programming relevance). The project's results framework should be signposted in an Annex.
	Theory of Change	Summarize the project's ToC, encompassing its outputs, outcomes, intermediate states, and intended long-term adaptation impacts; the causal pathways leading to the long-term impacts; and highlight both implicit and explicit assumptions, including the ones related to sustainability trajectories, system thresholds and climate projections. The project's objective(s) and type of climate risk that the project aimed to reduce should also be included within the ToC. While some projects may already have a defined ToC, evaluators may refine it through consultations with stakeholders. In cases where no explicit ToC exists in project documents, evaluators will construct one using information gleaned from project documents and stakeholder consultations.
	Adaptive management	Reported adjustments to the project strategies and actions in response to unexpected conditions and shocks – including climate risks – that affected the achievement of the project outcomes during project implementation.
	Risk management strategies	Any strategies and plans developed by the project, e.g. sustainability plan and exit strategy, to manage potential or emerging risks, including climate risks, to the sustainability of the adaptation benefits.
	Project performance	The project's effectiveness and sustainability scores as well as outcome rating provided at final evaluation will serve to better understand the sustainability projections. The rating justification will offer additional insights into the conditions expected to contribute to sustain the project results and the potential risks that could hinder the continuation of its benefits beyond the project's conclusion.

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Conditions driving sustainability The evaluation team will assess the system's conditions that were expected to contribute to maintaining the adaptation benefits generated by the project – i.e. by increasing climate resilience and reducing climate related risk through reduced vulnerability, exposure, and/or increase of the system's adaptive capacity. These conditions can be described according to the following categories:	Local ownership	The extent to which individuals and organizations adopted and took ownership of the project activities and results up to the final evaluation, thus contributing to sustaining the adaptation benefits beyond project completion. The extent to which individuals and organizations adopted and kept ownership of the project activities and results since the final evaluation, thus contributing to sustaining the adaptation benefits beyond project completion.
	Capacities	People, groups and/or organizations that obtained, improved or retained skills and knowledge that support adaptation benefits derived from the project. This may include improving the strength and effectiveness of governance structures, laws, and institutions at the local, regional, national, transnational, and international levels. There are different modes of capacity building, including education (e.g. through schools, universities, other education service providers); training (e.g. courses, seminars, webinars, e-learning); networking (e.g. conferences, workshops, sharing platforms, communities of practice, networks of excellence); technical assistance (e.g. expert missions, twinning); among others.
The evaluation team will assess the system's conditions observed ex post, that contribute to maintaining the adaptation benefits generated by the project such as increasing climate resilience and reducing climate related risk, e.g. through reduced vulnerability, exposure, and/or increase of the system's adaptive capacity.	Partnerships	Collaboration among and between different stakeholders (government, private sector, new donors, communities), including through resources and information exchange, that contributes to sustaining adaptation benefits.
	Resources	Resources may include: • Tangible assets or physical capital, such as infrastructure, properties, equipment, and inventory, • Intangible resources, such as climate information and early warning systems (CI/EWS), knowledge products, patents, trademarks, computer programs, etc. • Financial resources: such as implemented policies to help ensure sustained funding, funding sources available to support the continuation of interventions, development of new or supporting the expansion of financial market products, such as weather derivatives or catastrophe bonds, insurance for climate-related risks.

