Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP-GEF Project 'Malawi Climate Transparency Framework' (GEF ID 10149) 2021-2024

UNEP Climate Change Division

Validation date: September 2025

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

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Malawi Climate Transparency Framework
GEF ID: 10149
SMA IPMR ID: 44220
June 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared for UNEP Climate Change Division by Prof. Aurelian Mbzibain.

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 Yamikani Idriss, Julien LHEUREUX and Kerubo Moseti for their contributions and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to all stakeholders who took time to provide comments to the draft report.

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

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

Prof. Aurelian Mbzibain is a leading expert in international development, with a PhD in Business and Strategy Management, an MSc in Rural Development, and a degree in Agricultural Engineering. He brings over 20 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation, specializing in mid-term reviews (MTRs), Terminal Reviews (TR) and Theory of Change (ToC) analyses. His expertise spans adaptation, mitigation, biodiversity, conservation finance, and climate resilience, ensuring projects align with strategic objectives and deliver measurable outcomes.

As Founder and Co-Director of ACE D&H Consultants Ltd, Aurelian has led over 60 evaluations for organizations such as FAO, UNDP, WWF, World Resources Institute, UNEP and ClientEarth UK. He has delivered over a dozen GEF/GCF assignments, including evaluations in Bhutan, DRC, Kenya, and Togo, applying OECD criteria and integrating human rights and gender approaches. Aurelian has successfully conducted UNDP Country Programme Evaluations in Ethiopia, DRC, South Africa, and Benin, as well as EU-funded forestry and landscape management evaluations in Cameroon and Vietnam. His ability to facilitate hybrid sense-making sessions and stakeholder consultations enhances project impact and learning. With over 100 publications, he is a recognized thought leader in sustainable and inclusive development.

Terminal review consultant

Prof Aurelian Mbzibain

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP/ Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) - Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change project implemented between 2021 and 2025. The project's overall development goal was to strengthen the capacity of institutions in Malawi and set up an information system to fulfill the enhanced Transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the Donor1 and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

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

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, Malawi, Climate Transparency Framework, MRV

Primary data collection period: 16th May to 31st May 2025

Field mission dates: 26th – 31st of May 2025

[1] Replace with the name of the funding partner

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full Name
AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
ASCENT	African Sustainability Centre
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBIT	Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTU	Climate Transparency Unit
DNA	Designated National Authority
EAD	Environmental Affairs Department
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FOLU	Forests and Other Land Use
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GoM	Government of Malawi
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPPU	Industrial Processes and Product Use
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NSO	National Statistical Office
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoW	Programme of Work
PSC	Project Steering Committee

Acronym	Full Name
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
TR	Terminal Review
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1. Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA[2] ID:	44220	Grant ID[3] (if applicable):	S1-32GFL-000672
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division / Mitigation Branch / GEF Climate Mitigation Unit		
Implementing Partners:	Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) - Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change		
Sources of Funding:	*Country[4](ies)*: Malawi	*Institution[5] Name/Type:* Government	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG-13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts SDG Target 13.3. Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. SDG indicator 13.3.2: Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions		
MTS (all that apply):	MTS 2018-2021	UNEP approval date:	5 May 2021
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR**	*POW Direct Outcome: 1.3 Transparency and accountability of government and non-government climate action, including from the private sector and finance community is strengthened*	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR**	*MTS 2025 Outcome: 1C - State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement*
POW Output(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)*	*POW Output:*	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	*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:	Transparency PCP
Expected start date:	7 May 2021	Actual start date:	7 May 2021
Planned completion date:	30 June 2024	Actual operational completion date:	31 December 2024
Planned total project budget at approval:	US$ 1,206,000	Actual total expenditures[6] reported as of 31 March 2025	US$ 1,112,642
GEF grant allocation:	US$ 1,056,000	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 March 2025:	US$ 962,642[7]
Planned co-financing:	In-kind: US$ 150,000	Secured co-financing as of 31 December 2024:	In-kind: US$ 150,000
First disbursement:	25 June 2021	Planned date of financial closure:	31 December 2025
No. of formal project revisions:	2	Date of last approved project revision:	31/12/2025
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	03/12/2024

[2] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.
[3] For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.
[4] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.
[5] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.
[6] Includes both the GEF grant and the co-financing.
[7] As per Final Statement of Accounts report from the EAD.

Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	N/A	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	30 June 2025	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	tbd
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Malawi	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A yet

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The Paris Agreement (PA) marked a significant shift in international climate governance by introducing the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under Article 13. This framework is central to enabling countries to track progress against their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), facilitate international comparability, and promote increased ambition in climate action. Recognising that many developing countries faced systemic barriers to participating effectively in the ETF, the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) was established by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) at the request of the UNFCCC to support transparency readiness.

2. The CBIT Malawi project was developed to address Malawi's limited institutional, technical, and procedural capacity for implementing the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement. At project design, the country faced several challenges: the absence of a dedicated national climate transparency framework; limited coordination mechanisms between government agencies responsible for climate-relevant data; gaps in technical capacity for greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and MRV systems; and weak stakeholder engagement, particularly among subnational actors, academia, private sector, and women. These constraints risked undermining the quality, consistency, and timeliness of climate reporting to the UNFCCC.

3. In response, the CBIT Malawi project sought to establish the foundational architecture required for transparency compliance through:
   - Establishing the National Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system;
   - Developing and operationalizing an integrated platform for data management; and
   - Targeted capacity building to strengthen institutional and individual capacities to meet the Paris agreement requirements on an Enhanced Transparency Framework.

This Review

4. The Terminal Review (TR) was conducted at project closure to assess project performance (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency), examine results and potential impact, and determine their sustainability. It addressed four strategic questions concerning the adoption of ETF arrangements, strengthening of institutional transparency mechanisms, uptake of new tools, and adaptation to COVID-19 disruptions. The Terminal Review of the CBIT Malawi project employed a mixed-method, theory-based evaluation approach grounded in UNEP's Evaluation Office guidance and the GEF's evaluation criteria. The review was guided by the project's reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) and applied the core OECD-DAC principles; relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability while also exploring factors affecting performance and likelihood of impact.

5. At the heart of the methodology was a triangulated analysis drawing from multiple qualitative and quantitative data sources. The review process began with a comprehensive desk-based assessment of project-related documents. This documentary evidence provided an initial understanding of project intentions, progress, and adaptive responses across the implementation cycle. Primary data collection followed a participatory and inclusive approach. A total of 28 (26% women) out of 30 contacted key informant interviews were conducted with a diverse range of stakeholders including government ministries, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), academic institutions, private sector actors, UNEP staff, the technical implementation partner (ASCENT), and civil society organisations. To broaden the evidence base, an online survey was administered to 35 stakeholders with a response rate of 86%, capturing their perspectives on the project's performance, participation quality, communication effectiveness, and impact. Analytically, the evaluation applied content analysis, descriptive statistics, and thematic synthesis. Triangulation of data across sources and methods helped to ensure robustness and mitigate bias.

