

## Concept Note

### Regional Training Workshop on

### Building Capacity for Green Climate Fund (GCF) Concept Note

### Development in Central, South, and Southeast Asia

6 - 9 May 2025

*The Sukosol Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand*

*Meeting Room: Kamolmart Meeting Room (6<sup>th</sup> Floor)*

## Background

The Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT RRC.AP) plays a key role in advancing climate change adaptation efforts in developing countries across the Asia-Pacific region, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Centre implements capacity-building and knowledge-sharing programs, particularly in climate finance and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Simplified Approval Process with support from the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MoEJ), and in collaboration with partners experienced in climate action planning, including the GCF Secretariat.

The recent 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP28)<sup>1</sup> held in Dubai, discussions highlighted the persistent challenges faced by countries in the Asia-Pacific region in accessing climate finance, particularly through the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Drawing on its years of operational experience, the GCF reaffirmed its commitment to global solidarity by introducing important reforms aimed at enhancing access and effectiveness. A key outcome of COP28 was the launch of a revised Readiness program, effective from 2024, which eliminates annual funding caps. This significant change allows countries to access up to USD 4 million over the 2024–2027 period, offering greater flexibility to address capacity constraints and streamline project development for submission to the GCF and other donors. Notably, the revised program also introduces a dedicated allocation of up to USD 1 million to strengthen the capacity of Direct Access Entities (DAEs), reinforcing the foundation for climate action and sustainable development across the region.

These developments align with Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, which emphasizes the provision of financial support to developing countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation. As part of the Financial Mechanism of the UNFCCC, the GCF plays a central role in delivering this support by financing projects that reduce carbon emissions and enhance climate resilience. In each developing country, the GCF operates through a National Designated Authority (NDA), which serves as the key coordinating body for accessing and managing GCF resources.

While the GCF holds great promise for supporting climate action in the region, many countries in Asia continue to face significant challenges in accessing and utilizing its resources effectively. Common barriers include limited institutional capacity, inadequate technical expertise, and a lack of familiarity with the GCF's complex procedures. The development of strong concept notes, preparation of bankable projects aligned with GCF investment criteria, and the navigation of proposal submission and implementation processes all require a solid understanding of climate finance mechanisms.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sprep.org/news/unpacking-supply-and-demand-side-challenges-for-pacific-small-islands-developing-states-in-access-to-climate-finance>

Bridging this knowledge gap is essential to unlocking the full potential of GCF support for the countries of Central, South, and Southeast Asia.

In response to this need, there is a strong rationale for organizing a targeted regional training workshop focused on writing high-quality GCF concept notes. Such a workshop would serve as a practical and collaborative platform to equip government officials, climate practitioners, project developers, and civil society representatives with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the GCF landscape. By enhancing technical understanding, fostering cross-country collaboration, and providing hands-on tools for project development, the training aims to catalyze transformative climate resilience initiatives across the Asia-Pacific region.

Against this backdrop, the Asian Institute of Technology's Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (AIT RRC.AP), with support from the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MOEJ), and in partnership with the GCF Secretariat, aim to organize a regional training workshop tailored to the specific needs of countries in the Asia region. This initiative is designed to strengthen institutional capacity and accelerate access to climate finance in support of national climate priorities.

## Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the four-day workshop is to enhance the quality of GCF concept notes prepared by National Designated Authorities (NDAs) and related stakeholders from countries across Asia. The workshop will begin by strengthening participants' understanding of GCF policies, programming mechanisms, funding processes, and investment priorities. It will also provide a platform for knowledge exchange on emerging trends in climate finance, including pipeline development, investment criteria, and co-financing strategies.

Designed specifically for NDAs, Accredited Entities (AEs), members of national coordination mechanisms, and other key stakeholders, the workshop will build technical capacity to formulate high-quality concept notes tailored for submission to the Green Climate Fund. Participants will receive practical guidance on using the latest GCF concept note template, with detailed explanations of its essential components.

While the workshop will not cover in-depth writing skills, it will introduce fundamental tools to help participants structure project ideas logically and strategically. These tools include problem and objective tree analysis, theory of change development, results frameworks aligned with GCF expectations, climate rationale formulation, and preliminary budgeting considerations. The content will be delivered through a combination of interactive sessions, case examples, and peer-to-peer learning.