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Resilience		
Framework topic	Subtopic	Description
Resilience characteristics⁹ The evaluation team will describe and document the pathways through which the sustained adaptation outcomes and the emerging outcomes (including maladaptation), are influencing the human and natural system's resilience. This assessment is done by linking the sustained project outcomes to the resilience observed ex post. The evaluation team should further report on instances where there have been economic or non-economic losses and damages. These losses and damages may have occurred because the outcomes could not be sustained, or the sustained outcomes were insufficient due to worsening hazards.	Scale	How the sustained project adaptation outcomes have an impact on the temporal or spatial scale needed for natural and/or human systems to maintain or change their functions and/or structures in the face of climate disturbances. Examples: • Temporal scale: Implementation of an early warning system increases the speed of (human) responsiveness to climate disturbances. • Temporal scale: Savings, credit and insurance mechanisms to ensure rapid access to the financial resources to respond to shocks (e.g. shelter and food needs). • Spatial: The area of a restored landscape is large enough to support ecosystem services. • Spatial scale: hard infrastructure effectively provides a physical buffer from a targeted climate disturbance. Exemplary questions: • Temporal scale: e.g., did sufficient time pass to see desired results (especially for natural systems)? In what way(s) did the outcome change the speed of responsiveness to climate disturbances at the project site? • Spatial scale: is there a cluster of sites that together comprise of a substantial benefit at a regional or national scale? Did the project results change the impact of the climate disturbance?
	Redundancy	How the sustained adaptation outcomes of the project contribute to increasing the availability of resources, means, or options, or create new ones, to support resilience to climate risks. Examples: • The availability of multiple livelihoods or sources of income (e.g., remittances, cash crops, paid labor) creates a financial surplus or additionality that can be used to respond to climatic events. • Use of more than one evacuation route in case one is closed off or damaged. • Installed cisterns give redundancy to the water system by adding rainwater from cisterns as a new water source, in addition to wells and water brought from the municipality. Exemplary questions: • Are there duplicate systems or backup systems involved in responding to a specific climate disturbance at this project site? • If one path, approach, or strategy fails, what are the other options available?

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Framework topic	Subtopic	Description
	Diversity & Inclusion	How the sustained adaptation outcomes have widened/deepened the variety of actors and inputs working/interacting towards common goals. These also include the extent to which the project outcomes support equity and inclusiveness. Examples: • Engagement of marginalized groups in decision-making: people who are historically left out of decision-making positions now actively participate. • Gender equity in leadership: women and girls, non-binary and/or trans people have leadership roles. • Access to different sources of scientific research and/or information, as well as to traditional/Indigenous knowledge, to inform responses to shocks. • Shift from monoculture to diversified farming methods. Exemplary questions: • Human systems: e.g. Does the project site show inclusion for women and girls, disabled, poor, and/or other marginalized groups? Does the site reflect diversity or diversification in other ways? • How are different sources of scientific research and/or information, including traditional/Indigenous knowledge integrated in decision-making systems to inform responses to shocks? • Natural systems: e.g. Is ecological biodiversity a factor in sustaining results?
	Flexibility	How the sustained project adaptation outcomes contribute to the system's agility in responding to uncertainty, effectively tackling challenges, and seizing opportunities that may arise from change. Examples: • Availability of flexible institutions that support alternative pathways of action to climatic impacts. • Active cooperation facilitates complex decision-making around common goals in relation to addressing climate risk. • Ability to inform decisions with new information that becomes available, adopt new tools or agricultural inputs that can improve productivity and make crops more resistant to climatic impacts. Exemplary questions: • What kinds of flexibility and adaptability are illustrated at this project site? How were these capacities demonstrated? • If one path/ strategy/ approach did not work, was another tried? Why or what triggered the change? By whom?

