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NAMA Facility – 2nd Interim Evaluation and Learning

**Learning Report: Pathways for enhancing
knowledge and lesson sharing**

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Background to this Learning Report

The NAMA Facility¹ is committed to promoting lesson learning and knowledge-sharing as a core organising principle.

The 2nd Interim Evaluation of the NAMA Facility identified that its stakeholders, including governments, NAMA developers and the broader climate finance community, are keen to obtain more information on how to achieve the broad transformational change that is needed to meet international climate goals. They want to know more from the NAMA Facility, as well as other funds, about what is and is not working, where and why, as soon as that information becomes available.

Building upon the findings from the evaluation, this Report proposes pathways that funds – including smaller funds like the NAMA Facility – can use to enhance knowledge and lesson sharing in the wider climate finance community and countries that are seeking to be at the forefront of climate change mitigation.

The target audience for this learning report includes the NAMA Facility and other climate funds, governments of developing countries and emerging economies, NAMA² developers and direct implementers, as well as the wider climate finance community.

Key lessons

There are four complementary pathways recommended for learning-oriented climate funds to promote knowledge-sharing:

1. Have an explicit multi-pronged dissemination strategy that evolves as the context changes with sufficient resources to implement it.
2. Tailor outreach and dissemination strategies to effectively engage different audiences.
3. Optimise cross-collaboration with other programmes and initiatives.
4. Support regional/sectoral interactive workshops on what works to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange.

Approaches to knowledge and learning

This section provides examples of existing knowledge and learning strategies used by climate funds.

The NAMA Facility's knowledge and learning activities

A core aim of the NAMA Facility is to become a learning hub and to generate demonstration effects through its projects. The plans for this are documented in the Knowledge Creation Strategy. In addition to collecting and sharing lessons learnt to improve processes and provide better guidance and support to potential applicants, the Facility seeks to:

¹ Founded in 2012, the NAMA Facility provides support to developing countries and emerging economies for the implementation of transformational, country-led NAMA Support Projects (NSPs). NAMAs (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions) can be considered building blocks for the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). NSPs contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by providing demonstration examples for the implementation of NAMAs. Successful NSPs are expected to (1) encourage countries to prepare and implement further NAMAs, and to (2) mobilise additional finance for the implementation of climate change mitigation action.

² NAMAs is a term used for convenience. In this report, it also includes NDC implementation activities promoting transformational change that are conceptually similar, but may not be using NAMA terminology per se.

- Inspire others to raise their ambition, replicate projects and establish sectoral best practices; and
- Contribute to international debates on climate finance and transformational change through informed and evidence-based positions.

To achieve these objectives, the NAMA Facility has, for example, uploaded project descriptions and project factsheets to its website. Emerging lessons have also been shared at international climate meetings and through periodic coordination with other funds and through collaborations, such as the 2019 joint NAMA Facility-CIFs (Climate Investment Funds) workshop on transformational change. Whilst, to date, only a few projects are far enough into implementation for lessons on successes and challenges to be drawn, the NAMA Facility plans to further increase knowledge-sharing activities as more projects are completed and lessons are identified.

How other funds and initiatives promote knowledge dissemination and learning

Other larger climate funds have more extensive knowledge dissemination strategies with dedicated evaluation and learning units.³ For example, the CIFs Knowledge Center has a broad range of in-depth case studies, research reports and collaborative knowledge documents and regularly facilitates international knowledge-sharing events, such as to promote understanding of transformational change in climate action. Recent Green Climate Fund (GCF) learning outputs have focused on country readiness and NDC implementation activities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). These programmes, alongside regional investment banks that have direct links to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, also hold regular coordination meetings with each other to share learning. Some small funds, such as the Energy and Environment Partnership Trust Fund (EEP Africa; see case study) also have robust and multi-faceted dissemination strategies. The NDC Partnership, the LEDS Global Partnership, and the Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement, amongst others, host knowledge exchange initiatives and publish good practice resources on climate finance lessons.

Pathways for enhancing knowledge dissemination and learning

The degree of transformation, the speed and the diverse conditions make it imperative that lessons from what has and is happening now be shared broadly and promptly. This final section outlines four complementary strategies to promote and enhance knowledge and learning.

Pathway 1: Have an explicit multi-pronged knowledge management strategy that evolves as the context changes, with sufficient resources to implement it.

Develop a comprehensive strategy. The NAMA Facility's decision to embed learning into their core knowledge management structure mirrors other international examples, including that of the CIFs, GCF, and GEF. It is critical to build learning into the core structure of the fund at every stage. This helps to avoid inefficiencies or lost opportunities because items were not planned for in advance. The most effective learning processes embedded within support programmes and funds are typically those that are proactive and creative, adapting to evolving conditions.

