



ADAPTATION FUND

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Finalizing the Enhanced Readiness Strategy for the Adaptation Fund Readiness Programme

Issue Date: 26 November 2025

Submission Deadline: 14 December 2025, 23:59 EDT

Table of Contents

1. Background	1
2. Objective	1
3. Scope of Work	1
i) Ensure logical flow and incorporate evaluation recommendations.....	2
ii) Complete the Enhanced Readiness Strategy Theory of Change (ToC)	2
iii) Outline the value-add of the Fund’s Readiness Programme	2
iv) Outline support to advance achievement of the Global Goal on Adaptation.....	3
v) Outline support to integrate Article 6 Mechanism for Adaptation Funding.....	3
vi) Identify types of readiness grants and explain their function	4
vii) Develop an iterative Implementation Plan	4
viii) Prepare a proposed budget and personnel plan	4
4. Deliverables	4
5. Timeline.....	5
6. Submission requirements.....	5
7. Evaluation Criteria.....	6
Submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria	6
8. Submission Details	6
9. Contact Information	6
<i>Table 1: Assignment timeline</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Table 2: Evaluation criteria</i>	<i>6</i>

1. Background

The Adaptation Fund (the Fund) was established to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing country Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The Fund's Readiness Programme is designed to enhance the capacity of developing countries and their Implementing Entities (IEs) to directly access and manage climate adaptation finance.

The Adaptation Fund Secretariat (the Secretariat) has developed a draft Enhanced Readiness Strategy as outlined in the Fund's Medium-Term Strategy 2023-2027, which calls for enhanced access to climate finance and long-term institutional capacity building. In parallel, an independent evaluation of the Readiness Programme for the period May 2014 – March 2025 has been completed, providing valuable insights and recommendations.

The Secretariat now seeks the services of a qualified vendor to finalize the Enhanced Readiness Strategy, ensuring it is coherent, results-oriented, and aligned with both the Fund's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS-II) and the recommendations of the independent evaluation. This Enhanced Readiness Strategy will guide the evolution of the Fund's Readiness Programme, ensuring it delivers maximum impact, efficiency, and value to its stakeholders.

2. Objective

The primary objective of this assignment is to develop a final, - Enhanced Readiness Strategy for the Adaptation Fund's Readiness Programme and a related implementation plan, and ensuring that the Enhanced Readiness Strategy is strategic, practical, and incorporates all recommendations from the independent evaluation.

3. Scope of Work

The Enhanced Readiness Strategy must define a clear theory of change and causal pathways, outline measurable results, include implementation iterations, outline the value-add of the Fund's overall support to developing countries. In alignment with the Fund's mandate to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes, the strategy should describe how the Readiness Programme will deliver targeted capacity-building support that helps developing countries advance the UNFCCC Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), including strengthening national systems to design, implement, and monitor adaptation actions. It should also outline how the Programme will build capacity for Designated Authorities (DAs) and developing countries to engage in the mechanism articulated under Article 6 of the Paris

Agreement, including the use of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes and both market and non-market approaches that also promote adaptation ambition. Furthermore, the strategy should enhance the capabilities of Designated Authorities (DAs) to access and programme climate finance via the Fund's Direct Access modality and to identify and design concrete projects from National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Finally, the strategy should outline the budgetary and human resource requirements necessary for its effective implementation.

The selected vendor will undertake the following scope of work:

i) Ensure logical flow and incorporate evaluation recommendations

- Review existing draft strategy and background documentation of the Readiness Programme.
- Reorganize content to ensure a logical, results-based structure and a coherent and logically structured document. The narrative must flow seamlessly from the context to the strategic solutions and the implementation plan.
- Link to Recommendations: The vendor must systematically incorporate the requirements from all recommendations of the independent evaluation. For each recommendation, the vendor must demonstrate in their proposal how they will ensure the final strategy addresses it. The final strategy must include a dedicated section or matrix explicitly mapping how each recommendation has been actioned.

ii) Complete the Enhanced Readiness Strategy Theory of Change (ToC)

