

**Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF Project**  
**Strengthening Lao PDR's Institutional Capacity to**  
**Comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework**  
**under the Paris Agreement**  
**(GEF ID: 10039)**  
**2020 – 2024**



**UNEP Climate Change Division**  
**Validation date: October 2025**



This report has been prepared by an external consultant as part of a Terminal Review, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project's operational completion. The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process and provides a formal assessment of the quality of the Review report, which is provided within this report's annexed material. In addition, the Evaluation Office formally validates the report by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations. As such the project performance ratings presented in the Review report may be adjusted by the Evaluation Office. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Manoj Kumar Muthumanickam  
GEF Climate Change Mitigation Unit  
UNEP Climate Change Division  
[manojkumar.muthumanickam@un.org](mailto:manojkumar.muthumanickam@un.org)

Strengthening Lao PDR's Institutional Capacity to Comply with the Enhanced  
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The reviewer would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex II.

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The review consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of a next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

## BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Rahul Teku Vaswani is a climate change and sustainability consultant with over 20 years of experience in working or consulting with indigenous communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector, United Nations (UN), and Green Climate Fund (GCF) in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating regional/national programmes/projects for capacity building, low-emission climate-resilient development, waste management, water and energy efficiency, and renewable energy generation. He has advised governments and clients in developing and financing climate change projects, facilitating multistakeholder partnerships, and supporting technology adoption and acceleration. He has experience in managing country teams/portfolios, preparing project proposals and concepts, conducting compliance assessments and social-ecological-economic feasibility analyses, developing institutional environmental and social safeguards (ESS) and financial policies, designing portfolio performance management and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems, and delivering technical assistance programs.

**Terminal Review Consultant**  
**Rahul Teku Vaswani**

## ABOUT THE REVIEW

**Joint Review:** No.

**Report Language(s):** English.

**Review Type:** Terminal Review

**Brief Description:** This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP/GEF project implemented between 2020 and 2024. The project's overall development goal was to Strengthening Lao PDR's Institutional Capacity to Comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

**Source(s) of Funding by Country:** Lao PDR

**Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:**

Foundation/NGO No

Private Sector No

UN Body No

Multilateral Fund Yes

Environment Fund Yes

**Key words:** Climate Change, Greenhouse Gas, Emissions

**Primary data collection period:** February 2025

**Field mission dates:** February 24-28, 2025

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

|         |                                                               |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| AFOLU   | Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use                      |
| AML/CFT | Anti-Money Laundering / Countering the Financing of Terrorism |
| ASEAN   | Association of Southeast Asian Nations.                       |
| BTR     | Biennial Transparency Report                                  |
| BUR     | Biennial Update Report                                        |
| CBIT    | Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency                 |
| CCM     | Climate Change Mitigation (Unit of UNEP)                      |
| DCC     | Department of Climate Change (MONRE)                          |
| ETF     | Enhanced Transparency Framework (Paris Agreement)             |
| FAO     | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations       |
| FES     | Faculty of Environmental Sciences (NUOL)                      |
| FMO     | Fund Management Officer                                       |
| GCF     | Green Climate Fund                                            |
| GEF     | Global Environment Facility                                   |
| GGGI    | Global Green Growth Institute                                 |
| GHG     | Greenhouse Gas                                                |
| ICT     | Information and Communication Technology                      |
| IFMIS   | Integrated Financial Management Information System            |
| IPCC    | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change                     |
| JICA    | Japan International Cooperation Agency                        |
| LANIC   | Lao National Internet Centre                                  |
| LDC     | Least-Developed Country                                       |
| LSB     | Lao Statistics Bureau                                         |
| LWU     | Lao Women's Union                                             |
| MAF     | Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry                          |
| MEL     | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning                           |
| MEM     | Ministry of Energy and Mines                                  |
| MOF     | Ministry of Finance                                           |
| MOIC    | Ministry of Industry and Commerce                             |
| MONRE   | Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment                 |
| MPI     | Ministry of Planning and Investment                           |
| MPWT    | Ministry of Public Works and Transport                        |
| MRV     | Measurement, Reporting and Verification                       |
| MTS     | Medium-Term Strategy (UNEP)                                   |
| NC      | National Communication (to UNFCCC)                            |
| NDC     | Nationally Determined Contribution                            |
| NGHGDMS | National Greenhouse Gas Database Management System            |
| NSB     | National Statistics Bureau                                    |
| NUOL    | National University of Laos                                   |
| ODA     | Official Development Assistance                               |
| ODAMIS  | ODA Management Information System                             |
| PCA     | Project Cooperation Agreement                                 |
| PIR     | Project Implementation Review                                 |
| PMU     | Project Management Unit                                       |
| PoW     | Programme of Work (UNEP)                                      |
| PSC     | Project Steering Committee                                    |
| QA/QC   | Quality Assurance / Quality Control                           |
| REDD+   | Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation  |
| SDG     | Sustainable Development Goal                                  |
| TWGCC   | Technical Working Group for Climate Change                    |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Programme                          |
| UNEP    | United Nations Environment Programme                          |
| UNFCCC  | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change         |
| VCOMS   | Vientiane City Office for Management and Service              |

## PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

**Table 1. Project Identification Table**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GEF Project ID/SMA ID <sup>1</sup> :                                                                                                                                                                      | 10039                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Implementing Agency (UNEP Division/Branch/Unit):                                                                                                                                                          | Climate Change Division / Mitigation Branch / GEF Climate Mitigation Unit                                                                                                                                                                           | Executing Agency:                                                                                                      |                                                                                                   | Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, Lao PDR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Sources of Funding (Co-finance):                                                                                                                                                                          | Country: Lao PDR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                        | Institution Name: Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, Lao PDR |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Relevant SDG(s):                                                                                                                                                                                          | Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts ( <i>Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning</i> ) |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| MTS (at approval):                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | UNEP approval date:                                                                                                    | 12/12/2019                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference ( <i>applicable for projects approved from 2022</i> ):<br><br><b>OR</b><br><br>POW Output(s) number/reference ( <i>applicable for projects approved pre-2022</i> ) | POW Direct Outcome:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference ( <i>applicable for projects approved from 2022</i> ):                            |                                                                                                   | MTS 2025 Outcome:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                           | POW Output:<br><br>Climate: (iii) Number of national, subnational and private-sector actors reporting under the enhanced transparency arrangements of the Paris Agreement with UNEP support                                                         | <b>OR</b><br><br>POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference ( <i>applicable for projects approved pre-2022</i> ): |                                                                                                   | POW Expected Accomplishment:<br><br>Mitigation Expected Accomplishment: Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies<br><br>Indicators: Number of Ministries that have strengthened their capacities (institutional and human capacities) to report information for the implementation of NDC, through the provision of contents to produce sectoral chapters of BURs, NCs and the updated NDC2020 of Lao PDR, meeting the reporting requirements established in the ETF of the Paris Agreement. |
| Sub-programme:                                                                                                                                                                                            | Climate action subprogramme                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Programme Coordination Project:                                                                                        |                                                                                                   | Transparency PCP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| UNEP approval date:                                                                                                                                                                                       | 12/12/2019                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | GEF approval date:                                                                                                     |                                                                                                   | 24/07/2019                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| GEF Operational Programme #:                                                                                                                                                                              | 10039                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | GEF Strategic Priority:                                                                                                |                                                                                                   | 2.1. Support capacity-building                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

<sup>1</sup> SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

|                                            |                                  |                                                             |                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            |                                  |                                                             | needs for transparency under the Paris Agreement through the CBIT |
| Project type:                              | Medium Sized Project             | Focal Area(s):                                              | Climate Change Mitigation                                         |
| Expected start date:                       | 20/12/2019                       | Actual start date:                                          | 01/01/2020                                                        |
| Planned completion date:                   | 31/12/2022                       | Actual operational completion date:                         | 30/06/2024                                                        |
| Planned total project budget at approval:  | USD 1,360,000                    | Actual total expenditures reported as of 28/11/2024:        | USD 1,198,541.63                                                  |
| GEF grant allocation:                      | USD 1,210,000                    | GEF grant expenditures reported as of 28/11/2024:           | USD 1,198,541.63                                                  |
| Expected Medium-Size Project co-financing: | Cash: NA<br>In-kind: USD 150,000 | Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing: | Cash: NA<br>In-kind: USD 150,000                                  |
| No. of formal project revisions:           | 2                                | Date of last approved project revision:                     | 24/11/2023                                                        |
| No. of Steering Committee meetings:        | 3                                | Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:                    | 01/07/2024                                                        |
| Mid-term Review (planned date):            | NA                               | Mid-term Review (actual date):                              | NA                                                                |
| Terminal Review (planned date):            | 31/12/2024                       | Terminal Review (actual date):                              | 30/07/2025                                                        |
| Coverage - Country:                        | Lao PDR                          | Coverage - Region:                                          | Asia Pacific                                                      |
| Dates of previous project phases:          | NA                               | Status of future project phases:                            | NA                                                                |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Project background

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF)-financed medium-sized project “Strengthening Lao PDR’s Institutional Capacity to Comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement (CBIT Lao, GEF ID 10039)” was implemented by UNEP’s Climate Change Division (GEF Climate Change Mitigation Unit) and executed by the Department of Climate Change (DCC) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) in Lao PDR.

2. The project was funded by the GEF Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT). It received GEF Project Financing of USD 1,210,000, complemented by planned co-financing of USD 150,000 in the form of in-kind contributions from the DCC at MONRE. The total secured budget for the project amounted to USD 1,360,000. The project was implemented from January 2020 to June 2024 after receiving two no-cost extensions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project’s objective was to equip Lao PDR to track, manage and report progress against its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in line with the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) through:

- (i) Establishing legal and institutional arrangements for systematic data collection and sharing.
- (ii) Developing a National Greenhouse Gas Database Management System (NGHGDMS) and improved activity emissions data.
- (iii) Conducting national trainings for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV).
- (iv) Developing a module in the national ODA Management Information System (ODAMIS) to track climate finance in Lao PDR.

3. These deliverables respond directly to gaps identified in Lao PDR's previous Biennial Update Report (BUR), its 2021 NDC update, and the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP).

### Review objectives and scope

4. The management-led Terminal Review had two formal purposes:

- (i) *Accountability*: to provide credible evidence of results, performance and resource use to UNEP, GEF and national partners;
- (ii) *Learning*: to capture lessons and recommendations that improve future ETF-related capacity-building in Lao PDR and inform design of a proposed Phase II.

5. The scope of the Terminal Review covered the full implementation period (2020-2024) and all outputs under both components. Key evaluation criteria followed UNEP Evaluation Office guidance: strategic relevance, quality of project design, nature of external context, effectiveness, financial management, efficiency, monitoring & reporting, sustainability and cross-cutting factors affecting performance.

6. Methods combined desk review of more than 60 project documents, two rounds of stakeholder interviews (23 respondents), an on-line survey (21 responses), and field verification in Vientiane from 24-28 February 2025. Triangulation across sources, gender-balanced participation, and safeguarding of anonymity ensured data integrity.

### Overall project performance rating and key features

7. The Terminal Review assigns an overall rating of *Satisfactory* (S) to the project. The Detailed criterion ratings are presented in Table 10 “Summary of project findings and ratings” in Chapter VI-B (pp. 45-46).

8. A summary of the ratings is provided below:

| Performance dimension    | Rating                                                                                                      | Key strengths                                                                                                                | Key weaknesses                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strategic relevance      | Highly Satisfactory                                                                                         | Perfect alignment with two UNEP MTS cycles, GEF-6/7 CBIT mandate, 2021 NDC, and 9 <sup>th</sup> NSEDP                        | ---                                                                                                   |
| Quality of design        | Highly Satisfactory                                                                                         | Coherent results chain, robust risk matrix, gender indicators, digital transformation focus                                  | Outreach targets un-quantified; implicit staff-retention assumptions                                  |
| External context         | Unfavourable                                                                                                | —                                                                                                                            | Pandemic-driven travel bans, supply-chain delays                                                      |
| Effectiveness            | Satisfactory<br>(Outputs = Satisfactory; Outcomes = Moderately Satisfactory; Likelihood of Impact = Likely) | Eight of nine revised outputs completed; legal decree on data-sharing; NGHGDMS operational; finance-tracker prototype online | Data-quality gaps, NGHGDMS usability limits (English backend, no bulk import)                         |
| Efficiency               | Satisfactory                                                                                                | Blended on-line training saved costs.                                                                                        | 18-month delay (due to external factors)                                                              |
| Financial management     | Satisfactory                                                                                                | Clear audit trail; UNEP fiduciary compliance                                                                                 | ---                                                                                                   |
| Monitoring & reporting   | Satisfactory<br>(design Highly Satisfactory)                                                                | Annual PIRs complete; ToC reconstructed                                                                                      | ----                                                                                                  |
| Sustainability (overall) | Moderately Likely                                                                                           | Political will high; systems housed in LANIC; NUOL training pipeline                                                         | Budget line for server & IT admin not yet secured; high staff turnover                                |
| Cross-cutting factors    | Moderately Satisfactory                                                                                     | Stakeholder cooperation Satisfactory; UNEP supervision Satisfactory                                                          | Country ownership Moderately Satisfactory; gender mainstreaming Satisfactory but uneven participation |

## **Main findings and synthesis of conclusions**

9. *Relevance and design adequacy*: The project filled a clearly articulated national and regional transparency need. Its design foresaw two causal pathways: a capacity-and-governance pathway (institutional decree + NGHGDMS + training) and a finance-tracking pathway (ODAMIS-CF + training). Together they underpin Lao PDR's ability to submit ETF-compliant Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs). The reconstructed Theory of Change for the project confirms plausible linkages without critical gaps.
10. *Delivery of outputs and immediate outcomes*: The achievements are described below
11. *Outputs 1.1-1.2 (institutional gap analysis and decree)*: The Prime-Ministerial Decision 168/PM (June 2024) legally mandates inter-ministerial data-sharing and establishes a Technical Working Group. Practical role delineation, however, still requires guidelines and further formalization of engagement.
12. *Output 1.3 (NGHGDMS)*: The NGHGDMS is working online since 2023 and has already been used for the draft 2022 inventory, but stakeholders have requested Lao-language interface, bulk upload ability, automated QA/QC and JSON export to UNFCCC templates, and further in-depth trainings.
13. *Output 1.4 (activity data for biomass-burning)*: The New Tier-2 emission factor improves accuracy of AFOLU estimates.
14. *Outputs 1.5-1.8 (toolkits & training)*: The project has achieved 1,986 beneficiaries (1,287 men [65%] and 699 women [35%]) through trainings and consultations.
15. *Outputs 2.1-2.2 (climate-finance tracker)*: ODA MIS-CF module has been coded and piloted, but the absence of an MoU between MPI and DCC means data entry is voluntary and inconsistent.
16. *Immediate outcome evidence*: Line ministries now generate draft inventory spreadsheets internally; provincial pilots feed data to NGHGDMS; MPI has tagged 23 projects with Rio markers in ODA MIS.
17. *Efficiency and adaptive management*: COVID-19 related restrictions caused the project to have a 54-month actual duration versus 36 months as originally planned. The PMU used virtual workshops and hybrid missions to contain costs, and travel related savings were partly re-allocated to sub-national dissemination and on-line help-desk services.
18. *Sustainability prospects*: Socio-political sustainability is moderately likely as the ETF reporting is embedded in the National Climate Strategy. The institutional sustainability is moderately likely, as the Technical Working Group on Climate Change (TWGCC) exists and the National University of Laos (NUOL) courses have been institutionalised, but ministries still rely on project-funded staff. The financial sustainability is moderately likely, as the NGHGDMS server hosting fee and salary of the IT administrator are not secured through budget allocation beyond Dec 2025.

## Strategic Review Questions

19. The answers to key strategic review questions are summarized below:

| Strategic question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Synthesis answer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting? If so, please explain how. Towards this, how the coordination with other ministries have impacted by the project?             | <p>The state and non-state actors participating in the project adopted the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) arrangements under the Paris Agreement. Key contributing project elements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime-Ministerial Decision 168/PM (June 2024) legally mandating inter-ministerial data-sharing, forming a Technical Working Group on Climate Change, and defining roles and escalation procedures clearly, thus facilitating institutional cooperation.</li> <li>• Deployment of the National Greenhouse Gas Database Management System (NGHGDMS) enabling stakeholders to systematically manage emissions data, albeit with suggested improvements such as language accessibility and automated verification functions.</li> <li>• Tailored training and capacity building provided through sector-specific workshops and training modules developed with the National University of Laos (NUOL), significantly enhancing local expertise.</li> </ul> <p>However, constraints such as incomplete operational guidelines, usability limitations in NGHGDMS, and data-quality challenges initially hindered full adoption.</p> |
| Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so? | <p>The project strengthened transparency mechanisms in national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalizing inter-ministerial coordination via Prime-Ministerial Decision 168/PM, which established clear protocols for data sharing among ministries.</li> <li>• Operationalizing NGHGDMS, enabling consistent, centralized data collection and reporting.</li> <li>• Enhancing technical capacities, as evidenced by improved practices in data handling within line ministries and the Provincial Pilots for NGHGDMS data feeding.</li> <li>• Climate Finance Tracker (ODAMIS-CF) improved national capacity for financial transparency, identifying and mitigating double counting in climate finance reporting.</li> </ul> <p>Coordination among ministries improved significantly, particularly through the legally mandated Technical Working Group, although formal operational agreements remain essential to sustain these mechanisms</p>                                                                                                                                         |
| Did the project contribute to develop the local capacity to design and implement mitigation sections in the energy                                                                                                                                                                | <p>The project enhanced local capacity to design and implement mitigation actions, particularly through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialized training workshops and the establishment of university-accredited courses at NUOL, ensuring the</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

| Strategic question                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Synthesis answer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| sector? Whether the availability of UDP's and later UNEP CCC's technical expertise has contributed to the development of national capacity building?                                                                                     | <p>sustainable development of local expertise on energy-sector mitigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical expertise provided by UNEP significantly contributed to technical capacity enhancement. Workshops, practical exercises, and peer-to-peer support networks empowered local professionals with advanced knowledge and skills.</li> </ul> <p>However, capacity gains remain threatened by high staff turnover rates, necessitating sustained investment in training and capacity retention strategies.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Did the relevant stakeholders participating in the project adopt the new tools developed by the project? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so? | <p>Relevant stakeholders generally adopted the new tools developed by the project, with key factors facilitating adoption being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User-centered and sector-specific designs of tools like the NGHGDMS and ODAMIS-CF, addressing practical needs of stakeholders.</li> <li>• Interactive and hands-on training methods, significantly boosting stakeholders' ability to understand and utilize these tools effectively.</li> </ul> <p>Nevertheless, challenges such as the absence of bulk data upload capabilities, lack of automated data-quality checks, and language barriers in NGHGDMS hindered optimal adoption. Furthermore, voluntary rather than mandatory usage limited the systematic uptake of the ODAMIS-CF tool.</p> |

## Conclusions

20. The CBIT Lao project achieved strategic relevance and design excellence, delivered a suite of core transparency tools and a landmark inter-ministerial agreement, and demonstrated sound efficiency despite a highly unfavourable pandemic context. Effectiveness and sustainability are advancing but are not yet optimal, as continued investment is required to deepen data quality, embed systems institutionally and secure recurrent financing. Implementing the recommendations will enable Lao PDR to produce robust, ETF-compliant Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), leverage international climate finance and cement its leadership among LDCs on transparency. The project therefore merits its Moderately Satisfactory performance rating, while offering a solid springboard for an ambitious Phase II that shifts from foundation-building to full-scale, country-driven ETF implementation.

## Lessons Learned

21. Lesson 1: Legal frameworks require operational follow-through.
22. Lesson 2: Sector-specific, hands-on training is indispensable.
23. Lesson 3: Localization and user-centred design drive system uptake.
24. Lesson 4: Staff turnover erodes capacity gains.

## Recommendations

25. Recommendation 1: Formalise climate-finance data-sharing through an MPI-DCC MoU and ODAMIS reporting protocol.
26. Recommendation 2: Upgrade NGHGDMS (with Lao backend, bulk-import, automated QA/QC, JSON export, sector specific and Tier 2/Tier 3 modules)
27. Recommendation 3: Secure sustainable O&M funding and HR budget lines for continuing the server hosting by the government and permanent IT support for the NGHGDMS.
28. Recommendation 4: Standardise sector-specific data-collection templates and verification procedures, and integrate Rio Marker tagging in ODAMIS, and upgrade the ODAMIS to have import and export functions for climate-finance data to meet the ETF requirements.
29. Recommendation 5: Design and secure funding for the implementation of a Phase II of the CBIT Lao PDR project building on the foundations laid by Phase I and focusing on QA/QC, sector expansion for EFs, and full ETF-compliant reporting for the BTR.

## Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the CBIT Lao project, set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, have been adjusted as a result. The overall project performance is validated at the **Satisfactory** level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be Moderately Satisfactory (see Annex X).

## I. INTRODUCTION

30. This report presents the findings of the management-led Terminal Review of the “Strengthening Lao PDR's institutional capacity to comply with the ETF under the Paris Agreement” project, identified under GEF ID 10039 and UNEP GEF Project ID 01640. The UNEP-implemented GEF medium-sized project, sits in UNEP's Climate Action sub-programme and is delivered by the Climate Change Division, CCM Unit, in partnership with the Department of Climate Change (DCC), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), Lao PDR as the executing agency. The project, funded by the GEF Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT), received GEF Project Financing of USD 1,210,000, complemented by a planned co-financing amount of USD 150,000 in the form of in-kind contributions from the DCC at MONRE in Lao PDR. The project document was signed following the GEF CEO Endorsement/Approval on 24 July 2019. The project officially started with the Project Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and DCC entering into force on 20 December 2019, although actual project implementation started from 01 January 2020. The project received its first disbursement on 10 February 2020. Originally planned for 36 months, the project was expected to be completed by 31 December 2022. However, due to delays, notably those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project received two extensions, revising its completion date to 30 June 2024. The actual project duration is therefore 4.5 years (54 months). The project had three steering committee meetings and received its last project extension on 24 November 2023. Being a medium-sized project, the project did not undertake a mid-term review. The terminal review was originally planned to be completed by 31 March 2023, however is now being completed in July 2025. This terminal review covers the project as implemented during this extended period. While the project itself represents one phase (Phase I), recommendations for a potential future CBIT Phase II have been identified.

31. The project's overarching development objective was to strengthen Lao PDR's national capacity to track progress against actions identified in its NDC for domestic and international reporting requirements under the ETF of the Paris Agreement. This objective directly contributes to UNEP's Programme of Work within the Climate action subprogramme, specifically aligning with the PoW Indicator on the number of national, subnational, and private-sector actors reporting under the enhanced transparency arrangements of the Paris Agreement with UNEP support. The project also contributes significantly to Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action), particularly Target 13.3 on improving education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity and its associated indicator 13.3.2 on communicating capacity-building efforts. Beyond the executing agency, key implementing partners and leveraged resources involved the Technical Working Group for Climate Change (TWGCC), relevant departments from ministries such as Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC), Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), Vientiane City Office for Management and Service (VCOMS), and the Faculty of Environmental Sciences (FES) at the National University of Laos (NUOL). The purpose of this Terminal Review, as a management-led process, is primarily twofold: to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through documented results and lessons learned among UNEP, the Donor (GEF), and the relevant agencies of Lao PDR. This review evaluates project performance against criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and aims to determine project outcomes, impacts, and their sustainability. The key intended audience for the findings includes UNEP, the GEF, and the relevant government ministries and agencies in Lao PDR involved in the project's implementation and benefiting from its results.

