



PROCESSING GUIDELINES FOR GAFSP-FUNDED PROJECTS

A QUICK GUIDE

April 2023

Please submit documents and any queries for the GAFSP Coordination Unit (CU) to Indra J. Ekanayake (iekanayake@worldbank.org), and for the GAFSP Trustee to Angela Williamson (awilliamson@worldbank.org) and Iris Jacqueline Sta. Maria (istamaria@worldbank.org).

Available at www.GAFSPfund.org

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AF	Additional Financing
BITF	Business Investment Financing Track
CfP	Call for Proposals
CSO	Civil Society Organization
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
CU	Coordination Unit
DO	Development objective
FCV	Fragile, Conflict, Violence
FIF	Financial Intermediary Fund
FTR	Fund Transfer Request
FPA	Financial Procedures Agreement (GAFSP 2.0); previously referred to as Transfer Agreement between Trustee and SE
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
GAFSP 2.0	Revised operational GAFSP model approved in April 2019
GBFT	Grant-Based Financing track
IE	Impact Evaluation
LoC	Letter of Commitment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMI	Missing Middle Initiative
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PIM/ POM	Project Implementation Manual/ Project Operational Manual
PO	Producer Organization
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RE	Recipient-Executed
RETF	Recipient Executed Trust Fund
SC	Steering Committee
RF	Results Framework
SE	Supervising Entity
TA	Technical Assistance
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TOC	Theory of Change

Quick Reference Guide

<i>Acronyms and Abbreviations</i>	2
A. Approval of Country-led or PO-led Proposal by the Steering Committee (SC)	4
B. Approval and Transfer of Supervising Entity (SE) Administrative Fees	5
C. Approval and Transfer of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) (<i>if applicable</i>)	6
D. Request and Transfer of Impact Evaluation (IE) Budget (<i>if applicable</i>)	7
E. Project Preparation by the Supervising Entity (SE)	8
F. Final Project Approval by the Steering Committee (SC)	10
G. Project Extension, Restructuring or Suspension	11
H. Progress Reporting and Key Updates by the Supervising Entity (SE)	12
I. Completion Reporting by the Supervising Entity (SE)	13
J. Processing Additional/Co- Funding Grants by the Supervising Entity (SE)	14

A. Approval of Country-led or PO-led Proposal by the Steering Committee (SC)¹

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
<p>A.1. In response to a periodically held Call for Proposals (CfP) under the Grant Based Financing Track (GBFT), eligible countries (Country-led) or eligible producer organizations (PO-led) ²submit proposals via self-selected Supervising Entities (SEs) for GAFSP funding to the Steering Committee (SC) through the Coordination Unit (CU).</p>	Country or PO
<p>A.2. Proposal package includes the nomination of the preferred Supervising Entity/ies (SE/SEs)</p>	Country or PO In consultation with SE(s)
<p>A.3. The CU reviews proposals for completeness of document package and compliance with eligibility criteria and submits them to the independent Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for review.</p>	CU
<p>A.4. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviews proposals against the criteria outlined in the Country-led and PO-led modality Guidelines of a given Call and submits their recommendations to the SC for consideration.</p>	TAC
<p>A.5. The SC reviews all proposals and the recommendations from the TAC and decides on proposals to be funded, the total grant amount to be allocated, and confirms the responsible SE(s) and proposed implementation arrangements.</p>	SC
<p>A.6. Upon approval of a country or PO proposal by the SC, the CU informs the country or the PO and the selected SE/SEs of the SC decision. Along with the SC decision, project specific strengths and weaknesses and any additional observations are included for attention of the grant awardee.</p>	CU
<p>A.7. The Trustee sets aside the SC approved grant amounts and administrative fee for each SE³ under respective Country or PO allocation (see Section B on approval steps for administrative fee)</p>	Trustee

¹ Sections A to J of these guidelines apply to the regular Public Sector portfolio Grant Based Funding Track (GBFT) including Country-led and Producer organizations (PO)-led / Missing Middle Initiative (MMI) pilot grant project modalities.

² Country-led and PO-led modalities refer to GAFSP 2.0 modalities approved in 2019 and utilized under the 2021 Call.

