



ADAPTATION FUND

December 17, 2025

Terms of Reference (TOR) for Short-term Consultancy
Developing Innovation Strategy Directions for the Adaptation
Fund

1. Background

Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has committed over US\$ 1.5 billion for climate change adaptation and resilience projects and programmes, including 217 concrete, localized projects on the ground in the most vulnerable communities of developing countries around the world with over 50 million total beneficiaries. It also pioneered Direct Access empowering country ownership in adaptation, and operationalized other novel programmes such as Locally Led Adaptation and the Fund's Innovation Facility.

The Innovation Facility under the Fund's innovation pillar was outlined in the implementation plan of the Fund's first medium-term strategy, which was approved at the Board's thirty-first meeting (Decision B.31/32). The Facility offers small and large grants through three different windows. It builds on the Fund's core strengths and comparative advantage as a highly functioning and innovative fund established to finance concrete adaptation projects in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change.

Under the innovation window, the Fund seeks to “accelerate, encourage and enable innovation for effective, long-term adaptation to climate change”. Under the Medium-term Strategy II (2023-2027), the innovation pillar outlines four expected results at the strategy level, as follows:

1. *New innovations and risk-taking encouraged and accelerated:* Development of innovative adaptation practices, tools and technologies encouraged and accelerated, including solutions with high impact potential even if it comes with a higher risk of failure.
2. *Successful innovations replicated and scaled up:* Innovative adaptation practices, tools technologies that have demonstrated success in one country spread to new countries/regions or are scaled up from smaller to larger scales.
3. *Access and capacities enhanced for designing and implementing innovation:* Access and capacities enhanced, knowledge generated, and awareness raised, for implementing entities and non-accredited actors to design and implement innovative adaptation solutions.
4. *Evidence base generated and shared (linkage with learning and sharing pillar):* Evidence on the conditions that lead to successful innovation generated and shared, and partnerships, iteration, learning and adaptive management encouraged. Evidence of effective, efficient adaptation practices, products and technologies generated as a basis for implementing entities and other funds to assess scaling up.

The Adaptation Fund is currently in the very early stages of planning the development of its Medium-term Strategy III (provisionally 2027-2031). As part of its strategic planning, the Fund will first develop an “Innovation Directions” document. The Adaptation Fund is seeking to contract a qualified expert to develop Innovation Directions document on a Short-term Consultant contract. The Innovation Directions will outline a proposed vision and mission for the Fund for approaching innovation in line with the Fund's overall vision and mission outlined in Medium-term Strategy II, and provide options on the Fund's potential role in the innovation space in the medium term, with the purpose of potentially integrating it into the overarching Medium-term

Strategy III (2027-2031), ensuring alignment with the Fund's objectives and global adaptation priorities.

2. Objectives

The primary objective of this assignment is to develop an Innovation Directions document for the Adaptation Fund. The Innovation Directions document will:

1. Map out the innovation/adaptation finance landscape and outline options in terms of Fund's positioning in this landscape.
2. Outline approaches to leverage the Fund's strengths and comparative advantage to finance innovation in climate change adaptation.
3. Identify key innovation priorities and opportunities in climate change adaptation for the Fund, building on landscape mapping and positioning, the Fund's strengths and advantages, and previous lessons and tackling prevailing challenges in the innovation space.
4. Provide actionable recommendations for integrating innovation into the Fund's Medium-term Strategy.
5. Ensure alignment with global best practices and the Fund's overarching goals.

3. Scope of Work

The scope of work for this assignment includes the following tasks:

1. Conduct desk-based research, a survey, and interviews with key stakeholders, including Adaptation Fund staff, partners, and external experts, mapping options in terms of positioning in the financial landscape and identifying comparative advantages.
2. Develop a draft Innovation Directions document that outlines key innovation elements, priorities, opportunities and potential positioning and approaches.
3. Refine the draft based on feedback from stakeholders and produce a final document.

4. Approach and Methodology

The consultant is expected to adopt a systematic and participatory approach to developing the Innovation Pre-Strategy. The methodology should include:

1. Comprehensive desk research to identify global best practices in innovation for climate change adaptation.
2. Stakeholder consultations to gather diverse perspectives and insights.
3. Development of a draft strategy based on research and stakeholder inputs.
4. Iterative refinement of the strategy, incorporating feedback from the Adaptation Fund and other stakeholders.
5. Identification of the role and potential role of the Adaptation Fund, vis-a-vis other actors, in the broader adaptation innovation landscape, and positioning and relationships along the innovation "value chain."

5. Deliverables

The consultant will be responsible for delivering the following outputs:

1. **Stakeholder Viewpoints:** A summary report of interviews and a survey conducted with key stakeholders, highlighting insights, challenges, and recommendations.
2. **Draft Innovation Directions document:** A preliminary document outlining innovation priorities, approaches, and recommendations.
3. **Final Innovation Directions document:** A comprehensive and refined document incorporating stakeholder feedback.

6. Expertise Required

The individual consultant must meet the following qualifications:

- At least 12 years of experience in innovation for climate change adaptation.
- Proven expertise in developing innovative financial instruments for climate adaptation projects.
- Strong analytical and strategic thinking skills.
- Demonstrated ability to engage with diverse stakeholders and synthesize complex information.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English.

7. Timeline

The assignment will be conducted over a period of five months, from February 2026 to June 2026. The timeline for deliverables is as follows:

1. **February 2026:** Commencement of the assignment.
2. **March 2026:** Submission of summary report on stakeholder viewpoints
3. **May 2026:** Submission of the draft Innovation Pre-Strategy.
4. **June 2026:** Submission of the final Innovation Pre-Strategy.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for this assignment are as follows:

1. **Consultant:** Responsible for conducting research, stakeholder consultations, and developing the Innovation Pre-Strategy. The consultant will ensure timely delivery of all deliverables and maintain regular communication with the Adaptation Fund.
2. **Adaptation Fund:** Responsible for providing guidance, facilitating stakeholder engagement, and reviewing deliverables. The Fund will also ensure the consultant has access to relevant resources and information.

9. Reporting and Communication

The consultant will report to the Adaptation Fund's Lead for Programming and Innovation. Regular updates and progress reports will be required to ensure alignment with the Fund's expectations. Communication will be conducted through email, virtual meetings, and in-person consultations as needed.

10. Duration of work

Specified number of days from February 2026 to July 2026.

11. Additional Information

Interested candidate may wish to familiarize themselves with the institutional background of the Adaptation Fund (www.adaptation-fund.org)

12. Contact

Task Team Leader (TTL): Saliha Dobardzic, Team Lead, Programming and Innovation Unit

Please submit your CV by January 18, 2026 to sdobardzic@adaptation-fund.org and ahollander@adaptation-fund.org.