



## Key messages

- The Green Climate Fund (GCF) will become the largest multilateral institution providing climate adaptation finance.
- The success of adaptation initiatives funded by the GCF will depend, in part, upon cross-cutting parameters such as the GCF's investment framework, the initiatives' gender policies and the strengthening of stakeholder involvement and country ownership. Nonetheless, some adaptation-specific issues emerge.
- The GCF can promote effective country- and locally-owned adaptation in 2015 by: capitalising on the experience of existing National Implementing Entities; piloting 'small grants' approaches under a framework of enhanced direct access; and considering key adaptation aspects in the design of the investment and accountability frameworks.
- The potential of the GCF's Private Sector Facility to promote effective adaptation to climate change is still uncertain; several fundamental decisions about its operation are due to be taken in 2015, which will set its future course.

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## Effective support for climate change adaptation: Key tasks for the Green Climate Fund in 2015

**The Green Climate Fund (GCF) made significant progress in 2014. By the end of the year, donor governments had committed an initial US\$10.2 billion. Half of this sum will be devoted to adaptation, making the GCF the biggest multilateral adaptation finance institution in the world. The GCF's first decisions on use of the funds are due to be taken in late 2015, in the run-up to the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21), to be held in Paris, France. This policy brief looks at some of the key issues facing the GCF for it to become established as an effective financier of adaptation activities, during this critical year and beyond.**

Adaptation activities are under way in many countries and there has been important progress in the learning and development of how to implement adaptation plans.<sup>1</sup> For example, many Least Developed Countries have made good progress in implementing their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs);<sup>2</sup> processes for these countries to identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change, which were submitted to the UNFCCC in the period up to 2008. The international community is increasing its efforts to assist countries to produce longer-term National Adaptation Plans or similar instruments, which have been in development since the UNFCCC COP16, held in Cancun, Mexico, in 2010.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, many developing countries have set up national climate funds. These measures demonstrate how the international adaptation effort is dynamic and rapidly evolving, even

before the potential effects of funding from the GCF are considered.

However, recent estimates suggest that financing these adaptation activities and plans in developing countries might cost significantly more than previously thought. For example, the United Nations Environment Programme estimates that adaptation costs could reach US\$150–300 billion per year by 2030.<sup>4</sup>

### The international landscape for adaptation finance

Before the GCF, four main multilateral funding bodies existed for adaptation finance: the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund (all governed by the UNFCCC, with the latter two managed by the Global Environment Facility), and the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience, which is managed by the World Bank. The work of these bodies

is complemented by bilateral cooperation and significant domestic adaptation efforts in developing countries.

The GCF is a comparatively new funding institution, having come into operation in 2014.<sup>5</sup> The GCF Board decided to allocate 50% of the Fund's resources to adaptation, which will make the GCF the largest multilateral funder of climate adaptation activities. Existing funds for the GCF came from an initial round of financial pledges amassed in the run-up to the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP20), held in Lima, Peru, in December 2014. These were primarily from developed countries, but several developing countries, such as Colombia and Peru, also pledged resources.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Expectations for the GCF's adaptation funding

Developing countries and communities that are vulnerable to climate change have significant expectations that the GCF can help them to scale up their adaptation efforts. In response, the GCF Board clarified which types of adaptation outcomes it would focus on in its initial adaptation logic model (explained in Table 1). The Board also launched a process to enable institutions to seek accreditation for GCF funding.

The GCF Board is expected to announce its first project funding decisions at the third meeting in 2015, expected to take place in October. This objective was

included in the formal decision of the UNFCCC COP20 and so puts additional pressure on the GCF Board to meet this timeline.<sup>8</sup> Further progress will be required in some important cross-cutting tasks, such as a coherent and consistent gender policy and action plan, the application of environmental and social safeguards, the implementation of the readiness programme, or the comprehensive inclusion of multiple stakeholders to promote true country ownership. However, this Policy Brief focuses on mapping some of the more adaptation-specific issues and tasks that need resolving in relation to the GCF's role in funding adaptation ahead of these first expected funding decisions.

