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| 10 YEARS OF CLIMATE IMPACT |

GCF REGIONAL DIALOGUE

with EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Colombo, Sri Lanka
14–17 September 2026

IEU SESSION: GCF EVALUATION POLICY and COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

Independent Evaluation Unit and GCF Secretariat

Colombo, Sri Lanka
14–17 September 2026

Session flow

1. GCF Evaluation Policy

- A brief introduction – Dr. Archi Rastogi
- Guidance to AEs from GCF – Mr Sokleang Kim

2. Country Ownership in the GCF

- Independent Evaluation - Dr. Archi Rastogi
- Country Ownership Guidelines – Dr. Achala Abeysinghe

Session moderator: Ms Aiko Ward



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GCF Evaluation Policy and Standards

Dr. Archi Rastogi

Colombo, Sri Lanka
14–17 September 2026

About IEU

- Operates independently of the GCF Secretariat.
- Ensures that GCF is accountable and effective.
- Conducts independent evaluations of the GCF's activities and provides objective assessments.
- Synthesizes learning from high-quality and rigorous evaluations to support the GCF's effectiveness and efficiency.
- Informs decision-making by the Board and disseminates lessons learned.

Trusted Evidence.
Informed Policies.
High Impact.



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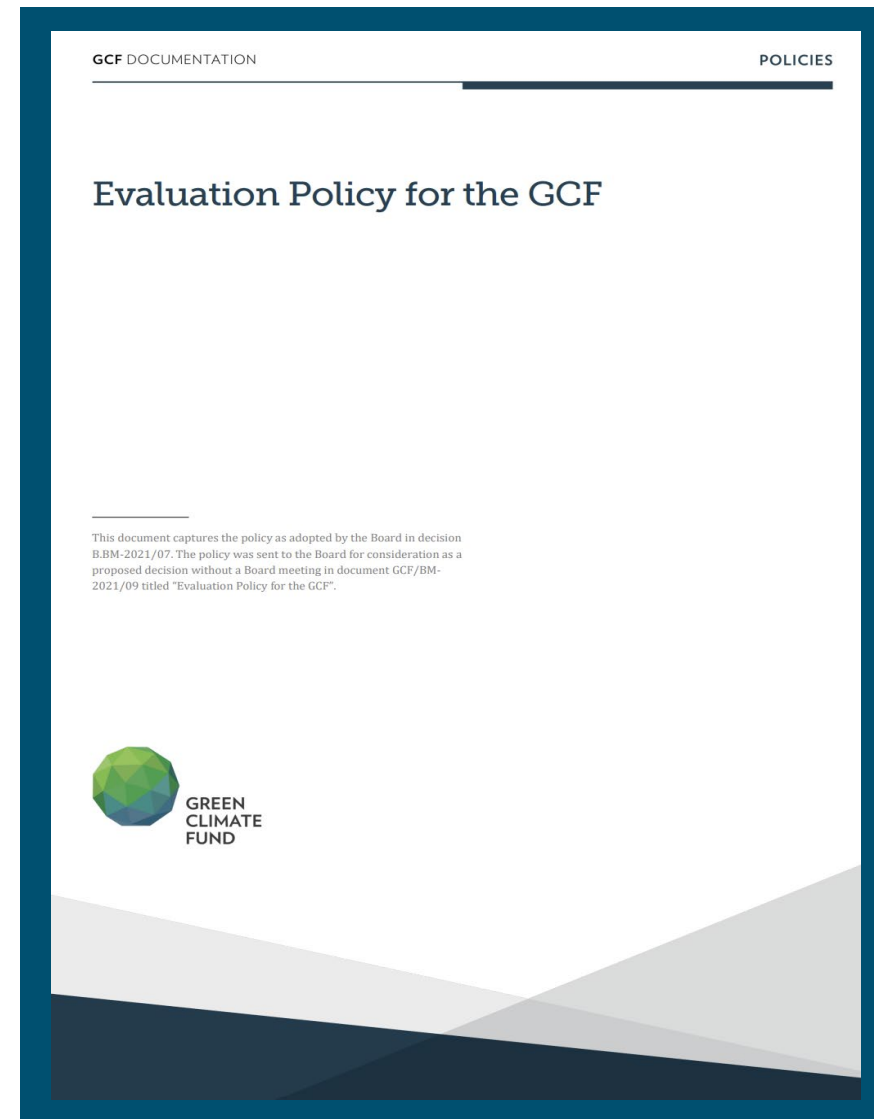
Independent
Evaluation
Unit



GCF Evaluation Policy

The Policy:

- Is a GCF-wide policy covering the **evaluation function** of the Fund
- Helps the Fund to credibly and objectively measure its performance, results, and efficiency in delivering on its mandate
- Covers aspects on evaluation capacity development needs of AEs
- Does *not* cover the monitoring functions of the Fund



Types of evaluations

IEU-Led Evaluation

- Thematic, country, portfolio, policy evaluations, etc.
- Lessons learned that can help to improve the institutional effectiveness of GCF

Secretariat-led Evaluation

- Monitoring and evaluations
- Self-evaluations

AE-led Evaluation

- Assesses performance of intervention
- Includes interim and final evaluations

Source: GCF Evaluation Policy, Section VII

Roles and responsibilities

	Role of IEU	Role of Secretariat	Role of AEs
IEU-led Evaluations	- Undertakes evaluations - Prepares management action reports - Synthesizes and presents these to the Board	- Shares information and data - Facilitates engagement with project stakeholders - Shares monitoring data such as APR, MTE/ FTE - Is available for interviews	- Shares information and data - Facilitates engagement with project stakeholders
Secretariat-led Evaluations	Undertakes quality assurance	Engages with the IEU in quality assurance of self-evaluation	- Shares information and data - Facilitates engagement with project stakeholders
AE-led Evaluations	Enforces evaluation policy and standards	Reviews and undertakes quality assurance	Undertakes MTE/ FTE

Source: GCF Evaluation Policy, Table 2

AE-led evaluations

2

The **monitoring and accountability framework (MAF)** for accredited entities (AEs) requires **all AEs to submit two important independent evaluations for all projects or programmes**, these being the project interim and final evaluations. These are submitted to the GCF as per a timeline agreed upon by the Secretariat and the AE.

