Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF Project 'Capacity Building for Azerbaijan to Meet the Requirements of Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement' (GEF ID 10043)
2020 – 2025

Azərbaycan Respublikası Ekologiya və Təbii Sərvətlər Nazirliyi

REC CAUCASUS

UNEP Climate Change Division

Validation date: July 2026

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.

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Capacity Building for Azerbaijan to Meet the Requirements of Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement
GEF ID # 10043
February/2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared for the UNEP Climate Change Division/Mitigation Branch/GEF Climate Mitigation Unit] by Kris B. Prasada Rao.

The reviewer would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex III.

The review team would like to thank the project team and in particular Mr. Yashar Karimov, Mr. Rasim Sattarzada and Mr. Aslan Shikhaliyev, Project Management Assistant for their contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. The evaluator(s) would also like to thank the Climate Change Centre and Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan.

Special acknowledgements to Ms. Camilla Piviali and Ms. Cicilia Magare.

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

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

Kris B. Prasada Rao holds an MSc in Human Geography and has 25 years of professional experience in climate change, natural resource management, environment, rural development, agriculture, and livelihoods. He has expertise in different aspects of climate change, including governance under the UNFCCC framework, adaptation and resilience, mitigation, and mainstreaming across sectors. He has worked in 49 countries for a broad range of multilateral institutions including UNEP, UNDP, FAO, IFAD, IUCN, the European Union, and a range of bilateral donors and NGOs. Kris B. Prasada Rao is a specialist in evaluation and has carried out numerous evaluations and reviews including complex strategic evaluations, global and regional multi-country programme evaluations, and in-country project evaluations. Moreover, he has hands-on programme and project implementation, management and oversight experience from positions with the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR), Oxfam America, and IFAD. He has since 2011 been a partner and board member at PEMconsult a/s.

Terminal Review Consultant
Kris B. Prasada Rao – Principal Reviewer

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No
Report Language(s): English
Review Type: Terminal Review
Brief Description: This report is a Terminal Review of the UNEP project: *Capacity Building for Azerbaijan to Meet the Requirements of Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement* implemented between 2020 and 2025. The project's overall goal was to *strengthen institutional and human capacities in Azerbaijan to meet the reporting requirements of the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement by establishing a tracking system to support reliable domestic monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) arrangements*. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine the sustainability of its results. The review has two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included: in-depth interviews, document reviews, and assessment of the online platform established. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways. With an overall performance rating of **Moderately Satisfactory**, the main findings include:

- Lesson 1: Using a trusted external partner as executing agency can greatly facilitate effective implementation in a context of cumbersome and slow government procedures and staff constraints – but comes with less government staff involvement in day-to-day project management, even if it is committed to the project.
- Lesson 2: Without a legal framework and formalised institutional arrangements in place, it is impossible to establish a full-fledged MRV system – improved technical capacity is insufficient is to achieve structural improvements.
- Lesson 3: Government stakeholders are likely to be reluctant to use existing online platforms that store data on foreign commercial servers and are likely to prefer local solutions where data is stored on government servers – even if this is more cumbersome and costly to implement.

The main recommendations to UNEP and implementing parties are:

- Recommendation 1: Focus efforts on facilitating the establishment of the legal and formalised institutional frameworks necessary for advancing on the MRV system.
- Recommendation 2: Operationalise the online MRV platform, methodologies and tools introduced by the project.
- Recommendation 3: Include in a potential project phase 2 a six-month inception period and a mid-term reflection to allow for procurement planning and adjustment of the project to an evolving context.
- Recommendation 4: Drawing on the lessons from the project's gender awareness raising, include in a potential phase 2 an activity that address climate change from a human rights and inclusion perspective.
- Recommendation 5: For the potential next phase of the project, establish a "hybrid" PMU that combines in-house MENR resources with RECC capacities.

Source(s) of Funding by Country: GEF Funding and co-financing from the government of Azerbaijan
Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:

Foundation/NGO	No
Private Sector	No
UN Body	No
Multilateral Fund	No
Environment Fund	Yes

Key words: Climate Change; CBIT, Paris Climate Agreement, NDC Tracking, Azerbaijan, Climate Transparency Framework, MRV

Primary data collection period:

Field mission dates: 13-20 September 2025

Virtual consultations: 3 September – 10 October 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BSP	Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
BUR	Biennial Update Report
CBIT	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
CBIT-GSP	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency – Global Support Programme
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Conference of the Parties
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
FMO	Financial Management Officer
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GoA	Government of Azerbaijan
HYPR	Half-Yearly Progress Report
MENR	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification
MTS	Medium-term Strategy
N/A	Not Applicable
NC	National Communication
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PA	Paris Agreement
PATPA	Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoW	Programme of Work
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RECC	Regional Environment Centre for the Caucasus
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-CCC	UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1: Project Identification Table

GEF Project ID/SMA ID[1]:	10043/38674		
Type of GEF Project:	Child: No	Global Coordinating Project:	No
	If yes, provide GEF Programme[2] ID:	Medium-Size Project or Full-Size Project:	MSP
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division/Mitigation Branch/GEF Climate Mitigation Unit	Executing Agency: (*indicate if internally executed*):	Regional Environment Centre for the Caucasus (RECC)
Sources of Funding (Co-finance):	*Country[3](ies):* Azerbaijan		*Institution[4] Name/Type:* Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR)/government
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG 13 (Climate Action)		
MTS (at approval):	MTS 2018-2021		
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference[5] *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR** POW Output(s) number/reference[56] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)*	*POW Direct Outcome:* Outcome 3: State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference [56] *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR** POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference [56] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	*MTS 2025 Outcome:* Outcome 3: State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement
	POW Output: Output 6: Technical support provided to countries to address UNFCCC commitments, monitoring, reporting requirements and mainstreaming results into national development planning		*POW Expected Accomplishment:* (b) Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies
Sub-programme:	Sub-programme 1 Climate Change	Programme Coordination Project (if relevant):	Science And Transparency
UNEP approval date:	7 July 2020	GEF approval date:	29 January 2020
GEF Operational Programme/Cycle # (e.g. GEF-7):	GEF-6	GEF Strategic Priority (e.g. BD4):	CBIT
Focal Area(s):	Climate Change		
Expected start date[6]:	13 July 2020	Actual start date:[7]	13 July 2020
Planned completion date[17]:	31 July 2023	Actual operational completion date:	30 April 2025
Planned project budget at approval:	GEF grant allocation: USD 1,298,000		
	Expected co-financing: USD 350,000		

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[1] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023. Previously, it was referred to as a PIMS ID number.
[2] GEF Programme refers to 'Parent' project.
[3] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.
[4] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund.
[5] For these items do not include full text; only enter the number or reference.
[6] Expected/planned dates are listed in the Project Document (ProDoc).
[7] Actual start date is the date of the last signature on the PCA or ICA.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td colspan="4">Cash: N/A
In-kind: USD 350,000</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Total planned budget: USD 1,648,000</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Actual expenditures reported (cash only):</td><td colspan="4">GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 April 2025: USD 1,215,249</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Actual co-financing as of 30 April 2025: USD 213,100</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Total actual expenditures reported as of 30 April 2025: USD 1,428,349</td></tr>
<tr><td>No. of formal project revisions:</td><td colspan="2">2</td><td>Date of last approved project revision:</td><td>4 March 2024</td></tr>
<tr><td>No. of Steering Committee meetings:</td><td colspan="2">6</td><td>Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:</td><td>12 February 2025</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Mid-term Review[8] (required or not required):</td><td>UNEP requirement:</td><td>N</td><td rowspan="2">Mid-term Review actual date:</td><td rowspan="2">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>GEF requirement:</td><td>N</td></tr>
<tr><td>Terminal Review (planned date):</td><td colspan="2">January 2025</td><td>Terminal Review actual date:</td><td>July-December 2025</td></tr>
<tr><td>Coverage - Country(ies):</td><td colspan="2">Azerbaijan</td><td>Coverage - Region(s):</td><td>Europe and Central Asia</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dates of previous project phases:</td><td colspan="2">N/A</td><td>Status of future project phases:</td><td>2nd phase under discussion with MENR</td></tr>
</table>

[8] UNEP projects of four or more years duration require an MTR unless there is an exceptional circumstance. See the *Evaluation in the Project Cycle* section in the [Evaluation Office's operational manual](). Donor requirements may vary and should be considered in conjunction with UNEP's requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The project was implemented in Azerbaijan with USD 1,298,000 funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and USD 213,100 in co-finance (in-kind) committed from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR). It was implemented between 2020 and 2025. The rationale for the project was to enable Azerbaijan to better implement the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement (PA) and track the progress and raise ambition of climate action and its objective was to: *Strengthen institutional and human capacities in Azerbaijan to meet the reporting requirements of the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement by establishing a tracking system to support reliable domestic monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) arrangements.*

This review

2. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of its results. It assessed performance against nine review criteria[9] and assigned a score from a six-point scale[10]. The review had two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data collection methods included: in-depth interviews, document reviews, and assessment of the online platform established. Data analysis was based on applying triangulated data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways.

Key findings and conclusions

3. **Strengths:** Implementation caught up after considerable delay, and the intended outputs were largely delivered. The project enhanced the awareness, interest and capacities of stakeholders in relation to GHG inventories, MRV, and climate finance tracking. Tools and methodologies were provided, an online GHG inventory, MRV and climate finance tracking platform was established, and the project also informed the drafting of the national Climate Act. Moreover, the project promoted gender integration in the MRV system. A functional interim institution responsible for coordination of GHG inventories and reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, the Climate Change Centre, provided the project with an institutional entry point of engagement. No negative effects of the project were identified.
4. The project contributed to modest improvements in GHG data collection and processing, NDC progress tracking and finance tracking – thus partially achieving its intended outcomes and laying the foundation for the establishment and operationalisation of improved institutional arrangements and cross-sectoral coordination once the Climate Act has been passed by the Parliament, which is likely to happen in the next couple of years. A second phase of the project is planned, which will be essential for ensuring the project results are translated into a full-fledged MRV system.
5. Once implementation took off, the project management arrangements worked well. RECC proved a capable executing agency and the PMU engaged proactively with stakeholders to ensure ownership and momentum. Consultant inputs were well-managed and generally delivered the intended results to the satisfaction of stakeholders. Synergies were achieved

[9] (1) Strategic Relevance, including Complementarity; (2) Quality of Project Design; (3) Nature of External Context; (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact); (5) Financial Management; (6) Efficiency; (7) Monitoring and Reporting; (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.

[10] The six-point scale is as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

with other interventions, in particular with the global CBIT-GSP project. The PSC met regularly, and there was a high degree of institutional and individual continuity in the participation. Financial management was fully compliant with UNEP and GEF requirements. The level of delivery corresponded to expectations, and project management costs were within budget. Oversight and backstopping by UNEP were well-functioning.

6. **Weaknesses:** The project was severely affected by external factors outside the control of the project, leading to a significantly delayed project start and limited implementation in 2020-2023 and the project was extended by 21 months. Due to timing issues and delays, the project outputs were not delivered in time to be used for the preparation of the BTR1 and BUR3, hence the potential scope of synergy with GEF support for the preparation of reports did not materialise.

7. The project design was overambitious with unrealistic expectations for a three-year medium-sized project. Being a first-generation CBIT project, the expected results were not fully taking into consideration the country context. The absence of a national Climate Act was (and still remains) an impediment to the establishment of fully functional institutional structures and processes for MRV. Hence, the intended output of established institutional arrangements was not fully achieved. Due to the lack of clear and formalised institutional frameworks and responsibilities for MRV across sectors, the use of the capacities, methodologies and tools developed by the project remains uneven, voluntary, person-driven and ad-hoc – and the outputs have thus not fully translated into the intended outcomes. While the Climate Change Centre has an interim responsibility to coordinate the GHG inventory, MRV and reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, it (as well as the other institutions involved) faces technical capacity constraints and its clout to convene the engagement of sector institutions is limited. The online platform for the GHG inventory, MRV and finance tracking is technically functional, but not in use.

8. Overall, MRV data collection and submission processes have not changed significantly. The capacity gains achieved under the project may partly be lost over time due to staff turnover. Further progress on the establishment of a full-fledged and institutionalised MRV system, the full achievement of the intended project outcomes and ensuring the sustainability of the results achieved hinges on the legal framework being put in place and further external support. While a second phase is planned, a hiatus in the further MRV system development is inevitable until the new phase commences, creating a risk of losing momentum and a high risk of losing the current PMU's institutional memory and skills.

9. A human rights lens was not applied in the project design or implementation, although the contribution to enhanced climate transparency contributes to the right to access to information. The MRV platform was developed as an internal tool for supporting the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC rather than a platform for providing public access to information (ongoing efforts such as the launch of an online datahub is anticipated to provide an avenue for broader public access). One challenge in this regard that some relevant data is classified government information that cannot be shared openly.

10. While MENR provided strategic oversight, with the executing agency role outsourced to an external NGO (RECC), government engagement in day-to-day project management was somewhat modest.

11. The monitoring and reporting did not provide full analyses of the implications for the project of the contextual obstacles and did thus not fully inform strategic decision-making. Moreover, it did not capture whether stakeholders applied the methodologies and knowledge in their work.

Table 2: Summary of project ratings

Criterion	Rating
Strategic Relevance	HS
Quality of Project Design	S
Nature of External Context	MU
Effectiveness	MS
Financial Management	HS
Efficiency	MU
Monitoring and Reporting	S
Sustainability	MU
Factors Affecting Performance	S
Overall Project Performance Rating	**MS**

Lessons learned

12. Lesson 1: Using a trusted external partner as executing agency can greatly facilitate effective implementation in a context of cumbersome and slow government procedures and staff constraints – but comes with less government staff involvement in day-to-day project management, even if it is committed to the project.

13. Lesson 2: Without a legal framework and formalised institutional arrangements in place, it is impossible to establish a full-fledged MRV system – improved technical capacity is insufficient is to achieve structural improvements.

14. Lesson 3: Government stakeholders are likely to be reluctant to use existing online platforms that store data on foreign commercial servers and are likely to prefer local solutions where data is stored on government servers – even if this is more cumbersome and costly to implement.

Recommendations

15. Recommendation 1: Focus efforts on facilitating the establishment of the legal and formalised institutional frameworks necessary for advancing on the MRV system.

16. Recommendation 2: Operationalise the online MRV platform, methodologies and tools introduced by the project.

17. Recommendation 3: Include in a potential project phase 2 a six-month inception period and a mid-term reflection to allow for procurement planning and adjustment of the project to an evolving context.

18. Recommendation 4: Drawing on the lessons from the project's gender awareness raising, include in a potential phase 2 an activity that address climate change from a human rights and inclusion perspective.

19. Recommendation 5: For the potential next phase of the project, establish a "hybrid" PMU that combines in-house MENR resources with RECC capacities.

Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the project 'Capacity Building for Azerbaijan to Meet the Requirements of Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement' (GEF ID 10043), set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, have been adjusted as a result. The overall project performance is validated at the **Moderately Satisfactory** level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be Highly Satisfactory (see Annex XI).

I. THE PROJECT

A. Context

Intervention context

20. Article 13 of the Paris Agreement (PA) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) requires Non-Annex I Parties to establish enhanced transparency frameworks (ETF) providing a clear overview of their progress on climate action and the support that they receive. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap Report 2019, countries are far from reaching the global goal of 2°C if only the current levels of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are considered. Hence, the ETF under the PA is critical to enable all countries to track the progress of climate action and raise ambition. 4. However, while various reports to UNFCCC have been prepared for many years, many Non-Annex I Parties to UNFCCC face significant capacity constraints vis-à-vis the preparation and submission of quality reports on a regular basis. The Parties to the PA established the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of developing countries to effectively participate in the ETF. Following this, the UNFCCC requested the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support the implementation of CBIT through voluntary contributions during GEF-6 and future replenishment cycles. Hence, during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21), the GEF established CBIT. Globally, CBIT aims to strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities; provide relevant tools, training, and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the PA and assist in the progressive improvement of transparency efforts.

21. The scope of implementation of Azerbaijan's nationally determined contributions is contingent upon the provision of adequate resources by the international community (financial resources, capacity building, and the transfer of technologies). Because of this, there is a need to strengthen Azerbaijan's national capacity to implement the different components of the PA. The objective of the project in Azerbaijan was to *Strengthen institutional and human capacities in Azerbaijan to meet the reporting requirements of the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement by establishing a tracking system to support reliable domestic MRV arrangements*. It supported the Government in enhancing its institutional and technological capacity, developing methodological tools and indicators, and engaging all relevant stakeholders.

Institutional context

22. UNEP was the GEF implementing agency of the project whereas the executing agency was the Regional Environment Centre for the Caucasus (RECC). The UNEP implementing Unit was the GEF Climate Mitigation Unit under the Mitigation Branch of the Climate Change Division. The project was executed by RECC with delegated authority from the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR). The project was funded with a GEF-6/CBIT Trust Fund grant of USD 1,298,000 and USD 213,100 in-kind co-financing from MENR.

23. The project was endorsed by the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on 29 January 2020 and approved by UNEP on 7 July 2020, and implementation started on 13 July 2020. The programme completed on 30 April 2025 a medium-size GEF project, no mid-term review was conducted. A second phase of the project is under consideration.

24. The project in Azerbaijan fell under the 2018-2021 and 2022-2025 Medium Term Strategies, aiming to contribute to the following expected accomplishment under <u>Sub-programme 1 – climate change</u>: 1B: "countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low

emission development plans and invest in clean technology". The project contributed to the 2020-2021 Programme of Work's Output 6: "*Technical support provided to countries to address UNFCCC commitments, monitoring, reporting requirements and mainstreaming results into national development planning*", expected accomplishment b "*countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies*".

B. Results Framework

25. The project had two components:

- Component 1: Strengthening Azerbaijan's enabling environment and capacity for implementing the Paris Agreement's transparency framework

- Component 2: Developing a strategy to secure financial resources for the implementation of the country's Nationally Determined Contributions, including an implementation tracking system

26. Each component had one outcome. The first component focused on establishing a structure and a platform and improving technical capacities across relevant government institutions and stakeholders vis-à-vis greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories and MRV, with the intended outcome of *enhanced institutional capacity to report and monitor progress of the implementation of the country's Nationally Determined Contributions*. This was the larger component with five outputs: institutional arrangements for interministerial cooperation and systemised GHG data collection and processing, an online GHG database, a system for tracking NDC progress, a staff training programme on climate transparency processes, and international knowledge sharing through the UNEP-GEF CBIT Global Support Programme (CBIT-GSP).

27. The second component focused on enhancing the tracking and mobilisation of climate financing, with the intended outcome of *enhanced institutional capacity to identify sources of funding and to track financial support*. This component comprised two outputs: a strategy for identifying funding sources and track financial support, and a training programme on identification of funding sources and tracking of financial support received.

28. The two components were intended to contribute to two intermediate states, that Azerbaijan meets ETF requirements and improves NDC implementation. This, in turn, would contribute to achieving the impact of Azerbaijan being able to set more ambitious NDC targets.

29. Section III provides an analysis of the logical consistency of the results framework and theory of change (ToC) of the project.

Table 3: Summary of project's latest approved results framework (source: CEO Endorsement Request, 29 January 2020)

	Results Statement
Project objective	Strengthen institutional and human capacities in Azerbaijan to meet the reporting requirements of the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement by establishing a tracking system to support reliable domestic MRV arrangements.
Impact	Azerbaijan is in a position to set more ambitious NDC targets
Intermediate state	Azerbaijan meets the requirements of the Enhanced Transparency Framework
	Azerbaijan improves implementation of its NDC

	Results Statement
Project outcome	1. Enhanced institutional capacity to report and monitor progress of the implementation of the country's Nationally Determined Contributions
	2. Enhanced institutional capacity to identify sources of funding and to track financial support
Outputs	1.1. Institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing for preparing GHG inventory are established
	1.2. National GHG database management system for GHG data is developed
	1.3. National system for tracking progress of the implementation of Azerbaijan's Nationally Determined Contributions for mitigation actions established and operationalized
	1.4. Training programme on enhanced transparency processes provided
	1.5. Knowledge-sharing and coordination mechanism with the CBIT Global Coordination Platform established
	2.1. Financial strategy outlining means to identify sources of funding needed, and to track financial support received, developed
	2.2. Capacity building and training programme on identifying sources of funding and tracking financial support processes provided

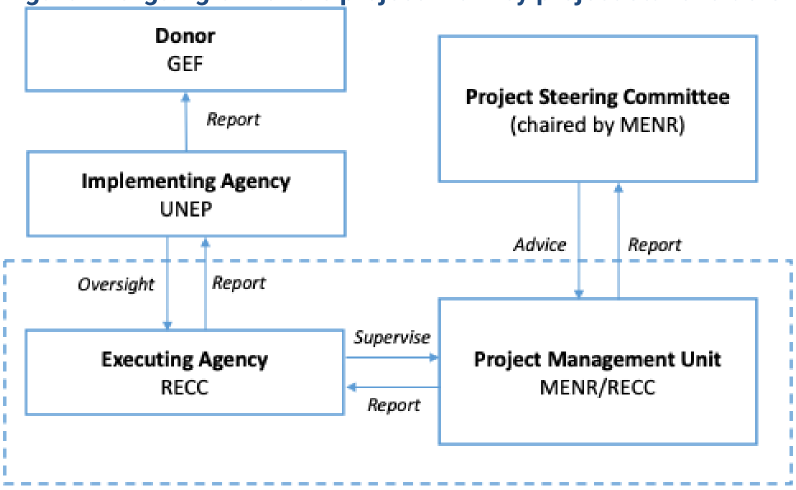
C. Project Implementation Structure and Partners

30. Figure 1 below depicts the management setup for the project in Azerbaijan. At the global level, UNEP had the role as GEF Implementing Agency (strategic oversight), whereas RECC has the role as Executing Agency (day-to-day execution of the project) on behalf of MENR, the owner of the project.

31. Project Steering Committee (PSC): The PSC was responsible for oversight of project implementation and approved annual work plans and budgets as well as major changes to the project. The PSC was chaired by MENR and comprised representatives from RECC, UNEP, Climate Change Centre (MENR), and the Ministries of Agriculture, Economic Development, Energy, and Finance. The PSC met annually in 2021-2025, but twice in 2023 – in total six times.

32. Project Management Unit (PMU): The PMU, housed at RECC, was responsible for day-to-day project coordination and implementation, including capacity development, and technical advisory. It was overseen by the National Project Director/ National Project Focal Point appointed by MENR, whereas day-to-day management and coordination of project implementation was carried out by a Chief Technical Adviser (part time), a Project Coordinator, a Project Management Assistant, an Administrative Assistant and a Finance Officer, recruited by RECC.

Figure 1: Organigram of the project with key project stakeholders



D. Stakeholders

33. Table 4 presents the main stakeholders and their interest in, and influence on, the implementation of the project in Azerbaijan. Due to the cross-cutting and multisectoral nature of climate change, there is a wide range of stakeholders, with various levels of engagement in climate transparency.

