

# Evaluation Management of the International Climate Initiative (IKI)

On Behalf of

The Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature  
Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer  
Protection (BMUV)

## Cluster Evaluations Report January 2022

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## 0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (EN)

### 0.1 Background and goals of the cluster evaluations

The evaluation system of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) aims at establishing efficient procedures for accountability, institutional learning and continuous improvement regarding steering at project and programme level. Various evaluation instruments are applied in order to conduct evidence-based analyses of key success factors of IKI projects. Evaluation results feed into operational programme management, strategic considerations for IKI's further development, and the regular preparation of funding guidelines for IKI selection procedures.

This cluster evaluation report presents the aggregated results of the individual project evaluations (IPE) implemented in the second IKI evaluation cycle (project start years 2008-2018). Where appropriate, the IPE of the first evaluation cycle (project start years 2008-2009) are also considered. The cluster evaluations were carried out by GFA Consulting Group as part of the project "IKI Evaluation Management" on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).

The present report comprises two cluster evaluations (CE) and a special evaluation: The two CE present the aggregated evaluation results clustered by **implementing organisation** (IO) and by **IKI funding area** (FA), providing insights into the overall performance of IKI projects as well as relevant success/failure factors. The special evaluation takes an in-depth look at the most important **factors influencing the sustainability** of project results.

### 0.2 Methodology

The results presented here are based on an analysis of 155 IKI IPE reports. Thus, only secondary data was used for this analysis. For all IPE the evaluators applied a uniform assessment grid (with only few exceptions for KfW projects, see below). This ensured comparability of the evaluation results and made aggregated analyses possible. Among others, the assessment grid defined seven evaluation criteria, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, coherence/coordination/complementarity as well as project planning and steering.

Specific evaluation questions, derived from the main interest of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), structured the analysis, for which both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied. For the **quantitative** data analysis all grades per evaluation criterion assigned in the IPE reports were summarized. Using SPSS, descriptive statistics were developed and correlation analysis as well as mean comparisons applied. **Qualitative** results that emerged from an MAXQDA-based analysis of the narrative descriptions and explanations in the IPE reports complement the quantitative results.

The CE only refer to a subset of the IPE reports developed in the second IKI evaluation cycle. The results presented here therefore only allow for **limited inference** to the population of IKI projects. In addition, it should be noted that the majority of the IPE referring to KfW projects did not apply the uniform IKI assessment grid, implying that the KfW evaluation results are only comparable to a limited extent with the other evaluation results.

### 0.3 Results

The IKI projects analysed in the context of this CE show **good to satisfactory average grades** for all evaluation criteria. Over time from 2008 to 2016, the grades assigned as part of the evaluations have slightly **improved**. In particular, the projects' relevance for IKI programme goals as well as the partner country's climate goals, and the high average degree of target achievement are evident. The evaluated IKI projects were also characterised by a high average efficiency as well as good coherence and coordination with projects of other donors, national ministries, and stakeholder groups. Potential for improvement is mainly seen with regard to intended impacts and the

sustainability of project results. In addition, according to the evaluations, for many of the analysed IKI projects there is room for improvement regarding adequate project planning and steering methods.

**Clustering evaluation results by IO** showed that average grades awarded in the IPE do indeed differ between IO clusters. The projects of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the cluster of research institutions/think tanks/universities were graded best for almost all evaluation criteria, followed by the projects implemented by non-governmental organisations. Projects implemented by KfW or United Nations organisations were assessed slightly worse on average. The qualitative analysis of the IPE reports did not provide clear IO-specific explanations for these observed grade differences. Instead, the most frequently mentioned project success and failure factors in the IPE were observed across all IO. These mainly refer to **general challenges of project management**, such as imprecise impact models with overambitious goals and indicators, insufficient context analyses that may hamper the projects' relevance for the target group, and a lack of adequate exit or risk mitigation strategies.

Although all IO clusters comprise projects with improvement potential, the generally slightly **poorer performance of the KfW and UN project clusters** is evident. This is related, among others, to the fact that these two organisations mainly implement projects in IKI FA I - Mitigation of Greenhouse Gases as well as FA III - Natural Carbon Sinks, which were graded slightly worse on average than the other two FA. The question whether these grades can be attributed to the IOs' approach to project management, the specifics of the FA or details of the assessment method remains open. It is also noticeable that KfW mainly implements projects with a methodological focus on financing instruments and has them implemented by partners. Thus, KfW may have less control over externalised project management. Moreover, the majority of UN projects has a regional or global focus and could therefore be more challenging in implementation than bilateral projects. In addition, these projects have often not yet identified partner countries in the planning phase, so that the target group has not been clearly determined and necessary context and needs analyses were only carried out at the beginning of project implementation. This finding, however, needs to be put into perspective by the fact that also projects implemented by research institutions/think tanks/universities as well as NGOs mainly have a global or regional focus, but received better average grades in the evaluations.

**Clustering evaluation results by IKI FA** also revealed grade differences between the FA, though relatively small ones. The quantitative analysis of the assigned grades showed that projects of FA II and IV were graded better in all evaluation criteria than projects of FA I and III. A possible reason for the better grades of FA IV - Biodiversity Conservation could be that this FA was founded at a later point in time, implying that the projects have start dates from 2012 onwards. Therefore projects may already have been better planned and implemented than early IKI projects. In addition, some of the projects in FA I and III were innovative (pilot) measures whose success has a higher dependence on external factors and could therefore be more difficult to achieve. FA I also received slightly lower grades in terms of their relevance for IKI programme goals, which can partly be attributed to a difficult quantifiability of tCO<sub>2</sub>eq avoidance/reduction. FA III particularly shows potential for improvement with regard to the projects' socio-economic impacts.

The grading of the evaluation criterion **sustainability** was relatively constant over the analysed period and consistently satisfactory. There is potential for improvement especially with regard to financial sustainability, i.e. the continuation of project results by national partners/target groups with their own funds after the projects' end. Participation of project partners and target groups during project preparation and implementation was quantitatively and qualitatively confirmed as an important factor influencing the projects' sustainability. Furthermore, the IPE identified a number of risks - some of them within the area of influence of the projects - that may negatively affect the sustainability of the project impacts.

## 0.4 Recommendations

Based on the CE results, the following recommendations are presented, in particular to further improve the projects' impact as well as the sustainability of project results:

1. The IKI should encourage the IO to ensure a high relevance of the IKI projects for target groups, and request relevant studies and documentation already during the application process.
2. The IKI should encourage the IO to establish well-founded impact models and SMART indicators.
3. The formation of partnerships for a coherent, complementary and coordinated approach in the sector should be demanded by the IKI already during the project planning phase.
4. Project applicants should be encouraged to consider a possible link between envisaged climate-relevant and socio-economic impacts for the target group. This should already be contemplated in the project planning phase in order to strengthen the target groups' acceptance of the project as well as their interest in project results.
5. The IKI should more clearly request adequate risk mitigation strategies in project applications, which have to be based on a clear identification of existing political, economic, social and ecological risks. Likewise, external risks, that may not be influenced by the project but could affect its success, should be clearly identified and discussed in the project proposal.
6. Already during the application process, the IKI should demand plausible exit strategies that go beyond a mere continuation of projects by means of external follow-up funding in order to ensure the institutional and financial sustainability of IKI projects.