

The Green Climate Fund and Lessons from other Global Funds' Experience

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Overview

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was first proposed at the fifteenth conference of the parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen in 2009 but was described in May 2012 by a participant in the Bonn meetings preparing for the eighteenth conference in Doha as "an empty shell". The design of the fund appears to reflect many lessons from the experience of other funds, but the broader strategic foundation may be flawed. If the GCF is to offer any prospect of meeting its original objectives (see Section 1) it will be necessary to ensure that (a) the design will allow clear linkage between activities financed by the fund and the expected results of these activities, (b) the governance meets the needs of both developing and developed country partners, (c) there is a flexible approach to funding that reflects varying project requirements and encourages donor contributions, (d) that the Fund is designed to be cost-effective and (e) that the strategic approach does not result in further fragmentation of an already congested climate change aid framework.

This paper presents a brief summary of the proposed fund and its history through to May 2013. Some of the key lessons learned from other Global Funds are summarized and the extent to which the current approach to the GCF reflects these is analyzed. The final section examines what may be required if the GCF is to offer a prospect of meeting the high expectations generated in Copenhagen in 2009.

1 The Green Climate Fund (GCF)

In 2009 at the fifteenth conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen (COP 15) it was decided:

"... that the **Copenhagen Green Climate Fund** shall be established as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention to support projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing countries related to mitigation including REDD-plus, adaptation, capacity-building, technology development and transfer."

"New multilateral funding for adaptation will be delivered through effective and efficient fund arrangements, with a governance structure providing for equal representation of developed and developing countries. A significant portion of such funding should flow through the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund."¹

Since 2009 there have been numerous meetings at which the objectives and design of the GCF have been discussed. At the Cancun meeting (COP 16) the proposal for a "Green Climate Fund," was

¹ From the Copenhagen Accord, para 8: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf>

endorsed and it was proposed that the fund be worth \$100 billion a year by 2020, to assist poorer countries in financing emission reductions and adaptation. There was no agreement on how the \$100 billion a year for the GCF would be raised. There was a much more detailed discussion at the Durban Conference of the Parties (COP 17) in 2011, prior to which a substantial draft design proposal had been drafted. The process of proposal preparation had clarified some of the areas where parties were not united and these were not resolved in Durban. These included issues related to fund governance, sourcing of funds and disbursement of funds.²

In May 2012 in Bonn there were further discussions, intended to lay the foundations for COP 18 in Qatar (November/December 2012). The Bonn meetings were not very productive. IISD Reporting Services (May 2012) describes them as being marked by distrust and confusion.

Since May 2012 there has been steady progress towards establishing the GCF (Schalatek *et al*, 2012). A Board has been established and has met three times, in August and October 2012 and in March 2013.³ Two Co-chairs have been appointed, it has been agreed that the Republic of Korea will host the GCF Secretariat and some progress has been made to develop a “business model framework”.⁴

Eleven donors had pledged funding to support the GCF as of end December 2012. A total of US \$8.1 million had been pledged of which US \$5.7 million had been received. Assuming all pledges are honoured, the funding available will just about cover GCF Secretariat costs to the end of 2013.⁵ European donors and the Republic of Korea have been the main sources of funding delivered so far.

The overall UNFCCC negotiating environment is complex and at times seems to deliver limited benefits at high cost.

- At COP 18 in Doha there were 9,000 participants. The “conference” comprised the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 18) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 8). The conference also included meetings of five subsidiary bodies: the thirty-seventh sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 37) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 37), the second part of the seventeenth session of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 17), the second part of the fifteenth session of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC

² See Bird *et al*, 2011 for a detailed summary of the key issues

³ See Press Releases on the GCF website, <http://gcfund.net/press.html>

⁴ GCF Press Release, 26th March 2013, http://www.gcfund.net/fileadmin/00_customer/documents/pdf/GCF_Press_Advisory-26_March.pdf

⁵ See Financial Report by the Interim Trustee as of December 31st 2012 submitted to the third meeting of the GCF Board in March 2013. http://www.gcfund.net/fileadmin/00_customer/documents/pdf/B_01_13_Inf_02_Status_of_resources_incl_Trustee_report__final_26Feb13_EDITED.pdf

(AWG-LCA 15) and the second part of the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP 1).⁶

- There has been a proliferation of stakeholder groups at COP meetings. The common simplification that the forums pit developed against developing countries hides the multiplicity of interests, with both the developed and the underdeveloped groups being subdivided into smaller sections with divergent interests. For example, during the final session of the AWG-LCA at Doha separate statements were made on behalf of at least eight separate groupings, the G-77/China, the European Union, the Arab Group, the Environmental Integrity Group (EIG), the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Africa Group, the Like-Minded Developing Countries and the Association of Independent Latin American and Caribbean States (AILAC). Groupings that made statements in other meetings at Doha included BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), the LDCs (Least Developed Countries), the Umbrella Group and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA). In addition at some meetings there were statements made by different country groups allying on individual topics as well as individual country statements.⁷ One advantage of the diversity of groupings is that it allows all interests to be expressed, and may increase the chances of a final decision being accepted by all parties.
- There is also a proliferation of meetings. The IISD website⁸ lists 17 major climate change related international meetings scheduled to take place between COP 18 and COP 19 (Warsaw, November 2013). The clearest evidence of the dysfunctionality of these meetings is that they spend much of their time wrangling over procedural and organisational issues (chairpersons, agendas, terms of reference of the different ad hoc working groups...) rather than matters of substance. This was particularly evident at the Bonn conference that preceded Doha.⁹