6. The strengths of this approach lay in its ability to combine empirical observation with stakeholder experience, yielding a nuanced and grounded understanding of project performance. However, the review also faced limitations. The evaluation team was not able to reach subnational council representatives or local communities directly. In addition, some interview respondents had rotated out of their roles during the project cycle, which constrained institutional memory in a few cases. Finally, while the online MRV platform was demonstrated, its real-time functionality could not be fully assessed due to delays in its operationalisation at the time of the field

visits. Despite these limitations, the methodology provided a credible and comprehensive basis for assessing the CBIT Malawi project.

Key Findings

7. The CBIT Malawi project aligned strongly with national and international climate priorities, and its strategic relevance was consistently rated as 'Highly Satisfactory.' The intervention contributed significantly to the establishment of institutional and technical foundations for climate transparency. Notable achievements included the creation of a Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within EAD, the development of a national online platform for MRV, and the designation of sectoral data hubs in line ministries.
8. Technical tools for emissions reporting, including country-specific emission factors for the FOLU and IPPU sectors, were developed and validated. However, similar work in the energy, transport, and agriculture sectors was not completed due to limited national expertise and late-stage implementation of some technical activities. While trainings were conducted, their timing towards the end of the project restricted opportunities for full institutionalisation.
9. The MRV online platform was developed and migrated to government servers, yet it remains underutilised, partly due to limited training and lack of formal data-sharing agreements across ministries. Draft Memoranda of Understanding were not signed at project close, weakening the institutional framework for transparency.
10. The project met its target for direct beneficiaries (168 individuals, compared to 150 planned), but fell slightly short of the gender parity goal. It implemented a gender action plan and promoted inclusive participation, though deeper structural mechanisms to sustain gender and youth engagement were lacking.
11. The implementation environment was moderately favourable, despite challenges including forex liquidity crises and recruitment delays. COVID-19 had minimal impact, as activities began post-restrictions. Adaptive management strategies were employed to mitigate delays, with consistent oversight from the Project Steering Committee and UNEP.
12. National ownership of the ETF agenda increased during the project, with strong leadership from EAD and sustained engagement of academic and technical institutions. However, private sector participation was limited, and subnational engagement was minimal despite decentralisation being a national priority.
13. In terms of sustainability, institutional frameworks were laid, but financial and socio-political sustainability remain uncertain. The absence of secured follow-up funding, costed exit strategies, and formal mandates for climate data collection and reporting threaten the durability of project results.

Conclusions

14. The CBIT Malawi project made significant strides in laying the institutional and technical foundation for enhanced climate transparency in line with the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). Key achievements included the establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), the development of an online MRV platform, initial progress on country-specific emission factors, and broad-based capacity development initiatives. The project also fostered improved coordination across sectoral ministries through the designation of data hubs and delivered important technical training and knowledge-sharing activities, including participation in global CBIT and UNFCCC platforms. Strong national ownership, consistent leadership by EAD, and constructive oversight from the Project Steering Committee further reinforced the project's strategic alignment and institutional embeddedness. Financial management and compliance with UNEP standards were consistently rated highly, and the project demonstrated good practice in applying a human rights-based approach and gender inclusion strategies in stakeholder engagement and training.
15. Nonetheless, the project also faced several limitations that constrained full realisation of its objectives. Delays related to forex liquidity, staff recruitment, and the late delivery of critical tools, particularly the MRV platform by the technical partner, compressed the project's implementation window and limited opportunities for iterative learning and institutionalisation. Key outputs such as emissions factors for the energy, agriculture, and transport sectors remained incomplete, and the uptake of newly introduced tools within institutional workflows was uneven. The absence of signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between EAD and sectoral ministries at project close highlighted persistent challenges in formalising cross-sectoral data governance. In addition, while gender and stakeholder participation targets were broadly met, deeper institutionalisation of these commitments, particularly with respect to subnational engagement and structured gender incentives remained limited. Taking these strengths and constraints together, the evaluation concludes that the CBIT Malawi project delivered moderately satisfactory performance, having established a credible foundation for climate

transparency while highlighting areas for improvement in institutional uptake, legal integration, and long-term sustainability.

Strategic Review Questions

16. ETF Adoption: The project made partial progress toward adoption of ETF arrangements. Institutional structures such as the CTU and data hubs were established, and national participation in global CBIT platforms increased visibility. However, operationalisation of ETF practices remains incomplete.
17. Transparency Mechanisms: Moderate contributions were made to strengthening institutional transparency, including improved inter-ministerial coordination and platform development, though limited by the absence of formal MoUs.
18. Adoption of Tools: Tools were developed and shared, but adoption was uneven and largely demonstrative due to timing constraints and late delivery of training.
19. COVID-19 Response: The pandemic had limited direct impact, with core implementation beginning after restrictions eased.

Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1: Institutional embedding of climate transparency units within existing government structures can enhance continuity and ownership.

Lesson Learned #2: Engagement of national data custodians from the outset is crucial for coherence, credibility, and alignment with national statistical systems.

Lesson Learned #3: Engaging subnational institutions remains a critical but underutilised entry point for inclusive climate data governance.

Lesson Learned #4: Efforts to enhance gender equity in climate transparency benefit from clearer incentives and structured mechanisms for participation.

Lesson Learned #5: Sustainability of transparency systems is constrained when financial continuity is not addressed early and explicitly.

Lesson Learned #6: Long-term capacity for climate transparency is best nurtured through early engagement, hands-on practice, and phased skill application.

Lesson Learned #7: Collaborative arrangements between international and national consultants can strengthen both delivery and national capacity.

Lesson Learned #8: Flexibility in partner selection and early alignment of digital infrastructure with government systems can prevent operational challenges.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Develop a CBIT Phase II project to complete emission factors for all sectors, operationalise the online platform, strengthen data management hubs, extend to subnational institutions, and support science-policy dialogues.

Recommendation #2: Integrate transparency functions, including data reporting, into Malawi's new Climate Change Law or subsidiary regulations.

Recommendation #3: Future CBIT projects should structure consultant engagements to ensure learning partnerships between national and international experts, include structured incentives for gender and youth engagement, and create stronger academia linkages. Service providers should be secured through open competitive processes to enhance value for money and national ownership.

Recommendation #4: Improve project M&E frameworks by including both quantitative and qualitative indicators to better assess behavioural and institutional change.

Validation

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

I. INTRODUCTION

20. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[8] and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Project Management Manual[9], the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes:

    1. to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and

    2. to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) of Malawi. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project.

