



OBSERVATOIRE DU SAHARA ET DU SAHEL  
SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY

# Grant Award Evaluation Procedure

*July 2017*



## Grant Award Evaluation Procedure

### 1. SUBJECT

This document describes the current procedure used for the evaluation of grant requests by OSS. It has been developed by the Executive Secretariat of the OSS as part of strengthening its capabilities in the management of funds available across different climate financing mechanisms.

The procedure shall be regularly updated according to progress made in activities and challenges related to management of grants received by the different funds/financial partners.

### 2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This procedure was developed in the framework of setting up a Grant Award mechanism for OSS. This document will be used as the main reference in the examination, evaluation and prioritization of project proposals submitted to OSS in order to receive grants.

OSS shall use this procedure in the execution of its duties as a regional implementation entity of Climate Funds (Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund) as well as in the management of grants received from other Funding institutions and financial partners.

### 3. DOCUMENTS OF REFERENCE

This procedure is fully compatible with OSS strategic orientations and operational guidelines for projects/programs management and implementation in its zone of action. These documents include mainly:

- 1) OSS Manual of Procedures (April 2012),
- 2) OSS Financial Regulation (December 2010).
- 3) OSS Strategy 2020 (December 2010),
- 4) OSS environmental and social policy (April 2016).



## 4. CONTENT

### 4.1. GENERAL POINTS

#### Receipt of proposals

Requests shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements of the call for proposals. OSS defines the rules and the terms of each call, which may be:

- Case 1: Time-bounded (deadlines will be fixed for submission of proposals),
- Case 2: Permanently open (submission of proposals at any time).

The OSS call for proposals shall encourage the submission of projects with good price-quality ratio and respecting the criterion of replicability / reproducibility.

In the 2nd case, the call will set "evaluation sessions" during which the proposals will be assessed individually according to the order of arrival (the rule of "first come first served" will be applied).

OSS may temporarily halt the receipt of applications during a call for proposals when its applications' review and processing capacity is achieved.

Applicants may be asked to submit their proposals in two stages. In this case, they shall be first asked to submit a concept note. Applicants whose concept notes have been retained during the preliminary evaluation shall be asked to further develop complete (detailed) proposals and to present them for a second thorough evaluation.

The proposals receipt process should ensure the confidentiality of applications and any document, information or data received by OSS.

#### The Grant Award Evaluation Committee

Project proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee composed of at least three members representing three assessment aspects: Fiduciary & Administrative, Technical and Environmental & Social as stipulated in the ToRs of the Grant Evaluation Committee (Annex 1).

The members of the Grant Evaluation Committee shall:

- Review proposals in an objective and impartial manner and treat all requests equally;
- Commit to not disclose any information other than that intended to be made available to applicants;
- Protect the confidentiality of information furnished by applicants;
- Declare any direct or indirect conflict of interest and withdraw from the evaluation process in case of such conflict.

All members of the Grant Evaluation Committee shall sign a declaration confirming the absence of any conflict of interest. In addition to signing the declaration of the absence of any conflict of interest, external Committee members who are not part of OSS staff are required to sign a declaration of confidentiality.



### **Preliminary Evaluation (Eligibility Check) of proposals**

Eligibility criteria shall be clearly defined in the call for proposals and will serve to assess the quality of applications in light of the objectives and priorities set by the Fund/financial partner. These criteria are given in Annex 2 (Phase 1).

In the case of the two-stage submission plan, the eligibility check is performed during the first stage. In the second stage, the evaluators will verify that the eligibility conditions are still met.

Evaluators may ask a bidder to provide additional information or clarification regarding his concept note, provided that such information does not substantially change the proposal. .

If the proposal is ineligible, a letter of rejection will be sent to the applicant together with the reasons for rejection.

### **In-depth evaluation of proposals**

The Grant Evaluation Committee shall use the eligibility and evaluation criteria presented in Annex 2 (Phase 2) in order to assign a score to each of the three evaluation components:

- Fiduciary & Administration Component: score ranging from 0 to 5;
- Technical Component: score ranging from 0 to 10;
- Environmental & Social Component: score ranging from 0 to 5.

