



**Terms of Reference
Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the
Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG)**

**Ex post evaluation of Adaptation Fund project
" Taking adaptation to the ground: a small grants facility for enabling local-level
responses to climate change"**

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1 BACKGROUND

The Adaptation Fund was established through decisions by the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. At COP24 in December 2018, the Parties to the Paris Agreement decided that the Adaptation Fund shall also serve the Paris Agreement.

The Fund supports country-driven projects and programmes, innovation and global learning for effective adaptation. All of the Fund's activities are designed to build national and local adaptive capacities while reaching and engaging the most vulnerable groups, and to integrate gender consideration to provide equal opportunity to access and benefit from the Fund's resources. They are also aimed at enhancing synergies with other sources of climate finance while creating models that can be replicated or scaled up. www.adaptation-fund.org

1.1 Adaptation Fund governance

The Fund provides climate finance to developing countries who are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

The Fund is supervised and managed by the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board), which is accountable to the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) [and Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA)]. The majority of Board members are from developing countries. The Board has two committees, namely, the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC), and the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC). The EFC is responsible for advising the Board on issues of conflict of interest, ethics, finance, fund and portfolio monitoring, evaluation and audit. The PPRC is responsible for assisting the Board with assessing project and programme proposals submitted to the Board and review project and programme performance reports. An Accreditation Panel (AP) has been established to ensure that organizations receiving funding from the Adaptation Fund meet the fiduciary standards. The AP provides recommendations to the Board regarding the accreditation of new Implementing Entities (IEs) and the suspension, cancellation or re-accreditation of entities already accredited.

The World Bank serves as an interim trustee of the Fund. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), through a team of dedicated officials, referred to as Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat (the Secretariat), provides secretariat services to the Board. The Secretariat manages the day-to-day operations of the Adaptation Fund such as research, advisory and administrative services.

1.2 Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaption Fund (AF-TERG)

The AF-TERG is an independent evaluation advisory group accountable to the Fund Board. It was established in 2018 and operates in line with the Evaluation Policy of the Fund.

The AF-TERG is headed by a chair and provides an evaluative advisory role through evaluation generation, utilization and capacity-building functions. The group is comprised of five independent experts in evaluation, called the AF-TERG members. A full-time secretariat provides support for the implementation of evaluative and advisory activities. While independent of the operations of the Adaptation Fund, the aim of the AF-TERG is to add value to the Fund's work through independent evaluation and by supporting learning www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/.

1.3 Ex post evaluation background

Ex post evaluations have been integral to the work of the AF-TERG since its initial Strategy and Work Programme, covering fiscal years 2021 to 2023.

The rationale for conducting ex post evaluations stems from the Adaptation Fund's interest in assessing the intended impact of its projects and programmes, recognizing that the effects of adaptation efforts may take time to materialize and may only become apparent years after project completion. In pursuit of the Adaptation Fund's overarching objective, the focus of ex post evaluations is on understanding how sustained outcomes contribute to enhancing adaptive capacity, bolstering resilience, and reducing the vulnerability of individuals, livelihoods, and ecosystems to climate change.

Given the relatively recent development of the Adaptation Fund's climate change portfolio and the scarcity of ex-post evaluation studies in the field of adaptation, the AF-TERG has adopted a multiphase approach for developing and implementing ex post evaluations of adaptation interventions:

- Phase 1 – Methodology [*completed*]: to develop a framework for ex post evaluations and a shortlist of up to five completed projects as pilots for ex post evaluation.
- Phase 2 – Piloting [*completed*]: test guidance and methods from Phase 1 in at least two pilots.
- Phase 3 – Implementation and Learning [*ongoing*]: to continue ex post evaluations over time, informing approaches, methods, and systems within the Fund.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the ex post evaluation work were implemented as part of the TERG first Strategy and Work Programme between FY22-FY24. An information update to the 29 meeting of EFC (March 2022) reported progress on phase 2 processes and emerging lessons from testing the methodology in Samoa.¹ An information update to the 30th meeting of EFC (October 2022) provided key findings for the Adaptation Fund and implementers of phase 2, including evaluation summaries of the ex post pilots in Samoa and Ecuador.¹

¹ AF-TERG, 2022. [Information update on phase 2 of the ex post project sustainability evaluations \(AF-TERG\)](#).

At its forty-second meeting, the Board approved the second multi-year work programme of the AF-TERG² covering the period FY25-FY27 (July 2024 – June 2027). Under the new work programme, the AF-TERG has conducted two ex post evaluations in FY25 and plans to carry out two more in FY26, followed by four in FY27. These evaluations will focus on strategically selected projects that completed implementation 3-5 years prior to the evaluation. This initiative is part of Phase 3, conducting ex post evaluations over time and related capacity building of evaluators.