- Finalize the draft ToC by identifying clear causal pathways connecting vision, objectives, outcomes, outputs, and activities.
- Articulate the specific value-add of the Readiness Programme. Specify how the Readiness Programme contributes to the Adaptation Fund's MTS-II results framework.
- Define associated indicators and methods to track implementation, outcomes, and feedback loops to enable monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

iii) Outline the value-add of the Fund's Readiness Programme

- Conduct a comparative analysis to clearly define and articulate the unique value proposition of the Adaptation Fund's Readiness Programme for developing countries and Implementing Entities. The analysis should explain

how the various components of the Enhanced Readiness Strategy are specifically designed to support countries and IEs in a differentiated and complementary manner.

iv) Outline support to advance achievement of the Global Goal on Adaptation

- Under Decision -/CMA.7, Parties to the Paris Agreement are urged to ensure that adaptation responses reflect national circumstances and support sustainable development and poverty eradication.
- The AF with other climate funds was invited to provide financial and technical support for countries to align the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience (UAEFGCR) with national systems. The Adaptation Fund's Readiness Programme will enhance its support to developing countries in a manner directly aligned with the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), with a particular focus on strengthening countries' capacities to design, develop, and submit high-quality adaptation projects in priority thematic and dimensional targets identified under the UAEFGCR. This focused readiness support through targeted technical assistance, tailored training, and strengthened institutional capabilities, will directly translate to developing countries' enhanced capacity to identify climate risks, prioritize interventions, and transform these priorities into robust project concepts and fully developed funding proposals. This support is expected to significantly increase both the volume and quality of the Fund's project pipelines and portfolio.

v) Outline support to integrate Article 6 Mechanism for Adaptation Funding

- The enhanced Readiness strategy should outline how to build the institutional, technical and project-development capacities developing countries need to engage in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and how they can leverage share-of-proceeds and other Article 6 flows to scale and finance concrete adaptation projects that implement NAP and NDC adaptation priorities. By simultaneously converting this enhanced capacity into a stronger pipeline of high-quality, country-driven adaptation proposals, developing countries can channel Article 6-related resources complemented by the Fund's funding modalities toward financing concrete adaptation projects and programmes consistent with its mandate.

vi) Identify types of readiness grants and explain their function

- Review existing and propose refinements or new readiness grant categories that respond to identified capacity gaps.
- For each proposed grant type, the Company must describe:
 - Its objective and target beneficiary.
 - The specific gaps and needs it addresses.
 - How it will work (application process, eligibility, management, and reporting).
 - How the grant structure includes mechanisms to strengthen collaboration, data tracking, and efficiency

vii) Develop an iterative Implementation Plan

- Develop a multi-year, phased implementation plan for the Enhanced Readiness Strategy outlining how the strategy will be rolled out over its duration (2026–2029). The plan should not be static but should allow for learning and adaptation.
- Explain how the end of each iteration will include a systematic review process to incorporate feedback, assess efficiency, and adjust the next iteration, accordingly, thus creating a learning loop.
- Integrate adaptive management features allowing for mid-course adjustments based on monitoring and feedback.

viii) Prepare a proposed budget and personnel plan

- Prepare a proposed budget that considers resources for the mechanisms and processes included in the Independent Evaluation Recommendations (e.g., costs for enhanced data collection and analysis) and a detailed staffing plan for the successful implementation of the Enhanced Readiness Strategy by the Secretariat. This includes:
 - Identifying the types and levels of personnel/expertise needed for implementation, including indicative time allocations e.g., resources for scaling up implementation, systematic tracking, monitoring, and evaluation of efficiency and results.
 - Ensuring the proposed budget aligns with the scale and ambition of the enhanced strategy while remaining feasible and efficient.

4. Deliverables

- i) Inception Report – detailing understanding of the assignment, methodology, and workplan with an outline of the final Enhanced Readiness Strategy (within two weeks of contract start).