The training workshop aims to deliver on the following key objectives:

1. **Enhance technical capacity:** To enhance the expertise of officers engaged in the design of climate change adaptation projects to effectively conceptualize project ideas and secure climate finance, with a particular focus on the Green Climate Fund.
2. **Strengthen regional networks:** To establish and reinforce networks among practitioners to facilitate collaborations and partnerships that contribute to shared goals in enhancing resilience.
3. **Support strategy development:** To collaboratively devise strategies for advancing urban climate change resilience, emphasizing utilizing climate finance opportunities from the Green Climate Fund.

## Expected Outputs

Given the diverse range of project ideas and institutional contexts, the outputs from the training workshop will vary by participant group. However, it is anticipated that each group will develop a set of foundational documents and tools to guide the preparation of a full GCF concept note. These may include:

- Draft Impact Chain Analysis
- Draft Problem Tree Analysis
- Draft Objectives Tree Analysis
- Draft Theory of Change
- Draft Logical Framework
- Draft Environmental and Social Risk Checklist
- Draft outline of activities to mainstream gender equity and social inclusion into the GCF concept note.

## Target Participants

The training seeks to invite about 20 participants from 5-6 countries within the Asia and Pacific region, who are involved in developing climate change adaptation concept notes for securing funding from the Green Climate Fund.

The training workshop is intended to strengthen the next chain of GCF Funding Proposals in close consultation with GCF-Secretariat and GCF- National Designated Authorities and Accredited Entities (AEs) from the region. A crucial aspect of the training involves ensuring that participants possess a comprehensive understanding of GCF System and ongoing initiatives related to low emissions and climate resilience. The training operates under the assumption that participants already possess knowledge of local and national adaptation priorities, and preferably, a working familiarity with the GCF and its requirements.

### *Training Mechanism*

Participants will be organized into country teams of experts, either under development or in early conceptual stages. Eligible participants may include:

- Representatives from AEs, DAEs, or nominated DAEs.
- Technical staff from government agencies, municipalities, civil society organizations, and consultants.
- Key stakeholders recommended by NDAs, AEs, or local government units (LGUs).

While the training will primarily focus on GCF and climate adaptation planning particularly referencing the Simplified Approval Process (SAP). It will also build transferable skills to access finance from other sources and support broader climate resilience objectives.

## AIT RRC.AP Training Materials on Developing Concept Notes for the GCF

The first step towards accessing finance through the Green Climate Fund is to develop a Concept Note. Although the requirements for a concept note in some modalities like the Simplified Approval Process are now optional, it helps project developers gauge feedback from the GCF Secretariat at an early

stage of the journey to obtaining funding approval, while ensuring that the requirements and criteria of the Secretariat are adequately addressed. AIT RRC.AP has developed e-learning materials in a modular structure under an e-learning course titled “Developing concept notes for the GCF Simplified Approval Process), which provides climate action project designers with practical know-how and tools to conceptualize project ideas in a way that is more likely to leverage GCF investment. Training materials are organized into seven modules covering the following topics, and respective exercise tools:

- 1. Problem Identification Part 1: Strategic Linkages and Climate Change Evidence-Based**
  - a. Building on National Priorities for Climate Action.
  - b. Using impact chain analysis to build your climate change evidence base.
- 2. Problem Identification Part 2: Non-Climate Drivers of Vulnerability, Gaps, and Barriers**
  - a. Using Problem Tree Analysis to identify non-climate drivers.
- 3. Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)**
  - a. Mainstreaming Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion in GCF SAP Concept Notes
- 4. Formulating a Theory of Change for your SAP concept note**
  - a. Objective tree analysis to identify the ideal state.
  - b. Designing a theory of change.
- 5. Environmental and Social Safeguards and Project Sustainability**
  - a. Project sustainability and designing your exit strategy.
- 6. Mainstreaming GCF’s Investment Criteria and Financing Considerations**
  - a. Mainstreaming GCF’s investment criteria into your concept note.
  - b. Project finance considerations.
- 7. Logical Framework and Monitoring & Evaluation for SAP Concept Notes**
  - a. Developing a basic logical framework for your concept note