## II. REVIEW METHODS

32. The design and implementation of the review methodology were guided by established principles for project evaluation, emphasizing stakeholder participation, triangulation of data, and attention to ethical considerations. The overall approach aimed to provide a comprehensive and balanced perspective on the project's journey and its achievements against its intended objectives. The Terminal Review process was structured in four steps following a slightly contracted version of the UNEP review process (shown in Figure 1):

- a. Review of all project documents and relevant deliverables/reports and initial consultations.
- b. Site visit to Vientiane, Lao PDR, and stakeholder interviews.
- c. Discussion of preliminary findings from the stakeholder interviews to UNEP and the Department of Climate Change (DCC).
- d. Preparation and submission of the final Terminal Review report, incorporating all collected information and feedback.

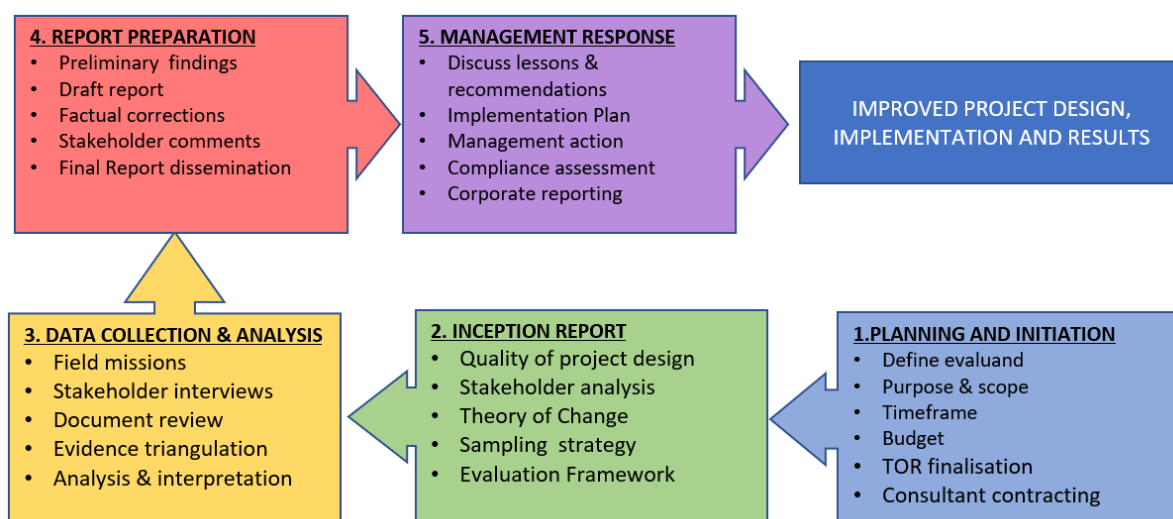


Figure 1. UNEP Review Process

33. *Data Collection:* The review employed a mixed-methods approach to data collection, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to gather information from a variety of sources. This approach was justified by the need to obtain both a broad overview of project performance and in-depth insights into specific aspects, challenges, and successes. The data collection process encompassed the following components:

- a. *Desk Review of Project Documents and Reports:* A comprehensive desk review of project-related documentation formed the initial and ongoing basis of the review. This involved examining official project documents, reports, and deliverables to understand the project's design, planned activities, implementation progress, reported results, and financial status. These documents provided detailed information on the methods, findings, and outcomes of specific project activities. The desk review allowed to gain a foundational understanding of the project, its context, and its reported

performance before engaging directly with stakeholders. It also helped in identifying key areas for further exploration during interviews and surveys. Sources reviewed included:

- (i) The original Project document and CEO Endorsement Document, outlining the project's objectives, components, expected outcomes, outputs, indicators, budget, and implementation arrangements.
  - (ii) Project Cooperation Agreement and subsequent amendments and no-cost extensions, detailing contractual agreements and changes over time.
  - (iii) Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), providing yearly updates on progress towards outcomes and outputs, implementation status, risks, and stakeholder engagement activities. The PIRs documented progress against indicators and provided justifications for ratings.
  - (iv) Audit reports, providing independent verification of financial management and expenditures.
  - (v) Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting minutes, documenting oversight, key decisions, discussions on progress, challenges, and recommendations by the project's governing body.
  - (vi) Specific project deliverables and reports, such as the Gap analysis of the institutional arrangements and capacities to comply with the ETF, the Final Report Institutional Mechanism for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation on Systemizing GHG Data Collection Sharing and Reporting, the Technical Report Country-specific Forest Fire Data and Emission Factor Development, the User Manual and User Guideline for NGHGDMS, User Manual for Simple Climate Finance Tracking System in Lao PDR, the Final Report of Climate Finance in Public Sector, and the Project Impact Assessment report.
- b. *Stakeholder Consultations and Interviews:* Direct consultation with key stakeholders was a central component of the data collection process. This involved conducting Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with individuals who had direct involvement in or knowledge of the project. The purpose of these interviews was to gather first-hand accounts, perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding the project's implementation, effectiveness, challenges, and perceived impacts. Interviews were conducted face-to-face during a site visit to Vientiane, Lao PDR. The selection of interviewees aimed for broad representation across different stakeholder groups to capture a range of viewpoints. Targeted stakeholders included:
- (i) Staff from the MONRE, particularly DCC as the Executing Agency and project management unit.
  - (ii) Representatives from key line ministries and government agencies involved in GHG inventory and climate finance tracking, such as the NSB, MAF, MEM, MOIC, MPWT, MPI, and VCOMS.
  - (iii) Representatives from the National University of Laos (NUOL), involved in developing and conducting short courses.
- c. *Online Survey:* An online survey was circulated among relevant stakeholders to gather broader feedback and perspectives on specific aspects of the project. The survey aimed to complement the in-depth interviews by collecting feedback from a larger pool of participants, including views on data collection challenges, understanding gained from training, confidence levels, and perceived improvements in coordination.

- d. *Analysis of Project Systems and Tools*: Key project outputs, specifically the National Greenhouse Gas Database Management System (NGHGDMS) and the Climate Finance Tracking tool, were analyzed. This involved assessing their design, functionality, usability, limitations, and alignment with intended purposes and international standards.
- e. *Data Verification (Triangulation)*: To enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, data collected from different sources were triangulated. Information gathered from the desk review (project reports, deliverables) was compared and validated with insights from stakeholder interviews, survey responses, and system analysis. Any inconsistencies or divergent views were explored further to arrive at a balanced assessment. Findings were also discussed with UNEP and DCC to verify their accuracy.

34. *Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Strategies*: Effective stakeholder engagement was crucial throughout the review process, building on the participatory approach of the project itself. Strategies included:

- a. Identifying key stakeholders across national and subnational government, academia, potentially private sector and civil society, and development partners.
- b. Conducting semi-structured interviews using to ensure all key areas were covered.
- c. Ensuring efforts were made to include gender-balanced participation in meetings and consultations.

35. *Limitations to the Review*: Despite efforts to ensure a comprehensive review, certain limitations were inherent in the process. These limitations were proactively considered during the data collection and analysis phases. Triangulation of data from multiple sources was the primary strategy to mitigate the risk of relying on potentially incomplete or biased information. The limitations are described below.

- a. *Data Availability and Quality*: Although significant documentation was provided, the review relies on the accuracy and completeness of project reports and information provided by stakeholders. Challenges in data collection and quality within the national system, were identified by the project stakeholders themselves, such as onerous data collection procedures, incomplete datasets, and inconsistent reporting, which posed potential limitations in fully assessing the robustness of the national system through the review.
- b. *Generalizability and Aggregation*: Findings from interviews and surveys with a limited number of individuals may not be fully generalizable to the entire national context or across all sectors. Aggregation of data across different ministries or levels (national/subnational) could be constrained by variations in reporting practices or data availability.
- c. *Potential Biases*: Stakeholder responses may be influenced by personal involvement or lack thereof in the project, organizational perspectives, or expectations regarding the review's outcomes. The terminal review strives for objectivity, but the potential for inherent biases in interpreting qualitative data is acknowledged.
- d. *Language Barriers*: While the review deliverables were prepared in English, effective communication and data collection in Lao PDR required translation and interpretation during interviews and consultations. The potential for nuances or misinterpretations during this process, although mitigated by experienced local support, cannot be entirely eliminated. It is noted that training materials were available in both English and Lao, facilitating access for national stakeholders.

36. *Ethics and Human Rights*: Throughout this review process and in the compilation of the Terminal Review report, efforts have been made to represent the views of all

stakeholders as surveyed and interviews. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were protected, particularly for interviewees and survey participants, to encourage open and honest feedback. Feedback and quotations were used to support findings, but without attribution to specific individuals. The review aimed to consult stakeholders at both national and subnational levels where feasible, recognizing that perspectives on data collection, capacity, and system usability might differ. Specific attention was paid to gender equality by aiming for a gender-balanced sample of interviewees in face-to-face meetings. This approach helped to understand potential differentiated effects or capacities among men and women involved in the project activities. No pictures were taken of the in-person consultations. All information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct.

### III. THE PROJECT

#### A. Context

37. The main issue that the CBIT Lao project addressed was Lao PDR's limited institutional and technical capacity to comply with the requirements of the ETF under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. This limitation hindered the country's ability to establish a robust national transparency system for domestic and international reporting. Lao PDR, as a Least Developed Country (LDC) and a non-Annex I Party, is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. These impacts manifest in various forms, including extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, and prolonged droughts, which affect the country's environment and human well-being. Consequently, the country faces significant environmental challenges, notably rapid deforestation, averaging a loss of 53,000 hectares per year, which is a major concern. The Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector is identified as one of the main key sectors producing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Lao PDR, accounting for 78 percent of total emissions in 2014. Activities such as land clearing for shifting cultivation, burning of agricultural waste, and land use change contribute significantly to biomass burning and subsequent GHG emissions, particularly non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases like CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O. The project's stated intention was to address the barriers and gaps that prevent Lao PDR from effectively preparing its inventory and engaging in the ETF reporting mechanisms. These causes include:

- a. Lack of effective coordination and cooperation among various stakeholders, including line ministries, agencies, and data providers. Coordination has traditionally relied on personal links rather than a solid legal foundation.
- b. Insufficient participation of key institutions. Certain relevant stakeholders, such as the waste management sector, were excluded from institutional arrangements.
- c. Limited technical capacity in sectors and governmental agencies, as well as a dearth of qualified national experts.
- d. Limited availability and consistency of data, including activity data and country-specific emission factors. Data collection often relies on manual processes and different ministries use different templates.
- e. Lack of clarity on financial, technology, and capacity-building support and its deployment rules.
- f. Insufficient domestic financial resources; most GHG inventory activities are funded by international organizations.
- g. Inconsistent data and challenges with time series, partly due to gaps in national stakeholders' arrangements.
- h. Limited human resources and lack of staff specifically responsible for inventory activities within each sector.
- i. A lack of political willingness or high-level support from the leadership of some ministries to fully prioritize climate transparency activities.

38. The consequence of these barriers is that the process of establishing a functional national transparency system and building the necessary capacities in Lao PDR is delayed, hindering the country's ability to effectively track progress against its NDC and meet international reporting obligations like the Biennial Transparency Reports (BTR). Existing efforts for preparing National Communications (NCs) and BURs have often been ad-hoc and the outcomes not sustained beyond the project period, leaving the country reliant on consultants for transparency-related processes.

## B. Objectives and components

39. The revised results hierarchy re-casts the CBIT Lao project as a tightly sequenced results hierarchy that moves from foundational capacity-building outputs to systemic, self-sustaining impacts on national climate-data governance. At the apex sits the long-lasting impact: "Lao PDR uses reliable, transparent climate information to guide mitigation and adaptation policy, report climate finance, and credibly meet Paris Agreement Enhanced Transparency Framework obligations." This single statement clarifies the ultimate purpose that was only implied in the results framework in the project document, which framed the objective as "Strengthening national capacity to track NDC progress."

40. *Intermediate States*: The results hierarchy identifies three intermediate states that must materialize before the impact can be realized:

- a. *Intermediate State 1*: Routine, in-house production of national GHG inventories with the National GHG Database Management System.
- b. *Intermediate State 2*: Institutionalized, gender-balanced MRV training at the National University of Laos, ensuring a continuous skills pipeline.
- c. *Intermediate State 3*: Transparent tracking and reporting of financial and technical support for climate action, guiding resource mobilization.

41. *Outcomes*: Two project outcomes provide the bridge from discrete products to those systemic states:

- a. *Outcome 1*: "Lao PDR has the institutional and technical capacities to systemize data collection and reporting for transparency." This directly underpins Intermediate States 1 and 2.
- b. *Outcome 2*: "Lao PDR has systems and tools to effectively track international support received for international reporting." This drives Intermediate State 3.

42. Both outcomes are unchanged from the project document, demonstrating continuity of intent, but the results hierarchy now situates them in mutually reinforcing "capacity and governance" and "finance-tracking" pathways that converge on the shared impact.

43. *Outputs Supporting Outcome 1*: Seven outputs constitute the capacity and governance pathway:

- a. Output 1.1: Gap analysis of the institutional arrangements and capacities to comply with the ETF is carried out.
- b. Output 1.2: Institutional mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing is established and formalized.
- c. Output 1.3: National GHG database management system is developed.
- d. Output 1.4: Development of Activity Data for Non-Co<sub>2</sub> gasses inventorying from biomass burning at national scale (revised from an AFOLU emission-factor study).
- e. Output 1.5: Sector-specific toolkits and consistency guidelines to facilitate data collection and reporting are developed.
- f. Output 1.6: Short courses at the National University of Laos are established and training to relevant staff in line ministries and agencies provided.
- g. Output 1.7: Capacity building workshop on enhancing transparency framework through dissemination of GHG inventory and mitigation matters. (replacing planned regional exchange constrained by COVID-19).

h. Output 1.8: Integrating GHG activity data into national statistic questionnaire.

44. Collectively these outputs supply the legal mandate, technical platform, data protocols and human capital required for ministries to generate inventories without external consultants, a key assumption for sustainability.

45. *Outputs Supporting Outcome 2:* The finance-tracking pathway is shorter but catalytic:

Output 2.1: Tracking system for support received associated with the implementation of Lao PDR's NDC is established.

Output 2.2: Training for public institutions on reporting climate finance received developed and conducted.

46. By equipping the MPI and line ministries with common templates and a central database, these outputs enable Lao PDR to populate ETF Tables 12-13 while simultaneously improving domestic budget transparency.

## C. Stakeholders

47. The stakeholders were selected to provide a comprehensive assessment of the project's effectiveness and impacts. Stakeholders participated through providing information via existing project documents and reports, responding to the online survey, and participating in interviews held during the mission in Lao PDR. The main groups of targeted stakeholders, organized by common characteristics such as roles, responsibilities, contributions, and benefits, include:

- a. *Implementing and Executing Agencies:* This group includes the UNEP CCC, as the GEF Implementing Agency and DCC of MONRE, as the Executing Agency and national focal point. Their interest/influence is very high, as they were responsible for the overall management, oversight, and delivery of the project. Their roles/responsibilities included project implementation, financial management, monitoring, and reporting. The UNEP CCC team also provided targeted technical assistance on climate finance tracking. They contributed information through project reports (PIRs, final reports, audit reports) and were key interviewees for the Terminal Review.
- b. *Key Line Ministries and Data Providers:* This encompasses various government ministries and entities such as MAF MEM, MOIC, MPWT, MPI, NSB, and VCOMS. Their interest/influence is high as they are the primary providers of activity data for the GHG inventory and information on climate finance, and direct beneficiaries of capacity building efforts and new systems. Their roles/responsibilities involve data collection, management, and reporting within their respective sectors. They contributed to the project through participation in workshops, piloting new systems, and providing data, and to the Terminal Review through online surveys and interviews.
- c. *Oversight and Coordination Bodies:* This includes the PSC and the cross-ministerial TWGCC. Their interest/influence is high as they provide strategic guidance and oversight for the project. Their roles/responsibilities included reviewing project progress, providing advice, and facilitating cooperation. They contributed to the project through meetings and validation workshops, and to the Terminal Review through their role in project oversight information and interviews.
- d. *Capacity Building Partners:* The NUOL, particularly the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, falls into this category. Their interest/influence is specific to training and research. Their role/responsibility was to develop and deliver short courses on GHG inventory and MRV. They contributed

training materials and expertise, and participated in Terminal Review interviews.

- e. *Civil Society and Social Organizations*: This group includes the LWU. Their interest/influence is related to advocacy and ensuring inclusivity. LWU's role included being a member of the TWGCC/PSC, advocating for gender considerations. They contributed by participating in project activities and were included in surveys/interviews for the Terminal Review.

48. Key change agents identified include MONRE/DCC as the driving force, key line ministries as they implement changes in data processes, and the PSC/TWGCC which formalize institutional arrangements.

49. Due attention was given to gender by aiming for 50 percent female participation in project activities like workshops and training sessions, explicitly encouraging female involvement, and including LWU in the TWGCC/PSC to integrate gender considerations. The Terminal Review interviews also ensured at least 50 percent engagement of women.

#### D. Project implementation structure and partners

50. The project implementation structure emphasizes collaboration and coordination among these diverse stakeholders, recognizing their critical roles in establishing a sustainable national transparency system. The structure is show in Figure 2.

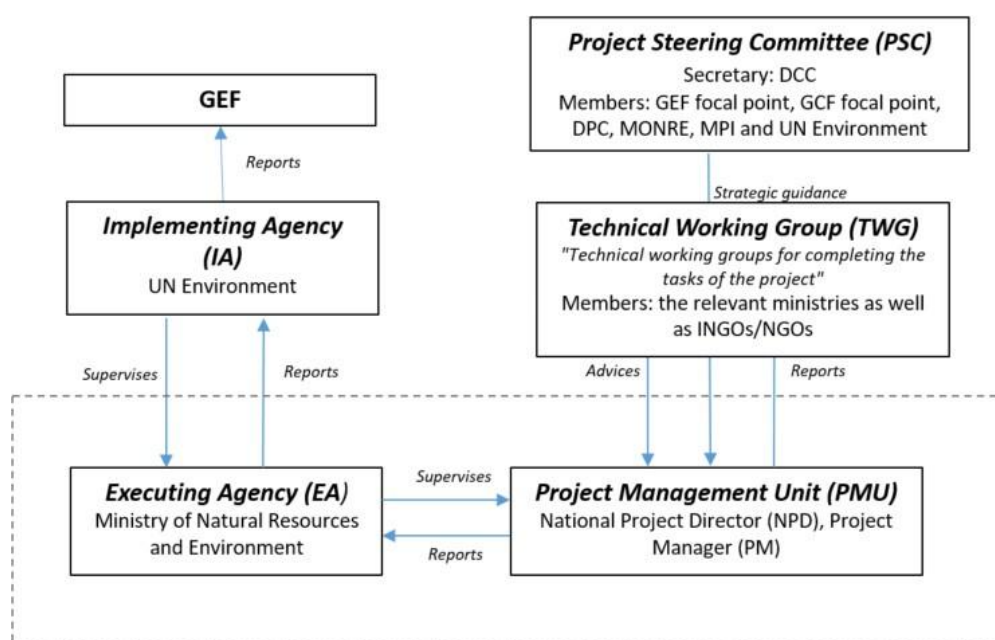


Figure 2. Organigram of the Project with key project stakeholders

51. The key project partners and their roles are described below:

- a. DCC, MONRE: As the Executing Agency and national climate change focal point, is responsible for the overall execution and management of the project. This includes appointing a National Project Director, ensuring technical quality, compiling and submitting reports to UNEP, facilitating meetings, and coordinating national stakeholders.
- b. PSC: This body, including the GEF/GCF focal points and senior representatives from MONRE, MPI, and Department of Planning and

Cooperation (DPC), provides strategic oversight and guidance to the Project Management Unit (PMU). The PSC approves annual work plans and budgets and ensures project outcomes are aligned with national priorities.

- c. TWGCC: A cross-ministerial, permanent body with members from various line ministries (MONRE, MAF, MEM, MPWT, MoST, MOIC, MoPH). The TWGCC provides technical inputs, guidance, and advice to the PMU, links project activities with ongoing work in parent departments, and participates in consultations and trainings.
  - d. PMU: Hosted by MONRE/DCC, the PMU is responsible for the day-to-day project operations, including monitoring, financial management, coordination with national counterparts, field visits, and preparing reports.
  - e. Key Line Ministries/Entities (MAF, MEM, MOIC, MPWT, VCOMS, etc.): These ministries/entities are crucial as they are the primary data providers for the GHG inventory and climate finance information. They are direct beneficiaries of capacity building and are expected to adopt the new systems and procedures. They participate in piloting activities and stakeholder consultations.
  - f. MPI: Plays a key role in tracking climate finance, particularly through the existing ODAMIS, and is involved in the evaluation and monitoring of project implementation. MPI is part of the PSC.
- b. NSB: A potential data provider for GHG inventory and relevant for integrating climate data into national statistics.
- c. NUOL, Faculty of Environmental Sciences: The lead partner for developing and delivering short courses on GHG Inventory and MRV, contributing significantly to local capacity building and research.
- d. LWU: A social organization included in the TWGCC/PSC to ensure gender considerations are integrated into project activities.
- e. Development Partners (e.g., UNDP, GIZ, JICA, GGGI): Provide Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the form of financial and technical support. Coordination with existing and prior initiatives is essential to leverage resources and avoid duplication.
- f. Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations (NGOs): Targeted as stakeholders for data provision, capacity building, and ensuring broad inclusivity and diverse perspectives in data gathering.

## E. Changes in design during implementation

52. Table 2 shows the revisions made to the outputs

**Table 2. Revisions made to the project outputs during implementation**

|            |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Revision 1 | 11 February 2021 | Output 1.4 Improved AFOLU activity data (Burned area, fuel load)<br><br>The output 1.4 on country specific EFs in the AFOLU sector was challenging to undertake for a national inventory, because the national laboratory capacity for analysing the samples from the field was limited.<br><br>As a result, a change was made improve “Activity Data” development, by improving radar sensor (remote sensing) data analysis with higher resolution satellite imagery. This would be useful to remedy data collection issues related to cloud cover in tropical forest regions in Laos. The activity included collecting field measurements to update on-ground biomass data to be used for country specific EFs. |
| Revision 2 | 20 August 2021   | Output 1.7 Capacity building workshop on enhancing transparency framework through dissemination of GHG inventory and mitigation matters.<br><br>The Output 1.7 was changed to the above net output due to the Covid-19 outbreak in the region and resulting travel restrictions. This output could not be carried out as originally envisaged. The related budget for this output was reallocated to enhance the transparency framework through sub-national dissemination on GHG inventory and mitigation aspects and long-term master’s programme courses.                                                                                                                                                      |
| Revision 3 | FY 2023          | Output 1.8 Integrating GHG activity data into national statistic questionnaire, was added to the revised work plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Revision 4 | FY 2024          | Output 1.9 BRT guideline and Mitigation MRV was removed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

53. Table 3 shows the formal amendments made to the grant agreement during implementation, owing to COVID-related delays/challenges and technical limitations.

