

# GCF IN BRIEF: SIMPLIFIED APPROVAL PROCESS



The Green Climate Fund is moving quickly to build a large and transformative project portfolio, with many projects already being implemented with the objective to adapt and/or mitigate to climate change.

However, there is a need to simplify and streamline the approval of certain small scale projects, particularly from direct access entities. In response, the GCF's Board has approved a new approach: the Simplified Approval Process (SAP), which is now operating.

## What is the Simplified Approval Process?

Adopted during the 18th Board meeting in October 2017 and updated in 2022 at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting, the SAP intends to reduce the time and effort needed in the preparation, review, approval and disbursement procedures for proposals of certain activities, in particular small-scale activities.

The simplifications are three-fold:

1. The application process is simpler, requiring fewer pages and easier form-filling. There are dedicated templates for Concept Notes and full Funding Proposals;
2. The review processes are streamlined; and
3. Post approval stages are facilitated and expedited

These simplifications should lead to a reduction in time and effort required to go from project conception to implementation.

The Secretariat will continue to identify areas for further simplifications within the GCF processes.

## What are the eligibility criteria?

SAP projects or programmes are expected to possess significant climate impact potential. SAP proposals are expected to be ready for scaling up and have the potential for transformation and promoting a paradigm shift to low-emission and climate-resilient development. Projects and programmes are eligible for the SAP if they meet these eligibility criteria:

1. A request for financing to GCF of up to USD 25 million of the total project budget; and
2. The environmental and social risks and impacts are classified as minimal to none.

SAP can support a number of activities. A few examples are:

- Early warning and other monitoring systems;
- Household-level facilities such as rainwater harvesting and small-scale renewable energy;
- Small-scale rural and urban community-based projects such as village water supply and drainage, and climate-resilient agriculture.

Projects or programmes that include known risk factors, which would require additional information and more detailed due diligence and consultations by relevant entities, are not eligible. Examples of activities with inherent risk factors are those causing the displacement of people or affecting indigenous people, as well as those occurring in protected areas and cultural heritage sites, or that generate waste, affect people's health, or involve trans-boundary impacts.

Over time, projects from Direct Access Entities should constitute at least 50 percent of the SAP portfolio.

## How does it work?

Proposals for projects or programmes meeting the eligibility criteria can be submitted by Accredited Entities (AEs), with an emphasis on the participation of Direct Access Entities. Concept notes can also be submitted by National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and Focal Points.

The proposal approval process is as follows:

### Proposal submission

- AEs and NDAs submit Concept Notes using the online submission portal. Please note that submission and endorsement of the concept note is mandatory for Project Preparation Facility (PPF) requests.
- The GCF Secretariat validates the risk category and notifies the AE and / or NDA of the project eligibility under the SAP.
- The AE develops a Funding Proposal using the dedicated SAP Funding Proposal template and submits the proposal using online submissions portal.
- The GCF, upon demand from the entity and in agreement with the NDA, may provide technical assistance towards the finalization of the proposal.

### Proposal review

- The GCF Secretariat reviews the Funding Proposal and annexes, as does the Independent Technical Advisory Panel (iTAP), on a rolling basis.
- The activities included in the Funding Proposal will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine their eligibility under the SAP.

### Board approval

- Board will consider the Funding Proposals for approval during its regular meetings.
- The Secretariat aims to execute FAAs at the Board meeting in which they are approved or promptly thereafter.

### Post-approval

- The Secretariat expedites the post-approval process, as appropriate.

### Implementation

- During the implementation, a robust monitoring shall ensure compliance with GCF procedures and safeguards are maintained.

## What are the next steps?

Concept Notes and Funding Proposals can be submitted via the online submission portal accessible in the AE/NDA GCF portal.

SAP Funding Proposal Guidelines and Sectoral Technical Guidelines are available on the GCF website to support Accredited Entities, particularly direct access entities, and NDAs, in developing proposals for the SAP. Capacity building webinars can also be found on the GCF Website.

All other interested parties are encouraged to partner with AEs or the NDAs to submit proposals for the SAP.

*Further information on the SAP is available on the GCF website.*

### Contact

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