### 2. The GCF's role in climate finance

The GCF is tasked by governments with developing its work in a way that complements the existing international climate finance architecture (as detailed in the Governing Instrument). For example, through decisions that were taken at COP20, governments "request the Green Climate Fund to enhance its collaboration with existing funds ... in order to enhance the complementarity and coherence of policies and programming at the national level".<sup>9</sup> This includes cooperation between the GCF and the Global Environment Facility on a technical level (such as on adaptation impact indicators),<sup>10</sup> and working with the UNFCCC's Adaptation Committee (a technical body rather than a funding institution) and the Least

Developed Countries Fund's Expert Group regarding funding for the formulation and implementation of NAPAs.<sup>11</sup>

The complexity of the international climate finance landscape is well documented<sup>12</sup> and poses several challenges for both the GCF and its recipient countries, which will find it challenging to navigate this new financial landscape. Some governments have suggested that the international bodies for adaptation finance should be consolidated to help simplify this landscape, with some closing or merging, or at least developing clearer institutional boundaries.

This Policy Brief cannot address this debate in full, as it requires consideration of many technical and political aspects. However, it is reasonable to state that the GCF should prove its competence and worth before other funds are closed down, for instance. There are already some features that differentiate the GCF from other adaptation funding bodies and can therefore help to define its role. Specifically, the GCF:

- supports adaptation **and** mitigation, which allows for more integrated approaches than addressing one of these challenges alone
- is open to all developing countries, but with a distinct allocation for adaptation in Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and African countries (50% of its adaptation resources)
- has sufficient resources and scope to fund larger, longer-term programmes than other bodies (by comparison, the Adaptation Fund has a US\$10 million cap per country due to its limited resources)
- can fund the scaling up of existing small, proven initiatives
- has a dedicated facility that seeks to encourage private sector entities to work with it.

### 3. Scaling up direct access through existing accredited agencies

Another central feature of the GCF is country ownership. One element here

**Table 1. The GCF's intended impacts and outcomes in the initial adaptation logic model**

Impact areas	Project/programme outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased resilience and enhanced livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, communities and regions.</li> <li>• Increased resilience of health and wellbeing, and food and water security.</li> <li>• Increased resilience of infrastructure and the built environment to climate change threats.</li> <li>• Improved resilience of ecosystems and ecosystem services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened institutional and regulatory systems for climate-responsive planning and development.</li> <li>• Increased generation and use of climate information in decision-making.</li> <li>• Strengthened adaptive capacity and reduced exposure to climate risks.</li> <li>• Strengthened awareness of climate threats and risk-reduction processes.</li> </ul>

Source: GCF (2014)<sup>7</sup>

is that instead of countries having to use multilateral agencies to access the available funds, they can use national institutions as 'implementing entities' or intermediaries for reaching international climate finance bodies. Therefore, we expect direct access (and enhanced direct access, explained in section 4 below) to ultimately become one of the main routes for channelling finance to adaptation projects 'on the ground'.

As this intermediary role, implementing entities must oversee the disbursement of funds and ensure the efficient, effective and responsible use of resources. For these reasons, debates about the GCF place great attention on the fiduciary, environmental and social standards required for agencies to be accredited as implementing entities. In reality, some developing countries lack institutions with the capability to meet these international standards. As of December 2014, the GCF has been helping to overcome this issue by supporting 27 countries that have requested help to advance the capacity of domestic institutions.

At its 8th meeting in October 2014, the GCF Board agreed on the guiding framework for accrediting institutions. This paves the way for preliminary accreditations to take place, which are a prerequisite for programme and project submission and approval.<sup>13</sup> This framework includes a fast-track procedure for institutions that are already accredited under bodies such as the Adaptation Fund and the Global Environment Facility. Under this procedure, institutions are required to demonstrate their ability to comply with the GCF's standards, particularly those that differ from the Adaptation Fund's and/or the Global Environment Facility's standards.