**Table 3. Amendments made to the grant agreement during implementation**

| Type of Amendment     | Signed/ Approved by UNEP Date | Entry Into Force Date | Agreement Expiry Date | Main Changes Introduced                                                                                      | Reason for Amendment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Amendment 1 Extension | 12 April 2023                 | 19 April 2023         | 31 December 2023      | No-cost extension of the project duration up to December 2023. Revision to the project budget and work plan. | To accommodate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and difficulties faced at project inception. The initial no-cost extension was for one year due to these difficulties. The remaining period after the original duration was assessed as not sufficient for sufficient in-depth trainings. |
| Amendment 2 Extension | 15 November 2023              | 01 January 2024       | 30 June 2024          | Further no-cost extension of the project duration up to June 2024.                                           | To accommodate the conduct of additional training and dissemination workshops for more                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

| Type of Amendment | Signed/ Approved by UNEP Date | Entry Into Force Date | Agreement Expiry Date | Main Changes Introduced                                                                                                                                         | Reason for Amendment                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   |                               |                       |                       | Revision to the project budget and work plan. Accommodating training/dissemination workshops. Project technical completion date explicitly set to 30 June 2024. | effective utilization of project deliverables. The remaining period after the first extension (to Dec 2023) was still not sufficient for sufficient in-depth trainings. |

## F. Project financing

54. Table 4 show the project's planned and actual expenditure per component as of 10 July 2025, as per the last shared information by the UNEP Financial Management Officer (FMO). The expenditure ratios for Components 1 and 2 are 0.99 and 0.97 respectively. Table 4 shows the detailed expenditures.

**Table 4. Planned and actual project expenditure by component**

| Component/sub-component/output<br>All figures as USD | Estimated cost at design | Cost as per last revised budget | Actual expenditure | Expenditure ratio (actual/planned) |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Component 1                                          | 950,00.00                | 938,263.52                      | 931,225.46         | 0.99                               |
| Component 2                                          | 150,00.00                | 131,735.37                      | 128,735.37         | 0.98                               |
| PMC                                                  | 110,000                  | 110,000                         | 109,706.49         | ~ 1                                |

55. Table 5 shows the co-financing for the project. The only co-financing is in-kind support from the DCC, MONRE, valued at USD 150,000.

**Table 5. Co-financing Table**

| Co-financing (Type/Source) All figures as USD | UNEP own Financing |        | Government |         | Other   |        | Total   |         | Total Disbursed (USD) |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
|                                               | Planned            | Actual | Planned    | Actual  | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual  |                       |
| Grants                                        |                    |        |            |         |         |        |         |         |                       |
| In-kind support                               |                    |        | 150,000    | 150,000 |         |        | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000               |
| Totals                                        |                    |        | 150,000    | 150,000 |         |        | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000               |

## IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

56. The revised formulation of the results statements and the justifications are presented in Table 6. and Figure 2 shows the causal pathways from outputs to impacts, including the drivers and assumptions. The revised Theory of Change (ToC) was constructed after the review of the results framework and logic in the project document, the PIRs, and discussions with UNEP focal points and the PMU. It was subsequently strengthened with the inputs from the stakeholder interviewed during the mission to Lao PDR and the results from the online survey. The original project document did not have a ToC explanation with a diagram, yet adaptive changes had occurred during project implementation and a coherent Terminal Review ToC was required for evaluation credibility.

57. The narrative explanation of the causal pathways of the reformulated ToC is below.

- a. *Capacity and governance pathway* (Output 1.1-1.8 to Outcome 1 to Intermediate States 1 and 2, leading to the impact): The gap analysis clarifies the necessary roles, and the inter-ministerial mechanism institutionalises data-sharing, while the NGHGDMS and sector toolkits give technical means, and short-courses ensure a cadre of skilled, gender-balanced technicians. Together these deliver a functioning, inclusive GHG-inventory system, enabling submission of higher-quality emissions data reports. The key drivers are sustained political backing, cloud-server availability, and women staff empowered. The key assumptions are ministries release data; trained staff stay in their post and internet reliable.
- b. *Finance-tracking pathway* (Outputs 2.1-2.2 to Outcome 2 to Intermediate State 3, leading to the impact): The support-received tracker, embedded in ODAMIS, plus targeted finance-MRV training for MPI, MOF, sector ministries and CSOs, create a unified dataset on climate-related ODA and public expenditure. Outcome 2 is the routine production of ETF compatible tables, leading to Intermediate state-3 where transparent data helps steer national budgets and donor alignment. The key drivers are clear roles and responsibilities on the interministerial coordination group and DCC's role as coordinator is instituted. The key assumptions are that line ministries/agencies accept DCC's feedback loops and resubmit corrected data efficiently, the emissions factors and forms are clear to data entry staff in line ministries/agencies, and finance data is clearly disclosed.
- c. *Integration to impact*: Both intermediate states are mutually reinforcing as credible inventories enhance trust and unlock finance, while finance MRV ensures resources for mitigation/adaptation captured in future inventories. This underpins the long-term impact where Lao PDR's fully ETF-compliant, transparency system accelerates NDC implementation and contributes to the global temperature goal.

58. Human rights and gender considerations in the ToC: The key drivers are active participation of Lao Women's Union in the TWGCC ensures women's voices in MRV governance and mandatory sex-disaggregation in all training statistics and in NGHGDMS user analytics. The key assumptions are MRV data-collection protocols respect privacy and the right to information, and no stakeholder group is excluded from finance-tracking. The expected equality gains are enhanced visibility of women professionals in climate-data roles, and transparent finance data can flag gender-responsive budgeting gaps where possible.

**Table 6. Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements**

| <b>Formulation in original project document</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review Inception (RTOC)</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>Justification for Reformulation</b>                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (Long-lasting) Impact<br>Not explicit in the project document.<br>Stated project objective is: Strengthen Lao PDR's national capacity to track progress against actions identified in its NDC for domestic and international reporting requirements under the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement | Impact statement<br><br>Lao PDR uses reliable, transparent climate information to guide mitigation and adaptation policy, report climate finance, and credibly meet Paris Agreement ETF obligations. | Refocuses impact on transparency as catalytic driver, links data use to finance and policy, and reflects stakeholder interviews and NDC 2021 priorities.   |
| Intermediate State 1<br>Not explicit in the project document.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Regular national GHG inventories produced in-house using NGHGDMS.                                                                                                                                    | Elevates NGHGDMS from tool to systemic practice.                                                                                                           |
| Intermediate State 2<br>Not explicit in the project document.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | MRV training institutionalised at NUOL ensuring continuous skill replenishment                                                                                                                       | Addresses human-capital sustainability.                                                                                                                    |
| Intermediate State 3<br>Not explicit in the project document.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Financial and technical support for climate action is transparently tracked and reported, guiding resource mobilisation                                                                              | Elevates finance-tracker from tool to systemic practice.                                                                                                   |
| Outcome 1:<br>Lao PDR has the institutional and technical capacities to systemize data collection and reporting for transparency                                                                                                                                                                                     | Lao PDR has the institutional and technical capacities to systemize data collection and reporting for transparency                                                                                   | No change                                                                                                                                                  |
| Outcome 2:<br>Lao PDR has systems and tools to effectively track international support received for international reporting                                                                                                                                                                                          | Lao PDR has systems and tools to effectively track international support received for international reporting                                                                                        | No change                                                                                                                                                  |
| Output 1.1 Gap analysis of the institutional arrangements and capacities to comply with the ETF is carried out                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Output 1.1 Gap analysis of the institutional arrangements and capacities to comply with the ETF is carried out                                                                                       | No change.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Output 1.2 Institutional mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing is established and formalized                                                                                                                                                                     | Output 1.2 Institutional mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing is established and formalized                                                     | No change.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Output 1.3 National GHG database management system is developed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Output 1.3 National GHG database management system is developed                                                                                                                                      | No change.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Output 1.4 Country-specific emission factor is developed in the AFOLU sector                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Output 1.4 Development of Activity Data for Non-Co2 gasses inventorying from biomass burning at national scale                                                                                       | Updated as per actual output. The original output was revised owing to national institutional capacity limitations to develop the EF for the AFOLU sector. |

| <b>Formulation in original project document</b>                                                                                                     | <b>Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review Inception (RTOC)</b>                                                                                 | <b>Justification for Reformulation</b>                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Output 1.5 Sector-specific toolkits and consistency guidelines to facilitate data collection and reporting are developed                            | Output 1.5 Sector-specific toolkits and consistency guidelines to facilitate data collection and reporting are developed                            | No change                                                                                                                                        |
| Output 1.6 Short courses at the National University of Laos are established and training to relevant staff in line ministries and agencies provided | Output 1.6 Short courses at the National University of Laos are established and training to relevant staff in line ministries and agencies provided | No change                                                                                                                                        |
| Output 1.7 Regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing activities on transparency are carried out                                                    | Output 1.7 Capacity building workshop on enhancing transparency framework through dissemination of GHG inventory and mitigation matters.            | Updated as per revised output. The original Output 1.7 was changed due to the Covid-19 outbreak in the region and resulting travel restrictions. |
| (Did not exist in the original project design)                                                                                                      | Output 1.8 Integrating GHG activity data into national statistic questionnaire                                                                      | Updated as per revised output.                                                                                                                   |
| Output 2.1 Tracking system for support received associated with the implementation of Lao PDR's NDC is established                                  | Output 2.1 Tracking system for support received associated with the implementation of Lao PDR's NDC is established                                  | No change.                                                                                                                                       |
| Output 2.2 Training for public institutions on reporting climate finance received developed and conducted.                                          | Output 2.2 Training for public institutions on reporting climate finance received developed and conducted.                                          | No change.                                                                                                                                       |

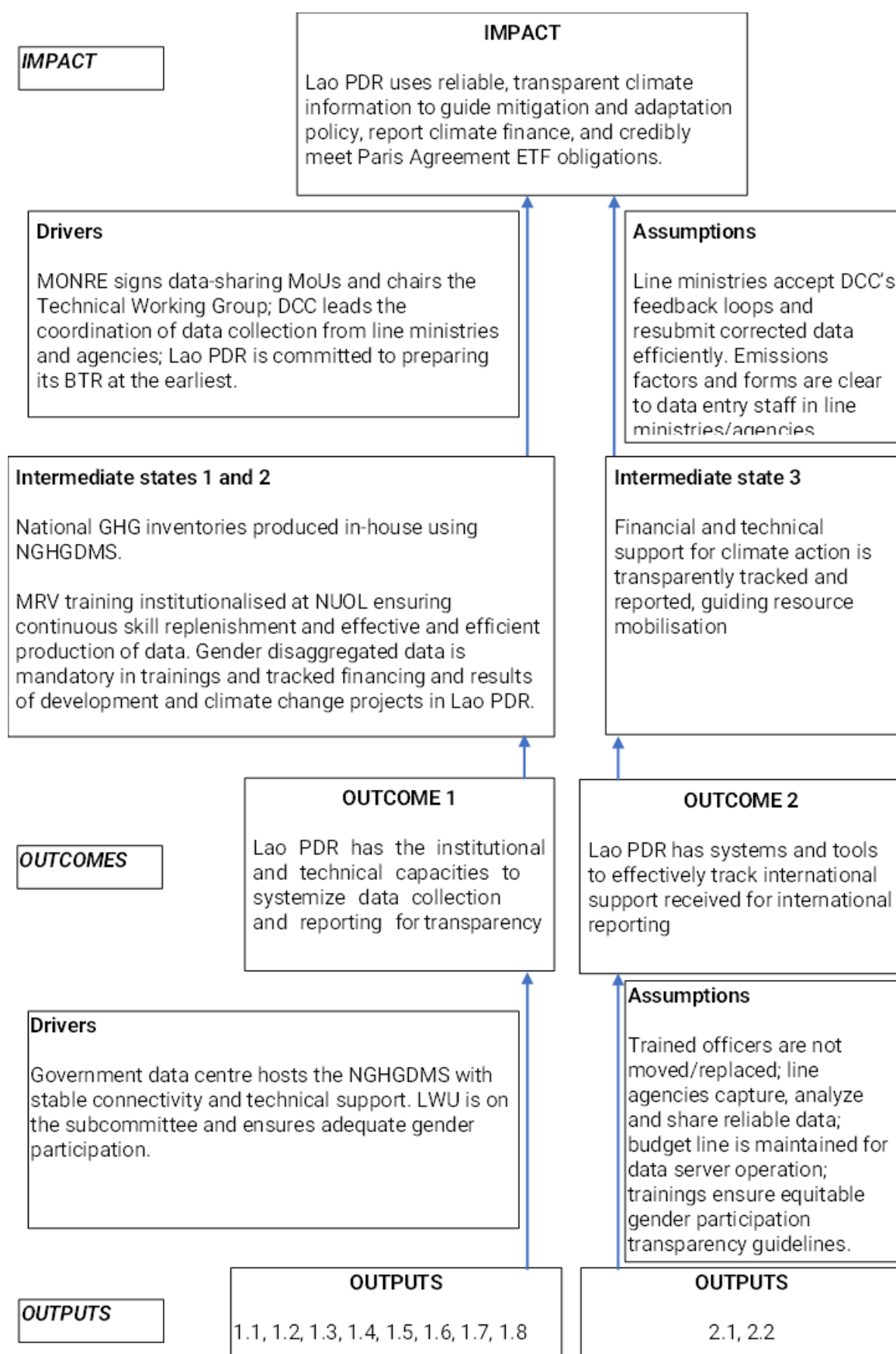


Figure 3 ToC at Review

## V. REVIEW FINDINGS

### A. Strategic Relevance

59. *Alignment to UNEP Mid-Term Strategy Programme of Work (PoW) and Strategic Priorities:* When the CBIT Lao PDR project was formulated, the governing frame was the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021 (MTS-1). That MTS contained a dedicated Climate Change sub-programme whose 2030 vision was that “countries increasingly transition to low-emission economic development and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change,” delivered through three result streams on mitigation, adaptation and REDD+ and supported by partnerships, technology transfer and climate finance mobilisation. The CBIT Lao PDR design of institutionalizing MRV systems, developing country-specific emission factors and building finance-tracking tools directly contributes to that sub-programme’s mitigation result stream and to its enabling focus on data, technology and gender differentiation. During implementation the frame shifted to UNEP MTS 2022-2025 with its “Climate Stability” systems transition and enabler on digital transformation. By deploying the NGHGDMS and an API to the national ODA system, the project operationalizes that digital enabler, while its sex-disaggregated capacity-building and LWU’s involvement address the MTS cross-cutting priority on gender equality. Thus, the project is aligned across both UNEP MTS cycles.

**Rating for Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory.**

60. *Alignment to GEF strategic priorities (GEF-6 and GEF-7):* The project was approved at the tail-end of GEF-6. Under that replenishment the GEF Council created the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) and asked the GEF “to support the establishment of the CBIT through voluntary contributions during GEF-6.” The GEF-6 Climate Change Mitigation Strategy Objective 3 aims to “foster enabling conditions to mainstream mitigation concerns into sustainable-development strategies,” explicitly citing MRV and transparency systems as eligible interventions. The CBIT Lao project responds directly to the new CBIT window and to Objective 3. In GEF-7, the CBIT was integrated into the Climate Change Focal Area outcomes A and B (institutional systems and capacity-building). The project’s components of an operational NGHGDMS, a finance-tracking module and gender-responsive training mirror those outcomes almost verbatim, and its gender targets are consistent with the 2018 GEF Gender Equality Policy. The feedback from the interviewed stakeholders highlights that without CBIT support, Lao PDR would lack the necessary capacities to fulfil the transparency provisions of the Paris Agreement, underscoring the project’s critical role in addressing this strategic priority.

**Rating for Alignment to GEF Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory.**

61. *Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national priorities:* Regionally, the 2021 ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change emphasizes the importance of “facilitating the clarity, transparency, and understanding” of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in line with UNFCCC decisions, which aligns with the objectives of the ETF under the Paris Agreement, and Lao PDR’s participation in the ASEAN MRV Partnership underscores demand at that level. Nationally, the updated Lao NDC (2021) commits to submit its first Biennial Transparency Report in 2024 (now delayed), and the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025) mandates digitalization of environmental information and transparent public-finance management. The project’s deliverables, such as BTR-ready inventory methods, digital MRV systems and a climate-finance tracker, directly satisfy those national obligations and hence possess good contextual relevance. The project also supports several key national strategies and plans, including the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and efforts related

to REDD+29, and directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 13 on Climate Action, particularly target 13.3 on improving education, awareness, and capacity

Rating for Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities: Highly Satisfactory.

62. *Complementarity / coherence with other interventions:* The CBIT project was positioned as the backbone transparency platform to which other initiatives could connect. It complements UNDP's Climate Promise that focuses on mitigation planning but flags weak data systems, attempts to align with JICA's National Forest Monitoring System, and builds on the climate MRV work accomplished by the FAO and GGGI implemented GCF Readiness projects in Lao PDR. Stakeholders surveyed during the Terminal Review viewed the UNEP-GEF investment as catalytic rather than duplicative.

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Highly Satisfactory.

63. The project exhibits strong and sustained strategic relevance across two UNEP MTS cycles, both GEF-6 and GEF-7 strategic directions, and the Lao national policy landscape, and coherence with projects focused on similar scopes of work in Lao PDR. In doing so, it provides an essential enabling layer for climate transparency and accountable NDC delivery, and has a highly satisfactory (HS) rating for strategic relevance.

**Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory**

## B. Quality of Project Design

64. The narrative descriptions for each criterion are given in Table 7 below and Table 8 provides the ratings. Overall, the Lao PDR CBIT project demonstrates a sound and context-responsive design that aligns closely with both UNEP and GEF strategic frameworks. Its logical framework is results-oriented, with clear outputs that credibly link to intended outcomes and longer-term ETF compliance impacts. Governance and partnership arrangements are well-articulated, leveraging national ownership while drawing on UNEP's normative oversight. Financial planning appears realistic and adaptive, with only minor realignments required during implementation. Key strengths include intentional complementarity with parallel MRV and climate-planning initiatives, and a forward-looking digital infrastructure that supports replication. On balance, the project's design quality is rated highly satisfactory, providing a credible platform for transparent, gender-responsive climate reporting in Lao PDR and serving as a catalytic model for other ASEAN LDCs.

**Table 7. Narrative assessments of each design quality criteria**

| Criterion           | Assessment of Design Quality                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Operating Context   | The ProDoc places the intervention squarely within Lao PDR's climate-policy landscape (NDC, 9th NSEDP, ASEAN commitments) and identifies institutional fragmentation and digital-infrastructure gaps. The risks are explicitly rated.                   |
| Project Preparation | The PPG phase delivered a gap analysis, stakeholder map and gender assessment, in the CEO endorsement comments were fully addressed. Baseline figures for some finance-tracking indicators remained "TBD," slightly reducing early measurement clarity. |

| Criterion                                          | Assessment of Design Quality                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strategic Relevance                                | The project design aligns with the UNEP MTS 2018-2021 (climate sub-programme) and the GEF-6 CBIT window. Subsequent PIRs confirm continued fit with the UNEP MTS 2022-2025 digital-transformation enabler, and GEF-7, UNEP POW 2022-2023, as well as with national policy landscape and regional connection, demonstrating foresight and sustained relevance. |
| Intended Results and Causality                     | Annex A provides a logical results chain with verifiable indicators, and the emission-factor and finance-tracker outputs logically feed two outcomes. Some causal assumptions such as staff retention were implicit and intermediate states were not explicit, which have been reformulated during the Terminal Review.                                       |
| Logical Framework and Monitoring                   | The log-frame is outcome-oriented, includes annual milestones and allocates USD 42,000 for Monitoring and Evaluation. The rating definitions and roles are specified and reflect robust UNEP/GEF standards compliance.                                                                                                                                        |
| Governance and Supervision Arrangements            | The roles of the Project Steering Committee, UNEP Task Manager and MONRE/DCC are clearly delineated with “no-objection” procedures and risk-management duties, and balance UNEP oversight with national ownership.                                                                                                                                            |
| Partnerships                                       | The project design actively coordinates with UNDP’s Climate Promise, JICA forest-MRV support and GGGI city-level GHG work, establishing data-exchange protocols and shared steering structures to avoid duplication and maximise synergies.                                                                                                                   |
| Learning, Communication and Outreach               | The knowledge management plan commits to open-access training materials, South-South exchanges and integration of lessons into NGHGDMS documentation. The targets for publications or regional peer-review outputs, however, were not quantified, thus limiting accountability for outreach ambitions.                                                        |
| Financial Planning / Budgeting                     | The USD 1.21 million GEF budget is broken down by year, component and line item with confirmed co-finance. The minor realignments recorded in PIRs remained within 5 percent of the totals, indicating realistic initial costing.                                                                                                                             |
| Efficiency (Design Stage)                          | Combining database build, emission-factor work and finance tracking under one PMU produces economies of scale, and partnering with a local university for training further optimises costs. The wide geographic scope for South-South exchanges somewhat inflates travel ( $\approx$ USD 200,000) and could reduce cost-effectiveness if under-utilised.      |
| Risk Identification and Social Safeguards          | The risk matrix categorises technical, institutional and fiduciary risks with mitigation. The ESS screening rates project “Category C/Low Risk”, no physical works or resettlement. The gender and human-rights dimensions are addressed via sex-disaggregated indicators, and the social-inclusion risks for remote ethnic groups are only lightly noted.    |
| Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects | The ownership is embedded in MONRE/DCC, and the NGHGDMS links to ODAMIS and Treasury IFMIS, which aids the institutional sustainability of the project’s results. However financial sustainability hinges on continued funding for the Government of Lao PDR for server hosting post-GEF support, which is a high-risk assumption.                            |
| Identified Design Weaknesses / Gaps                | The identified design weaknesses and gaps are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline gaps for finance-tracking indicators</li> <li>• Implicit causal assumptions and non-time-bound intermediate targets</li> <li>• Outreach indicators unquantified; ambitious travel budget vs learning returns</li> </ul>                                      |

**Table 8. Overall quality of project design score**

|   | SECTION                                            | RATING<br>(1-6) | WEIGHTIN<br>G | TOTAL (Rating x<br>Weighting)             |
|---|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------|
| A | Operating Context                                  | 5               | 0.4           | 2                                         |
| B | Project Preparation                                | 5               | 1.2           | 6                                         |
| C | Strategic Relevance                                | 6               | 0.8           | 4.8                                       |
| D | Intended Results and Causality                     | 5               | 1.6           | 8                                         |
| E | Logical Framework and Monitoring                   | 6               | 0.8           | 4.8                                       |
| F | Governance and Supervision Arrangements            | 6               | 0.4           | 2.4                                       |
| G | Partnerships                                       | 6               | 0.8           | 4.8                                       |
| H | Learning, Communication and Outreach               | 5               | 0.4           | 2                                         |
| I | Financial Planning / Budgeting                     | 5               | 0.4           | 2                                         |
| J | Efficiency                                         | 5               | 0.8           | 4                                         |
| K | Risk identification and Social Safeguards          | 5               | 0.8           | 4                                         |
| L | Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects | 5               | 1.2           | 6                                         |
| M | Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps          | 5               | 0.4           | 2                                         |
|   | <b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>                                |                 |               | <b>5.28</b> (Sum Totals<br>divided by 10) |

|                               |                |                             |               |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 (Highly Unsatisfactory)     | < 1.83         | 4 (Moderately Satisfactory) | >=3.5 <=4.33  |
| 2 (Unsatisfactory)            | >= 1.83 < 2.66 | 5 (Satisfactory)            | >4.33 <= 5.16 |
| 3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory) | >=2.66 <3.5    | 6 (Highly Satisfactory)     | > 5.16        |

**Rating for Project Design: Highly Satisfactory**

### C. Nature of the External Context

65. The project's implementation was immediately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic shortly after its inception. National lockdown, a strict entry ban and work-from-home orders halted the formation of the PMU, prevented deployment of the planned in-country international MRV expert and forced the first wave of project consultations online, immediately compressing the schedule. Recurrent outbreaks in 2022 prolonged travel bans, turning most technical missions and training workshops into virtual events. The piloting of the National GHG Database was postponed twice and the risk rating for timely delivery was raised to "significant." Regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing activities were particularly affected by COVID travel restrictions, leading to resources being diverted to sub-national awareness-raising efforts instead. In late 2022, the project saw an unrelated but compounding setback when the finance-tracking component's lead consulting firm underwent an unexpected management shake-up, thus suspending Output 2.1 activities until a new contract was negotiated. By 2023, pandemic restrictions eased, yet the accumulated delays required the capacity-building programme to be streamlined and precipitated a request for a 12-month no-cost extension. With restrictions fully lifted in 2024, implementation regained momentum, but lingering COVID-induced slippage still necessitated a final six-month extension to conduct capacity building activities and to finalize reporting and audits.