- ii) Draft Enhanced Readiness Strategy for review by the Secretariat – including ToC, value-add articulation, implementation plan, budget, and mapping of evaluation recommendations.
- iii) Virtual Consultation Workshop Facilitation – presentation of the draft to the Secretariat and relevant stakeholders.
- iv) Final Enhanced Readiness Strategy – complete and edited version incorporating all feedback, comprising all elements from the Scope of Work, ready for submission to the Adaptation Fund Board.

5. Timeline

The assignment is expected to be completed within **two (2) months** from the contract signing date. The following is a proposed timeline, which prospective vendors are expected to refine in their proposals.

Table 1: Assignment timeline

Activity	Duration
Inception: Desk review, stakeholder consultations (virtual), inception report.	1 and 1/2 Weeks
Drafting: Finalization of the draft Enhanced Readiness Strategy.	4 Weeks
Review and Integration: Incorporation of feedback from the Secretariat/Board on the draft.	1 Week
Finalization: Preparation and submission of the final strategy and presentation.	1 and 1/2 Weeks
Total Expected Duration	8 Weeks

6. Submission requirements

The vendor should demonstrate:

- Proven experience in developing strategic frameworks, theories of change, and results-based management tools;
- Expertise in climate finance, adaptation, and institutional capacity-building;
- Familiarity with the Adaptation Fund or other climate funds; and
- Experience in stakeholder consultation and programme design.

Submissions must include the following:

- a) Technical proposal (maximum 10 pages) that includes:
 - Company profile and relevant experience;
 - Understanding of the assignment;
 - Proposed methodology and work plan;
 - Team composition and expertise;
 - Approach to integrating evaluation recommendations; and
 - Proposed timeline.

b) Financial proposal with:

- A detailed budget in US Dollars, breaking down costs by main task/deliverable and personnel time.
- The budget should be all-inclusive (e.g., professional fees, communications, etc.).

7. Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria

Table 2: Evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description	Weight
Vendor experience and expertise	Demonstrated experience in developing strategies, theories of change, and implementation plans for international climate funds or similar multilateral organizations	30%
Technical quality and methodology of proposal	Approach to integrating evaluation recommendations and finalizing the strategy	40%
Experience and qualifications of team	Relevant expertise of the proposed team members in areas such as climate finance, adaptation, M&E, and programme management.	20%
Cost Competitiveness	Cost effectiveness and overall value for money of the financial proposal	10%

8. Submission Details

Vendors are requested to submit their proposals electronically to: fmadziwa@adaptation-fund.org with subject line "**Bid for Enhanced Readiness Strategy - [Company Name]**" no later than 14 December 2025, 23:59 EDT.

9. Contact Information

For any clarifications, please contact:

Farayi Madziwa

Readiness Programme Coordinator

Fmadziwa@adaptation-fund.org

+1202 458 5184

Annex 1: Links to key documentation

1. [Compendium of Adaptation Fund Board Decisions: Compendium on Readiness AFB Decisions.docx](#)
2. [Adaptation Fund Board Decisions Webpage: https://www.adaptation-fund.org/documents-publications/meeting-documents/](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/documents-publications/meeting-documents/)
3. Workshop reports, and some post workshop assessment reports: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/readiness/news-seminars/>. Knowledge Management products on readiness include Knowledge Management products from country exchanges: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/readiness/news-seminars/>.
4. Other country exchange knowledge products produced by Knowledge Management unit in subsequent country exchanges: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/knowledge-learning/knowledge-events/>. Knowledge Management paper on readiness: "Study on Readiness and Capacity Building for Direct Access to Adaptation Finance": <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/study-on-readiness-and-capacity-building-for-direct-access-to-adaptation-finance/>.