Provide sufficient resources to implement it. Key elements of this pathway include having a learning budget appropriate for fund size and objectives, dedicated staff with relevant skillsets and periodic review and updating of the knowledge and learning strategy as the fund, its projects, and the broader context evolves. For example, several funds have dedicated knowledge management staff or full teams

³ In the interest of space, this document only briefly mentions a few of the many funds active in supporting NDC implementation. For a broader list of relevant funds, see for example, the Climate Finance Explorer maintained by the NDC Partnership <https://ndcpartnership.org/climate-finance-explorer>

with complementary outreach skillsets, such as experience with editing, graphic design, workshop facilitation, and/or the latest social media techniques. These teams also help ensure that knowledge creation and dissemination activities are integrated into broader communication and outreach strategies.

Whether activities are handled internally or outsourced will depend on the programme or fund's size, capacities, and knowledge dissemination objectives.

EEP Africa: Multi-pronged knowledge dissemination from a small fund

Since 2010, EEP Africa has invested over EUR 50 million of early-stage financing in 250 innovative clean energy projects in Southern and East Africa. The fund is hosted and managed by the Nordic Development Fund (NDF) with funding from Austria, Finland and NDF.

EEP Africa provides investment facilitation and business development support through virtual and in-person investor and matchmaking events. It facilitates knowledge exchange and learning through its knowledge products and Knowledge Exchange Forums. The Forums provide platforms for discussing trends, experiences and lessons learned.

There is one staff member dedicated to Knowledge Management, who draws on the support of the rest of the team and sub-contractors when needed.

EEP Africa produces short videos, infographics and factsheets to showcase individual projects as well as developing sectoral briefs integrating lessons from a variety of projects.

They also develop highly graphical and accessible learning reports addressing themes that cut across their portfolio. Recent examples include “Energising Resilience: Climate Co-Benefits from Clean Energy Projects” and “Powering Productivity: Lessons in Green Growth from the EEP Africa Portfolio.”

EEP Africa hosts or participates in a variety of in-person and virtual forums to showcase success stories, knowledge products and share learning. They regularly use e-mail and social media, including Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to announce events and share new knowledge products. They also actively develop partnerships with other players in the sector to amplify their message and reach a broader audience.

Pathway 2: Tailor outreach and knowledge dissemination strategies to effectively engage different audiences.

Tailor modes of dissemination to address the needs of different stakeholder groups. The dissemination strategy should map the relevant target audiences to the appropriate knowledge products and tools to reach them effectively.

Knowledge products could include short videos, interactive online presentations, infographics, reports and briefs. Mechanisms include websites, e-mail, social media, such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, webinars, conferences and side events, as well as virtual and in-person peer-to-peer exchange forums.

The strategy should separately address the best ways to reach different target audiences on different topic areas. As an illustration, the most effective method of engaging a potential private investor concerned about risk is unlikely to be the same as for a Ministry of Energy official concerned about integration into existing national and sectoral strategies.

Sample topics. Stakeholders in the NAMA Facility evaluation mentioned the following examples of topics that would interest them, which are consistent with the findings from other studies of similar climate funds the authors recently conducted:

- The role that learning plays in facilitating transformational change at the project/country level.
- Methods of engaging the private sector.
- Factors that promote/impede replication and increasing scale.
- Holistic and nexus approaches such as mitigation, adaptation and resilience linkages, or the nexus between water, energy, and food, or mitigation-economic recovery linkages in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic.
- Innovation success and caution stories, for example, by sector, region or addressing innovative funding mechanisms or new technologies and strategies.
- Bespoke strategies for underserved groups, such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), or highly-indebted countries with limited ability to access loans.

Provide various levels of detail. Widespread marketing and outreach good practices typically recommend a staged approach – that is targeting each stage of generating awareness, interest, motivation and commitment for different groups appropriately. In this case, a fund’s knowledge dissemination strategy should therefore include a variety of outputs and events tailored to different target audiences and at different levels of detail. For some audiences, high-level project description will be inspirational, for others a more detailed understanding of technical, financial, and/or country ownership components will be most helpful. The NAMA Facility is still developing a fully multi-faceted approach, while older funds, such as the CIFs and GEF have more examples at different stages for various audiences.

Use a variety of modes. Given that different groups access information in different ways, it is also valuable to look beyond email blasts, newsletters and basic project information published on websites. Possible strategies and outputs include:

- Project-level highlighting beneficiary stories: factsheets, high level and/or in-depth case studies, infographics, PowerPoint presentations, videos and webinars. Includes modes that showcase a handful of projects or projects individually.
- Thematic: studies and knowledge products, presentations, webinars, peer-to-peer exchange such as to address innovative financial instruments or sectoral success stories.
- Mixed mechanisms that reinforce each other: e-mail, social media, webinars, conferences and side events, as well as virtual and in-person peer-to-peer exchange forums. Social media is particularly helpful at broadening the audience beyond existing participants.