**Rating for Nature of the external context: Unfavourable**

## D. Effectiveness

66. The CBIT Lao project's effectiveness can be assessed by weaving together what the project tangibly delivered, how those deliverables have been taken up by intended users, and what the same users and interviewees say still needs to be strengthened to keep the transparency system on a long-term, self-sustaining trajectory.

### Availability of Outputs

67. During the extended implementation period the project produced seven discrete outputs under Component 1 and two under Component 2, each one reaching UNEP's technical review standard. These outputs are described below, first for Component 1, then for Component 2.

68. *Output 1.1 Gap analysis of institutional arrangements and capacities to comply with the ETF:* The foundational Gap-and-Capacity Analysis (Output 1.1), is a diagnostic endorsed by the TWGCC in February 2022, and is repeatedly cited in sector work plans as the point of reference for data-improvement task. Line-ministry have asked that it be updated annually so that gaps do not re-emerge.

69. *Output 1.2 Institutional mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation:* Legislative anchoring of cooperation arrived with the Prime-Ministerial Decision 168/PM (Output 1.2), which was signed on 17 June 2024 after three drafting rounds, in the form of an 'Agreement on the Institutional Mechanism for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation on Systemizing Data Collection, Sharing, and Reporting'. Stakeholders deemed this a landmark agreement, but also reveal that focal points remain unclear about where verification responsibilities lie and have requested a short addendum to spell out who certifies sector estimates. The formalization of this agreement occurred towards the end of the project timeline, meaning its full operationalization was not realized before project closure.

70. *Output 1.3 National GHG database management system:* The cornerstone digital product, NGHGDMS went live in November 2023 and the system now hosts IPCC 2006 calculators. Several training courses, including Training of Trainers (ToT), were conducted at national and sub-national levels, to understand and use the NGHGDMS. Yet user analytics and survey responses expose challenges. User analysis identified limitations, including a lack of efficient data import/export, missing sectors, lack of automatic validation or error flagging, areas for enhancement in QA/QC and verification, and unintuitive data visualizations. Similarly, stakeholder feedback highlighted challenges with the system interface, with nearly half of provincial users saying the absence of an Excel bulk-import feature slows them down. They prefer the back-end fully in Lao language rather than in English. The project team has already drafted an import module and full Lao interface for the follow-on phase, but, until these are operational, a help-desk upload service is acting as an interim workaround.

71. *Output 1.4 Development of Activity Data for Non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases from biomass burning:* The effort to improve emission factors delivered a single but high-priority biomass-burning factor (Output 1.4) that was peer-reviewed by external specialists and embedded directly in NGHGDMS. The output was produced using a bottom-up approach and combining it with remote sensing, primarily from Sentinel-2 data, and applying IPCC 2006 Tier 1 methods and default values. Forestry sector interviewees welcomed the Tier-2 rigor of the new factor yet argued that rice-residue burning is the next logical target and should be tackled in any subsequent work or phase of the CBIT Lao PDR project.

72. *Output 1.5 Sector-specific toolkits and consistency guidelines:* Quality control, long an Achilles heel in Lao PDR inventories, was addressed through Output 1.5. In this output, toolkits and guidelines aligned with IPCC 2006 Guidelines were developed in parallel with the NGHGDMS and validated through workshops. User manuals and data entry templates were

shared and uploaded on the NGHGDMS website. Stakeholders, however, felt that training on system use was less effective without robust foundational data collection technologies in the field. Two-thirds of survey respondents reported consulting the toolkit often, but the uncertainty analysis section is still available only in English and senior directors have asked for a Lao 'cheat-sheet'.

73. *Output 1.6: Short courses at the National University of Laos:* Under this output, content for two short courses on GHG inventories and MRV was developed with NUoL and training courses were delivered. Feedback on the courses suggested improving the balance of high-level concepts to detailed technical information and focusing more on the AFOLU sector and the 'soft' side of MRV, such as institutional arrangements and governance.

74. *Output 1.7 Capacity building workshop on enhancing transparency framework through dissemination of GHG inventory and mitigation matters:* Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the originally designed activities for Output 1.7 were reformulated and resources were reallocated to a new activity on sub-national dissemination. Project staff participated in national and international conferences and workshops, and a project closure cum South-South knowledge exchange workshop was organized in July 2024 with participation from Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Participants nevertheless asked for longer hands-on laboratory sessions, full Lao versions of the slide decks, and follow-up modules on linking inventory results to mitigation planning tools such as LEAP.

75. *Output 1.8 Integrating GHG activity data into national statistic questionnaire:* This output was not in the original results framework of the CBIT Lao PDR. It was introduced in FY 2023. Output 1.8 strengthened effectiveness by inserting key GHG questions into the National Statistics Bureau's national survey instruments. Draft forms were co-created with NSB, DCC and line ministries, then field-tested and validated, producing an agreed core questionnaire. The exercise confirmed that routine statistics can cover Tier 1 activity data for agriculture and household waste, yet significant gaps persist for energy, industrial processes and private-sector reporting, and QA/metadata procedures remain incomplete. Roll-out now hinges on NSB approval, provincial training funds and live links to NGHGDMS.

76. *Output 2.1 Tracking system for support received (Climate Finance):* Under Component 2, the climate-finance tracker (Output 2.1) combines an Excel front-end for line ministries with an ODAMIS-compatible API specification. Finance officers praise the "first consolidated picture of climate ODA," but both the online survey and mission meetings reveal that ministries are less confident in tagging domestic budgets. They want clear Rio Marker guidance and DCC wants a formal memorandum of understanding with the MPI to institutionalise data exchange.

77. *Output 2.2 Training for public institutions on reporting climate finance:* The project's finance-MRV training package (Output 2.2) did raise officers' self-reported confidence, yet line ministries are calling for refresher clinics aligned with the annual budget calendar and a telephone help-desk.

78. Overall, every output promised in the original logical framework and the additional transparency workshop have reached its target audience, but the project's own monitoring data and independent feedback converge on the same message: if the system is going to solidify into routine administrative practice, it needs language localisation, bulk-import functionality, a standard protocol for quality control, and a rolling training mechanism that keeps pace with staff mobility or turn-over.

### **Rating for Availability of Outputs: Satisfactory**

## Achievement of Project Outcomes

79. *Outcome 1 'Lao PDR has the institutional and technical capacities to systemize data collection and reporting for transparency'* shows clear evidence of attainment. The attribution to UNEP's intervention is clear: the NGHGDMS, the new emission factor, the guidelines and trainings exist because of the UNEP/GEF intervention, and no parallel donor or project has contributed comparable assets. Nonetheless, interviews with stakeholders underscore remaining fragilities: unresolved ambiguity over which agency certifies sector data, the lack of an Excel import function, and the need for a perpetual induction or training package to offset civil-service rotation. These gaps do not invalidate the outcome but could erode it if left unaddressed.

80. *Outcome 2 'Lao PDR has systems and tools to effectively track international support received for international reporting'* is also largely achieved. The tracker covered 87 percent of ODA lines found in the Treasury's IFMIS, and MPI's Budget Call Circular 05/Fin-2025 now makes its use mandatory across government, thereby meeting the reconstructed ToC trigger for Intermediate State 2. Yet stakeholder commentary again supplies nuance. Government officers find ODA tagging intuitive but consider domestic-budget tagging "messy" and ask for codified Rio-marker guidance, while DCC seeks a formalised data-sharing protocol. The absence of these instruments is not a design failure, as it reflects the ambitious policy frontier the project has reached, but it does mean that the outcome remains vulnerable until the MoU and guidance are finalised.

81. Evidence regarding the achievement of GEF-6 Core indicator, and objective and outcome level indicators includes the following:

82. *GEF-6 Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment.* Target 60 (30 Women and 30 Men). The project has organized at least 36 events, such as consultations, workshops, and trainings. The direct beneficiaries of the workshops and meetings are 1,986 persons which include 1,287 men (65%) and 699 women (35%).

83. Objective level indicator: Number of Ministries that have strengthened their capacities (institutional and human capacities) to report information for the implementation of NDC, through the provision of contents to produce sectoral chapters of BURs, NCs, and the updated NDC 2020 of Lao PDR, meeting the reporting requirements established in the ETF of the Paris Agreement. Baseline 1, Target 4, Final Assessment 4. The project achieved this target. The ministries identified were Ministry of Property, Ministry of Technology and Communication, Ministry of Planning and Investment, and Ministry of Industry and Trade.

84. Outcome 1 indicator 1.1: Qualitative rating of the National GHG inventory Reporting in its ability to track GHG emission from the key sectors. Baseline 3, Target 6, Final Assessment 4. The project achieved this target partially. Significant improvements were made in governance structures, particularly with the adoption of the 'Agreement on the Institutional Mechanism for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation on Systemizing Data Collection, Sharing, and Reporting'. However, the mechanism was adopted late, impacting operationalization. Operational challenges remain, including the need for detailed data mapping, improvement of the NGHGDMS functionality and usability, and limited verification activities. Stakeholder feedback highlights ongoing challenges with data availability, standardization, verification, and language barriers.

85. *Outcome 1 indicator 1.2: Qualitative rating of Lao PDR's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities:* Baseline 1, Target 3, Final Assessment 3. The MONRE and DCC have the mandate to coordinate activities via the new agreement. However, internal coordination within DCC and integration of transparency activities into national planning and budgeting are areas needing improvement.

86. Outcome 1 indicator 1.3: Percentage of training participants declaring to be in a better position to implement the National GHG inventory to track GHG emissions from the key sectors (disaggregated by gender): Baseline 0 percent, Target 70 percent, Final Assessment 67 percent (69% for men, and 60% for women). The project has conducted training activities that have contributed to building individual capacity, and the project has nearly met its target.

87. Outcome 2 indicator 2.1: Qualitative rating of the MRV system to track financial support received: Baseline 1, Target 5, Final Assessment 3. The project developed a basic Excel-based tool for collecting, compiling and reporting information on finance and support received. The stakeholders have highlighted that further work is needed to identify and define roles and responsibilities, improve data availability (owing to lack of detailed climate project information), integrate with ODAMIS and NDC tracking systems, and establish standardized verification methods, as well as the need for upstream capacity development to produce detailed information relevant for the climate finance MRV system.

88. Outcome 2 indicator 2.2: Percentage of training participants declaring to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track financial support received (disaggregated by gender): Baseline 0 percent, Target 70 percent, Final Assessment 64 percent (60% for men, and 75% for women). The project has conducted training activities that have contributed to building individual capacity on implementing the MRV system, though the achievement is slightly below the target.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory

### Likelihood of Impact

89. With the cabinet clearance of Lao PDR's first Biennial Transparency Report scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2025 and budget lines already earmarked for database hosting and refresher training, the trajectory from outcomes to long-term impact now looks somewhat likely. The July 2024 workshop amplified political commitment and discussed that transparency metrics feed directly into consultations for the 10th NSEDP.

90. Nevertheless, interviewees insist that three enablers must crystallize if impact is to be locked in. First, provincial data flows have to deepen, which hinges on standardized sector templates and budget for field data collection. Second, the promised Lao back-end and bulk-import upgrades must go live so that provincial staff can operate the system without English fluency or high-bandwidth connections. Third, a formal DCC-MPI MoU must institutionalize the cadence and verification of finance-tracking data. Provided these follow-through measures are executed on schedule, the stakeholders' own verdict that "for the first time we see all sectors and finance in one place" is likely to translate into a durable, replicated model that advances SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 16 on accountable institutions and UNEP's Expected Accomplishment C on enhanced transparency under the Paris Agreement.

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Likely

**Rating for Effectiveness: Satisfactory**

## E. Financial Management

### Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

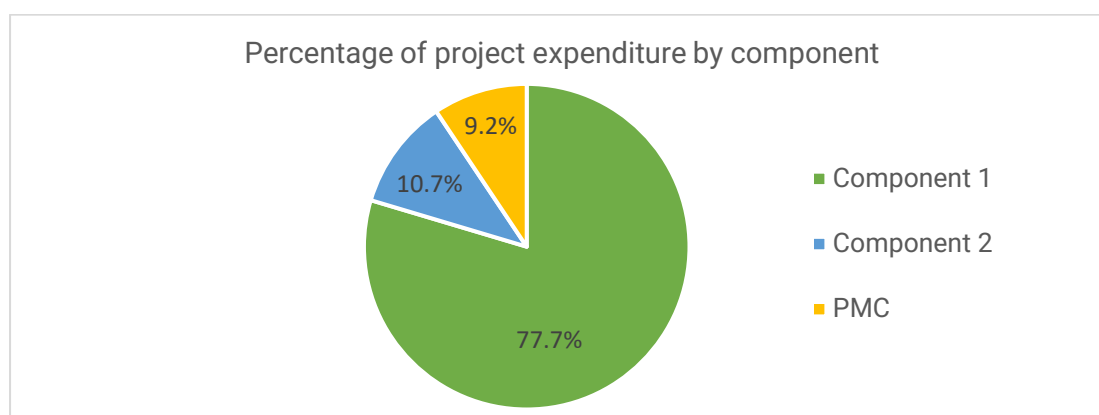
91. Throughout the 2021-2024 implementation period the CBIT-Lao project consistently complied with UNEP's fiduciary requirements. All procurements and budget revisions were routed through the Umoja workflow and cleared at headquarters level, while national disbursements followed the cash-advance–liquidation cycle prescribed for UNEP-executed grants. The independent special-purpose audit covering 1 January 2023–31 July 2024

issued an unqualified opinion, confirming that proper books were kept, expenditures were incurred in accordance with objectives outlined in the project implementation plan, and that internal controls were in place. Project-management sign-off in the same report re-affirms that all GEF funds were within audit scope and fully supported by vouchers, demonstrating strict adherence to UNEP policy on evidence and eligibility.

Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures: Satisfactory

### Completeness of Financial Information

92. Financial data were both granular and up-to-date. Cumulative expenditure to 10 July 2024 totalled USD 1,198,541.63 against the approved ceiling of USD 1.21 million. Component-level tracking shows 77.7 percent of expenditures under Component 1 (USD 931,255.46), 10.7 percent to Component 2 (USD 106,442.82) and 9.2 percent to project management (USD 109,706.49). At the time of the CEO endorsement, the distributions were 78.5 percent, 12.4 percent, and 9.1 percent respectively. Government in-kind co-financing of USD 150,000 (office space, staff time and utilities) was fully realized, as recorded in both the final technical report and the 2024 PIR, ensuring that all pledged resources are transparently captured. As per the final statement of accounts dated 10 July 2025, the project has an unspent amount of USD 11,458.37, which shall be returned to GEF.



**Figure 4. Percentage of project expenditure by component**

(Note: the figures do not total to 100% because, the chart does not show the Terminal Review expenses, which are equal to 2.4% of the project budget; these were originally budgeted under component 1, but in the most recent budget revision were separated).

**Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Satisfactory**

### Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

93. Early PIRs noted COVID-related hiring delays, and in 2021 the PMU instituted monthly coordination calls with UNEP's Task Manager to align cash-flow projections with technical milestones. By 2022 these had evolved into structured quarterly variance-analysis meetings involving the National Project Director and Department of Climate Change finance officers; minutes from these sessions informed budget re-programming that shifted unspent regional-travel funds to additional capacity-building workshops, illustrating responsive dialogue. The auditor corroborates this collaboration, noting that "adequate documentation

(is) prepared by the project accountants and validated by the technical leads before submission to UNEP.”

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff: Satisfactory

**Table 9. Financial management table**

| NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial management components:                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Rating   | Evidence/ Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:</b>                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>S</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence <sup>2</sup> to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | No       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>2. Completeness of project financial information<sup>3</sup>:</b>                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>S</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| A.                                                                                                                              | Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Yes      | The cofinancing and project cost tables at design are detailed.                                                                                                                                                   |
| B.                                                                                                                              | Revisions to the budget                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes      | Specific revisions to the budget during project implementation have been provided.                                                                                                                                |
| C.                                                                                                                              | All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Yes      | The PCA and ICA and amendments have been shared.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| D.                                                                                                                              | Proof of fund transfers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes      | No copies of fund transfer receipts have been shared. However, the Audit Reports state the fund transfer amounts.                                                                                                 |
| E.                                                                                                                              | Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Yes      | Official co-financing statement for December 2019 to June 2024 has been provided.                                                                                                                                 |
| F.                                                                                                                              | A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)                                                                                                                                  | Yes      | Final statement of account has been provided showing cumulative project expenditures and commitments as of 28 November 2024. The expenditures are detailed as per budget lines, project components, and annually. |
| G.                                                                                                                              | Copies of any completed audits and management responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes      | Audit Reports from covering the project implementation from 01 January 2020 to 30 June 2024.                                                                                                                      |
| H.                                                                                                                              | Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):<br><br>1. As per the final statement of accounts, the project has an unspent amount of USD The UNEP financial officer was requested to provide clarification on whether all GEF funds for the | Yes      | The clarifications have not been provided as of the writing of the Terminal Report.                                                                                                                               |

<sup>2</sup> If the Review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

<sup>3</sup> See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

| NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS                                                                                                                                                       |          |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Financial management components:                                                                                                                                               | Rating   | Evidence/ Comments |
| project were drawn and disbursed, and/or whether some remaining funds will be returned to GEF, and when the final statement of accounts and/or audit report will be available. |          |                    |
| <b>3. Communication between finance and project management staff</b>                                                                                                           | <b>S</b> |                    |
| Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.                                                                                    | S        |                    |
| Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.                                                                                    | S        |                    |
| Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.                                                  | S        |                    |
| Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.                               | S        |                    |
| Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process                                                       | S        |                    |
| <b>Overall rating</b>                                                                                                                                                          | <b>S</b> |                    |

**Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory**

## F. Efficiency

94. Originally planned for 36 months from January 2020 to December 2022, the project experienced significant delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic which restricted in-person coordination and expert recruitment. These delays necessitated two no-cost extensions, first extending the project to December 2023 and subsequently to June 2024, resulting in a total project duration of 54 months. These extensions were crucial for completing the planned activities and delivering key outputs, such as the formal agreement on the institutional mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation, which was finalized only in June 2024. To mitigate further delays, the PMU employed time-saving measures included adapting expert roles when international experts could not be deployed and devising alternative methods for data collection using local teams to circumvent travel restrictions. The PMU planned bi-weekly meetings with consultants and with UNEP to monitor physical and financial progress, although actual frequency varied. The project design aimed for cost-effectiveness by actively making use of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, and data sources. It drew on REDD+ monitoring forums, leveraged GGGI's MRV roadmap work, and synchronized with other GEF and UNFCCC initiatives so that data templates, legal mandates and training curricula built cumulatively on earlier investments. This institutional scaffolding reduced transaction costs, accelerated stakeholder buy-in and mitigated duplication risks. Budgetary reallocations, such as moving unspent international-travel funds to additional workshops, demonstrated cost-effectiveness, raising total disbursement to 88 percent by June 2024 without requesting extra GEF resources. The established TWGCC served as a key existing body for guidance and cooperation. Partnerships, such as with NUoL for developing and delivering short courses, were intended to foster sustainable capacity building. However, challenges in integrating new systems with existing ones and the lack of formal data sharing protocols between key ministries (DCC and MPI) were identified as impediments.

95. The project minimized UNEP's environmental footprint by shifting to virtual trainings that substituted for dozens of planned regional missions, thereby curbing emissions and cutting per-diem costs. The resources saved from cancelled travel were redirected to sub-national dissemination rather than additional flights. Collectively, these adaptive measures meant that, despite pandemic-induced delays, the project delivered all core outputs within the secured budget and an extended timeframe.

**Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory**

## **G. Monitoring and Reporting**

### **Monitoring Design and Budgeting**

96. From the outset the CBIT-Lao project embedded a fully costed M&E plan. The logical framework approved at CEO endorsement translated each outcome into SMART indicators with baselines, mid-term milestones and end-of-project targets. For example, Indicator 3 tracks the share of trainees who feel better able to compile the national GHG inventory, disaggregated by sex, moving from a 0 percent baseline to a 70 percent end-target and reporting separate male (69%) and female (60%) achievement figures in 2024 ascertained by the project impact assessment. Core-indicator commitments were likewise gender-balanced, setting 60 direct beneficiaries split evenly between women and men. To resource this framework, the project set aside just under 3 percent of the GEF grant: USD 3000 for the inception workshop, USD 9000 for annual external audits and USD 30000 for the Terminal Review. Although, as a medium-size project, it was exempt from a Mid-Term Review, the design compensated by requiring annual PIRs and quarterly financial/progress reports, with costs for data collection, surveys and workshops embedded in Component 1 contract and travel lines. The Project Document further instructs that all monitoring data be sex-disaggregated wherever feasible and that vulnerability dimensions, such as provincial capacity gaps and language barriers, be flagged for corrective action. Risk monitoring was integrated from day one, as the risk-log template assigns likelihood and impact scores to governance, schedule and COVID-19 threats and is reviewed at each PIR, ensuring that indicator budgeting remains responsive to emerging constraints. Overall, the design combined clear, measurable indicators with a modest but sufficient budget envelope, explicit provision for gender and provincial disaggregation, and a built-in risk screen, laying a credible foundation for evidence-based management without diverting excessive resources from technical delivery.

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting: Highly Satisfactory

### **Monitoring of Project Implementation**

97. During implementation the monitoring architecture proved agile, feeding real-time evidence into management decisions. Monthly activity trackers and the risk log revealed that COVID-19 travel bans and the delayed arrival of the embedded MRV expert were creating schedule slippage, and the PMU responded by restructuring the expert team and moving training online, which were recorded in the 2021 PIR as risk-mitigation measures. Subsequent PIRs show how data triggered two successive no-cost extensions, first to December 2023 and then to June 2024, justified by variance analyses that compared planned versus actual delivery rates for output milestones. The risk matrix was recalibrated each year, and the COVID risk shifted from "Significant" in 2021 to "Low" in 2024 as vaccination rates rose, which illustrates iterative learning. The monitoring data also underpinned budget reallocations. When implementation reviews showed that international-travel funds were underspent by 40 percent, management, with UNEP concurrence, moved the surplus to additional provincial workshops and database enhancements, a change captured under "minor amendments" as noted in the 2023 PIR. Training evaluation sheets,

analyzed after every session, highlighted persistent capacity gaps in provincial data verification and, as a result, a new short-course module on QA/QC was financed in early 2024, and the indicator on trainee confidence rose from 50 percent in 2022 to 67 percent in the final year of implementation. Collectively, the routine capture, analysis and application of monitoring evidence enabled adaptive management that protected the results chain despite exogenous shocks and kept spending aligned with emerging priorities.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Highly Satisfactory

### Project Reporting

98. Reporting requirements were met comprehensively and on time through UNEP's digital ecosystem: Umoja for expenditure, IPMR for results, and the annual PIR template for narrative synthesis. All four PIRs (2021-2024) document outcome ratings, GEF-core indicator progress, risk updates, ESSM compliance and gender performance, providing a transparent audit trail from work-plan to impact. Gender considerations feature throughout and the 2023 PIR notes 50 percent female participation in finance-tracking workshops and describes the inclusion of the LWU on the project task force. The results tables consistently present sex-disaggregated metrics, for example, female trainees exceeded the 30-person target by 100 percent in 2024, and the narrative highlights differential capacity needs, echoing survey findings that women dominate finance departments but seek deeper analytical skills. Financial and environmental reporting were comprehensive, as quarterly expenditure statements reconciled with the audits.