The maximum overall score is therefore 20. In order to be considered for funding, the proposal must reach a score of 15 or above without having a 0 in one of the evaluation component. Thresholds may vary according to the call.

Proposals shall then be ranked and prioritized according to scores obtained as well as to other criteria linked to the quality-price ratio and the thematic and geographic representativeness of projects.

An evaluation report will be prepared by the committee. In addition to scores, the report shall contain the reviewers' comments or requests for clarification on certain aspects of the proposal.

The evaluation report will be subsequently communicated to the committee Chair for approval and signature. Upon validation, the committee Chairman shall take into consideration the assessment made by the committee, in particular the following aspects:

- The proposal is in line with the objectives and priorities of the fund / financial partner;
- The costs and other budgetary aspects are reasonable;
- Sufficient funds are available;
- The evaluation report is well justified and documented.

### **Evaluation Results**

At the end of the evaluation process, validated and signed evaluation report will be submitted to the relevant fund / financial partner for final validation and decision. Meanwhile, OSS shall notify in writing (official letter) all applicants about the status of their proposals:

- For accepted proposals: Applicants shall be informed that their proposals have been submitted to the fund / financial partner for validation and final decision;

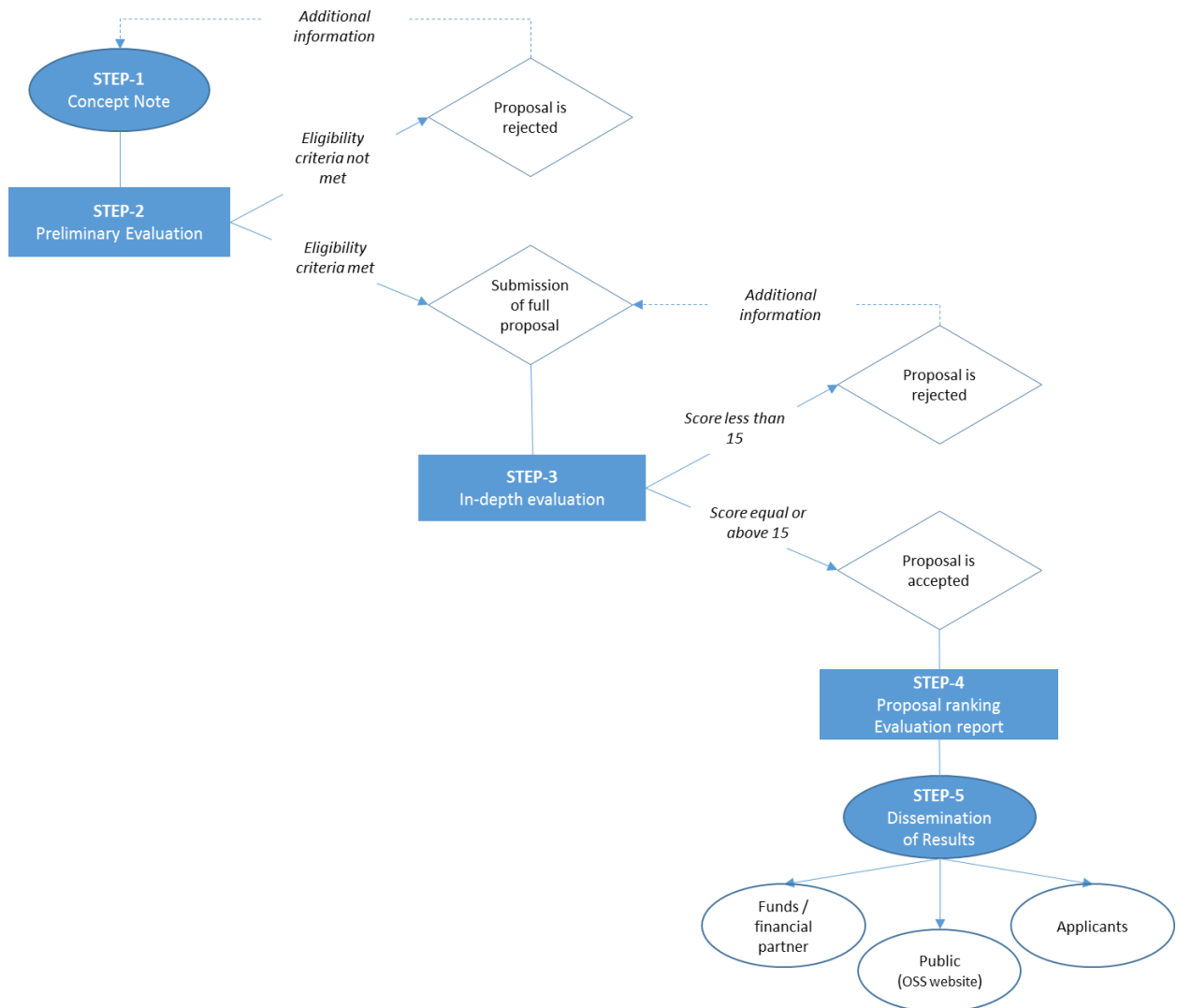


- For Rejected proposals: The notification letter shall indicate the reasons for rejection and/or the list of information and additional information requested by the committee. Clarifications and additional information should reach the Committee within 30 calendar days of receipt of the notification letter. The committee shall then re-review the proposal accordingly.

The Grant Evaluation Committee shall then publish the evaluation results on the OSS official website.

The evaluation results may be contested by the applicants. To file a complaint, the applicant shall refer to the external communication procedure of OSS. Complaints must reach the OSS within 30 calendar days of receipt of rejection/notification letter.

#### 4.2. PROCEDURE OVERVIEW





The table below details the implementation process of the Grant Award Evaluation procedure:

WHAT	HOW	WHO
<b>STEP-1 – Receipt of proposals (concept notes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design of the call for proposals: with or without deadline, content, specific conditions ...</li> <li>- Publication of the call for proposals on the OSS website and / or other means of communication deemed relevant.</li> <li>- Receipt of concept notes and sorting by date of arrival</li> </ul>	OSS