21. In terms of time scope, the TR covers the period from approval of the project until completion. The project was approved by the UNEP Project Approval Group on 5 May 2021 and by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Chief Executive Officer on the 22 January 2021. The agreement between the parties was expected to remain in force until 30 June 2025. The actual start date was 7 May 2021 with operational completion slated for the 30 June 2024. Two revisions occurred during implementation. The first revision was approved on the 14 March 2023 to accommodate delays in implementation of activities. This entailed a reorganisation of activity timelines. Revision 2 was approved on 27 May 2024 extending operational completion from June 2024 to 31 December 2024 to ensure completion of remaining activities in project. With these approvals, the technical completion date was extended to 31 December 2024, and the PCA expiry date is 31 December 2025. It is important to note that towards the very end of the project, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) (Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Wildlife) faced challenges to host the MRV system in its own national server, which led to some of the final closing activities (i.e. training of stakeholders on the MRV systems) to spill over into the first quarter of 2025.

22. Furthermore, the TR will also assess the degree to which the overall project budget of US$ 1,206,000 was effectively mobilised (GEF and in-kind contributions) and spent over the duration of the project. The project was financed through the 7th Global Environment Facility (GEF) Operational Programme as a Medium-Sized Project and forms part of the GEF Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Trust Fund. The project is fully aligned with Malawi's Nationally Determined Contributions. Malawi produced its Third National Communications (TNC)[10], first Biennial Update Report (BUR)[11], and revised its 2015 Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)[12]. The 2021 NDCs embody efforts by countries that are Party to the Paris Agreement to put in place measures to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The NDC has outlined Malawi's climate change priorities for the period from 2020 - 2040 and has provided concrete strategies for addressing the causes of climate change and responding to the adverse effects and impacts in line with provisions established under the Paris Agreement. The CBIT project is fully aligned. In fact, the revised 2021 NDCs, acknowledge the contribution of the CBIT project in strengthening the National Climate Transparency Framework (page 90). As part of the "Global capacity-building towards enhanced transparency in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector", the Malawi CBIT project benefits from best practices and lessons learnt at regional and international levels. The government identifies climate change as a national priority in its Malawi 2063 (MW2063)[13] vision , and consequently this project benefits from this wider national goals. In fact, the MW2063 emphasises the need for human capacity deevlopment, environmental sustainability and effective governance and institutions as key enablers for achieving its goals.

23. Finally, the project aligns with UNEP's[14] aims to address the three major environmental crises—climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution—by promoting sustainable development pathways. More specifically, the project is guided by UNEP's Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023. Its relevant stated outcomes

[8] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114
[9] https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752
[10] The Third National Communication Of the Republic of Malawi To the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources, Lilongwe, Malawi, January, 2021.
[11] MALAWI'S FIRST BIENNIAL UPDATE REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (CoP) OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) MINISTRY OF FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, LILONGWE, MALAWI NOVEMBER, 2021.
[12] Republic of Malawi (2021) Revised Nationally Determined Contributions, Malawi%20Updated%20NDC%20July%202021%20submitted.pdf
[13] National Planning Commission (2020) Malawi 2063, *Transforming Our Nation,* MW2063-VISION-FINAL-VERSION.pdf
[14] Medium-Term Strategy 2022—2025 The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for tackling climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution and waste from 2022—2025.

are designed to ensure that “Countries and stakeholders have increased capacity, finance and access to technologies to deliver on the adaptation and mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement” and that “State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement”. At design, the project was guided by the UN Environment Medium-Term Strategy (2018-2021) Climate change sub programme goals.

- Mitigation Expected Accomplishment: Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies;

- Adaptation Expected Accomplishment: Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans, which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation.

24. During implementation, UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2022-2025 has guided the CBIT project by highlighting strategic priorities aligned with the CBIT initiative, including enhancing resilience, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting and restoring ecosystems, addressing pollution, and promoting sustainable resource use.

25. The findings from this review will therefore be directly relevant to the donor agency, UNEP acting as the GEF Implementing Agency and EAD as the Executing Agency. Other government agencies such as the national MET office, Agriculture, Forest and Land Use (AFOLU) sectors and others also stand to gain learning from the TR results. Other non-state actors such as academia and civil society could also draw lessons and learning from the intervention for their own decision makings.

II. REVIEW METHODS

26. UNEP's Terminal Reviews (TRs) are guided by a structured approach to ensure comprehensive review of projects' performance. The review is designed to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impacts of a project while drawing lessons for future interventions.

1. UNEP's review model/approach

Definitions of review criteria

27. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, the UNEP Programme Manual and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations, this TR/MTR has been carried out using a set of 9 commonly applied review criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance[15], (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/Matrix for more details on each review criterion).

28. 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.

Matrix of ratings levels for each criterion

29. 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 review team has considered all the evidence gathered during the review in relation to this matrix in order to generate review criteria performance ratings.

Strategic questions

30. In addition to the 9 review criteria outlined above, the TR addresses a number of strategic questions that were formulated in the Terms of Reference. These questions were posed by the UNEP Evaluation Office in conjunction with members of the Project Team.

- Q1: Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?
- Q2: Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting? If so, please explain how.
- Q3: 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?
- Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

31. 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 5 topics of interest to the GEF are summarised in Annex XI. The intended action/results on the 5 topics were described in the GEF CEO Endorsement and Approval documents. The 5 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

[15] This criterion includes a sub-category on Complementarity, which closely reflects the OECD-DAC criterion of 'Coherence', introduced in 2019. Complementarity with other initiatives is assessed with respect to the project's design. In addition, complementarity with other initiatives during the project's implementation is assessed under the criterion of Efficiency.

Safeguards Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach.

2. Review Process

32. UNEP adopts a theory-based, utilization-focused, and participatory approach for conducting Terminal Reviews (TRs). This ensures a thorough and actionable review process. A theory-based review examines the underlying project logic, known as the Theory of Change (ToC), to assess how activities led to intended outcomes. For the CBIT Project, the focus was on strengthening institutional capacities within government ministries and key stakeholders to enhance climate transparency. The utilization-focused approach aims to ensure that findings and recommendations are practical and immediately useful to key stakeholders, including UNEP, EAD, MalawiaN government and interested national stakeholder. The review sought to produce insights that could be applied to similar climate-related initiatives, supporting future decision-making and planning. UNEP also emphasizes a participatory approach, engaging key stakeholders throughout the review process. This collaboration ensures that the review findings are well-grounded and that stakeholders, including government ministries, NGOs, and the private sector, have a sense of ownership over the final recommendations. The overall review process is summarized in figure 1.