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

**Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory**

## H. Sustainability

### Socio-political Sustainability

99. The socio-political sustainability of the project's outcomes is significantly influenced by the level of government ownership and stakeholder buy-in. A key achievement towards this was the completion of the Agreement on the Institutional Mechanism for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation on Systemizing Data Collection, Sharing, and Reporting, described as a landmark agreement providing the mandate for MRV activities. Stakeholder engagement was considered crucial from the outset, with ministries, agencies, the private sector, and subnational levels involved through workshops, interviews, and other forms of interaction to ensure ownership and data collection. The project aimed to secure high-level support through consultations with political stakeholders. However, challenges remain, including a potential lack of high-level support from ministry leadership for implementing the new inter-ministerial mechanism. Stakeholder interviews revealed that while the new Agreement is known, it has not yet been fully operationalized, and further work is needed to assign focal points and test its use in a real-world setting. Continued government commitment and efforts to integrate climate change considerations into national development plans, as highlighted in discussions about the upcoming 10th National Socio-economic Development Plan, are critical for sustaining socio-political momentum.

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Likely

### Financial Sustainability

100. Financial sustainability of the project's outcomes is a key concern, particularly regarding the long-term operation and maintenance of the systems and ongoing capacity building efforts. The project was primarily funded by a GEF grant of USD 1,210,000, with an

in-kind co-financing commitment of USD 150,000 from the DCC. While the Lao PDR government contributed the committed in-kind co-financing in the form of staff time, office facilities, and other operating costs, the GEF funds were intended to cover technical assistance, system development, and capacity building activities. Maintaining systems like the NGHGDMS and the Climate Finance Tracking System requires dedicated budget and personnel for server maintenance, updates, and user support. The cost of maintaining the ODAMIS server, which incorporates the climate finance tracking component, was reportedly covered by project funding, raising questions about its long-term financial sustainability. For the university short courses, identifying additional funding sources was an explicit activity to ensure their economic sustainability and further development beyond the limited project period. A major risk identified was whether the government would allocate sufficient resources to operate and maintain these systems beyond the project. Yet, discussions with stakeholders during the mission underscore that ministry budgets for data verification remain thin and will need earmarked line items or a Phase 2 CBIT grant to further build capacities and buy-in.

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Likely

### **Institutional Sustainability**

101. The project aimed to build lasting capacity within Lao PDR's existing institutional framework. A central strategy was to leverage and build on existing institutions, such as the TWGCC. Partnerships with institutions like the NUL were established to anchor capacity building through short courses on GHG inventory and MRV, with the goal of integrating these into existing academic programs. As a result, The university's Faculty of Environmental Sciences has adopted a training curriculum into formal university courses that can support capacity building after the project. The project focused on clarifying institutional roles and responsibilities for data collection and reporting. However, challenges persist, including the lack of formal data sharing protocols and agreements between key ministries/entities like DCC and MPI, which is essential for accessing and utilizing climate finance data from the ODAMIS system for national reporting. The sustainability of institutional capacity is also threatened by high rates of staff turnover within ministries, leading to a loss of trained personnel and technical knowledge. While the project established technical working groups to mitigate this risk, strategies for continuous training and better knowledge transfer are needed. The integration of project-developed systems (like the NGHGDMS and Climate Finance Tracking tool) with existing platforms such as ODAMIS and NDC tracking systems is considered crucial for avoiding duplication and ensuring long-term coherence and efficiency.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Likely

**Rating for Sustainability (Likelihood): Moderately Likely**

## **I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues**

102. These factors are integrated in criteria A-H discussed in Section V above. Below are the individual assessment ratings for the factors.

### **Preparation and Readiness**

103. Initial mobilisation was hampered by COVID-19 restrictions and delays in recruiting international and national experts, forcing activity rescheduling and a revised workplan. Although DCC quickly set up a Project Management Unit and steering arrangements, essential tools such as sector templates and baseline data were not ready when implementation began, slowing downstream outputs. Financial systems followed UNEP rules, but internal procedures for rapid procurement proved cumbersome. Overall,

foundational elements were in place but not fully “implementation-ready”, resulting in a moderately satisfactory start-up.

Rating for Preparation and Readiness: Moderately Satisfactory

### **Quality of Project Management and Supervision**

104. *Quality of Project Management and Supervision by UNEP:* UNEP’s Task Manager maintained regular virtual troubleshooting during pandemic lockdowns, expedited no-cost extensions, and ensured fiduciary compliance. Technical backstopping (e.g., on IPCC software choices) was well received. Financial reporting templates were clear, but guidance on gender and safeguards was largely document-based rather than hands-on. Consequently, UNEP oversight is judged satisfactory but not exemplary, matching PIR self-ratings of “S” toward outcomes with some implementation lags.

105. *Quality of Project Management and Supervision by DCC:* The DCC provided strong political backing and chaired quarterly coordination meetings, but high staff turnover and competing mandates diluted day-to-day management. While budget execution met GEF policies, delays in hiring sector consultants and slow data requests to line ministries postponed several outputs. The unit adapted by introducing blended online training and accelerating procurement in 2024, bringing delivery back on track. Nevertheless, mid-course corrective actions were largely reactive. Performance is therefore moderately satisfactory, reflecting DCC’s commitment tempered by limited managerial capacity.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Moderately Satisfactory

### **Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation**

106. A nine-ministry Technical Working Group, provincial pilots, and two national workshops ensured broad inclusion, yet engagement was uneven. Surveys show provincial officials still lack clarity on data-entry roles and seldom coordinate with the central database team. Private-sector energy operators provided activity data only after repeated requests. On the positive side, collaboration with MPI on climate-finance tracking fostered valuable inter-ministerial links. Overall participation is satisfactory, with cooperation improving over the implementation period.

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory

### **Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality**

107. The project mainstreamed gender by listing the LWU on the TWGCC and monitoring sex-disaggregated training indicators (target ≥70% improved capacity). Yet most technical trainings still show male dominance, and no specific gender-impact analysis was undertaken for database or finance-tracking tools. Human-rights considerations, such as data transparency and equitable access, are implicit rather than explicit.

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Moderately Satisfactory

### **Environmental and Social Safeguards**

108. Classified “low-risk” at design, the project generated no adverse environmental impacts, as activities are office-based capacity building. Safeguard screening was completed, and the risk register reviewed annually with no issues identified. Procurement followed UNEP green-procurement notes, and workshops observed COVID-19 safety protocols. While safeguards performance is satisfactory, documentation could more clearly link safeguards to database system privacy and data-sharing ethics.

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

### Country Ownership and Driven-ness

109. Lao PDR ratified the Paris Agreement early and anchors CBIT outputs in its National Climate-Change Strategy. The Lao PDR Decree on Climate Change (2019) mandates that the MONRE shall play an important role in leading and coordinating with relevant ministries and parties to act against climate change, and focuses on developing a climate change data and information management system to support national coordination on climate planning and action. DCC's leadership, in-kind cofinancing of USD 150,000, and the adoption of the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Agreement that embeds results in national structures, indicate the country's commitment. However, routine ministry budgets for GHG inventory work remain scarce, risking sustainability once GEF funds cease.

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Moderately Satisfactory

### Communication and Public Awareness

110. The project produced bilingual factsheets, a public NGHGDMS portal, and quarterly newsletters, raising visibility among technical audiences. Two television spots and social-media posts during National Environment Day broadened outreach, yet systematic communication planning, especially feedback channels for provincial users, remains limited. Public awareness of transparency obligations is improving but not widespread, indicating room for a more robust, audience focused communication strategy in any follow-up phase.

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Satisfactory

**Rating for Factors Affecting Performance: Moderately Satisfactory**

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Conclusions

111. The CBIT Lao project sought to close a triple capacity gap of fragmented mandates, poor-quality data, and scarce technical skills that inhibited the country from complying with the Paris Agreement's ETF. The project had a delayed start to implementation due to COVID-19 related restrictions, but by June 2024 had delivered most of the outputs, significantly a legal decree on inter-ministerial cooperation, the NGHGDMS, and various trainings. These advances mean Lao PDR can now build upon consultant led inventories to country-driven, ETF-ready reporting, with sustained effort.

112. Stakeholder interviews during the mission confirm strong ownership of the new systems but also highlight practical barriers such as language, data templates, QA/QC, and staff turnover that still impede routine use. The UNFCCC Paris Agreement COP Decision 18/CMA.1 allows LDCs flexibility to determine their first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) schedule, provided they show progressive improvement and maintain or enhance past reporting frequency. The achievements here position Lao PDR to submit a voluntary BTR by 2026, if follow-up actions recommended below are implemented.

113. Main strengths are described below:

114. *Strategic alignment and adaptive design:* From inception the project was hard-wired into Lao PDR's national planning architecture. The 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP) refers to the establishment of a database system and collect information on sources of emissions, and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2021) assigns MONRE the exact outputs later financed by CBIT Lao PDR project. Because the logical framework already mirrored national priorities every COVID-driven work-plan revision (April 2021, February 2022) sailed through the PSC.

115. *A legally binding backbone for data sharing:* Negotiating the June 2024 Inter-Ministerial Decree took three drafts, several bilateral consultations and two cabinet briefings, but the payoff was immediate. The ministries finally received focal-point letters naming positions, an annex listing datasets with submission deadlines, and an escalation pathway for disputes.

116. *Deployment of the NGHGDMS:* The NGHGDMS is hosted on the government server in Vientiane, and has a modular architecture that allows future Tier 2 plug-ins. Stakeholders have praised the development of the NGHGDMS, but have also flagged the lack of Lao language menus, connectivity issues, upload ability challenges, difficult understandability, and unavailability of error checks.

117. *Human-capital pipeline via the National University of Laos:* Each NUOL course blended lectures with hands-on labs using dummy datasets. The pre- and post-tests shows an average competence gain of 34 percent, and 19 graduates have since joined a peer-to-peer MRV Champions network on WhatsApp. The university's Faculty of Environmental Sciences has adopted the curriculum into formal degrees courses, supporting annual intakes beyond the project's lifespan.

118. *Prototype climate-finance tracker (ODAMIS-CF):* The ODA MIS-CF workbook uses macros to replicate ETF Table 13, tags each disbursement with Rio Markers and automatically aggregates by donor and sector. The February 2024 pilot captured USD 74 million in climate-related support across 35 projects and flagged USD 8 million in double-counting. Finance officers lauded the "one-click" summary sheet but requested legal backing to compel line ministries to report.

119. Weaknesses and their causes are described below:

120. *Efficiency losses*: Border closures, 14-day quarantines and disrupted global supply chains added up to two no-cost extensions (total 18 months) and three budget revisions for the project. Because international consultants could not travel until 2023, the field work was compressed into two quarters and diminished some learning opportunities.

121. *Data-quality and template gaps*: Mission discussions revealed that waste departments still estimate municipal-solid-waste composition from a 2015 JICA survey, the Ministry of Energy uses calorific values from neighbouring Thailand, and the Ministry of Agriculture lacks a template for water-management regimes in rice paddies, a key determinant of CH<sub>4</sub> emissions. Most of the provincial respondents described existing Excel forms as too generic or too complicated, leading to ad-hoc modifications that break formula links when uploaded.

122. *NGHGDMS usability constraints*: The current version of the NGHGDMS is in English, offers no bulk-upload, forces manual entry, and lacks range, error, or consistency checks. Stakeholders have unanimously requested Lao menus, error flags and an offline sync feature.

123. *Un-institutionalised finance tracker*: Although ODAMIS-CF proved technically sound, responsibilities remain unclear: ODAMIS staff expect line ministries to input data, while ministries expect ODAMIS to scrape project ledgers. The absence of an MPI-DCC Memorandum of Understanding means data entry is voluntary, and officers warn that without legal compulsion, Rio Marker fields will not be marked.

124. *Financial and human-resource sustainability risks*: The NGHGDMS has been hosted at Lao National Internet Centre (LANIC) from 15th December 2023 and will be continued to be hosted till 15 December 2025. The annual hosting fees of approximately USD 600 are covered under an ICT Department grant that cannot be renewed without a MONRE budget line..

## B. Summary of project findings and ratings

125. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of '**Satisfactory**'.

### UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

The UNEP Evaluation Office formally quality assesses (see Annex X) management led Terminal Review reports and validates the performance ratings therein by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations.

The Evaluation Office assesses a Terminal Review report in the same way as it assesses the initial draft of a Terminal Evaluation report. It applies the following assumptions in its validation process:

- That what is being assessed is the contents of the report and the extent to which it makes a consistent and justifiable case for the performance ratings it records.
- That the consultant has, within the report, presented all the evidence that was made available to them.
- That the Review has been based on a robust Theory of Change, reconstructed where necessary, which reflects UNEP's definitions at all levels of results.
- That the project team and key stakeholders have already reviewed a draft version of the report and provided substantive comments and made factual corrections to the Review Consultant, who has responded to them. The Evaluation Office assumes, therefore, that it has received the Final (revised) version of the report.

In this instance the Evaluation Office finds that the Report is of Moderately Satisfactory quality and validates the overall project performance rating at the '**Satisfactory**' level.

**Table 10. Summary of project findings and ratings**

| Criterion                                                                            | Rating    | Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)                                                                                                                                        | EOU Validated Rating |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Strategic Relevance</b>                                                           | <b>HS</b> | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>HS</b>            |
| 1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities                               | HS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | HS                   |
| 2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities                                   | HS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | HS                   |
| 3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities | HS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | HS                   |
| 4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence                    | HS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | HS                   |
| <b>Quality of Project Design</b>                                                     | <b>HS</b> | <b>The rating is revised, the assessment revised based on additional information gathered during the review process and presented in the report regarding weaknesses in the design e.g. lack of Lao language options for provincial users/ staff.</b> | <b>S</b>             |
| <b>Nature of External Context</b>                                                    | <b>U</b>  | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>U</b>             |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>                                                                 | <b>S</b>  | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>S</b>             |
| 1. Availability of outputs                                                           | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | S                    |
| 2. Achievement of project outcomes                                                   | MS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | MS                   |
| 3. Likelihood of impact                                                              | L         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | L                    |
| <b>Financial Management</b>                                                          | <b>S</b>  | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>S</b>             |
| 1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures                             | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | S                    |
| 2. Completeness of project financial information                                     | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | S                    |
| 3. Communication between finance and project management staff                        | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | S                    |
| <b>Efficiency</b>                                                                    | <b>S</b>  | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>S</b>             |
| <b>Monitoring and Reporting</b>                                                      | <b>HS</b> | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>HS</b>            |
| 1. Monitoring design and budgeting                                                   | S         | The rating is revised based on the evidence presented that have assessed the quality of the design of the monitoring plan, including the completeness of project indicators at output level (no indicators for communication and outreach).           | S                    |
| 2. Monitoring of project implementation                                              | HS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | HS                   |
| 3. Project reporting                                                                 | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | MS                   |

| Criterion                                             | Rating    | Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)                                                                              | EOU Validated Rating |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Sustainability</b>                                 | <b>ML</b> | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                             | <b>ML</b>            |
| 1. Socio-political sustainability                     | ML        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | ML                   |
| 2. Financial sustainability                           | MU        | The rating has been revised as there is high dependency on future funding and required funding has not been secured to continue technical support, data management and monitoring.          | MU                   |
| 3. Institutional sustainability                       | ML        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | ML                   |
| <b>Factors Affecting Performance</b>                  | <b>MS</b> | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                             | <b>MS</b>            |
| 1. Preparation and readiness                          | MS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | MS                   |
| 2. Quality of project management and supervision      | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | S                    |
| 2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:                         | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | S                    |
| 2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:                        | MS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | MS                   |
| 3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation        | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | S                    |
| 4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality | MU        | The rating has been revised as the evidence presented does not demonstrate human rights/ gender consideration in project implementation, interpretation of results and project expenditure. | MU                   |
| 5. Environmental and social safeguards                | S         | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | S                    |
| 6. Country ownership and driven-ness                  | MS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | MS                   |
| 7. Communication and public awareness                 | MS        | The rating is validated.                                                                                                                                                                    | MS                   |
| <b>Overall Project Performance Rating</b>             | <b>S</b>  | <b>The rating is validated.</b>                                                                                                                                                             | <b>S</b>             |

## C. Lessons learned

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lesson Learned #1:</b> | Formalizing institutional arrangements through legal agreements is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective inter-ministerial cooperation. Operationalization and clear definition of specific roles are crucial next steps.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | The Agreement on the Institutional Mechanism for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation was a significant achievement of the project. However, stakeholders indicated that despite this agreement, the mechanism still needs to be fully operationalized and mainstreamed, with continued ambiguity over specific responsibilities, such as data certification. This highlights that legal frameworks need practical implementation plans and continuous testing.                                    |
| <b>Lesson Learned #2:</b> | Capacity building for complex transparency requirements must move beyond general system training to focus on the foundational, sector-specific processes of data collection, management, and technical verification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | Stakeholder feedback consistently emphasized that training received was often too general and did not adequately cover the practical, technical aspects of data collection and verification necessary for accurate GHG inventories and climate finance reporting. Ministries struggled to apply general training to their specific sector data challenges, indicating a need for more tailored and hands-on approaches focused on the data itself before system entry.                      |
| <b>Lesson Learned #3:</b> | Designing and implementing national transparency systems requires careful consideration of local context, including language barriers, safeguards for privacy, and existing data management practices, to ensure usability, security, and widespread adoption.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | The NGHGDMS and other system components faced usability challenges due to English language interfaces in key areas, lack of compatibility with common offline data management tools (like Excel import), and mismatches between system categories and relevant national data sources. Incorporating full localization and designing workflows compatible with existing practices (like using standardized Excel templates) is essential for practical use by line ministries.               |
| <b>Lesson Learned #4:</b> | High staff turnover poses a significant threat to capacity retention and system sustainability, necessitating embedded strategies for continuous knowledge transfer and repeat training to ensure continuity of expertise.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | Frequent changes in personnel within relevant government departments resulted in the loss of trained staff, creating gaps in technical knowledge and system usage continuity. This experience underscores the need for ongoing capacity building efforts beyond initial project training, such as establishing perpetual induction programs or regular refresher courses, to maintain a sufficient pool of skilled personnel capable of operating and maintaining the transparency systems. |

## D. Recommendations

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation #1:</b>                                       | Formalize and strengthen the institutional arrangements and data sharing protocols for climate finance tracking, particularly by establishing a formal reporting protocol or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between DCC and MPI to ensure DCC's timely access to comprehensive climate finance data recorded in ODAMIS for national reporting.                                                                                                |
| <b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b> | Roles and responsibilities for climate finance tracking and coordination are not yet clearly defined or operationalized across all stakeholders. A critical gap exists in the formal mechanism for DCC to systematically obtain and utilize the climate finance data being entered into the MPI-managed ODAMIS, hindering national reporting efforts. Data availability from project developers and the private sector also remains a challenge. |
| <b>Priority Level:</b>                                          | High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Type of Recommendation</b>                                   | Institutional, Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Responsibility:</b>                                          | MPI (Department of International Cooperation), DCC (MONRE), relevant ministries (MEM, MAF, MPWT, MOIC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>                      | Within 6 months of Management Response endorsement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

126. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.D Effectiveness, Climate Finance Tracking and ODAMIS, Stakeholder interview insights

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation #2:</b>                                       | Make technical improvements to the NGHGDMS, including developing a functional import feature for offline templates, providing full translation of the system backend into Lao, enhancing QA/QC features, automated error/uncertainty checks, JSON export to UNFCCC templates, and incorporating key missing sectors and methodologies for higher-tier calculations.      |
| <b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b> | The NGHGDMS currently has significant functional limitations that impede user adoption and efficient data management, such as the absence of a working import function, manual uploads, predominant use of English in the backend, lack of automatic error validation, and the need for inclusion of additional relevant sectors and more advanced calculation features. |
| <b>Priority Level:</b>                                          | High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Type of Recommendation</b>                                   | Technical, System Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Responsibility:</b>                                          | DCC, MONRE, System Developers, potentially supported by Development Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>                      | Design update by Q4-2025, roll-out Q1-2026.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

127. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.D Effectiveness, NGHGDMS, Stakeholder interview insights

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation #3:</b>                                       | Develop and implement strategies for the sustainable technical support and maintenance of the national transparency systems (NGHGDMS, ODAMIS climate finance module) and for addressing staff turnover through dedicated long-term budget allocation for system server hosting and maintenance, permanent IT administrator, and the institutionalization of continuous, practical training programs or induction packages for new staff.                                                                                    |
| <b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b> | The long-term functionality and usability of the developed systems are at risk without dedicated, sustainable funding and personnel for ongoing technical support and maintenance beyond project cycles. High rates of staff turnover within ministries lead to a continuous loss of trained personnel and accumulated technical knowledge, necessitating ongoing, accessible capacity building. Currently the server hosting costs are covered only to December 2025, and there are no dedicated funds for staff training. |
| <b>Priority Level:</b>                                          | High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Type of Recommendation</b>                                   | Institutional, Financial, Capacity Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Responsibility:</b>                                          | MONRE, DCC, MPI, relevant ministries, government (MOF, National Assembly)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>                      | Secure commitment letters Q4-2025, and insert into FY 2026 budget.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

128. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.H Sustainability, Stakeholder interview insights

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation #4:</b>                                       | Develop and institutionalize standardized, sector-specific data collection forms and technical verification procedures within relevant line ministries to improve the quality, consistency, and availability of primary activity data required for GHG inventory calculations and accurate climate finance tracking. Institutionalize the climate-finance tracking tool through an MPI-DCC MoU and integrate Rio-marker tagging in the 2026 Public-Finance Act revision including upgrade of the ODAMIS system to have import and export functions for climate-finance data to meet the ETF requirements. |
| <b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b> | A fundamental barrier is the lack of detailed, standardized primary data at the source level within line ministries and limited technical capacity among staff for collecting, managing, and rigorously verifying this data according to specific GHG inventory and climate finance reporting requirements. Existing data often resides in disparate, non-standardized formats.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Priority Level:</b>                                          | High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Type of Recommendation</b>                                   | Capacity Development, Technical Assistance, Institutional                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Responsibility:</b>                                          | DCC, MPI Department of International Cooperations, relevant line ministries (MAF, MEM, MOIC, MPWT, MONRE Waste sector), potentially Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>                      | MoU signed within 9 months; legislation amended by Q3-2026.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

129. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.D Effectiveness, V.H.

