

Annex X: 2019 Work Plan of the Independent Redress Mechanism

I. Introduction

1.1 Background

1. The Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) is mandated in paragraph 69 of the GCF's Governing Instrument. This paragraph states that "(t)he Board will establish an independent redress mechanism that will report to the Board. The mechanism will receive complaints related to the operation of the Fund and will evaluate and make recommendations." The IRM performs a key function within the GCF's accountability mechanisms. The IRM reports directly to the Board and is subject to the decisions of the Board. It is independent of the Secretariat of the GCF. The IRMs mandate is contained in the updated terms of reference adopted by the Board on 25 September 2017 (decision B.BM-2017/10).

2. The updated TOR of the IRM tasks the IRM with the following activities:

- (a) **Reconsideration requests:** Addressing requests from developing countries for reconsideration of Board decisions denying funding to a project or programme;
- (b) **Complaints and Grievances:** Addressing complaints and grievances from persons adversely impacted by projects or programmes of the GCF;
- (c) **Advisory:** Recommending reconsideration of GCF policies, procedures, guidelines and systems based on lessons learned from cases handled by the IRM and from good international practice; providing guidance to the GCF's readiness and accreditation activities based on best practices;
- (d) **Capacity building:** strengthening the capacities of accountability and redress mechanisms of direct access entities; and
- (e) **Outreach:** Providing education and outreach to stakeholders, the public and staff of the GCF.

3. The terms of reference specify that "to ensure the financial independence of the IRM, the Head of the IRM will propose a work plan, and budget for meeting the annual expenses and the Board will consider and approve this work plan and budget." The terms of reference also state that the annual work plan and budget shall be submitted to the Board through the Ethics and Audit Committee (EAC).

4. The IRM developed this work plan and budget for 2019 to give effect to Board decisions and implement the Board approved terms of reference. This work plan and budget was submitted to, and approved by, the EAC on 8 August 2018. Subsequently, the Budget Committee of the Board also considered and approved the work plan and budget for 2019. The Board is requested to consider and approve the same.

1.2 Implementation of the 2018 Work Plan

5. As mandated by the Board in decision B.15/12, the IRM has consulted with the Ethics and Audit Committee (EAC) in the implementation of the 2018 work plan, reporting to it on a quarterly basis. Summaries of the work of the IRM from January to September 2018 have been provided to the Board in three documents titled "Report on the activities of the Independent Redress Mechanism" dated 4 February 2018 (document GCF/B.19/17), 5 June 2018 (document GCF/B.20/Inf.03) and 25 September 2018 (document GCF/B.21/Inf.06).

1.3 Work plan and budget

6. The budget for 2019 will allow the IRM to implement the activities set out in this work plan. The budget was developed in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer of the GCF Secretariat. Depending on the complaints and reconsideration requests received by the IRM (which are unpredictable), the budget may need to be supplemented during the year. The budget is set out in annex III hereof.

1.4 Key components of the 2019 Work Plan

7. The work plan is divided into two closely related components. Each component is essential for operating the IRM and ensuring that Board mandated tasks are completed in a timely and efficient fashion. A draft Board decision is suggested in annex I. The two main components of the work plan are as follows:

- (i) Operate the IRM;
- (ii) Process complaints and requests for reconsideration of funding decisions.

8. Each of these tasks is explained in more detail below.

II. Operate the IRM

2.1 Staff and consultants

9. The IRM is led by the Head of the IRM. It is now staffed by a Compliance and Dispute Resolution Specialist, and a Team Assistant. One staffing change is envisaged in 2019 in anticipation of the Procedures and Guidelines scheduled to be adopted by the Board in 2018. The current position of Team Assistant which is a local hiring will need to be upgraded to an international hire at an IS1 level and re-designated as “Registrar IRM”.

10. The work of the two senior level Advisors of the IRM who served as consultants since 2017 have been completed and as such their services will not be required in 2019. The IRM is constituting rosters of subject experts, translators and mediators on an open competitive basis. Should the IRM need such services, they will be drawn from the rostered consultants on a financially competitive basis.

2.2 Procedures and guidelines

11. The Board, by decision B.13/24, requested the Head of the IRM to prepare, with the support of the Secretariat, for consideration by the Board, Procedures and Guidelines for the IRM (decision B.06/09, annex V, para. 14 (document GCF/B.06/18, annex V, para. 14)) “in close consultation with similar or equivalent mechanisms of accredited entities and other stakeholders”. The IRM has given effect to this decision. Draft Procedures and Guidelines are scheduled to be presented to the Board at B.21 for adoption after the EAC concludes its deliberation on the draft. The IRM will continue to support the Board in adopting the Procedures and Guidelines either at B.21 or at a Board meeting thereafter and in implementing the same thereafter.