The Adaptation Fund has been piloting direct access for adaptation finance and has so far accredited National Implementing Entities from 17 developing countries. Some of these have already completed the project design or implementation stage for community-

based adaptation approaches; five direct access projects are being implemented and six other projects were recently approved.<sup>14</sup> As a result, these institutions have gathered important experience. Some of this matches key features of the GCF's investment framework, such as coherence with national strategies and country ownership, engagement with various stakeholders, catalytic effects beyond one project, and contributions to the creation of enabling environments.<sup>15</sup> This experience has the potential to help others through South-South knowledge exchange.

It will be up to each country to decide whether it plans to continue working through institutions that are already accredited, but doing so, at least initially, provides some clear opportunities and does not limit a country's option to work with other implementing entities or intermediaries.

In order to capitalise on this prior experience, the GCF could actively encourage these countries and institutions to apply for GCF accreditation and submit funding proposals. This could include several different scenarios. For example, if endorsed by their national government focal point for the GCF, National Implementing Entities could apply for accreditation under the GCF. With support from the GCF readiness programme, they could seek to fill the gaps required to meet the fiduciary, environmental and social standards needed for successful accreditation.

Alternatively, countries could use the 'needs and approaches' contained in their Adaptation Fund (or similar) project submissions as a starting point for creating funding proposals. These usually take account of national strategies and plans, and could be used to help prepare concept notes in line with GCF requirements, with a view to scaling up identified approaches or expanding them within a region. Intense in-country consultations among relevant stakeholders on the proposed approaches

should be pursued. The GCF could offer specific grants to National Implementing Entities for project development and developing fully fledged proposals, including additional efforts to involve major stakeholders and intended project beneficiaries. This has been the case for the Adaptation Fund, which has issued grants of US\$30,000 per project, up to US\$10 million. This has helped to improve the quality of project proposals, including the undertaking of feasibility studies, environmental and social assessments, and stakeholder consultations.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, to send a clear signal of its intention to allow direct access to thrive, the GCF Board could agree to allocate a certain share of the resources available for programming to direct access proposals, similarly to the Adaptation Fund approach.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4. Piloting enhanced direct access through small grants facilities**

At its 8th meeting in 2014, the GCF Board decided to launch a pilot phase to trial an advanced version of direct access, called 'enhanced direct access'.<sup>18</sup> This can be understood as a means to enhance country ownership and is linked to the emergence of domestic climate finance institutions, such as national climate funds, in developing countries.

In contrast to 'traditional' direct access, enhanced direct access – as broadly understood – would shift a greater number of funding decisions to subnational, national or regional entities and thereby go beyond just delegating the implementation responsibilities to domestic agencies. It could also be used for financing policy-level interventions through national finance ministries. Such arrangements would require additional responsibilities and capabilities on the part of the recipients (e.g. systems for awarding grants or loan management).<sup>19</sup>

The GCF Board mandated its Secretariat to draft a terms of reference for enhanced direct access.<sup>20</sup> To provide context for this decision, a GCF background paper refers to a recently approved Adaptation Fund



project submitted by the South African National Implementing Entity.<sup>21</sup> This project will set up a small grants facility where the submission and approval of small proposals (US\$100,000 and under) will be coordinated within the country, based on a programme framework approved by the Adaptation Fund.

The GCF has decided to operate at a greater order of magnitude. Its 'micro project' category is reserved for programmes and projects up to US\$10 million, and its 'small' category concerns projects with a value of US\$10–50 million. The implications of this different scale need to be reflected in the terms of reference for the pilot programme.