³ The Trustee under the GAFSP 1.0 has signed a Transfer Agreement (TrA) with every Supervising Entity (SE) to govern all financial transactions with that Supervising Entity. Upon establishment of GAFSP 2.0, these TAs will be replaced by a Financial Procedures Agreements (FPAs).

B. Approval and Transfer of Supervising Entity (SE) Administrative Fees

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
<p>B.1. The SE submits to the CU for SC approval, a detailed budget for project preparation, supervision, and completion reporting, and any related administrative fees (collectively “Administrative Fee”) to cover SE overheads for the full duration of the project.</p> <p>a. If the Administrative Fee is 5%⁴ or less of the grant amount for CO-led and PO-led GBFT projects⁵, the CU is authorized to approve the Fee on behalf of the SC, and the Fee is submitted to the SC for information only.</p> <p>b. If the Administrative Fee is more than 5% of the grant amount⁵, it will require exceptional approval from the SC. The SE’s Administrative Fee request including justification will be submitted to the SC for review and approval on a five-day no-objection basis.</p> <p><i>Note B.1a: For proposals with more than one assigned SE, the SEs, in collaboration with the Government counterpart, should decide on the portion of the grant to be implemented through each SE. This allocation of the grant funding between SEs should be communicated to the CU and Trustee, prior to the SEs request for administrative fees.</i></p> <p><i>Note B.1b: The partner SE should be copied on administrative fee requests submitted to the CU for projects with multiple SEs.</i></p>	<p>SE</p> <p>CU</p> <p>SC</p>
<p>B.2. The CU informs the Trustee and the relevant SE of the SC’s approval of the Administrative Fee.</p>	CU
<p>B.3. The Trustee commits the approved amount to the SE and issues a Letter of Commitment (LoC).</p>	Trustee
<p>B.4. The SE may submit to the Trustee, a Fund Transfer Request (FTR) for the transfer of the total Administrative Fee approved by the SC.</p>	SE
<p>B.5. The Trustee validates the FTR and transfers the requested funds to the SE.</p>	Trustee
<p>B.6. SEs are not required to provide financial reporting on the use of Administrative Fees. Any undisbursed balances of Administrative Fees at project closing do not need to be returned by the SE to the Trustee, but can</p>	SE

⁴ For those grants approved under the 2019 Special Call for Proposals targeting FCV countries, the SC approved Administrative Fee ceiling is 8% of the grant amount. For this specific call, administrative Fee requests up to 8% are approved under delegated authority by the CU. Fee requests above 8% require exceptional SC approval.

⁵ The SC approved on an exceptional basis administrative fee for PO-led/ MMI projects of up to 12% for parent projects and MMI 2020 COVID-19 Additional Financing grants, based on adequate justification.

be redeployed to support ongoing and/or future GAFSP projects supervised by the respective SE.	
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C. Approval and Transfer of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) (if applicable)

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
Note C.1: <i>The Availability of Project Preparation Grants (PPGs) is determined by the SC before the Call for Proposals is launched. This section applies only when the Call documents specifically reference availability of PPGs.</i>	
C.1. A recipient country, in consultation with the respective SE, may include in its proposal submitted in response to a Call for Proposals, a request for a PPG to be used to assist the country in the detailed design of a project under the GAFSP Country-led GBFT. ⁶ The PPG is approved by the GAFSP SC as part of the overall grant to the country.	Country
C.2. If the approved proposal included a PPG request, following consultations with the Government, the SE ⁷ confirms to the CU and Trustee the country's wish to use the PPG and the exact amount before the funds are committed. Note C.2a. <i>The PPG amount is taken out of the total grant amount allocated to the country. If the country chooses not to utilize the PPG, then the funds will be retained as part of the project grant amount.</i> Note C.2b. <i>The PPG must be used within 18 months from the date of SC approval and can be used <u>solely by the recipient country</u> for their project preparation activities. The PPG cannot be used for SE costs that are expected to be covered by the Administrative Fee. Any PPG funds that have not been disbursed after 18 months <u>must be returned to the GAFSP Trustee and cannot be reassigned to be used with the remaining grant funds for implementation.</u></i>	SE/ Country
C.3. The Trustee commits the requested PPG amount.	Trustee
C.4. The SE may submit to the Trustee an FTR for the transfer of the total PPG approved by the SC.	SE
C.5. The PPG should be processed following the selected SE's policies and procedures.	SE / Country
C.6. The Trustee validates the FTR and transfers the funds requested to the SE.	Trustee

⁶ The maximum Project Preparation Grant amount previously set was \$500,000 and may be revisited in future Calls.