As a result many participants in the conferences have been disappointed at the complexity and glacial pace of progress at these meetings. For example at the closing session of the COP 18 plenary Nauru, for AOSIS, lamented that the adopted package is deficient in terms of mitigation ambition and finance, stating that it “only promises that something might materialize in the future.” The Nauru representative lamented that the outcome “provides little more than a gateway to a long path,” and warned that if delegates take “a wrong turn in the road, this process will collapse and our nations will disappear.”¹⁰

It is possible that the overall environment for the GCF is so unfavourable that the Fund will never become fully operational, swamped not by its own faults but by the deficiencies of the broader UNFCCC context. However most such initiatives do eventually lead to a result. The Adaptation Fund, for example, took eight years from agreement to its establishment in 2001 to operational status in 2009. This paper therefore takes a positive approach – reviewing lessons from other Global Funds which the GCF can learn from, looking at the design to date to see to what extent these are already being reflected

⁶ IISD, “Summary of the Doha Climate Change Conference”, <http://www.iisd.ca/vol12/enb12567e.html>

⁷ IISD, *op cit*

⁸ IISD, *op cit*, list of “Upcoming Meetings”

⁹ <http://www.iisd.ca/vol12/enb12546e.html> - “A Brief Analysis of the Bonn Climate Change Conference”

¹⁰ IISD, Summary of the Doha Climate Change Conference, *op cit*

and concluding with suggestions on the approach which might offer the GCF the greatest opportunities to meet its goals.

2 Learning from Other Global Funds

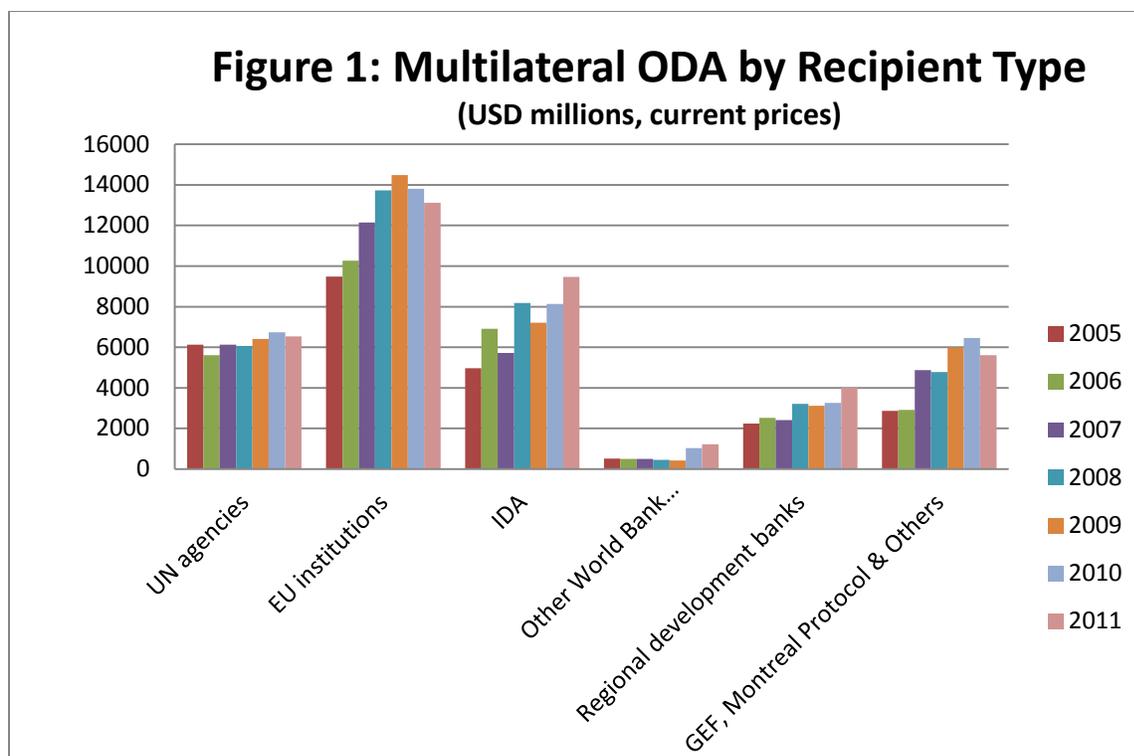
2.1 Sources of Lessons Learned

Global Funds are a relatively new feature of the global aid architecture. There is no formal definition of a global fund, and there are a variety of institutional models. The most common model is an autonomous legal entity which manages the fund, but with a separate “trustee” that receives income (grant contributions from donors), invests the funds while they are held and transfers resources to the fund in line with overall governance arrangements. The World Bank is often the trustee, for example for the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs), for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and for the Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

However there are many variants of this model. In some cases the income is partly in the form of loans or other revenue (promissory notes to the International Finance Facility for Immunization (IFFIm), loans to the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs), income from Certified Emission Reductions to the Adaptation Fund). In some the fund is not (or was not originally) an autonomous legal entity (e.g. the Global Environment Fund (GEF), and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)). The World Bank is not the only organization that acts as a trustee (e.g. the United Nations Environment Programme provides treasury services for the Montreal Protocol). Some Global Funds are managed (wholly or partly) by the same agency that provides trustee services (for example CIFs, GEF, and the Global Fund for Disaster Reduction and Recovery). Some Global Funds have several implementing agencies – often multilateral development banks or UN agencies. The Adaptation Fund (AF) combines the use of multilateral entities and “direct access”, allowing accredited National Implementing Entities to apply direct to the fund (Trujillo *et al*, 2013, page 10).