14(c)

The Policy assumes that the **GCF evaluation criteria will be used consistently by the GCF stakeholders** to whom the Policy applies for the evaluation function. The GCF evaluation criteria (appendix II) are based on the evaluation criteria in the IEU TOR, and also take into account the MAF.

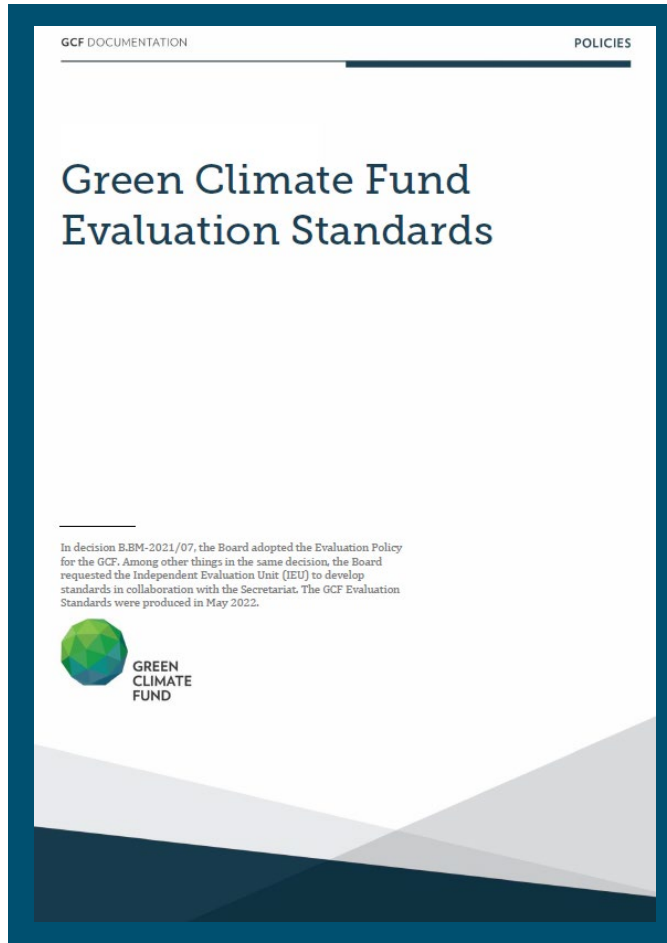
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AE-led evaluations: Project interim and final evaluations that must be submitted to the GCF by AEs in relation to all approved GCF projects or programmes in accordance with the MAF, and which are subsequently considered by the GCF. [...] **Accredited entities may conduct impact evaluations** for GCF funded activities, in collaboration with the GCF.

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The Secretariat is also responsible for receiving, reviewing and assuring the quality of interim and final evaluations. These **independent or self-evaluations** will be submitted to the GCF by the AE in line with the MAF.

GCF Evaluation Standards



1

Independence

2

Impartiality and Objectivity

3

Utility and Value Added

4

Ownership and Participation

5

Credibility and Rigour

6

Transparency

7

Learning

8

Human Rights, Gender Equality and Environmental Considerations

9

Confidentiality

10

Cost-effectiveness

11

Ethics

12

Integrity

13

Accountability

14

Competence

15

Respect and Beneficence

Structure of the Evaluation Standards

Standard 1. Independence

14. The independence of an evaluation may be secured by ensuring that it is carried out by entities and persons free of the control of those responsible for the design and implementation of the GCF investment, operations, strategies, policies, management and governance. Independence implies freedom from political influence and organizational pressure. It is characterized by full access to information and complete autonomy in carrying out the evaluation, reporting findings and providing recommendations. The independence of evaluations is necessary for credibility, influences how an evaluation is used and allows evaluators to be impartial and free from undue pressure throughout the evaluation process.

Appendix I: Suggested checklist for application of GCF Evaluation Standards

*Stage 1.
Commissioning,
planning and
design*

*Stage 2.
Implementation,
including data
collection*

*Stage 3.
Reporting*

*Stage 4.
Dissemination and
communication*

1. Commissioning, planning and design	Yes	No	Comments	Relevant standards
Are those conducting the evaluation free from conflict of interest?				Independence
Do those who carry out the evaluation have the required qualifications, expertise and experience to conduct the evaluation competently, including awareness and knowledge of the GCF Evaluation Standards and Evaluation Guidelines?				Competence
Is the proposed approach to gathering evidence the most cost-effective?				Cost-effectiveness
Are the time frame and resources realistic for achieving the intended purpose and outcomes, including engaging local stakeholders and communicating findings to different stakeholder groups?				Cost-effectiveness; Credibility; Participation

Appendix II: Good practices for implementing GCF Evaluation Standards

1. Independence

- Independence is achieved when evaluation activities are independent of managers responsible for programme design and implementation.
- As defined in the GCF Evaluation Policy, self-evaluations should have independence in the composition of evaluators. Evaluators in this type of evaluation should be free from conflict of interest regarding the programme, project or policy that will be evaluated.
- Those commissioning the evaluation should ensure that the evaluators are free of conflict of interest, in both independent and self-evaluations. The procurement and recruitment process of evaluators should also be free of outside interference, following only the GCF's or the accredited entities' procurement and human resources procedures. Procurement and recruitment of evaluators should be conducted in a way that the selection is free from conflict of interest. For instance, selection panels may be independent of managers responsible for programme design, management and implementation.
- Those supervising the implementation of evaluations should ensure that evaluators are given access to all information and stakeholders.
- Some organizations require that the evaluators sign a form indicating they have no conflict of interest.
- Evaluators should have full discretion in submitting their report directly to those commissioning the evaluation.