⁷ For projects with more than one SE, the PPG should be channeled through the investment SE.

<p>C.7. The SE transfers the PPG to the country and supervises the implementation of the Grant to support the preparation of the Project in line with the SE's policies and procedures.⁸</p> <p>Note C.7a: <i>The PPG is to be used strictly for project preparation <u>by the country</u>, i.e., funds are passed to and used by the recipient. SE expenses associated with the preparation of the GAFSP project should be covered from the SE Administrative Fee.</i></p>	SE
<p>C.8. A brief PPG closure report on the use of and outputs financed by the PPG, and a final account of the use of funds should be submitted by the SE to the CU and Trustee, no later than 19 months after SC approval of the preparation grant. The CU shares these PPG closure reports with the SC for information.</p>	SE
<p>C.9. The SE submits the financial closure report to the Trustee.</p>	SE
<p>C.10. If any PPG funds remain unused, the Trustee sends a request for payment to the SE for the return of funds.</p>	Trustee
<p>C.11. The SE must return any PPG funds remaining to the Trustee upon receipt of the request for payment.</p>	SE

D. Request and Transfer of Impact Evaluation (IE) Budget (if applicable)

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
<p>Note D.1. <i>GAFSP provides funding, on a case by case basis, for rigorous in-depth impact evaluations⁹ (IE) (e.g., those using experimental or quasi-experimental designs), for country-led GBFT projects that plan to implement particularly innovative interventions for which there is additional learning value. The IE should be designed during the project preparation (Section E) stage or latest by the end of first year of project implementation to ensure adequate baseline data can be collected.</i></p>	
<p>D.1. To request funding for an in-depth IE of a country-led project, the SE must submit an IE proposal and budget to the CU for SC approval¹⁰.</p> <p>a. The SE is encouraged to share an early draft of IE proposal with CU for due diligence review as relating to consistency and compliance with the M&E Plan (2017/2022), methodological rigor in accountability for results (i.e., Theory of change (TOC) and Results Framework (RF), and any other guidance (e.g., budget, IE providers etc.).</p>	SE

⁸ Under exceptional circumstances, advance approval may be sought for the SE to execute the PPG on behalf of the countries.

⁹ Please see GAFSP M&E Plan 2017 and 2022 for full information on qualifying IEs.

¹⁰ Funds for in-depth IEs are available only for country-led projects. The PO-led projects are not eligible for such funds.

D.2. The CU submits the IE proposal, budget, and due diligence report to the SC for approval on a five day no-objection basis ¹¹ .	CU
D.3. The CU communicates any SC questions or comments on the IE proposal to the relevant SE for their response. Any objections to the IE proposal will be communicated to the SC and the relevant SE. If there are no objections, the proposal is approved for grant allocation and SE will be notified.	CU/ SE
D.4. The CU informs the Trustee and the relevant SE of the SC's approval of the IE proposal and budget, at the conclusion of the review period and with no objection received.	CU
D.5. The Trustee commits the approved amount to the SE and issues a LoC.	Trustee
D.6. The SE may submit to the Trustee an FTR for the transfer of the total IE budget approved by the SC.	SE
D.7. The Trustee validates the FTR and transfers the requested funds to the SE.	Trustee
D.8. The SE is required to share within 12-months ¹² the SE approved IE grant document with the CU for notification to the SC. It is also the responsibility of SE to inform the SC through the CU of any proposed revisions that were not adopted and reasons.	SE
D.9. The SE is required to report to the SC about progress on the IE and use of its funds through the GAFSP 6-monthly reporting exercise (as of June 30 and December 31 of each year) ¹³ .	SE

E. Project Preparation by the Supervising Entity (SE)

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
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¹¹ It is recommended to send draft IE documents in advance for informal CU review and guidance, prior to formal submission for SC review/approval.

¹² A reasonable period is less than 12-months between SC approval of an IE proposal and SC approval of the final IE grant document. The SE is obligated to keep the CU informed of any delays beyond this period and to be updated of further delays at 3-monthly intervals. The CU in turn will keep the SC updated of any protracted delays.