Table 4: Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder	Power over project results/implementation and level of interest	Participation in project design, and how	Role in project	Expected change in behaviour	Power and interest rating*
UNEP	Implementing Agency Responsible for project implementation, control over financial resources. PSC member.	Yes – led the design process.	Project oversight, reporting to the GEF. Controlled financial resources and disbursements.	Integration of best practices and experiences from the project in future support for MRV in Azerbaijan and in CBIT projects in other countries.	A
Regional Environment Centre for the Caucasus (RECC)	Executing Agency (delegated authority from MENR). Independent NGO. Responsible for project execution, control over financial resources. Housed PMU, PSC member.	Yes – engaged in design process.	Project management, technical advisory, capacity building, activity planning and execution. Recruited PMU staff.	Integration of best practices and experiences in future MRV work in Azerbaijan and other climate transparency projects in the Caucasus.	A
Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR)	Project primary beneficiary. Oversaw the project. PSC Chair.	Yes – engaged in design process.	Designated National Authority to UNFCCC. Responsible ministry for climate change,	Integration of best practices and experiences future MRV work.	A

Stakeholder	Power over project results/implementation and level of interest	Participation in project design, and how	Role in project	Expected change in behaviour	Power and interest rating*
Climate Change Centre, National Hydro-Meteorological Centre MENR	Responsible MENR Unit for climate change, GHG inventory, and MRV. PSC member.	No – agency established in 2023	incl. climate transparency and reporting to PA/UNFCCC. Appointed National Project Director/National Project Focal Point of the PMU. Staff trained on MRV and Climate finance. Provided in-kind co-financing.	Strengthened reporting to PA/UNFCCC and coordination of inputs from sector stakeholders.	
Ministry of Finance	Leads financial policy, supports climate change initiatives. PSC member.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in preparation of a financial strategy. Staff trained on MRV and Climate finance.	Climate finance data collection and reporting in national system. Implementation of climate financing measures.	B
Ministry of Economic Development	Leads economic and tax policy, supports low-carbon industrial development. PSC member.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in preparation of a financial strategy. Staff trained on MRV and Climate finance.	Implementation of climate financing measures, e.g. related to taxes.	C
Ministry of Agriculture	Leads agricultural policy, expertise in land use, land-use change, and forestry. PSC member.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in development of a national system to track NDC implementation, and of national system to identify sources of funding and to track financial support. Staff trained on MRV and climate finance.	MRV and climate finance data collection and reporting in national system.	C
Ministry of Energy	Coordinates energy policy, expertise in sustainable energy. PSC member.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in development of a national system to track NDC implementation. Staff trained on MRV and climate finance.	MRV and climate finance data collection and reporting in national system.	C
State Statistical Committee	Collects national statistics, including related MRV tasks.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in development of national system to track NDC and climate finance. Contributed to dentification and selection of relevant indicators.	Climate and finance data compiling in national system.	B

Stakeholder	Power over project results/implementation and level of interest	Participation in project design, and how	Role in project	Expected change in behaviour	Power and interest rating*
Ministry of Transport, Communication and High Technologies	Coordinates transport policy, expertise in development and implementation of low-carbon transport strategy.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in development of a national system to track NDC implementation. Staff trained on MRV and climate finance.	MRV and climate finance data collection and reporting in national system.	B
Centre for Analysis of Economic Reforms and Communication	Develops proposals for cross-sectoral economic reforms. Relies on data obtained through economic analysis.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in assessment of national policy, legal and institutional frameworks, and formulation of a financial strategy.	Use of financial data in national system.	D
State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) Azerenergy OSC	Oil and gas production, transport and sale. Expertise in low-carbon strategies in the oil and gas sector.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in development of a national system to track NDC implementation. Staff trained on MRV and climate finance.	MRV and climate finance data collection and reporting in national system.	D
Azerbaijan Renewable Energy Agency (Ministry of Energy)	Leads national renewable energy policy efforts. Expertise in renewable energy strategies and initiatives.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in development of a national system to track NDC implementation. Staff trained on MRV and climate finance.	MRV and climate finance data collection and reporting in national system.	C
National Academy of Sciences	Leads scientific-research activities. Expertise in climate change research.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in development of methodologies and training programmes.	Collection and use of MRV data in national system for research.	C
State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic	Regulation of women and children affairs. Oversees activities of NGO involved in family-related matters.	Yes – consulted.	Involved in all gender-related project activities.	Use of gender-related MTV data in national system.	D
NGOs	Engaged in formulation and implementation of climate change policy.	Yes – consulted.	Relevant NGOs engaged in development of all project activities, incl. NGOs working on gender and climate issues.	Use of MRV and financial data in national system.	C
Private sector (energy and transport sectors)	Key actors in major greenhouse gas emission sectors.	Yes – consulted.	Consulted in design of private sector role in the tracking system. Trained on climate finance tracking.	MRV and climate finance data collection and reporting in national system.	D

Stakeholder	Power over project results/implementation and level of interest	Participation in project design, and how	Role in project	Expected change in behaviour	Power and interest rating*
UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC)	Technical advisory and capacity development on climate transparency. Executing Agency for CBIT-GSP.	No.	Provided technical advisory and global trainings.	Facilitating sharing of best practices and experiences from the project phase 2 in Azerbaijan with other CBIT projects.	C
Consultants	International and national technical experts on various aspects of climate change and climate transparency.	No.	Technical advisory, capacity development, preparation of documents.	Continued provision of services vis-à-vis supporting climate transparency in Azerbaijan	C
GEF Secretariat	Donor.	Yes – reviewed and approved design.	Controlled funds and disbursements to UNEP. Mandated under PA/UNFCCC to provide financial support to Non-Annex I Parties for CBIT capacity development.	Integration of best practices and experiences in assessment of CBIT project applications from Non-Annex I Parties.	A

* A: high power, /high interest over the project = key player
B: high power/ low interest over the project = meet their needs
C: low power/ high interest over the project = show consideration
D: low power /low interest over the project = least important

E. Changes in Design during Implementation

34. The project was originally scheduled for completion on 31 July 2023. However, on 12 August 2022 the completion was extended (revision 1) to 30 September 2024 to accommodate lengthy project inception activities. Furthermore, on 4 March 2024, the project was once again extended (revision 2) to 30 April 2025 to allow for completion of all remaining project activities following delays related to a lengthy procurement of the project international expert and the limited availability of project stakeholders, as they had been focused on the preparation of COP 29, which was held in Azerbaijan in November 2024. No changes were made to the project results framework.

F. Project Financing

35. This GEF medium-sized project was financed through a GEF grant of USD 1,298,000. Co-financing was committed from MENR to the value of USD 350,000 (in-kind). As of 30 April 2025, USD 1,214,756 of the GEF grant were spent, and on 30 April 2025 USD 213,100 in-kind co-financing had been realised.

Table 5: Co-financing table (30 April 2025)

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UNEP own Financing (US$1,000)		Government (US$1,000)		Other* (US$1,000)		Total (US$1,000)		Total Disbursed (US$1,000)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
– Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
– Loans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

– Credits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
– Equity investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
– In-kind support	-	-	350	213	-	-	350	213	213
– Other (*)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	-	-	350	213	-	-	350	213	213

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

II. REVIEW METHODS

A. UNEP's Review Approach

36. In line with UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual, the review was undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess 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.

37. The main target audiences for the review findings are UNEP, RECC, and MENR.

38. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, the review has been carried out using a set of nine commonly applied review criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance, (2) Quality of Project Design, (3) Nature of External Context, (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact), (5) Financial Management, (6) Efficiency, (7) Monitoring and Reporting, (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues (see Annex II: Review Framework for more details on each review criterion).

39. Most review criteria are rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

40. The UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements required to be demonstrated at each level (i.e. Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) for each review criterion. The reviewer has considered all the evidence gathered during the review in relation to this matrix to generate review criteria performance ratings.

41. In addition to the nine review criteria outlined above, the review addresses a number of strategic questions that were formulated in the Terms of Reference. These questions were posed by the UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit.

42. For projects funded by the GEF, findings from the review are to be uploaded in the GEF Portal. To support this process, review findings related to the five topics of interest to the GEF are summarised in Annex VIII. The intended action/results on the five topics were described in the GEF CEO Endorsement and Approval documents. The five topics are: i) performance against GEF's Core Indicator Targets; ii) engagement of stakeholders; iii) gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; iv) implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach.

43. This review adopted a participatory approach, consulting with project team members, partners and beneficiaries at several stages throughout the process. Central to the review was the analysis (and reconstruction) of the project's Theory of Change. Consultations were held during the review inception phase to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how

the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The (reconstructed) Theory of Change, supported by a graphic representation and narrative discussion of the causal pathways, was discussed further with respondents during the data collection phase, and refined as appropriate. The final iteration of the Theory of Change is presented in this final review report and has been used throughout the review process.

B. Data Collection

Primary data sources

44. Primary data was collected through interviews with a range of stakeholders. Face-to-face interviews were held with most of the interviewed stakeholders in Baku, Azerbaijan, whereas UNEP staff, UNEP-CCC staff, international consultants, and key Azerbaijani stakeholders that were unavailable during the mission were interviewed virtually. Interviewees were selected in consultation with the project team, based on their level of engagement in the project. Triangulation and verification were done by obtaining views from different stakeholders with different perspectives, as well as comparing with secondary (document) sources. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews guided by the review matrix and tailored to the individual perspective, role and mandate of each interviewee.

Table 6: Review respondents and field visits

Stakeholders - Individuals			A. Total number involved (M/F)	B. Number contacted (M/F)	Sample size (% B/A)[11]	C. Total number responded Total (M/F)	Response rate (% C/B)[12]
Project Team	**Project Team** (with management responsibilities e.g. Project Management Unit)	Implementing agency	1M/4F	1M/4F	100%	1M/3F	80%
		Executing agency(ies)	3M/1F	3M	75%	3M	100%
Beneficiaries	**Direct Beneficiaries:** (e.g. duty bearers, gatekeepers, training participants, etc.) **Indirect Beneficiaries:** (e.g. household members, civil society representatives, group members, etc.)		Direct: 367: 202M/165F Indirect: N/A	15: 5F/10M	4%	15: 5F/10M	100%
Stakeholders - Entities			**A. Total number involved**	**B. Number contacted**	**Sample size (% B/A)[13]**	**C. Total number responded**	**Response rate (% C/B)[14]**
Partners	**Project implementing/ executing partners** (receiving project funds)		3	3	100%	3	100%
	Project collaborating/ contributing partners[15] (not receiving project funds)		5	5	100%	5	100%

Strategies for inclusivity

[11] Percentage of people involved in the project who were contacted.
[12] Percentage of people contacted who responded.
[13] Percentage of entities involved in the project who were contacted.
[14] Percentage of entities contacted who responded.
[15] Contributing partners may be providing resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc.).

45. Given the project was purely of an institutional capacity building nature, all key stakeholders, i.e. significantly involved staff at UNEP, RECC, MENR, UNEP-CCC, key consultants, as well as PSC members and training participants/data collectors from government institutions were contacted. Follow-up emails from the reviewer and/or phone calls by the PMU were made to maximise the response rate/engagement.

Secondary data sources

46. The secondary data sources used were project documentation including design documents (e.g. the CEO Endorsement Request), project implementation reviews (PIRs), half-yearly progress report (HYPRs), final report, project deliverables (e.g. reports, studies, workshop reports, training materials, and online platform), and financial reports. Annex IV provides a complete overview of the secondary data sources used.

C. Data Analysis

47. Given the nature of the project, most data collected was of a qualitative nature, with the exception of financial data and numbers and gender of training participants. As such, a qualitative interpretation was applied, with triangulation/comparison of data from different interviews and secondary sources.

D. Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

48. The reviewer was not able to interview representatives of all stakeholders and training participants, but only a sample of those, as well as the most central stakeholders to the project. Nonetheless, most PSC members and other representatives from the most important institutions vis-à-vis climate transparency and MRV were interviewed. The availability of project documentation was good, with the main design documents and all progress reports and written deliverables made available to the reviewer.

E. Ethical Considerations

49. Throughout this 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. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All information gathered after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to the UN ‘Standards of Conduct’.

III. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

50. A Theory of Change (ToC) and a results framework were provided in the CEO Endorsement Request. They were fully aligned with each other. No subsequent revisions were made to the ToC or the results framework. The expected results of the project were clearly articulated, and the intermediate states and four outputs were appropriately defined. The assumptions and drivers identified in the ToC were appropriate, although no assumption or risk was identified related to the adoption of the climate change law, despite its vital importance for achieving the intended outcomes. However, the impact, the two outcomes, and three outputs were not pegged at the correct level. Hence, a reconstructed ToC was elaborated by the review consultant and provided to UNEP for approval. Table 7 provides a detailed assessment of the ToC and results framework, presents the changes made, as well as justifications for the changes made. Figure 2 depicts the reconstructed ToC. As per UNEP's Evaluation Office guidelines, two drivers on gender and one assumption on human rights were added to the ToC.

51. The project was intended to directly deliver the intended outputs and originally phrased outcomes (which in reality were capacity outputs, see above), and lead to improved monitoring of NDC implementation progress and tracking of financial support. However, improved mobilisation of financing would to a significant degree depend on factors outside the control of the project. Moreover, the project would make a modest indirect contribution to the intermediate states and impact, but these high-level changes were not included in the results framework. Hence, results at the higher levels cannot be attributed to the project, nor can the project be held accountable for lack of changes at the higher level.

52. The results framework contained six indicators, one at the objective level and five pegged at the outcome level. Baselines and end-of-project targets were specified for all indicators. Three of the indicators derived from the GEF rating scales were defined in the CBIT Programming Directions. Two of the indicated outcome-level indicators were appropriate outcome indicators. However, the three remaining indicators were suitable for measuring outputs, but not for assessing outcomes. The objective level indicator was, in practice, a composite indicator that measured two distinct elements: one was suitable for assessing the achievement of the outcomes, whereas the other was suitable for assessing output achievement and also duplicating the other indicators; the former is thus included in the review framework at the outcome level.

Table 7: Justification for reformulation of results statements

Formulation in original project document(s) – *CEO Endorsement Request, 29 January 2020*	**Formulation for reconstructed ToC at review (RTOC)**	**Justification for reformulation**
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT		
Azerbaijan is in a position to set more ambitious NDC targets		"In a position to" is not an impact as it does not necessarily mean an actual change, but just an improvement in capacity (output) to engage, with no indication whether skills are applied or not. Nor are "more ambitious targets" and impact, as they do not infer in actual change, but just policy intentions (outcome or perhaps an intermediate state). The impact would be the actual change CBIT contributes to, i.e.
	Azerbaijan has made significant progress towards achieving its NDC targets	

		reduced GHG emissions and enhanced climate resilience. Rephrased and moved intermediate state level.
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
A. Azerbaijan meets the requirements of the Enhanced Transparency Framework		Appropriate intermediate state.
B. Azerbaijan improves implementation of its NDC		Appropriate intermediate state.
	C. Azerbaijan has set more ambitious NDC targets	Repositioning and rephrasing of original impact statement.
OBJECTIVE (from results framework)		
Strengthen institutional and human capacities in Azerbaijan to meet the reporting requirements of the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement by establishing a tracking system to support reliable domestic MRV arrangements.		Enhanced capacity is not an outcome, as it does not necessarily mean an actual change in practice. Enhanced capacity is a direct output of capacity development activities. Tracking system also reflected in the outputs.
OBJECTIVE INDCATOR		
Number of ministries with strengthened capacities (institutional and human) that provide information meeting the Paris Agreement ETF requirements to produce sectoral chapters of BURs, NCs and the updated NDC 2020		Composite indicator comprising dual levels: a) increased capacities (output) which is already captured in indicator 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, and b) provision of sectoral information to biennial update reports (BURs), national communications (NCs), NDC which is an appropriate indicator for the outcome level.
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
1. Enhanced institutional capacity to report and monitor progress of the implementation of the country's Nationally Determined Contributions	1. Improved monitoring of NDC implementation progress	Enhanced capacity is not an outcome, as it does not necessarily mean an actual change in practice. Enhanced capacity is a direct output of capacity development activities.
2. Enhanced institutional capacity to identify sources of funding and to track financial support	2. Improved identification of financial sources and tracking of financial support	
OUTCOME INDICATORS		
1.1. Qualitative rating of the MRV system in its ability to track mitigation actions focusing on the energy sector *Based on the GEF 1-10 rating scale, outlined in Annex III of the CBIT's Programming Directions*		Appropriate outcome indicator.
	Number of ministries that provide information meeting the Paris Agreement ETF requirements to produce sectoral chapters of BURs, NCs and the updated NDC 2020	Repositioning of second half of objective indicator.
1.2. Qualitative rating of Azerbaijan's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities *Based on the GEF 1-4 rating scale outlined in Annex IV of the CBIT's Programming Directions*		Appropriate output indicator, but not for the outcome, as improved capacity in itself is not a measure of improved practice.
1.3. % of training participants (Output 1.4) declaring to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track mitigation actions (disaggregated by gender)		Appropriate output indicator, but not for the outcome. Measuring at the end of the training provides no information on the actual application of skills.
2.1. Qualitative rating of the MRV system in its ability to track financial support received		Appropriate outcome indicator.

Based on the GEF 1-10 rating scale outlined in Annex III of the CBIT Programming Directions		
2.2. % of training participants (Output 2.2) declaring to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track financial support received (disaggregated by gender)		Appropriate output indicator, but not for the outcome. Measuring at the end of the training provides no information on the actual application of skills.
OUTPUTS		
1.1. Institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing for preparing GHG inventory are established		Appropriate output.
1.2. National GHG database management system for GHG data is developed		Appropriate output.
1.3. National system for tracking progress of the implementation of Azerbaijan's Nationally Determined Contributions for mitigation actions established and operationalized		Appropriate output.
1.4. Training programme on enhanced transparency processes provided		Provision of training is an activity, not an output. The output would be the expected improvements – the activities specified are to a large extent covered under outputs 1.1-1.3.
1.5. Knowledge-sharing and coordination mechanism with the CBIT Global Coordination Platform established		Knowledge-sharing and coordination with the global CBIT GSP project is a capacity development activity level rather than a distinct output vis-à-vis the functionality of the Azerbaijani ETF.
2.1. Financial strategy outlining means to identify sources of funding needed, and to track financial support received, developed		Appropriate output.
2.2. Capacity building and training programme on identifying sources of funding and tracking financial support processes provided		Provision of training is an activity, not an output. The output would be the expected capacity improvements. The output would be the expected improvements covered under output 2.1.
OUTPUT INDICATORS		
	Qualitative rating of Azerbaijan's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities *Based on the GEF 1-4 rating scale outlined in Annex IV of the CBIT's Programming Directions*	Repositioning of outcome indicator 1.2.
	% of training participants (Output 1.4) declaring to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track mitigation actions (disaggregated by gender)	Repositioning of outcome indicator 1.3.
	% of training participants (Output 2.2) declaring to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track financial support received (disaggregated by gender)	Repositioning of outcome indicator 2.2.

Table 8: Justification for reformulation / expansion of drivers and assumptions

Formulation in original project document(s) – *CEO Endorsement Request, 29 January 2020*	**Formulation for reconstructed ToC at review (RTOC)**	**Justification for reformulation**
DRIVERS		

Government of Azerbaijan commitment to effectively participate in international treaties on Climate Change and ensure its effective implementation		Appropriate driver
The Government's commitment to implement actions to address climate change and continuously enhance its ambition		Appropriate driver
The ETF provides consistent and reliable data for policy making on climate change		Appropriate driver
	Women are actively involved in monitoring of NDC progress	Added as per UNEP Evaluation Office guidelines
	Gender issues are addressed in NDC target setting	Added as per UNEP Evaluation Office guidelines
ASSUMPTIONS		
Private sector and relevant stakeholders accept to share data and information		Appropriate assumption
Government allocates sufficient resources to operate and maintain the systems established		Appropriate assumption
There is political stability, and commitment of government to ensure adequately resources the system		Appropriate assumption
Arrangements over time are made to continuously train human resources for MRV		Appropriate assumption
Capacities are retained		Appropriate assumption
There is sufficient and sustainable funding		Appropriate assumption
	The project works toward the UN principles on human rights	Added as per UNEP Evaluation Office guidelines

53. In combination, the establishment of institutional arrangements for interministerial collaboration a systemised GHG data collection and processing (output 1.1), a national GHG database (output 1.2) and a national system for tracking mitigation actions (output 1.3), the project was intended to improve the monitoring of NDC implementation (outcome 1). However, the achievement of the outcome would also hinge on government commitment to implementation of the PA/UNFCCC (driver) and willingness of the private sector and other stakeholders to share data and information (assumption). The project deliverables included a gender awareness workshop, which would contribute to active involvement of women in MRV (driver).

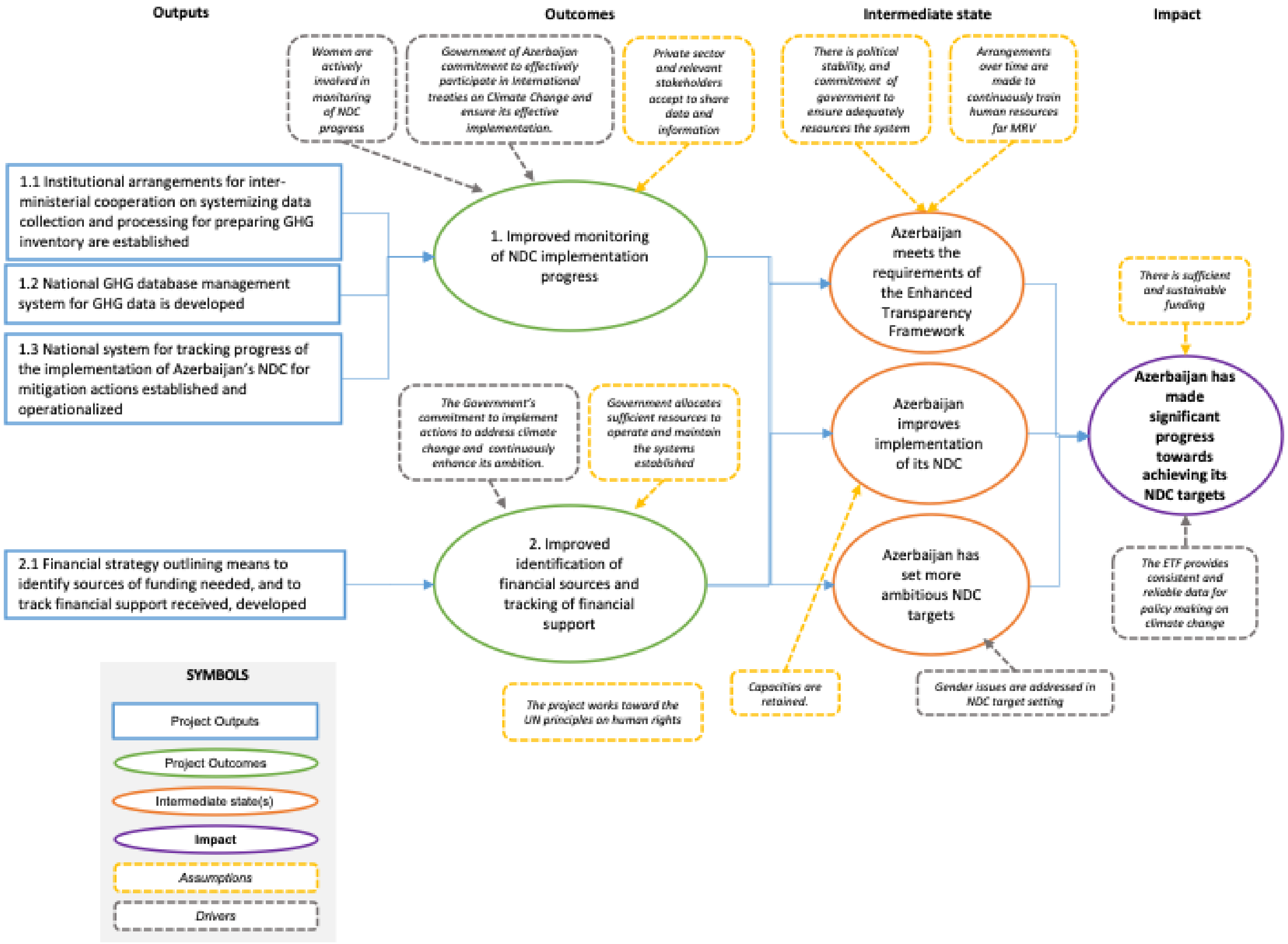
54. Moreover, the combination of a financial strategy which outlines the means to identify finding sources and track financial support (output 2.1) would lead to Improved mobilisation and tracking of financial support (outcome 2). However, the achievement of the outcome would also hinge on government commitment to climate action and enhancing ambitions (driver) and allocation of sufficient resources by government for operation and maintenance of the tracking system (assumption).