2. Impartiality and Objectivity

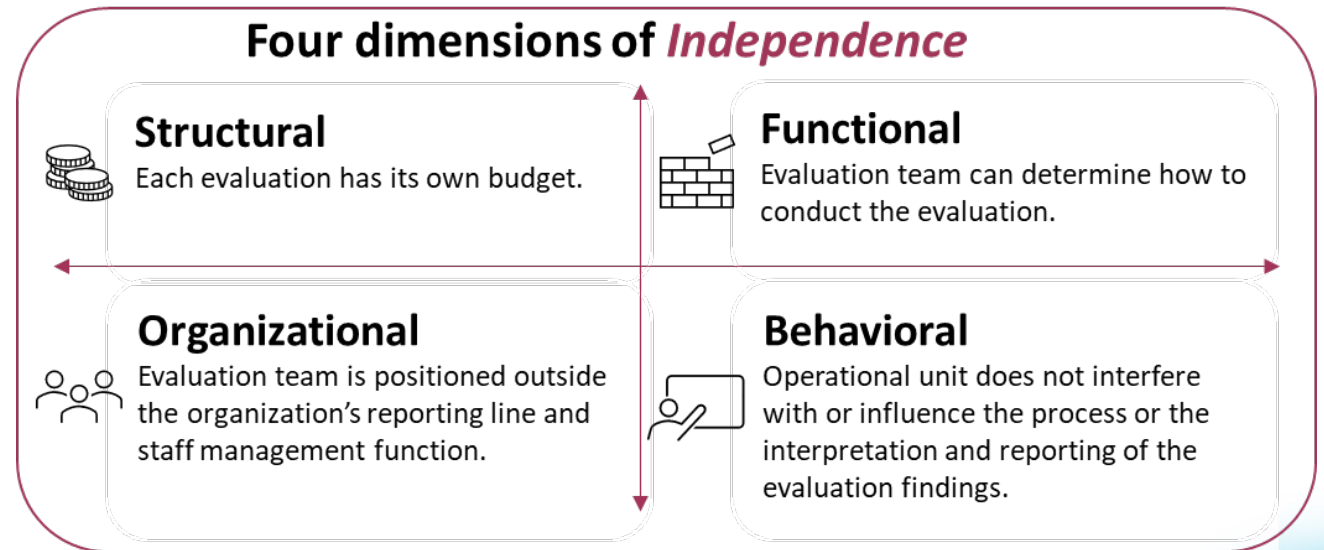
Evaluation teams:

- Should be independent to avoid undue influence and bias while ensuring objective and credible evaluation results.
- Should not have been, or expected to be, directly responsible for the policy-setting, design or management of the evaluation subject.
- Must have the complete freedom to conduct the evaluation work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development and must be able to express their assessment freely.
- Should conduct evaluations with professional integrity, in an unbiased fashion, and be ready and willing to issue strong, high-quality and uncompromising reports, free of any restriction imposed by Management and the Board.
- Must have the competencies and knowledge required to perform their roles successfully.

Standard 1. Independence

Independence implies:

- Freedom from political influence and organizational pressure.
- Full access to information and complete autonomy in
 - carrying out the evaluation
 - reporting findings
 - providing recommendations.



Examples of good practices for implementing *Independence*:

- The procurement and recruitment process of evaluators should also be free of outside interference, following only the GCF's or the **accredited entities' procurement** and human resources procedures.
- Evaluation activities are independent of managers responsible for programme design and implementation.
- Evaluators can submit reports directly to those commissioning the evaluation.

Standard 6. Transparency

Transparency at the GCF refers to:

- GCF's obligation to disclose findings publicly and transparently and to share the information generated through the evaluation.
- Clear communication concerning decisions in the evaluation process.
- Transparency in conveying the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied, the evaluation approach and methods, and the intended use of the findings.



Examples of good practices for implementing *Standard 6*:

- Evaluation teams are selected in a transparent way through pre-established processes.
- Evaluation products are publicly accessible and easily readable.
- Sources on which findings are based are clearly stated.