The Global Funds have been receiving an increasing share of multilateral concessional aid. There appears to be a steady shift in the global aid architecture, with the share of resources going to United Nations (UN) agencies falling while the share going to Global Funds is increasing since 2005. Figure 1¹¹ shows that the contributions to UN agencies (in current prices) remained almost stable between 2005 and 2011, while the greatest growth was in contributions to “GEF, Montreal Protocol and Others” , which includes most of the major Global Funds.

¹¹ The “others” in this figure include 130 international bodies but the totals are dominated by the large Global Funds, such as the AF, CGIAR (Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research), GAVI, GCDT (Global Crop Diversity Trust), GEF, GFATM, IFFIm and PIDG (Private Infrastructure Development Group).



Source: OECD DAC “DAC1 Official and Private Flows” DAC Table 15:
<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/statisticsonresourceflowstodevelopingcountries.htm>

There have been many evaluations of Global Funds. Copies of these are usually available on the individual fund’s website. The most valuable however are comparative evaluations of the performance of funds using common methodologies, which allow clear patterns to emerge from the overview. Three substantial comparative evaluations have been made by the World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and by the Governments of the UK (the Department for International Development, DFID) and Australia (the Australian aid agency, AusAID) (AusAID, 2012; DFID, 2011; IEG, 2010). Each one has a somewhat different coverage, reflecting the differing interests of the agencies involved. The IEG is interested in lessons to be learned from Global Funds managed by the World Bank. The bilateral donors are partly interested in seeing to what extent the funds are contributing to achievement of their own development objectives. However these limitations are substantially offset by their strengths as a source of broad lessons learned:

- The three studies use many individual fund-specific evaluations as part of their input;
- They each review a range of funds using common criteria;
- These criteria include many which most – perhaps all - stakeholders would agree are important: delivering results on poverty and sustainable development; contributing to the wider multilateral system; good partnership behavior; cost and value consciousness; transparency and accountability; gender focus; ability to work in fragile states...;

- The two bilateral reviews covered many of the same organizations. Seven Global Funds were included in both reviews¹², with similar, though not identical conclusions;
- These reviews provide a valuable window on what matters to major donors – a vital input when fund design is under consideration, as without the donors the funds would not exist.

In 2010 the World Resources Institute produced a paper based on case studies of ten institutions involved in climate change finance. The authors concluded that the success of future climate finance will depend on finding a new balance of power, responsibility, and accountability in the relationship between contributor and recipient countries and the financial institutions they create and operate (Ballasteros *et al*, 2010).

In 2013 two evaluations of Climate Funds have been published by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (Forstater *et al*, 2013 and Trujillo *et al*, 2013). These use an identical methodology, developed by Smita Nakhoda (Nakhoda, 2013) and it is expected that there will be further studies using the same methodology, which will provide a valuable database for understanding lessons learned from climate finance funds.

The following lessons learned draw substantially on these sources, and also on the author's experience in managing a number of global funds between 2004 and 2009 (including the Avian and Human Influenza Trust Fund, the Consultant Trust Fund, the Japanese Social Development Fund and the Japan funded Policy and Human Resources Development Fund) for the World Bank and in evaluations of the impact of these and other funds.

2.2 Lessons Learned

A Focus on Results

Funds that are most highly regarded by evaluators have generally been those which can show a clear link between inputs, outputs and outcomes. This is easier for funds with a clear and narrow focus – for example GFATM's focus on fighting three diseases, Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. However it is clear that effective results focus benefits from various approaches:

- Developing a logical and easily understood results framework, showing what the expected relationship is between inputs, outputs, expected outcomes and ultimate impact;
- Developing the results framework collaboratively with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. This brings in a wide range of perspectives, and it also helps to give the stakeholders an understanding of the results logic;¹³

¹² AF, GAVI, GEF, GFDRR (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery), GFATM, GPE (ex EFA-FTI – Education for All Fast Track Initiative) and UNPF (United Nations Population Fund)

¹³ The author found that stakeholder involvement in results framework development helped the fund managers to understand what information the stakeholders needed and the stakeholders to better recognize what could and could not be expected from the fund, given issues of attribution.

- Quantification of outputs, and of outcomes wherever possible. (It is often impossible to plausibly quantify ultimate impact indicators, mainly because the impacts are related to many other activities apart from the fund and it is often impossible to attribute change solely to the fund's activities)¹⁴;
- Breaking a large fund into smaller components. Some Global Funds are fairly tightly focused (e.g. GAVI) but most are quite diverse in their activities and outcome indicators that relate to the overall fund activities become too vague to be useful. GFATM could naturally split its objectives into those related to each of three diseases. The CIFs have benefitted from establishing "sub-Funds" with differing results chains;
- Starting on the results framework at an early stage, while recognizing explicitly that after a few years it may be necessary to review the framework in the light of experience.