In 2025, the AF-TERG published the "[Toolkit for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions](#)". This comprehensive guide is designed to assist Implementing Entities and evaluation contractors in understanding the requirements for conducting ex post evaluations of Adaptation Fund projects and programmes.

To date, the AF-TERG has commissioned ex-post evaluations for the following Adaptation Fund projects³:

Project Title	Implementing entity	Country	Sector	Duration	Grant amount USD	Year of ex post evaluation [Phase]
Enhancing Resilience of Samoa's Coastal Communities to Climate Change	UN Development Programme	Samoa	Multi-sector	4 years	8,732,351	2022 [Phase 1]
Enhancing resilience of communities to the adverse effects of climate change on food security, in Pichincha Province and the Jubones River basin	UN World Food Programme	Ecuador	Food Security	5 years	7,449,468	2022 [Phase 1]
Enhancing the Adaptive Capacity and Increasing Resilience of Small-size Agriculture Producers of the Northeast of Argentina	Unidad Para Cambio Rural Argentina	Argentina	Agriculture	4.5 years	5,640,000	2024 [Phase 2]
Increasing Climate Resilience and Enhancing Sustainable Land Management in the Southwest of the Buenos Aires Province	International Bank of Reconstruction and Development	Argentina	Rural development	4 years	4,296,817	2024 [Phase 2]
Enhancing Resilience of Communities to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Food Security in Mauritania	UN World Food Programme	Mauritania	Food Security	4 years	7,803,605	2026 [Phase 3]
Climate Change Adaptation Programme in Water and Agriculture in Anseba Region, Eritrea	UN Development Programme	Eritrea	Rural development	5 years	6,520,850	2026 [Phase 3]

² Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AFB-EFC.33-6-Rev-1-AF-TERG-Second-multiyear-work-programme-2.pdf>

³ Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/our-evaluations/operational-level-evaluations/ex-post-evaluations/>

Reduction of Vulnerability to Coastal Flooding through Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the South of Artemisa and Mayabeque Provinces	UN Development Programme	Cuba	Coastal management	5 years	6,067,320	Ongoing [Phase 3]
Increased Resilience to Climate Change in Northern Ghana through the Management of Water Resources and Diversification of Livelihoods	UN Development Programme	Ghana	Water management	4 years	8,293,972	Ongoing [Phase 3]

1.4 **Project Overview**

This term of reference (ToR) relates to the ex post evaluation of the Adaptation Fund project “*Taking adaptation to the ground: A Small Grants Facility for Enabling Local-level Responses to Climate Change*” to be implemented in fiscal year 2027.

The project has been chosen for ex post evaluation following a rigorous evaluability assessment process and the project’s Implementing Entity has been duly informed and has consented to the assessment.

Brief Overview of the Project being Evaluated

Project category:	Regular Project
Region:	Africa
Country(ies):	South Africa
Project Title:	Taking adaptation to the ground: A small Grants Facility for enabling local-level responses to climate change
Implementing Entity:	South Africa National Biodiversity Institution
Executing Entity(ies):	South South North Trust
Focal Area(s):	Multi-sector
Project URL	LINK

Grant amount (USD)	2,442,682
Amount disbursed at completion (USD)	2,442,682
Approval date:	October 10, 2014
Project start date:	September 16, 2015
Expected project duration (at start)	48 months
Actual date of project completion:	March 31, 2021
Date of Final Evaluation	December 2020
Planned date of ex post evaluation	The second half of calendar year 2026

2 EVALUATION PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 Objective of the evaluation

In line with the Evaluation Policy of the Adaptation Fund⁴, the ex-post evaluations of selected Fund-financed projects are conducted three to five years after project closure with the aim of assessing and learning from longer-term impact and sustainability.

The evaluation has three primary purposes:

- (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 local resilience.

2.2 Key strategic questions

The high-level 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 outcomes contribute to local resilience?

These evaluation questions should be addressed by capturing differences in vulnerability and the differentiated distribution of benefits between women and men.

2.3 Scope of the work

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. For additional details regarding the approach for an ex post evaluation, please refer to Section 4 or to the [Ex Post Toolkit — Adaptation Fund](#).