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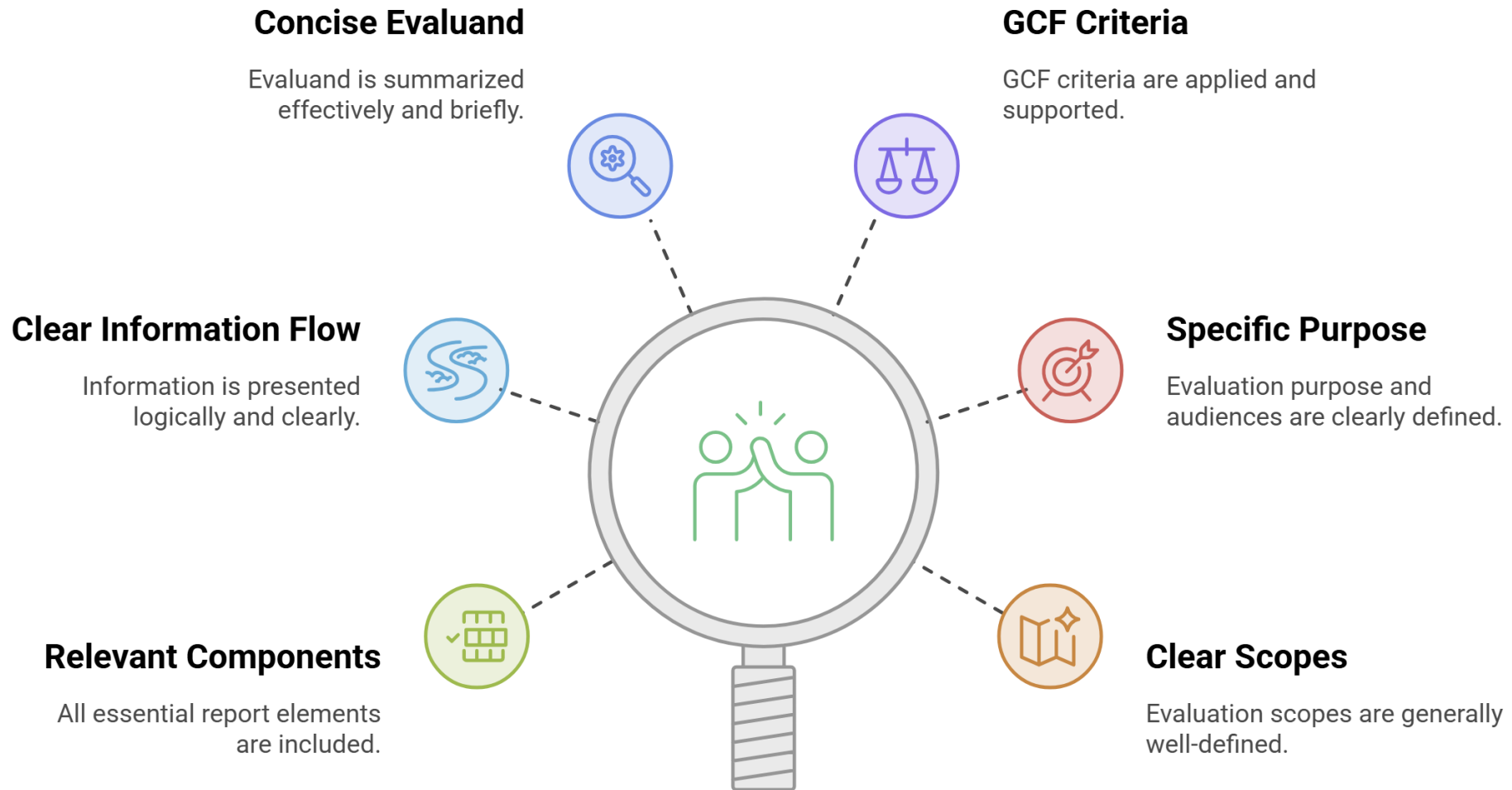
Thank you

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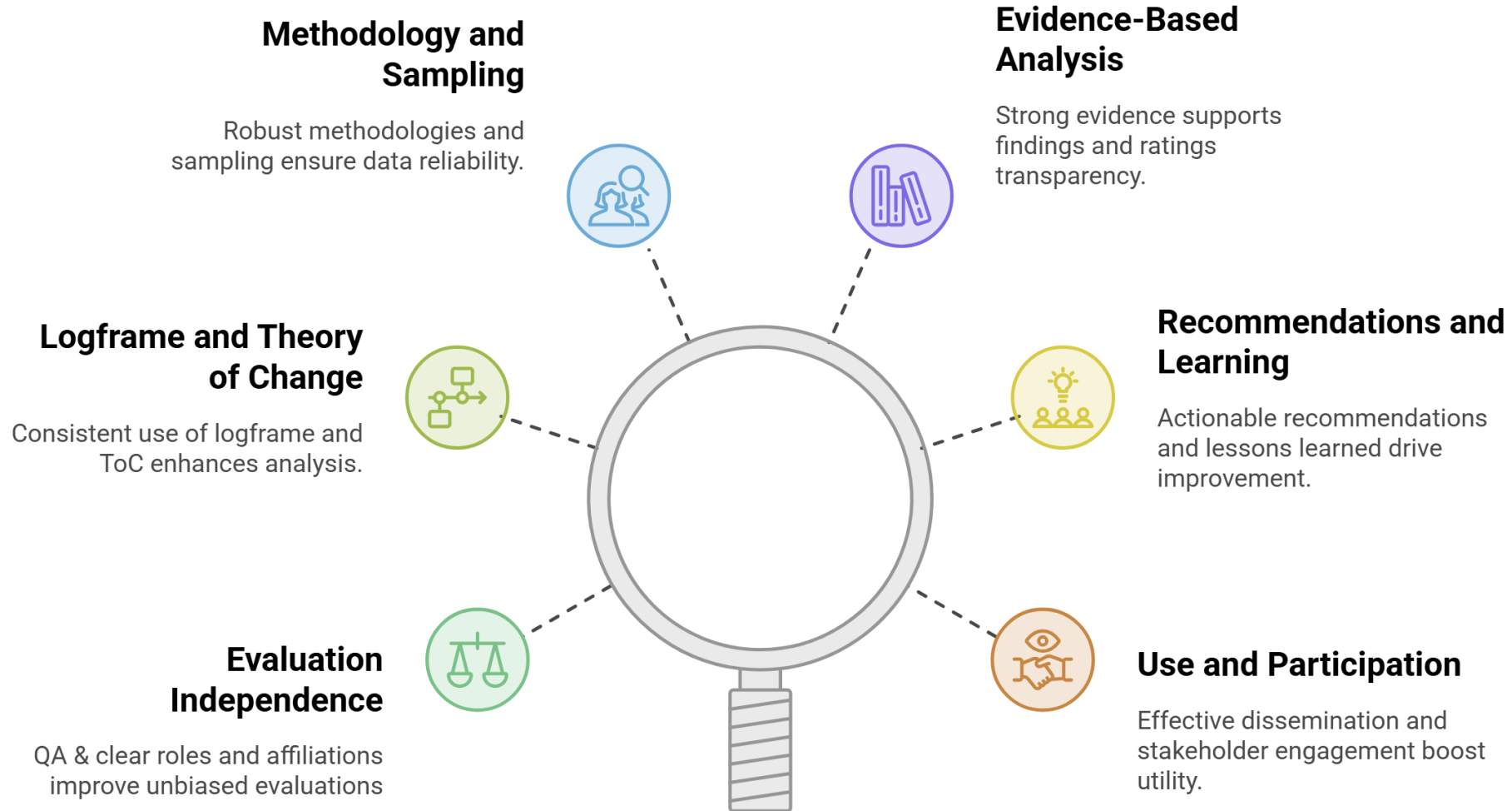
Sokleang Kim

