



Community of Practice of
Direct Access Entities

Work Programme: Climate Project Development

SIX PAPERS FOCUSING ON CPDAE MEMBERS' LESSONS
LEARNED AND EXPERIENCE SHARING ON VARIOUS TOPICS

PAPER #6:
**RE-ACCREDITATION
TO GCF AND AF**

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Management Guidance and Technical Oversight

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1. Introduction

The Community of Practice for Direct Access Entities (CPDAE) is a network composed of National Implementing Entities (NIEs) to the Adaptation Fund (AF) and Direct Access Entities (DAEs) to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Membership is open to interested AF NIEs and GCF DAEs and the CPDAE is driven by its members, led by an elected Committee that coordinates its work.

The Work Programme “Climate Project Development” under a CPDAE Readiness Project implemented by GIZ under GCF contract aims to build capacities and share knowledge among the CPDAE members to advance their project pipelines and increase the number of quality funding proposals. One of the deliverables of this work programme is the development of six papers focusing on CPDAE members’ lessons learned and experience sharing on various topics. This paper at hand focuses on the re-accreditation to GCF and AF.

2. Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund Guidance on Re-Accreditation to GCF and AF

2.1. Green Climate Fund Guidance

In decision B.24/13, the GCF Board adopted the GCF’s re-accreditation process . The GCF accreditation term for an AE is five years. The accreditation term begins when the Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) is entered into by both, the GCF and an AE, i.e., becomes effective.

Note that AEs are required to report on an annual basis during the term of their accreditation on their continued compliance with the standards for GCF accreditation. This includes annual self-assessments conducted by the AE and a mid-term accreditation review conducted by the GCF based on information provided by the AE. If completed properly, the re-accreditation can build on these self-assessments and mid-term assessment in that documents and information provided during these assessments do not need to be identified and uploaded again during re-accreditation. This can save a lot of time and effort during the re-accreditation process.

An AE will need to seek re-accreditation to GCF in order to maintain its status as an AE or otherwise its AE status will lapse at the end of its accreditation term. AEs are strongly recommended to submit re-accreditation applications well before the accreditation expiry date. An AE can either: (i) apply for a re-accreditation for the same categories as their latest accreditation scope; or (ii) Choose to additionally apply for an upgrade in their accreditation scope; or (iii) choose to apply for a downgrade in its accreditations scope.

Re-accreditation applications need to be submitted to the GCF’s Digital Accreditation Platform (DAP). The DAP account of an AE will include the original accreditation application, annual self-assessments, and the mid-term accreditation assessment. The re-accreditation will be a separate procedure in the DAP and the files and information provided during the most recent previous accreditation submission will be included in the re-accreditation form. This means that an entity will only have to upload files and information that refer to new policies, procedures, track record and other information since the most recent previous completed accreditation submission. Accordingly, for each re-accreditation item/standard, the applicant can tick one of the following to indicate changes since the previous complete accreditation submission:

¹ See <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about/policies/accreditation-framework> for all GCF policies applying to re-accreditation.

- **“YES”**, if there were changes to respective policies, procedures, track record and/or information since the AE’s previous accreditation or the AE’s most recent self-assessment for or mid-term review by the GCF;
- **“NO”** if there were no changes to respective policies, procedures, track record and/or information, and
- **“F/T”** if the given item is considered to have been met by way of fast-tracked accreditation by GEF, AF, and/or Directorate-General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid of the European Commission.

The questions (or standards) for re-accreditation in the DAP form are virtually identical with those for initial accreditation. Hence, the Re-accreditation Application Form is composed of seven sections to be completed:

- I. Background and contact information of the AE;
- II. Information on how the institution and its intended projects/programmes will contribute to furthering GCF objectives;
- III. Information on the scope of intended projects/programmes and estimated contribution requested;
- IV. Basic fiduciary criteria;
- V. Specialized fiduciary criteria (Project Management; Grant Award and/or Funding Allocation Mechanisms; and/or On-lending and/or Blending (for loans, equity and/or guarantees));
- VI. Environmental and social safeguards (ESS) standards; and
- VII. Gender.