¹³ Refer to section H. Progress Reporting by the Supervising Entity.

<p>E.1. Project preparation, implementation, and supervision/implementation support will be governed by the relevant policies and procedures of the selected SE. In addition to applicable SE guidelines for project preparation, the following GAFSP <u>additional guidelines</u> apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Funds approved for investment activities are to be used strictly for Recipient-Executed (RE) activities, i.e., funds are passed on to the recipient, with the role of the SE limited to appraisal and implementation support of activities supported by these grant funds. b. The project design should be in line with the proposal approved by the SC and take into account any comments and recommendations relating to proposal strengths and weaknesses, from the TAC and any further guidance contained in the notification of approval letter. c. The SE should provide necessary guidance to the project teams to ensure that the requirements set forth in the GAFSP M&E Plan (2017/ 2022)¹⁴ are reflected in the relevant M&E sections of the formal project design documents to ensure the overall compliance in reporting results to the SC through the CU, on a six-monthly basis. d. For all Country-led GBFT projects, GAFSP is expected to facilitate country-led investment plans that are inclusive, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. The engagement of Civil society Organizations (CSOs), especially that of POs, is a core element of GAFSP from project design through implementation and will be a key evaluation point for final project approval. e. The SE is strongly advised to submit major changes to the project design for SC approval <i>prior to</i> finalizing project preparation with the recipient to ensure any SC feedback or objections can still be considered in the project design and avoid delays at approval of final project document step. f. Any <i>major changes</i> during preparation of the project to the proposal approved by the SC (e.g., to the project objectives, scope, components, and major activities to be funded under those components) must be sent to the CU with the appropriate justification for review and five-day no-objection approval by the SC, prior to moving forward with appraisal and finalization of project documentation. 	SE
<p>E.2. Grant allocation by SE: For those projects with two SEs, the SEs are requested to confirm to the GAFSP CU the allocation of the approved grant amount between the two SEs as agreed with the Government as early as possible (also refer to point B.1. above).</p>	SE
<p>E.3. Optional: It is encouraged that the SE share the project appraisal document (or equivalent initial draft project design document and results</p>	SE/ CU

¹⁴ All project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks should follow the appropriate GAFSP M&E Plan: all projects (public sector and MMI projects) approved as proposals prior to 2021, should follow the 2017 M&E Plan. All projects approved as proposals after 2021 (country-led and PO-led) should follow the 2022 M&E Plan.

<p>framework) once developed with the project preparation team with the CU, to ensure compliance with the additional requirements described under point E.1. above, before the project is fully developed and presented to SC for their approval in order to facilitate the review process.</p>	
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F. Final Project Approval by the Steering Committee (SC)

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
<p>F.1. Prior to the final approval of the project by the relevant approving body within the SE (and prior to negotiations with the Government or PO counterpart), the SE submits the completed draft final project document (e.g., project appraisal document or equivalent) to the CU for SC approval on a five-day no-objection basis to ensure that the conditions under E.1. mentioned above have been met.</p> <p>Note F.1: <i>When a country is awarded a GAFSP grant to be supervised by two SEs, it is advised that the two SEs should aim to submit a joint project document or aim to coordinate and submit their respective draft project documents to the CU for review by the SC at the same time. If there is a delay respective SEs must inform the CU of the timeline.</i></p>	SE/ CU
<p>F.2. The SE GAFSP focal point is responsible for sending the near-final project document to the CU.¹⁵ The CU reviews the documentation for compliance with the requirements described under E.1 above. Complete documents will be sent to the SC on a five day no-objection basis for the approval of the final draft project document.¹⁶ <u>The SE should allow a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks for the overall approval process.</u> The SE is responsible for ensuring that the project document approved by the SE's relevant governing body is consistent with the document approved by the SC.</p>	SE/ CU
<p>F.3. During the SC review period, the CU communicates any comments or questions from the SC on the project document and any potential delays to the relevant SE for their response. Any objections by an SC member to the project document will be communicated to the whole SC and the relevant SE. If there are no objections, the proposal is approved for grant allocation and the SE will be so notified.</p>	CU/ SE
<p>F.4. The SE is responsible for sharing the SE approved project document confirming that proposed revisions (if any) were adopted in the project document, or any other SE recognized and related operational document</p>	SE

¹⁵ The project document can be at or near the time of appraisal and should be shared for SC approval prior to moving forward internally for negotiations and final SE approval.