Colombo, Sri Lanka
14–17 September 2026

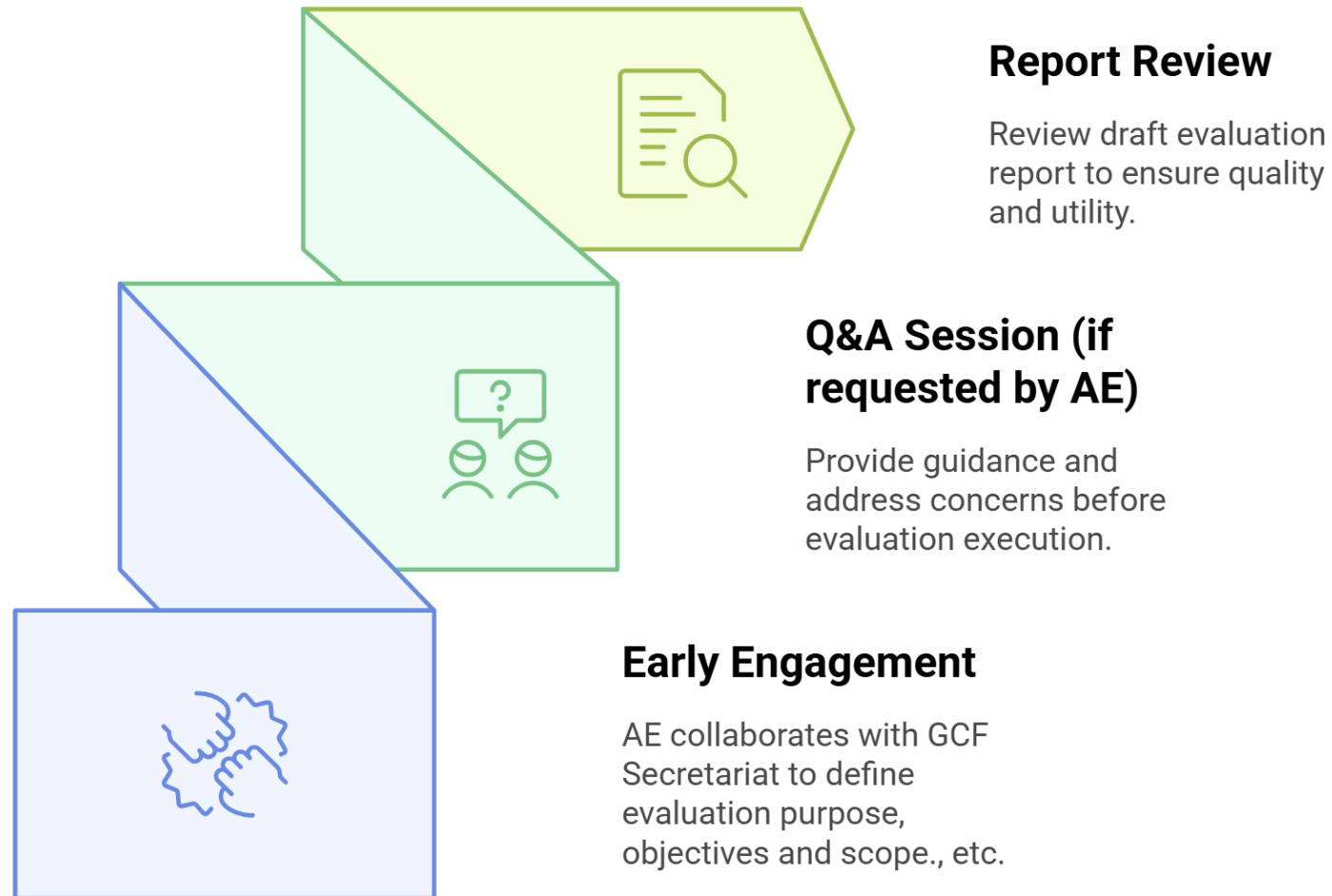
Key observations - Positive



Pathways to Excellence of the AE-led evaluations



Recommended steps to ensure utility-focused AE-led evaluations

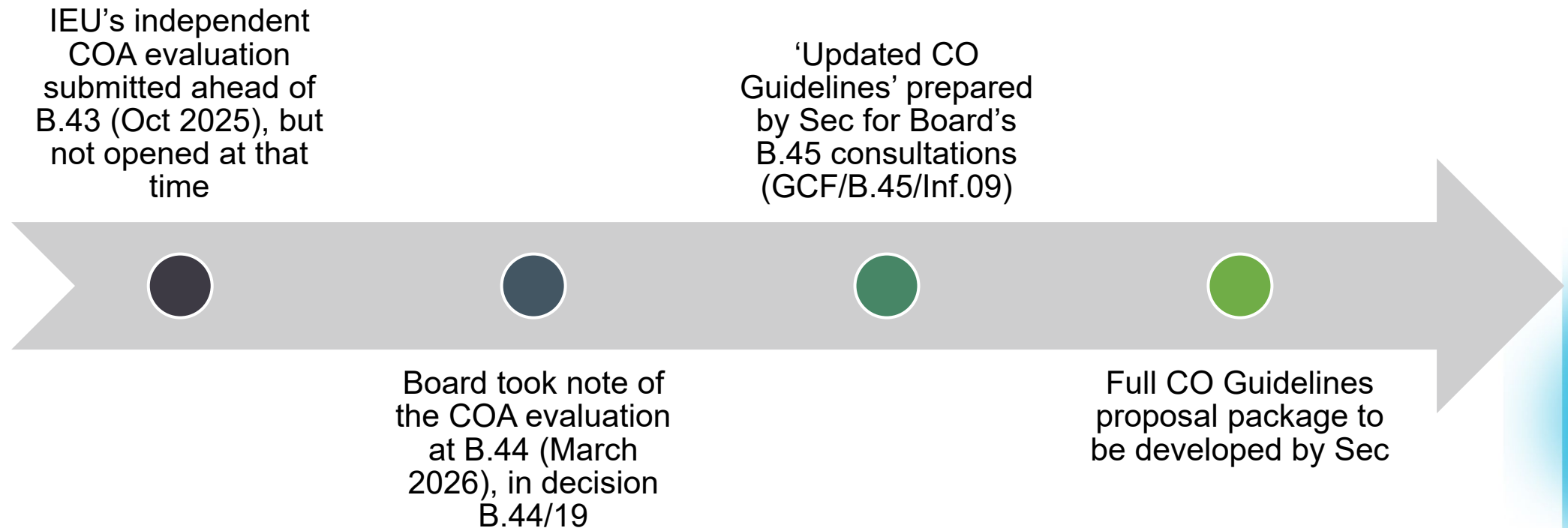


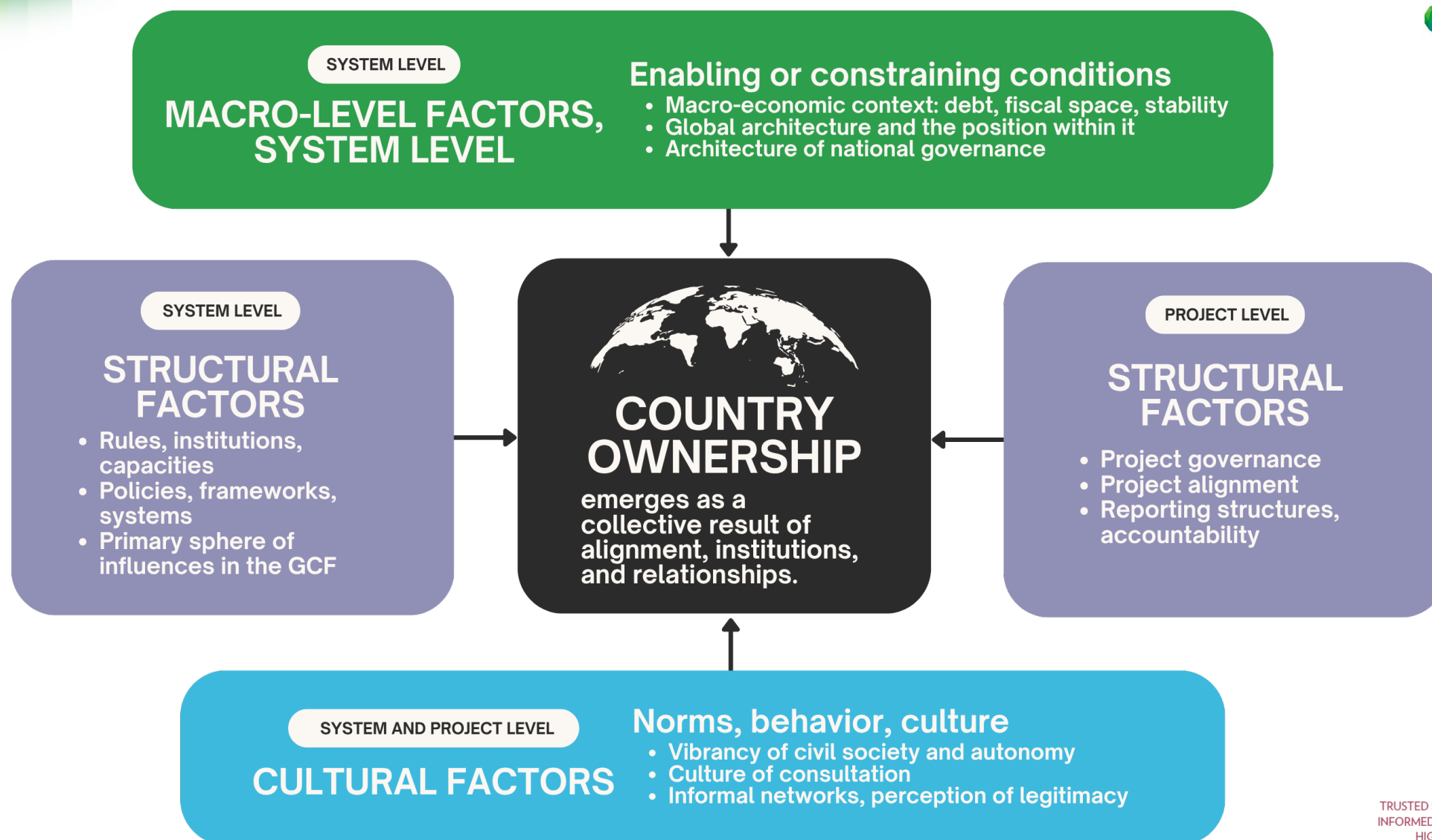
Independent Evaluation of GCF's Approach to Country Ownership

Dr. Archi Rastogi

Colombo, Sri Lanka
14–17 September 2026

COA Evaluation & Policy Update Timeline





TRUSTED EVIDENCE.
INFORMED POLICIES.
HIGH IMPACT.

Country ownership is embedded in the GCF's design. But has not matured into a coherent system of leadership and coordination.

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Four key conclusions and recommendations from the Independent Evaluation of the GCF's approach to country ownership

1

Embedded, but fragmented

Country ownership remains more aspirational than operational

Conclusion

Country ownership is embedded across the GCF architecture, but implementation remains fragmented.