Having a variety of knowledge products at different levels of detail that reach the targeted audience in multiple reinforcing ways can help to:

- More deeply engage stakeholders;

- Prompt them to more fully absorb the messages;
- Recognise how it is relevant for their context; and
- Move them to seek the next level of relevant information.

In this way, it may stimulate them to develop a proposal or provide inspiration to address a challenge.

Pathway 3: Optimise cross-collaboration with other programmes and initiatives.

There are several funds and programmes supporting transformational change in similar ways.

Collaboration with other funds and initiatives provides opportunities to increase efficiency and reach. For example, coordination and collaboration can:

- **Increase synergies.** Overlapping activities in the same countries provide opportunities for synergies. Yet, inefficiencies are also a risk if funds work at cross-purposes or if piecemeal funding leaves gaps that lock in suboptimal development pathways. It benefits all funders to know as early as feasible who is funding (or not funding) what, where, and why. This helps funders make strategic decisions that better target funds. Such coordination can also promote a more consistent approach to e.g. application processes, which make it less costly for applicants to apply, and help funders to recognize when an application would be better suited for another fund.
- **Facilitate comprehensive learning.** Given that individual country contexts vary widely, it can be beneficial to examine lessons from projects in a particular sector or aspect of innovation using information from multiple funds to e.g. identify truly cross-cutting themes and caution areas.
- **Expand reach.** Funds that have the objective to provide demonstration effects beyond funded countries and projects all target similar groups of stakeholders. Given that both time and funds are finite, coordination and collaboration on outputs and events, as appropriate, will increase cost efficiency and effectiveness (by providing multiple platforms through which to share lessons). Understanding what each fund is doing, and would like to do, as well as what lessons they have to share will allow individual funds to more efficiently target their outputs and events in their unique areas. This is particularly relevant for smaller funds, like the NAMA Facility whose resources are much more limited than larger funds.

Successful collaboration starts with a clear commitment and recognition of the value from the relevant parties. It is facilitated by agreeing to a specific scope outlined in a clear action plan and minimum anticipated frequency of exchange. For example, there could be quarterly calls covering upcoming funding and dissemination activities and other items of note. This could be supplemented by ad-hoc exchanges as questions or opportunities arise.

Pathway 4: Support regional/sectoral interactive workshops on what works to facilitate peer to peer exchange.

One method that appears to be particularly suited to cross-collaboration, which the NAMA Facility and other funds and initiatives are increasingly using, is to host regional and/or sectoral peer to peer exchanges - such as through e-lists, webinars, workshops or other interactive platforms - that incorporate lessons from multiple funds yet are targeted enough to provide a deeper and meaningful exchange that also helps facilitate long-term peer-to-peer relationships.

Pathway 4 illustrates a way to integrate all three of the above pathways into practical, actionable activities. This provides opportunities to go beyond documents primarily shared passively on a website or at more general events that limit the depth or reach.

Putting it all together

As an example, a small fund like the NAMA Facility that has projects coming to completion could expand on its Knowledge Creation Strategy to include a mapping of stakeholders, needs, knowledge products and mechanisms that is consistent with its objectives and supported by dedicated budgets, staffing, targets, and milestones.

The outreach could include thematic knowledge products that highlight lessons learnt across the fund's portfolio, as well as engaging with other funds and learning initiatives in a specific sector or funding strategy. For each knowledge project, dissemination could start by the knowledge management team developing a blog, article and a short video to introduce it.

The introductory materials as well as the full knowledge product could be shared via social media, e-mail, website, and conferences over three months. Targeted regional webinars could provide opportunities for interested stakeholders to learn more and ask questions. Virtual and/or in-person forums for a subset of engaged and interested stakeholders could provide opportunities for the information to transform into deeper understanding through peer-to-peer exchange and brainstorming relevant for each participant's situation. These exchange forums could be hosted by the NAMA Facility or by another learning platform.

References and Resources

The NAMA Facility Knowledge Creation Strategy is available at <https://www.nama-facility.org/publications/nama-facility-knowledge-creation-strategy/>

Websites of funds and initiatives mentioned in this report:

- CIF's main website: <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/>
- CIF's evaluation and learning page: <https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/knowledge-center>
- EEP Africa website: <https://eepafrica.org/>
- GEF's main website: <http://www.thegef.org>
- GEF's Knowledge and Learning page: <http://www.thegef.org/topics/knowledge-learning>
- GCF's main website: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/>
- GCF's Independent Evaluation Unit: <https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/>
- LEDS Global Partnership: <https://ledsgp.org/>
- NAMA Facility's main website: <https://www.nama-facility.org/>
- NAMA Facility's webinars and publications page: <https://www.nama-facility.org/publications/>
- NDC Partnership: <https://ndcpartnership.org/>
- Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement: <https://transparency-partnership.net/>

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