The GCF could decide to allocate a certain amount of resources (e.g. US\$250–300 million) towards a programme of small grants facilities, and request proposals that aim to set up facilities of this type in a limited number of countries. These could take existing institutions into account where necessary. Such a small grants programme would suit the needs of both the GCF and developing countries for several reasons:

- It would not prescribe to countries which types of approaches to promote, and would not limit them, for example, to specific elements of the initial adaptation logic model. But as a whole, the adaptation logic model would be applied as guidance to Small Grants Facilities.
- It would support activities that are likely to have lower risks, due to the smaller scale of each individual intervention.
- Multiple programmes could add up collectively to a larger impact through a programmatic approach that combines capacity development with implementation.
- It could facilitate better inclusion of vulnerable groups by increasing the accessibility of funds to local organisations.
- It could build on and further strengthen existing structures within countries, which might help mobilise additional local or national resources.

- It could significantly enhance learning and knowledge exchange, if systems for this are built into the approach from the outset (including ways to strengthen national policies), thereby contributing to the GCF's objective to be a learning institution.

### 5. Development of investment and accountability frameworks

Investment and accountability are closely linked to each other. It will be important for the GCF to apply effective investment and accountability frameworks early on to ensure that funded programmes can demonstrate that they have increased the adaptive capacity of populations at risk from climate change impacts. Such frameworks will also showcase their contributions to the GCF's objectives and assist with capturing lessons learned during implementation.

An important task in 2015 will be to further consolidate the initial investment framework, which aims to clarify criteria, sub-criteria and associated indicators for assessing proposals. At its 8th meeting, the GCF Board took note of an initial approach to the monitoring and evaluation policy.<sup>22</sup> Subsequently, at COP20, governments asked the GCF Board to develop a monitoring and accountability framework.<sup>23</sup>

When further developing these guidelines, the GCF is well advised to draw on lessons learned from other bodies. In its *Fifth Assessment Report*, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change agreed on some crucial principles for effective adaptation, including:

- Adaptation is place- and context-specific, and no single approach for reducing risks is appropriate across all settings.
- The first step towards adaptation to future climate change is reducing vulnerability and exposure to present climate variability. It is worth noting that GCF funds distributed for adaptation need to be 'future-proofed', i.e. projects should take into account expected future climate variability.
- Adaptation planning and implementation, at all levels of governance, are contingent on societal values, objectives and perceptions of risk.
- Poor planning, overemphasising short-term outcomes, or failing to sufficiently anticipate consequences can result in maladaptation.<sup>24</sup>

The GCF's paper on sub-criteria and methodologies for the initial investment framework contains proposals for fleshing out further aspects, such as the potential for impact, the potential for paradigm shifts and sustainable

### Guidelines for monitoring and evaluating climate change adaptation activities

Following an expert meeting on the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation, the Adaptation Committee under the UNFCCC made the following recommendations in its report to COP20:

- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks need to be appropriate, relevant to needs and tailored to country circumstances. A common set of global indicators is not useful, owing to the context-specific nature of adaptation.
- National-level assessments can play a different role in measuring adaptive capacity to subnational or project-based assessments. For example, they can measure the degree of coordination and integration of adaptation in national priorities.
- A positive learning environment is important; this can encourage formal and informal learning, including peer-to-peer learning, and encourage learning from negative experiences as well as positive ones.
- Planning and allocating resources, both technical and financial, are important for effective monitoring and evaluation systems.<sup>25</sup>

development benefits, aspects of recipient needs, and country ownership or efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>26</sup> It reflects some of the adaptation-specific aspects and mandates of the GCF by *inter alia*: recognising the importance of including qualitative judgements (as opposed to only looking at quantitative aspects); considering the long-term continuation of relevant outcomes (as opposed to only paying attention to short-term outcomes); underlining the importance of taking into account diverse country circumstances and needs; further elaborating on the prioritisation of particularly vulnerable groups of the population; and differentiating the approach to costing and co-financing (with a strong role for full-cost and grant-based finance, and with no finance leverage obligations for adaptation).