The re-accreditation process, similar to the accreditation process, consists of three stages:

- **Stage I:** No-objection (for DAEs) and institutional assessment and completeness check;
- **Stage II:** (Step 1) Re-accreditation review and Stage II (Step 2) Decision; and
- **Stage III:** Legal arrangements

Note: Keep in mind that the Re-accreditation Application Form or accreditation policies may be amended by the GCF from time to time.

2.2. Adaptation Fund Guidance

An AF accreditation is valid for a period of five years with the possibility of renewal. Implementing Entities (IEs) are strongly recommended to meet the re-accreditation deadlines. The AF Secretariat sends out notification letters to AEs 18 months prior to the accreditation expiration date. The IEs are then strongly recommended to submit their re-accreditation application and supporting documentation through the online accreditation system, 12 months prior to the accreditation expiry date.

If an AE does not submit a re-accreditation application by its accreditation expiry date, the AF Secretariat will contact the Designated Authority (DA) of the given country (or DAs in case of regional IEs) to inform about the IE’s intention of not pursuing re-accreditation and related change in status as “Not-Accredited”. If an IE is implementing an AF financed project at the time of losing its accreditation status, a grace period can be negotiated and obtained for achieving re-accreditation before the completion of the project or within three years from its accreditation expiry date. In any case, an IE is strongly recommended to achieve re-accreditation within three years from its accreditation expiry date.

The AF re-accreditation process requires a new application for every applicant. Applicants will be requested to describe any changes that have occurred since the entity was accredited and provide the most up-to-date supporting documentation and any other document requested by the Accreditation Panel. All substantial changes within the organization in the last five years in the areas of i) its constitution, ii) major policies and processes/procedures, and iii) key management positions, should be highlighted by the applicant. The Accreditation Panel will apply the same rigor, uniformity, and consistency in the way the re-accreditation work is done as it was the case during the initial accreditation. Re-accreditation is necessary because an organization can change significantly in five years and therefore the re-accreditation process is commensurate with any potential changes to the organization.

AF re-accreditation can be categorized into two: (i) ‘regular’ re-accreditation; (ii) ‘fast-track’ re-accreditation.

Review of a 'regular' re-accreditation will focus on (i) continued compliance with the Fund's fiduciary standards, (ii) compliance with the Fund's Environmental and Social policy and the Gender Policy, (iii) the results of the assessment of the implementing entity's performance in project/programme implementation and (iv) policies and procedure related to anti-money-laundering/countering the financing of the terrorism.

Under the fast-track re-accreditation, the review will focus on (i) the fiduciary standard related to the legal personality; (ii) commitment by the implementing entity to apply the Fund's Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy; (iii) mechanism to deal with complaints on environmental and social harms and gender harms caused by projects/programmes, and (iv) policies and procedure related to anti-money-laundering/countering the financing of the terrorism.

3. Experience of CPDAE members

In interviews conducted with 22 of 33 CPDAE members from January to March 2023, a specific question was "Which experiences and lessons learned does your institution have in the area of re-accreditation that could be shared with the CPDAE members?".

3.1. Positive experiences and common barriers

The following table summarizes positive experiences and major obstacles mentioned by different CPDAE members during the interviews.

Table 1: **Positive experiences and barriers mentioned by CPDAE members regarding Re-Accreditation**

Positive Experiences	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the case of GCF, building on the initial accreditation, as well as the mid-term accreditation update, can decrease the re-accreditation workload. ● Policies and procedures that did not change since the initial accreditation do not need to be uploaded again. Hence it is good to keep track of these. ● Readiness support is available to help with re-accreditation, including the procurement of experienced re-accreditation consultants. Such consultants can be used, for instance, to elaborate re-accreditation and upgrade gap assessments, help close gaps identified, support the elaboration and upload of re-accreditation submissions, and advise during Q&A with the Accreditation Panel. ● One recently re-accredited entity stated that re-accreditation was perceived useful because it drove the organization to revisit some of its policies and procedures and update and improve some of them. ● Another entity stated: "Our experience is that the re-accreditation process was tedious and long, but ultimately, we found the process useful in terms of strengthening our institution. What the GCF requires is useful in the context of other donor cooperation." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-accreditation is complex and requires extensive attention from many departments of an entity. ● It is important to plan well ahead (realistic timeline to meet deadline) and ensure that all relevant departments within the organization are involved. ● Entities should not rely on the GCF to alert them when and how re-accreditation efforts are to be started – the entities need to drive these processes themselves. ● If the re-accreditation deadline is missed, this can lead to serious delays in many areas, including inability to get new FPs approved. ● A significant re-accreditation barrier can be if the person managing the original accreditation left the organization when re-accreditation is to start. ● In short: re-accreditation requires significant, time, capacities, and budget, hence requires early and up-front planning.