55. The two outcomes on improved access to climate change-related information would contribute towards three intermediate states, namely that Azerbaijan a) meets the ETF requirements, b) improves its NDC implementation, and c) sets more ambitious NDC targets. However, the achievement of the intermediate states would hinge on political stability and government commitment to allocate the requires resources to the system established by the project (assumption), that arrangements are made to ensure continuous MRV training of human resources (assumption), and that sufficient staff and institutional capacities are retained (assumption). Moreover, the gender awareness provided by the project would contribute towards gender issues being address in NDC target setting (driver). The enhanced climate action of the intermediate states would contribute towards Azerbaijan making significant progress towards achieving its NDC targets (impact).

56. While the project did not explicitly address human rights in its design or implementation, MRV and climate transparency under the ETF contributes to the right to access to

information, whereas improved climate action contributes toward the right to a healthy environment. As such, the project worked towards UN principles on human rights (assumption).

Figure 2: Theory of Change at review


Outputs
Outcomes
Intermediate state
Impact
Women are actively involved in monitoring of NDC progress
Government of Azerbaijan commitment to effectively participate in International treaties on Climate Change and ensure its effective implementation.
Private sector and relevant stakeholders accept to share data and information
There is political stability, and commitment of government to ensure adequately resources the system
Arrangements over time are made to continuously train human resources for MRV
1.1 Institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing for preparing GHG inventory are established
1.2 National GHG database management system for GHG data is developed
1.3 National system for tracking progress of the implementation of Azerbaijan's NDC for mitigation actions established and operationalized
1. Improved monitoring of NDC implementation progress
Azerbaijan meets the requirements of the Enhanced Transparency Framework
There is sufficient and sustainable funding
Azerbaijan has made significant progress towards achieving its NDC targets
The Government's commitment to implement actions to address climate change and continuously enhance its ambition.
Government allocates sufficient resources to operate and maintain the systems established
Azerbaijan improves implementation of its NDC
2.1 Financial strategy outlining means to identify sources of funding needed, and to track financial support received, developed
2. Improved identification of financial sources and tracking of financial support
Azerbaijan has set more ambitious NDC targets
The ETF provides consistent and reliable data for policy making on climate change
SYMBOLS
Project Outputs
Project Outcomes
Intermediate state(s)
Impact
Assumptions
Drivers
The project works toward the UN principles on human rights
Capacities are retained.
Gender issues are addressed in NDC target setting

IV. REVIEW FINDINGS[16]

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy[17] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

Table 9: Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and Strategic Priorities

UNEP strategic document	Alignment with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities	Level of alignment *full, partial, or not at all*
MTS (2017-2021)[18]	Aligned with sub-programme 1: climate change. By promoting better institutional frameworks and processes for GHG inventories, MRV and financing tracking, the project contributed towards improving reporting to PA/UNFCCC as well as improved access to information for evidence-based planning of climate action.	Full
POW (2020-2021)[19]	The project contributed to sub-programme 1 expected accomplishment b) *"Countries increasingly adopt, integrate and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies"*, Output 6: *"Technical support provided to countries to address UNFCCC commitments, monitoring, reporting requirements and mainstreaming results into national development planning"*. Thereby, the project indirectly contributed to the expected indicator i) *"the number of countries supported by UNEP that make progress in adopting and/or implementing low greenhouse gas emission development plans, strategies and/or policies"*.	Full
Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[20]	Institutional and staff capacity-building vis-à-vis GHG inventories, MRV and climate finance tracking was the backbone of the project. As such, it in particular aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan vis-à-vis a) *assistance for facilitating compliance with and enforcement of obligations under multilateral environmental agreements and implementation of environmental commitments*, and b) *supporting national and regional institutions in data collection, analysis and monitoring of environmental trends*.	Full
South-South Cooperation[21]	While the project had a national focus, it also supported South-South sharing of lessons and best practices, hosting a workshop for selected countries (arranged jointly with CBIT-GSP).	Full

Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities

Table 10: Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

Donor or partner strategic document	Alignment with donor or partner strategic priorities	Level of alignment

16 Refer to the TOR for descriptions of the nature and scope of each criterion.
17 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 Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents.
18 Refer to the MTS under which the project was approved.
19 Refer to the POW under which the project was approved.
20 If applicable.
21 If applicable.

		full, partial, or not at all
GEF	The project was aligned with the GEF Climate Change focal area and responded to the UNFCCC-mandated GEF financing for CBIT/climate transparency.	Full
Name of Donor/Partner	N/A	N/A

Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

Table 11: Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

Strategic document or agreement	**Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional, national environmental priorities**	**Level of alignment** *full, partial, or not at all*
Paris Agreement and Azerbaijan's NDC	The project supported MENR and other Government of Azerbaijan (GoA) institutions in enhancing the capacity to implement ETF, MRV and climate transparency obligations under the PA/UNFCCC. Azerbaijan faces constraints vis-à-vis implementing the reporting obligations, such as an absence of a formalised legal and institutional framework, technical capacity constraints among government institutions and other stakeholders, data gaps for some sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry and other land use, livestock), lack of national emission factors/standards.	Full

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

Table 12: Complementarity with existing interventions/coherence

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	**Complementarity** *(including collaboration, coordination and overlap or duplication)*	**Level of alignment** *full, partial, or not at all*
CBIT-GSP/CBIT Global Coordination Platform	Joint international peer learning workshop in Azerbaijan and two COP 29 side events arranged with CBIT-GSP in 2024. Participation of project staff and national stakeholders in several in-person and virtual regional/global workshops and trainings held by CBIT-GSP vis-à-vis GHG inventories, NDC tracking and climate finance, incl. Mutual Learning Program for Enhanced Transparency Reporting on NDC Tracking 2025 (Azerbaijan-Moldova-Türkiye-Uzbekistan-Japan). CBIT-GSP provided training in Azerbaijan on Low Emissions Analysis Platform (LEAP) modelling.	Full
Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA)	Facilitated by the project, PATPA provided ad-hoc technical guidance to MENR related to legislation and institutional framework for tracking and reporting climate finance – thereby enhancing the climate finance component of the project. The project supported MENR the preparation in 2024 of the climate finance part of Azerbaijan's first BTR (led by the national climate finance expert), while PATPA provided additional technical guidance.	Full
GEF-support for reporting to PA/UNFCCC	GEF has supported Azerbaijan in the preparation of reports to PA/UNFCCC, involving largely the same stakeholder as the project. The project complemented existing GEF-supported reporting initiatives, reinforcing national capacity in MRV and climate finance tracking. However, due to project delays and unaligned timelines, the synergies were less than expected although the project did contribute to the reporting. The improvement of the MRV system and the preparation of the report to some extent competed for Government staff time.	Partial

Findings Statements on Strategic Relevance and Complementarity

57. The project was fully aligned with the climate sub-programme of the MTS 2017-2021 and PoW 2020-2021, specifically contributing to accomplishment b) output 6: “Technical support provided to countries to address UNFCCC commitments, monitoring, reporting requirements and mainstreaming results into national development planning”. This was done through capacity development, establishing and online MRV platform and promoting the establishment of appropriate institutional arrangements for MRV. Moreover, with the focus on capacity development, the project aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan vis-à-vis providing “assistance for facilitating compliance with and enforcement of obligations under multilateral environmental agreements and implementation of environmental commitments” and “supporting national and regional institutions in data collection, analysis and monitoring of environmental trends”. While the project focus was national, it also promoted South-South peer learning with an international learning event held in Azerbaijan in cooperation with CBIT-GSP. The project was aligned with the GEF Climate Change focal area and funded under the PA/UNFCCC mandated GEF financing for CBIT/climate transparency. At the national level, the project contributed to enhancing the capacities of MENR and other government institutions to implement Azerbaijan’s MRV and climate transparency obligations under the PA/UNFCCC.

58. Participation of the project team and Azerbaijani stakeholders in global and regional, in-person and virtual, CBIT-GSP workshops and training, as well as a joint international workshop held in Azerbaijan, contributed to enhancing Azerbaijani capacities as well as to link to, and learn from, other countries, thereby reinforcing the project in Azerbaijan. Based on the learnings, the PMU engaged in dialogue with various countries to learn from their national MRV platforms, which informed the development of the platform in Azerbaijan. Synergy was also achieved with PATPA vis-à-vis enhancing capacities for the tracking of, and reporting on, climate financing. The project aimed to strengthen the framework and process for reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, at the same time, GEF provided funding for the preparation of reports (NC, BUR, BTR) to the PA/UNFCCC. The project complemented existing GEF-supported reporting initiatives, reinforcing national capacity in MRV and climate finance tracking. However, due to delays in implementation and unaligned timelines, the synergies were less than expected (e.g. the online platform was not ready for use in time for the reporting), although the project did contribute to the reporting. The improvement of the MRV system under the project and the preparation of the report to some extent competed for staff time.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

B. Quality of Project Design

Table 13: Summary of quality of project design assessment ratings

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	Summary Assessment
A	Project Preparation	5	- Azerbaijan’s challenges related to inventories, NDC tracking, MRV, and ETF clearly outlined - Human rights not addressed, which is understandable, given the project’s focus

			- Gender mainstreaming and participation of women considered, and one gender activity included - Detailed (but not costed) work plan and procurement plan provided
B	Risk identification and Safeguards	5	- Clear and appropriate risk log included, but no assessment of operating context - Environmental, social and economic screening carried out, safeguard checklist elaborated – low risk
C	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	5	- Project management arrangements clearly described - UNEP's role clearly described, but internal allocation of roles in UNEP not described
D	Partnerships	5	- Institutional capacity constraints described - No evidence of a detailed capacity assessment of the partners during design, but capacity needs assessment included in project activities - Roles of RECC, PSC and PMU articulated
E	Strategic Relevance	4	- MTS mentioned in results framework, but PoW and Bali Strategic Plan not mentioned - Links to national priorities described in a somewhat generic manner - Link to GEF focal areas and indicators outlined - List of previous GEF-funded MRV capacity-development projects and other interventions provided and links with CBIT-GSP described
F	Logical Framework and Causality	4	- Expected results clearly articulated, but proper outcomes not defined - Intermediate states and 4 outputs appropriately defined, but impact, outcomes and 3 outputs not pegged at the correct level - Appropriate assumptions and drivers, but no assumption re. availability of donor financing in a competitive environment - Realistic and SMART outputs - Some indicators appropriate for measuring outcomes, but others better suited for measuring outputs, baselines and targets provided
G	Financial Planning	5	- Budget by component/outcome but not by output - Co-finance expectations provided by output
H	Efficiency	5	- Results of earlier MRV support considered - Synergy with CBIT-GSP to some extent addressed - MRV intended to integrate in national monitoring system - No efficiency or cost-effectiveness strategy
I	Monitoring	5	- Costed monitoring plan provided, but focused on progress reporting and terminal review - Data sources specified for indicators - Funds allocated for terminal review
J	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	3	- Sustainability is sought through staff capacity development at institutions participating in MRV - Provisions for sustainability of MRV platform and data collection somewhat unspecific, and not addressing operation and maintenance - Social and financial sustainability not addressed - Replication of earlier MRV results achieved described in terms of transferability but without mechanism for facilitating replication
K	Learning, Communication and Outreach	4	- No communication plan included in the project design, but terms of reference and budget for part-

			time communication officer and development of communication plans,
	Total (Weighted) Score:	*4.43*	*(Full analysis in the Inception Report, available from the Project/Task Manager)*

59. Main project design strengths: The CEO Endorsement Request clearly outlined Azerbaijan's climate action challenges, incl. challenges related to inventories, NDC tracking, MRV, and ETF. It also addressed gender aspects of climate transparency and MRV and aimed at ensuring the participation of women in the project. A clear and appropriate risk matrix was included. The project was duly screened for environment and social risks and needs for safeguards and justifiably found to be low risk without need for safeguards. Project management and oversight arrangements were clearly described. The expected results were clearly articulated. A complete budget was provided by component/outcome and co-financing expectations per output were clearly defined. Results of earlier MRV support were taken into consideration in the design and the MRV was planned to integrate in the national monitoring system whenever possible. Resources were allocated for project monitoring and evaluation. Sustainability was sought through staff capacity development at institutions participating in the MRV system.

60. Main project design weaknesses: Human rights were not explicitly addressed in the project design, which is understandable, given the project's focus on MRV and reporting. However, climate transparency does to the right to access to information and indirectly the right to a healthy and safe environment. There was no assessment of the operating context, other than the risk matrix. There were some inconsistencies in the theory of change and results framework. The monitoring plan focused entirely on progress reporting and terminal review with limited attention to monitoring data collection. The provisions for sustainability of the tracking system and data collection processes were somewhat unspecific and did not address issues related to operation and maintenance, nor was financial sustainability addressed. Replication of MRV results from the energy sector to other sectors was described in terms of transferability of approach and capacity development, but without a mechanism for facilitating the replication.

61. The project in Azerbaijan was among the first generation of CBIT projects and thus developed before there was experience and lessons on the establishment of MRV systems under the ETF. Overambition and unrealistic expectations of the extent to which CBIT projects would be able to deliver full-fledged and operational MRV frameworks, as well as somewhat insufficient adaptation of design to local conditions, reportedly characterised first generation CBIT projects, and UNEP has since refined its approach to CBIT projects, based on lessons learnt from the first-generation projects.

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

C. Nature of the External Context

62. The political and economic context in Azerbaijan was largely stable, but there was armed conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh. The project commenced during a period with major global events, i.e. the COVID-19 pandemic followed by inflation. The start of the project was significantly delayed by slower than expected national registration of the project, delayed implementation due to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures, and partially limited internet access under martial law during the conflict. Moreover, MENR staff resources were redirected to monitor the environmental situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. The appointment of the project director was delayed. Further delays were triggered by the demise of RECC's Country Director (which led to temporary suspension of project activities), and resignation and replacement of PMU staff.

63. With the absence of a legal framework for climate change in Azerbaijan, the institutional arrangements and mandates and obligations of the various government institutions vis-à-vis climate action are unclear. Nonetheless, stakeholders report that there is high-level political interest in climate change, which was further elevated during 2024 by Azerbaijan's hosting of UNFCCC COP 29 in November 2024. A draft Climate Act has been prepared and submitted to the Cabinet for approval and stakeholder consultations, but it is not yet approved, and there is still some unclarity on the institutional arrangements the new Climate Act will specify. The absence of clear institutional mandates also means that the formal designation of staff responsible GHG inventories and MRV is generally absent across sectors. Hence, engagement in the project of the key government institutions and other stakeholders was largely voluntarily and dependent on the level of awareness and interest. This, in combination with some data being classified information, and sensitivities related to climate data, created practical challenges for the operationalisation of a fully integrated MRV platform and climate transparency framework.

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

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

Table 14: Availability of outputs

	Narrative Assessment	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 1.1: Institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing for preparing GHG inventory are established **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Indicator: Qualitative rating of Azerbaijan's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities (*Based on the GEF 1-4 rating scale outlined in Annex IV of the CBIT's Programming Directions)* Baseline: 1 Target: 4 (=+3) **Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:**	**Indicator status: 3 (+2)** ***(reported by PMU)*** **– below target (66% achievement)** The project contributed significantly to enhanced awareness and capacities of government staff across relevant government institutions vis-à-vis GHG inventories, MRV and climate transparency in general. Experts from MENR (incl. the Climate Change Centre), the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, the State Statistical Committee and other government institutions as well as representatives from civil society, academia, and the private sector, were trained on GHG Inventory, NDC Tracking, and Finance Tracking. This in turn led to a significant increase in ownership and buy-in among government institutions vis-à-vis engaging in climate action in general, and in collecting and reporting climate transparency data and information specifically. Interlocutors widely acknowledge the project's contribution to enhancing awareness and commitment, with a number of interviewees expressing this being the most significant result of the project – thereby laying the foundation for improved cross-sectoral engagement and coordination. However, since the new Climate Act has not yet been adopted, climate transparency and MRV has not yet been institutionalised. There is no legally designated institutional lead for climate transparency nor have relevant sector government institutions been officially mandated/tasked to engage in data collection and reporting. Hence, their participation remains driven by interest and willingness of their leaderships and staff to engage, and some institutions have been more committed and engaged than others. Nonetheless, the Climate Change Centre of the National Hydro-Meteorological Centre (under MENR), is de-facto responsible at interim. The project made a considerable contribution to strengthening the technical capacity of the Climate Change Centre's staff vis-à-vis GHG inventories and MRV. Nonetheless, process has been made towards the institutionalisation of data collection and progress with support from the project. A draft legal act defining the roles and responsibilities of government institutions and other key stakeholders has been elaborated and circulated for comments from ministries. The draft act is currently being updated based on the feedback received, and has been submitted to the Cabinet for approval, whereas public consultations are yet to be carried out. The project supported the process of drafting the Climate Act, e.g. by reviewing draft text and providing recommendations. Moreover, the PMU supported the Climate Change Centre and MENR in the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC, incl. the First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1) and the Third Biennial Update Report (BUR3). The increased capacities and tool provided by the project contributed to this, although the online platform for	- PIRs - Final report - Deliverables - Stakeholder interviews - Interviews with PMU and MENR staff

	GHG inventory, MRV and climate finance data was not operational in time to assist the elaboration of the aforementioned reports. ***Level of delivery: partial***	
Output 1.2: National GHG database management system for GHG data is developed **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** *N/A (no indicators defined)* **Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:**	A national online GHG database management system was developed, tested, and operationalised. Moreover, templates, protocols, sector-specific data collection tools, manuals and guidelines (e.g. for NDC indicator application) were developed to support standardised and harmonised data collection. Staff at government sector institutions were trained in GHG inventories and in the use of the tools and online system. Some interlocutors report that the unified methodology and tools provided are in use, such as improved conversion of net calorie values to carbon dioxide emissions, whereas others are not yet applying them. The GHG database is one of three components of the online platform, together with an MRV and a finance tracking component. The platform was developed by an Azerbaijani IT consultant company with technical advice provided by an international climate transparency expert – also drawing on experience from other countries, particularly Georgia. It is based on open-source software and data is stored locally on Government servers. However, the system has so far not been used for the updating of the national GHG inventory, and government sector institutions have so far not uploaded data and information. Interlocutors report that the system is not used due to a reluctance or inability to upload data when there is not a legal mandate to use the platform, not least since some data reportedly is classified. ***Level of delivery: full***	- PIRs - Final report - Deliverables - Stakeholder interviews - Interviews with PMU and MENR staff
Output 1.3: National system for tracking progress of the implementation of Azerbaijan's Nationally Determined Contributions for mitigation actions established and operationalized **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Indicator: % of training participants declaring to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track mitigation actions (disaggregated by gender) Baseline: 0% Target: 70%	**Indicator status: 70% *(reported by PMU)* – on target (100% achievement)** An online MRV system and datahub for tracking mitigation action and NDC progress was developed, tested, and operationalized (one component of the three-component online platform). The initial NDC tracking system/datahub design developed by the IT consultant was further refined based on inputs from the Chief Technical Adviser and the international transparency experts vis-à-vis structure, maintenance, and usability. Staff at government sector institutions as well as civil society, academia and private sector actors were trained on climate transparency, including MRV, mitigation action tracking, and the use of the online platform. However, the system has so far not been used for the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC. ***Level of delivery: full***	- PIRs - Final report - Deliverables - Stakeholder interviews - Interviews with PMU and MENR staff

Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:		
Output 2.1: Financial strategy outlining means to identify sources of funding needed, and to track financial support received, developed **Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s)** Indicator: % 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% Target: 70% **Other information, not related to the indicators, that demonstrates Output delivery:**	**Indicator status: 70% *(reported by PMU)* – on target (100% achievement)** An online system for tracking climate finance was developed, tested, and operationalized (one component of the three-component online platform). The climate finance tracking system was updated based on recommendations from national and international experts. A financial strategy/manual outlining mechanisms for identifying funding sources, tagging/tracking financial support and reporting on this in BTRs was developed, incl. a gap analysis of existing systems and a stakeholder map. Institutional arrangements and data flow requirements for financial data gathering were elaborated, and a legal framework was updated for institutionalising the financial tracking system but have not yet been formally adopted. Staff at government sector institutions as well as civil society, academia and private sector actors were trained on climate finance tracking, the strategy/manual, and the online system. ***Level of delivery: full***	- PIRs - Final report - Stakeholder interviews - Deliverables - Interviews with PMU and MENR staff

64. The project has significantly contributed to enhancing staff capacities vis-à-vis climate transparency, GHG inventories, MRV, and finance tracking. The GHG inventory methodologies and tools provided by the project are reportedly being used by some, but not yet by all, stakeholders. Moreover, the project has contributed considerably to raising awareness and creating commitment across government sector institutions of the relevance of engaging in climate action as well as collecting and reporting climate-related data and information and enhanced the communication and coordination across government institutions on GHG inventories and MRV – this is by a number of stakeholders seen as the most significant results of the project.

65. A three-component online platform comprising a) a GHG inventory database for emission data, b) an MRV system for tracking climate action and NDC progress and c) a system for tracking climate finance. The platform was developed domestically, albeit taking experiences from other countries into consideration. It is based on open-source software and data is kept on Government servers, thus addressing concerns about software licensing and perceived risks regarding the control over government data, which in some cases is classified, on an international and commercially operated platform. However, the development of a new platform from scratch (also looking at the platforms developed by other countries) rather than following the international consultant's recommendation of adapting an existing SharePoint-based solution, was more

time-consuming and costly – but interlocutors found the locally developed solution more suited to their needs. The platform is fully functional, but due to the considerable implementation delays affecting the project as well as a lack of formalised institutional mandate to use the platform, the platform was not ready in time for use for the preparation of the First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1), the Third Biennial Update Report (BUR3), or the updating of the GHG inventory.

