

## **Annex VIII: Terms of reference for the selection of the host countries/cities for GCF regional presence**

### **I. Introduction**

1. These terms of reference outline the objective, eligibility and evaluation criteria, and selection process for identifying an initial set of host countries/cities for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) regional presence. This process supports the implementation of decision B.41/10, which calls for the establishment of a regional presence to enhance accessibility, efficiency and country ownership, and does not prejudice the potential for future expansion informed by operational experience, evolving needs and demand, and continued Board guidance.
2. The process reflects guidance from the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement and is intended to ensure a transparent, inclusive, and competitive approach to selection

### **II. Objective**

3. The objective is to select an initial set of host countries/cities in which to establish regional offices and potentially “outposts” as part of GCF regional presence. The process will consider proposals submitted by countries that are Parties to the UNFCCC and eligible based on the criteria, and will be guided by operational, institutional, and strategic priorities as defined by the Board and the updated Strategic Plan for the GCF 2024-2027.

### **III. Call for proposals**

4. Parties to the UNFCCC interested in hosting an office\* of GCF and eligible based on the criteria are invited to submit a proposal by completing the form in appendix I that addresses the eligibility and evaluation criteria outlined in this terms of reference. Submission may be accompanied by documentary information providing evidence of how the country/city meets the requirements.
5. Submission of a proposal does not imply selection or commitment by GCF. All submissions will be evaluated transparently against the criteria, and final decisions on host country/city selection will rest with the Board.
6. Recognizing both the regional groupings referenced in decision B.41/10<sup>†</sup> and the Secretariat’s updated structure endorsed by the Board in decision B.40/01,<sup>‡</sup> the call for proposal is being launched without prejudgement of any future adjustments to the geographic configuration of the regional presence of GCF, which shall be informed by the assessment of the actual proposals received and be considered by the Board in early December 2025.
7. To facilitate planning and effective coordination of the selection process, countries that intend to submit a proposal are kindly requested to notify the Secretariat of their intention to do so by 15 August 2025.
8. Final proposals must be submitted by 19 September 2025 and emailed to [regionalpresence@gcfund.org](mailto:regionalpresence@gcfund.org) and [secretarytotheboard@gcfund.org](mailto:secretarytotheboard@gcfund.org).

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\* As a reference point and based on current capacities, offices may accommodate up to 30 staff members.

<sup>†</sup> Regional groupings as per decision B.41/10: Asia-Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>‡</sup> Updated Secretariat geographical structure as per decision B.40/01: Latin America and the Caribbean; Africa; Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East; Asia and the Pacific (served by headquarters).

## IV. Eligibility criteria

9. To be considered, a proposal must meet all of the following minimum requirements:

Criterion	Methodology
<b>1. Non-Annex I Parties</b> To be eligible for consideration, proposed host countries must be non-Annex I Parties	Refer to Annex I to the UNFCCC
<b>2. Legal status, privileges, immunities and exemptions afforded through a host country agreement with GCF <sup>a</sup></b>	Commitment by the country to the speedy conclusion of the host country agreement. Timeframe and potential impediments assessed.
<b>3. Demonstrate a baseline level of the local conditions in the host city, measured by the extent of health care, housing, safety and security, climate, isolation, and level of amenities / conveniences of life</b> To be eligible for consideration, proposed host cities must have an A or B rating in the ICSC Mobility and Hardship Classification.	Consolidated entitlement index of the ICSC <sup>b</sup>

*Abbreviations:* ICSC = International Civil Service Commission, non-Annex I Parties = Parties not included in Annex I to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC = United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

<sup>a</sup> This approach is aligned with the risk appetite statement of GCF (decision B.40/17), which requires host countries to recognize the GCF privileges and immunities as a prerequisite for establishing a presence.