Recommendation

Provide normative and operational clarity on roles and responsibilities across the full project cycle.

2

Processes over institutions

Country ownership remains uneven and largely procedural

Conclusion

Support has often strengthened discrete processes more than strong national institutions and coordination systems.

Recommendation

Make institution-building the cornerstone of the GCF's approach to country ownership.

3

Social dimension not fully embedded

Participation remains largely procedural

Conclusion

Inclusive participation, trust and recognition of diverse voices have not been fully embedded in GCF practice.

Recommendation

Make meaningful whole-of-society engagement the default expectation.

4

Predictability and trust

Countries struggle to navigate the system

Conclusion

Perceived procedural complexity and delays persist; pathways from priorities to funding remain unclear.

Recommendation

Make access not only faster, but predictable and trusted.

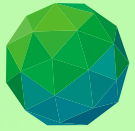
Overall takeaway

Country ownership is a system-level property that emerges when different mechanisms cumulatively reinforce one another.

GCF Country Ownership Guidelines

Dr. Achala Abeyasinghe

Colombo, Sri Lanka
14–17 September 2026



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Draft Updated Country Ownership Guidelines, including a No-Objection and Consultation Procedure

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Key features

1	Guiding principles	• Indicate meaning of country ownership in practice: (i) national alignment; (ii) country-driven prioritization; (iii) inclusive engagement; (iv) capacity/institutional development; (v) use of country systems where appropriate; (vi) transparency and mutual accountability; (vii) fit-for-purpose mechanisms.
2	Overview of roles and responsibilities	• Enhance clarity and accountability among partners. • Governments (broadly): lead strategic development planning, enabling environments. • NDAs: coordinate government and society, promote direct access & country-driven approaches. • AEs: ensure alignment, engage NDAs meaningfully, contribute to national capacity building. • GCF: provide predictable support, transparency, enhanced engagement mechanisms.
3	Guidance across GCF business cycle	• Provide guidance to enhance country ownership across: (i) investment planning and prioritization; (ii) origination and programming; (iii) implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
4	NOC Procedure	• Set out fit-for-purpose approach to ensure country ownership. • Promote (i) upstream engagement; (ii) consistency of proposals with national strategies and plans; (iii) prioritization of proposals ("GCF priorities").

Guidance across GCF business cycle

1. Investment planning & prioritization

- **Countries exercise inclusive national leadership over climate priorities, investment pathways, and enabling environments.**
 - **Institutional leadership:** strong NDAs with mandate, authority, staffing, and coordination capacity.
 - **National coordination mechanisms:** countries ensure continuous, structured engagement across government and relevant stakeholders.
 - **Strategic planning:** countries translate strategic plans and national priorities into prioritized pipelines and investment plans.
 - **Transformative impact:** countries/NDAs engage early with GCF and AEs to ensure predictable pipelines, prioritize transformative potential, and improve enabling conditions for climate finance.
 - **Country systems and DAEs:** countries/NDAs, GCF, and IAEs (where applicable) cooperate to strengthen national institutions and expand DAE readiness and accreditation.

2. Origination & programming

- **Countries ensure investment approaches are driven by national priorities and include diverse perspectives through early, informed, and continuous engagement.**
 - **Country-driven pipeline development:** countries work with AEs through NDAs, national coordination mechanisms, or other inclusive structures to identify priority projects for GCF.
 - **Meaningful AE–NDA engagement:** consultations begin at concept note stage and continue throughout proposal development, with specific guidelines for multi-country and private sector projects.
 - **Fit-for-purpose process:** country alignment and support demonstrated through the **No-objection and Consultation (NOC) Procedure**, with differentiated approaches based on specific contexts.
 - **Programming capacity:** readiness, PPF, DAE support, and IAE knowledge transfer strengthen country-owned programming.

3. Implementation, monitoring & evaluation

- **Countries exercise inclusive national leadership in oversight, adaptive management, accountability, and learning.**
 - **Monitoring and accountability:** NDAs exercise oversight through national coordination mechanisms or other multi-stakeholder arrangements.
 - **AE transparency and reporting:** AEs facilitate NDA oversight by sharing implementation reports submitted to GCF (subject to applicable requirements/protections).
 - **Country-owned adaptive management:** NDAs, AEs, and GCF coordinate on extensions, restructuring, and other implementation changes, subject to applicable GCF policies.
 - **Implementation capacity:** readiness and partnerships strengthen national systems for delivery, compliance, and results management.
 - **Evaluation and learning:** countries, AEs, and GCF use evidence and feedback loops to improve future programming.

No-Objection and Consultation (NOC) Procedure

NOCP: AE experience with NOLs



Reported challenges

- Unclear **processes**
- Unpredictable **timelines**
- **Political considerations** and changes in government that interrupt processes or reverse decisions
- **Perception** that **private-sector** finance competes with public programmes
- **Perception** that **multi-country** proposals reduce each country's allocation
- Limited **NDA capacity/familiarity** with private-sector operations and fund structures



Impact on project approval

- Longer **timelines**, continuous planning **uncertainty**
- Heavy **transaction costs** with no added value
- **Countries removed** from multi-country FPs due to NOL delays