66. The project contributed towards the establishment of a legal framework and officially mandated institutional arrangements for climate transparency and data management by supporting the drafting of the Climate Act and by developing frameworks for appropriate institutional arrangements. Interim inter-institional coordination mechanisms were established under the project and facilitated active participation by line ministries. However, by the end of the project, the Climate Act had not yet been adopted by the Parliament and thus institutional arrangements have not yet been formalised. Hence, the engagement of line ministries in climate transparency remains voluntary, largely person driven and uneven – with some government institutions engaging considerably whereas other are reportedly less engaged. Due to the lack of formalised institutional arrangements and responsibilities vis-à-vis climate transparency as well as formal adoption of the online platform, the platform, while fully functional, is not yet populated with data and information. Hence, output 1.1 (establishment of institutional arrangements) was only partly achieved. While output 1.2 (national GHG database developed), output 1.3 (establishment and operationalisation of national NDC tracking system) and output 2.1 (financial strategy developed) were achieved, the outputs have not yet been fully operationalised/put to use.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

Table 15: Achievement of project outcomes

Outcome 1: Improved monitoring of NDC implementation progress	Results statement
Performance Indicator(s) and Target(s): Indicator: Qualitative rating of the MRV system in its ability to track mitigation actions focusing on the energy sector (*Based on the GEF 1-10 rating scale, outlined in Annex III of the CBIT's Programming Directions*) Baseline: 2 Target: 7 (=+5) Indicator: Number of ministries with strengthened capacities (institutional and human) that provide information meeting the Paris Agreement ETF requirements to produce sectoral chapters of BURs, NCs and the updated NDC 2020 Baseline: 1 (MENR) Target: 5 (=+4)	Status: 3 (+1) (reported by PMU) – below target (20% achievement) Status: 3 (+2) (reported by PMU) – below target (50% achievement)
Sources of Information /Evidence:	- PIRs - Final report - Stakeholder interviews - Interviews with PMU and MENR staff
Narrative Assessment:	The project increased institutional capacities through enhancing the skills, awareness and interest of staff members and providing guidelines, tools and methodologies for MRV, NDC reporting, and GHG inventories. This reportedly contributed to modest improvements in NDC tracking and the number of ministries providing information for BTR/BUR in line with ETF requirements, such as improved quality and timeliness of submissions. However, with the continued absence of a legal and formal institutional framework for climate transparency, no significant systemic changes were achieved vis-à-vis improving the arrangements for NDC monitoring. Nonetheless, interlocutors report that the project has provided a unified methodology measuring by the same unit, which will facilitate the preparation of future BTRs. Some interlocutors report that they are already applying the methodologies, whereas others have not yet used them, indicating that they expect to use them for the next round of data collection, but that they would need official instruction to do so. The project laid the groundwork for establishing conducive MRV processes in Azerbaijan once the Climate Act is passed – by supporting the Climate Act development process, proposing institutional arrangements, enhancing capacities and awareness, providing tangible tools and methodologies, and establishing an online platform that is ready for use.
Level of Achievement:	Partly achieved

Outcome 2: Improved identification of financial sources and tracking of financial support	Results statement
Performance Indicator(s) and Target(s):	Indicator final target status:

Indicator: Qualitative rating of the MRV system in its ability to track financial support received *(Based on the GEF 1-10 rating scale outlined in Annex III of the CBIT Programming Directions)* Baseline: 1 Target: 6 (=+5)	*Unclear, conflicting information and assessment based on post-training participant capacity self-assessment rather than actual changes in climate finance tracking and reporting.* Reported change: - 2025 PIR: 2 (+1) – below target (20% achievement) - 2025 Final Report: 4 (+3) – below target (60% achievement)
Sources of Information /Evidence:	- PIRs - Final report - Stakeholder interviews - Interviews with PMU and MENR staff
Narrative Assessment:	The project increased institutional capacities for finance tracking through enhancing the skills, awareness and interest of staff members and providing guidelines, tools and methodologies. However, with the continued absence of a legal and formal institutional framework for climate transparency, no systemic changes were achieved vis-à-vis improving the arrangements for finance tracking, nor is there clear evidence of any changes in the actual tracking undertaken. Once the legal framework is in place, more work is required to develop an operational climate finance tagging system, incl. mobilising stakeholders in the financing sector, and understanding better whether Azerbaijan should pursue a carbon credit system, carbon taxes, or a combination – as well as developing and testing the climate finance tagging system with the private sector. Nonetheless, the project laid the groundwork for climate finance tracking in Azerbaijan once the legal framework is adopted – by proposing a strategy and institutional arrangements for finance tracking, supporting the elaboration of the legal framework (incl. the draft Climate Act), enhancing capacities.
Level of Achievement:	Partly achieved

67. The project laid the groundwork for improved monitoring of NDC implementation progress and tracking of climate financing by strengthening staff capacities and awareness, providing tools and methodologies, establishing a functional online platform, proposing appropriate institutional arrangements, and contributing to the process of establishing the required legal framework. Minor improvements in NDC progress monitoring and finance tracking have been achieved However, as the legal framework and formalised institutional arrangements are not yet in place, the project outputs have not yet been fully applied in Azerbaijan's MRV and have thus only partly led to the intended outcomes.

Likelihood of Impact

Table 16: Likelihood of impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes	Partially in place	- *Government of Azerbaijan commitment to effectively participate in international treaties on Climate Change and ensure its effective implementation* Status: the driver is partly in place, the GoA displays commitment (a commitment that was further enhanced during 2024 by hosting COP 29), but the country still lacks a legal and formalised institutional framework for application of the outputs delivered by the project. - *The Government's commitment to implement actions to address climate change and continuously enhance its ambition* Status: the driver is partly in place, GoA is committed to implementing actions (in particular vis-à-vis adaptation and vis-à-

		vis accessing carbon credits), but oil and gas is the main source of foreign revenue - *Women are actively involved in monitoring of NDC progress* Status: in place, women participated in project activities as well as in actual NDC reporting.
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Partially hold	- *Private sector and relevant stakeholders accept to share data and information* Status: the assumption partly holds, there are sensitivities related to sharing data and making it publicly available, incl. in the oil and gas sector - *Government allocates sufficient resources to operate and maintain the systems established* Status: does not hold, with the absence of a legal and formal institutional framework, budget allocations are uncertain
Proportion of **Project Outcomes** fully or partially achieved	All	- Outcomes are partly achieved; their achievement depends on the passing of the Climate Act and formalisation of adequate institutional arrangements
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially in place	- *Gender issues are addressed in NDC target setting* Status: the driver is partly in place, gender is briefly mentioned in NDC but not specified in the targets
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially hold	- *There is political stability, and commitment of government to ensure adequately resources the system* Status: the assumption partly holds, there is political stability, (especially after the conclusion of the armed conflict with Armenia) but with the lack of a legal and formalised institutional framework, resource allocation is uncertain - *Arrangements over time are made to continuously train human resources for MRV* Status: the assumption does not hold, in the absence of legal and institutional arrangements the training of human resources is project dependent and there is currently no mechanism for continuous training in place. - *Capacities are retained* Status: the assumption partly holds, GoA is affected by staff turnover, but some staff have remained in position. Retainment of PMU staff depends on future donor funding. - *The project works toward the UN principles on human rights* Status: the assumption partly holds, a human rights lens was not explicitly applied in the project design or implementation, but climate transparency contributes to the right to access to information and indirectly to the right to a healthy environment.
Proportion of **Intermediate States** achieved	Some *(partially, but not due to project)*	- *A. Azerbaijan meets the requirements of the Enhanced Transparency Framework* Status: the intermediate state is not achieved, the project outputs have not yet been out into use, and progress on NDC reporting quality so far is modest. - *B. Azerbaijan improves implementation of its NDC* Status: the intermediate state is not achieved, the project outputs have not yet been out into use, and progress on NDC reporting quality so far is modest. - *C. Azerbaijan has set more ambitious NDC targets* Status: the intermediate state is partly achieved, the October 2023 NDC update commits Azerbaijan to reduce GHG emissions by 35% by 2030 and 40% by 2050, but this cannot be attributed to the project, which mainly engaged NDC monitoring and promoting gender mainstreaming in NDC rather than target setting.
Drivers to support transition from	Not in place	- *The ETF provides consistent and reliable data for policy making on climate change*

Intermediate States to Impact			Status: the driver is not in place, the MRV system promoted by the project is not yet in use or informing policy
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Do not hold	-	*There is sufficient and sustainable funding* Status: the assumption does not hold, current level of climate financing mobilised is insufficient to meet NDC targets

68. In the absence of a legal and formalised institutional framework, the use of the outputs produced by the project is limited. The online platform is not yet in use and the use of the skills imparted by government sector institutions as well as other stakeholders is largely voluntary and based on individual interest and commitment. Moreover, funding for the operation and maintenance of the system also hinges on the passing of the Climate Act as well as the establishment of a conducive institutional framework. As any government, the Government of Azerbaijan is faced with staff turnover, which poses a challenge towards maintaining technical capacities for GHG inventories, MRV and data management, and so far, in the absence of a formal institutional framework, the continued development of staff capacities remains project dependent.

69. Nonetheless, stakeholders find that the Climate Act seems likely to be approved, which in turn would enable the formalisation of the institutional framework as well as budgetary allocations – thereby creating the enabling conditions for applying the outputs produced by the project. This will significantly increase the likelihood of the project results contributing to the achievement of the project outcomes, and thereby indirectly to the intended intermediate states, and ultimately to the intended impact of Azerbaijan making significant progress towards achieving its NDC targets. However, there are some significant drivers and assumption that would need to be place for this to happen, such as government willingness to allocate sufficient financial and staff resources for effective ETF implementation across government sector institutions, operation and maintenance of the MRV platform, and continuous staff capacity development, and a broader acceptance of the private sector to share data that is viewed as sensitive.

70. Unsurprisingly, when considering the capacity development nature of the project, no negative effects were observed. Nor were any unintended positive effects observed.

71. The targets for GEF core indicator 11, "*number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment*", were exceeded, with 165 women (target: 106 women) and 202 men (target: 114 men) being trained by the project.

Findings Statements on Effectiveness:

72. The project largely delivered its intended outputs, with increased staff capacities, awareness and commitment, and the provision of tools, methodologies and an online platform for improving the GHG inventory, NDC reporting, and climate finance tracking. However, in the absence of a legal framework and a formalised institutional framework, the intended outputs (e.g. the methodologies and tools) are being used on a voluntary and ad-hoc basis (e.g. the online platform is not being used) and have not translated into the intended outcomes. Hence, the intended indirect contribution to higher level results (intermediate states and impact) remains limited.

73. Nonetheless, the project laid the foundation for improved and more effective processes for GHG inventories, MRV/NDC reporting and climate finance tracking, if the Climate Act is passed and a formalised institutional framework is established in the near future, which in turn could enable a delayed achievement of the intended project outcomes. Moreover, if these processes are established and used to inform policymaking, the project would

indirectly contribute to the intended intermediate states and impact of Azerbaijan achieving its NDC targets.

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory
Rating for Availability of Outputs: Satisfactory
Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory
Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Moderately Likely

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

74. All audit reports were available, although the 2024-2025 audit was delayed, All audits were labelled as "unqualified" by the auditors and all expenses incurred were eligible and registered correctly.

75. The financial management and procurement adhered to UNEP's policies and procedures for GEF-funded projects; no instances of non-compliance were found by the auditors or UNEP. On UNEP's side, all cash advances were processed and disbursed to RECC promptly and in a timely manner.

Completeness of Financial Information

76. As shown in table 17, all financial information was provided to the terminal review. There were no gaps in the information available..

Table 17: Financial management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:		**HS**	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[22] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	All audits were "unqualified"
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's project approval date.		Yes	Processed on 10 Sept 2020, 3 months after UNEP approval
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed? *(where applicable)*		Yes	No non-compliance was reported by the auditors or UNEP
2. Completeness of project financial information[23]:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		**HS**	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Annexed to CEO Endorsement
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	All project amendments (incl. budget revisions) provided
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with RECC provided
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Proof of all (4) transfers provided
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Annual co-financing reports provided for 2021-2024

[22] 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.
[23] See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference.

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	Quarterly financial statements and final statement provided, broken down by component and budget line
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes	All audits provided.
H.	Procure documents[24], including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan *(where applicable)*	N/A	
I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
Overall rating		**HS**	

Findings Statements on Financial Management:

77. All required financial information was available (although the 2024-2025 was delayed), all audits were unqualified, and all expenses were eligible with no evidence of non-compliance with UNEP-GEF requirements.

Rating for Financial Management: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Highly Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

78. The project experienced a protracted inception phase and significant implementation delays due to a combination of factors outside the control of the project related to slow Government approval, appointment of Project Director, and procurement processes (e.g. procurement of international and IT consultants), as described in more detail earlier. For these reasons, there was virtually no implementation progress in 2020-2021 and modest progress in 2022-2023, and most implementation thus took place in 2024-2025, after the original closing date. The project was thus extended twice. The second extension reflected the alignment of project implementation with Azerbaijan's hosting of UNFCCC COP 29 in 2024, which required intensified engagement of MENR staff in international climate governance processes. In total, the project was extended by 21 months. As described in section IV.D. (effectiveness), an implication of the delays was that the platform and tools were not delivered in time to be used for the preparation of the BTR1 and BUR3, and their application in practice was thus not tested by the project.

79. Due to low spending on personnel in 2020-2022, the extension did not have significant negative implications for the ability to cover salaries until project completion, although some salary resources were initially spent om the first PMU team during a period with little activity, until it was decided not to approve salary spending and temporarily suspending the project for six months in 2021. Later, the second PMU team worked part time on other projects, which also co-funded PMU salaries. The deliverables produced within the project budget corresponded to expectations. As described in section IV.A. (strategic relevance), the project achieved synergies with the global CBIT-GSP project and PATPA vis-à-vis capacity building and technical assistance for Azerbaijani stakeholders. The project in Azerbaijan and CBIT-GSP jointly implemented an international peer learning workshop in Azerbaijan and two COP 29 side events utilising financial and staff resources from both

[24] Relevant for procurement action over USD 10,000 in value.

projects. At the end of the project, USD 1,214,756 of the GEF grant had been spent, corresponding to an execution rate of 96.2 pct.

80. International consultant inputs were combined into a single company contract, which facilitated administration as well as ensuring that international inputs were coordinated.

Table 18: Project extensions

Type of project extension	Duration (# months)	Reason for no-cost extension
No-cost (12 August 2022)	14 months (from 31 July 2023 to 30 September 2024)	Lengthy project inception and delays due to a combination of contextual factors (described earlier) as well as slow Cabinet approval and official registration of project, b) COVID-19 lockdowns, slow appointment of project focal point by MENR and setting up of PSC, delays due to need to revised project workplan, budget and procurement plan, the demise of the RECC Country Director and project focal point, and resigning and replacement of PMU staff.
No-cost (4 March 2024)	7 months (from 30 September 2024 to 30 April 2025)	Delays caused by lengthy procurement processes, and anticipated delays in 2024 due to presidential elections and hosting of COP 29 requiring considerable MENR staff resources.

Findings Statements on Efficiency:

81. A substantially delayed project start and slow implementation in 2020-2023 necessitated a total extension of almost two years – hence, the project's implementation timeliness was poor. Considering that the factors causing delays were beyond the control of the project, the extensions were justified. However, the slow government approval and procurement processes were predictable, and could thus have been factored in during the project design and inception phase. Moreover, due to the delays, the project outputs were not delivered in time to assist the preparation of Azerbaijan's BTR1 and BUR3.

82. The project management costs were within budget, and the deliverables produced within the budget corresponded to expectations.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring of Project Implementation

83. The monitoring and evaluation plan in the CEO Endorsement Request covered the inception workshop, progress reporting as well as the terminal review, and allocated monitoring responsibilities to the PMU, and the results framework indicated data sources (means of verification) for the indicators. The monitoring and evaluation plan was budgeted, but resources were only allocated for the inception workshop and the terminal review. The objective and outcome indicators in the results frameworks were measurable and generally relevant and appropriate, although some captured outputs rather than outcome-level results as described in section III (theory of change). All indicators had baselines and end targets, but not mid-term targets. Indicators were gender disaggregated, where appropriate (i.e. indicators related to workshop participation).

84. The indicators in the results frameworks were monitored and reported on in the annual project implementation review reports (PIRs) and the half-yearly progress reports (HYPRs), including gender-disaggregated data. Overall, the indicator data provided appears reliable, but the underlying evidence and justifications were not clearly described

for the qualitative ratings of the MRV system and of institutional capacities. Moreover, the data collection did not capture the extent to which stakeholders applied the knowledge/skills imparted and tools/methodologies delivered in their work – and thus the progress against the outcomes was not fully captured, which also limited the utility of the monitoring vis-à-vis providing guidance for strategic decision-making. The PIRs also captured data on the relevant GEF core indicator (direct beneficiaries). Moreover, the PMU collected feedback from participants after each training. The progress on outputs and deliverables under each output were also reported upon. Considering the nature and size of the project (medium-sized, capacity-development focused), the monitoring was largely sufficient.

Project Reporting

85. The following progress reports were prepared and submitted by the PMU: quarterly financial reports, HYPRs, and PIRs. Moreover, a final report was prepared after project closure. PSC meetings were also used to report on progress. Overall, the reports provided a clear and comprehensive overview of the implementation status of activities, deliverables and outputs. Progress on indicators as well as information on the external context and obstacles faced were reported on. The HYPRs and PIRs covered risk management, albeit in some cases with limited detail. Gender was covered in the PIRs, capturing the participation of women in activities and PSC meetings and briefly reflecting endeavours to promote gender awareness. The progress reporting in general provided a credible reflection of the implementation status, progress, and challenges. However, the implications of the systemic obstacles that have largely inhibited the achievement of the intended outcomes and institutionalisation of the project results despite the achievement of the intended deliverables were not fully reflected in the reports. Due the heavy workload of the PMU, reporting was at times delayed, especially in 2024, due the hosting of COP 29.

Findings Statements on Monitoring and Reporting:

86. Monitoring and reporting were overall sufficient and capturing project progress and challenges. However, the level of achievement of the intended outcomes and the implications of the significant contextual obstacles that largely impeded the achievement of the outcomes were not fully analysed, and thus the monitoring did not fully guide strategic decision-making.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

87. Interlocutors indicate a degree of high-level political interest in climate action, which was further augmented by Azerbaijan's hosting of COP 29. As such, the Climate Act and establishment of formalised institutional arrangements are expected by interlocutors to be passed, and some interlocutors expect this to happen within one year, whereas other interlocutors express that this would likely take more than two years. A key factor is an interest in accessing international climate financing. A strong MRV system and the ability to provide evidence of Azerbaijan being effective in implementing the NDC would provide leverage vis-à-vis mobilising climate financing as well as positioning Azerbaijan in climate negotiations. Moreover, Azerbaijan has an interest establishing financing mechanisms to reduce carbon taxation on exports under the upcoming EU Carbon Border Adjustment

Mechanism (CBAM) by introducing carbon credits and/or domestic carbon taxes to incentivise emission reductions. As common for non-Annex I parties, there is generally a stronger interest in engaging in adaptation than mitigation action.

88. The project made a significant contribution to increased awareness and interest in engaging climate transparency in government sector institutions (see section IV.D.) but without clear institutional mandates and obligations, the level of engagement remains person-dependent and uneven.

Financial Sustainability

89. Until the legal and formalised institutional framework is in place, budget allocation for climate transparency and MRV will not easily be included in line ministry budget and work plans. As such, the development and operation of an MRV system will, at least in the near future, depend on international funding. On the positive side, the online platform is based on open-source software and hosted on Government servers; hence the running costs are low and does not require any licensing. Moreover, a second phase of the project funded by the GEF is in the pipeline for development.

Institutional Sustainability

90. Institutionalisation of the MRV system is impossible until the Climate Act has been passed. Once the Act is adopted, the institutional structure will need to be set up. While an interim institutional arrangement is in place, it faces capacity constraints and has limited clout vis-à-vis convening government sector institutions. The project's outputs and deliverables will facilitate the institutionalisation, as the project has contributed to the Climate Act process, provided guidance on institutional arrangements, and increased staff capacities (see section IV.D.). Further support will be needed for the institutionalisation, once the legal framework is in place. Moreover, while staff capacities have increased, these gains may partly be lost due to staff turnover.

91. Building and sustaining teams with technical capacity for GHG inventories and MRV within government institutions is in general fundamentally challenged by low salaries, understaffing, bureaucracy and high staff turnover. Some interlocutors argue that systems that do not entirely depend on in-house expertise but draw on independent national experts for specialised technical expert inputs, e.g. from academia – coordinated by the government – tend to work better.

92. With the current CBIT phase having ended in April 2025 and since the process of developing the second phase has not yet commenced and GEF project development takes several months, a hiatus in the MRV system development is inevitable. Currently, there is no active project covering salaries for the PMU staff. This creates a real risk of losing momentum and a high risk that the PMU staff will move to other employment, thus leading to a loss of institutional memory and skills vis-à-vis driving the MRV process forward.

Findings Statements on Sustainability:

93. The absence of a formalised legal framework hampers the ability to establish formal and financed institutional arrangements for MRV. There is generally commitment to climate transparency, but this commitment remains person driven. The project has contributed to enhancing stakeholders' interest and capacities and also helped facilitating the Climate Act process and providing guidance for appropriate institutional arrangements. However, sustainability hinges on continued external support. A second phase of the project is planned, but with an inevitable gap of several months, there is a real risk of losing the capacities and institutional memory of the PMU.

Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability (use 'Likely' scale): Moderately Unlikely
Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Likely
Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely
Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

94. The PSC met six times 2021-2025. Project progress was reported by the PMU to the PSC. There was a high degree continuity in the participation in the PSC in terms of institutional representation as well as in terms of the individuals representing each institution and the PSC meetings. The PSC served as a body for information sharing among key stakeholders and approval of project work plans and budgets. Moreover, the PSC helped mobilising the participation of government institutions in the project.

95. Overall, the arrangements with RECC as executing agency worked well. The PMU was well embedded in MENR, and the team was well-qualified, proactive and its work was widely appreciated by interlocutors. After the extended delay and hiatus, the PMU successfully ensured the project was delivered, and also adapted implementation to contextual realities, such as modifying the work plan to avoid implementation being hampered by government staff being tied up with COP 29 preparations, using COP 29 to as a vehicle for enhancing the visibility and stakeholders awareness of MRV, and adjusting the work plan to contribute to the Climate Act process.

96. RECC is a proven and trusted partner of MENR vis-à-vis project execution, also being executing agency for other GEF projects. However, the model of depending on an external entity for project management (which is project dependent for its staffing) also had a weakness in terms of Government engagement with modest engagement of MENR staff in day-to-day project implementation – as evidenced by the extended period of hiatus when the previous RECC Country Director and PMU staff were lost, where MENR was unable to move the project forward until RECC recruited a new Country Director. The PMU staff also worked on other projects, which had implications for the project, e.g. resulting in some delays in the preparation of progress reports. The inputs from national consultants (often Government staff, which are allowed to work on consultancy contracts as per Government rules) and international consultants were satisfactory, and their work was widely appreciated by interlocutors.

97. The cooperation and communication between UNEP and RECC were regular and smooth, and oversight and support provided by UNEP was engaged and responsive with annual visits to Azerbaijan in 2022-2025. UNEP participated in all PSC meetings.

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

98. Promotion of stakeholder participation and cooperation across sectors was a central feature of the project, as the provision of data and information for climate transparency by nature required multi-sectoral engagement. This was particularly clearly expressed in output 1.1 (institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial cooperation), but stakeholder participation and cooperation across sectors was a feature of all outputs. Hence, considerable effort went into mobilising, engaging and capacitating stakeholders. The PMU was in regular dialogue with stakeholders and trainings were based on assessment of stakeholders' capacity needs (e.g. collected through online surveys) and stakeholder feedback on key deliverables were sought. Indeed, interlocutors widely commended the

project for enhancing awareness and buy-in of stakeholders (see section IV.D). Moreover, key line ministries were represented in the PSC.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

99. The project deliverables included a gender awareness workshop, and participating institutions were encouraged to appoint women to participate in trainings. The participation of women was monitored, e.g. with gender-disaggregated data provided on participation in workshops/trainings and PSC meetings. Of the 367 direct beneficiaries (e.g. training participants), 165 (45 pct.) were female and 202 (55 pct.) were male, indicating a good degree of gender parity.

100. The project did not explicitly address human rights, but climate transparency contributes to the right to access to information, whereas improved climate action contributes toward the right to a healthy environment.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

101. Given the project had a purely institutional capacity development focus and did not entail any on-the-ground investments, no environmental or social risks were identified at design, during implementation, or by the terminal review. The project was appropriately rated as a low-risk project. There was thus no need for implementing any environmental or social safeguards or mitigation measures. The only direct negative environmental impact of the project was fossil energy consumption and carbon emissions related to: 1) air- and road travel of staff, technical experts and participating beneficiaries, 2) power consumption by servers and internet use (e.g. data uploads and downloads, online training and meetings), and 3) resource consumption and waste generation related to the use of computer equipment and office facilities. A number of trainings and meetings were conducted virtually (sometimes due to COVID-19 restrictions) thus contributing to reducing the carbon footprint. The PIRs included information on the status vis-à-vis environmental and social safeguards.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

102. As described earlier, the project significantly enhanced awareness and ownership of climate transparency among key ministries as evidenced by the high degree of continuity in the participation in PSC meetings, and interlocutors indicate a degree of high-level buy-in and thus expect that the necessary legal framework and formalised institutional arrangements will be established in a foreseeable future. The participating government institutions provided in-kind contributions of staff-time, e.g. in connection with training participation. MENR in particular provided in-kind cofinancing such as staff time and office space. However, government staff who engaged more deeply in specific project activities and deliverables were often engaged as consultants by the project.