B Build on Country Programmes

One of the greatest weaknesses of many Global Funds is the impression they give that decisions on projects to finance are not based on country level priorities. At worst this can mean that approved grants are perceived as supporting "pet" projects prepared by fund staff members with little or no participation by representatives of the "beneficiary" country. At best projects may be proposed by stakeholders in the benefitting country, and be well intended efforts to meet domestic objectives consistent with the fund's aims, but not endorsed by all domestic stakeholders as part of a national programme of activities. As a result there may be limited ownership of the funded activity in-country, low priority activities may be funded leaving high priority projects unfunded, or domestic resources may be diverted from their best use. A well known example is the generous funding provided by GFATM in some countries (such as Burundi) resulting in resources going to the three GFATM target diseases being as high as all other medical expenditures, attracting medical professionals away from broader health service activity and substantially distorting resource availability from any optimal distribution of the overall resources available for health activities (Sridhar *et al*, 2009).

The best answer to this is to require all project proposals to fall within a widely endorsed national plan for the overall sector. This approach worked very well for the Avian and Human Influenza Trust Fund (AHIF). An effective response to the avian influenza threat anywhere required coordinated action by those working in human and veterinary health. In many countries the authorities responsible for human and animal health were not accustomed to working together closely, and the international agencies most concerned (the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organisation (WHO)) were equally unaccustomed to close collaboration. AHIF required that all projects submitted for funding had to be included in a national

¹⁴ As an example of the relationship between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact, for an improved seed production project inputs might be the funds required to build an improved seed farm. The construction and operation of the farm would be the output. The measurable outcome would be production and distribution of improved seed. The impact would be increased yields and increased incomes but there might be other activities that also contribute to these changes – fertilizer, agricultural extension, irrigation projects etc., and determining what proportion of the impact is directly attributable to the seed production project may be a challenge.

avian influenza action plan, that was approved by the Ministries responsible for human and animal health (and any other key government stakeholders) and that was technically endorsed by FAO, OIE and WHO. This requirement may have slowed the flow of requests for funding, but it successfully encouraged potentially competing institutions to collaborate and often to submit joint requests for funding. It is considered to have resulted in better conceived projects. An independent evaluation of the fund concluded that “AHIF has been a very important stimulus for policy change and for animal - human health integrated cooperation in countries” (Marshang, 2009). A similar approach is used by the Adaptation Fund, which requires extensive stakeholder consultation during the process of accrediting National Implementing Entities entitled to direct access to the AF (Trujillo *et al*, 2013, pages 10 and 11).

C *Avoid Fund Proliferation*

This is probably the greatest challenge to the GCF. A remarkable number of funds that support climate change related projects already exist. One website lists 26 funds¹⁵, including the GCF. It does not reflect the many individual projects supported by Non Government Organisations (NGOs), bilateral and multilateral donors that have climate change related objectives but do not come from narrowly focused “climate change” funds. In at least one region the volume of resources available for climate change projects already exceeds absorptive capacity. On a recent visit to the Pacific islands the author noted that there were multiple donors chasing the same projects, and that some over-hastily developed projects lacked local ownership and were already failing to deliver on their objectives or were being abandoned. Once the GCF is operational there will be a strong case for reforming or closing down existing funds that can finance the same projects. A paper by Ballasteros *et al* (2010) suggested that in order to generate a greater sense of trust and ownership, backers of existing agencies may have to accept a degree of duplication of existing capacity through the creation of new mechanisms. While this may be politically realistic it would be wasteful and undermine the long term strength of the GCF.

D *Balanced Governance*

Many existing global funds have governance structures dominated by major donors and the managing organization. This may be seen as simplifying logistics and avoiding conflicts of interest that could arise if the potential recipient governing body members are making judgements on proposed projects that can benefit their own countries. On the other hand this approach to governance excludes the beneficiaries, who are arguably the most important stakeholders. The larger funds have found ways to bring fund beneficiaries into their governance structures without compromising integrity. The Adaptation Fund for example seems to have done this effectively (Forstater *et al*, 2013). However it must at the same time be recognized that Global Funds would not exist if donor countries do not contribute to their resources, and they will require a reasonable share of governance power.

¹⁵ Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2012, <http://www.climatefundsupdate.org/listing>

E Keep Costs Down

Stakeholders, and especially donors, monitor fund operating costs closely, particularly as a proportion of total fund disbursements. Provided the GCF can attract adequate contributions to make it a very large fund economies of scale alone should allow costs to be reasonable. Other factors that would assist include avoiding a high-cost headquarters environment, avoiding inclusion in high-salary employment structures and minimizing the number of bodies involved in fund management and supervision. However lessons from other funds suggest that none of these is critical compared with overall good management. Some of the funds (such as the GEF) that have headquarters in the United States, are closely linked in to international agency salary structures, and use multiple Implementing Agencies¹⁶, nevertheless achieve acceptable cost levels. This is partly because they are able to use existing staff and country offices to support the development and supervision of fund activities. A key factor here is to try not to have both direct access to the fund **and** use of other implementing agencies, in order to avoid duplicating staff involved in developing, supervising and monitoring specific projects.

F Ensure Human Resource (HR) policies and practice are sound

The DFID and AusAID comparative reviews found that a number of institutions had poor HR policies and weak leadership. UN agencies were often the worst performers here. FAO, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) all attract critical comment in the AusAID AMA study and several others were noted as being in the process of reforming their HR or leadership systems –e.g. the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), UN Habitat, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, (UNODC).