2.3 Operating procedures (OPs) for the IRM

12. The IRM developed and commenced piloting draft supporting operating procedures (SoPs) in early 2018, to efficiently and effectively implement the TOR and the Procedures and

Guidelines of the IRM when adopted by the Board. The SoPs will continue to be pilot tested in 2019 and finalized and issued in the course of the year.

2.4 Advisory services

13. The IRM is mandated to provide the Board and the GCF Secretariat with advice on changes to policies, procedures, systems etc of the GCF based on lessons learned either from cases handled by it or from international best practices. The IRM will prepare a lesson learned report in 2019 for presentation to the Board and the Secretariat with recommendations, as appropriate. The IRM also works collaboratively with the other two independent units. In accordance with the draft Policy on the Protection of Whistle-blowers and Witnesses the Independent Integrity Unit and the IRM will cooperate and coordinate with each other to maximize the effectiveness of that Policy, once adopted by the Board.

2.5 Strengthening capacities of redress mechanisms of direct access AEs

14. Under the TOR, the IRM is mandated to share best practices and give guidance that can be helpful for strengthening of capacities of the accountability/redress mechanisms of direct access accredited entities. In 2018, the IRM developed capacity building activities for strengthening redress mechanisms of direct access entities who need such assistance. Based on a survey of such mechanisms and their capacities, the IRM assessed their needs and has provided basic training through workshops and advice. These activities will be continued and improved in 2019. Experience gained in strengthening such capacities will be summarized and shared with the redress mechanisms of all accredited entities in 2019.

15. In 2019, the IRM plans to conduct two clinics and plenary sessions as part of the annual DAE workshop organised by the secretariat. Additionally, the IRM plans to conduct two, 2-day workshop for staff of 8-10 selected grievance mechanisms of DAEs. Additionally, the IRM will hold clinics and participate in a plenary session at five regional Structured Dialogues targeting NDAs and AE as well as Accredited Observers.

2.6 Communications strategy

16. The IRM has developed and is implementing a communications strategy to give effect to its TOR. The implementation of the strategy has budgetary implications. The strategy will help achieve the following TOR mandated tasks systematically and efficiently:

- (a) Share lessons learned from cases that are handled by the IRM;
- (b) Share best practices with the GCF and with direct access accredited entities and strengthen the capacity of grievance redress mechanisms of such entities, as appropriate; and
- (c) Provide outreach and education to relevant stakeholders and the public through workshops (including with civil society, accredited entities and NDAs at structured dialogues organised by the Secretariat) and disseminate information in user-friendly formats. In these efforts, the IRM will work closely with redress mechanisms of accredited entities to conduct regional and national workshops and other outreach events. Two such outreach events are planned in 2019 targeting civil society groups in developing countries.

2.7 Case management system (CMS)

17. The IRM is acquiring a case management system (CMS) in 2018 through an open competitive process. The CMS allows the IRM to systematically, consistently and timely process complaints and reconsideration requests received by it. The CMS is also needed to collect and analyse data related to such complaints and reconsideration requests so that the IRM's capacity building activities for accredited entities and advice to the GCF based on lessons learned are well grounded. The CMS needs to be maintained by the software vendor and a budgetary allocation is sought to support the same.

2.8 Independent Accountability Mechanisms Network

18. With Board approval, the IRM joined the Independent Accountability Mechanisms Network (IAMnet) in February 2017. IAMnet is a community of practice in this area. There are over 40 accountability mechanisms of international financial institutions and funds, and a significant number of the independent redress mechanisms of the current accredited entities are members of this network. The IRM will continue to actively participate in IAMnet, including attending its annual meeting and serving on working groups.

2.9 Reports

19. The TOR requires the IRM to publish an annual report for dissemination to the public. Such a report was published for 2017 in January 2018. A similar report will be published for 2018 in January 2019. Additionally, the TOR envisages periodic activity reports from the IRM to the Board. Furthermore, the GCF is expected to report to the UNFCCC, among other things, about the work of the IRM. The IRM will prepare all the aforesaid reports in a timely and appropriate manner. Public reports will be published on the IRM's website and will also be made available through other appropriate means.

III. Process complaints and reconsideration requests

3.1 Complaints and requests

20. The IRM is now operational and able to process (a) *complaints* from persons adversely affected by GCF funded projects or programmes, and (b) *requests* from developing countries for reconsideration of funding denied by the Board. In 2017, the IRM received one complaint from Bangladesh which was declared ineligible. In 2018 the IRM has not received any *complaints* and has so far received one *request* from Argentina for reconsideration of a funding decision denying funding by the Board (later withdrawn).

21. While it is not possible to predict how many complaints or requests will be filed in any given year, for purposes of planning and budgeting, the IRM estimated the possibility of three cases being filed in 2018. For 2019, budgetary provision is sought on a similar estimated basis.