<b>STEP-2 – Preliminary Evaluation (Eligibility Check)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting of the Grant Evaluation Committee</li> <li>- Review of concept notes</li> <li>- Decision-making: rejection; or request for clarification; or acceptance and request for the submission of full proposal</li> </ul>	Grant Evaluation Committee
<b>STEP-3 – In-depth Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Examination of the full proposal per component (Fiduciary &amp; Administrative, Technical and Environmental &amp; Social)</li> <li>- Scoring and calculation of the overall score</li> <li>-Preparation of a draft evaluation report including comments and requests for additional information for each component.</li> </ul>	Grant Evaluation Committee: members
<b>STEP-4 – Ranking of proposal and validation of the evaluation report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ranking proposals according to overall score and other criteria</li> <li>- Validation and signature of the evaluation report</li> <li>- Taking final decision</li> </ul>	Grant Evaluation Committee: members + Chair
<b>STEP-5 – Dissemination of results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sending the evaluation report to the fund/financial partner</li> <li>- Sending notification letters to applicants to inform them about the evaluation results along with the comments and the requests for additional information.</li> <li>- Publication of the evaluation results on the OSS website</li> </ul>	Grant Evaluation Committee



## **ANNEX 1**

### **ToRs for Grant Award Evaluation Committee**

#### **Context**

The Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) is an intergovernmental international organization operating in the Sahara-Sahel African region. OSS provides a North-South-South partnership framework to mobilize and strengthen the capacity of African member countries to meet the environmental challenges in the context of sustainable and long term development for the Sahel-Sahara region.

OSS members include 23 African countries, six non-African countries, 10 organizations (including sub-regional organizations representing West, East and North Africa) and one non-governmental organization. OSS is working with its member countries and organizations in the subsidiarity and complementarity. It acts as initiator and facilitator of partnerships around common environmental challenges.

The management of shared water resources and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, including those on desertification, biodiversity and climate change, are key areas in the Organization's activities. In addition, the study of interactions between communities, ecosystem services and climate, is a key aspect of the 2020 Strategy through which the OSS leads its efforts to ensure the development, the coordination, the implementation and the monitoring of interdisciplinary multi-institutional programs.