G Choose a Good Trustee

Both Donors and Recipients place a high priority on ensuring that Funds are well managed between their contribution and their disbursement. The most successful approach to this has been to initially place funds with a Trustee, which is required to manage and invest the funds until it is formally requested to transfer them to the body or bodies that supervise the actual use of the resources. The World Bank is the most common choice, acting as Trustee for many of the most highly respected Global Funds – the Adaptation Fund, GAVI, GEF and GFATM for example. However it is not the only well regarded Trustee. The UN Environment Program (UNEP) is the Trustee for the Montreal Protocol, and the AusAID AMA is positive about its performance.

H Establish a clear logic for Resource Allocation

Some Global Funds appear to lose their way when it comes to overall resource allocation. This can result from various influences:

¹⁶ GEF had 10 “Agencies” as of May 2013, responsible for creating project proposals and managing GEF projects – see GEF website: http://www.thegef.org/gef/gef_agencies

- Donors may earmark funds for specific regions, countries or types of activity. These earmarks ensure that the donors' contributions are aligned with their own priorities, but can substantially skew overall resources away from logical allocation. In the case of AHIF several donors wished to focus their resources on East Asia, where the avian influenza risk was highest. The overall result was that AHIF was able to support any project that emerged in Asia, whereas it was extremely short of resources for Africa and other areas where there was greater unmet need for assistance¹⁷.
- Projects may be approved on a "first come first served" basis, without a broader view of overall allocation by country, region or sub-activity. Each individual project may be well-prepared and fully endorsed by the recipient country, but the final result may be that resources go to those who are best at project preparation rather than to those with the greatest need. (This was the case for both AHIF and the AF. In both cases the pressure for rapid implementation and disbursement meant that it was difficult to turn down proposals that were ready for financing by arguing that there were more deserving cases in the pipeline.)
- In order to avoid resource allocation pitfalls the fund's managers and governing body need to establish overall needs and resource allocation principles at the outset of fund operation, to regularly review the application of these principles and to ensure that these are not undermined by resource availability that is skewed to support particular areas or by a pressure for rapid disbursement that gives priority to those who make early applications for funds. Introducing direct access modalities may not necessarily help, if these lead to pressure on the fund to provide resources to National Implementing Entities as soon as they are accredited.

I Avoid over demanding policies and processes

Every new Global Fund has to establish policies and processes for the management of project proposals, proposal assessment, project supervision and monitoring and evaluation. Some build on existing structures, particularly where existing institutions are used as Implementing Agencies and can apply their own systems (e.g. the 10 GEF Agencies). Others build new structures more or less from scratch. An example of the latter is GFATM, which has been strongly criticized for the demanding processes it has established¹⁸. These may have the advantage of being tailored precisely to the fund's needs, but from the point of view of recipients every new fund with a different application form, processing and approval system, disbursement and financial accounting structure, and reporting and monitoring and evaluation requirements adds to the burden already in place.

The fact, noted above, that at least 26 climate change funds already exist means that most recipients are already having to cope with a range of different policy and process requirements for climate change projects alone. The GCF must try to avoid making this burden worse.

¹⁷ See regular reports on AHIF progress on AHIF website:

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTAVIANFLU/0,,contentMDK:21355695~pagePK:210058~p_iPK:210062~theSitePK:3124441,00.html

¹⁸ See e.g. Neil Squires blog on the Global Fund's new funding model: <http://blogs.dfid.gov.uk/2013/02/the-global-funds-new-funding-model/>

J *Be Transparent*

Lack of transparency generates suspicion. The Internet is the best tool for transparency, providing global and equitable access to information, and the GCF will need to maintain its own website with all relevant data easily accessible, including direct links to information from the Trustee, if this is a separate body.

K *Be Realistic*

The financial expectations for the GCF have regularly included the number of \$100 billion (all figures are in US dollars unless otherwise indicated). However exactly what this means is not always clear. The Cancun conference (COP16, 2010) made a commitment for \$30 billion in fast start finance up to 2012 and \$100 billion a year in long term finance by 2020, for adaptation, mitigation and related bilateral, multilateral and related technical cooperation in developing countries, with the resources coming through a variety of channels.¹⁹

The hope that has been expressed in some quarters, that the GCF might attract \$100 billion a year in new grant funding seems seriously misplaced. In 2010 total official development assistance (ODA) was \$148 billion, and of this multilateral ODA came to \$39.5 billion (OECD DAC website). Since 2010 the global economy and particularly economic conditions in major donor countries have generally deteriorated. Several countries have explicitly cut their aid budgets and significant increases seem unlikely in the near future (OECD, 2013).

The Climate Funds Update website managed by the Heinrich Boll Stiftung and ODI (Heinrich Boll Stiftung) monitors the totals pledged, deposited, approved and disbursed by 26 separate funds. Their latest figures (checked in May 2013) gave a total of \$35.1 billion (bn) pledged to these funds, of which \$26bn had been deposited, \$18.8bn approved and \$2.3bn disbursed. There were eight separate funds with over \$1bn in pledged resources. In order of magnitude the largest were Japan Fast Start Finance (\$15bn pledged), the Clean Technology Fund (CTF: \$4.9bn), the UK International Climate Fund (\$4.6bn), the Norway International Climate and Forest Initiative (\$1.6bn), the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR: \$1.2bn), GEF 5 (\$1.1bn), the German International Climate Initiative (\$1.1bn) and the Amazon Fund (\$1.03bn). The oldest of the 26 funds (GEF4) started in 2006 so the total of \$35.1bn represents seven years of fund accumulation – on average less than \$6bn a year.²⁰

¹⁹ See Cancun COP decision paras 95 to 100: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf#page=2>

²⁰ While there are undoubtedly many smaller funds that provide climate change grants, suggesting that the \$34.4bn might be an *underestimate*, there is also almost certainly some double-counting. For example the largest fund, the Japan Fast Start Fund, includes Japanese contributions to Clean Investment Funds (CTF, PPCR, FIP, SREP – all included in the “24”) and GEF, which are also counted as pledges to these funds. The exact magnitude of these overlaps is not clear but could be as much as \$2bn, so there is also a risk that the \$34.4bn figure is an *overestimate* of 6 years’ pledges.