Annex 2: Framework for enhancing scope and effectiveness of the AF Readiness Programme

Introduction

In 2001, the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), through decisions 2/CP.7 and 3/CP.7 adopted two capacity-building frameworks that affirmed that capacity-building is essential to enable developing countries to implement the objective of the Convention. The frameworks provide a set of guiding principles and approaches to capacity-building and set out a way forward for capacity-building activities, such as developing and strengthening skills and knowledge, as well as providing opportunities for stakeholders and organizations to share their experiences and increase their awareness to enable them to participate more fully in the climate change process. Article 11 of the Paris Agreement reaffirms that capacity-building should enhance the ability of developing countries to implement climate action, and should facilitate technology development, dissemination and deployment, access to climate finance, relevant aspects of education, training and public awareness, and the transparent, timely and accurate communication of information. It also asserts that capacity-building should be country-driven, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive.

The Adaptation Fund (AF) has been actively providing readiness and capacity-building support to developing countries since accreditation of the Fund's first implementing entities and approval of its first projects by the Board in 2010. The AF Readiness Programme for Climate Finance (Readiness Programme) was launched in 2014 to increase the capacity of developing country Parties to the UNFCCC to directly access climate adaptation finance from the Fund, and their overall capacity to develop and implement concrete projects and programmes that increase the resilience of vulnerable communities to the adverse impacts of climate change. Providing essential readiness and capacity-building support remains crucial for achieving the mission of the AF, which is dedicated to upholding the Paris Agreement and accelerating effective adaptation action and efficient access to finance, including through direct access, to respond to the urgent needs and priorities of developing countries.

In October 2022, the Board approved the AF 2nd Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 (MTS II), which consolidates the Fund's niche and comparative advantage, reconfirms the strategic areas of Action, Innovation and Learning and Sharing, and

reinforces the crosscutting strategic emphasis on Enhancing Access to Climate Finance and Long-Term Institutional Capacity. MTS II and its implementation plan approved by the Board in March 2023, foresees an expanded Readiness Programme (RP) through which the AF actively supports use of its Direct Access modality by eligible developing countries and provides readiness and capacity-building support for project development and implementation.

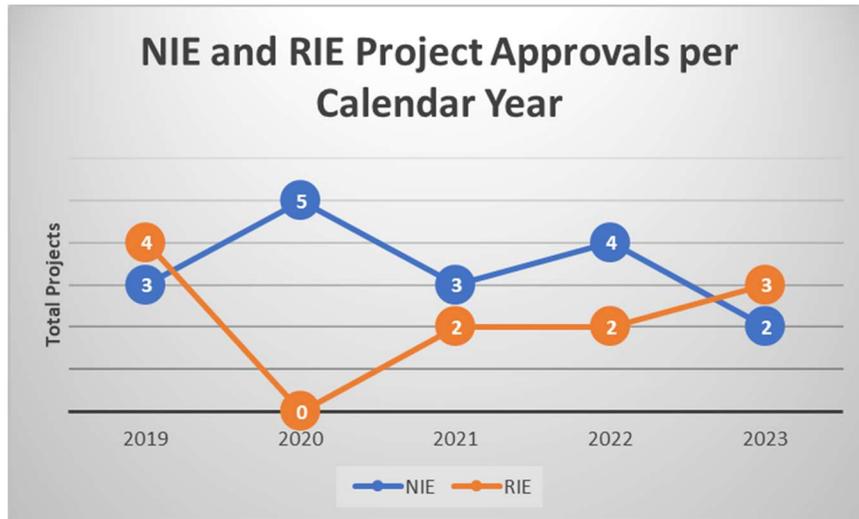
Readiness programme objectives

The AF Board established the objectives of the RP as:

- i) to increase the preparedness of applicant national implementing entities seeking accreditation by the Adaptation Fund, and
- ii) to increase the number of high-quality project/programme proposals submitted to the Board after accreditation.