103. Until formalised institutional mandates and obligations are in place, ownership and driven-ness remain largely person-driven among government sector institutions. MENR has established temporary arrangements with the Climate Change under the National Hydro-Meteorological Centre being de facto responsible for coordinating climate transparency. However, due to institutional capacity constraints across the Government, further progress towards the outcomes remains dependent on future project support. There is little scope for forward momentum towards achieving the intended outcomes until the legal and formalised institutional framework is in place (see sections IV.D. and IV.H).

Communication and Public Awareness

104. Communication with key stakeholders across government institutions was regular and done through workshops, PSC meetings, and bilateral communication. As described in section IV.D., the arguably most significant achievement of the project was increased awareness, which stakeholders ascribed to capacity development as well as proactive communication from the PMU. Moreover, the project engaged in communication and knowledge-sharing with other countries jointly with CBIT-GSP with a peer-learning workshop hosted by Azerbaijan and two side events at COP 29 in Baku. Furthermore, the PMU proactively shared Azerbaijan's experience in regional and global workshops and seminars arranged by CBIT-GSP and others and posted information about the project and climate transparency in Azerbaijan on the CBIT-GSP website. Press releases about project workshops were published on the CBIT-GSP website as well as RECC's website. However, online MRV platform has so far mainly been developed as an internal tool for supporting the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC rather than a platform for providing the wider public with information about Azerbaijan's progress on climate action. Nonetheless, ongoing efforts such as the launch of an online datahub is anticipated to provide an avenue for broader public access. While the project benefitted from short-term inputs from a national communications expert and a budget line (USD 6,000) for communication activities (output 1.5), no communication plan was envisaged in the project design or developed.

Findings Statements on Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues:

105. Once implementation took off after the initial delays, project management arrangements (PSC, PMU, performance by the implementing and execution entities) worked well. While MENR provided strategic oversight, the model of depending on an external entity meant that the Government engagement in day-to-day project management was somewhat modest.

106. The engagement and communication with stakeholders were proactive and instrumental for building awareness and ownership. However, in the absence of a legal and institutional framework, this remains person dependent and further progress on MRV would require a) the legal and institutional framework being put in place, and b) further external support.

107. Gender responsiveness was adequate whereas human rights were only implicitly addressed although functional MRV systems and climate transparency contribute to the right to information. Due to the institutional capacity development nature of the project, no environmental or social safeguard measures were required.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Satisfactory

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Satisfactory

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Satisfactory

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Satisfactory

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

Strengths

108. After considerable delay, implementation caught up in the last year of implementation, and the project largely delivered its intended outputs. First and foremost, the project succeeded in enhancing the awareness, interest and capacities of stakeholders and staff in the Climate Change Centre/MENR and across sector institutions in relation to GHG inventories, MRV, and climate finance tracking. Tangible tools and methodologies were provided, an online GHG inventory, MRV and climate finance tracking platform was established, and the project also informed the drafting of the national Climate Act. Promotion of stakeholder participation and cooperation across sectors was a central feature of the project, and interlocutors widely commended the project for enhancing awareness and buy-in of stakeholders as it arguably most significant result. Moreover, the project explicitly addressed gender concerns and promoted gender integration in the MRV system. A functional interim institution responsible for coordination of GHG inventories and reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, the Climate Change Centre, provided the project with an institutional entry point of engagement. No negative effects of the project were identified.

109. The increased capacities and tools provided contributed to modest improvements in how some Government institutions collect and process GHG data, NDC progress tracking, and finance tracking. The project thus partially achieved its intended outcomes and laid the foundation for the establishment and operationalisation of improved institutional arrangements and cross-sectoral coordination of GHG inventories, MRV, and reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, once the Climate Act has been passed by the Parliament. With a degree of buy-in among high-level Government decision-makers to climate action, which was augmented by Azerbaijan's hosting of COP 29, the prospect of accessing international climate finance, and an interest reducing future carbon taxation on exports to the EU, the Climate Act is likely to be passed within the next couple of years. A second phase of the project is planned, which will be essential for ensuring the project results are translated into a full-fledged MRV system.

110. Once implementation took off after the period of delay, the project management arrangements worked well. Overall, RECC proved a capable executing agency and the PMU engaged proactively with stakeholders to ensure ownership and momentum. International and national consultant inputs were well-managed and generally delivered the intended results to the satisfaction of stakeholders. Synergies were achieved with other interventions, in particular joint activities with the global CBIT-GSP project, which enabled the project to share experiences with, and learn from, other countries. The PSC met regularly, and there was a high degree of institutional and individual continuity in the participation in PSC meetings. Financial management worked well and was fully compliant with UNEP and GEF requirements. The level of delivery corresponded to expectations, and project management costs were within budget – enabled by the adaptive management decision to temporarily suspend the project, until Government formalities were in place for implementation. Progress monitoring and reporting was overall sufficient. Oversight and backstopping by UNEP were well-functioning.

Weaknesses

111. The project was severely affected by external factors outside the control of the project, such as slow Government approval and procurement, armed conflict with Armenia, COVID-19 and loss of RECC and PMU staff, leading to a significantly delayed project start and an

extended period of hiatus with limited implementation in 2020-2023 and the project was extended by 21 months (in part also due to Azerbaijan's hosting of COP 29). Due to the delays, the tools and online platform were not delivered in time to be used for the preparation of the BTR1 and BUR3, hence the potential scope of synergy with GEF support for the preparation of reports did not materialise.

112. The project design was overambitious with unrealistic expectations regarding the results that could be achieved by a three-year medium-sized project. Being a first-generation CBIT project, the expected results were not fully taking into consideration to the country context. The absence of a national Climate Act was (and still remains) an impediment to the establishment of full-fledged and fully functional institutional structures and processes for MRV. Full institutionalisation of the MRV system is impossible until the Climate Act has been passed. Hence, the intended output of established institutional arrangements was not fully achieved. Due the lack clear and formalised institutional frameworks and responsibilities for MRV across sectors, the use of the capacities, methodologies and tools developed by the project remains uneven across sectors, voluntary, person-driven and ad-hoc – and the outputs have thus not fully translated into the intended outcomes. While the Climate Change Centre has an interim responsibility to coordinate the GHG inventory, MRV and reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, it (as well as the other government institutions involved) faces technical capacity constraints and its clout to convene the engagement of sector institutions is limited. The online platform for the GHG inventory, MRV and finance tracking is technically functional, but not in use.

113. Overall, MRV data collection and submission processes have not changed significantly. The capacity gains achieved under the project may partly be lost over time due to staff turnover. Government budget allocations for MRV across sectors is also unlikely until the legal framework is in place. Hence, further progress on the establishment a full-fledged and institutionalised MRV system, the full achievement of the intended project outcomes and ensuring the sustainability of the results achieved hinges on a combination of a) the legal framework being put in place (including formalised institutional mandates) and b) further external support. However, while a second phase is planned, a hiatus in the further MRV system development is inevitable until the new phase commences, creating a risk of losing momentum and a high risk of losing the current PMU's institutional memory and skills.

114. A human rights lens was not applied in the project, although the contribution to enhanced climate transparency contributes to the right to access to information. However, the MRV platform was developed as an internal tool for supporting the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC rather than a platform for providing public access to information (ongoing efforts such as the launch of an online datahub is anticipated to provide an avenue for broader public access). One challenge in this regard is that some relevant data is classified government information that cannot be shared openly.

115. With the executing agency role outsourced to an external NGO (RECC), government engagement in day-to-day project management was somewhat modest. Some government staff had significant roles in the implementation of project deliverables, but this was in several cases recruited as consultants based on their technical expertise (fully in line with Government rules and regulations), rather than government staff being appointed to engaged based on their staff functions.

116. The monitoring and reporting did not provide a full analysis of the implications for the project of the major contextual obstacles faced. Hence, the monitoring did not fully inform strategic decision-making. Moreover, it did not capture whether stakeholders applied the

methodologies and knowledge in their work. While the reported progress on the project indicators appears reliable, the underlying evidence and justifications are unclear.

Responses to Key Strategic Questions

117. The review terms of reference included a set of strategic question of interest to UNEP. Table 19 provides responses to these.

Table 19: Responses to Strategic Questions

Strategic Question	Response
Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the ETF arrangements under the PA? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?	Due to the absence of a Climate Act, institutional arrangements for ETF have not been formalised or adopted.
Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN convention reporting? If so, please explain how.	The project enhanced awareness, commitment and capacities among stakeholders vis-à-vis GHG inventories and NDC reporting. This as to a modest extent led to improvements – some, but not all, stakeholders reported that they to some extent apply the methodologies/tool provided by the project. The PMU has also contributed to the preparation of specific reports to the PA/UNFCCC.
Did the State and non-State actors 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?	Some, but not all, stakeholders reported that they apply the methodologies/tool provided by the project. The online platform is yet not being used by data collectors, one reason being the lack of formal institutional arrangements.
What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?	During the pandemic, meetings and workshops were conducted virtually. However, project implementation progress was already severely limited due to factors unrelated to COVID-19.

Overall performance rating

118. Table 20 below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter IV. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of 'Moderately Satisfactory'.

UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

The UNEP Evaluation Office formally quality assesses (see Annex XI) 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 Highly Satisfactory and validates the overall project performance rating at the **'Moderately Satisfactory'** level.

Table 20: Summary of project findings and ratings[25]

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Strategic Relevance	The project was fully aligned with UNEP and GEF policies and priorities. Synergies were achieved with other initiatives related to MRV, in particular CBIT-GSP, although synergies with GEF support for the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC were modest.	**HS**	**The rating is validated**	**HS**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	Fully aligned with the climate change sub-programme mitigation expected accomplishment of the MTS 2018-2021 and POW 2020-2021. Aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan vis-à-vis assistance for facilitating compliance with and enforcement of obligations under MEAs and supporting institutions in data collection, analysis and monitoring.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	Aligned with GEF Climate Change focal area. Responded to UNFCCC-mandated GEF financing for CBIT.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Supported Azerbaijan in enhancing the capacity to implement MRV and climate transparency obligations under the PA/UNFCCC.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	Direct synergies and joint efforts with CBIT-GSP and PATPA. Scope for synergy with GEF support for reporting to PA/UNFCCC, but due to unaligned timelines, and competing needs, synergies did not materialise.	S	The rating is validated	S
Quality of Project Design	Satisfactory coverage of project preparation, risk identification and safeguards, partnerships, management arrangements, financial planning, efficiency, monitoring. Moderately satisfactory coverage of strategic relevance, results framework and causality, learning and communication. Moderately unsatisfactory coverage of sustainability.	**S**	**The rating is validated**	**S**

[25] Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated, also on a six-point scale, from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Nature of External Context	Largely stable political and economic context, but armed conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. No climate legislation and unclear institutional mandates. Implementation significantly delayed by a mix of factors, incl. armed conflict, COVID-19, loss of RECC staff. Hosting of COP 29 augmented political interest.	**MU**	**The rating is validated**	**MU**
Effectiveness	The project largely delivered its intended outputs, but the outputs are only being used on a voluntary and ad-hoc basis and have not fully translated into the intended outcomes – although the project laid the foundation for future improvements of MRV and climate finance tracking.	**MS**	The rating is validated	**MS**
1. Availability of outputs	Three out of four outputs were fully achieved with enhanced GHG inventory, MRV and climate finance tracking staff capacities and awareness, access to tangible tools and methodologies, and the establishment of a functional online platform. However, the intended output of established institutional arrangements was not fully achieved (due to the absence of a legal framework and mandates) and as a result the online platform is also not in use.	S	The rating is adjusted to MS (Moderately Satisfactory) *3 out of 4 Outputs were fully delivered; these are mostly of good quality, and capacities have improved. However, the tools, guidelines, and methodologies developed are only partly being applied due to institutional setbacks (such as the absence of a legal framework and mandates) resulting in limited actual use. Moreover, outputs were not delivered in time to support the preparation of Azerbaijan's BTR1 & BUR3.*	MS
2. Achievement of project outcomes	In the absence of legal and institutional frameworks, the online platform is not in use and no systemic changes vis-à-vis GHG inventories, NDC reporting or climate finance tracking were achieved. As such, the intended outcomes were only partly achieved although modest improvements were reportedly made vis-à-vis NDC progress tracking and finance tracking.	MS	The rating is validated	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Likelihood of impact	In the absence of a legal and formalised institutional framework, the use of the outputs produced by the project is limited and the intended outcomes have not been fully achieved. Nonetheless, stakeholders find that the Climate Act seems likely to be approved within the next couple of years, which would enable the formalisation of the institutional framework – creating the enabling conditions for applying the outputs and achieving the outcomes, which may lead to an indirect contribution to the intended impact. Hence, impact is moderately likely.	ML	The rating is adjusted to MU (Moderately Unlikely) *While the project established useful foundations, there are still significant issues such as- absence of a formal legal framework; weak institutional mechanisms; platform not in use; uncertain fund allocation with no clear transition strategy; limited private-sector data sharing; etc.* *Although stakeholders are optimistic about the Climate Act being passed within a few years, at present, critical assumptions and drivers to support the transition from Outputs to Impact remain weak or absent.*	MU
Financial Management	The required financial information was available, all audits were unqualified, and all expenses were eligible.	**HS**	**The rating is validated**	**HS**
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Unqualified audits, all expenses eligible. No evidence of non-compliance with UNEP-GEF requirements.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
2. Completeness of project financial information	All available information provided. No gaps.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
Efficiency	The project was substantially delayed due to factors outside the control of the project and extended for 21 months. Due to the delays, the project outputs were not delivered in time to assist the preparation of the BTR1 and BUR3. The project management costs were within budget, and the level of delivery within the budget corresponded to expectations.	**MU**	**The rating is validated**	**MU**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Monitoring and Reporting	Monitoring and reporting were overall sufficient and capturing project progress and challenges. However, implications of the contextual obstacles were not fully analysed, and the monitoring did not fully guide strategic decision-making.	**S**	**The rating is validated**	**S**
1. Monitoring of project implementation	Indicators were monitored and gender disaggregated when appropriate. Progress on outputs and deliverables was monitored and reported on. Indicator data appears reliable, but the underlying evidence and justifications were not clearly described. Data collection did not capture whether stakeholders applied the knowledge imparted and methodologies delivered in their work – thus the progress against the outcomes was not fully captured.	MS	The rating is validated	MS
2. Project reporting	Technical and financial progress was reported regularly, providing a clear and comprehensive overview of the implementation status of activities, deliverables and outputs. However, the implications of the systemic obstacles to the achievement of the outcomes were not fully reflected.	S	The rating is validated	S
Sustainability	The absence of a formalised legal framework hampers the ability to establish formal and financed institutional arrangements for MRV. There is generally commitment to climate transparency, but this commitment remains person driven. Sustainability hinges on continued external support.	**MU**	**The rating is validated**	**MU**
1. Socio-political sustainability	Reported high-level political interest in climate actions. The Climate Act and formalised institutional arrangements are likely to be passed within the next couple of years. Interest in accessing international climate financing and interest establishing financing mechanisms to reduce carbon taxation on exports to the EU. Azerbaijan's export is dominated by oil and gas, which reportedly tempers the interest in climate action among some actors. The project contributed to increased interest in engaging climate transparency in line ministries and agencies, but without clear institutional mandates and obligations, the level of engagement remains person-dependent and uneven.	ML	The rating is validated	ML
2. Financial sustainability	Until the legal and formalised institutional framework is in place, Government budget allocation for MRV is unlikely. The MRV system development depends on international funding. The online platform is based on open-source software and hosted on Government servers; hence the running costs are low. A second phase of the project is planned.	MU	The rating is validated	MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Institutional sustainability	Institutionalisation of the MRV system is impossible until the Climate Act has been passed. An interim institution is in place but faces capacity constraints and has limited clout. Further support will be needed for the institutionalisation. Project outputs and deliverables will facilitate the institutionalisation, but capacity gains may partly be lost due to staff turnover. A hiatus in the MRV system development is inevitable until Project phase 2 commences, creating a risk of losing momentum and a high risk of loss of the current PMU's institutional memory and skills.	MU	The rating is validated	MU
Factors Affecting Performance	Once implementation took off after the initial delays, project management arrangements worked well, but with the dependence on an external entity, the Government engagement in day-to-day project management was modest. The engagement and communication with stakeholders were proactive and instrumental for building ownership. Further progress on MRV would require a) the legal and institutional framework being put in place, and b) further external support.	**S**	**The rating is validated**	**S**
1. Quality of project management and supervision		S	The rating is validated	S
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	Good communication and cooperation with RECC. Well-functioning oversight and support. Participated in PSC.	S	The rating is validated	S
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	High continuity in PSC participation. Well-qualified and proactive PMU. Consultant inputs were managed well. Extended period of hiatus, due to loss of RECC staff and inability of MENR to move the project forward until RECC recruited new staff.	MS	The rating is validated	MS
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Promotion of stakeholder participation and cooperation across sectors was a central feature of the project, as the provision of data and information for climate transparency by nature required multi-sectoral engagement. Considerable effort went into mobilising, engaging and capacitating stakeholders. Interlocutors widely commended the project for enhancing awareness and buy-in of stakeholders.	HS	The rating is validated	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Project deliverables included a gender awareness workshop. The participation of women was monitored. 45 pct. of the direct beneficiaries were female. The project did not explicitly address human rights, but climate transparency contributes to the right to access to information.	S	The rating is adjusted to MS (Moderately Satisfactory) *Gender considerations were integrated into implementation activities (visible in trainings and participation). However, human rights were not explicitly addressed. Overall, Considerations exist, but it has not been comprehensive, systematic or outcome oriented*	MS
4. Environmental and social safeguards	The project focused on capacity building, tools development, studies, and establishment of an online platform. There were no investments or effects on the ground linked to the project.	S	The rating is validated	S
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	There is a degree of high-level buy-in and legal framework and formalised institutional arrangements are likely established in a foreseeable future. Ownership and driven-ness remain largely person-driven. Due to institutional capacity constraints, further progress towards outcomes remains dependent on future project support. There is little scope for forward momentum towards achieving the intended the outcomes until the legal and formalised institutional framework is in place.	MS	The rating is validated.	MS
6. Communication and public awareness	Communication with key stakeholders across ministries and agencies was regular. The arguably biggest achievement of the project was increased awareness, due to capacity development and proactive communication from the PMU. The project engaged in communication and knowledge-sharing with other countries jointly with CBIT-GSP. The online MRV platform has so far mainly been developed as an internal tool for supporting the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC rather than a platform for providing public access to information.	S	The rating is validated	S
Overall Project Performance Rating		**MS**	**The rating is validated**	**MS**

B. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	**Using a trusted external partner as executing agency can greatly facilitate effective implementation in a context of cumbersome and slow government procedures and staff constraints – but comes with less government staff involvement in day-to-day project management, even if it is committed to the project.**
Context/comment:	The arrangements with RECC as executing agency worked well. The PMU was well embedded in MENR, and the team was well-qualified, proactive and is work was widely appreciated by interlocutors. The PMU successfully ensured the project was delivered. RECC is a proven and trusted partner of MENR vis-à-vis project execution, also being executing agency for other GEF projects. However, the model of depending on an external entity for project management also meant that the engagement of MENR staff in day-to-day project implementation was modest, and MENR could not move the project forward, when RECC lost its Country Director and PMU staff.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Sections IV.C, IV.F, IV.I, V.A

Lesson Learned #2:	**Without a legal framework and formalised institutional arrangements in place, it is impossible to establish a full-fledged MRV system – improved technical capacity is insufficient is to achieve structural improvements.**
Context/comment:	With the continued absence of a legal framework, and thus also of a formalised institutional framework, the project could not fully achieve its intended outcomes. While awareness and interest were raised, technical capacities strengthened, and methodologies and tools were made available for the actual the adoption and use of the methodologies, tools and skills was ad-hoc, uneven, and person-driven. Moreover, stakeholders were reluctant to upload data to the platform without being formally/legally authorised to do so – so the platform is not currently used. Hence, the project could only lay the foundation for the future establishment of a full-fledged MRV system – once the legal and institutional framework is in place.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Sections IV.D, IV.H, IV.I, V.A

Lesson Learned #3:	**Government stakeholders are likely to be reluctant to use existing online platforms that store data on foreign commercial servers and are likely to prefer local solutions where data is stored on government servers – even if this is more cumbersome and costly to implement.**
Context/comment:	The project opted to not follow the recommendations of the international consultants to develop Azerbaijan's online MRV platform based on an existing SharePoint-based solution. Instead, the project engaged a national consulting firm to develop the platform from scratch based on open-source software and storing the data on Government servers. However, this was a more time consuming and expensive solution. This choice was made due to reluctance to upload Government data, which in some cases is classified.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Section IV.D

C. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	**Focus efforts on facilitating the establishment of the legal and formalised institutional frameworks necessary for advancing on the MRV system.** Suggested actions: - Engage in awareness raising and advocacy at the political level. - Support the public consultation process for the Climate Act. - Finalise and sign the memoranda of understanding drafted under the project. - Advocate for the inclusion of funding for MRV in budgeting process for government institutions. - Identify and support the development of legislation necessary for operationalising/implementing the Climate Act vis-à-vis climate transparency and MRV. - Support the establishment of an institutionalised function at the Climate Change /MENR for for continuous capacity development for current and new government staff among government data collectors.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Until the Climate Act has been adopted and institutional arrangements have been formalised, there is little scope for strengthening the inter-agency coordination of climate transparency, operationalising the online MRV platform, ensuring that the methodologies and tools provided by the project are consistently being used, and moving forward towards achieving the intended project outcomes. Further technical capacity development is unlikely to yield significant results until the legal and institutional framework is in place. Moreover, in a context with high staff turnover, maintaining the capacities developed under the project will be difficult without institutionalised arrangements for transfer of skills.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Sections IV.D, IV.H, IV.I, V.A
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project/Partner
Responsibility:	UNEP, MENR, RECC
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2026 – promote in the dialogue with MENR, address in the design of a CBIT project phase 2

Recommendation #2:	**Operationalise the online MRV platform, methodologies and tools introduced by the project.** Suggested actions: - Engage with relevant ministries and institutions to map their current use of the platform, methodologies and tools and obtain feedback on how well they work and/or factors that limit their use. - Pilot/test the online platform, methodologies and tools with a selected ministry/institution that had demonstrated interest and willingness to engage – adjust/refine based on the experience. - Pilot climate finance tracking/tagging with selected national stakeholders (e.g. the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy, the Central Bank, private sector actors) and

	international/development partners financing climate action (grants, loans, investments, blended financing) - Improve the online platform's finance module with a box on funding source, a multiple-choice box on donor/investor type, and a multiple-choice box on funding type (e.g. grant, loan, investment).
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	In addition to the challenges related to the lack of a legal and formalised institutional framework, some stakeholder institutions have more readily engaged and applied the methodologies and tools introduced by the project, whereas others have not applied these. Moreover, due to the implementation delays and completion of several deliverables shortly before project closure, there has been little time and opportunity to test and refine the methodologies and tools developed.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Sections IV.D, IV.F, V.A
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project/Partner
Responsibility:	UNEP, MENR, RECC
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2026 – promote in the dialogue with MENR, address in the design of a CBIT project phase 2.