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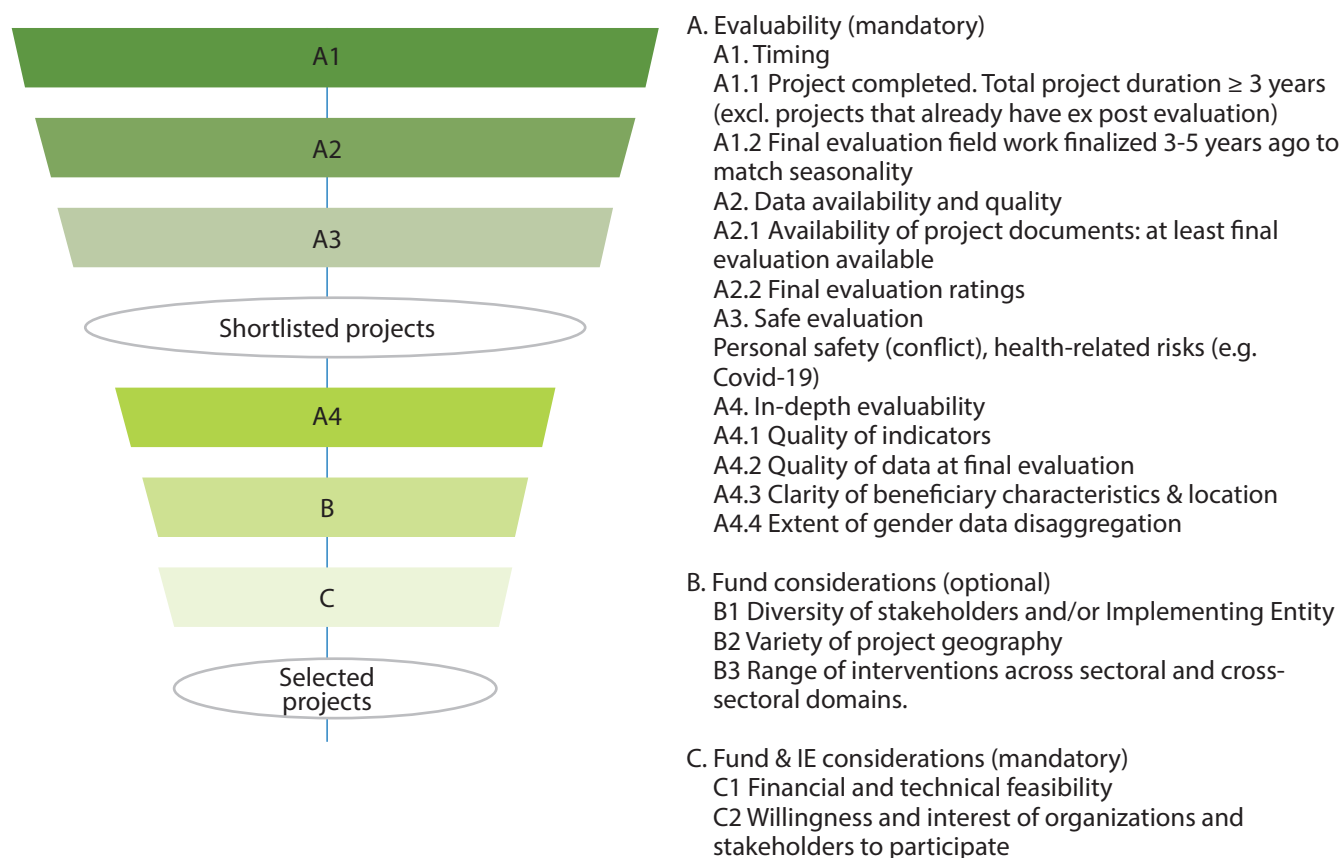
Framework topic	Subtopic	Description
	Connectedness/ feedback loops	How the sustained project adaptation outcomes support communication lines, access to information or partnerships to respond or adapt to shocks or stressors. Examples: • Established partnerships for the maintenance of key infrastructure. • Information and Early Warning System reports with recommendations are regularly disseminated to producers, who use them to support their decisions on land-use management. Exemplary questions: • What kinds of communication and/or coordination was developed at this project site to sustain results? • Does information get to whomever needs it to respond to climate risk at this project site? Is it done in a new or different way because of the project?

Appendix B. Selection criteria for ex post project evaluations

The AF-TERG identifies eligible projects and selects candidates based on the criteria provided in Figure 6. The project selection or screening process for ex post evaluability follows a funnel-like structure with three types of criteria:

- **Criteria A. Evaluability (mandatory):** the evaluability of project elements is assessed to determine the availability of quality, sufficient, and relevant data. Additional considerations involve ensuring the timing is favorable and conducting an assessment to ascertain whether the country or region is deemed safe for the evaluation process.
- **Criteria B. Portfolio representativeness (optional):** the sampling of the portfolio aims to reflect the multi-sectoral and cross-sectoral variety of the interventions, as well as the geographic diversity and the range of partners implementing Adaptation Fund-supported projects and programmes. Concurrently, it will seek project characteristics that might lend themselves to a more robust ex post evaluation and a more accurate overview of the contributions of the Fund. These criteria may vary over time based on the priorities set by the Adaptation Fund Board.
- **Criteria C. Fund and IE considerations (mandatory):** the financial and technical feasibility of the evaluation is assessed vis-a-vis the characteristics of the shortlisted projects. Implementing Entities whose projects are shortlisted for ex post evaluations are notified within three months of selection approval, ensuring that their commitment and support are secured for a successful ex post analysis.