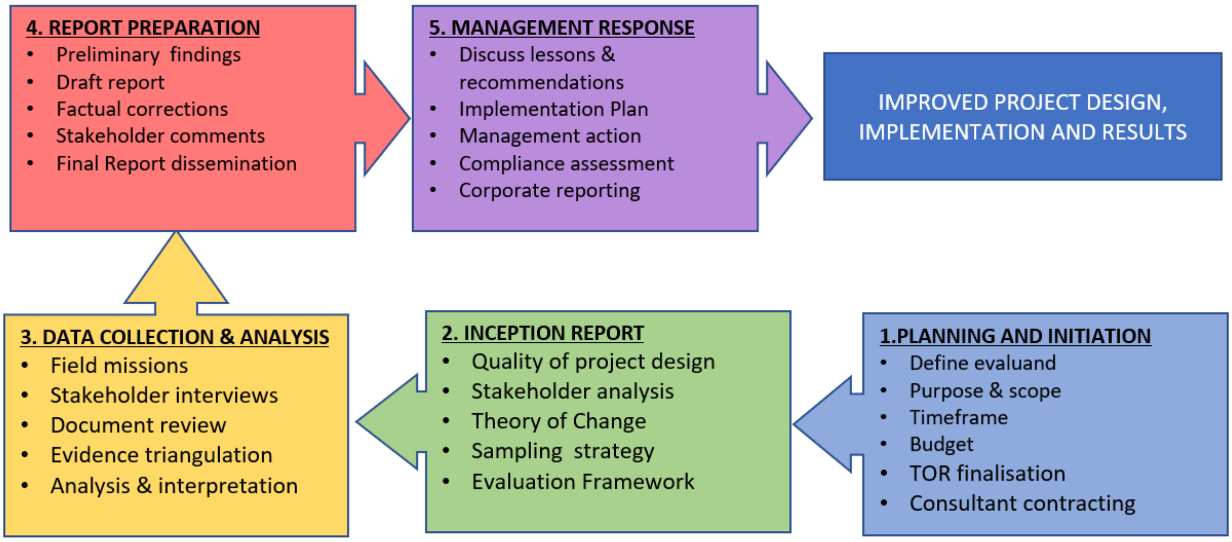

Figure 1: UNEP Review Process

33. Following this conceptual background, the review was delivered using a mixed methods approach. The process generally constituted: 1) review of secondary literature: This entailed a context and content analysis of relevant documents. This served as a source of secondary data (qualitative and quantitative); 2) Data collection: This entailed primary data collection through interviews and consultations, focus group discussions and field visits and; 3) Reporting which was an interactive process led by the reviewer working with the UNEP Task Leader and the PMU.

2.1. Data Collection

2.2. Primary data sources

Sampling strategy

34. The review adopted a purposive sampling approach[16] to identify potential participants in the TR. Purposive sampling allowed the reviewer to select participants by sector, those who possess specific knowledge,

[16] Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples. Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1(1), 77-100.

experiences, participation in the project and roles, gender and location. For instance, stakeholders with direct involvement in climate transparency efforts, such as government officials, NGO representatives, and technical experts were identified. Additionally, this approach enhanced Depth and Richness of Data through selecting information-rich cases that provide detailed and nuanced insights. Finally, this sampling approach was more practical and cost-effective than probability sampling, especially when working with limited resources or hard-to-reach populations. It allowed the reviewer to focus on a smaller, targeted sample rather than attempting to survey a large, random population. With all these considerations, the number of potential respondents was selected from a contact list of stakeholders involved in the project in collaboration with the PMU team during the project inception phase ensuring a broad representation across all sectors influenced by the project while balancing availability, logistical and time constraints. To be included, respondents had to have been involved in the project and therefore, had sufficient understanding of the intervention. Secondly, they needed to have participated in at least 3 project interventions or had key roles such as project steering committee membership, project management unit or consultants. By focusing on these criteria, the evaluator ensured that respondents were fully knowledgeable about the project and therefore, could contribute to the process.

Data collection tools

35. The reviewer adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection. This consisted of interviews, focus group discussions, field visits and observations and a quantitative online survey. Ahead of all interviews or focused group discussions, respondents were briefed on the review to secure their consent. They were also assured about confidentiality and that all information will be anonymized.

36. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with core stakeholders (project staff, government ministries, members of the steering committee, private sector, civil society), face to face during the country visit but also online through Zoom, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp using the data collection tools validated by UNEP during inception. Semi-structured interviews provided a guided approach to data collection using pre-identified questions but also allowed stakeholders to express their views and surface new insights from their lived experiences. Arrangements for the face-to-face interviews were made by the PMU, while online meetings were organized by the reviewer in line with the availability of the potential respondents.

37. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): several FGDs were conducted with stakeholders during the field mission with project staff and officials to discuss the project's contributions to national climate transparency and capacity-building.

Online quantitative perception survey of stakeholders:

38. A total of 30 people took part in the online survey out of 35 contacted through the PMU distribution list, representing an 86% response rate. Out of 30 responses received, all of them consented to participate in the survey. The analysis is therefore based on the 30 complete responses. The online survey enabled the reviewer to obtain quantitative information regarding stakeholders' perspectives regarding the delivery of the project. This enhanced inclusiveness as it enabled those who could not take part in the face-to-face meetings to participate. The survey also included open ended questions, enabling respondents to also surface their views, identify perceived challenges and formulate recommendations for the future. Figure 2 shows the distribution of participants in the online survey. As expected, most respondents were from government or state agencies (40%) considering that this was primarily an institutional strengthening project. The mix of respondents provided a diversity of views and perspectives.

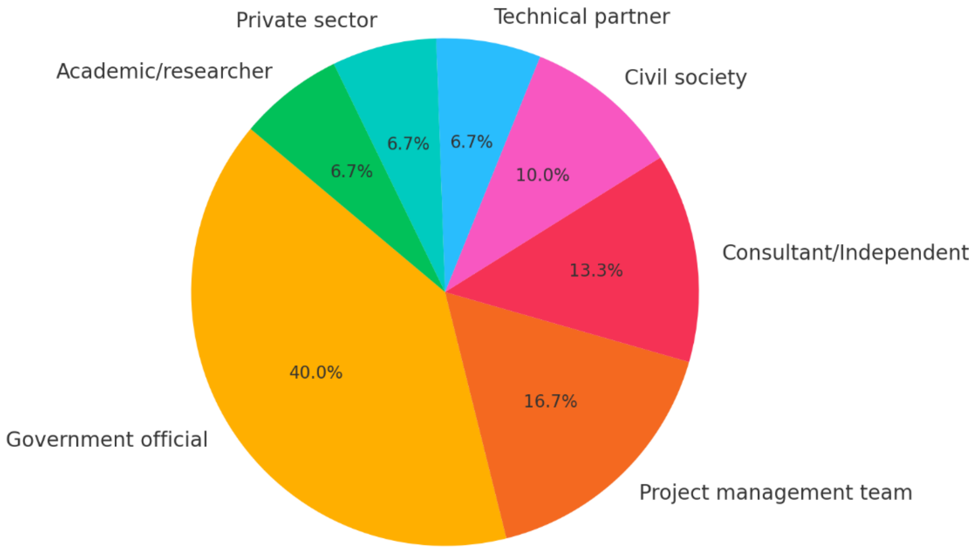

Figure 2: Distribution of participants in the online survey

39. Primary data collection took place from the 14 May to the 30 May 2025. Throughout the data collection process, respect for ethics and human rights perspectives were applied. Verbatim notes were taken for all interviews and focus group discussions ensuring a detailed documentation of discussions throughout. Where interviews happened via zoom, verbatim notes taken were crossed checked with the artificial intelligence generated summaries to ensure completeness. This has ensured that all insights have been documented for analysis. All pictures were taken, and other information gathered after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to relevant UNEG guidelines and UN standards of conduct.