In order to facilitate access to the funding allocated to the fight against Climate Change to its member countries, OSS was accredited in July 2013 as regional implementation entity of the Adaptation Fund (AF) and its accreditation by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is underway. Mechanisms for evaluation of projects / programs proposals, procurement rules and management and monitoring systems of OSS have been developed and consolidated to this end.

#### **Subject of the document**

These ToR describe the composition and the functioning of the Grant Award Evaluation Committee. This committee will be in charge of reviewing project and program proposals submitted to OSS in order to receive grants from Climate Fund (GCF and FA) or/and from other financial partners and donors.

This committee is created within the framework of establishing a Grant Award mechanism for OSS.

#### **Composition of the Committee**

The Grant Award Evaluation Committee will be chaired by the Executive Secretary of the OSS and composed mainly of OSS staff members supported, if necessary, by external experts. The committee will operate based on three (03) complementary units/components: (i) Fiduciary & Administration, (ii) technical and (iii) Environmental & Social.

##### **i. Fiduciary & Administration Unit**

This unit will examine aspects related to institutional and financial arrangements for the project proposal. It will mainly assess the following criteria: the country and the project eligibility, the eligibility of the executing entity and other project stakeholders, the financial resources and budget allocation, the project management system. This unit will be composed of the following OSS staff members: the expenditure controller, the accountant, the procurement manager and the programs coordinators.



**ii. Technical unit**

This unit will examine aspects related to the issues and themes addressed and the technical solutions proposed by the project. The following aspects will be assessed: conformity of the project objectives with the focus areas of the fund/financial partner, compliance of activities and expected results with good practices and internationally recognized standards, ...

Depending on the themes addressed by the project proposal, the committee chairman will appoint the OSS experts that will compose this unit. If necessary, the committee chairman may seek recourse to external expertise.

**iii. Environmental & Social (E&S) Unit**

This unit will review the environmental and social impacts and risks related to the project activities. The composition and mission of this unit are detailed in the ToR of the E&S Technical Evaluation Committee (see Annex-1 of the OSS's E&S policy).

Similarly, assessing the E&S impacts of project proposals shall be based on the outputs of the implementation procedures of the E&S policy, in particular, the E&S risk identification and management.

**Functioning of the committee**

Following receipt of a grant request, the committee Chairman shall summon the members of the 03 units to assess the compliance of the project proposal with the eligibility and evaluation criteria set by the fund/financial partner.

The Grant Evaluation Committee shall use as main work support the Grand Evaluation Procedure of OSS.





## ANNEX 2

### Table of eligibility and evaluation criteria

COMPONENT	CRITERIA	SCORE
<b>PHASE-1: Preliminary Evaluation / eligibility check (concept note)</b>		
<b>Fiduciary &amp; Administrative (F&amp;A)</b>	Availability of funds	N. A
	Eligibility of the country / countries	
	Eligibility of the Executing entity (EE) and partner institutions	
	Eligibility of the project (letters of endorsement)	
<b>Technical</b>	Compliance with the objectives and priorities of the fund/financial partner	
<b>PHASE-2: In-depth Evaluation (full proposal)</b>		
<b>Fiduciary &amp; Administrative (F&amp;A)</b>	<i>Re-verification of the F&amp;A criteria of the Preliminary Assessment (see PHASE-1)</i>	0 - 5
	Reasonableness of the budget estimate and allocation	
	Reasonableness of the EE management fees	
<b>Technical</b>	Compliance with national and/or regional strategies and plans	0 - 10
	Relevance of the addressed issues and themes	
	Clarity of the project objectives and components	
	Relevance and added value with respect to Fund/financial partner objectives	
	Promotion of new and innovative solutions	
	Compliance of the proposed solutions with best practices and international standards	
	Integration of activities related to knowledge sharing and capacity building	
	Integration of monitoring and evaluation system	
<b>Environmental &amp; Social (E&amp;S)</b>	<i>Criteria available in Annex 1 of the E&amp;S risk identification and management procedure (Screening Checklist based on the PS2-8)</i>	0 - 5
<b>OVERALL RATING</b>		<b>.../20</b>