Figure 6. Selection criteria for ex post project evaluations



Projects undergo an initial assessment based on mandatory criteria types A1 to A3. These criteria primarily involve inclusion or exclusion factors. The outcome of this initial assessment is a list of shortlisted projects. The final selection of projects is determined by experts' opinions and guided by criteria A4, B, and C1.

This process results in a list of projects categorized using a "stoplight scale" (green: feasible for ex post evaluation; yellow: potentially feasible but with concerns; red: not advisable for ex post evaluation). See 'Example of application of criteria A4 to C1' presented after Table 9.

Implementing Entities (IEs) whose projects are rated as green (and sometimes yellow) on the scale are contacted to gauge their willingness and interest in participating in the ex post evaluation (criteria C2). The detailed description of the project selection criteria is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Selection criteria for complete ex post project evaluations

A. Evaluability (mandatory)																																												
A1. Timing																																												
Criteria	Description	Decision rule																																										
A1.1. Project completed	Project completed AND Total project duration ≥ 3 years AND Project does not have an ex post evaluation yet.	YES / NO Inclusion: YES Exclusion: NO																																										
A1.2. Date of final evaluation	Final evaluation field work finalized 3-5 years ago to match seasonality. - If info on fieldwork dates is not available: use date of final evaluation submission. - If info of date of final evaluation is not available: use project end date	YES / NO Inclusion: YES Exclusion: NO																																										
A2. Data availability and quality																																												
Criteria	Description	Decision rule																																										
A2.1. Availability of project documents	At least project document and final evaluation are available	YES / NO Inclusion: YES Exclusion: NO																																										
A2.2. Final evaluation ratings	Ratings: effectiveness *, project outcomes (overall project assessment)*, M&E (design/ implementation)*, sustainability** <table><tr><td>Rating*</td><td>HS</td><td>(6)</td><td>Rating**</td><td>L</td><td>(6)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td>(5)</td><td></td><td>ML</td><td>(4.5)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>MS</td><td>(4)</td><td></td><td>MU</td><td>(3)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>MU</td><td>(3)</td><td></td><td>U</td><td>(1.5)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>U</td><td>(2)</td><td></td><td>NA/UA</td><td>(0)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>HU</td><td>(1)</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>NA/UA</td><td>(0)</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> Weight: - Effectiveness (1) - Project outcomes (1) - M&E at design (0,5) - M&E implementation (0,5) - Sustainability (1) Calculation: Final evaluation rating of project A = (effectiveness x 1) + (project outcome x 1) + (M&E design x 0.5) + (M&E implementation x 0.5) + (Sustainability x 1).	Rating*	HS	(6)	Rating**	L	(6)		S	(5)		ML	(4.5)		MS	(4)		MU	(3)		MU	(3)		U	(1.5)		U	(2)		NA/UA	(0)		HU	(1)					NA/UA	(0)				Inclusion: Top 50% of projects with the highest final evaluation ratings. Exclusion: Bottom 50% IF ratings not available: project is included and will be further assessed under criteria A4.
Rating*	HS	(6)	Rating**	L	(6)																																							
	S	(5)		ML	(4.5)																																							
	MS	(4)		MU	(3)																																							
	MU	(3)		U	(1.5)																																							
	U	(2)		NA/UA	(0)																																							
	HU	(1)																																										
	NA/UA	(0)																																										