In this context even bringing the cumulative total for all ODA funds, existing as well as the new GCF, to \$100m billion would be a major challenge. \$100bn a year in new grant funds would be over double the recent annual total for all multilateral aid and more than 15 times the annual average for climate funds over the past six years.

This discussion however depends on what is included in the “climate funds” definition. Stadelmann *et al* (2011) looked at this issue to see what definitions would fit the requirement that funds be “new and additional”. They concluded that only two of the eight options they examined were viable: “new sources only” and “above pre-defined business as usual level of development assistance”.

A study by an OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) team (Clapp *et al*, 2012) looks at the implications of taking a much broader view of eligible financial flows that might be considered to be “climate finance”, including public and private finance and “adds” different types of climate finance, from grants to non-concessional development finance and private capital. The study concludes that if a very broad definition is adopted “aggregate flows are estimated in the range of \$70 to \$120 bn annually” (Clapp *et al*, 2012, page 11). This suggests that in the future measuring, reporting and verification (“MRV”) will be important but the debate over whether the \$100bn a year target is being approached or overtaken will depend on arguments over definitions which are likely to be highly politicised. These debates might focus on what is really new, whether net or gross flows should be counted, whether private investment should be included, what really is “climate” finance and the reliability of the actual data.

L Allow for a Variety of Funding Sources and Instruments

Some civil society commentators have argued that all aid for climate change activities should be provided on a grant basis.²¹ This is neither necessary nor desirable. One of the most important areas for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases is energy generation, and most energy projects, large or small, are capital investments intended to produce returns to the investor. The object of climate change projects in this context is to encourage investors to adopt low emission options, particularly investment in renewable energy (solar, hydro, wind, tides etc.). This can often be achieved by providing part of the capital required in the form of soft loans, making the overall investment more attractive if renewable energy options are selected (many CTF investments follow this logic). Provision of such funds in the form of soft loans provides a guarantee that the investor will follow the agreed renewable energy strategy, and eventually returns capital to the fund for further lending to new borrowers. The CTF (the second largest existing climate change fund) is partly financed by donors in the form of very soft loans, allowing access to resources that would not otherwise be available for ODA, and on-lends these resources to promote the use of clean technologies for investors in developing countries. This has been

²¹ See e.g. “Climate Loan Sharks”, World Development Movement, 2012

successfully achieved in a number of examples including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia²².

Several of the most successful recent new Global Funds have made major use of “innovative financing”. The diversity of these is shown in a paper by Navin Girishinkar (Girishinkar, 2009). He distinguishes “*Private mechanisms* involving private-to-private flows in the market and in civil society; *Solidarity mechanisms* supporting sovereign-to-sovereign transfers and forming the backbone of multilateral and bilateral ODA and other official flows; *Public-private partnership mechanisms* leveraging or mobilizing private finance in support of public service delivery and other public functions, such as sovereign risk management and; *Catalytic mechanisms* involving public support for creating and developing private markets (*inter alia* by reducing risks of private entry).” Important examples include the Advanced Market Commitments (AMC) to strengthen the market for vaccines and essential drugs at the global level (supporting GAVI), the Certified Emission Reductions (CER) financing the Adaptation Fund²³, Stolen Asset Recovery, Output Based Aid and Carbon Funds.

At the same time there are other ideas for innovative sources of funding for climate change activities – aviation and maritime transport taxes, financial transaction taxes and private investment funds. However the potential for these to make a major contribution to the \$100 bn target is limited, partly as many are controversial²⁴. The AF offers an important lesson here – it was originally expected to be mainly resourced through the proceeds of CERs, but as carbon prices have been well below those forecast the revenue from CERs has been below expectations and a very substantial proportion of the AF’s resources has come from multilateral ODA contributions (Trujillo *et al*, 2013, page 5).

The GCF should be open to funding from a variety of sources, and using a diverse range of financial instruments. The ambitious “\$100bn” a year targets are unlikely to be achieved unless a broad approach is taken to what is to be included.

M Catch the Moment

The most successful Global Funds have built on a well-timed launch, exploiting an opportunity when the subject is high on the international profile and the fund has little competition for resources in the sector. The GCF may well have already missed its best opportunity for such a launch, as climate change has now been on the international agenda for over a decade and competing funds are well established. This means that once the GCF’s broad parameters are fully agreed a “big launch” will need careful timing.