Recommendation #3:	**Include in a potential project phase 2 a six-month inception period and a mid-term reflection to allow for procurement planning and adjustment of the project to an evolving context.** Suggested actions: - During the inception phase: o Secure Government approval and staff appointment processes are completed. o Monitor and analyse the timeline and challenges (technical and political) vis-a-vis the finalisation of the legal framework and formalised institutional arrangements, which the project can help address. o Conduct a gap analysis and establish the project baseline. o Synchronise the project workplan with the preparation of reports (e.g. BTR, NC) to the PA/UNFCCC and identify opportunities for synergy and joint action. o Make any necessary adjustments to the project workplan. o Develop a procurement plan and initiate procurement. - Half-way through project implementation: o Analyse implementation progress towards achieving the intended outputs and outcomes and identify bottlenecks and gaps that the project should address. o Adjust the project design (outputs, outcomes, targets, work plan) to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness in an evolving context.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project design was overambitious and not fully adapted to the contextual realities, including the implication of the lack of a legal and formalised institutional framework. Due to uncertainty regarding when framework will be approved and the final contents, project planning is challenging, requiring flexibility and adaptability to the evolving context. Moreover, Government recruitment and procurement processes are inevitably slow, creating a risk of delay.

Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Sections IV.B, IV.D, IV.F, V.A
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP, MENR, RECC
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2026 – address in the design of a CBIT project phase 2.

Recommendation #4:	**Drawing on the lessons from the project's gender awareness raising, include in a potential phase 2 activities that address climate change from a human rights and inclusion perspective.** Suggested actions: - Train data collectors on human rights in relation to climate transparency and making data publicly available – conduct a workshop based on the lessons from the gender awareness workshop. - Explore the extent to which the MRV system can be based on mainly unclassified data, which can be made publicly available. - Explore options to make currently classified data publicly accessible, e.g. promoting and supporting the declassification of GHG inventory and other data. - Explore whether a public access component could be added to the online MRV platform.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project did not apply a human rights-based approach, despite the clear linkage between climate transparency and the right to access to information. The online MRV platform does not have a public access function, due to a perception of the Government data being sensitive information, as some data is classified. The project explicitly addressed another cross-cutting issue, gender, by promoting gender awareness and inclusion of gender considerations in the MRV system.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Sections III, IV.B, IV.I, V.A
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	UNEP, MENR, RECC
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2026 – address in the design of a CBIT project phase 2.

Recommendation #5:	**For the potential next phase of the project, establish a "hybrid" PMU that combines in-house MENR resources with RECC capacities.** Suggested actions: - Appoint one or two well-qualified in-house MENR staff members to the PMU to work on day-to-day project management and implementation as part of their core responsibilities – as a tangible MENR co-financing contribution. - Employ with GEF project resources 1-2 project personnel in the PMU – employed by RECC. - Formally assign MENR as executing agency. - Temporarily employ the current PMU staff as consultants until the next phase.

Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Having RECC as executing agency and a PMU with external, project-funded, staff had some distinct advantages in terms of drawing on RECC's capacities and having dedicated and skilled experts focusing on the project, thereby augmenting MENR's in-house resources with additional staff-time and expertise – and driving the project forward. At the same time, this model meant that the involvement of in-house MENR staff in day-to-day project management was modest and with a degree of dependency on external resources for advancing the climate transparency and MRV system. Moreover, there is a high risk of losing the current PMU staff, institutional memory and momentum during the gap period between phase 1 and phase 2 of the project.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Sections IV.H, IV.I, and V.A
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project/Partner
Responsibility:	UNEP, MENR, RECC
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2026 – address in the design of a CBIT project phase 2

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
5	But also through other regional and international events such as COP, etc.	In practice yes, but in the RF output 1.5 explicitly refers to CBIT-GSP – no change made
7	Many of the stakeholders were also transparency data providers	This is their role in the MRV system (and already reflected in the second-last column), but this column is specifically referring to how they engaged in the project implementation – no change made
7	And provided the NPD (Director)	Already mentioned in the third column – no change made
10	They reported the same in the final PIR	In the version of the final PIR provided to the reviewer, USD 350,000 (not US 213,000) was indicated.
33	I kindly ask you to apply the comments received on the Eswatini TR recommendations here as most of them apply.	Eswatini TR report comments on recommendation addressed – pls. refer to Eswatini report for responses.
33	All 6 of your recommendations are categorized as “opportunity for improvement”, which corresponds to the lowest priority level. Ideally, we should identify at least 1 recommendation as “Critical” (high priority level) and 1 recommendation as “Important” (medium level), to allow MTEA to know what they should focus on in the short term to ensure sustainability of project results. Start with the most critical, and finish with the lowest priority recommendations.	In principle, the reviewer agrees with this comment. However, the UNEP TR guidelines have the following definitions of priority levels: a) Critical Recommendations (High level) • Address significant and/or widespread deficiencies in governance, risk management, or internal control processes. • Reduce the likelihood of compromising relevant project management/implementation principles or policies. b) Important Recommendations (Medium level) • Address moderate and/or isolated deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management, or internal control processes. • Reduce the likelihood of weakening relevant project management/implementation principles or policies. c) 'Opportunity for improvement' Recommendations (Low level) • Address ‘less than optimal’ practices in governance, risk management, or internal control processes. • Reduce the likelihood of best practices being overlooked. Since the governance, risk management, internal control, project management/implementation principles and policies were followed well by the project, all recommendations were related to improving results delivery and sustainability “opportunities for improvement”. This does not mean that all recommendations have the same level of importance or all of them are low priority recommendations in the view of

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
		the reviewer. But the priority-setting criterion definitions in the Evaluation Office guidelines, makes it difficult to label the recommendations as "critical" or "important".
33	As per our guidelines, the TR report should ideally provide no more than 5 recommendations. We recommend you narrow these down to 5 based on the prioritization exercise described above.	The recommendation on addressing adaption in the MRV system has been taken out – the number of recommendations is now five.
33	The actions associated with the recommendations should have an implementation timeframe of within 0 to 12 months after the TR report is finalized. As of now, th timeframes suggested are too vague and associated with the development implementation of a potential CBIT 2 project, which is not something confirmed yet. Please make sure to provide cleared timeframes, i.e. 0 to 3 months, 3 to 6 months, or 6 to 12 months after the TR report. Please also dissociate these from the potential CBIT 2 project, unless the recommendation are very specific to elements associated with a CBIT 2 project.	Shorter time frames have been introduced, focusing on the design of CBIT Phase II to remain within the 12-months' timeframe. As described in the review findings, the achievement of the intended CBIT project outcomes hinges on the access to future support (as well as on the adoption of a legal framework); the country is unlikely to achieve this on its own. In UNEP's case, there is little possibility for providing such support until CBIT 2 commences. Hence, the recommendations mainly focus on CBIT 2 albeit also directed to MENR.
2	The Executive Summary should reflect that while the project did not explicitly apply a formal human rights methodology, this was **not included in the project design** and no criteria were provided for such an evaluation. The project contributed to enhanced climate transparency, which aligns with the right to access to information under the Aarhus Convention. No violations of human rights were observed. References to human rights should therefore be contextualized as potential future considerations rather than shortcomings.	Text adjusted - it should be noted that HR is a mandatory review criterion for UNEP and that UNEP is committed to including a HR lens. The contribution to the right to access to information is already mentioned. The review report does not in any way imply there were human rights violations – the finding is about approach.
2	Technical limitations inherent to GHG inventory processes, which are **not open to the public globally**, were appropriately respected.	The review does not have sufficient evidence to confirm this. No change made.
2	While the project did not explicitly apply a formal human rights methodology, this was not included in the project design and no specific criteria were provided for such evaluation. The project contributed to enhanced climate transparency, supporting the right to access information in line with the Aarhus Convention. No human rights violations were observed during implementation. Given the technical and confidentiality requirements of GHG inventory processes, full public access to raw data is not standard practice globally.	The text has been adjusted, but the suggested phrasing has not been adopted, since the review has not found evidence for saying there is a globally agreed need for confidentiality of GHG inventories. T here is no need to say anything about HR violations, as the report is not by any means suggesting there were any such issues – the finding it is about approach.
2	The MENR and Government stakeholders actively supported and participated in project oversight, including through the PSC, PMU, and workshops. The MENR was the linking point between the PMU and the line ministries with facilitating the coordination among stakeholders.	Text adjusted. However. PSC participation and workshop participation is not-day-to-day project management. The review does not state that MENER qas not engaged, but, MENR participation in day-to-day project execution was indeed somewhat modest.
3	The lesson should focus on state technical requirements for data storage and accessibility rather than attributing reluctance to stakeholders.	While one could arguably draw several additional lessons, the number should be kept low. And this lesson is an important one also for other countries. Other countries use foreign servers.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
		State requirements are country-specific, whereas the lessons focus on lessons that are relevant beyond Azerbaijan. No change made.
21	The project complemented existing GEF-supported reporting initiatives, reinforcing national capacity in MRV and climate finance tracking. Timing differences between project activities and reporting cycles were managed to the extent possible and did not reduce the overall contribution to Azerbaijan's reporting obligations.	Text added to reflect the point re. finance tracking. the text on time competition adjusted. But the finding on competition for staff time was confirmed during mission.
21	The project complemented existing GEF-supported reporting initiatives, reinforcing national capacity in MRV and climate finance tracking. Timing differences between project activities and reporting cycles were managed to the extent possible and did not reduce the overall contribution to Azerbaijan's reporting obligations.	Text adjusted - see response to previous comment.
23	It is recommended to mention by default everywhere when human rights issue is mentioned that it is understandable that human rights were not addressed given the project focus on MRV and reporting. When given out of the context, the statement may be misunderstood.	Text adjusted here. Pls. note that this section only concerns the proejct design, not the implementation. Pls. note the all UNEP project are expected address (or reflect upon) human rights - please refer to UNP's review guidelines for further information re. how human rights are mandatory to be addressed in reviews. The reviewer finds that there was/is scope to consider humans rights more explicitly in this and other MRV projects - as also found in reviews of other MRV/climate transparency-related reviews.
23	The description of the external context should use neutral, UN-consistent, and diplomatically appropriate language, accurately reflecting nationally and internationally recognised developments, while avoiding terminology that could be interpreted as politically sensitive or inconsistent with Azerbaijan's official position and international law.	See below for responses on specific comments received on the context chapter. Effort has been made towards making the text neutral, the text does not in any way forward views of any specific party. The report presents the findings of the reviewer, not the views of UNEP or the UN. See the disclaimer on page ii. The text has been reviewed by UNEP
23	- Use of politically sensitive and non-neutral terminology. - Over-attribution of project delays to political/security factors rather than objective force-majeure and institutional circumstances. - Risk of misinterpretation in future UN or donor reviews. It is kindly requested to replace the paragraph for the following text: The political and economic context in Azerbaijan was stable, while the project period coincided with significant national and global developments. In the 44-Day Patriotic War, Azerbaijan restored its territorial integrity in accordance with international law. The project	Adjustments made. Disagree on the notion that the terminology used is non-neutral. Armed conflict is a widely used term and does not infer any judgement on the cause of the conflict or on the actions of either party. The MTR merely mentions that there was a conflict, which had some bearing on the project. This is how far the MTR report can go on this issue. It is beyond the scope of the report to comment on the nature, drivers or outcomes of the conflict. The terms "patriotic war" and "liberated territories" are terms used by one side of the conflict, hence not terms the reviewer can use.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
	also commenced during a period of a global event, namely the COVID-19 pandemic. The start of the project was significantly delayed due to slower than expected national registration, implementation setbacks caused by COVID-19 lockdown measures worldwide, and partially limited internet access due to martial law. In addition, MENR staff resources were redirected to ensure monitoring of the environmental situation in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. Further delays were triggered by the demise of the RECC Country Director (which led to a temporary suspension of project activities), as well as the resignation and replacement of PMU staff.	
23	The description of post-COP29 developments has been updated to accurately reflect strengthened high-level political leadership and institutional arrangements for climate governance following COP29. - The provided statement was factually incorrect. - It implied institutional weakening, whereas: - - Climate momentum was elevated, not reduced. - - Political leadership on climate was strengthened at the Presidential level. - This phrasing created unnecessary reputational and governance risk. It is kindly requested to change this part for the following: …although momentum for climate action was further elevated following COP29. In particular, the Minister leading the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources during COP29, who served as COP29 President, was subsequently appointed as the Official Representative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on climate change issues. This appointment resulted in the establishment of a dedicated climate change representation unit within the Presidential Administration, further strengthening high-level political coordination and oversight on climate policy.	Text adjusted – but the suggested language goes beyond the evidence gathered. And the statement made, was fully aligned with evidence gathered.
24	It is kindly requested to replace for the following text: This, combined with the need to manage climate and emissions-related data in accordance with national data protection and confidentiality requirements—which is standard practice for GHG inventory and MRV systems globally—posed practical challenges for the phased operationalisation of a fully integrated MRV platform and climate transparency framework.	Text adjusted. However, some of the suggested statements are not fully aligned with the information gathered. Globally, there are different views on the actual needs for confidentiality. The reviewer does not have evidence to speak about standard global practice, vis-a-vis confidentiality requirements.
26	The training have been conducted and relevant staff of the ministries have been trained to use the upload feature of the MRV system.	This sentence concerns the legal mandate, not technical capacity to do so. The training provided is already covered earlier in this row. No change made.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
28	Pending formal adoption of the Climate Act, coordination mechanisms established under the project enabled active participation by line ministries on an interim basis. Levels of engagement reflected sector-specific readiness and mandates, which the project successfully helped to advance.	Text added earlier in this paragraph to reflect this point. However, the finding on voluntary and varied engagement remained valid and unchanged. Evidence collected indicates that the level of engagement was not always as high as the ministerial mandate suggests it should be.
29	We disagree with the statement and it is kindly requested to remove it. The statement is not supported by the evidence. It is kindly requested to change the sentence for the following: The direct participation of the Project Management Unit (PMU) in the preparation of the BTR and BUR strengthened synergies between the CBIT project and GEF enabling activities, facilitating the practical application of project-supported methodologies, tools and institutional coordination arrangements.	Sentence deleted as requested. However, the suggested new sentence is not adequately underpinned by the TR findings and thus not added.
30	We disagree with the statement. This statement is not supported by the evidence. It is recommended to strengthen the wording related to PMU engagement in BTR/BUR preparation to accurately reflect its role in enhancing synergies between CBIT and enabling activities and its substantive contribution to improving the quality of Azerbaijan's UNFCCC submissions. It is kindly requested to change for the following: The enhanced capacities, harmonised methodologies and tools developed under the project, together with the direct engagement of PMU staff in the preparation of the BTR and BUR, resulted in a significant improvement in the quality, consistency and completeness of Azerbaijan's reports submitted to the PA/UNFCCC. This integration of CBIT technical support with national reporting processes enhanced institutional learning and accelerated readiness for subsequent reporting cycles under the Enhanced Transparency Framework.	The concerned sentence has been deleted. however, the proposed new text is not fully in line with the TR findings and hence not added.
31	"44-Day Patriotic War, where Azerbaijan restored its territorial integrity in accordance with international law"	The suggested addition is not incorporated, as it is beyond the scope of the review to discuss the cause and effects of the conflict/war. The previous neutral statement that merely mentions the conflict affected the project has been reinstated.
31	This is a design flaw and cannot be attributed to flaw in the implementation. While the project did not explicitly apply a formal human rights methodology, this was **not included in the project design** and no criteria were provided for such an evaluation. The project contributed to enhanced climate transparency, which aligns with the right to access to information under the Aarhus Convention. No violations of human rights were observed. References to human rights should therefore be contextualized as potential future considerations rather than shortcomings.	Text adjusted. However, it is mandatory for all UNEP reviews to assess the human rights angle. The report does not in any way imply that the project led to any human rights violations.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
	It is recommended to mention by default everywhere when human rights issue is mentioned that it is understandable that human rights were not addressed given the project focus on MRV and reporting.	
32	The assessment of climate finance sufficiency goes beyond the scope of this CBIT capacity-building project and is not supported by evidence generated under the review; the wording has therefore been suggest accordingly: Status: cannot be fully assessed; the project did not include an assessment of national climate finance sufficiency or a costed analysis of NDC implementation. While the project contributed to improved capacities and methodological groundwork for climate finance tracking, conclusions on the adequacy of overall climate financing to meet NDC targets fall outside the scope of this review.	This is an assessment of the underlying assumptions in the project design vis-à-vis the likelihood of impact. Assumptions are by definition factors outside the control of the project. It does not in any way related to project performance. There is no evidence of Azerbaijan being different than all other countries - insufficient climate finding is a global issue. No change made.
35	The description of the external context should use neutral, UN-consistent, and diplomatically appropriate language, accurately reflecting nationally and internationally recognised developments, while avoiding terminology that could be interpreted as politically sensitive or inconsistent with Azerbaijan's official position and international law. It is kindly requested to fully replace or adequately adapt the part for the following text: The political and economic context in Azerbaijan was stable, while the project period coincided with significant national and global developments. In the 44-Day Patriotic War, Azerbaijan restored its territorial integrity in accordance with international law. The project also commenced during a period of a global event, namely the COVID-19 pandemic. The start of the project was significantly delayed due to slower than expected national registration, implementation setbacks caused by COVID-19 lockdown measures worldwide, and partially limited internet access due to martial law. In addition, MENR staff resources were redirected to ensure monitoring of the environmental situation in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. Further delays were triggered by the demise of the RECC Country Director (which led to a temporary suspension of project activities), as well as the resignation and replacement of PMU staff.	Text has been deleted and cross-reference made to earlier sections instead. The suggested text has not been included due to a) repetition of earlier text, and b) since the proposed language on the conflict goes beyond what the TR can mention – see earlier response on neutral language.
36	The description of post-COP29 developments has been updated to accurately reflect strengthened high-level political leadership and institutional arrangements for climate governance following COP29. It is kindly requested to change this part for the following: …although momentum for climate action was further elevated following COP29. In particular, the Minister leading the Ministry of Ecology and	Text deleted, but the suggested new text has not been added - see earlier comment on this point.

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
	Natural Resources during COP29, who served as COP29 President, was subsequently appointed as the Official Representative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on climate change issues. This appointment resulted in the establishment of a dedicated climate change representation unit within the Presidential Administration, further strengthening high-level political coordination and oversight on climate policy.	
40	The project successfully leveraged RECC as an experienced executing agency, which enabled the PMU to manage day-to-day operations effectively. MENR provided strategic oversight to RECC through the direct discussions.	Text adjusted to reflect MENR oversight, but the overall finding remains valid.
40	It is recommended to mention by default everywhere when human rights issue is mentioned that it is understandable that human rights were not addressed given the project focus on MRV and reporting.	Text adjusted. However, the reviewer finds that there is scope for, and value in, making human rights more explicit in MRV and climate transparency projects, see earlier response.
42	Access to climate-related information was supported through workshops, training, and public demonstration of the MRV platform at the COP29 side event. Technical limitations inherent to GHG inventory processes, which are **not open to the public globally**, were appropriately respected. It is recommended to mention by default everywhere when human rights issue is mentioned that it is understandable that human rights were not addressed given the project focus on MRV and reporting.	Comment on GHG inventory process noted but already reflected in the report. But this challenge remains valid. Text adjusted. See previous response re human rights.
53	It was a design flaw, not an implementation flaw. It is recommended to mention by default everywhere when human rights issue is mentioned that it is understandable that human rights were not addressed given the project focus on MRV and reporting.	Design flaws can still be addressed during implementation. The notion is factually correct – and UNEP is committed to apply a HRBA in its projects. It is mandatory for UNEP reviews to either include a lesson or a recommendation related to HR. See earlier responses re HR and the project focus. It is the view of the reviewer that HR could and should be considered more explicitly in climate transparency work. No change made.
53	It is a global practice where the Inventory information is not open to the public.	The statement is factually correct. The "R" in MRV is "reporting". The term "climate transparency" suggests openness and public access. The TR does not have evidence to corroborate the current global practice in this regard. No change made.

ANNEX II. REVIEW FRAMEWORK

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
	A. Strategic questions		
1.	Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the ETF arrangements under the PA? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Training participants • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
2.	Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN convention reporting? If so, please explain how.	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Training participants • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
3.	Did the State and non-State actors 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?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Training participants • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
4.	(Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
	A. Strategic relevance		
	Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and strategic priorities		
5.	Is the project responding to UNEP's MTS, PoW, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP), and South-South Cooperation?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request • UNEP MTS, PoW, BSP, South-South Cooperation
	Alignment to donor/partner strategic priorities		
6.	Is the project responding to GEF-6 strategies and priorities vis-à-vis climate transparency?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request • GEF-6 Climate Change Programme
	Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities		

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
7.	Is the project responding to needs and priorities of Azerbaijan vis-à-vis reporting to UNFCCC, MRV, and climate transparency?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Training participants • Technical experts • Civil society • Academia
Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence			
8.	Was the project coherent with, and complementary to, other interventions supporting climate transparency and MRV, such as GEF-funded enabling activities in Azerbaijan and CBIT GSP?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff
B. Quality & Revision of Project design			
9.	Was the project design conducive for implementation and monitoring of the project?	• Assessment of ToC, results framework, indicators, risk matrix	• CEO Endorsement Request
C. Nature of external context			
10.	Was the overall political context in Azerbaijan stable and conducive for project implementation?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • UNEP supervision mission reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
11.	Did major events (such as COVID-19, inflation, natural disasters, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict) have any major implications for the implementation of the project?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
C. Effectiveness			
Availability of outputs			
12.	Were institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial cooperation on systemizing data collection and processing for preparing GHG inventory established? (output 1.1)	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • UNEP supervision mission reports • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
13.	Was a national GHG database management system for GHG data developed (output 1.2)	• GHG database inspection • Document review • Interviews	• GHG database • PIRs and HYPRs • UNEP supervision mission reports • Workshop reports • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
14.	Was a national system for tracking progress of the implementation of Azerbaijan's NDC for mitigation actions established and operationalized? (output 1.3)	• MRV system inspection • Document review • Interviews	• MRV system • PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
15.	How many ministries have obtained the required institutional and human capacities to provide the required information for the BURS, NCs, and updated NDC? (indicator A – output part)	• Comparison of status vs. target • Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Training participants
16.	How much has the qualitative rating of Azerbaijan's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities improved? (indicator 1.2)	• Comparison of status vs. target • Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
17.	How large a percentage of training participants reported to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track mitigation actions? (indicator 1.3)	• Comparison of status vs. target • Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Training participants
18.	Was a financial strategy outlining means to identify sources of funding needed and track financial support received developed? (output 2.1)	• Financial strategy inspection • Document review • Interviews	• Financial strategy • PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
19.	How large a percentage of training participants reported to be in a better position to implement the MRV system to track financial support received? (indicator 2.2)	• Comparison of status vs. target • Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Training participants
20.	Were any unplanned significant outputs delivered, and if so, what were they?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
	Achievement of outcomes		
21.	Has monitoring of NDC implementation progress improved in Azerbaijan and to what extent did the project contribute to this? (outcome 1)	• Document review • Interviews	• MRV system • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Training participants • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
22.	How many ministries are providing the required information for the BURS, NCs, and updated NDC? (indicator A – outcome part)	• Comparison of status vs. target • Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Training participants
23.	How much has the qualitative rating of the MRV system in its ability to track mitigation actions in the energy sector improved and to what extent did the project contribute to this? (indicator 1.1)	• Comparison of status vs. target • Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Ministry of Energy staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
24.	Has mobilisation and tracking of financial support improved in Azerbaijan and to what extent did the project contribute to this? (outcome 2)	• Document review • Interviews	• MRV system • Financial strategy • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Ministry of Finance staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Training participants • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
25.	How much has the qualitative rating of the MRV system in its ability to track financial support received improved and to what extent did the project contribute to this? (indicator 2.1)	• Comparison of status vs. target • Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • MENR staff • Ministry of Finance staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
26.	Were any unplanned significant outcomes been achieved, and if so, what were they and how did the project contribute?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
		Likelihood of impact	
27.	To what extent does Azerbaijan meet the requirements of the ETF and to what extent has the project contributed to this? (intermediate state 1)	• Document review • Interviews	• MRV system • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
28.	Has Azerbaijan improved the implementation of its NDC and to what extent has the project contributed to this? (intermediate state 2)	• Document review • Interviews	• NC, BUR • MRV system • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
29.	Has Azerbaijan set more ambitious NDC targets and to what extent has the project contributed to this? (intermediate state 3)	• Document review • Interviews	• NDC • MRV system • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
30.	Has Azerbaijan made progress in the achievement of its NDC targets and can such changes in any way be linked to MRV and climate transparency improvements? (impact)	• Document review • Interviews	• NC, BUR • MRV system • PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Academia
31.	Is there any evidence of unintended negative effects of the project and if so, what where they?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Civil society • Academia