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A3. Safe evaluation			
Criteria	Description	Decision rule	
A3. Safety	Personal safety (conflict), health-related risks (e.g. Covid-19) YES: project country is NOT a fragile or conflict-affected NO: project country IS a fragile or conflict-affected	YES / NO Inclusion: YES Exclusion: NO	
A4. In-depth evaluability			
Criteria	Description	Decision rule	
The evaluation team should provide a rating based on (i) the below outlined description of each rating, and (ii) the comparison of the project with others in the funnel. Calculation: rating A4.1 + rating A4.2 + rating A4.3 + rating A4.4		Inclusion: Top 50% (highest sum of A4 subcriteria) Exclusion: Bottom 50%	
A4.1. Quality of Indicators	<u>A4.1 Quality of indicators</u> (At least some) outcome level indicators are specified. Indicators are SMART No outcome level indicators. Output level indicators are specified. Indicators are mostly smart. No outcome level indicators. Output level indicators are specified. Indicators are mostly not smart. Unable to assess	rating HS S MS MU U HU UA	rating number 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
A4.2. Quality of data at final evaluation	<u>A4.2 Quality of data at final evaluation</u> All outcome level indicators exist and have been (mostly) measured Output level indicators exist and have been (mostly) measured No/insufficient data available for outcome/output Unable to assess	rating HS S MS MU U HU UA	rating number 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
A4.3. Clarity of beneficiary characteristics & location	<u>A4.3 Clarity of beneficiary characteristics & location</u> Data on beneficiaries and locations are disaggregated and clear Data on beneficiaries and locations are somewhat disaggregated and clear Data on beneficiaries and locations is not disaggregated or clear Unable to assess	rating HS S MS MU U HU UA	rating number 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

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A4.4. Extent of gender data disaggregation	A4.4 Extent of gender data disaggregation	rating	rating number
	Data is disaggregated by gender and/or there are gender specific project outputs/outcomes	HS	6
		S	5
	Data is to some degree disaggregated by gender	MS	4
		MU	3
	Data is not disaggregated by gender nor are there gender specific project outputs/outcomes	U	2
HU		1	
Unable to assess	UA	0	
B. Portfolio representativeness			
Criteria	Description		
Criteria to be updated each year based on the specified considerations. B rating is calculated as: B1 + B2 + B3			
B1. Diversity of stakeholders or IE	The Fund seeks a portfolio of ex post project evaluations that has an equitable representation of all types of Implementing Entities (NIEs, RIEs and MIEs), prioritizing NIEs.		
B2. Variety of geography	The Fund seeks a portfolio of ex post project evaluations across all regions in which its projects are implemented.		
B3. Variety in cross sector	The Fund seeks to have a portfolio of ex post evaluations of projects in the different sectors in which the projects are implemented.		
C. Fund and Implementing Entity Considerations			
Criteria	Description		
C1. Financial and technical feasibility	Considerations of the evaluability of the project (number of outputs), considering available time and resources for evaluation.		
C2. Willingness and interest of stakeholders to participate	Based on consultation with Implementing Entities after the projects shortlist is ready.		

Example of application of criteria A2.2:

	Final evaluation ratings											
Project -ID	Effectiveness Project outcomes (overall) M&E at design M&E Implementation Impact Sustainability						Effectiveness	Project outcomes (overall)	M&E at design	M&E Implementation	Sustainability	Weighted score
							1	1	0.5	0.5	1	=SUMPRODUCT
Project 1	S	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	-	-	-	-	5
Project 2	MS	MS	S	S	ML	MU	4	4	5	5	3	16
Project 3	S	S	S	S	MU	ML	5	5	5	5	4.5	19.5

Results:

- Project 3 has a ranking above the 50th percentile among all projects in the funnel, thus earning selection to advance to the next assessment stage.
- Project 2 has ranked below the 50th percentile among all projects in the funnel and is consequently excluded.
- Despite lacking some ratings in the final evaluation report, project 1 is not excluded but instead retained in the funnel for further examination under A4 criteria.

Example of application of criteria A4 to C1

Project	A4 criteria				B criteria				C1 Financial and technical feasibility	Suitable for ex post evaluation?
	A4.2 Quality of data at final evaluation	A4.3 Clarity of beneficiary characteristics & location	A4.4 Data disregarded by gender	A4 ranking total	B1 Diversity of stakeholders or IE	B2 Variety of geography	B3 Sectorial and cross-sectoral interven.	B ranking total		
Project 1	MU	MS	MU	14	0	2	1	3	yes	NO. Poor data quality (A4 criteria).
Project 2	UA	S	S	17	0	0	0	0	no	NO. Not reevant to Fund priorities and unfeasible (too many outputs in different sectors).
Project 3	MU	S	S	18	0	1	0	1	yes	YES. But not relevant to Fund priorities (B criteria)
Project 4	S	S	S	19	0	0	0	0	yes	YES. But not relevant to Fund priorities (B criteria)
Project 5	S	S	S	17	0	2	1	3	yes	YES
Project 6	MS	MS	S	17	2	2	0	4	no	No. Unfeasible (too many outputs in different sections).
Project 7	S	MS	MU	16	1	2	1	4	yes	YES. But poor data quality (A4 criteria).