⁴ Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/evaluation-policy-of-the-adaptation-fund-graphically-edited/>

3 EVALUATION OUTPUTS

The consultant will provide four deliverables:

- **Draft and final Inception report**, containing the assessment of available outcome data, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, a draft of the Theory of Sustainability, project stakeholder analysis, project-specific evaluation questions, and the fieldwork design (including data collection methods and tools, plan and logistics, tentative review schedule). Please refer to Appendix D for the inception report outline of AF-TERG ex post evaluations, as detailed in the Toolkit for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions. [Ex post Toolkit - Adaptation Fund](#)
- **Final evaluation report**, including consolidated findings from both desk and fieldwork, supported by evidence. It also contains lessons learned and recommendations. Please refer to Appendix E for the ex post evaluation report outline, as provided in the Toolkit for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions. [Ex post Toolkit - Adaptation Fund](#)
- **Evaluation summary**. An accompanying brief (ca. 10 pages) for disseminating key findings among participants / local counterparts, translated to local language(s). The evaluation summary should include a project summary table, details of evaluation questions and methods, documentation of positive and negative outcomes, unexpected results or maladaptation, assessment of contribution to system resilience, and evaluation of the adaptation fund's impact.
- **Presentation of findings**. Typically, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, it will summarize the key findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

Any other material generated or produced (field notes, survey results, interview transcripts, site photos, etc.) during this consultancy will be delivered to the AF-TERG.

The intellectual property of all deliverables belongs to the World Bank and Adaptation Fund and may be made public at the discretion of the Adaptation Fund and the World Bank.

4 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

4.1 **Evaluation principles**

See the Evaluation Principles Guidance Note for more details. [Evaluation Principles - Adaptation Fund](#)

4.2 **Evaluation framework**

The consultant will use the Sustainability Framework for the Ex Post Evaluation of Adaptation Interventions (ExPost-EAI framework) developed by the AF-TERG. [Ex post Toolkit - Adaptation Fund](#)

Using the ExPost-EAI framework, the consultant will identify changes in project outcomes from the implementation phase - **intended adaptation outcomes** and **observed adaptation outcomes** -, to the time of the ex post evaluation - **sustained** and **emerging outcomes**, as well as potential **maladaptation**.

The consultant will explain why project outcomes (or some of them) were sustained over time based on the following key aspects:

- A. **Context:** human and natural systems in which the project was implemented, including changes since project closure. This covers the social, economic, and political conditions affecting sustainability, as well as environmental and climate-related dynamics—such as ecosystem interactions, natural resources, and climate risks—that directly or indirectly influenced the sustainability of adaptation outcomes.
- B. **Project strategy:** including the project's underlying theory of change and relevant changes during project implementation. It also evaluates project performance and assumptions regarding the sustainability of outcomes at the final evaluation, which are then tested against evidence gathered during the ex post evaluation.
- C. **Conditions driving sustainability:** conditions that uphold the adaptation benefits generated by the project and changes from the anticipated conditions (at the final evaluation). These can be classified into the following categories:
 - 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**.

Once the outcomes are characterized ex post, the framework further helps describe how they influence the system:

- D. **System's resilience:** The pathways through which the sustained adaptation outcomes contribute to the system's resilience. This analysis helps in understanding how the project's lasting effects influence the system's ability to withstand and respond to changes over time.

The analysis of the key aspects mentioned above enables the identification of factors that may have enhanced or diminished the project's long-term impacts. It also offers insights into how the adaptation benefits attributed to the project contribute to the system's resilience and adaptive capacity. Based on this analysis, the consultant will assess the relevance of the project impacts to the Adaptation Fund's strategic objectives.

The consultant will tailor the ExPost-EAI framework to the intervention's characteristics and achieved outcomes, as outlined in the project document, mid-term review (if conducted), and final evaluation.

4.3 Methods

The consultant 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.

The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following methods and tools:

Project documentation review: should include the project document and the final (terminal) 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.

Interviews with stakeholders: will be conducted remotely and/or in-person. The main purpose of these interviews will be to inform about the ongoing evaluation purpose and scope, gather data and information on the different elements of the ExPost-EAI framework, and inquire about new sources of information and stakeholders for potential interviews. In preparation for the interviews with key stakeholders, a questionnaire should be prepared by the consultant and shared with the AF-TERG for approval.

Field visits: The evaluation is expected to include a field mission to collect data, engage stakeholders, and validate initial findings. Fieldwork must include at least one national evaluator with strong knowledge of the country's political, social, and environmental context. The consultant should facilitate the eventual participation of one or two representatives from the Implementing Entity (IE) / Executing Entity (EE) during the field mission. An AF-TERG representative may join all or part of the mission. The scope, schedule, and logistics will be agreed in advance with the AF-TERG focal point, the Implementing Entity, and the Executing Entity.

Other data collection and tools. Additional methods and tools can enhance the robustness of findings and ensure data quality, especially when dealing with qualitative data. Therefore, it is recommended that the consultant incorporates supplementary tools and data sources, such as focus group discussions, GIS analysis, and surveys, to facilitate triangulation of information and gather input from diverse stakeholders.

5 MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The deliverables are expected to be developed within six months as shown in the table below. Payments will be made according to the delivery of the expected products, which will be considered accepted as soon as the AF-TERG's comments are effectively incorporated and approved by the AF-TERG. The documents will be delivered in English.