<sup>b</sup> <https://icsc.un.org/Home/DataMobility>

10. See the note in appendix II for further information on privileges and immunities and the host country agreement.

## V. Weighted evaluation criteria

11. Eligible proposals will be assessed using weighted evaluation criteria organized into two categories, reflecting both operational and institutional priorities:

- (a) **Meeting work objectives for regional presence** – focuses on the capacity of the proposed location to support the core functions of GCF, including programming, engagement and delivery; and
- (b) **Recruiting and retaining a world-class workforce** – addresses factors critical to ensuring the long-term viability and effectiveness of regional operations by enabling GCF to attract, support and retain skilled staff.

12. While eligibility criteria establish the minimum standards for consideration, evaluation criteria serve to differentiate among eligible proposals based on the quality and strength of the enabling environment. Assessments will be informed by independent metrics, verified data, and formal commitments outlined in the submissions.

<b>Meeting work objectives for regional presence</b>		
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>A1. Intra-regional air connectivity from the host city</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Air Transport Association Air Connectivity Index (country level), complemented by an analysis conducted by the Secretariat team overseeing the arrangements of corporate travel</li> </ul>	25%
<b>A2. Extent and quality of telecommunications and digital connectivity</b> in the proposed host city necessary for sustained operations and effective outreach to countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICT Development Index published by the International Telecommunication Union (country level)</li> </ul>	12.5%
<b>A3. Extent of host city diplomatic representation with countries in the region</b> - availability of embassies and consular facilities to support visa services in the host city for travel within the region, and to facilitate engagement with governments of other countries within the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As reported in the proposal and confirmed by GCF</li> </ul>	10%
<b>A4. Presence of a climate finance and institutional ecosystem aligned with the mandate and strategic objectives of GCF in the host city</b> —characterized by an active presence of United Nations agencies, and international and regional development and financial institutions that enable complementarity and coherence, equitable access for vulnerable and underserved countries, and a dynamic private sector and climate finance community capable of driving innovation and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As reported in the proposal and confirmed by GCF</li> </ul>	10%
<b>Recruiting and retaining a world-class workforce</b>		
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
<b>B1. Local conditions</b> in the host city, measured by the extent of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health care</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Safety and security</li> <li>Climate</li> <li>Isolation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidated entitlement index of the International Civil Service Commission (city level)</li> <li>Universal Health Coverage index score of the World Health Organization (country level)</li> </ul>	20%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of amenities / Conveniences of life</li> </ul> <p>Further consideration beyond the evaluation of the eligibility threshold</p>		
<p>B2. Extent of <b>international schools</b> in the host city offering English-speaking, K-12, International Baccalaureate-based curriculum for children of staff, and the host country's willingness and ability to support enrolment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As reported in the proposal and confirmed by GCF</li> </ul>	12.5%
<p>B3. Extent to which the host country/city provides <b>supportive conditions for partner employment</b>, including mechanisms to facilitate work permits or access to local employment markets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As reported in the proposal and confirmed by GCF</li> </ul>	10%

13. The host country candidate can provide additional information and evidence supporting its proposal.

## VI. Non-weighted criteria

14. In addition to the evaluation criteria, proposals will be reviewed against non-scored comparative considerations that are important for cost-effectiveness and long-term viability as follows:

Criterion	Methodology
<p><b>C1. Cost consideration</b></p> <p>This will include estimated staff salaries and entitlements, housing and office space costs, and local operating and infrastructure costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost analysis conducted by the Secretariat</li> </ul>
<p><b>C2. Host country support via financial and/or in-kind contributions</b></p> <p>This may include tax exemptions, subsidies, operational co-financing, provision of office space, utilities, facilitation of visas or customs clearance, and logistical and administrative support</p> <p>These are optional contributions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As reported in the proposal and confirmed by GCF</li> </ul>