Appendix C. ToR outline for ex post evaluations

1. Background

- 1.1 Adaptation Fund governance
- 1.2 Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaption Fund (AF-TERG)
- 1.3 Ex post evaluation background
- 1.4 Project overview

2. Evaluation purpose and scope

- 2.1 Objective of the evaluation
- 2.2 Key strategic questions
- 2.3 Scope of the work

3. Evaluation outputs

4. Evaluation approach and methods

- 4.1 Evaluation principles
- 4.2 Evaluation framework
- 4.3 Methods

5. Evaluation timeline

6. Evaluator(s) competencies

- 6.1 Specific requirements for the firm, including country presence and languages needed.
- 6.2 Requirements for the team leader

Annex A. Inception report outline

Annex B. Final evaluation report outline

Annex C. Evaluation summary outline

Annex D. Evaluation framework

Appendix D. Inception report outline of AF-TERG ex post evaluations

Table of contents

List of tables and figures

Acronyms and abbreviations

Project general information

- Project summary table
- Summary of project justification
- Summary of project strategy
 - Project objectives and components
 - Project intended impact (including. contribution to AF results framework)
 - Theory of Change
 - List of relevant sustainability ratings

Objective and scope of the evaluation

Findings based on deskwork

- Sustainability assessment
 - Context analysis
 - Strategy
 - Conditions driving sustainability
 - Gender considerations
- Resilience analysis
 - Resilience characteristics

Fieldwork design

- Key data sources that will be selected to inform the answer to each evaluation question.
- Methods and tools to be used to answer each evaluation question and their limitations.

- Sampling approach, including area and population to be represented, rationale for selection, and limitations.
- Timeline showing the key evaluation phases.

Data analysis strategy

- Risks and limitations that may undermine the reliability and validity of results, and proposed mitigation strategies for each
- How gender analysis will be integrated into the evaluation design

Annexes

- Evaluation matrix¹⁰
- Stakeholder analysis
- List of interviewed stakeholders
- Project results framework
- Analysis of data quality for each project outcome/outputs
- List of project documents and M&E data available

10. Find an illustrative Evaluation Matrix in Annex 2 of the Inception report Guidance. Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/AFBEFC.318Add.6-02.13.24.pdf>

Appendix E. Ex post evaluation report outline

Table of contents

List of tables and figures

Acronyms and abbreviations

Report summary

Project general information

- Project summary table
- Summary of project justification
- Summary of project strategy
 - Project objectives and components
 - Project intended impact (including contribution to AF results framework)
 - Theory of Change
 - List of relevant sustainability ratings

Objective and scope of the evaluation

- Evaluation process
- Evaluation scope

Evaluation methods and limitations

Findings [based on deskwork and fieldwork]

- Sustainability and sustainability rating
 - Site 1: ...
 - Site 2: ...
 - Site X: ...
- Resilience
- Impact
 - Emerging project impact
 - Adaptation Fund impact

Conclusions

Lessons learned and corresponding recommendations

- For Implementing Entities
- For the Adaptation Fund and funders
- For projects designed with [relevant technical field(s)] components
- For improvements in M&E to capture data on sustained results after project completion
- For the AF-TERG on methods

Annexes

- List of interviewed stakeholders
- Results framework
- Analysis of data quality for each project outcome/outputs
- List of documents consulted
- Evaluation matrix¹¹

11. Find an illustrative Evaluation Matrix in Annex 2 of the Inception report Guidance. Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/AFBEFC.318Add.6-02.13.24.pdf>

Appendix F. Other evaluation approaches for ex post project evaluation

A. Sustained and emerging impacts evaluations (mixed methods)

Refers to an evaluation that focuses on the long-term sustainability of outcomes and impacts at least two years after the end of an intervention (which might be a project, policy, or group of projects or programmes) or after the end of participants' involvement in an intervention. It also traces what emerged from local efforts to sustain results. SEIE uses mixed methods to examine the extent to which intended impacts have been sustained, as well as any emerging impacts that have emerged over time (positive and negative).

