

Annex III

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION OF THE MULTILATERAL FUND

1. The Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund commends the final report on the assessment of the Multilateral Fund's evaluation function and expresses appreciation for the constructive engagement and comprehensive analysis provided by an independent consultant. We acknowledge the author's efforts to understand the Multilateral Fund's unique business model and her professionalism throughout the assessment process.
2. The Executive Committee acknowledges the opportunity presented by this assessment to further strengthen the evaluation function. The coordination and guidance from the evaluation team in facilitating the assessment process are also deeply appreciated. We extend our thanks to the Chief Officer of the Secretariat for supporting the consultant and the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (SMEO) in facilitating access to relevant information and engaging Secretariat staff in the assessment.
3. The Executive Committee welcomes the thorough analysis presented in the final report as well as the comprehensive data on monitoring and evaluation outputs and budgets since 2009, consolidated in the first part of the report.¹ This serves as a solid foundation for the Committee's decision-making regarding a future evaluation policy and its role in supporting the Multilateral Fund's mission to assist Article 5 countries in meeting their Montreal Protocol obligations.

Response to the assessment recommendations

4. Overall, the final assessment report offers a positive assessment of the Multilateral Fund's evaluation function over its 30-year history while identifying areas for improvement. Seven key recommendations are outlined for updating the evaluation function. After examining the seven recommendations of the assessment, the Executive Committee considers the following:
5. Regarding recommendation 1: The Executive Committee agrees that an evaluation policy would provide an operational framework for improved implementation of the work of the evaluation unit. Regarding the separation between the monitoring and evaluation functions, making the SMEO responsible solely for evaluation, the Executive Committee considers that this could be approved as long as it does not represent an additional burden for the Secretariat. The practical implications concern the management of project completion reports (PCRs). Consequently, the Executive Committee approves the evaluation policy presented in annex IV of document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/96/66 and the reframing of the role of the SMEO to Senior Evaluation Officer (SEO), while requesting the SMEO in consultation with the Secretariat to finalise the modalities for the transfer of the monitoring component of the PCR-related work to the Secretariat.
6. Regarding recommendation 2: The Executive Committee agrees that the preparation of guidelines and tools for awareness raising on the evaluation function, after adoption of the evaluation policy, may be useful. These evaluation products would be posted on the evaluation page of the Multilateral Fund website, and the SMEO would inform the Executive Committee in the annual report on the evaluation function. Briefings for the implementing and bilateral agencies may also be organized at the inter-agency coordination meetings (IACMs), and as relevant.
7. Regarding recommendation 3: The Executive Committee agrees with the *establishment of a systematic follow-up system* to track the status of implementation of the approved evaluation recommendations. The SMEO should prepare a proposal to be considered at the 98th meeting for a system

¹ UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/95/10 and UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/94/7

to follow up on recommendations, which could include the consideration of digital tools for an online follow-up system and possible integration with the knowledge management system of the Multilateral Fund. The Executive Committee agrees with the usefulness of preparing guidance for consultants on delivering evaluation reports, and considers that this is an internal management of the evaluation work which can be developed by the SMEO without requiring additional guidance.

8. Regarding recommendation 4: The Executive Committee agrees with the usefulness of engaging stakeholders in the process of evaluation, in particular with regard to ensuring that field experiences are better reflected in evaluation products. Regarding the five sub-components of recommendation 4, the Executive Committee is of the following view:

- (a) On revisiting the purpose of desk studies and consider the introduction of inception papers: The Executive Committee agrees that this is a relevant practice that could be introduced in the preparation of evaluations, when a desk study appears not to be sufficient for a comprehensive evaluation;
- (b) On undertaking fewer, deeper and more strategic evaluations: The Executive Committee agrees with this recommendation that some strategic evaluations be considered in future programmes of work;
- (c) On streamlining interactions with the Committee: The Executive Committee is satisfied with the current practice of interaction with the SMEO and wishes to maintain its regular oversight role for continued reporting of progress on the implementation of the evaluation work programme;
- (d) On introducing briefing sessions with evaluation consultants: The briefing sessions with evaluation consultants could be organized ad hoc, when relevant for the results of an evaluation, with due attention to avoid adding a burden to the Secretariat's work. The Executive Committee considers that this practice should be used discretionally only when it would bring clear added value to the final evaluation; and
- (e) On requesting evaluation as a standing item at key Multilateral Fund meetings (i.e., IACMs and regional network meetings): The Executive Committee observes that IACM agendas already include an evaluation item, and that it is included in some of the regional network meeting agendas. The Executive Committee agrees with the usefulness of including an evaluation item in the agendas of these meetings, as relevant.

9. Regarding recommendation 5: Reappraise the evaluation framework used at the Multilateral Fund. The Executive Committee agrees with undertaking more innovative approaches in evaluation. However, the inclusion of softer dimensions should remain within the realm of the mandate of the Fund. The SMEO will consider developing a framework for evaluating non-investment activities that clearly define expected outputs, outcomes and ultimate results of these evaluations for consideration at the 98th meeting.

10. Regarding recommendation 6: Introduce enhanced quality assurance mechanisms for evaluation reports. The Executive Committee agrees with the need for the SMEO to ensure the quality of evaluation reports. Involving the Secretariat's programme managers should not be done at the expense of the workload of the project review team. The Executive Committee agrees that the measures should be implemented to ensure high quality evaluation work, but without an extra burden for the Secretariat and with no additional costs for the evaluation budget.

11. Regarding recommendation 7: Supplementing evaluation expertise in the short term. The Executive Committee observes that this recommendation identified a need to support the review on PCRs which has now been completed with the adoption of the universal PCR format at the 94th meeting. Therefore, there is

no longer a need for temporary support. The Executive Committee is open to considering the possibility of a Junior Professional Officer in the future, should the SEO present a reasonable plan for this request with a clear explanation of the role and purpose of such temporary support.

12. The Executive Committee appreciates the findings of the assessment and reaffirms its commitment to supporting the strengthening of the evaluation function. It further requests the SMEO to implement the elements contained in the recommendations, as per the response in paragraphs 5 to 11 above. The Executive Committee will continue to exercise its oversight function in examining progress made, as a result of the assessment, in enhancing the utility and relevance of the evaluation function.²

² See terms of reference for an external assessment of the evaluation function of the Multilateral Fund contained in document UNEP/OzL.Pro/ExCom/92/8.