¹⁶ It is recommended to send draft documents in advance for informal CU review and guidance, prior to formal submission for SC review/approval.

(e.g., Project operational/ implementation manual) to the CU in a timely manner.	
F.5. The CU is expected to do timely monitoring of project documents submitted by the SE and any expected revisions are to be communicated with the SE prior to SE approval.	CU/ SE
F.6. Following SC approval, the CU confirms approval in writing to all SC members and the SE. The CU also informs the Trustee and updates records in the GAFSP FIF Portal system. The Trustee reviews SC decision documents and commits the approved amount to the SE. The Trustee issues a LoC to the SE.	CU/Trustee
F.7. Following approval of the Project by the relevant approving body of the SE, and within a two-month period ¹⁷ the SE notifies the Trustee and the CU of that approval and shares the approved project document ¹⁸ to the CU for notification to SC. It is also the responsibility of the SE to inform the SC through the CU of any proposed revisions that were not adopted and the reasons.	SE
F.8. The SE submits a FTR to the Trustee based on the projected cash requirements for the project for the first 12-month period.	SE
F.9. The Trustee validates the FTR and transfers the funds requested to the SE.	Trustee
F.10. The SE submits an FTR on an annual basis (or more frequently if required) based on the disbursement needs of the relevant projects for that year.	SE

G. Project Extension, Restructuring or Suspension

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
<p>G.1. Changes to the project (e.g., budget, safeguards, development objective (DO), project design) during implementation, or extension of the project closing date are subject to the following GAFSP approvals, <u>prior to completion of internal SE approval processes for the restructuring or extension</u>:</p> <p>a. Minor changes to the project design, minor reallocation of funds between components, or cumulative extension of the project closing date for less than two years must be submitted to the CU for information. The communication to the CU should include details of the changes being made and justification for the changes. These changes will periodically be communicated to the SC for information.</p>	SE

¹⁷ Within two-months after SE approval or before effectiveness of a project, whichever comes first, is considered as a reasonable period.

¹⁸ The SE approved final project document is made available via the relevant project page of GAFSP website.

<p>b. Changes to the project development objectives or to the project safeguards category, major reallocations of project costs (i.e., >25% of original component cost to new activities or other components, expenditure categories), and cumulative extensions of the project closing date for more than two years <u>requires SC approval</u>. The SE should submit details of the proposed changes and justification for those changes, as well as a project restructuring document to the SC through the CU for approval on a five-day no-objection basis.</p> <p>a. As a rule, the SC only approves a cumulative Closing Date extension beyond two years if the project’s development objectives remain achievable and the performance of the project remains satisfactory (rated as <i>moderately satisfactory</i> or above¹⁹ for implementation progress in the most recent SE implementation progress report and latest GAFSP annual Portfolio Review ratings).</p>	
<p>G.2. The CU informs the SE of SC approval of the project extension or restructuring.</p>	CU
<p>G.3. The SE is also required to inform the SC through the CU of a project suspension and lifting of such suspension, at the same time that the relevant Government or PO is informed.</p>	SE

H. Progress Reporting and Key Updates by the Supervising Entity (SE)

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
<p>H.1. The SE is required to report to the SC, on project preparation or implementation progress (including, inter alia, progress on disbursement and progress in outputs/outcomes included in the project’s results framework/M&E systems) using the standardized CU-prepared GAFSP reporting template on a 6-monthly basis (data as of June 30 and December 31 of each year).</p> <p>Note H.1: For projects with two SEs, if a single joint project document was submitted for SC approval (refer to point F.1 above) or activities are fully merged then only one progress update will be required covering the activities supervised by both SEs.</p>	SE
<p>H.2. The CU notifies the SEs in June and December each year of the deadline for submission of the progress update and provides the reporting template.</p>	CU

¹⁹ For AfDB managed projects, a project must be rated Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory (given that there is no Moderately Satisfactory rating in AfDB’s implementation progress monitoring system).