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Recommendation #5:</b>                                       | Design and secure funding for the implementation of a Phase II of the CBIT Lao PDR project building on the foundations laid by Phase I and focusing on QA/QC, sector expansion for EFs, and full ETF-compliant reporting for the BTR                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b> | The first phase of the CBIT project has established foundational elements, including systems and institutional agreements, but significant technical and institutional gaps remain in data collection, management, quality assurance, verification, and the full operationalization of these tools and mechanisms. These gaps hinder full compliance with the ETF and require further targeted support beyond the scope and duration of Phase I. |
| <b>Priority Level:</b>                                          | High                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Type of Recommendation</b>                                   | Strategic, Programmatic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Responsibility:</b>                                          | UNEP, GEF, DCC/MONRE, Relevant Line Ministries, Development Partners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>                      | Concept note by Q4-2025; CEO endorsement by Q4-2026; Phase 2 launch Q1-2027.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

130. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.D Effectiveness, Section VI.A Conclusions

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 11. Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

| Page Ref | Stakeholder comment | Reviewer Response |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|
|          | n/a                 | n/a               |
|          |                     |                   |
|          |                     |                   |
|          |                     |                   |

## ANNEX II. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

| Review Questions                                                                                                              | Sub-Questions/Indicators                                                                                                                                                                            | Sources                                                                                                                                                                                       | Methods/Informants                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A. Strategic Relevance</b>                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                 |
| Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                 |
| To what extent was the project aligned to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities | Was the project design consistent with UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities?                                                                                                                      | Project documents, national policy documents and development plans<br>GEF strategic goals and objectives<br>UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities | Document review                                                 |
| Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                 |
| To what extent was the project aligned to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities                                                  | Was the project design consistent with the GEF focal area objective and priorities?                                                                                                                 | Project documents, Inception reports<br>National policy documents and development plans<br>GEF strategic goals and objectives                                                                 | Document review                                                 |
| Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                 |
| To what extent was the project relevant to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities               | The extent of evidence of alignment with global, regional, sub regional and national environmental priorities                                                                                       | National development policies and plans<br>Relevant national environmental and development policies<br>CBIT global and regional initiatives<br>UNEP, PMU, national ministries                 | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, and stakeholders. |
| Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                 |
| Does the project add value to ongoing efforts at the country level, and to what extent?                                       | To what extent were ongoing initiatives and lessons from past initiatives integrated into design? Were there synergies between the project and other initiatives in the same country and/or region? | ProDoc, PIRs, project stakeholders<br>UNEP, PMU, national ministries                                                                                                                          | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMO, and stakeholders. |
| <b>B. Quality of Project Design</b>                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                 |

| Review Questions                                                                                                                    | Sub-Questions/Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Sources                                                    | Methods/Informants                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To what extent was the project design adequate to address the barriers to achieving government's objectives and aims under the PCA? | How does the project score against the key design features set out by GEF/UNEP?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Prodoc, design quality assessment template,                | Quantitative ranking based on provided project design quality assessment template |
| C. Nature of External Context                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                            |                                                                                   |
| To what extent was the project implementation context facilitating/ constraining to project delivery?                               | What external contextual factors beyond the control of the affected the delivery of the project including the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, presidential election and other changes? Evidence of adaptive measures adopted by the project team and to what effect?                                                                       | Prodoc, PIRs, PSC meetings minutes<br>PMU, UNEP            | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU                                      |
| D. Effectiveness                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                            |                                                                                   |
| Availability of Outputs                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                            |                                                                                   |
| How successful was the project in delivering its outputs, and how useful were the outputs to stakeholders?                          | Evidence of outputs delivered against the results framework. To what extent do beneficiaries consider the outputs to be of quality and adequate?                                                                                                                                                                                               | Prodoc, PIRs, output deliverables, UNEP, PMU, stakeholders | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, and stakeholders                    |
| Achievement of Project Outcomes                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                            |                                                                                   |
| How successful was the project in achieving its outcomes?                                                                           | Evidence of the level of progress against outcome targets in the results framework regarding adoption and use of transparency framework and instruments by state and non-state actors.                                                                                                                                                         | Prodoc, PIRs, UNEP, PMU, stakeholders                      | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, and stakeholders                    |
| Likelihood of Impact                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                            |                                                                                   |
| What is the likelihood of project results and outcomes contributing to long lasting impacts.                                        | To what extent has the project played a catalytic role and exuded potential for scalability/replication? What evidence exists considering the likelihood that long lasting effects will be achieved because of the intervention? Did the project produce any positive or negative unintended/unexpected results? (applicable to each outcome)? | Prodoc, PIRs, UNEP, PMU, stakeholders                      | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, and stakeholders                    |
| E. Financial Management                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                            |                                                                                   |

| Review Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Sub-Questions/Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Sources                                                                         | Methods/Informants                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| To what extent did the project team adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures? To what extent have financial reports been kept and complete, and to what extent was communication between the project manager and fund manager fluid and facilitated adaptive management? | Level of perceived adherence to policies and procedures by project teams; level of completeness of required financial information in line with UNEP guidelines; level of overall awareness of overall financial situation and proactiveness in addressing concerns | Prodoc, financial reports, Audit report, PIRs, FMO, PMU, UNEP                   | Document review, communication with FMO, PMU, and UNEP |
| F. Efficiency                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                        |
| To what extent was the project delivered in a timely manner and within budget                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Level of resource use efficiency and budget revisions. What measures were taken to ensure value for money – cost savings, leveraging existing structures, and timely delivery of this intervention?                                                                | Prodoc, Financial reports, Audit report, PIRs, budget revisions, FMO, PMU, UNEP | Document review, communication with FMO, PMU, and UNEP |
| G. Monitoring and Reporting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                        |
| Monitoring Design and Budgeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                        |
| How relevant and appropriate were the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress? To what extent was the M&E plan and budget sufficient to track progress towards targets                                                                                | Evidence of SMART indicators; sufficiency of indicators to fully capture change pursued including disaggregated effects; evidence of how the M&E plan and budget was comprehensive Level of spending on M&E budget.                                                | Prodoc, PIRs, UNEP, PMU                                                         | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU           |
| Monitoring of Project Implementation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                        |
| To what extent did the M&E plan operate as planned? (To what extent did the project deliver on GEF Core indicators.)                                                                                                                                                               | Evidence of progress monitoring and adjustments Level of satisfaction with project M&E; evidence of efforts to collect data beyond quantitative - harvesting changes and outcomes; evidence of how M&E data was used for decision making.                          | Prodoc, PIRs, UNEP, PMU                                                         | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU           |
| Project Reporting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                        |

| Review Questions                                                                                              | Sub-Questions/Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Sources                 | Methods/Informants                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| To what extent were UNEP and donor reporting commitments and guidelines fulfilled?                            | Evidence of any gaps in reporting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | PIRs, UNEP, PMU         | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU               |
| <b>H. Sustainability</b>                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                            |
| <b>Socio-political Sustainability</b>                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                            |
| Are project achievements likely to live beyond the project initial period from a socio-political perspective? | What is the likelihood that the results of the project will continue to be useful or even remain after the project has ended? Evidence of specific actions undertaken by the project that promote socio-political sustainability?                                                                                                                                          | PIRs, UNEP, PMU         | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| <b>Financial Sustainability</b>                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                            |
| Are project achievements likely to live beyond the initial project period from a financial perspective?       | Evidence of specific actions undertaken by the project that promote financial sustainability?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | PIRs, UNEP, PMU         | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| <b>Institutional Sustainability</b>                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                            |
| Are project achievements likely to live beyond the initial project period from an institutional perspective?  | Evidence of specific actions undertaken by the project that promote institutional sustainability?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | PIRs, UNEP, PMU         | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| <b>I. Factors Affecting Performance</b>                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                            |
| <b>Preparation and Readiness</b>                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                            |
| What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project             | Level of perceived preparedness of the project from design to first disbursement of funds; evidence of stakeholder engagement prior to commencement of implementation. To what extent did UNEP provide project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, monitoring and supervision (technical, administrative and operational)? | Prodoc, PIRs, UNEP, PMU | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| <b>Quality of Project Management and Supervision</b>                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |                                                            |

| Review Questions                                                                                  | Sub-Questions/Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Sources         | Methods/Informants                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project | How effectively did the PMU carry out its role and responsibilities in the management and administration of the project? What were the main challenges in terms of project management and administration? To what extent were risks identified and managed? To what extent did the steering committee and other governance structures operate as planned? | PIRs, UNEP, PMU | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |                                                            |
| What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project | To which extent did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to achieve project results? What were the challenges and benefits/outcomes of this engagement?                                                                                                                                          | PIRs, UNEP, PMU | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |                                                            |
| What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project | To which extent cross cutting issues including human rights and gender equality were adequately considered in project design and implementation? Were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?                                                                                                            | PIRs, UNEP, PMU | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| Environmental and Social Safeguards                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |                                                            |
| What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project | To what extent were environmental safeguard concerns effectively identified and addressed during project implementation? What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?                                                                                               | PIRs, UNEP, PMU | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| Country Ownership and Driven-ness                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |                                                            |
| What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project | Perceived level of quality of engagement of government and public sector agencies in the project and role in scaling up and ensuring sustainability. Are stakeholders utilizing the benefits and products from this project                                                                                                                               | PIRs, UNEP, PMU | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |
| Communication and Public Awareness                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |                                                            |
| What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project | How does the project evaluate, document and share its results, lessons learned and experiences? What actions were undertaken to ensure public awareness and ownership and to what effect?                                                                                                                                                                 | PIRs, UNEP, PMU | Document review<br>Interviews with UNEP, PMU, stakeholders |

### ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

**Table 12. People consulted during the Review (names excluded)**

| Organisation                                          | Position                                                   | Role in the project / Review                     | Gender |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------|
| DCC, MONRE                                            | Deputy Director-General                                    | National focal point / Steering Committee member | F      |
| DCC, MONRE                                            | Deputy Director, GHG Mitigation Division (Project Manager) | PMU lead & national counterpart                  | F      |
| DCC, MONRE                                            | Deputy Director, GHG Mitigation Division                   | Technical focal point – mitigation               | M      |
| DCC, MONRE                                            | Deputy Director, Information Division                      | Data / MRV focal point                           | M      |
| DCC, MONRE                                            | Technical Officer, GHG Mitigation Division                 | Inventory data compiler                          | M      |
| DCC, MONRE                                            | Technical Officer, GHG Mitigation Division                 | Inventory data compiler                          | M      |
| DCC, MONRE                                            | Technical Officer, GHG Mitigation Division                 | Inventory data compiler                          | F      |
| Planning and Finance Department, MONRE                | Deputy Director                                            | Finance & budget coordination                    | M      |
| Forestry Department, MAF                              | Technical Officer                                          | AFOLU data provider                              | M      |
| Agriculture Dept, MAF                                 | Technical Officer                                          | AFOLU data provider                              | F      |
| Livestock and Fisheries Dept, MAF                     | Technical Officer                                          | AFOLU data provider                              | M      |
| ICT (independent)                                     | National ICT Expert                                        | NGHGDMS back-end support                         | M      |
| International Cooperation Department, MPI             | Deputy Director                                            | ODAMIS / climate-finance focal                   | M      |
| Industry Department, MOIC                             | Technical Officer                                          | Industrial-process data provider                 | F      |
| External Finance Department, MOF                      | Technical Officer                                          | Climate-finance data provider                    | F      |
| Debt Management Department, MOF                       | Deputy Director                                            | Finance-tracking QA/QC                           | M      |
| Cabinet, MoES                                         | Technical Officer                                          | Education sector liaison                         | F      |
| Cabinet, Lao Women's Union                            | Division Director                                          | Gender & stakeholder outreach                    | F      |
| Energy Management Department, MEM                     | Technical Officer                                          | Energy-sector data provider                      | M      |
| Energy Promotion Department, MEM                      | Technical Officer                                          | Energy-sector data provider                      | M      |
| Business Energy Department, MEM                       | Technical Officer                                          | Energy-sector data provider                      | F      |
| Energy Management Department, MEM                     | Deputy Director                                            | Energy-sector QA/QC                              | F      |
| Planning and Cooperation Department, MEM              | Technical Officer                                          | Energy-sector coordination                       | M      |
| Road Department, MPWT                                 | Technical Officer                                          | Transport-sector data provider                   | F      |
| Urban and Housing Department, MPWT                    | Deputy Director                                            | Transport-sector data provider                   | M      |
| Vientiane City Office for Management & Service (MPWT) | Deputy Director                                            | City-level waste/transport data                  | M      |
| Independent expert                                    | National Expert – Climate Finance                          | Finance-tracking methodology                     | M      |
| National University of Laos, FES                      | National Expert – GHG MRV                                  | Academic support & training                      | M      |
| UNEP Climate Change Division                          | Task Manager (GEF CCM Unit)                                | Implementing Agency supervision                  | M      |
| UNEP Climate Change Division                          | Programme Officer (GEF CCM Unit)                           | Implementing Agency support                      | M      |

## ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

### **Project planning and reporting documents**

- GEF-6 Request for project endorsement/approval
- CEO Endorsement Document for “Strengthening Lao PDR’s Institutional Capacity to Comply with the ETF” (UNEP/GEF ID 10039)
- Project Cooperation Agreement and subsequent two amendments for extending the project duration (no-cost extensions)
- Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) for 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24.
- Final Technical Report
- Final statement of accounts dated 28.11.2024
- Audit reports for 01 January 2020 to 31 December 2022, and 01 January 2023 to 30 June 2024.
- Co-financing report for December 2019 to June 2024.
- Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting minutes for the first, second, and final meetings.
- Communication from UNEP Financial Officer on the last reported expenditures from the PMU.
- Online demonstration of the ODAMIS by MPI.

### **Project Outputs:**

- Output 1.1: Gap analysis of the institutional arrangements and capacities to comply with the ETF
- Output 1.2: Final Report Institutional Mechanism for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation on Systemizing GHG Data Collection Sharing and Reporting
- Output 1.2: Agreement on the Establishment of a Coordinating Committee for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation regarding Greenhouse Gas emission Data Collection, Sharing and Reporting
- Output 1.3: User Manual for National Greenhouse Gas Database Management System (NGHGDMS)
- Output 1.3: User Guideline for National Greenhouse Gas Database Management System (NGHGDMS)
- Output 1.3: National GHG Database Management System Final Report
- Output 1.4: Technical Report Country-specific Forest Fire Data and Emission Factor Development
- Output 1.5: Data Entry Template for National Greenhouse Gas Database Management System (NGHGDMS)
- Output 1.6: Capacity and Training Needs Assessment Report for MRV System Management and GHG Inventories
- Output 1.6: Short courses training on GHG Inventory
- Output 1.6: Short courses training on MRV Development
- Output 1.8: Data Entry form that integrate with Central Questionnaires for National GHG Inventory

- Output 2.1: Report on the Assessment of Official Development Assistance (ODA) Tracking System in Lao PDR
- Output 2.2 Final Report of Climate Finance in Public Sector
- Output 2.1: User Manual for Simple Climate Finance Tracking System in Lao PDR
- Third national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory, based on data from 2014
- First Biennial Update Report (BUR)

Previous reviews/evaluations:

- Project Impact Assessment report

Reference Documents and Guidelines:

- ASEAN Joint Statement on Climate Change to the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP26)
- Green Climate Fund Approved Readiness Proposal for Strategic Frameworks support for Lao PDR through GGFI, 2018
- Green Climate Fund Approved Readiness Proposal for Resilient COVID-19 recovery and transformational pipeline to boost climate actions in agriculture, land and water sectors in Lao PDR, implemented by FAO, 2021
- Green Climate Fund Lao PDR Country Programme
- Lao PDR's First National Communication
- Lao PDR's Second National Communication
- Lao PDR's Nationally Determined Contribution
- Lao PDR National Strategy on Climate Change toward 2030
- Lao PDR 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP)
- The Paris Agreement, 2015
- UNDP Enhancing Climate Change Transparency, 2023
- UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021
- UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025
- UNFCCC handbook on Institutional Arrangements to support MRV/transparency of climate action and support
- UNFCCC Report of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement on the third part of its first session, held in Katowice from 2 to 15 December 2018
- UNFCCC Reference Manual for the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement

## ANNEX V. REVIEW ITINERARY

**Mission dates: 24-28 February 2025**

**Mission Location: Vientiane, Lao PDR.**

**Details of meetings:**

**Meeting 1 – 25 February 2025**

*Venue: Department of Climate Change (DCC), MONRE, Vientiane*

**Table 13. Participants of Meeting 1 on 25 February 2025 (Names excluded)**

| No. | Position                | Department / Division        | Ministry / Organisation |
|-----|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1   | Deputy Director-General | Climate Change Department    | MONRE                   |
| 2   | Deputy Director         | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD | MONRE                   |
| 3   | Deputy Director         | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD | MONRE                   |
| 4   | Deputy Director         | Information Division, CCD    | MONRE                   |
| 5   | Technical Officer       | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD | MONRE                   |
| 6   | Technical Officer       | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD | MONRE                   |
| 7   | Technical Officer       | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD | MONRE                   |
| 8   | Technical Officer       | Forestry Department          | MAF                     |
| 9   | Technical Officer       | Agriculture Department       | MAF                     |
| 10  | Technical Officer       | Livestock & Fisheries Dept.  | MAF                     |
| 11  | ICT National Expert     | —                            | Independent             |
| 12  | Consultant              | —                            | UNEP                    |

**Meeting 2 – 26 February 2025**

*Venue: Department of Climate Change (DCC), MONRE, Vientiane*

**Table 14. Participants of Meeting 2 on 26 February 2025 (Names excluded)**

| No. | Position                | Department / Division           | Ministry / Organisation |
|-----|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1   | Deputy Director-General | Climate Change Department       | MONRE                   |
| 2   | Deputy Director         | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD    | MONRE                   |
| 3   | Deputy Director         | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD    | MONRE                   |
| 4   | Technical Officer       | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD    | MONRE                   |
| 5   | Technical Officer       | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD    | MONRE                   |
| 6   | Technical Officer       | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD    | MONRE                   |
| 7   | Deputy Director         | Planning & Finance Department   | MONRE                   |
| 8   | Deputy Director         | International Cooperation Dept. | MPI                     |
| 9   | Technical Officer       | Industry Department             | MOIC                    |
| 10  | Technical Officer       | External Finance Department     | MOF                     |
| 11  | Deputy Director         | Debt Management Department      | MOF                     |
| 12  | Technical Officer       | Cabinet                         | MoES                    |
| 13  | Division Director       | Cabinet                         | Lao Women's Union       |
| 14  | Consultant              | —                               | UNEP                    |

### Meeting 3 – 27 February 2025

Venue: Department of Climate Change (DCC), MONRE, Vientiane

**Table 15. Participants of Meeting 3 on 27 February 2025 (Names excluded)**

| No. | Position                          | Department / Division                          | Ministry / Organisation     |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1   | Deputy Director-General           | Climate Change Department                      | MONRE                       |
| 2   | Deputy Director                   | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD                   | MONRE                       |
| 3   | Deputy Director                   | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD                   | MONRE                       |
| 4   | Technical Officer                 | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD                   | MONRE                       |
| 5   | Technical Officer                 | GHG Mitigation Division, CCD                   | MONRE                       |
| 6   | Technical Officer                 | Energy Management Dept.                        | MEM                         |
| 7   | Technical Officer                 | Energy Promotion Dept.                         | MEM                         |
| 8   | Technical Officer                 | Business Energy Dept.                          | MEM                         |
| 9   | Deputy Director                   | Energy Management Dept.                        | MEM                         |
| 10  | Technical Officer                 | Planning & Co-operation Dept.                  | MEM                         |
| 11  | Technical Officer                 | Road Department                                | MPWT                        |
| 12  | Deputy Director                   | Urban & Housing Department                     | MPWT                        |
| 13  | Deputy Director                   | Vientiane City Office for Management & Service | MPWT                        |
| 14  | National Expert – Climate Finance | —                                              | Freelance                   |
| 15  | National Expert – GHG MRV         | Faculty of Environmental Science               | National University of Laos |
| 16  | Consultant                        | —                                              | UNEP                        |

## ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

### Rahul Teku Vaswani

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Profession</b>         | Climate change and sustainability consultant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Nationality</b>        | Indian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Country experience</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Americas: USA, Costa Rica</li> <li>Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Thailand, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Education</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Arts in International Affairs, December 2003, The American University, Washington, DC, USA</li> <li>Master of Natural Resources and Sustainable Development, May 2003, United Nations Mandated University for Peace, Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica</li> <li>Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering, January 1999, Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur, India</li> </ul> |

Mr. Rahul Teku Vaswani is an independent climate change and sustainability consultant with over 20 years of experience in working or consulting with indigenous communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector, United Nations (UN), and Green Climate Fund (GCF) in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating regional/national programmes/projects for capacity building, low-emission climate-resilient development, waste management, water and energy efficiency, and renewable energy generation. He has advised governments and clients in developing and financing climate change projects, facilitating multistakeholder partnerships, and supporting technology adoption and acceleration. His experience includes managing country teams/portfolios, preparing project proposals and concepts, conducting compliance assessments and social-ecological-economic feasibility analyses, developing institutional environmental and social safeguards (ESS) and financial policies, designing portfolio performance management and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems, delivering technical assistance programs, and conducting project evaluations.

#### Independent reviews/evaluations:

- Evaluated and updated the AML/CFT, ESS, and Gender policies and GRM and MEL system of the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation (BTFC) for compliance to GCF policies/standards.
- Evaluated and improved The Pacific Community's MEL system and processes to ensure compliance with GCF policies and project monitoring and reporting standards.
- Conducted the performance audit for the UNDP Regional Bureau of Africa's country-level programs for the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigation.
- Conducted Midterm Reviews of five UNDP-GEF full-sized projects: "Enabling Solid State Lighting Market Transformation and Promotion of Light Emitting Diode Lighting in China," "Greening of Logistics Industry in Zhejiang Province in China," "Promoting Energy Efficient Motors in Chinese Industries," "Accelerating the Development and Commercialization of Fuel Cell Vehicles in China," and "Energy Efficient Standards, Certification, and Labelling for Appliances and Equipment in Kazakhstan".
- Conducted Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP project on "Emissions Trading Scheme Phase II in China".
- Evaluated government programs for solar photovoltaic power installations, passive solarization of homes, and construction of solar greenhouses for energy and food security in mountain communities (India).

## ANNEX VII. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

### Terminal Review of the UNEP project

**“GEF ID: 10039 - Strengthening Lao PDR's Institutional Capacity to Comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement (CBIT)”**

### Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

(This section describes what is to be reviewed. Key parameters are: project timeframe, funding envelope, results framework and geographic scope)

#### 1. Project General Information

**Table 1. Project summary**

(This is a generic table to summarise a project. Integrate the information below with the standard ‘project summary’ table of the relevant donor e.g. Adaptation Fund, GCF, GEF).

|                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              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| UNEP PIMS ID/SMA <sup>4</sup> ID:                                                                                                                                                       | 38901                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Grant ID (if applicable):                                       | S1-32CBL-000001<br>GEF ID: 10039 |
| UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):                                                                                                                                                 | GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Mitigation Branch, Climate Change Division, UNEP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                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| Executing Partners:                                                                                                                                                                     | Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                 |                                  |
| Sources of Funding:                                                                                                                                                                     | Country <sup>5</sup> (ies): Not Applicable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Institution <sup>6</sup> Name/Type: Global Environment Facility |                                  |
| Relevant SDG(s):                                                                                                                                                                        | SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         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| MTS (all that apply):                                                                                                                                                                   | Climate Change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | UNEP approval date:                                             | 12 December 2019                 |
| POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022):<br><br><b>OR</b><br><br>POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022) | 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<sup>4</sup> SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.