40. A total of 28 persons (% 72 male and 28% female) participated in face to face and virtual data collection out of 30 contacted[17] representing a 93% response rate. The full list of stakeholders consulted is presented in annex III, disaggregated by role, sector and gender. Figure 3 below presents the summary.

[17] Not all those invited to take part in the online survey were invited to take part in the face to face sessions. In some cases there were multiple people from the same agency and a decision was made to select some and not others, this was particularly the case to ensure more female participants were invited. Additional female respondents were also contacted during the field mission who were not initially selected through snowballing and based on their availability to participate

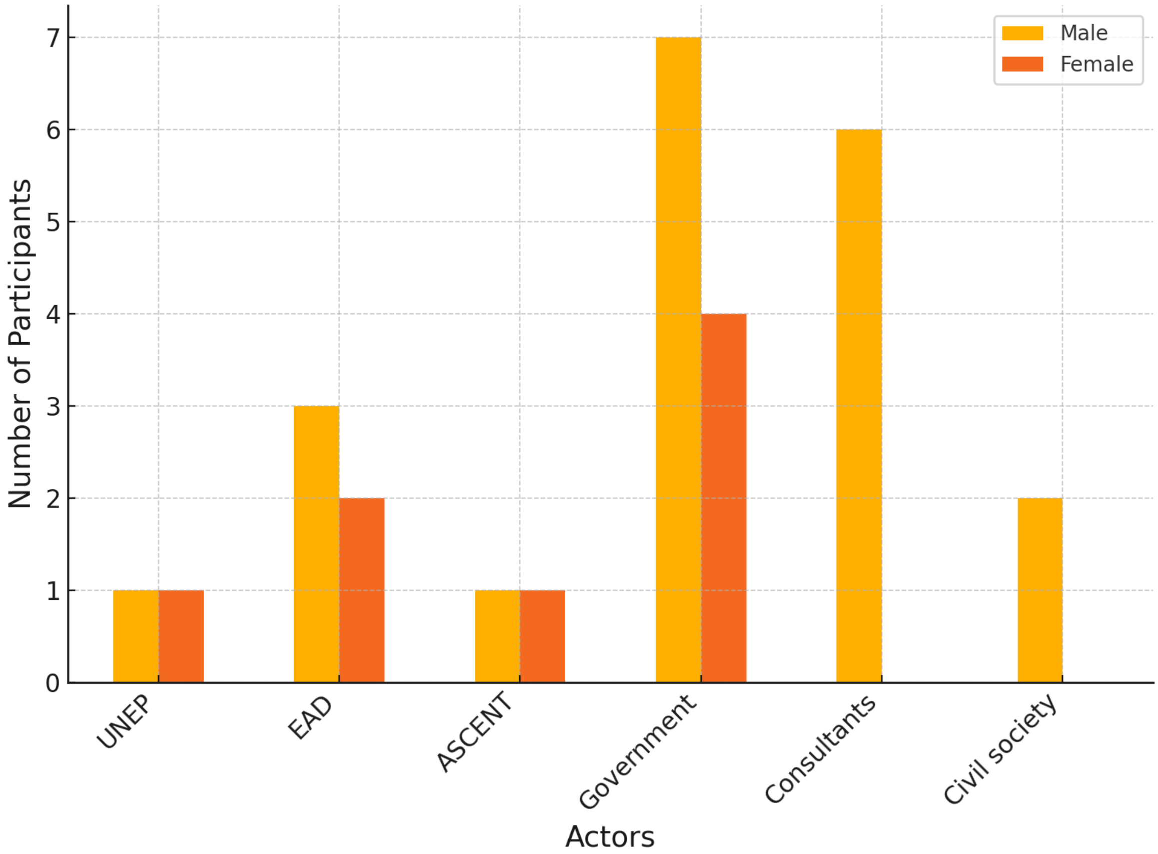

Figure 3: Distribution of participants by gender during primary data collection

41. Government actors accounted for the highest number of participants, including 7 males and 4 females. Consultants followed, all of whom were male. UNEP, EAD, and ASCENT had relatively balanced representation, with each including both male and female participants.

Actions taken to increase response

42. To maximize response rates, interviews and FGDs were scheduled with flexibility, allowing stakeholders to participate at convenient times. Virtual tools, such as video conferencing, were used to engage stakeholders who were unavailable for in-person meetings. Email reminders, phone calls and WhatsApp messages and follow-ups were also employed to ensure participation from key actors. The dynamism of the project manager played the most significant role in mobilizing participants during the field mission but also to encourage participation in the online survey.

Secondary Sources

43. Initial documentary review commenced at inception continued during data collection as additional information became available. A documentary review helps the reviewer to understand the context, objectives, and theoretical framework of the programme. This ensures that the evaluation is grounded in the programme's original intent and context, reducing the risk of misinterpreting its purpose or outcomes[18]. Furthermore, this process provides triangulation of data, which enhances the credibility and validity of review findings[19]. Finally, the review helps identify lessons learned and best practices from the programme's implementation – evidence what worked well, what did not, and why[20]. The documents reviewed included the following:

- Annual and semi-annual project reports
- Project design documents

[18] Patton, M. Q. (2008). Utilization-Focused Evaluation. Sage Publications.
[19] Yin, R. K. (2017). Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods. Sage Publications.
[20] Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2003). Evaluation: A Systematic Approach. Sage Publications.

- Audit reports
- Quarterly and annual financial statements
- Training materials and records
- Documentation related to stakeholder engagement
- Project deliverables
- Relevant peer reviewed and grey literature online
- UNEP evaluation guidelines and directives.

44. This review provided a comprehensive understanding of the project's progress, enabling cross-referencing of data from interviews, FGDs and the online survey. The list of documents consulted throughout the review process is presented under annex IV.