The order of deliveries may be discussed and eventually amended according to necessary adaptations and in agreement with the contractor(s) and involved.

Deliverable	Quantity	Planned Delivery Date	Payment (% of contract value)
Inception report	1	2 months from contract start	30
Draft Final Evaluation report	1	4 months after contract start	30
Final Evaluation Report	1	5 months after contract start	30
Evaluation Summary and PPT presentation	1	6 months after contract start	10

The vendor shall include the full costs of the evaluation in its financial proposal, covering all activities and field-mission expenses (e.g., enumerators, interpreters/translation, data collection, local transport, accommodation, per diems, permits/clearances, insurance, and incidentals).

The vendor shall facilitate the participation of up to two representatives of the project’s implementing entity/executing entities (observers). As part of that, the vendor shall coordinate schedules, site access, and logistics; it is noted, however, that observers are not expected to conduct interviews or influence findings. The vendor shall include in its financial proposal all costs required to facilitate observer participation, including local transport and in-country logistical arrangements. If an AF-TERG representative joins the mission, the AF-TERG will cover their own costs.

All payments will be made following a review and acceptance of the deliverables by the AF-TERG and confirmation that they meet the quality standards of the Adaptation Fund.

6 EVALUATOR(S) COMPETENCIES

6.1 Specific requirements for the firm

- At least 10 years in the design and execution of project evaluations.
- Proven track record in climate change evaluations, with a focus on adaptation.
- Experience working in Africa. Experience working in South Africa is an advantage.
- Ability to work in English; additional local languages for local consultants would be an asset.
- Availability of locally based team member(s) (evaluator(s)).

6.2 Requirements for the team leader

The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the quality, integrity, and synthesis of the evaluation. This includes leadership of the methodology, oversight of data collection and analysis, integration of findings, and final responsibility for the evaluation report and conclusions. The requirements for the team leader include:

- Master's degree in economics, public policy, environmental governance, evaluation or other related fields with demonstrated sectoral depth – or Bachelor's degree in these fields with an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- At least six years of relevant experience in evaluation, with a focus on final (terminal) evaluations, ex-post evaluations, longer term impact, sustainability and learning. Experience in ex-post evaluations taking place three to five years after project completion would be an asset.
- Proven leadership of at least 3 complex final or ex post evaluations, preferably including small grant facilities, climate change adaptation interventions, natural resource governance, and community-based interventions.
- Experience of working in the Africa. Experience working in the project host country South Africa is a plus.
- Deep knowledge of theory of change, evaluation design and evaluation methodologies, including the measurement of causal change in the different sectors relevant to the Fund.
- Experience with flexibly piloting new methods, adapting to opportunities and barriers during fieldwork, and consulting with clients during the evaluation.
- Proven analytical and problem-solving skills, and ability to apply these skills in a practical setting, including the ability to identify issues, present findings / recommendations and contribute to resolution of evaluative challenges.
- Experience with data collection, the development of data collection protocols, data entry, and data analysis, with experience in applying mixed statistical, data analysis and triangulation methods.
- Ability to lead smaller teams such as quantitative enumerators or review their work.
- Experience with reporting on the results of data analysis and triangulation, with demonstrated analytical and organizational skills, and capable to work under strict timelines.
- Strong interpersonal skills and ability to work effectively with partners and promote collaboration in a multi-cultural environment.
- Excellent command of English written as well as spoken fluency.

Desirable qualifications are:

- Knowledge of and/or experience with projects funded by the Adaptation Fund or other environmental / climate change funds.

6.3 Team composition and expertise

The evaluation shall be conducted by a multidisciplinary team composed of one Team Leader and two to four additional members (excluding support/field staff), depending on the scope and complexity of the assignment. At least one of the team members should be a South African-based evaluator. The team should collectively cover all of the following areas:

- Social and institutional analysis: community dynamics, governance and policy processes, participation, power, and social capital.
- Climate adaptation: expertise in climate risk, resilience, and common sectors for small grants (community-based adaptation, water, agriculture/food systems, fisheries, urban resilience, nature-based solutions).
- Small-grants/fund management assessment, grant cycle, regranting models, grantee capacity strengthening, and value-for-money implications of delivery mechanisms.
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL): theory of change, results-based management, indicators and longitudinal assessment, learning-oriented evaluation approaches.
- Mixed-methods: quantitative/statistical design and analysis, and qualitative/participatory research for outcome harvesting, MSC, and case studies, depending on the proposed approach to the evaluation.
- Gender and social inclusion: gender-transformative approaches, inclusion of marginalized groups, assessment of unintended social effects.
- The evaluation team should demonstrate proficiency in relevant local languages, specifically Sepedi, Tsonga and Afrikaans, or ensure the use of qualified interpreters to facilitate effective stakeholder engagement, data collection, and accurate interpretation of findings in all project locations.