Favourable context/conditions

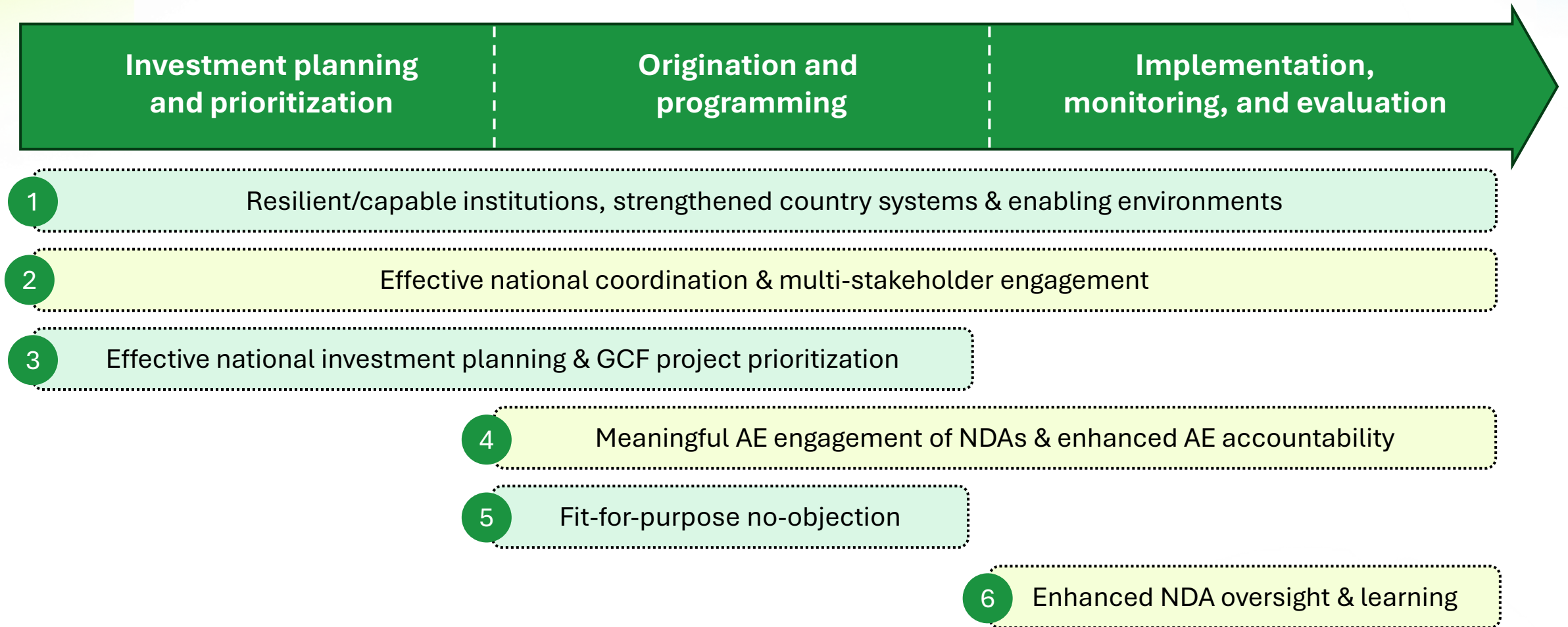
- Clearly defined **NDA mandates, procedures, and response standards**
- Early, continuous, in-person **engagement** and **tailored materials**
- NDAs in **Finance/Planning Ministries** (investment expertise)
- Targeted **GCF facilitation** and strong country-level **relationships**

NOC Procedure: differentiated approaches

- **Context: integral component** of the Updated Guidelines. It articulates how stakeholders shall demonstrate **consistency with national climate strategies and plans** at defined stages of the business cycle.
- **Fit-for-purpose procedure:** differentiated approaches, primarily based on the **type of instrument** requested in the funding proposal (FP). Grounded in the Governing Instrument (para. 46):
 - “Recipient countries may designate a national authority. This national designated authority **will recommend** to the Board funding proposals in the context of national climate strategies and plans, including through consultation processes. The national designated authorities **will be consulted** on other funding proposals for consideration prior to submission to the Fund, to ensure consistency with national climate strategies and plans.”

Group 1 FPs (Consultation)		Group 2 FPs (No-objection)
Governing Instrument	• NDAs will be consulted on FPs to ensure consistency with national climate strategies/plans.	• NDAs will recommend FPs to the Board in the context of national climate strategies/plans.
NOC Procedure	• Non-grant instruments that do not increase financial liability of the country; or • Other FPs as determined by Board.	• Non-reimbursable grants; or • Financial instruments that increase financial liability of the country; or • Any other instrument not explicitly in Group 1.

Enhancing country ownership: key objectives across the business cycle



Research and Benchmarking

Research and consultations to date

Evidence base	Activity
Research	• IEU Evaluations (2025 & 2019) • Prior Secretariat review (B.30) • Benchmarking exercise (in progress)
Board	• B.43 informal sessions (2) • Technical sessions (2) • Bilateral calls (11) • Written consultation (first round)
GCF	• Secretariat workshop • Secretariat sessions (28) • IU sessions (3)
NDA s	• Survey (146 invited, 41 responses) • Structured interviews (8)
AE s	• Survey (153 invited, 47 responses) • Structured interviews (16)
CSOs, PSOs, IPAG	• B.43 informal sessions (6) • Additional sessions (2)

Benchmarking (in progress)

Org.	Country Ownership Approach	No-Objection Process
AF	Country drivenness, direct access, inclusive engagement, readiness	Endorsement required (concept and full proposal)
FRLD	Country drivenness, direct access, national capacity, inclusive engagement	Direct submission of proposal/request by focal point (may delegate engagement to access entity)
GEF	Country Engagement Strategy (national coord., prioritization, national capacity, knowledge mgmt., inclusive participation)	- Sovereign/grant: endorsement letter (concept only) - Non-sovereign/non-grant: notification (proposal)
CIF	Country-led programmatic approach (national coord., prioritization, national capacity, enabling environment, inclusive engagement), direct access	- Endorsement embedded in investment plan - MDB partner policies/procedures apply
IFAD	Country drivenness, national capacity, country presence, inclusive engagement	- Sovereign: country is borrower/recipient - Non-sovereign: objection window (proposal) (30d)
Global Fund	Country Coordinating Mechanism (national coord., prioritization, inclusive engagement, programming, oversight), national capacity, knowledge mgmt.	Endorsement embedded in CCM proposal

Next steps



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