Useful resources:

✓ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/themes/SEIE>

B. Contribution analysis (qualitative)

Assesses causal questions and infers causality in real-life programme evaluations. It offers a step-by-step approach to help managers, researchers, and policymakers arrive at conclusions about the contribution their programme has made (or is making) to outcomes. It reduces uncertainty about the contribution of the intervention to observed results through increased understanding of why the observed results have occurred (or not) and the roles of the intervention, and other internal and external factors.

Useful resources:

✓ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/contribution-analysis>

✓ <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/d66ebabd-e2a8-4844-9075-482708b1915b/content>

✓ <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Contribution-analysis.pdf>

C. Most significant change (qualitative)

Involves generating and analysing personal accounts of change and deciding which of these accounts is the most significant – and why. It follows three basic steps:

- deciding the types of stories that should be collected (e.g. stories about practice change or health outcomes or empowerment)
- collecting the stories and determining which stories are the most significant
- sharing the stories and discussion of values with stakeholders and contributors so that learning happens about what is valued.

Useful resources:

✓ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/most-significant-change.pdf>

D. Outcome harvesting (qualitative)

Collects (“harvests”) evidence of what has changed (“outcomes”). Unlike some evaluation approaches, it does not measure progress towards predetermined objectives or outcomes. Rather, it collects evidence of what has changed and then, working backwards, determines whether and how an intervention contributed to these changes. The outcome(s) can be positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect, but the connection between the intervention and the outcomes should be plausible.

Useful resources:

✓ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/outcome-harvesting>

✓ <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Outcome-harvesting.pdf>

E. Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA)

Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is a means of analysing the causal contribution of different conditions (e.g. aspects of an intervention and the wider context) to an outcome of interest and how different factors contribute to a given outcome. QCA can be used with relatively small data sets as there is no requirement to have enough cases to achieve statistical significance. However, it’s advisable to have a sufficient number of cases cover all possible

configurations of causal conditions, not just single cases.

QCA starts with the documentation of the different configurations of conditions associated with each case of an observed outcome. These are then subject to a minimization procedure that identifies the simplest set of conditions that can account for all the observed outcomes, as well as their absence.

Useful resources:

✓ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/qualitative-comparative-analysis>

F. Propensity score matching (quasi experimental)

The evaluation team creates an artificial control group by matching each treated unit with a non-treated unit of similar characteristics. Using these matches, the evaluation team can estimate the impact of an intervention. Matching is a useful method in data analysis for estimating the impact of a programme or event for which it is not ethically or logistically feasible to randomize.

Useful resources:

✓ <https://www.statisticshowto.com/propensity-score-matching/>

✓ https://dimewiki.worldbank.org/Propensity_Score_Matching#:~:text=Propensity%20score%20matching%20%28PSM%29%20is%20a%20quasi-experimental%20method,researcher%20can%20estimate%20the%20impact%20of%20an%20intervention

Appendix G. Methods and tools for ex post evaluation (non-comprehensive)

Table 10. Methods and tools for Ex Post evaluation (non-comprehensive)