Whilst the objectives served the capacity-building efforts of the Fund in its infancy, consideration of their relevance could be assessed in the context of enhancing effectiveness and expanding the scope of the RP to actively support wider use of the Fund's Direct Access modality. This is important for the following reasons:

- a. First, as at the time of writing, the AF has 32 accredited NIEs. There is opportunity to reach more developing countries via the Direct Access modality and to increase access for countries that are already engaging with the Fund. This is especially significant as of March 2021 when the Board approved through decision B.36/42 that developing countries can accredit up to 2 NIEs per country. It further creates opportunities to at a minimum double the number of accredited NIEs by targeting countries that already have an NIE accredited with the Fund.
- b. Second, the number of projects approved by the Board for NIEs and RIEs in each calendar year for the last 5 years are shown in the table below:



The number of approved projects has been inconsistent and has been averaging less than 4 projects per calendar year for NIEs and average 2 for RIEs in the past 5 years. There is an opportunity via the RP to further engage NIEs and RIEs to improve the quality of submitted proposals and in turn, realize a consistently upward trend in the number of projects that are submitted by NIEs and RIEs and approved by the Board.

Approach to an expanded readiness programme

To expand and enhance the RP in alignment with MTS II, a three-pronged approach will be implemented simultaneously:

1. Reframing the Fund’s overall readiness and capacity-building strategy

The readiness program plays a crucial role in building capacity and access to finance for vulnerable countries. It is important to tailor the delivery of capacity-building in a manner that is fit-for-purpose, that is, where capacity-building support targets real capacity gaps as identified jointly with implementing entities and developing countries at large, and where support is delivered timeously and using appropriate instruments and tools to address the identified gaps in a sustained manner.

Reframing the Fund’s overall approach to readiness and capacity-building will involve the secretariat reflecting on progress and achievements to date and engaging with AF management and relevant staff to provide strategic insights into enhancing the effectiveness of the RP. An important aspect of the reframing process involves consulting AF stakeholders about their capacity building needs. Identifying key stakeholders and engaging them in the design and implementation of readiness activities is key to achieving effective and sustained capacity-building.

Stakeholders with a direct link to the AF that will be consulted include, accredited IEs, the Fund's DAs, and Board members. Additional stakeholders could include governments, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and private sector entities. Consultations with stakeholders will explore ways to enhance effectiveness of the RP and cover the following pre-identified elements:

i) Focusing on demand-driven support

An expanded RP should include a structured process to regularly conduct needs assessments to identify unique readiness gaps and tailor support accordingly. The RP will need to incorporate flexibility and adaptability in the delivery of support to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging challenges.

ii) Expanding RP scope and recipients

Currently the RP is geared towards delivering support at the IE level, with most support going to NIEs. The expanded RP should reach beyond this level and extend support to DAs, EEs, UNFCCC negotiators, local communities and organizations working with IEs and other groups that have a stake in the AF. This enhances broader knowledge exchange and fosters local ownership and ensures that the delivered support is fit for purpose.

Delivering tailored support

Effective readiness and capacity-building support should recognize the diverse challenges faced by different regions, countries, and IEs, and should customize delivery based on specific needs. The expanded RP should deliver support in the spatial context of addressing various readiness and capacity gaps that impact the overall ability of countries to meet their resilience and adaptation needs. This includes delivering support within the context of national adaptation planning, financial management, project development and incorporating new evidence based tools and strategies for capacity-building which offer diverse support options including grants, technical assistance, peer-peer exchanges, collaborative platforms etc., to meet specific needs.

iii) Strengthening access and inclusivity

The expanded RP should continue to provide simplified access procedures to readiness and capacity-building support and to streamline application processes and eligibility criteria to reduce administrative burdens for developing countries. This

includes leveraging technology and utilizing digital tools and platforms that facilitate easy access to information, resources, and training.

iv) Building Institutional Capacity

The approach to training and capacity building should aim to enhance and sustain institutional level learning, knowledge retention and growth. Current processes such as accreditation already enable capacity-building at the institutional level, and existing training activities could be made more targeted to enhance skills, not only during accreditation, but also during project development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The expanded RP should continue to leverage on the strong links to knowledge management and activities under the AF Knowledge management unit.