²² See CTF website: <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/content/north-africa-solar-scheme-boosts-capacity>

²³ 2% of the value of the proceeds CERs under the Clean Development Mechanism goes to the Adaptation Fund

²⁴ Some of these were discussed in the context of Long Term Finance at the Doha COP, with no clear consensus emerging - see the IISD Doha COP summary at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol12/enb12567e.html> and the UNFCCC website on Long Term Finance: https://unfccc.int/cooperation_support/financial_mechanism/long-term_finance/items/7405.php

N *Plan for Closure*

It may appear negative to think about closure of a fund at the start-up phase, but funds are not expected to have a perpetual existence, and ultimate closure needs to be prepared for. This requires consideration of where and how unused funds will be returned, something which some funds have failed to consider. It also requires thinking about the eventual costs of closure, as many funds find the closing down period extends over many years after the final contributions to their operating costs have been received.

3 **Does the Emerging Design Address Lessons Learned ?**

The GCF has now been under preparation for four years and many of its likely features are now emerging.

The clearest indicator of the form the GCF may take is the resolution passed at COP 17 in Durban.²⁵ This decision (“Decision 3”) and its attached Annex indicate that many – but not all – of the lessons learned from past Global Funds’ experience are being reflected in the emerging design of the GCF.

There is substantial emphasis on the need for a focus on results.²⁶ The GCF design allows for establishment of various windows, starting with separate ones for adaptation and mitigation.²⁷ However there is no explicit recognition that one of the arguments for such separate windows is the need to allow for clarity in results focus. The overall objectives and guiding principles of the GCF are very broad and would challenge any results monitoring: “The purpose of the Fund is to make a significant and ambitious contribution to the global efforts towards attaining the goals set by the international community to combat climate change.” “The Fund will contribute to the achievement of the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In the context of sustainable development, the Fund will promote the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change, taking into account the needs of those developing countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.”²⁸ The objectives of the specific windows will need to be much clearer and quantifiable if their impact is to be effectively monitored.

The importance of country programmes is acknowledged several times in Decision 3. Paragraph 7 of the decision emphasizes the need to “ensure consistency with national climate strategies and plans and a country driven approach”, and the Annex refers to the need to “promote coherence in programming at

²⁵ “Launching the Green Climate Fund”, Decision 3/CP.17:

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09a01.pdf#page=55>

²⁶ Op cit, Annex, Section VII, Para 58

²⁷ Op cit, Annex, Section V C, paras 37 and 39.

²⁸ Op cit, Annex Section I, paras 1 and 2.

the national level through appropriate mechanisms”²⁹ and commits the Fund to support developing countries in pursuing and preparing “project-based and programmatic approaches in accordance with climate change strategies and plans, such as low-emission development strategies or plans, nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs), national adaptation plans of action (NAPAs), national adaptation plans (NAPs) and other related activities.”³⁰.

However the diversity of eligible recipients and possible strategies or plans (see previous paragraph) to which they may align may substantially weaken the effectiveness of attempts to align GCF support to country programmes. Access to GCF resources may be through subnational, national, regional and international agencies.³¹ Private sector bodies are also likely to be able to be recipients in certain circumstances, and there may also be some eligibility for other civil society organizations.³² The range of eligible approaches could easily lead to a situation where a variety of agencies submit proposals each of which is aligned to a different plan or strategy, all of which have a degree of legitimacy. This risk may be reduced by a process of accreditation of National Implementing Entities (NIE), following the AF model, but it would probably be necessary to ensure that all funding requests from a country with an accredited NIE are endorsed by that NIE, even if they are submitted through a multilateral or regional implementing entity.

At its third meeting the GCF Board (March 2013) confirmed that the fund “will...have a country-driven and owned approach”³³ during its discussions on the business model framework, but this did not add any detail to the earlier Decision 3.

Decision 3 makes no commitment to escape the challenge of fund proliferation. The GCF is expected to “initiate discussions on coherence in climate finance delivery with other relevant multilateral entities”³⁴ but there is no reference to any commitment to close other funds that have been established under UNFCCC or other auspices. Most, perhaps all, of the activities proposed for the Fund can be financed under existing entities. If the start of operations of the GCF is accompanied by a firm commitment to close several existing funds to new contributions, to cease financing new operations under these funds and to transfer outstanding uncommitted balances to the GCF this would enormously increase the

²⁹ Op cit, Annex Section V A, para 34

³⁰ Op cit, Annex Section VB, Para 36 and Section VC 1, para 40

³¹ Op cit, Annex Section, Section VD, Paras 47 and 48. Para 45 notes: “Access to Fund resources will be through national, regional and international implementing entities accredited by the Board. Recipient countries will determine the mode of access and both modalities can be used simultaneously.” It is not fully clear what “both modalities” refers to here – but it probably allows *direct* access from national (and subnational) entities as well as *indirect* access through regional and international entities.

³² Op cit, Annex V C2 refers to “a private sector facility” and Annex VD1, para 47 notes that “the Board will consider additional modalities that further enhance direct access, including through funding entities with a view to enhancing country ownership of projects and programmes”

³³ Decisions of the Board, March 2013: B.01-13/06, section b):

http://www.gcfund.net/fileadmin/00_customer/documents/pdf/Decisions_of_the_Board_V1_15March2013.pdf

³⁴ Decision 3 : Op cit, Annex Section VA Para 34

credibility and potential impact of the Fund. In many cases this may be difficult, but it should be possible for some of the funds that already operate under the auspices of the UN FCCC.

