

Annex XII: 2020 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 IRM's 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 increase awareness of its role and work 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 2020 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 4 September 2019. Subsequently, the Budget Committee of the Board also considered and approved the work plan and budget for 2020 on 15 October 2019 (endorsement certificates for the EAC and Budget Committee are attached as annex IV and V respectively). The Board is requested to consider and approve the same.

1.2 Implementation of the 2019 Work Plan

5. As mandated by the Board in paragraph 6 of the IRM's Terms of Reference (decision B.BM-2017/10), the IRM has consulted with the Ethics and Audit Committee (EAC) in the implementation of the 2019 work plan, reporting to it on a quarterly basis. Summaries of the work of the IRM from January to September 2019 have been provided to the Board in two documents titled "Report on the activities of the Independent Redress Mechanism" 12 June 2019 (GCF/B.23/Inf.03) and 15 October 2019 (GCF/B.24/Inf.02).

1.3 Work plan and budget

6. The budget for 2020 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 2020 Work Plan

7. The work plan is divided into six 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 five main components of the work plan are as follows:

- (i) Operate the IRM;
- (ii) Address requests from developing countries for reconsideration of funding decisions and complaints from GCF project affected people;
- (iii) Provide advice;
- (iv) Develop the capacity of grievance redress mechanisms of DAEs; and
- (v) Conduct outreach.

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 the Registrar of the IRM. No staffing changes are envisaged in 2020.

10. The IRM has constituted three rosters of subject experts, translators and mediators on an open competitive basis. There are at present 19 subject experts, 16 mediators and 45 translators on the three IRM rosters. Should the IRM need such services, they may be drawn from the rostered consultants on a financially competitive basis. Additionally, the IRM provides an opportunity for four interns through the year to assist in the IRM's work.

2.2 Supporting operating procedures (SOPs) for the IRM

11. The IRM developed and commenced piloting draft supporting operating procedures (SoPs) in early 2018, to guide IRM staff in efficiently and effectively implementing the TOR and the Procedures and Guidelines of the IRM that were adopted by the Board at B.22 in February 2019. The SoPs will continue to be pilot tested in 2020 and finalized in the course of the year.

2.3 Case management system (CMS)

12. The IRM has acquired a custom-tailored case management system (CMS) in 2018-2019 through an open competitive process. The CMS allows the IRM to systematically, consistently and timely process complaints and reconsideration requests received by it. Additionally, the

CMS is also used by the Independent Units to register and process appeals under the Information Disclosure Policy of the GCF. 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, along with a budgetary allocation for possible change requests (i.e. changes to the system that are outside of the scope of the 2018 contract, but which are deemed necessary once the CMS becomes operational).

2.4 Independent Accountability Mechanisms Network

13. 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 to develop good practices, collaborate on outreach activities, and implement governance reforms. The IAMnet meets in-person once a year for a three-day annual meeting. In 2020, the IAMnet annual meeting will be held in Washington, DC.

2.5 Reports

14. 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, and for 2018 in February 2019. A similar report will be published for 2019 in January 2020. Additionally, the TOR envisages periodic activity reports from the IRM to the Board. Furthermore, the GCF Board 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. Address reconsideration requests and complaints

3.1 Requests and complaints

15. The IRM is now operational and able to process (a) *requests* from developing countries for reconsideration of funding denied by the Board, and (b) *complaints* from persons adversely affected by GCF funded projects or programmes. In 2017, the IRM received one complaint from Transparency International Bangladesh (an NGO) which was declared ineligible. In 2018 the IRM did not receive any *complaints* but received one *request* from Argentina for reconsideration of a funding decision denying funding by the Board (later withdrawn). In 2018-2019 the IRM also processed a self-initiated investigation relating to a project in Peru which resulted in the Secretariat providing undertakings to take various remedial measures. The IRM aims to monitor and close this case. However, in the event that the agreed undertakings by the GCF Secretariat are not implemented satisfactorily, the IRM retains the option to further investigate and to treat the information received in this case as an eligible complaint.

16. 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 each being filed in 2018 and 2019. For 2020, budgetary provision is sought on a similar estimated basis.

IV. Providing advice

17. The IRM is mandated to provide the Board and the GCF Secretariat with advice on changes to policies, procedures, and systems of the GCF based on lessons learned either from cases handled by it or from international best practices. The IRM drafted two advisory reports in 2019 for presentation to the Board and the Secretariat with recommendations, as appropriate. The IRM will prepare, as appropriate, advisory reports in 2020 for presentation to the Board. The IRM also works collaboratively with the other two Independent Units and the Secretariat to provide advice and feedback on a range of policy documents.

V. Develop the capacity of grievance redress mechanisms of DAEs

18. 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. In October 2019, the IRM conducted a workshop in Songdo for the staff of grievance redress mechanism of direct access entities. Additionally, with the help of a consultant, the IRM is developing online and in-person training materials for the personnel of grievance redress and accountability mechanisms of direct access entities.

19. In 2020, the IRM plans to conduct a three-day training workshop for approximately thirty participants of key grievance redress mechanism personnel of direct access entities using the learning materials that have been developed. Utilizing the knowledge platform that the Secretariat is implementing, the IRM will upload the online learning modules to the platform and make it available to such personnel and the public. Additionally, the IRM will hold clinics and participate in the Global Programming Conference and the Global Private Sector Conference in Songdo conducted by the GCF Secretariat targeting NDAs and AE as well as Accredited Observers.

VI. Conduct outreach

20. The IRM has developed and is implementing a communications strategy to give effect to its mandate to conduct outreach to key stakeholders. 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, as appropriate; and
- (c) Provide outreach and education to relevant stakeholders and the public through workshops and disseminate information in user-friendly formats. The IRM plans to host one outreach event on its own in 2020, and to contribute to and participate in three outreach events led by other accountability mechanisms and civil society organisations.