Limitations and mitigation strategy

45. The limitations of the methodology are those of assessments based on qualitative and quantitative tools. Secondary and primary sources whether qualitative or quantitative in nature have their respective challenges. The former, especially in the case of progress reports from which most of the statistical information is drawn, refer to authors who are not independent, in this case internal staff involved in the implementation of the programme, who may therefore develop biases unknowingly or intentionally. The primary sources, on the other hand, even if carefully chosen and inclusive, remain a non-random qualitative sample, and therefore always a questionable representation of the general population. In other words, the extent to which the views of one or more actors are objective and/or significant of what happened in the programme as a whole can always be questioned.
46. Consequently, the review combined field visits, interviews, group discussions, and administration of an online survey of stakeholders and therefore benefit from the advantages of mixed methods. An additional strategy for mitigating the challenges identified lied in the rigour of a systematic triangulation of sources and data. In this respect, at a first level of internal confrontation, the documents are first examined in terms of their intrinsic coherence in order to determine their own quality and the reliability likely to result from them. Then, on the same subject, the different documents available are compared with each other to identify a second level of consistency and possible discrepancies. The primary data are in turn called upon and their indications compared with what emerges from the secondary data, to determine a third level of confidence.
47. Given that the reviewer had a week in country, and the limited number of interventions implemented in the districts, the mission focused on reaching out to stakeholders in the capital city. Fortunately, the reviewer took advantage of a national BTR workshop organized at the Lifestyle Hotel from the 28 to the 29 of May 2025, to meet the most engaged stakeholders in Malawi’s climate efforts. The focus on convenience and access means that the views might not be representative of all regions. However, by comparing and triangulating evidence from the various sources, it mitigates the potential bias. The reviewer has prioritised quality over quantity of stakeholders involved in the review. In this direction, the most critical and priority stakeholders have been included. The high response rates secured demonstrate a high level of engagement and commitment from selected stakeholders. Flexibility was built into data collection including the use of WhatsApp, organising interviews in the evenings to respond to gender needs of respondents.

Data analysis

48. We have used content analysis in the review of secondary data. The reviewer implemented a thorough and systematic approach to verify the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data provided by the project. Accuracy checks and consistency analyses were performed on the data, focusing on key performance indicators and output measures to ensure reliability and internal consistency. Thematic analysis was conducted on the primary data in line with the TR criteria and sub-questions highlighted in the TR matrix while being sufficiently flexible to develop new themes based on emerging issues in the data. We proceeded to triangulate data from multiple sources highlighted in table 1 to reach evidence-based conclusions. Table 1 below highlights the framework for analysis, criteria and key information sources utilised to address the TR questions.

Table 1: Analysis Framework

Criteria	Data sources			
	Documentary review	Interviews/face to face/online	Focus group discussions	Online survey
Strategic relevance	x	x	x	x
Quality of project design	x	x	X	
Nature of external content	x	x	x	x
Effectiveness	x	x	x	x
Financial management	x	x	X (finance team only)	
Efficiency	x	x	x	x
Monitoring and reporting	x	x	x	x
Sustainability	x	x	x	x
Factors affecting performance	x	x	x	x

49. It is important to stress that throughout, the evaluations maintained a gender, HR and inclusiveness perspective. This included the review of the prodoc and project evidence to assess the extent to which gender, inclusiveness and social safeguards were considered during design and implementation. Following the analysis, the reviewer reached out to respondents whose testimonials were considered for inclusion in the report to seek their consent and approval before being identified in the report. The text was shared with them for their input and contributions before inclusion.

50. Overall, by comparing planned versus actual achievements, the reviewer could determine whether the project delivered its outputs and outcomes within the allocated resources and timeframe. Verified data underpinned the review's conclusions, ensuring that findings were based on credible evidence. This enhanced the reliability of the reviewer's judgments regarding the project's success and areas needing improvement and informed the development of actionable recommendations.

51. Review findings have been presented in accessible forms including tables, figures, graphs etc. Quotes and testimonials from respondents have also been included to showcase the lived experiences of beneficiaries. By working closely with the UNEP Task manager and PMU team, we have ensured that the recommendations are co-created and consequently can be fully utilised by the project team and stakeholders for their own decision-making requirements.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

Background

52. Malawi is a Least Developed Country (LDC) and was rated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR, 2007) as one of the most vulnerable countries to the deleterious impacts of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa. This is largely because it is highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Major climate related hazards that wreak havoc in the country are floods and droughts leading to seasonal shortages of food supply as a result of poor harvests and soil erosion. The overall total rainfall received over Malawi shows a high degree of inter- and intra-seasonal variability which has been increasing. The vulnerability of the agriculture sector to climate change means that the Malawian economy as a whole is vulnerable as well, given that 30-40% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from agriculture. In 2015, floods affected 15 out of 28 districts in Malawi. About 1.1 million people were affected, 230,000 displaced, 176 killed and 172 reported missing. The total cost of loss and damage that the Government of Malawi incurred during these severe floods was estimated to be US$ 335 million, and the recovery and reconstruction costs stood at US$ 494 million. Climate change poses a threat to national development with regard to sustainable development and wealth creation goals. Even if there is still uncertainty about its magnitude, the impacts of climate change are likely to slow or even reverse the current pace of development. Extreme weather events resulting from a changing climate that could affect Malawi more frequently include heat waves, floods, cyclones, droughts and forest fires.

53. The challenges associated with risk reduction strategies include: political and institutional challenges in translating early warning into early action; communication challenges related to Early Warning Systems (EWS); conveying useful information in local languages and communicating EWS in remote areas; national-level mistrust of locally collected data, which are perceived to be inflated to leverage more relief resources; the call for improved user-friendliness of early warning information, including at smaller spatial scales; the need for increased capacity in national meteorological centers; and the need for better linkages between early warning, response, and prevention. Malawi signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 10 June 1992 and ratified it on 21st April 1994. Malawi also signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on 26th October 2001. Moreover, Malawi has produced its National Communications (NC), GHG inventories, a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), a Technology Needs Assessment (TNA), an Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) and its first Biennial Update Report (BUR), prepared in 2017 and awaiting national validation for official submission to UNFCCC.

54. Malawi's climate change science and data resources provided an adequate information basis upon which to improve climate transparency by means of this CBIT project. It has been possible to identify gaps and needs in order to promote the implementation of the Transparency Framework in the country. The climate information available at project start was approximately one decade old – it dated back to 2005-2006. More recent data may exist, but it was not captured in the national systems; rather, it still lied in external sources which are not required to share such crucial information with the Government of Malawi. Thus, this CBIT Project sought to integrate existing and future information in the national information systems.

55. At project design, data available in Malawi included:

    - Informational data from scientific studies and environmental conservation entities. This is mostly limited in scope and scattered. It can be integrated;
    - GHG Inventories in Initial National Communication (INC, reported in 2002), Second National Communication (SNC, reported in October 2011) and ongoing TNC to the UNFCCC.