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
32.	To what extent did the project reach its GEF-6 Core Indicator targets?	• Document review	• GEF Core Indicators • PIRs
		D. Financial management	
33.	To what extent was project spending aligned with the original budget?	• Comparison of actual spending vs. budget • Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request • Audit reports • Financial reports and Umoja extract
34.	Were fund allocations and reallocations clearly justified/explained?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request • Project amendments • PIRs
35.	Were financial resources were made available in a timely manner that did not cause implementation delays or implementation gaps?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs • Funds transfer admittance advice • Cash advance requests • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP FMO • PMU staff
36.	To what extent did the project adhere to UNEP's financial policies?	• Document review • Interviews	• Audit reports • UNEP FMO • Project finance manager
37.	To what extent was the financial information provided by the project complete?	• Document review • Interviews	• Audit reports • Financial reports and Umoja extract • UNEP FMO • Project finance manager
38.	How well did the communication flow between financial and project management staff?	• Document review • Interviews	• Financial reports and Umoja extract • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP FMO • PMU staff • Project finance manager
39.	Did the co-financing materialise as expected at project approval?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • Co-finance confirmation letters • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • Financial reports and Umoja extract • PMU staff • MENR staff
		E. Efficiency	
40.	Was the project implemented in a timely manner?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
41.	Was the project implemented in a cost-effective manner?	• Comparison of actual vs. planned costs of outcomes and outputs • Comparison of numbers of activities and deliverables implemented vs. project design	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • Financial reports and Umoja extract • Budgets • Budget amendments • PMU staff • Project finance manager • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP FMO
42.	Did the no-cost extensions have any implications for the funds available for project activities and outputs?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • Financial reports and Umoja extract • Budgets • Budget amendments • PMU staff • Project finance manager • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP FMO
43.	Did the project achieve economy of scale, costs-savings or increase the level of activity and output through partnerships (e.g. joint activities and division of labour) and use of existing information and processes?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff
F. Monitoring and reporting			
Monitoring Design and budgeting			
44.	Did the project design include a monitoring plan which was sufficiently budgeted?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request
45.	Were the project indicators SMART and gender disaggregated?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request
46.	Were the indicators appropriate and adequate for measuring progress on project results?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request
47.	Were baselines and targets available for the indicators?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request
48.	Were appropriate data collection methods specified for the indicators?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request
Monitoring of project implementation			
49.	Was monitoring data, incl. on the outcome indicators, collected regularly and systematically?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff
50.	Was the monitoring date collected complete and reliable?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
51.	Did the monitoring data provide adequate information on progress towards the intended results?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff
52.	Was the monitoring data disaggregated by gender, when appropriate?	• Document review	• PIRs and HYPRs
53.	Were the funds budgeted for monitoring spent on monitoring?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • Financial reports and Umoja extract
54.	Were risks systematically monitored, and was the risk matrix updated?	• Document review	• PIRs and HYPRs
55.	Was project monitoring used to inform project management and decision-making (adaptive management)?	• Document review	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • PSC members
56.	Is the monitoring system sufficiently capturing implementation progress and results?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
	Project reporting		
57.	Was project reporting conducted regularly and in a timely manner?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
58.	Did project reporting adhere to GEF and UNEP reporting requirements?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
59.	Did project reporting provide adequate and accurate information to provide a realistic picture of project progress?	• Document review • Comparison of reported progress with terminal review findings on project progress	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
	G. Sustainability		
	Socio-political sustainability		
60.	Is there sufficient institutional and political ownership of the MRV system/ETF at all levels?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
61.	Is there sufficient institutional and political commitment to climate transparency at all levels?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
	Financial sustainability		
62.	Is it likely that funding will be mobilised from the GEF and/or other donors for a CBIT project phase 2?	• Interviews	• MENR staff • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
63.	Is there evidence of political will to invest domestic resources in the MRV system/ETF?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
64.	Have financial resources been allocated to the MRV system/ETF?	• Document review • Interviews	• Financial strategy • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Ministry of Finance staff • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
	Institutional sustainability		
65.	Have MENR, RECC; and other key institutions internalised the project approaches and results in their work?	• Document review • Interviews	• Financial strategy • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
66.	Are the key institutions likely to sustain the technical capacities imparted by the project at the staff and organisational levels?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
67.	Are the policy and institutional frameworks (incl. mandates and work plans) in Azerbaijan conducive to post-project continuation and strengthening of the MRV system/ETF?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Academia
68.	Did the project implement a clear sustainability strategy?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
H. Factors and processes affecting project performance and cross-cutting issues			
Preparedness and readiness			
69.	Were contextual changes emerging between project design and project start adequately addressed during the inception phase?	• Document review • Interviews	• Inception meeting minutes • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
70.	Were project design shortcomings identified and addressed during the inception phase?	• Document review • Interviews	• Inception meeting minutes • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
71.	Were all key stakeholders mobilised during the inception phase?	• Document review • Interviews	• Inception meeting minutes • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
72.	Were PMU staff and key consultants mobilised in a timely manner?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
73.	Were office space and equipment required by the PMU made available in a timely manner?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
74.	Did project implementation commence in a timely manner?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
	Quality of project management and supervision		
75.	Did the PSC provide clear strategic guidance to the project, help addressing institutional bottlenecks, and convene the support/engagement of senior officials?	• Document review • Interviews	• PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
76.	Did the PMU act sufficiently on directions given by the PSC?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
77.	Did the PMU have sufficient technical and managerial capacity available to facilitate project implementation?	• Document review • Interviews	• PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
78.	Was decision-making timely?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
79.	Was the communication, incl. guidance and supervision, between the implementing and executing agencies responsive?	• Interviews	• PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
80.	Was adaptive action taken to respond to opportunities, address emerging challenges, and mitigate emerging risks?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts
	Stakeholder participation and cooperation		

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
81.	Were key stakeholders consulted/involved of in the project design process?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • Project Identification Form • PSC meeting minutes • Inception workshop reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
82.	Were key stakeholders involved in project oversight (e.g. PSC participation)?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
83.	Were stakeholders consulted in the development of approaches, tools, and training programmes?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Training participants • Technical experts • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
84.	Was the level of cooperation and dialogue with key stakeholders sufficient?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
85.	Did stakeholders outside government (civil society, the private sector, academia) participate in the project?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • Workshop reports • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • Training participants • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
	Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity		
86.	Was a gender analysis conducted in the project design process?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request • Project Identification Form

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
87.	Were human rights and gender considerations in the context of UNFCCC reporting, MRV, and ETF addressed by project activities?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Workshop reports • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • PMU staff • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts • Civil society • Academia
88.	Were specific measures and approaches implemented to encourage the participation of women in project management/oversight and activities?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • Technical experts
89.	Were women engaged in the delivery of project activities, e.g. as experts, trainers, and workshop participants	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Workshop reports • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • PMU staff • Technical experts
90.	Were project indicators and monitoring data gender disaggregated, when appropriate?	• Document review	• PIRs and HYPRs • Workshop and training participant lists
	Environmental and social safeguards		
91.	Were UNEP environmental and social safeguards requirements adhered to vis-à-vis: a) reviewing risk ratings on a regular basis, b) monitoring project implementation for possible safeguard issues, c) responding (where relevant) to safeguard issues, and d) reporting on the implementation of safeguard management measures?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
92.	Did project activities and products address environmental and social considerations in the NDC monitoring, financing, and target setting?	• Document review • Interviews	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Workshop reports • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Training participants • Technical experts
93.	Were steps taken to minimise or offset the project's environmental and carbon footprint (e.g. vis-à-vis air travel, energy use, waste)?	• Interviews	• PMU staff • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point

#	Review questions	Methods	Sources of information
		Country ownership and driven-ness	
94.	Were there sufficient high-level ownership and commitment relevant institutions and actors to national MRV and ETF processes?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Civil society • Private sector • Academia
95.	Was there sufficient high-level ownership willingness across relevant institutions and actors to fund and allocate staff to the implementation of MRV and ETF processes?	• Document review • Interviews	• Financial strategy • PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • MENR staff • Ministry of Finance staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Civil society • Academia
		Communication and public awareness	
96.	Did the project develop and implement a communication strategy targeting key audiences vis-à-vis a) decision-making supportive of MRV/ETF and b) collecting and reporting data in the MRV system?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point
97.	Did the project engage in communication to the wider public on climate transparency, the MVR system and ETF?	• Document review	• CEO Endorsement Request • PIRs and HYPRs • Project deliverables (e.g. publications, training modules) • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • Civil society • Private sector
98.	Did the communication products and activities of the project reach the intended audiences?	• Document review • Interview	• PIRs and HYPRs • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • Civil society • Private sector
99.	Did the project engage in sharing of experiences with peers in other countries, e.g. through CBIT-GSP?	• Document review • Interviews	• PIRs and HYPRs • PSC meeting minutes • UNEP supervision mission reports • MENR staff • Staff of other ministries and agencies • PMU staff • PSC members • UNEP Task Manager and Project Focal Point • UNEP-CCC staff • Technical experts

ANNEX III. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

People consulted during the Review

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
UNEP	Task Manager	Overall Implementation and financial oversight	Male
	Administrative Officer	Financial Management oversight	Female
	Programme Management Officer	Overall Implementation and financial oversight since 2025	Female
	Climate Mitigation Programme Manager	Implementation oversight	Female
RECC	Director	Project oversight	Male
	Project Coordinator	Project management and coordination	Male
	Project Management Assistant	Project management and administration	Male
National Hydro-Meteorological Centre, MENR	Head of Department, Department of International Cooperation and Public Relations	Chief Technical Advisor	Male
	Deputy Director, Climate Change Centre	PSC member	Female
State Ecological Expertise Agency, MENR	Chief Lawyer	National Legal Adviser (consultant)	Male
MENR	Advisor to the Minister for IT	Oversight of MRV platform development	Male
	Chief Operations Manager	Development of MRV platform (consultant)	Male
	Head of International Cooperation Division	GEF Operational Focal Point	Male
	Head of Climate Policy Division	Climate Change Expert (consultant)	Male
Ministry of Energy	Head of Energy Efficiency and Reports, Energy Efficiency Department	PSC member	Female
	Senior Adviser, Energy Efficiency Department	Training participant	Female
	Deputy Director for Renewable Energy	GHG inventory expert (consultant)	Female
Ministry of Agriculture	Sector Advisor for Agriculture, Ecology and Climate Issues, Land Use Control Department	PSC member	Female
State Water Resources Agency	Former Deputy Head of Ecological and Environmental Policy Division, MENR	PSC Chair	Male
Ministry of Finance IMF, World Bank	Head of Environment, Agrarian and Communal Service	PSC member	Male
	Executive Board Representative at IMF. Former Deputy Director, Medium-term Expenditure Framework Department, Ministry of Finance	Climate Finance Expert (consultant)	Male

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
Ministry of Economy	Chief Policy Adviser, Division of Social Policy	PSC member	Male
Aether Consulting	Consultant	International Consultant Team Leader	Male
UNEP-CCC	Consultant	Regional Network Coordinator, CBIT-GSP	Female
	Project Officer - Climate and Energy	Technical assistance for MRV platform	Male

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

- MENR: Cofinancing confirmation letter. 16 April 2019
- MENR: UDP technical support request letter. 16 April 2019
- UNEP: GEF-6 Request for Project Endorsement/Approval. 8 January 2020
- UNEP: Project Identification Form. 30 May 2018
- GEF: Letter: CEO endorsement of medium-sized Project. 29 January 2020
- UNEP-RECC Project Cooperation Agreement + annexes. 13 July 2020
- 1st project revision: Amendment, Project Revision Sheet, routing slips, work plan and budget revisions. 22 August 2022
- 2nd project revision: Amendment, Project Revision Sheet, request letter, routing slips, work plan and budget revisions. 4 March 2024
- 1st inception workshop: agenda. 4 June 2021
- 2nd inception workshop: workshop report. 8 July 2022
- 2nd inception workshop: agenda and list of participants. 21 June 2022
- PSC meeting minutes: 4 June 2021, 31 March 2022, 31 May 2023, 21 December 2025, 25 July 2024, 11 February 2025
- Project Implementation Reviews: 2021-2025
- Half-Yearly Progress Report: 2020-2024
- Final Report, 18 June 2025
- Audit reports: 2021-2025
- Cash advances: Funds transfer admittance advice, cash advance requests, cash advance statements. 2023-2025
- Co-finance reports: 2021-2024
- Quarterly expenditure reports: 2020-2025
- UNEP: Supervision mission reports: October 2022, June 2023, July 2024, February 2025

Project outputs work package 3: 1.3. National system for tracking progress of the implementation of Azerbaijan's Nationally Determined Contributions for mitigation actions established and operationalized

- Deliverable 1.3.1: Report on assessment of current institutional arrangements and national policies on NDC implementation and tracking, June 2023
- Deliverable 1.3.2: Climate Transparency and MRV Management System Design Options, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.3.3: Report on workshop result – NDC consultation workshop, 22 December 2022
- Deliverable 1.3.4: Design of the data hub website and a report on the maintenance and updating procedures of the website, July 2024
- Deliverable 1.3.5:

    - Report of data harmonization standards and protocols, April 2024 – updated April 2025
    - Report of results from experience sharing of early ideas and solving of questions among a group of peers through the CBIT Global Coordination Platform. Additionally, reports of participation in exchange activities under the CBIT Global Coordination Platform (Third Report), May 2025
- Deliverable 1.3.6: Set of guidelines for applying indicators at decentralised level, December 2024 – updated March 2025
- Deliverable 1.3.7: Report of a Pilot On-Site Operation of the NDC Tracking System, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.3.8: Report on the first 6 months of data hub operation (feedback / recommendations from users / working group unit), April 2025

Project outputs work package 4: 1.4. Training programme on enhanced transparency processes provided

- Deliverable 1.4.1: *[No title]*, 20 April 2023
- Deliverable 1.4.2: Training programme in capacity needs assessment and workshop organized for trainers, November 2023 – updated January 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.3: Report on Training of Trainers activities November 2023 – updated November 2024
- Deliverable 1.4.4: Training programme agenda and materials and reports of workshop held for staffs from relevant ministries including energy, agriculture and finance, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.5: Report on Training of staffs from relevant ministries activities (including training attendance list), April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.6: Training materials ready to be reproduced in hard and digital presentations, ready to be made available to users through web on-line platforms hosted by Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resource, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.7: Report of key feedback from stakeholders on the Capacity needs assessment exercise and outlook, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.8: Database management system training materials, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.9: Document detailing the database management system training programme for stakeholders, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.10: Report of database management system training activities implemented (including training attendance list), April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.11: Training materials on the use of the online tracking system ready to be reproduced (hard & digital) and available to users on web platforms, April 2025
- Deliverable 1.4.12: Report of the online tracking system training activities (including training attendance list), April 2025

Project outputs work package 5: 1.5. Knowledge-sharing and coordination mechanism with the CBIT Global Coordination Platform established

- Deliverable 1.5.1:
    - Workshop report: The participation in the 27th session of United Nation Climate Change Conference in Sharm El-Sheikh, 6-18 November 2022

  - Workshop report: The participation in the 28th session of United Nation Climate Change Conference in Dubai, December 2023
  - International conferences and workshops (Third report), May 2025
- Deliverable 1.5.2:
  - Report of participation in regional activities, Jule-December 2022
  - Workshop report: Deep-dive into tracking NDC mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement, 25-27 July 2023
  - Training Workshop for the countries of Eurasia, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Deep-dive into tracking NDC mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement, 25-27 July 2023
  - Report of participation in regional activities (First Report). December 2023
  - Report of participation in regional activities (Third Report), May 2025
- Deliverable 1.5.3:
  - Report of results from experience sharing of early ideas and solving of questions among a group of peers through the CBIT Global Coordination Platform. Additionally, reports of participation in exchange activities under the CBIT Global Coordination and GSP platforms, 11 May 2023
  - Report of results from experience sharing of early ideas and solving of questions among a group of peers through the CBIT Global Coordination Platform. Additionally, reports of participation in exchange activities under the CBIT Global Coordination and GSP platforms, The virtual workshop on "Climate Finance Tracking: Reporting, Methodologies and Best Practices", 20 June 2023
  - Report of results from experience sharing of early ideas and solving of questions among a group of peers through the CBIT Global Coordination Platform. Additionally, reports of participation in exchange activities under the CBIT Global Coordination Platform (First Report), December 2023
  - Report of results from experience sharing of early ideas and solving of questions among a group of peers through the CBIT Global Coordination Platform. Additionally, reports of participation in exchange activities under the CBIT Global Coordination Platform (Second Report), December 2023
  - Report of results from experience sharing of early ideas and solving of questions among a group of peers through the CBIT Global Coordination Platform. Additionally, reports of participation in exchange activities under the CBIT Global Coordination Platform (Third Report), May 2025

Project outputs work package 6: 2.1. Financial strategy outlining means to identify sources of funding needed, and to track financial support received, developed

- Deliverable 2.1.1:
  - *[No title]*, 22 January 2022
  - *[No title]*, March 2023
- Deliverable 2.1.2:
  - *[No title]*, 22 January 2022
  - *[No title]*, April 2023
- Deliverable 2.1.3: *[No title]*, May 2023

- Deliverable 2.1.4: Report of the workshop to validate the initial proposal, 14 July 2023
- Deliverable 2.1.6: Final proposal of institutional arrangements and flows of data needed for an optimal gathering of financial data, December 2024
- Deliverable 2.1.7: Draft legal framework, December 2023
- Deliverable 2.1.8: One document with guidelines on tagging system and the overall system to identify sources of funding needed and to track financial support received, March 2025
- Deliverable 2.1.9: Workshop report (including attendance list) and stakeholder feedback, February 2025

Project outputs work package 7: 2.2. Capacity building and training programme on identifying sources of funding and tracking financial support processes provided

- Deliverable 2.2.1: Document detailing the training program and material for training of the Trainers including a training Manual, January 2025
- Deliverable 2.2.2: Document detailing training program and material for national stakeholders, January 2025
- Deliverable 2.2.3: Report of the three (3) training sessions to the stakeholders on using the methodologies for identifying and reporting climate finance, and understanding the process and procedures of reporting (including training report and attendance lists), February 2025
- Deliverable 2.2.4: Assessment report with summary of results of the training activities, March 2025

Reference documents:

- UNEP: Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021, May 2016
- UNEP: Proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021, 15 March 2019
- UNEP: Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, 23 December 2004

ANNEX V. REVIEW ITINERARY

Time	Stakeholder	Institution
Monday 15 September		
10.00-11.00	• Director • Project Coordinator • Project Management Assistant	RECC
11.30-12.30	• Head of Energy Efficiency and Reports • Senior Adviser	Ministry of Energy
14.00-16.30	• Deputy Director, PSC member • Chief Lawyer, National Legal Adviser	National Hydro-Meteorological Centre State Ecological Expertise Agency
16.30-18.00	Head of Department, Chief Technical Advisor	National Hydro-Meteorological Centre
Tuesday 16 September		
10.00-11.30	• Advisor to the Minister for IT • IT system consultant	MENR
11.30-12.30	Head of International Cooperation Division, GEF Operational Focal Point	MENR
14.00-15.30	Sector Advisor for Agriculture, Ecology and Climate Issues	Ministry of Agriculture
16.30-17.30	PSC Chair	State Water Resources Agency (former MENR)
Wednesday 17 September		
10.00-11.00	Head of Climate Policy Division	MENR
11.00-12.00	Head of Environment, Agrarian and Communal Service	Ministry of Finance
14.30-17.00	• Director • Coordinator • Project Management Assistant	RECC

ANNEX VI. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS ASSESSMENT

ESS PLANNING AT PROJECT DESIGN	
List any ESS issues identified at project design (e.g. SS 1.7, SS 2.3, etc.)[26]	N/A
For any ESS issues identified at project design, were mitigation strategies developed (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	N/A
Were any gaps in ESS issues identified at the review inception phase (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	N

ESS MONITORING AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Is there evidence that the potential emergence of ESS issues was actively monitored during project implementation (Y/N)?[27] (If yes, briefly describe)	N
Is there a justification for the absence of ESS monitoring (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe[28])	Y – low risk project, focused exclusively on training, awareness raising, studies, tools development. No investments or effects on the ground linked to the project.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Identify the ESS issues/events triggered[29] by the project.[30]	N/A
Describe consequences of ESS issues/events during project implementation.	N/A
Describe the management response and identify supporting documentation.[31, 32]	N/A
Were negative ESS effects offset by management response (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	N/A

[26] Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).
[27] **Low risk:** Negative impacts minimal or negligible: no further study or impact management required.
Moderate risk: Potential negative impacts, but limited in scale, not unprecedented or irreversible and generally limited to programme/project area; impacts amenable to management using standard mitigation measures; limited environmental or social analysis may be required to develop an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP). Straightforward application of good practice may be sufficient without additional study.
High risk: Potential for significant negative impacts (e.g. irreversible, unprecedented, cumulative, significant stakeholder concerns); Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) (or Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)) including a full impact assessment may be required, followed by an effective comprehensive safeguard management plan.
[28] For instance, during COVID, access to the field may have been restricted
[29] 'Triggered' refers to environmental or social issues/events that are caused or exacerbated—directly or indirectly—as a result of the project's activities, interventions, or presence.
[30] Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).
31 For most low-moderate risk projects, good practice approach may be sufficient. Project should demonstrate safeguard management approach in the project activities, budget, risks management, stakeholder engagement or/and monitoring segments of the project document to avoid or minimize the identified potential risks without preparing a separate safeguard management plan.
32 E.g., GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Minutes, etc.

ANNEX VII. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name	Kris Borring Prasada Rao
Profession	Partner and Board Member, PEMconsult
Nationality	Danish
Country experience	• Africa: Botswana, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe • Americas: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Peru, USA • Asia: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, the Philippines • Europe: Denmark, Italy, Lithuania, Poland
Education	• MSc Human Geography, University of Copenhagen, 1999 • BSc Geography, University of Copenhagen, 1997

Short biography

Mr Kris B. Prasada Rao is an independent evaluator. He holds an MSc in Human Geography and has 25 years of professional experience in climate change, natural resource management, environment, rural development, agriculture, and livelihoods. He has expertise in different aspects of climate change, including governance under the UNFCCC framework, adaptation and resilience, mitigation, and mainstreaming across sectors. He has worked in 48 countries for a broad range of multilateral institutions (including UNEP, UNDP, FAO, IFAD, IUCN, and the European Union), bilateral donors, and NGOs. Kris B. Prasada Rao is a specialist in evaluation and has carried out numerous evaluations and reviews including complex strategic evaluations, global and regional multi-country programme evaluations, and in-country project evaluations. Moreover, he has hands-on programme and project implementation, management and oversight experience from positions with the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR), Oxfam America, and IFAD. He has since 2011 been a partner and board member at PEMconsult (www.pem.dk).