3.2. Good practice tips and suggestions

Good practice tips for the Re-Accreditation to the GCF and AF are highlighted in the following table. By following these good practice tips, NIEs and DAEs can hopefully achieve re-accreditation faster and with less hassle.

Table 3: **Good practice tips for Re-Accreditation to GCF and AF**

Prepare properly for re-accreditation (more than one year before re-accreditation)

- Ensure that all annual accreditation self-assessments and the mid-term accreditation assessments (in case of GCF) are being completed in full. If this work is completed properly, the re-accreditation work will be limited to updates to policies and procedures and new track record that occurred since the last mid-term or self-assessment. In other words, the re-accreditation work will be less complicated and time consuming.
- Make sure there is enough budget to support the re-accreditation process. For example, re-accreditation can be supported through a readiness grant.
- If deemed necessary, ensure that external consultant support during re-accreditation will be readily available when needed. This includes timely assurance that a budget is available for an expert and timely procurement of the expert. Consider that highly experienced experts may have limited or no availability in the short term, hence procure well ahead.
- If your organization would like to combine the re-accreditation with one or several accreditation up grade requests, contact the GCF more than one year ahead of the re-accreditation deadline to get guidance whether and how a combination of re-accreditation and upgrade is viable. Make sure that your organization will have all files, policies, procedures, and track record for the accreditation upgrade at the time of submission.
- There are several CPDAE member institutions that have completed re-accreditation processes with the AF and/or GCF (examples: CSE, Profonampe, etc.). It may be useful for your organization to engage in a dialogue with such re-accredited institutions (knowledge sharing, technical support, etc.).

Plan the re-accreditation well (one year before the re-accreditation deadline)

- Start the re-accreditation work half a year, better one year, ahead of the submission deadline. It is useful to appoint one person in-house with the overall responsibility for re-accreditation. This person should be up to date with the latest AF and/or GCF re-accreditation policies and procedures.
- If deemed necessary, start with a re-accreditation gap assessment.
- Elaborate a plan with clear responsibilities who is responsible for and participating in identifying information to be uploaded to the re-accreditation platform.
- Make sure all documents to be uploaded are available in English language – plan the translation of documents well ahead.

Avoid delays during AP assessment

- Be prepared that there may be one or several rounds of Q&A on the re-accreditation submission. Be prepared to answer such questions in a timely manner, including, if necessary, by using external expert support (procure such support well ahead).

Manage your files properly

- Before, during and after re-accreditation it is highly recommendable to implement a file management system for all re-accreditation related information and documents. This is to avoid that documents need to be identified and collected anew, for example if an employee who was in charge of an earlier or the original accreditation left your organization. Even if for example the GCF DAP stores documents submitted in earlier accreditation processes, it is safer for entities to have their own file management system.
- Equally important is a file naming system that allows for easy retrieval and management of submitted documents. One idea is to start every file name with a consecutive number followed by a short and concise summary of the document contents. Example “DOC033 Procurement Policy of Sep 2021.pdf”

4. Conclusion

DAEs and the NIEs are advised to keep up to date with the latest guidelines and recommendations of the GCF and/or AF for re-accreditation. Notably, such guidelines undergo a continuous cycle of refinement and enhancement, hence it is useful to check the GCF and AF websites on a regular basis and well ahead of re-accreditation.

Table 3 above presents many practical tips and recommendations on planning and implementing the re-accreditation of an entity in an efficient way by minimizing time and resource inputs.