56. There was therefore still large sets of data needed in order to achieve comprehensive monitoring, reporting and verification of GHG emissions in the country. In 2012 and subsequently, the World Bank commissioned technical assistance on the identification of potential opportunities for Malawi's engagement in carbon markets, as well as an institutional assessment of the country's capacity to effectively secure those opportunities. This included mapping of the stakeholders and their comprehension of the subject. This has helped identify sector capacity gaps that have been partly addressed, some of which this CBIT project sought to bridge. This CBIT Project helped assess what previous work regarding GHG capacity-building initiatives with the World Bank and other partners could be leveraged. Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi (PERFORM), 2014-2019, is one of USAID/Malawi's primary activities under the Presidential Global Climate Change Initiative, working with

the Government of Malawi and a wide range of Malawian organizations to mitigate the country's vulnerability to climate change. The program provided support in implementing the national REDD+ strategy/action plan; establishing GHG inventory capacity priorities; providing technical assistance for Malawi's intended nationally determined contribution (INDC). Thus, among the activities in cooperation with USAID, stood the development of a National GHG Inventory System: Malawi established a cross-ministerial network to compile a GHG inventory, led by the environmental affairs Department with MOU's between the different government departments. U.S. climate change experts worked with Malawi's Environmental Affairs Department to improve the quality of GHG inventory data and reporting. Under PERFORM, data collection protocols and computerized National GHG management systems were developed, and Ministries, Departments and key sectors have designated their focal points. The National GHG Management System was finalized under such cooperation, and results were officially launched on 4th April 2019. It, therefore, set a basis for inventory management upon which this CBIT project could build. All work resulting from this cooperation with the US were expected to be leveraged for this CBIT Project, providing the basis for future work on GHG inventories.

57. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) requires all Parties to regularly prepare and submit national inventories of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removals not controlled by the Montreal Protocol. For non-Annex I (NAI) Parties mainly developing countries—reporting frequency is determined by the submission of National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs). Since 2010, the reporting obligations for NAI countries have gradually strengthened. These countries are now expected to submit NCs every four years and Biennial Update Reports (BURs) every two years, including updated GHG inventories. In line with UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16, developing countries are effectively required to compile and report GHG inventories biennially.

58. Within the IPCC framework, countries are also expected to facilitate data sharing and cooperation among major emitting sectors and relevant institutions, including government, private sector, and civil society. Effective intersectoral collaboration depends on shared principles, established best practices, and a clear understanding of challenges and responsibilities. Importantly, data-sharing mechanisms must be governed by robust data protection protocols to ensure the privacy and security of institutional and individual information.

Malawi's National Commitments

59. Malawi has developed a broad suite of policies and legal instruments to address climate change, anchored in the 1995 Constitution and Vision 2020. Key frameworks include the National Environmental Action Plan (1994), National Environmental Policy (2004), and the Environmental Management Act (2017). More recent policy instruments—the National Climate Change Management Policy, Forestry Policy, and Water Policy—offer explicit mandates on GHG mitigation and climate adaptation.

60. The 2016 Climate Change Management Policy outlines a national objective to "promote climate change adaptation and mitigation for sustainable livelihoods," including a commitment to manage net GHG emissions. The Environmental Management Act (2017) empowers the government to set and enforce environmental standards, including for GHG emissions.

61. In 2015, Malawi submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), which became the official Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2017 upon ratification, and further revised in 2021. Supported by development partners, the NDC builds on earlier efforts such as the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), National Communications, and national development strategies like the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III). The NDC sets out long-term goals (2015–2040) for emissions reductions across sectors, reflecting Malawi's national circumstances and capacity constraints.

62. Malawi also developed a NAMA in 2015 to demonstrate commitment to low-emissions development. Supported by the UNDP and coordinated by EAD, this NAMA covers agriculture, forestry, energy, transport, and waste management, drawing on prior national communications and stakeholder consultations.

Existing GHG Data Sharing Arrangements before CBIT project

63. GHG data reporting in Malawi has lacked a unified and consistent framework. Efforts have varied across institutions and over time, often driven by project-specific needs or donor support. This has resulted in fragmented practices and inconsistent data quality. GHG data collection is led by the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), with contributions from District Councils, development partners, private sector actors, and civil society. District Environmental Subcommittees compile and transmit local data to the EAD. However, capacity constraints, particularly human resources and technical infrastructure impede consistent data quality and reporting.

64. Two primary data collection models are in use: (1) routine data gathered through departmental mandates, and (2) data collected upon request under informal agreements. Most institutions lack dedicated MRV systems and rely on ad hoc processes. For instance, EAD supports other departments (e.g., Crops and Land Resources) in data collection only when specifically requested. Data is often collected manually using paper forms, then entered into computers. This creates risks of data loss from hardware failure or theft. In some departments, such as Forestry, data is collected digitally via satellite imagery but stored on unsecured local devices due to a lack of centralized servers.

65. Data is typically shared as summarized reports during meetings or dissemination events, not through real-time digital platforms. Capacity to develop country-specific emission factors, compile comprehensive inventories, and track climate support is limited. Institutional knowledge is also vulnerable due to staff turnover and lack of documentation. In sectors such as transport and energy, data quality remains especially weak. To address these issues, Malawi needed significant investment in staff training, systems development, and sustainable financing to meet its obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). Strengthening national GHG data systems is critical to meeting transparency requirements under the Paris Agreement and advancing low-carbon development goals.

B. Objectives and components

66. The project was structured around 3 outcomes:

Outcome 1: Malawi's institutions effectively collaborate to track and report Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, climate actions and support needed and received

- Output 1.1: Institutional arrangement and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms established and formalized for data management activities
- Output 1.2: Country-specific emission factors and activity data for Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU), energy, industry, transport and waste sectors developed and made accessible to stakeholders
- Output 1.3: Data collection and sharing protocols and regulations including linkages between hubs customized in line with the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines and made available to institutions

Outcome 2: Stakeholders use the data management platform to support the MRV system

- Output 2.1: A data management platform customized to the country's circumstances and operationalized to support the MRV system.
- Output 2.2: Sector data collection and reporting tools for GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received customized and made available to relevant stakeholders.
- Output 2.3: The climate transparency unit members and other relevant stakeholders trained on the effective management and use of the data platform to track NDC implementation, GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received
- Output 2.4: Data from the GHG inventory and MRV system aggregated, entered into the platform and made publicly available.

Outcome 3. The climate transparency unit, relevant sector institutions and stakeholders perform their roles in the MRV system on a continuous basis.

- Output 3.1. Field data teams from the key sectors (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste) assigned and trained in data management.
- Output 3.2. Knowledge of relevant national stakeholders on the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement and their respective roles enhanced
- Output 3.3. Best practices on transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement, including gender mainstreaming, shared and scaled up through peer-exchange programs for relevant stakeholders via South-South interactions and the CBIT Global Coordination Platform.

C. Stakeholders

67. The CBIT Malawi project is built around a multi-stakeholder framework that draws together a diverse range of actors with differentiated responsibilities. The project's central objective establishing an MRV system aligned with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement necessitates contributions from government, academic institutions, civil society, the private sector, and international partners. The following section presents the stakeholders identified during project design.