The future governance of the GCF is treated in detail in Decision 3³⁵ and addresses the lessons learned from past experience. The Board has now been established, with 24 members, composed of an equal number of members from developing and developed country Parties. There are representatives of Least Developed Countries and of Small Island Developing States. However there continue to be underlying disagreements over aspects of governance, which were evident at the Doha COP, with disagreements that could not be resolved over the body that would be responsible for drafting the arrangements between the GCF and the COP.³⁶

There is little in Decision 3 to suggest that cost control is currently an issue that is being addressed. There is a reference to selection of the trustee using a “competitive bidding process”³⁷ but this does not necessarily mean that cost would be a major criterion. The potential proliferation of implementing entities noted above could mean that the number of organisations aiming to recover overhead costs and establish networks of staff to develop, support, monitor and evaluate operations will be excessive. There is also a high risk that the large number of entities could result in many small projects and significant diseconomies of scale.³⁸

Decision 3 is silent on HR policies, the processes for applying for projects, and long term closure arrangements and this is not surprising as one would expect these to be established only after the Secretariat is up and running.

It seems probable that GCF trustee and management roles will be separate, in line with good practice elsewhere. The World Bank will be the interim trustee³⁹ and the GCF Board is “invited” to arrange for a competitive bidding approach to select the permanent trustee.⁴⁰

Decision 3 includes proposals on the resource allocation process, but these are rather vague.⁴¹ The Board “will balance the allocation of resources between adaptation and mitigation activities”, it will “ensure appropriate allocation of resources for other activities”, “a results-based approach will be an important criterion for allocating resources” and “in allocating resources for adaptation, the Board will take into account the urgent and immediate needs of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including LDCs, SIDS (Small Island Developing States) and African States, using minimum allocation floors for these countries as appropriate. The Board will aim for appropriate geographical balance.” There is no recognition here that firm policies on resource allocation are needed to offset donors’ efforts to earmark contributions or that the variety of

³⁵ Op cit, Annex Section II

³⁶ See Earth Negotiations Bulletin, Vol12 No 567 Page 5: <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb12567e.pdf>

³⁷ Decision 3, Op cit, para 16

³⁸ This risk is also highlighted by Germanwatch, 2011

³⁹ Decision3, Annex IIF paras 24 to 27

⁴⁰ Op cit, para 16

⁴¹ Op cit, Annex V E, paras 50 to 52

entities involved in direct and indirect access to GCF resources (noted above) could result in inequitable disbursements.

The need for transparency is well recognized by Decision 3.⁴² The GCF has now established its own website (gcfund.net) and this provides a comprehensive source for all official documentation. However even generally well informed commentators such as the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) find it difficult to follow GCF progress: “The Board has yet to agree on procedures for reporting out from the meetings, making it extremely difficult for those not internally engaged to have a clear picture of what is happening” (Boyle, 2012).

Decision 3 makes no reference to funding targets. It allows for a broad range of funding sources. Section IV of the Annex to the Decision states the GCF “will receive financial inputs from developed country Parties to the Convention” and that it “may also receive financial inputs from a variety of other sources, public and private, including alternative sources.” It is also open to using a range of funding instruments: “The Fund will provide financing in the form of grants and concessional lending, and through other modalities, instruments or facilities as may be approved by the Board.”⁴³ A similarly broad commitment was made at the third meeting of the GCF Board: “The Fund will...leverage additional public and private resources through the operational facilities of the Fund including through the private sector facility”.⁴⁴

4 Conclusions

A comparison of the lessons learned from other Global Funds and the emerging structure of the GCF suggests that the team preparing the GCF are well aware of others’ experience. At the same time there are some significant weaknesses in the emerging design. The length of time involved in the GCF gestation and the variety and number of participants seems to have resulted in a design that includes everything, and that could be very difficult to manage for results. The objectives and guiding principles are very broad, and unless the GCF is broken down into thematic windows with clear and measurable objectives donors who are looking for results-oriented operations will be disappointed. While the importance of country programmes and plans is recognized, the multiplicity of possible plans to refer to, and the number of entities that can approach the GCF for direct or indirect funding, risks leading to a poor linkage between country-driven programmes and approved operations. The diverse range of entities is also likely to undermine the GCF’s cost-effectiveness and could result in relatively small operations, numerous participating entities and resulting high overhead costs. The proposals for GCF governance give an equal weighting to developed and developing partners, but the reality of recent meetings suggests that numerous separate interest groups are emerging leading at best to a more realistic reflection of the diversity of interests in climate change – but at worst to a totally dysfunctional governance process. The COP 17 decision made no reference to running down or closing competing climate change funds. There is already an excessive proliferation of climate change funds, and on its

⁴² Op cit, paras 7, 13, 16 etc.

⁴³ Op cit, Annex VI, paras 54 to 56

⁴⁴ Decisions of the Board, March 2013, op cit

present lines the GCF will overlap with existing funds, add to confusion and increase the proportion of funds intended for beneficiaries that finish up paying for the costs of the GCF itself and the other entities that may be involved in planning and oversight of its operations.

How then could the emerging design be improved ? The following lessons might be observed

- Tie the approval of operations closely to their inclusion in national plans, and limit the range of acceptable planning frameworks;
- Establish relatively narrow issue-based windows with clear window-specific expected results;
- Allocate resources clearly to these windows and avoid distortions that can result from donor attempts to earmark resources geographically;
- Ensure that all or most projects are subject to direct access to the GCF. Only (if ever) use indirect approaches (i.e. disbursing via other international or regional implementing agencies) if the alternative entity has a very strong comparative advantage;
- Link the launch of the GCF with planned closure of some competing funds;
- Ensure that funding targets for the GCF are realistic.

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