Method	Description	Additional considerations
Qualitative methods		
<i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	Interviews conducted using a semi-structured approach with a flexible interview guide containing a limited number of predefined questions. This method ensures that the interview remains focused on the project elements or outcomes of interest, while allowing participants the opportunity to introduce and discuss topics that they find relevant. Depending on the interviewed person, this tool can be applied as <i>group interview, community interview, focus group, or key informant interview</i>.	Easy to conduct and can provide good qualitative data on all kinds of topics. Can be applied both online and in-person
<i>Direct observations</i>	The evaluation team visits project sites observes, and captures assets and activities connected with the project interventions.	Criteria for field visits should be established prior to the field mission. Evidence should be properly documented (e.g. via reports, videos, photos).
<i>Resource and social mapping</i>	Mapping. To learn the community's perception of what natural resources are found in the community and how they are used. It can be used as a basis for discussion of how a project has contributed to changes in the system. Common types include institutional maps (Venn diagrams, activity/daily routine maps, and resource maps. Seasonal diagrams or seasonal calendars. Show the major changes and relationships that affect a household, community, or region within a year. It can be used as a basis to discuss how this seasonality has changed over the years since project closure, e.g. due to changes in climate conditions, due to project activities, or other factors. Transects and transect walks. Are used to expose the physical layout and assess problems in an area, such as those related to agriculture or water management. Ex post, they facilitate discussions on developments that have emerged over the years, linking them back to the original project. Timelines. To reconstruct key event (including climate shocks), decisions, and changes over time. They provide insight into when and how adaptation benefits emerged, evolved, or declined after project completion. Timelines can also reveal when other projects or external actors began interventions in the same area, helping evaluators distinguish between the original project's impacts and those of subsequent initiatives.	Provides a good basis for group discussion and reflection on of changes since project closure.

(continued)

Method	Description	Additional considerations
Qualitative methods		
<i>Rankings and matrices</i>	Are used to determine perceptions about most/least sustained activities, as well as unexpected impacts, and to facilitate discussions about the reasons behind these outcomes.	
<i>Most-significant change/ Historical narration</i>	Involves generating and analysing personal accounts of change and deciding which of these accounts is the most significant – and why. After identifying these changes, selected individuals present the stories and engage in thorough discussions to assess their significance.	The content often offers valuable insights but may carry subjective elements, particularly if external agents select the significant changes.
<i>Case studies</i>	In-depth assessment of a limited range of observations, e.g., some coastal defense sites or communities benefitted from an early warning system. Techniques described above (e.g., focus group, individual interviews) may be part of a case study.	Need to define criteria for selecting cases, such as including a mix of more favorable and problematic cases based on pre-established parameters.
Quantitative methods		
<i>Quantitative surveys</i>	Interviews are conducted by enumerators on the basis of a pre-written and pre-coded questionnaire. This questionnaire is drafted during the fieldwork design phase or after qualitative fieldwork has narrowed findings about likelihood of sustainability. The number of respondents will be influenced by factors such as the need for statistical rigour (representativeness, confidence interval, etc.), and the time/budget available. An additional ten per cent of respondents (e.g. beneficiaries, households) are added to any sample to account for those who moved since the project closed, or others who are not available. Enumerators need to be trained and ideally tablets are used to minimize the data cleaning process.	Time needs to be allocated for establishing a sampling frame, for preparing and pre-testing the survey instruments, and training the enumerators.
<i>Geospatial methods</i>	Aerial or satellite images can be used to examine changes in the human-natural system and the sustainability of those changes in the project area. The GIS data used will be tailored to each case and will depend on the specific adaptation outcomes targeted by the project. Data regarding observed changes at the project site level can assist in selecting sites, validating outcomes reported in the final evaluation, and preparing for the fieldwork. The evaluation team can collect related data while in the field, e.g., using their smartphones to gather GPS tracking data, enabling subsequent GIS analysis after the mission.	Particularly useful for mapping and analysing changes in land use and environmental issues, such as climate-related impacts (flooding, landslides, etc.). It may also be useful during the site and sample selection process.

(continued)

Method	Description	Additional considerations
Artificial Intelligence		
AI	The terminology used in the AI field is complex due to the diversity of methods and approaches used. Artificial intelligence (AI) can be used as a quantitative method, especially when it is used for analyzing large data sets, identifying patterns, and making predictions based on numerical or structured data. For example, AI techniques such as machine learning, predictive modeling, and natural language processing typically rely on statistical and computational methods to process and analyse quantitative data. AI can also be used in qualitative data analysis when applied to explore unstructured data such as text, audio, or images. For instance, AI can assist in sentiment analysis, content analysis, or thematic analysis of qualitative data by processing textual or spoken data and identifying patterns or themes.	There is a strong need for human oversight and validation when considering the use of AI in evaluations. Human judgment remains crucial for context and causality.