Enhancing innovation and impact

Effective readiness and capacity-building support must be delivered in an iterative, sustained manner over time. The expanded RP could explore creative ways of enhancing the delivery of support such as partnering with private sector e.g., with Climate KIC in the delivery of capacity-building support to IEs under the AF innovation funding window. Readiness and capacity-building approaches should promote scalability to reach wider populations and groups of stakeholders, strengthen local ownership and governance, enable risk sharing, and build in knowledge sharing and transfer within the community of entities delivering readiness and capacity-building support for adaptation finance.

v) Implementing integrated approaches

The AF provides climate financing for developing countries to implement concrete adaptation actions in over 8 project sectors. The expanded RP should deliver capacity-building support that takes into considering the interconnectedness of sectors such as agriculture, water resources, health, urban and rural development, etc., and the interconnectedness of its IEs to other climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility. This will enable the development of holistic and sustainable solutions to address readiness and capacity-building needs.

vi) Robust monitoring and evaluation

An emerging theme in the Paris Committee on Capacity Building (PCCB) under the Paris Agreement is how to measure capacity-building. The expanded RP should continuously assess the effectiveness of the programme and its activities, and adapt

strategies based on internal learnings and feedback from stakeholders. The RP results framework could further enhanced to enable capturing of robust data and information for assessing the impact of support. Developing the enhanced results framework could be done leveraging on the expertise of the AF Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG).

vii) Strengthening readiness partnerships and collaboration

Recognizing that effective readiness and capacity-building support requires increasingly large financial investments sustained over many years, the expanded RP should strengthen collaboration and partnerships that are specifically targeted at capacity-building over and above broader partnerships at the Fund level. Such deliberate partnerships, which include partnering with private sector, UN agencies, constituted bodies under the UNFCCC, multilateral organizations, development agencies and NGOs, could leverage financial resources, broader reach and knowledge, external expertise, and networking opportunities for continued innovation and progression of the RP to meet evolving readiness and capacity-building needs.

2. Enhancing technical assistance grants

The Board, through decision B.41/15 (a) requested the secretariat to prepare an analysis on the possibility of broadening the scope, eligibility criteria and type of technical assistance (TA) grants available to national and regional IEs. The Board also requested the analysis to be presented at its forty-second meeting in March 2024. The secretariat will engage a consultant between January and February to do a rapid assessment of the current TA grants under the RP and make recommendations for expanding the scope of the current grants as well as introducing new TA grants that would address NIE and possibly RIE capacity needs that have become apparent as the Fund has evolved over the years. The recommendations from the rapid assessment would be presented to the Board at its forty-second meeting in March 2024.

The AF Knowledge Management includes in its FY24 budget, an allocation to develop a paper on readiness and capacity-building. This budget, complemented by a small amount from the readiness budget if need, could be used to hire a consultant for the rapid assessment that presents the state of current TA grants, and that explores ways to enhance the TA grants, including by establishing new ones based on developing country and IE needs. Preliminary discussions between the readiness team and other AF business units and informal discussions with IEs at readiness events held in 2023

have cited support for the AF designated authority (DA) to do self-assessments for identifying suitable NIE candidates, support for data collection and completion of project performance reports (PPRs) by executing entities (EEs), and support for strengthening coordination and the relationship between the DA, IE and EEs as possible new grants that could be explored.

3. Collaboration with AF-TERG.

The AF Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG) plays a crucial role in assuring the effectiveness and accountability of the Adaptation Fund. This includes undertaking evaluations of the RP either as independent evaluations or as part of the overall evaluation of the Fund. Evaluation data and feedback would enable evidence-based decision-making and be used to inform adjustments to the RP strategy and to optimize resource allocation. TERG evaluations are also important to ensure that the RP strategy and results framework remain relevant to evolving needs and adapts to emerging challenges in the readiness and capacity-building space.

The TERG is currently undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the RP and could also be leveraged to undertake adhoc thematic evaluations. These semi-independent evaluations entail collaboration and shared responsibility between the AF and the TERG. Specific sharing of responsibilities to preserve the independence of the work of the TERG, transparency and separation between AF and TERG operations and would be discussed and acknowledge in writing, for each semi-independent evaluation undertaken.

Currently 1 independent comprehensive evaluation of the RP and 1 semi-independent thematic evaluation is under discussion, both of which will feed into the final strategy for the expanded RP.