## Appendix I: Host country/city proposal submission form

Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
<b>Basic information of the applicant</b>			
Country	Name of the proposed country		Provide letters of support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Finance as supporting documents
City	Name of the proposed host city		
Primary focal point	Name, title, organization, contact details		
<b>Eligibility criteria</b>			
<b>Non-Annex I Parties</b>	To be eligible for consideration, proposed host countries must be non-Annex I Parties	<i>No response required for this criterion - To be assessed based on data from the UNFCCC List of Parties</i>	
Legal status, privileges, immunities and exemptions afforded through a host country agreement with GCF	<p>Confirm commitment and ability to finalize host country agreement and confer privileges and immunities as noted in appendix II</p> <p>Provide an estimated timeline for completing the host country agreement</p>		
Demonstrate a baseline level of the local conditions in the host city, measured by	Eligible cities include those included under classes A and B of the ICSC Mobility and Hardship Classification, based on the most	<i>No response required for this criterion - To be assessed based on data from the ICSC Mobility and Hardship Classification</i>	

Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
the extent of health care, housing, safety and security, climate, isolation, and level of amenities / convenience	updated available data at the time of the assessment		
<b>Weighted evaluation criteria</b> <b>Category A: Meeting work objectives for regional presence</b>			
A1. Intra-regional air connectivity from the host city	Applicant cities will be assessed based on their intra-regional air connectivity, based on the International Air Transport Association data	<i>No response required for this criterion - To be assessed via the International Air Transport Association Air Connectivity Index (country level), complemented by an analysis conducted by the Secretariat team overseeing the arrangements of corporate travel</i>	
A2. Extent and quality of telecommunications and digital connectivity in the proposed host city necessary for sustained operations and effective outreach to countries	Note that this criterion will also be assessed based on data from the ICT Development Index published by the International Telecommunication Union	<i>No response required for this criterion – To be assessed based on data from the ICT Development Index published by the International Telecommunication Union</i>	

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Applicant response</b>	<b>Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup></b>
<p>A3. Extent of host city diplomatic representation with countries in the region -</p> <p>availability of embassies and consular facilities to support visa services in the host city for travel within the region, and to facilitate engagement with governments of other countries within the region</p>	<p>Describe the extent of foreign embassies and consulates in the host city, particularly those from countries within the region.</p> <p>Include the number of foreign embassies, high commissions, and consulates</p>		
<p>A4. Presence of a climate finance and institutional ecosystem aligned with the mandate and strategic objectives of GCF in the host city - characterized by an active presence of United Nations agencies, and international and regional development and financial institutions that</p>	<p>Describe the presence of the organizations in the host city that demonstrate its climate finance and institutional ecosystem</p>		

Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
enable complementarity and coherence, equitable access for vulnerable and underserved countries, and a dynamic private sector and climate finance community capable of driving innovation and investment			
<b>Weighted evaluation criteria</b> <b>Category B: Recruiting and retaining a world-class workforce</b>			
<b>B1. Local conditions</b> in the host city, measured by the extent of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthcare</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Safety and security</li> <li>Climate</li> <li>Isolation</li> <li>Level of amenities/Conveniences of life</li> </ul>	Applicant cities will be assessed based on the following two indices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidated entitlement index of the International Civil Service Commission</li> <li>Universal Health Coverage index score of the World Health Organization</li> </ul>	<i>No response required for this criterion - To be assessed based on data from the Consolidated entitlement index of the ICSC and the Universal Health Coverage index score of the World Health Organization</i>	



Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
Further consideration beyond the evaluation of the eligibility threshold			
B2. <b>Extent of international schools</b> in the host city offering English-speaking, K-12, International Baccalaureate-based curriculum for children of staff, and the host country's willingness and ability to support enrolment	<p>Describe the availability of international schools in the host city offering English-speaking, K-12, International Baccalaureate-based curriculum, and the host country's willingness and ability to support enrollment for GCF staff families</p> <p>Indicate the number and names of international schools offering an English-speaking curriculum for grades K-12</p> <p>Indicate the number and names of international schools offering International Baccalaureate programmes or similar globally recognized qualifications</p> <p>Indicate any commitment from the host country or local authorities to facilitate the enrolment of the children of GCF staff (e.g., priority access, fee</p>		

Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
	reductions, special arrangements)		
B3. Extent to which the host country/city provides supportive conditions for partner employment, including mechanisms to facilitate work permits or access to local employment markets	Indicate commitment from the host country/city or local authorities to offer any legal and practical conditions under which spouses/partners of GCF staff would be permitted to work in the host country, including visa, permit, and employment access provisions		
Non-weighted criteria			
<b>C.1 Cost considerations</b>	<p><i>No response required for this criterion. The Secretariat will conduct a comprehensive cost analysis</i></p>		
Comprehensive cost analysis by the Secretariat of the proposed host city			
<b>C.2 Host country support</b> via financial and/or in-kind contributions	Provide any financial or in-kind contributions offered by the host government or partners. Quantify contributions wherever possible and state their duration (e.g., one-time, renewable, permanent).		
These are optional contributions	<u>Office space and operational support</u>		

Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate any provision of office premises (free of charge or subsidized), and their locations</li> <li>• Indicate length and terms of lease (if applicable)</li> <li>• Indicate any inclusivity of services, such as security, cleaning, utilities (i.e., electricity, water, internet) and/or building management</li> <li>• Indicate any other financial contribution to office operations</li> </ul> <p><u>Staffing support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate any provision of salary support or full coverage of locally recruited staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If such support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
	<p>exists, please indicate the number, types of positions covered and duration of the support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate any provision of seconded staff and administrative assistants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If such support exists, please indicate the number, types of positions covered and duration of the support</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Other financial and non-financial support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate any other financial and/or non-financial support</li> </ul>		

Criterion	Description	Applicant response	Supporting documents/evidence <sup>a</sup>
	offered, including any special administrative or logistical support, that may reduce operating costs		

*Abbreviations:* ICSC = International Civil Service Commission, non-Annex I Parties = Parties not included in Annex I to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

<sup>a</sup> Under this column, provide the list of supporting documents/evidence included in attachment to this form.

## **Appendix II: Notes on legal status, privileges, immunities and exceptions**

1. Establishing a regional presence requires careful consideration of legal frameworks, particularly regarding privileges, immunities and exemptions. Securing the necessary recognition and legal protections for the organization and its representatives is essential to ensure the smooth operations of GCF. It is also essential to ensure that GCF is able to discharge its duty of care.
2. As an international organization, GCF requires certain privileges, immunities and exemptions to carry out its functions and mandate effectively for the benefit of the whole Fund, without interference. These privileges, immunities and exemptions are essential to protect GCF assets, ensure the security of its officials, and facilitate its operations. These would include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) Recognition of the legal personality and legal capacity of GCF;
  - (b) Immunity from every form of legal process;
  - (c) Inviolability of its premises and archives;
  - (d) Exemption from taxation and customs duties; and
  - (e) Immunity from search, requisition, confiscation and expropriation or any other form of seizure by executive or legislative action.
3. The privileges, immunities and exemptions of GCF representatives (members and alternate Board members, Board members' advisers, officials, as well as experts) would include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) Exemption for them and their dependents, from immigration restrictions and facilitated entry into, exit from, and residence in the territory of the host country;
  - (b) Exemption from taxation;
  - (c) Immunity from all forms of legal process and arrest for acts performed as part of their functions to GCF (except where GCF waives that immunity);
  - (d) Same repatriation facilities in times of international crises, together with their dependents, as are accorded to diplomatic envoys; and
  - (e) Freedom of speech in the exercise of their functions.
4. The existence of a bilateral agreement alone on privileges and immunities with GCF is not sufficient for the establishment of GCF regional presence, which would require additional privileges and immunities relevant to the establishment of a regional presence.

### **Host country agreements**

5. To establish a regional presence, GCF must negotiate and conclude a host country agreement with the country where operations will be based. When entering into this agreement, the host country will, among other things, recognize the legal capacity of GCF to operate in its jurisdiction, including its ability to contract, acquire property and hire staff, as outlined in paragraph 7 of the Governing Instrument for the GCF.