<sup>6</sup> Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

|                                             |                           |                                                                  |                           |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Planned completion date:                    | 31 Dec 2022               | Actual operational completion date:                              | 30 June 2024              |
| Planned total project budget at approval:   | USD 1,210,000             | Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:                 | 1,008,793.47              |
| Planned Extra-budgetary Funds:              | Cash:<br>In-kind: 150,000 | Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:                                   | Cash:<br>In-kind: 121,500 |
|                                             |                           | Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of [date]: | Cash: Not applicable      |
| First disbursement:                         | 10 February 2020          | Planned date of financial closure:                               | 31 January 2025           |
| No. of formal project revisions:            | 3                         | Date of last approved project revision:                          | 23 November 2023          |
| No. of Steering Committee meetings:         | 2                         | Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:                         | 24 October 2023           |
| Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date): | Not applicable            | Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):                       | Not applicable            |
| Terminal Evaluation (planned date):         | Dec 2022                  | Terminal Evaluation (actual date):                               | August 2024 to March 2025 |
| Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):       | Lao PDR                   | Coverage – Implementing Region(s):                               | Asia                      |
| Dates of previous project phases:           | Not applicable            | Status of future project phases:                                 | Not applicable            |

## 2. Project Rationale<sup>7</sup>

Since its ratification of the UNFCCC, the Government of Lao PDR has actively and consistently participated in processes related to the Convention and implemented necessary institutional arrangements for climate change. In 2008, the National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCC), under the chair of the Deputy Prime Minister was established to draft the Climate Change Strategy for Lao PDR. As part of the institutionalization of climate change, eight technical working groups with stakeholders and representatives from different ministries were established under the NSCC. Upon completion of the Climate Change Strategy in 2010, the NSCC has been integrated as the Technical Working Group on Climate Change (TWGCC) into the National Environment Committee (NEC) whose mandate has been expanded to also include climate change. The TWGCC is chaired by the Director General of Department of Climate Change under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and includes eight representatives from different ministries and organizations<sup>8</sup>. The TWGCC acts as focal point for coordination among sectors at the central and local levels regarding climate change. Its duties include, among others to review and provide feedback and technical input on policies, strategies, action plans and other documents related to climate change as well as to identify sector-specific research needs.

<sup>7</sup> Rationale captured in the GEF CEO endorsement document

<sup>8</sup> These ministries/organisations are the following: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Department of Cultivation); Ministry of Energy and Mines (Institute of Renewable Energy Promotion); Ministry of Public Works and Transport (Department of Transport); Ministry of Science and Technology; Ministry of Industry and Commerce (Department of Industry and Handicraft); Ministry of Public Health; Ministry of Education and Sport and the Lao Women Union.

The Department of Climate Change has the mandate to coordinate the development and preparation of the National Communications. In pursuant of this mandate, the department has established institutional arrangements for compiling the NCs. Under this structure, the ad hoc Technical Working Group on Climate Change, established to support preparation of NCs, provides technical advice to the DCC in carrying out its mandates on climate change, including preparation and submission of NCs.

Lao PDR's NCs have been made possible with financial assistance by the GEF through United Nations Development Programme (FNC and SNC). In addition, the Tata Energy Research Institute of India, for instance, provided technical support for the GHG inventory of the FNC. While the FNC was heavily dependent on external consultants, the SNC saw a stronger involvement of national experts. In the preparation process of the SNC, five technical working groups were established to provide the necessary activity data. Several trainings and technical consultation workshops, with technical support from neighboring countries, were carried out to enhance the capacity of those technical working groups. National experts were leading the mitigation studies. However, since the submission of the SNC, very few experts from Lao PDR have had opportunities to participate in capacity-building activities supported by international organizations. The preparation of Lao PDR's TNC and first BUR also sees the involvement of national consultants, which have already been engaged/involved in earlier NC processes. In addition, the country has very limited experience with monitoring the impact of climate actions and the related progress of NDC goals, which is a key requirement of future reporting under the Biennial Transparency Reports. In its NDC it is specifically stated that "Lao PDR recognises that its capacity with respect to MRV requires development if the climate change goals set out in this INDC are to be realized". The NDC further includes the need for a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) MRV Framework as well as the need for a tracking system for climate finance.

Currently, there is neither an established definition of climate finance, nor a standardized methodology of tracking climate finance and support received. The monitoring, reporting and verification of climate finance flows and associated results is however considered one of the four key components of "climate finance readiness"<sup>9</sup> for using climate finance in a transformative way at the national level. In line with this approach, Lao PDR hosted a joint National Dialogue for the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility in March 2019 with a view to synergize the financing and maximize impacts in the country. With the support of UNDP, the country has conducted a "Disaster Risk Management Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (DRM-PEIR)" in 2017, providing analysis on the financial flows related to disaster risk management in the country. This exercise showed that expenditures related to activities for disaster risk management were not clearly identified in the budget data and that the descriptive details in the budget lines was very limited. While this methodology builds on the established "Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (CPEIR)", the country still lacks a national system and methodologies to support regular, coherent and consistent tracking of climate finance, in line with international reporting requirements.

The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) is in the process of developing an Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Management Information System, potentially providing an entry point for climate finance tracking in the country. However, targeted and strategic efforts are required for developing and implementing a nation-wide system for climate finance tracking, as identified in Lao PDR's NDC.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/turkey/docs/Publications/EnvSust/UNDP-Readiness\\_for\\_Climate\\_Finance.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/turkey/docs/Publications/EnvSust/UNDP-Readiness_for_Climate_Finance.pdf)

Despite improvements of the national inventory process from the FNC to the SNC and a few existing institutional arrangements, Lao PDR's institutional setup for the preparation of GHG inventories is still at its early stage (see identified barriers above). The country needs a more comprehensive transparency system for mitigation and means of implementation to comply with the new Enhanced Transparency Framework, calling for more frequent and comprehensive reporting on GHG emissions and progress of NDC. In addition, mitigation mechanisms such as NAMAs and REDD+ and related transparency requirements, also have to be included in Lao PDR's transparency system. To meet these international demands and to improve national planning and decision-making, Lao PDR needs to strengthen its institutional arrangements, enhance and sustain national capacities for tracking and updating its NDC. The implementation of the NDC is overseen by the cross-ministerial National Disaster Management Committee (NDCMC) while the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment fulfills a coordinating role with relevant ministries.

This project will be crucial in addressing and overcoming the barriers, as mentioned above, to enable Lao PDR to track its national climate change actions and to comply with international reporting requirements. Without this project, the process of establishing a national transparency system and building the necessary capacities will be delayed. Given the limited time for the preparation and readiness for future BTR reporting from 2024 onwards and the lengthy process of establishing the required institutional and technical capacities, an immediate response to Lao PDR's needs and barriers is essential. Recognizing the importance of transparency, Lao PDR included in its NDC that an "MRV system is the cornerstone of effective national implementation plans to be demonstrated and provides data for future project development".

Even though the implementation of various support initiatives has built the basic foundation of a national GHG system, additional support for the development of a national transparency system is required. Under previous projects, especially the NC processes, activities have been ad-hoc and outcomes were not sustained beyond the project period. This also applies to the ongoing BUR process.

This CBIT project aims to establish a national transparency system for domestic and international reporting, including the establishment of long-term institutional arrangements and GHG data management systems to inform the implementation of Lao PDR's NDC and feed into the global stock take. The CBIT project will focus on designing a functional and robust domestic transparency system to enable tracking progress of priority mitigation actions defined in the NDC.

### 3. Project Results Framework

[The reformulated project results framework approved during the various amendments is as follows:

| Project Component                                                                                                               | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                     | Expected Outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COMPONENT 1: Lao PDR has the institutional and technical capacities to systemize data collection and reporting for transparency | 1. Lao PDR has the institutional and technical capacities to systemize data collection and reporting for transparency | 1.1: Gap analysis of the institutional arrangements and capacities to comply with the ETF is carried out<br>1.2: Institutional mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing is established and formalized<br>1.3: National GHG database management system is developed<br>1.4: Development of Activity Data for Non-Co2 gasses inventorying from biomass burning at national scale<br>1.5: Sector-specific toolkits, and consistency guidelines to facilitate data collection and reporting are developed |

| Project Component                                                                                                          | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                        | Expected Outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                          | 1.6: Short courses at the National University of Laos are established and training to relevant staff in line ministries and agencies provided<br>1.7: Regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing activities on transparency are carried out<br>1.8: Integrating GHG activity data into national statistic questionnaire. |
| COMPONENT 2: Lao PDR has systems and tools to effectively track international support received for international reporting | 2. Lao PDR has systems and tools to effectively track international support received for international reporting outputs | 2.1: Tracking system for support received, associated with the implementation of Lao PDR's NDC established<br>2.2: Training for public institutions on reporting climate finance                                                                                                                                         |

#### 4. Executing Arrangements<sup>10</sup>

The Department of Climate Change within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment will act as the project's Executing Agency, while UN Environment will assume the role of the GEF Implementing Agency. The Department of Climate Change, as the national climate change focal point and coordinating agency for climate change projects in the country, will ensure that project activities are synergetic with other previous, ongoing or planned projects and initiatives related to transparency in the country, and that overlaps are avoided. Specifically, the project will build on GEF-supported work undertaken in relation to Lao PDR's TNC and its first BUR, which will be finalized in 2019 and was also led by the Department of Climate Change. The Director General of the Department of Climate Change also chairs the cross-ministerial, permanent Technical Working Group for Climate Change which also includes Director of Divisions (Divisions are sub-departments) from Ministries and representatives of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and Development Partners. This body will be regularly reported to for seeking political support in executing the project. Further, key ministries will be included on the Project Steering Committee. This will ensure that lessons-learned from previous initiatives will be applied to this project, and that lessons-learned generated from this project will guide future work.

DCC also engaged UNEP-DTU for targeted technical assistance. However, in the year 2021, UNEP-DTU partnership came to an end. Subsequently, the work and the remaining budget was taken over by UNEP-CCC. However, it may be noted that UNEP-CCC was engaged directly by UNEP.

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<sup>10</sup> Execution arrangements as per the CEO project design

## 5. Project Cost and Financing

The planned project budget at approval was USD 1,210,000. GEF grant allocation as per project components is presented in the below table. Co-financing from different partners was estimated to be USD 150,000.

| Project Component                                                                              | Trust Fund | Grant Amount (\$) | Confirmed Cofinancing (\$) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Component 1: Strengthening of Lao PDR's Transparency Framework for Mitigation                  | GEF TF     | 950,000           | 30,000                     |
| Component 2: Strengthening Lao PDR's capacity to monitor and report on means of implementation | GEF TF     | 150,000           | 70,000                     |
| Subtotal                                                                                       |            | 1,100,000         | 100,000                    |
| Project management Cost (PMC)                                                                  | GEF TF     | 110,000           | 50,000                     |
| <b>Total project costs</b>                                                                     |            | <b>1,210,000</b>  | <b>150,000</b>             |

Revised component wise budget and expenditure for a period up to March 2024 is as follows:

### DCC, MoNRE

| Component    | Budget (in USD)  | Expenditure till March 2024 (in USD) |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Component 1  | 938,264          | 794,869.96                           |
| Component 2  | 109,443          | 106,442.82                           |
| PMC          | 110,000          | 99,749.02                            |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,157,707</b> | <b>1,001,061.80</b>                  |

### UNEP-CCC

| Component    | Budget (in USD) | Expenditure till March 2024 (in USD) |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Component 1  | -               | -                                    |
| Component 2  | 22,293          | 7,731.67                             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>22,293</b>   | <b>7,731.67</b>                      |

## 6. Implementation Issues

The CBIT Lao project was originally scheduled to operationally close on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Due to initial delays and restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project went to a first revision which extended the project until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. PIR 2023 recommended to assess if further time is needed for capacity building, and possible extension of project by 3 or 6 months to complete all capacity building activities so that desired impact is achieved. Subsequently, a second revision for 6 months was carried out to extend the project until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Further, since early 2023, the project management activities have been carried by the Executing Agency core ministerial staff, because the PMC funds were exhausted. Despite this setback, the DCC officials have filled in effectively to address the various reporting requirements and have established close working relationship with UNEP.

## Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

(Apart from section 9, where you could insert up to 5 strategic questions that are in addition to the review criteria, this section is standard and does not need to be revised for each project)

### 7. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy<sup>11</sup> and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual<sup>12</sup>, the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and Government of Lao PDR. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project, where applicable.

### 8. Key Review principles

Review findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the Review Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

**The “Why?” Question.** As this is a Terminal Review and a follow-up project is a possibility, particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at the front of the consultant(s)’ minds all through the review exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project’s results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

**Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association:** In order to attribute any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for reviews. Establishing the contribution made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A credible association between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114>

<sup>12</sup> <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752>

**Communicating Review Results.** A key aim of the Review is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all review deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main review report will be shared with key stakeholders by the UNEP Project Manager<sup>13</sup>. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant will plan with the UNEP Project Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key review findings and lessons to them. This may include some or all of the following: a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of a review brief or interactive presentation.

## 9. Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions**<sup>14</sup> listed below (no more than 5 questions are recommended). These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?

Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting? If so, please explain how. Towards this, how the coordination with other ministries have impacted by the project?

Did the project contribute to develop the local capacity to design and implement mitigation sections in the energy sector? Whether the availability of UDP's and later UNEP CCC's technical expertise has contributed to the development of national capacity building?

Did the relevant stakeholders participating in the project adopt the new tools developed by the project? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?

- (a) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

For GEF-funded projects there are a series of questions that need to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. The consultant should complete the table in Annex 5 of these TOR and append it to the Final Review report.

## 10. Review Criteria

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the review criteria. The set of review criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance.

Where UNEP funding partners have areas of specific interest, these are noted, below.

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<sup>13</sup> For GEF funded projects, UNEP Project Manager refers to the Task Manager.

<sup>14</sup> The strategic questions should not duplicate questions that will be addressed under the standard review criteria described in section 10.

A suite of various tools, templates and guidelines that can help Review Consultant(s) to follow a thorough review process that meets all of UNEP's needs is available via the UNEP Project Manager.

## **A. Strategic Relevance**

The Review will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Review will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

### **i. Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy<sup>15</sup> (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities**

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building<sup>16</sup> (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

### **ii. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities**

Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Review will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

### **iii. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities**

The Review will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will also be considered. Examples may include: UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

### **iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence<sup>17</sup>**

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<sup>15</sup> UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as *POW Outcomes* and *POW Direct Outcomes*, of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

<sup>17</sup> This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization<sup>18</sup>, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within Cooperation Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

## **B. Quality of Project Design**

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating<sup>19</sup> should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

## **C. Nature of External Context**

At review inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval<sup>20</sup>). This rating is entered in the final review ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and UNEP Project Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

## **D. Effectiveness**

### **i. Availability of Outputs<sup>21</sup>**

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes.

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<sup>18</sup> A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

<sup>19</sup> In some instances, based on data collected during the review process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Review Report.

<sup>20</sup> Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

<sup>21</sup> Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)

The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

## **ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes<sup>22</sup>**

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed<sup>23</sup> Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

## **iii. Likelihood of Impact**

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the Review will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project reviews is outlined in a guidance note available and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role<sup>24</sup> or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required

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<sup>22</sup> Outcomes are the change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries (UNEP, 2023) (UNEP, 2023)

<sup>23</sup> UNEP staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during a review will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2016 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the review.

<sup>24</sup> The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Review will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Global Environment Facility</b> | The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the project is reaching Core Indicator targets (from GEF-6 onwards).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Global Environment Facility</b> | The Review will determine, under Effectiveness, the project's <u>additionality</u> by comparing the benefits of GEF support to a scenario without GEF support. It will identify specific areas where GEF support has contributed additional results and what these additional results were. It will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the findings. |

## E. Financial Management

Financial management will be assessed under three themes: adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, completeness of financial information and communication between financial and project management staff. The Review will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Review will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Review will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Review will assess the level of communication between the UNEP Project Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Global Environment Facility</b> | The Review will determine, under Financial Management, i) time from CEO endorsement (FSP) / CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement; ii) disbursement balance; iii) whether the project has secured co-financing higher than 35% and iv) time between CEO Endorsement and (likely) end of Terminal Review. |
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## F. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion, the Review will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected

timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Review will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Review will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities<sup>25</sup> with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. Consultants should note that as management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to UNEP and implementing parties.

## **G. Monitoring and Reporting**

The Review will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

### **i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting**

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART<sup>26</sup> results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Review will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed, where applicable.

### **ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation**

The Review will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards project objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

### **iii. Project Reporting**

UNEP has a centralised project information management system<sup>27</sup> in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This

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<sup>25</sup> Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

<sup>26</sup> SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

<sup>27</sup> Prior to 2022 it was the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and from 2022 UNEP has the Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) solution.

information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the UNEP Project Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Global Environment Facility</b> | For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review the quality of regular reports and confirm they have been submitted on a timely basis. |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **H. Sustainability (for Adaptation Fund, read Human and Ecological Sustainability and Security)**

Sustainability<sup>28</sup> is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct project outcomes may also be included.

### **i. Socio-political Sustainability**

The Review will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the Review will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

### **ii. Financial Sustainability**

Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new natural resource management approach. The Review will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where the project outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

### **iii. Institutional Sustainability**

The Review will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as

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<sup>28</sup> As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the Review will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

## **I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues**

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Review Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other review criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the Review Criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the reviewed project should be given in this section)

### **i. Preparation and Readiness**

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The Review will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular, the Review will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. (Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).

### **ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision**

In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others it may refer to the project management performance of an implementing partner and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Review will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Global Environment Facility</b> | For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review whether the segregation of responsibilities met the GEF requirements <sup>29</sup> (the GEF Agency must separate its project implementation and execution duties and establish each of the following: (a) A satisfactory institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation and executing functions in different departments of the GEF Agency; and (b) Clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the GEF Agency between the project implementation and execution functions. |
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### **iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation**

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs

<sup>29</sup> GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards: Separation of Implementation and Execution Functions in GEF Partner Agencies (2019).

and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

#### **iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality (for Adaptation Fund, read 'Equity'; for GCF, read 'Gender Equity')**

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment<sup>30</sup>.

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular the Review will consider to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

Note that the project's effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) should be included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there is no dedicated result within the results framework. If an explicit commitment on this topic is made within the project document then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions.

#### **v. Environmental and Social Safeguards**

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, or mitigation of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements<sup>31</sup> were met to: review risk ratings on a regular basis; monitor project implementation for possible safeguard issues; respond (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned, are reviewed above under Quality of Project Design).

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<sup>30</sup> The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender\\_equality\\_and\\_the\\_environment\\_Policy\\_and\\_strategy-2015Gender\\_equality\\_and\\_the\\_environment\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

<sup>31</sup> For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

The Review will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

#### **vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness**

The Review will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Review will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

#### **vii. Communication and Public Awareness**

The Review will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Review should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Review will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

### **Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES**

(This section has both standard text and parts that are specific to the project, to be filled in)

The Terminal Review will be an in-depth review using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative review methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) should provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

The findings of the Review will be based on the following:

#### **(a) A desk review of:**

Relevant background documentation:

Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;

Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and any other monitoring materials etc.;

Project deliverables (e.g. publications, assessments, etc.)

Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.

(b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:

UNEP Project Manager<sup>32</sup>

Project management team;

UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);

Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;

Project partners, including relevant Ministries and Departments of the Government;

Relevant resource persons.

Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

### **Field visits**

### **Other data collection tools**

Additional details would be provided to the review consultant after onboarding.

## **11. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures**

See Annex 1 of these TOR for a list of tools and guidance available, see Annex 2 for a list of review criteria and sub-categories to be assessed. The Review Consultant will prepare:

**Inception Report: (see Annex 3 of these TOR)** containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.

**Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.

**Draft and Final Review Report: (See Annex 4 of these TOR)** containing an Executive Summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

A **Review Brief** (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and review findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the UNEP Project Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

**Review of the Draft Review Report.** The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the UNEP Project Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. The UNEP Project Manager will then forward the revised draft report to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the UNEP Project Manager for consolidation. The UNEP Project Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

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<sup>32</sup> For GEF funded projects, UNEP Project Manager refers to the Task Manager.

The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process and provides a formal assessment of the quality of the final Terminal Review report, which is provided within this report's annexed material. In addition, the Evaluation Office formally validates the report by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations. As such the project performance ratings presented in the Review report may be adjusted by the Evaluation Office.

At the end of the review process, the UNEP Project Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals, and circulate the **Lessons Learned**.

## 12. The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Project Manager [Sudhir Sharma], in consultation with the Fund Management Officer [Fatma Twahir]

The Review Consultant will liaise with the UNEP Project Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Project Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period 50 work-days spread over a period of 8 months and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, energy, engineering, international development or other relevant sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 15 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of [climate change conventions, GHG inventory and MRV systems] is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and knowledge of [Laotian] is desirable. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

The Review Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the UNEP Project Manager, for overall quality of the review and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Review Deliverables, above. The Review Consultant will ensure that all review criteria and questions are adequately covered.

## ANNEX VIII. GEF PORTAL INPUTS (FOR GEF FUNDED PROJECTS)

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Review Report, either as copied or summarised text.** In each case, references should be provided for the paragraphs and pages of the report from which the responses have been copied or summarised.

**Table 16. GEF portal inputs**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Question:</b> What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-733, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided<sup>34</sup>).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><b>Response:</b> The GEF-6 Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment had a target of 60 (30 women, 30 men). The project significantly exceeded this target by achieving 1,986 beneficiaries (1,287 men [65%] and 699 women [35%]).</p> <p>(Reference: Chapter V Section D. Effectiveness)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Question:</b> What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>Response:</b> Being a medium-sized project, it did not have an MTR. The main challenges of stakeholder engagement were COVID-19 related travel restrictions that prevented the organization of in-person workshops. As a result, workshops were moved online, until travel restrictions were lifted. The project itself had to be extended twice for a total extension on 18 months. Nonetheless, stakeholder engagement was a central and extensive aspect of the project's implementation, and actors from national and sub-national government agencies, academia, and the private sector were engaged in various activities including over 36 consultation workshops and training events, resulting in reaching a large number of direct beneficiaries. Outcomes included the development and validation of key deliverables like the institutional mechanism, GHG database system, and training materials through these consultations. A significant regional knowledge sharing workshop was held in July 2024, fostering South-South cooperation and peer exchange among countries like Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam on MRV systems.</p> <p>(Reference: Chapter V Section D. Effectiveness)</p> |
| <p><b>Question:</b> What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Response:</b> While a formal gender action plan was not developed, conscious efforts were made to ensure gender involvement, aiming for 50 percent female participation in activities. Over 699 women benefited from events and 379 from training workshops. The Lao Women's Union was included in the Technical Working Group/Project Steering Committee to integrate gender considerations. All monitoring data, including training participation statistics, was required to be sex-disaggregated wherever feasible, providing visibility on female involvement. This data highlighted differing capacity needs, particularly noting that women often dominate finance departments and may require deeper analytical skills. The project aimed to enhance the visibility of women professionals in climate-data roles and potentially flag gender-responsive budgeting gaps through transparent finance data.</p> <p>(Reference: Chapter V Section D. Effectiveness)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>Question:</b> What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

<sup>33</sup> The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. (i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

<sup>34</sup> This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed.