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Natural resource management, ecosystems/biodiversity, environment, climate change, agriculture, water, rural development, livelihoods, poverty reduction
- Evaluation and review
- Programme and project planning, implementation, monitoring, supervision
- Programme Manager, Team Leader: management and supervision of international and local programme staff and consultants

Selected assignments and experiences (independent reviews/evaluations):

- Mid-Term Review of the UNEP Project: “Global Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Platform: Unified Support Platform and Program for Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, Phase II (CBIT-GSP II)”. Client: UNEP, 2025
- Mid-term Review of the SADC Transfrontier Conservation Area Financing Facility. Client: IUCN, 2024
- Review of the DOF BirdLife Denmark programme Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation – People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living, phase III (PPN III), Nepal, Kenya, Uganda. *Team Leader*. Client: DOF BirdLife Denmark, 2024
- Terminal review of the project: "Technology Needs Assessments – Phase III (TNA Phase III)", funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). *Team Leader*. Client: UNEP, 2023-2024
- Final evaluation of the project: “Next generation low carbon, climate resilient Eco-Village Development in South Asia” (EVD IV), Sri Lanka, Nepal, India. Client: DIB, 2023

- Final Evaluation (FE) of the UNDP-GCF project "Supporting vulnerable communities in Maldives to manage climate change-induced water shortages". *Team Leader*. Client: UNDP, 2023
- Independent final evaluation of the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP) Phase I, Bangladesh, India, Nepal. *Team Leader*. Client: IUCN, 2022-2023
- Global evaluation of the EU's cooperation with the World Bank, Mozambique. Client: EC, 2022-2023
- Terminal evaluation of four UNEP-GEF Projects and terminal review of one project on capacity development for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). *Team Leader*. Client: UNEP, 2022-2023
- Terminal Review of the UNDP-UNEP-GEF project "Global Support Programme for Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports of non-Annex I Parties under the UNFCCC". Client: UNEP/UNOPS, 2022
- Evaluation of the EU cooperation with the United Nations. Client: EC, 2021-2022
- Final evaluation of FAO-GEF project Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral areas systems. *Team Leader*. Client: FAO, 2021
- Review of the Climate Grant from the Danish Climate Envelope for civil society climate action. Client: CISU, 2021
- Review of the DOF BirdLife Denmark programme Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation – People Partner with Nature for Sustainable Living phase II, Nepal, Kenya, Uganda. *Team Leader*. Client: CISU, 2021
- Terminal Evaluation: Development of Sustainable Renewable Energy Power Generation (SREPGen), Bangladesh, UNDP-GEF project. *Team Leader*. Client: UNDP, 2020-2021
- Terminal evaluation of UNEP-UNDP GEF CBIT GCP (Capacity Building in Transparency Global Coordination Platform) phase 1. Client: UNEP+UNDP, 2020-2021
- Evaluation of the Danish Support for Climate Change Adaptation in Developing Countries. Client: Danida, 2019-2020
- Project evaluations and results-based framework development for future monitoring and evaluation - the Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) Programme, the EU-INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contribution for the UNFCCC) Project, NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution for the UNFCCC) Support Programme. *Team Leader*. Client: UNDP, 2019-2020
- Evaluation of the European Union's co-operation with Myanmar, 2012-2017. *Team Leader*. Client: EC, 2018-2020
- Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-EC DG Environment Strategic Cooperation Agreement (SCA). *Team Leader*. Client: UNEP, 2019-2020
- End reviews of EAMCEF II (Conservation and Restoration of the Eastern Arc Mountains) and ECOPRC (Empowering Communities Through Training on Participatory Forest Management, REDD and Climate Changes), Tanzania. Te*am Leader*. Client Embassy of Norway, 2019
- Joint Nordic Evaluation of the Nordic Development Fund (NDF). Client: Particip for NDF, 2019
- Mid-Term Review of the Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP IV) 2016-2020 between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Lao PDR. Client: Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 2018-2019
- Midterm Review of the UNDP-UNEP-GEF project "Global Support Programme for Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports of non-Annex I Parties under the UNFCCC". Client: UNDP, 2018

- Evaluation of the European Union's co-operation with Afghanistan, 2007-2016. *Team Leader*. Client: EC, 2016-2018
- Evaluation of the European Union's sustainable energy cooperation (2011-2016). Client: EC, 2017
- Mid-Term Review of the UNDP-GEF project: Establishing integrated models for protected areas and their co-management in Afghanistan. *Team Leader.* Client: UNDP, 2017
- Evaluation of the European Union's co-operation with the Region of Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, 2008-2015. Client: EC, 2016-2017
- Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP project "Building Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change in Afghanistan 2014-2018", funded by the GEF (Global Environment Facility). *Team Leader*. Client: UNEP, 2016
- Global evaluation of EU's Water Facility. Client: EC, 2016
- Evaluation of the European Union's co-operation with Central Asia. *Team Leader*. Client: EC, 2015-2016
- Mid Term Review of the EU funded Project: "Sustaining biodiversity, environmental and social benefits in the Protected Areas of the Eastern Plains Landscape of Cambodia". Client: WWF, 2016
- Global Mid-Term Evaluation of the EU funded Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) Programme. *Team Leader*. UNDP, 2015
- Evaluation of Swedish (SMHI) International Training Programs (ITP); Climate Change - Mitigation and Adaptation 2007-2011. Sida, 2015
- Evaluation of the development cooperation of Denmark, Sweden and the European Union with Bangladesh. Client: EC, 2015
- Evaluation of the European Union's support to environment and climate change in third countries (2007-2013). Client: EC, 2014-2015
- Mid-term Evaluation of the UNEP-DHI – Centre for Water and Environment. Client: UNEP, 2014
- Global joint donor review of UNDP Cap-Net. *Team Leader*. Client: UNOPS, 2014
- Global evaluation of the "Gender-responsive Climate Change Initiatives and Decision-making" programme phase 2 and 3 (implemented by UNDP-UNEP, IUCN, WEDO) under the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA). *Team Leader*. Client: UNDP, 2013
- Evaluation of Output 2, Rural Growth Programme (RGP), Tajikistan. *Team Leader.* Client: UNDP, 2013

ANNEX VIII. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

Table 21: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets?
Response: the project responded to the following GEF core indicator "*People benefitting from GEF-financed investments/# of direct beneficiaries (# of women)*". The end targets were exceeded with 165 women (target: 106 women) and 202 men (target: 114 men) being trained by the project. (Section IV.D)
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR?
Response: Promotion of stakeholder participation and cooperation across sectors was a central feature of the project, as the provision of data and information for climate transparency by nature required multi-sectoral engagement. This was particularly clearly expressed in output 1.1 (institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial cooperation), but stakeholder participation and cooperation across sectors were a feature of all outputs. Considerable effort went into mobilising, engaging, and capacitating stakeholders. The PMU was in regular dialogue with stakeholders, and training was based on assessment of stakeholders' capacity needs, and stakeholder feedback on key deliverables was sought. Interlocutors widely commended the project for enhancing awareness and buy-in of stakeholders. Moreover, key line ministries were represented in the PSC. (Section IV.I)
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?
Response: The project deliverables included a gender awareness workshop, and participating institutions were encouraged to appoint women to participate in trainings. The participation of women was monitored, e.g. with gender-disaggregated data provided on participation in workshops/trainings and PSC meetings. Of the 367 direct beneficiaries (e.g. training participants), 165 (45 pct.) were female and 202 (55 pct.) were male, indicating a good degree of gender parity. (Section IV.I)
Question: 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 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 had an institutional focus and did not entail any on-the-ground investments. The project was appropriately rated as a low-risk project. There was thus no need for implementing any environmental or social safeguards or mitigation measures. No environmental or social risks were identified at design, during implementation, or by the terminal review other than the carbon footprint from travel and power consumption associated with project implementation. (Section IV.I)
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: Communication with key stakeholders across government institutions was regular and done through workshops, PSC meetings, and bilateral communication. The arguably biggest achievement of the project was increased awareness, which stakeholders ascribed to capacity development as well as proactive communication from the PMU. The project engaged in communication and knowledge-sharing with other countries jointly with CBIT-GSP with a peer-learning workshop hosted by Azerbaijan and two side events at COP 29 in Baku. Moreover, the PMU proactively shared Azerbaijan's experience in regional and global workshops and seminars and posted information about the project and climate transparency in Azerbaijan on the CBIT-GSP website. Press releases about project workshops were published on the CBIT-GSP website as well as RECC's website. While the project benefitted from short-term inputs from a national communications expert and a budget line for communication activities, no communication plan was developed. (Section IV.I)
Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?

Response:

Strengths: The intended outputs were largely delivered. The project enhanced the awareness, interest and capacities of stakeholders in relation to GHG inventories, MRV, and climate finance tracking. Tools and methodologies were provided, an online GHG inventory, MRV and climate finance tracking platform was established, and the project also informed the drafting of the national Climate Act. Moreover, the project promoted gender integration in the MRV system. A functional interim institution responsible for coordination of GHG inventories and reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, the Climate Change Centre, provided the project with an institutional entry point of engagement.

The project contributed to modest improvements in GHG data collection and processing, NDC progress tracking, and finance tracking – thus partially achieving its intended outcomes and laying the foundation for the establishment and operationalisation of improved institutional arrangements and cross-sectoral coordination once the Climate Act has been passed by the Parliament, which is likely to happen in the next couple of years. A second phase of the project is planned, which will be essential for ensuring the project results are translated into a full-fledged MRV system.

Once implementation took off, the project management arrangements worked well. RECC proved a capable executing agency and the PMU engaged proactively with stakeholders to ensure ownership and momentum. Consultant inputs were well-managed and generally delivered the intended results to the satisfaction of stakeholders. Synergies were achieved with other interventions, in particular with the global CBIT-GSP project. The PSC met regularly, and there was a high degree of institutional and individual continuity in the participation. Financial management was fully compliant with UNEP and GEF requirements. The level of delivery corresponded to expectations, and project management costs were within budget. Oversight and backstopping by UNEP were well-functioning.

Weaknesses: The project was severely affected by external factors outside the control of the project, leading to a significantly delayed project start and limited implementation in 2020-2023 and the project was extended by 21 months. Due to the delays, the tools and online platform were not delivered in time to be used for the preparation of the BTR1 and BUR3, hence the potential scope of synergy with GEF support for the preparation of reports did not materialise.

The design was overambitious with unrealistic expectations for a three-year medium-sized project. Being a first-generation CBIT project, the expected results were not fully taking into consideration the country context. The absence of a national Climate Act was (and still remains) an impediment to the establishment of fully functional institutional structures and processes for MRV. Hence, the intended output of established institutional arrangements was not fully achieved. Due to the lack of clear and formalised institutional frameworks and responsibilities for MRV across sectors, the use of the capacities, methodologies and tools developed by the project remains uneven, voluntary, person-driven and ad-hoc – and the outputs have thus not fully translated into the intended outcomes. While the Climate Change Centre has an interim responsibility to coordinate the GHG inventory, MRV and reporting to the PA/UNFCCC, it (as well as the other institutions involved) faces technical capacity constraints and its clout to convene the engagement of sector institutions is limited. The online platform for the GHG inventory, MRV and finance tracking is technically functional, but not in use.

Overall, MRV data collection and submission processes have not changed significantly. The capacity gains achieved under the project may partly be lost over time due to staff turnover. Further progress on the establishment of a full-fledged and institutionalised MRV system, the full achievement of the intended project outcomes and ensuring the sustainability of the results achieved hinges on the legal framework being put in place and further external support. While a second phase is planned, a hiatus in the further MRV system development is inevitable until the new phase commences, creating a risk of losing momentum and the current PMU's institutional memory and skills.

A human rights lens was not applied in the project, although the contribution to enhanced climate transparency contributes to the right to access to information. The MRV platform was developed as an internal tool for supporting the preparation of reports to the PA/UNFCCC rather than a platform for providing public access to information. One challenge in this regard is the view that some relevant data is classified government information that cannot be shared openly.

With the executing agency role outsourced to an external NGO (RECC), government engagement in day-to-day project management was somewhat modest.

(Section V.A)

ANNEX IX. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Title and Reference No.: Capacity Building for Azerbaijan to Meet the Requirements of Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement (GEF ID 10043)

Contact Person (TM/PM): Katarina Barunica

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	**ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)**	**WHAT WILL BE DONE?**	**EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE**	**REPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY**
Recommendation 1: Focus efforts on facilitating the establishment of the legal and formalised institutional frameworks necessary for advancing on the MRV system.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the RECC and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the RECC and MENR once the Terminal Review report is validated by the Evaluation Office. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will engage with the RECC and Azerbaijan MENR during the concept development of a potential CBIT 2 project to integrate the proposed actions into the design of the project.	June 2026 June 2027	UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit / MENR
Recommendation 2: Operationalise the online MRV platform, methodologies and tools introduced by the project.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the RECC and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the RECC and MENR once the Terminal Review report is validated by the Evaluation Office. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit	June 2026 June 2027	UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit / MENR

		will engage with the RECC and Azerbaijan MENR during the concept development of a potential CBIT 2 project to integrate the proposed actions into the design of the project.		
Recommendation 3: Include in a potential project phase 2 a six-month inception period and a mid-term reflection to allow for procurement planning and adjustment of the project to an evolving context.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the RECC and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the RECC and MENR once the Terminal Review report is validated by the Evaluation Office. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will engage with the RECC and Azerbaijan MENR during the concept development of a potential CBIT 2 project to integrate the proposed actions into the design of the project.	June 2026 June 2027	UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit / MENR
Recommendation 4: Drawing on the lessons from the project's gender awareness raising, include in a potential phase 2 an activity that address climate change from a human rights and inclusion perspective.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the RECC and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the RECC and MENR once the Terminal Review report is validated by the Evaluation Office. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will engage with the RECC and Azerbaijan MENR during the concept development of a potential CBIT 2 project to integrate the proposed actions into the design of the project.	June 2026 June 2027	UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit / MENR

Recommendation 5: For the potential next phase of the project, establish a “hybrid” PMU that combines in-house MENR resources with RECC capacities.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the RECC and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the RECC and MENR once the Terminal Review report is validated by the Evaluation Office. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will engage with the RECC and Azerbaijan MENR during the concept development of a potential CBIT 2 project to integrate the proposed actions into the design of the project.	June 2026 June 2027	UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit / MENR

ANNEX X. GEF CO-FINANCE

Ask the project FMO to assist in filling in this table

CONFIRMED SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS AT MTR AND TE STAGES

Please include evidence for co-financing for the project with this form (please add rows as necessary)

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Cofinancing	Investment Mobilized	Amount ($) at CEO	Amount ($) at MTR	Amount ($) at TE
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	350,000		213,100
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
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(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
(select)		(select)	(select)			
Total Co-financing						213,100

ANNEX XI. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF Project Capacity Building for Azerbaijan to Meet the Requirements of Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement (GEF ID #: 10043)

Consultant: Kris B. Prasada Rao

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).

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Report Rating**
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the ***Executive Summary*** act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: • a clear summary of the review object • review objectives, scope and methodology • the overall project review rating • a summary of main review findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) • summary responses to key strategic review questions • summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete and includes most of the required elements. Key strategic questions are not explicitly addressed here. Strengths/weaknesses: The Executive Summary provides a concise narrative of the project review, in a well-balanced manner. It enables readers to understand the main substance of the project's performance. Responses to the key strategic questions of the Review are not explicitly addressed in the executive Summary, although it is noted that they are covered separately under Section V.A	5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the ***key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand***? Consider how well the report presents: • an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address • timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) • geographic coverage (regions/countries) • total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources • implementing and funding partners • institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • implementation structure with diagram • UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) • summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) • substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are adequately addressed Strengths/weaknesses: The introduction is well presented, covering the required information in sufficient detail. It provides a clear description of the evaluand and its parameters, stakeholders, significant changes, funding sources and budget.	6

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Report Rating
Section C: Review Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the ***review methodology***? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the review: • statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the review findings • data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) • criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited • number and types of respondents *(including in a table broken down by gender)* • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate • methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) • data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) • data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) • review limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) • consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: It clearly presents the main data collection methods and sources, including the rationale for their selection. Gender and ethical considerations are discussed, including efforts to increase stakeholder engagement at the local level. A table summarising the respondents' sample is included and is disaggregated by male/female. Methods used to verify and analyse data have been adequately explained. Limitations to the review and ethical considerations have also been discussed.	6
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the ***Theory of Change***, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (*narratively and diagrammatically)?* Consider how well the report presents: • whether the project design included a TOC • how the *TOC at review* [33] was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (*including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Review report.)* • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete; it includes a TOC narrative, TOC diagram, and comparison table. Strengths/weaknesses: The narrative provides an explanation for each reconstruction/reformulation of results that have been introduced at Review. The causal logic has been adequately described, to include the description of Drivers and Assumptions influencing the causal pathways. The diagram is consistent wit the reconstructed TOC summarised in Table 7 'Justification for reformulation of results statements'	6
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on ***sufficient and adequate data*** and ***clear and credible evidence***? Consider how well the report	Coverage/omissions:	

[33] 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*.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Report Rating
presents: • sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report • evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) • evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source • gaps in data are explained and justified • data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the review	Strengths/weaknesses: The evidence presented in the review is consistent throughout the report, appear to be credible, and they adequately support the assessment of project performance. Gaps in data are identified where relevant. The data sources are adequate to the scope of the review.	6
6. Does the report include ***rigorous analysis*** and ***logical findings***? Consider the extent to which the findings are: • supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented • logical, clear and coherent • aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix • aligned with the review framework • more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way • balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	Coverage/omissions: Strengths/weaknesses: The analyses and findings present a good alignment with the UNEP review criteria matrix, data transparency and triangulation of evidence, ToC-based approach; comprehensive description of data sources; and balanced reporting of strengths and weaknesses in project implementation. The report could have benefited from a more robust description of the sampling strategy and data analysis procedures.	5
Section E: Review Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project ***Strategic Relevance*** with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[34]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Coverage/omissions: The report adequately covers all the required dimensions of relevance Strengths/weaknesses: The preview presents a comprehensive analysis of the project's alignment with UNEP MTS/POW, donor and partner priorities, national and regional priorities, and complementarity with existing interventions	6
8. Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the ***Quality of Project Design***, based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete; it presents a summary of project design covering both its main strengths and weaknesses. Strengths/weaknesses: The quality of project design has been analysed in depth, to include ratings, and an analysis of the main strengths and weaknesses of the	**[35]NOT RATED**

[34] 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.

[35] The Quality of Project Design criterion is not rated in this table because the majority of the analysis is presented in the Inception Report and the Final Terminal Review report only contains a summary.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Report Rating
	design. A table showing the calculation of the overall design score is also presented.	
9. Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the ***Nature of the External Context*** under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[36]), and how they affected performance?	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The review provides a description of key external features of the project's implementing contexts, covering political upheaval as well as the COVID-19 Pandemic which occurred during the project's lifespan.	[37]**NOT RATED**
10. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Availability of Outputs*** to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • 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).	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The review is clear and evidence based. Each output has been assessed in depth, providing useful insights into the quality, utility and timeliness of the outputs to intended beneficiaries. Indicators and targets have been assessed appropriately. The review could have benefited from the inclusion of an assessment of positive or negative effects to disadvantaged groups (by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation).	5.5
11. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Achievement of Outcomes***, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • 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).	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The review provides a detailed and evidence-based assessment of Outcome achievement. Contribution, association and/or attribution of outcome level changes are adequately supported. The analysis compares the scale of outcomes versus the performance indicators. Constraints to outcome achievement are also discussed. The review could have benefitted from an assessment of outcome achievement from the perspective of disadvantaged groups (by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation).	5

[36] 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.

[37] The Nature of External Context is not rated in this table because it is not consistently applicable across all projects. Some review reports will simply record that there was no unexpected unfavourable external factors, while others may have to describe critical external events.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Report Rating
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to ***Likelihood of Impact***? Consider how well the report presents: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes • an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents • 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).	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The causality from outputs to Impact are adequately summarised and well-reasoned. The review discusses the status of the TOC drivers and assumptions including the strengths and weaknesses in the change process as observed at the time of the review. Gender is covered (headcounts) but not so much from an outcome-level perspective.	5
13. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Financial Management*** and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	Coverage/omissions: The section covers all the required sub-categories. Strengths/weaknesses: The required dimensions of financial management have been assessed and the findings summarised; the 'financial management' table has been included within the section to support the findings.	5
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Efficiency***? Consider how well the report presents: • cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Coverage/omissions: The section covers most of the required aspects of efficiency. Strengths/weaknesses: The review discusses the implications of delays and extensions adequately. Cost-saving measures are also discussed. The section could have benefited from a more explicit discussion on the effects of the synergies that were created on improving the project's efficiency.	5
15. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's ***Monitoring and Reporting***? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • the quality of *monitoring of project implementation* (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) • the quality of *project reporting* (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	Coverage/omissions: The section covers the required sub-categories. Strengths/weaknesses: The review provides a clear and well-reasoned assessment the project's monitoring and reporting performance. Sufficient evidence has been provided to support the assessment and ratings. The review also assesses the utility of the monitoring data to adaptive management	6
16. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Sustainability*** (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	Coverage/omissions: All the sub-categories of sustainability are covered. Strengths/weaknesses: The assessment of the sustainability of results is clear, well-reasoned and supported with relevant examples. The review provides useful insights into the likelihood of the continuation of	6

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Report Rating
	project results and identifies some of the risks that have the potential to adversely affect sustainability. The key stakeholders that are needed to support sustainability have also been discussed.	
17. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the ***Factors Affecting Performance***, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections? *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.* Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: • quality of project management and supervision[38] • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness	Coverage/omissions: All the factors affecting performance have been presented in stand-alone subsections in this chapter. Strengths/weaknesses: The assessment of factors affecting performance is clear, well-evidenced and consistent with the findings presented in the report.	6
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
18. Do the ***Conclusions*** present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: • provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) • add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion • are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process • provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) • provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	Coverage/omissions: The review includes conclusions, responses to the key strategic questions, and a summary the performance ratings Strengths/weaknesses: The section provides an overview of both the achievements and limitations of project performance in achieving its results. The conclusions are consistent with the findings reported under the various criteria. Gender and human rights issues are mentioned. Lessons learned are clear, well-reasoned, and anchored on actual findings presented in the report. The responses to the Key Strategic Review Questions are clear, however, they could have benefitted from more in-depth responses, or alternatively, cross-references to report sections/paras where more details can be found.	5.5
19. Does the report present ***Recommendations*** for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? Consider how well the recommendations:	Coverage/omissions: The review includes recommendations. Strengths/weaknesses:	5

[38] 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.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Report Rating
• are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: **(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. **(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.	The recommendations are clearly presented, identifying various proposed actions to remedy the problem/challenge described, as well as the proposed responsible agents and implementation timeframes. They are logically connected to the findings presented in the report. Human rights and gender issues are also included among the recommendations. Most of the recommendations require a phase 2 project for implementation; the review aptly proposes that the planned phase 2 project should follow-up on the implementation of the relevant recommendations. Except for #3 and #4, the recommendations are primarily addressed to third-party actors. These could benefit from inclusion of text that specifies UNEP's role in transmitting such recommendations to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner.	
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
20. Is the report ***well-structured and complete***? Does it: • follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines • include all required sections and annexes, as applicable • not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report ***present*** information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: • in clear and accessible language • largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors • in an adequate and professional tone • with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	Coverage/omissions: The report is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The review is well-structured and for the most part adequately meets the UNEP Evaluation Office formatting guidelines. It marginally exceeds the recommended report length. The review is well written and uses clear and professional language and tone. Tables have been used to support the review where appropriate.	6
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5.6**

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.

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

Rating (1–6)	Description
6	Provides all content with high quality.
5	Provides all content with minor weaknesses.
4	Provides most content with minor weaknesses.
3	Provides most content with significant weaknesses.
2	Omits substantive content with significant weaknesses.
1	Omits almost all content with major weaknesses.