One particular aspect that is highlighted in the GCF's governing instrument, and which therefore must also be addressed in its monitoring and evaluation framework, is the role of participatory monitoring. The GCF has not yet defined this term, but one potential definition is that used by CARE International: "Participatory monitoring and evaluation assesses change through processes that involve many people or groups, each of which is affecting, or is affected by, the changes being assessed. Stakeholders negotiate an agreement about how progress should be measured and how the findings will be acted upon. Participatory monitoring and evaluation draws on the methods and tools of participatory action research including Participatory Rural Appraisal."<sup>27</sup>

In principle, these aspects fit very well with the GCF's main parameters, as set out in its initial investment framework. Such an approach may also contribute to the 'paradigm shift' that the GCF is intended to create (explained in more detail in 'How can the Green Climate Fund initiate a paradigm shift?'<sup>28</sup>) by creating a learning environment that builds strongly on the needs and views of those who are intended to benefit from funded activities.

## 6. Funding adaptation through the Private Sector Facility

As mandated at COP20, one of the tasks for the GCF Board in 2015 will be to further develop its Private Sector Facility. This instrument, which cuts across both mitigation and adaptation activities, was set up to enable it to "directly and indirectly finance private sector mitigation and adaptation activities at the national, regional and international levels". It particularly seeks to "promote the participation of private sector actors in developing countries, in particular local actors, including small and medium-sized enterprises and local financial intermediaries"<sup>29</sup>

The GCF Board did not take any decisions on the next steps for setting up this Facility at its 8th meeting, but preparatory documents indicate some of the tasks to be accomplished in 2015. For delivering locally owned and suitable adaptation solutions, involving local private entities seems to be of particular importance compared to the role of external companies. This matter has received increasing attention in the GCF and is reflected in a specific input paper for its most recent meeting.<sup>30</sup> However, there are still a number of unresolved questions on how the Facility will operate. These need to be decided in 2015 and will form the basis for considering in depth how the Facility can deliver adaptation actions that address the needs of the people most vulnerable to climate change.

## 7. Next steps

Given the diversity of needs and approaches to climate change adaptation, it is difficult for the GCF to define specific activities in its early days without knowing what countries' particular requests will be. However, it is clear that there are still some significant decisions to be made and processes to be worked through in 2015, before the GCF takes its first decisions about what to fund. The suggestions made in this Policy Brief aim to inspire the debate and facilitate progress in the GCF around several of these key decisions.

Some activities have already begun. Support for accreditation is already part of the GCF readiness programme, and the accreditation of institutions will be a key agenda item for the 9th Board meeting (held in March 2015 in Songdo, Republic of Korea), as well as the further development of the investment framework. Developing the terms of reference for the enhanced direct access pilot phase is also under way, and a decision on this by the Board (envisaged for its 9th meeting) should include the promotion of in-country small grants facilities. The further development of the results management framework, which includes aspects on monitoring and accountability, will be subject to GCF Board discussions (potentially at its 10th or 11th meeting) and needs to build in adaptation-specific aspects. The Private Sector Facility is likely to be subject to continuous discussions throughout 2015. On all these aspects, the GCF Secretariat is advised to consider broad experience from various relevant actors.

By addressing these issues in 2015, the GCF Board and Secretariat can advance the GCF's framework in an innovative manner and further elaborate its complementary role to other adaptation finance institutions. This will help to promote effective adaptation action.

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## About CFAS

The Climate Finance Advisory Service (CFAS) offers negotiators, policy-makers and advisors in the poorest and most climate vulnerable countries bespoke information and guidance to help them effectively participate in complex global climate finance negotiations. It is supported by the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN).

## About CDKN

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) aims to help decision-makers in developing countries design and deliver climate compatible development. We do this by providing demand-led research and technical assistance, and channelling the best available knowledge on climate change and development to support policy processes at the country level.



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