**Response:**

The project consistently maintained a low social and environmental risk rating throughout its implementation. This low-risk classification was established at the time of CEO Endorsement and remained unchanged according to the annual PIR reports. As the project's core activities were centered on capacity building, institutional strengthening, and developing data management systems (desk-based and office-based work), they inherently had minimal environmental and social impacts. No new or unforeseen social or environmental risks were identified during the project period. Crucially, the project reported receiving no complaints or grievances related to potential or actual social and/or environmental impacts. Management measures included regular safeguard screening and reviews of the risk register during the annual reporting cycle, confirming the continued low risk status. The nature of the project's interventions meant that extensive or complex safeguard management measures were not required beyond these routine monitoring activities.

(Reference Chapter V Section G. Monitoring and Reporting)

**Question:** What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions?

**Response:** The project's knowledge management approach focused on developing and disseminating key resources and conducting extensive training. Outcomes included the development of knowledge products such as the National GHG Database Management System (NGHGDMS) user manuals, data entry templates, short courses curriculum on GHG inventory and MRV, and guidelines. Numerous training workshops were conducted at national and sub-national levels to build capacity in using these tools and understanding transparency requirements. A positive outcome highlighted was the improved knowledge and confidence among many participants, and the fostering of a professional network for collaboration. Challenges included the language barrier within the NGHGDMS backend and some materials, a perceived lack of depth in the technical training, particularly regarding sector-specific data collection, QA/QC, and linking to practical application. Difficulties in applying learning were linked to data gaps and quality issues, and concerns were raised about the sustainability of resources and support for continued learning and system application beyond the project.

(Reference: Chapter V Section D. Effectiveness)

**Question: What are the main findings of the review?**

**Response:** The terminal review found that the project successfully established foundational institutional and technical elements for Lao PDR to comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework. Key achievements included formalizing an inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism through a legal decree, developing the National GHG Database Management System (NGHGDMS), and delivering training programs and knowledge products. These outputs position Lao PDR to move towards country-driven, ETF-ready reporting, leveraging GEF funding catalytically. However, the terminal review also highlighted several key weaknesses and remaining challenges: persistent data quality and gap issues within line ministries, particularly for detailed activity data; insufficient technical capacity for data collection, verification, and system application, necessitating more sector-specific training; language barriers and functional limitations such as lack of bulk import, and automated validation in the NGHGDMS; and sustainability concerns regarding dedicated budget, technical support, and staffing to ensure the long-term operationalization of the systems and institutional memory, exacerbated by staff turnover. The overall performance rating assigned was Moderately Satisfactory.

(Reference: Chapter VI Conclusions and Recommendations)

## ANNEX IX. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Project Title and Reference No.:** Strengthening Lao PDR's Institutional Capacity to Comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement  
(GEF ID: 10039)

**Contact Person (TM/PM):** Manoj Kumar Muthumanickam

| RECOMMENDATIONS                                                                                                          | PLANS                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                    |                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                          | ACCEPTED<br>(YES/NO/PARTIALLY) | WHAT WILL BE DONE?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | EXPECTED<br>COMPLETION DATE                        | REPOSNSIBLE<br>OFFICER/ UNIT/<br>DIVISION/ AGENCY |
| Formalise climate-finance data-sharing through an MPI-DCC MoU and ODAMIS reporting protocol.                             | Yes                            | This recommendation is beyond the organizational mandate of UNEP. While the current project funding has concluded, UNEP will encourage the implementation of the recommendation for establishing an MoU between DCC and MPI that defines data-sharing protocols for climate finance tracking via ODAMIS. The TR recommendation has already been shared with Government of Laos. However, to emphasize the recommendation, UNEP will send an official communication in the form of letter highlighting this recommendation. | Within 6 months of Management Response endorsement | DCC, MoNRE                                        |
| Upgrade NGHGDMS (with Lao backend, bulk-import, automated QA/QC, JSON export, sector specific and Tier 2/Tier 3 modules) | Yes                            | This recommendation is beyond the organizational mandate of UNEP. This recommendation builds on the work completed during Phase I of the project. As indicated above, Government of Lao has been informed on this recommendation. The above-mentioned official communication will cover this aspect as well.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Within 6 months of Management Response endorsement | DCC, MoNRE,                                       |

| RECOMMENDATIONS                                                                                                                                 | PLANS                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                    |                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                 | ACCEPTED<br>(YES/NO/PARTIALLY) | WHAT WILL BE DONE?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | EXPECTED<br>COMPLETION DATE                        | RESPONSIBLE<br>OFFICER/ UNIT/<br>DIVISION/ AGENCY                         |
|                                                                                                                                                 |                                | The country has evinced interest in the next phase of the CBIT project. UNEP will consider the recommendation in the development of the Phase II of the project to address the NGHGDMS limitations just in case this has not been addressed by that time. Further it may be noted that the approval of the next phase of the CBIT project will be dependent on available GEF resources, while efforts will be made to get the next phase approved by June 2026.                                                           |                                                    |                                                                           |
| Secure sustainable O&M funding and HR budget lines for continuing the server hosting by the government and permanent IT support for the NGHGDMS | Yes                            | While UNEP resonates with the recommendation, the decision to retain staff for sustainable maintenance lies with the Ministry.<br>UNEP will consider the recommendation in the development of the Phase II of the project to address the NGHGDMS limitations just in case this has not been addressed by that time. Further it may be noted that the approval of the next phase of the CBIT project will be dependent on available GEF resources, while efforts will be made to get the next phase approved by June 2026. | Within 6 months of Management Response endorsement | MONRE, DCC, MPI, relevant ministries, government (MOF, National Assembly) |
| Standardise sector-specific data-collection templates and verification procedures, and integrate Rio Marker tagging                             | Yes                            | This recommendation is beyond the organizational mandate of UNEP.<br>The decision on advancement of sector-specific data integration will need to be made                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Within 6 months of Management Response endorsement | DCC, MoNRE                                                                |

| RECOMMENDATIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | PLANS                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                          |                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | ACCEPTED<br>(YES/NO/PARTIALLY) | WHAT WILL BE DONE?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | EXPECTED<br>COMPLETION DATE                                                              | RESPONSIBLE<br>OFFICER/ UNIT/<br>DIVISION/ AGENCY |
| in ODAMIS, and upgrade the ODAMIS to have import and export functions for climate-finance data to meet the ETF requirements.                                                                                                         |                                | by DCC and MPI with support from Lao Statistics Bureau and relevant stakeholders. To emphasize the recommendation, UNEP will send an official communication in the form of letter highlighting this recommendation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                          |                                                   |
| Design and secure funding for the implementation of a Phase II of the CBIT Lao PDR project building on the foundations laid by Phase I and focusing on QA/QC, sector expansion for EFs, and full ETF-compliant reporting for the BTR | Yes                            | To advance Lao PDR's climate transparency efforts, UNEP along with DCC will consider the development a Phase II of the CBIT project. This next phase would build on the foundational systems and institutional arrangements established in Phase I, focusing on closing remaining gaps in data quality, sectoral emission factors, and QA/QC processes. It will aim to fully operationalize tools and mechanisms for ETF-compliant BTR submissions.<br><br>Further it may be noted that the approval of the next phase of the CBIT project will be dependent on available GEF resources, while efforts will be made to get the next phase approved by June 2026. | Phase 2 approval by June 2026 (subject to Government of Lao's interest and GEF approval) | UNEP, DCC/MONRE                                   |

The following is a summary of lessons learned from some of the project's experiences and based upon explicit findings of the review. They briefly describe the context from which the lessons are derived, and the potential for wider application:

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lesson Learned #1:</b> | Legal frameworks require operational follow-through:<br>Formalizing institutional arrangements through legal agreements is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective inter-ministerial cooperation. Operationalization and clear definition of specific roles are crucial next steps.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | The Agreement on the Institutional Mechanism for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation was a significant achievement of the project. However, stakeholders indicated that despite this agreement, the mechanism still needs to be fully operationalized and mainstreamed, with continued ambiguity over specific responsibilities, such as data certification. This highlights that legal frameworks need practical implementation plans and continuous testing.                                    |
| <b>Lesson Learned #2:</b> | Sector-specific, hands-on training is indispensable:<br>Capacity building for complex transparency requirements must move beyond general system training to focus on the foundational, sector-specific processes of data collection, management, and technical verification.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | Stakeholder feedback consistently emphasized that training received was often too general and did not adequately cover the practical, technical aspects of data collection and verification necessary for accurate GHG inventories and climate finance reporting. Ministries struggled to apply general training to their specific sector data challenges, indicating a need for more tailored and hands-on approaches focused on the data itself before system entry.                      |
| <b>Lesson Learned #3:</b> | Localization and user-centered design drive system uptake:<br>Designing and implementing national transparency systems requires careful consideration of local context, including language barriers, safeguards for privacy, and existing data management practices, to ensure usability, security, and widespread adoption.                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | The NGHGDMS and other system components faced usability challenges due to English language interfaces in key areas, lack of compatibility with common offline data management tools (like Excel import), and mismatches between system categories and relevant national data sources. Incorporating full localization and designing workflows compatible with existing practices (like using standardized Excel templates) is essential for practical use by line ministries.               |
| <b>Lesson Learned #4:</b> | Staff turnover erodes capacity gains:<br>High staff turnover poses a significant threat to capacity retention and system sustainability, necessitating embedded strategies for continuous knowledge transfer and repeat training to ensure continuity of expertise.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Context/comment:</b>   | Frequent changes in personnel within relevant government departments resulted in the loss of trained staff, creating gaps in technical knowledge and system usage continuity. This experience underscores the need for ongoing capacity building efforts beyond initial project training, such as establishing perpetual induction programs or regular refresher courses, to maintain a sufficient pool of skilled personnel capable of operating and maintaining the transparency systems. |

## ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

**Review Title:** Terminal Review of the UNEP Project Strengthening Lao PDR's Institutional Capacity to Comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement (GEF ID: 10039) 2020 – 2024

**Consultant:** Rahul Teku Vaswani

All UNEP Reviews are subject to a quality assessment by the UNEP Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the review product (i.e. Main Review Report).

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | UNEP Evaluation Office Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Final Review Report Rating |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Report Quality Criteria</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                            |
| <p><b>Quality of the Executive Summary</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> acts as a stand alone and accurate summary of the main review product, especially for senior management.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concise overview of the review object</li> <li>• clear summary of the review objectives and scope</li> <li>• overall review rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria</li> <li>• reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report</li> <li>• summary response to key strategic review questions</li> <li>• summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions</li> <li>• summary of lessons learned and recommendations.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are addressed including responses to the four strategic review questions. The specific elements of the project results framework, specifically the relationship of the project's outcomes with outputs is not presented.</p> <p>The results framework of the project is presented in the "the Project" chapter of the report.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>A detailed overview of project performance rating and features and an overview of 'synthesis answers' to each strategic question are presented which makes for a lengthy Executive Summary (5.5 pages).</p> <p>The Executive Summary would have benefited from an overview or reference to the project's results framework in line with UNEP terminology of expected impact, outcomes (not immediate outcome) and outputs.</p> <p>Inconsistency of rating of the overall performance: in para. 7 'Satisfactory' and para. 20 'Moderately Satisfactory'.</p> <p>Table 1. Project Details refers to the POW Expected Accomplishment Indicator for Lao PDR rather the general POW Expected Accomplishment.</p> | 4                          |
| <p><b>Quality of the 'Introduction' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> introduces/situates the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the review itself.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc)</li> <li>• date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates</li> <li>• number of project phases (where appropriate)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are addressed.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>Concise description of the purpose and intended audience of the findings of the review.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 5                          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | UNEP Evaluation Office Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Final Review Report Rating |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome)</li> <li>• coverage of the review (regions/countries where implemented)</li> <li>• implementing and funding partners</li> <li>• total secured budget</li> <li>• whether the project has been reviewed/evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.)</li> <li>• concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                            |
| <p><b>Quality of the 'Review Methods' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of review methods, demonstrates the <u>credibility</u> of the findings and performance ratings.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• description of review data collection methods and information sources</li> <li>• justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face)</li> <li>• number and type of respondents (see <i>table template</i>)</li> <li>• selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited</li> <li>• strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation</li> <li>• methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc)</li> <li>• details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.)</li> <li>• methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc)</li> <li>• review limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc)</li> <li>• ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. <i>'Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.'</i></li> </ul> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are covered except for quantitative data on number of interviewees and survey respondents.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The considerations of ethics and human rights are duly considered.</p> <p>The description of stakeholders consulted for the review does not indicate if UNEP staff were interviewed nor does it identify the target audience of the survey.</p> <p>Additional information relevant to the review methods chapter is presented in:<br/>-Annex III. People consulted during the review present by name, organization and position, national stakeholders that were interviewed including the UNEP/GEF task manager and UNEP programme officer.<br/>-Annex V. Review Itinerary provides a comprehensive overview of the field mission to Vientiane, Lao PDR.</p> <p>The four key strategic questions that are listed in the ToR are not mentioned in the review methods section.</p> | 4                          |
| <p><b>Quality of the 'Project' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> describes and <u>verifies</u> key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance.</p> <p>To include:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are covered in the section.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>A detailed description of the components of the results framework, and stakeholder groups is provided.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4                          |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Context:</b> overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses)</li> <li>• <b>Results framework:</b> summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)</li> <li>• <b>Stakeholders:</b> description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics</li> <li>• <b>Project implementation structure and partners:</b> description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners</li> <li>• <b>Changes in design during implementation:</b> any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order</li> <li>• <b>Project financing:</b> completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Figure 2 provides a clear organigram of the project with key project stakeholders. The description of stakeholders focuses on direct beneficiaries.</p> <p>It would have been beneficial to present the indicators at outcome and output levels in the project results framework and changes to indicators as a result of the revisions made to the project outputs during implementation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                            |
| <p><b>Quality of the Theory of Change</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to set out the TOC at Review in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• description of how the <i>TOC at Review</i><sup>35</sup> was designed (who was involved etc)</li> <li>• confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions</li> <li>• articulation of causal pathways</li> <li>• identification of drivers and assumptions</li> <li>• identification of key actors in the change process</li> <li>• summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. <i>The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.</i> This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The required elements are covered in the section.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>A detailed narrative is provided of causal pathways from outputs to outcomes, and from outcomes to intermediate state to impact. The formulation of the outcomes does not identify the key actors for results change, instead these are identified in the RToC narrative.</p> <p>The justifications for reformulation of results statements are well presented in Table 6.</p> <p>The assumptions include gender participation. It would have been beneficial for the completeness of the RToC description if gender equality and inclusivity, including vulnerable groups and private sector actors had been included.</p> | 4.5                        |

<sup>35</sup> During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Review Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the review process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Review*.

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| <p><b>Quality of Key Findings within the Report</b></p> <p><u>Presentation of evidence:</u> nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source.</p> <p><u>Consistency within the report:</u> all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix.</p> <p><u>Findings Statements (where applicable):</u> The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual review criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. <b>A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand.</b> In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.</p> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The findings presented are meeting format requirements. Source(s) of evidence of findings are not consistently presented or presented with indication of the type of source.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>It would have been beneficial to explicitly include the source of evidence (documents or interviews [without naming interviewees]) for the findings presented.</p> <p>Findings and ratings are presented based on individual review and frequently provides insights into the project's implementation and support the performance assessment.</p> | 4.5                        |
| <p><b>Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval.</p> <p>To include:</p> <p>Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities</li> <li>• Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities</li> <li>• Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities</li> <li>• Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation<sup>36</sup>), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                             | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The required sub-categories have been assessed and each rated and overall rating for the criterion has been awarded.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The assessments of alignment to GEF strategic priorities and complementarity coherence are detailed and supported with feedback from stakeholders.</p> <p>The assessments of the sub-categories would have benefited from listing the specific MTS and subprogramme related indicators that the project has contributed to.</p>                                                                            | 5                          |
| <p><b>Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The section presents required elements of strengths and weaknesses of the design and the weighted rating table.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>All elements of the project design received the second highest rating of S (5) and overall awarded the highest weighted rating of HS (5.28).</p> <p>The weaknesses of the project design quality presented in table 7 para. 172 do</p>                                                                                                                                                                          | 5                          |

<sup>36</sup> A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | not appear to have significantly affected the overall quality of the design.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                            |
| <p><b>Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval<sup>37</sup>), and how they affected performance.</p> <p>While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The effects of COVID-19 are mentioned in this section.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/><br/>The assessment would have benefited from including the security situation and extent to which there was economic stability during the period of project implementation.</p> <p>The political context and any occurrence of climatic events are also not described.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 3.5                        |
| <p><b>Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section</b></p> <p><b>(i) Availability of Outputs:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget</li> <li>assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets</li> <li>assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries</li> <li>identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).</li> </ul> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The section meets some of the requirements by presenting key outputs but not the accompanying indicator targets towards which the outputs were made available.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The section provides a detailed overview of the availability of outputs. The section would have benefited from listing the indicator targets.</p> <p>Possible effects on women or disadvantaged groups are not addressed in the assessment, however, there is a brief assessment of weaknesses in the delivery of the outputs e.g. lack of language localisation.</p> | 4                          |
| <p><b>ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries</li> <li>assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets</li> <li>discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The achievement of the two outcomes has been assessed as required.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The assessment is supported by a detailed assessment of achievement towards the GEF-6 Core indicator, objective and outcome level indicators targets.</p> <p>The assessment refers to the tracking of outcome indicators that are disaggregated by gender.</p> <p>It would have been beneficial to discuss indicators 1.2 and 2.1 which are</p>                                                                                                                   | 5                          |

<sup>37</sup> Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

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| <p>outcome level changes to the work of the project itself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work</li> <li>identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>presented as qualitative ratings of institutional capacity for transparency-related activities and of the MRV system to track financial support received that measured against quantitative targets.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                            |
| <p><b>(iii) Likelihood of Impact:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown</li> <li>an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents</li> <li>explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out</li> <li>identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).</li> </ul> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The section has addressed key elements required related to impact with emphasis on three enablers.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The assessment would have benefited from considering the result framework more closely, taking into account whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the RToC have held.</p> <p>It would have been relevant to consider and include in the assessment if there is any likelihood that the project may lead or contribute to unintended negative effects.</p> | 3.5                        |
| <p><b>Quality of 'Financial Management' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed).</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures</li> <li><i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used</li> <li><i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The required elements of the three sub-categories of financial management have been assessed and rated and an overall rating for the criterion is provided.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>It would have been appropriate to include in the assessment the aspect of timeliness in approval of cash advances.</p> <p>The assessment of the completeness of financial information provides details of the distribution of expenditures by component and actual unspent balance.</p>                      | 4.5                        |
| <p><b>Quality of 'Efficiency' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness).</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe</li> <li>discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are addressed.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The assessment addresses adaptive and cost-effective measures applied during the project implementation period including minimizing environmental footprint by shifting regional missions for virtual training.</p> <p>The no-cost extensions have been assessed based on delays incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>                                                                                                         | 5                          |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implications of any delays and no cost extensions</li> <li>the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                            |
| <p><b>Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting.</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quality of the monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>)</li> <li>quality of monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>)</li> <li>quality of project reporting (<i>e.g. PIMS and donor reports</i>) \</li> </ul>             | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are addressed with sub-category ratings and an overall rating.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The assessment is strengthened by including the use of the risk-log, risk matrix and risk monitoring during project implementation.</p> <p>The assessment refers to the systematic inclusion of gender-disaggregated data in the monitoring design and project reporting.</p> <p>It would have been beneficial to include a more detailed quality assessment of the availability of monitoring data of different stakeholder groups attending e.g. training and workshops as well as evidence of substantial collaboration and communication with appropriate UNEP colleagues beyond IPMR reporting.</p> | 4.5                        |
| <p><b>Quality of 'Sustainability' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level).</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>socio-political sustainability</li> <li>financial sustainability</li> <li>institutional sustainability</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are addressed with sub-category ratings and an overall rating.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The assessment refers to the project's outcomes and further development of the project outcomes.</p> <p>It would have been beneficial to include mention if there existed an exit strategy in the assessment of financial sustainability and institutional sustainability.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 5                          |
| <p><b>Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors.</p> <p>Consider how well the review report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preparation and readiness</li> </ul> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>All required elements are addressed with sub-category ratings and an overall rating.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>The assessment of the preparation and readiness would have benefited from more detailed assessment of the steering arrangements (Technical Working Group and Project Steering Committee).</p> <p>The assessment of responsiveness to human rights and gender equity would have benefited from addressing all aspects in terms of project implementation, interpretation of results and project expenditure.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                          | 4.5                        |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quality of project management and supervision<sup>38</sup></li> <li>stakeholder participation and co-operation</li> <li>responsiveness to human rights and gender equality</li> <li>environmental and social safeguards</li> <li>country ownership and driven-ness</li> <li>communication and public awareness</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | The assessment of communication and public awareness could have benefited from referring to the lack of quantifiable outreach indicators that was identified in the assessment of the quality of project design and the need for language localization for the NGHGDMS system to function well with target stakeholder groups (para. 78).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                            |
| <p><b>Quality of the Conclusions Section</b></p> <p><b>(i) Conclusions Narrative:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the performance of the evaluand as a whole, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project</li> <li>clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions</li> <li>human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b><br/>The required elements are addressed in the section with focus on main strengths and weaknesses in the overall performance.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>A broad range of aspects are well summarized and presented as strengths and weaknesses of the project performance.</p> <p>The required table with a summary of project findings and ratings is missing in this section.</p> <p>It would have been beneficial with summarized responses provided to the strategic questions of the evaluation which are presented with detailed answers in the Executive Summary.</p> <p>Human rights and gender dimensions are not addressed explicitly in the discussion of strengths and weaknesses.</p> | 3.5                        |
| <p><b>ii) Utility of the Lessons:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization)</p> <p>Consider how well the lessons achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit review findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future)</li> <li>briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful</li> <li>do not duplicate recommendations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>There are four lessons with learnings derived from the findings of the report on the implementation of the project.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 5                          |
| <p><b>(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b><br/>There are five recommendations presented in required format.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 4.5                        |

<sup>38</sup> In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

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| <p>to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results.</p> <p>Consider how well the recommendations achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when</li> <li>include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions</li> <li>represent a measurable performance target in order that the UNEP Unit/Branch can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p> <p>(i) In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.</p> <p>(ii) Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.</p> | <p>The recommendations include cross-references to relevant sections of the report.</p> <p>Recommendation #1 and lesson #1 both address the need for formalizing institutional arrangements.</p> <p>Evaluation Office guidance requests one recommendation on strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions (e.g. related to designing and managing and interpreting data collected in national transparency systems tracking climate finance).</p> <p>The proposed implementation time-frames of each recommendation provides detailed actionable steps on how to implement the recommendation.</p> |                            |
| <p><b>Quality of Report Structure and Presentation</b></p> <p><b>(i) Structure and completeness of the report:</b></p> <p>To what extent does the report follow the UNEP Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines?</p> <p>Are all requested Annexes included and complete?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>Final report (coverage/omissions):</b></p> <p>The report follows the overall structure and formatting guidelines.</p> <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b></p> <p>All requested annexes are included in the annexure or in case of annexes related to financial management, these are included in the main report.</p> <p>The conclusions section is missing a Table with ratings and summary assessment as justification for the ratings.</p>                                                                                                                                              | 4.5                        |
| <p><b>(ii) Writing and formatting:</b></p> <p>Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document?</p> <p>Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p><b>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</b></p> <p>The report is generally well-written and the language is of adequate quality.</p> <p>Organigrams and tables are used to some extent to present key information.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 4.5                        |
| <b>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>4</b>                   |

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the review report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.