H.3. Reporting to the Trustee will be in accordance with the conditions of the Transfer Agreement or Financial Procedures Agreements (FPAs) as applicable.	SE
H.4. The SE is required to notify the CU, regarding any change of the Task Team Leader (TTL) and contact details as soon as possible	SE
H.5. The SE is required to notify the CU, regarding any project preparation delays beyond two-years after grant approval. If any major changes in implementation arrangements (e.g., changes to SEs, co-financing, implementing agencies project name) are proposed the SE is responsible for providing a Memo for additional SC approval to the CU for processing. The SE is also required to keep the CU informed of any subsequent delays on a six-monthly basis.	SE
H.6. The CU keeps the SC informed of any project preparation / implementation delays and follow-up with SEs. The CU also processes additional SC approval requests relating to substantial changes to the approved grant.	CU

I. Completion Reporting by the Supervising Entity (SE)

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
I.1. Within 30 days after the end of each financial reporting year (or such other frequency agreed upon with the Trustee) and/or following the closing date of the project ²⁰ , the SE submits a report on project closures and use of funds to the Trustee.	SE
I.2. The Trustee cancels any unused portion of the grant and sends a request for payment to the SE.	Trustee
I.3. The SE must return any funds remaining to the Trustee upon receipt of the request for payment.	SE
I.4. The SE must submit an investment income report to the Trustee on an annual basis and return any investment income to the Trustee during project implementation when requested by the Trustee and at the end of the project.	SE/Trustee
I.5. Within 6 months following the project closing date, the SE should submit to the SC through the CU a full project closing report. The project closing report may be in the standard format typically used by the SE or where no SE	SE

²⁰ The project closing date is the date after which no more disbursements of the GAFSP grant can be made by the SE to the recipient.

<p>standard format is available using the closing report template provided by the CU on request.</p> <p>Note I.5: <i>If the GAFSP funding is part of a larger project that may not be completed at the time of the closing of the GAFSP grant, an interim completion report should be submitted within 6 months of the GAFSP grant closing date. The full project completion report (covering GAFSP and non GAFSP funds) should be submitted upon completion of the full project.</i></p>	
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J. Processing Additional/ Co-Funding Grants by the Supervising Entity (SE)

Steps/Actions Required	Responsible Entity
<p>J.1. Appraisal and Approval: Additional Funding (AF) grants (additional funds to existing GAFSP projects or existing SE projects) should be processed in collaboration with the project counterparts following the internal policies and procedures of the SE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Grants should be processed as additional financing to the ongoing GAFSP project or SE project (parent project) for which these grants were approved. c. Feedback from the TAC of the approved proposal should be assessed and incorporated during appraisal of the AF. If there is a need for closing date extension beyond that already approved by the SC at the time of AF grant approval, such changes would require a separate extension of closing date request. See Section G of these Guidelines. d. The final draft additional financing/restructuring related documents should be shared by the SE with the CU for review of compliance with requirements (as described under E.1 above) before being submitted to SC on a five day no-objection basis for approval. SC approval is required prior to internal SE approval of the AF. The CU shares the project documents with the SC for their information and reference. e. The SE is requested to share the final AF document with the CU for information upon internal SE approval of the AF. 	SE
<p>J.2. Administrative Fees.</p> <p>Additional SE Administrative Fees are approved by the SC at the time the additional funding grants are approved. SEs may submit an FTR to the Trustee to request the transfer of the full Administrative Fee amount.</p> <p>Note J.2: <i>The additional Administrative Fees should cover the costs for preparation, implementation support and completion reporting for the AF grant, as well as any associated SE fees.</i></p>	SE

<p>J.3. Fund Transfer: Once the AF is approved by the SE, a FTR, including confirmation of SE approval, may be submitted to the Trustee to request the transfer of the full grant amount.</p>	<p>SE / Trustee</p>
<p>J.4. Progress Reporting and Completion Reporting: Progress and completion reporting for the AF grants follows the procedures laid out respectively under sections H and I of these guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The AF will be included in the regular six-monthly reporting template of the original project. b. SEs will be requested to report disaggregated disbursement data for the AF grant and the original GAFSP grant. c. Only one completion report will be required covering the original GAFSP grant (or SE funded project) and the additional financing upon completion of the full project. 	<p>SE</p>
<p>J.5. Project Extension, Restructuring or Suspension. Procedures for extension and restructuring of suspensions will follow information outlined under section G of these Guidelines.</p>	