Environmental Affairs Department (EAD)

68. At the heart of the project is the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) within the Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Wildlife, which acts as the project's executing agency. EAD is responsible for establishing and hosting the Climate Transparency Unit, the operational anchor of the MRV system. The department leads the coordination of data flows between sectors, facilitates the development of national reporting capacities, and ensures the system's compliance with ETF requirements. The Climate Transparency Unit is also charged with formalizing institutional arrangements and legal frameworks to ensure sustainability and legitimacy of the system.

Sectoral Ministries and Government Departments

69. A wide array of sectoral ministries play an essential role as data custodians and collaborators in the MRV system. These include the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Transport and Public Works, and the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS). These ministries are each tasked with hosting sector-specific data hubs, staffed by appointed focal points. These focal points are responsible for collecting, processing, and submitting activity data and GHG emissions information relevant to their sectors. The Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development also has a cross-cutting role, particularly in reporting climate finance flows and integrating MRV data into national development planning processes.

70. Each ministry brings its own institutional experience and data practices, and one of the project's aims is to harmonize these through standardized protocols and cross-sectoral coordination. The MRV system is designed to create formalized lines of responsibility among ministries, improve internal data governance, and support Malawi's efforts in meeting its NDC targets.

National Statistics Office (NSO)

71. The National Statistics Office (NSO) is a key player in ensuring data harmonization and standardization. While not directly responsible for primary data collection in this project, the NSO contributes technical support in aligning MRV data with national statistical systems. This is crucial for ensuring that climate data meets standards of consistency, reliability, and national comparability.

Academic and Research Institutions

72. Institutions such as the University of Malawi of Science and Technology, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences) and independent research think tanks play a critical technical support role. Research Institutions like the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Climate Systems Analysis Group (CSAG) are also proposed as possible sources of information. Academic and research structures are involved in generating country-specific emission factors, an essential requirement for improving the accuracy of GHG inventories. These institutions are also tasked with reviewing and validating data collection methodologies, developing training materials, and facilitating capacity-building sessions. Their involvement not only builds national technical expertise but also links scientific research with policy implementation.

Private Sector Actors

73. The private sector is represented by entities such as Malawi Telecommunications Limited (MTL), Winroc International, and Tetra Tech. Their role is primarily as providers of sectoral data particularly in the energy, industry, and ICT sectors and users of the MRV platform. These companies are expected to share operational and emissions data and to integrate MRV compliance into their reporting practices. The project also aims to sensitize private sector actors to the benefits of climate transparency, including improved corporate environmental responsibility and access to green finance. There was limited evidence of their engagement during implementation, though Portland Cement was involved.

Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations

74. Civil society groups and NGOs, including the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA), LEAD, the Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC), and international actors like Oxfam, ActionAid, and WWF,

are identified in the project document as having a dual role in the project. On one hand, they act as intermediaries between local communities and the national system, helping to gather and validate data at the grassroots level. On the other, they serve as advocates for inclusive, equitable, and gender-sensitive approaches to climate governance. These organizations are expected to participate in training, peer exchanges, and policy dialogues, and their presence helps reinforce public accountability and stakeholder legitimacy.

Local Communities and Field Data Teams

75. Lastly, local communities and assigned field data teams are vital for ground-truthing emissions data and gathering activity-level information, particularly in the AFOLU, waste, and energy sectors. These teams, based within district-level institutions or extension services, receive specialized training and support to ensure that data quality is maintained. The project emphasizes the importance of community engagement not just for data collection but for broader transparency and inclusion goals. In practice, this project was limited to sectoral actors at the level of the capital city.

Marginalized Groups (Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities)

76. The design stage acknowledged the importance of marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, as critical stakeholders for ensuring equitable and inclusive outcomes. During implementation, efforts were made to include marginalized groups through gender-balanced workshops and targeted capacity-building programs. A gender action plan was developed to mainstream gender and track women's engagement. As of 2024, the project reported 40% participation of women in project activities, which is slightly shy of the target 50%. However, this participation remained at high level during implementation as discussed under the section on performance factors.

Africa Sustainability Center (ASCENT)

77. ASCENT is a regional Think Tank with experience of designing and implementing MRV systems. ASCENT provided support to the development of the MRV system for Malawi. It provided support to EAD in project execution and especially on technical matters such as specialized training. It had a significant role in delivering key aspects of components 1 and 2 of the project.

UNEP

78. At the design stage, UNEP played a pivotal role in providing technical and financial support for the CBIT project development Their expertise guided the project's design, ensuring alignment with international standards, including the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement. Their continued involvement and technical guidance during implementation were instrumental in achieving the project's objectives and strengthening institutional transparency mechanisms.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

79. The project was financed through the 7th Global Environment Facility (GEF) Operational Programme as a Medium-Sized Project and forms part of the GEF Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Trust Fund. As mentioned earlier, the project was approved by the UNEP Project Approval Group on 5 May 2021 and by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Chief Executive Officer on the 22 January 2021. The agreement between the parties was expected to remain in force until 30 June 2025. The actual start date was 7 May 2021 with operational completion slated for the 31 December 2024.

80. In terms of institutional framing, Malawi signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 10 June 1992 and ratified it on 21st April 1994. Malawi also signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on 26th October 2001. Moreover, Malawi produced its Third National Communications (TNC)[21], first Biennial Update Report (BUR)[22], and revised its 2015 Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)[23]. The 2021 NDCs embody efforts by countries that are Party to the Paris Agreement to put in place measures to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The NDC has outlined Malawi's climate change priorities for the period from 2020 - 2040 and has provided concrete strategies for addressing the causes of climate change and responding to the adverse effects and impacts in line with provisions established under the Paris Agreement. The CBIT project is fully aligned. In fact, the revised 2021 NDCs, acknowledge the contribution

[21] The Third National Communication Of the Republic of Malawi To the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources, Lilongwe, Malawi, January, 2021.

[22] MALAWI'S FIRST BIENNIAL UPDATE REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (CoP) OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) MINISTRY OF FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, LILONGWE, MALAWI NOVEMBER, 2021.

[23] Republic of Malawi (2021) Revised Nationally Determined Contributions, Malawi%20Updated%20NDC%20July%202021%20submitted.pdf

of the CBIT project in strengthening the National Climate Transparency Framework (page 90). As part of the "Global capacity-building towards enhanced transparency in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector", the Malawi CBIT project benefits from best practices and lessons learnt at regional and international levels. The government identifies climate change as a national priority in its Malawi 2063 (MW2063)[24] vision, and consequently this project benefits from this wider national goals. In fact, the MW2063 emphasises the need for human capacity development, environmental sustainability and effective governance and institutions as key enablers for achieving its goals.

81. Malawi appointed UNEP as the GEF Implementing Agency for this CBIT project. The Executing Agency for the CBIT project was the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) (Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Wildlife). The project activities cut across several sectors and state departments, which are agriculture, environment, energy, water and trade & industry, among others. The following management structure was established to leverage the multistakeholder expertise across the various departments. The implementation structure is illustrated in the organogram below:

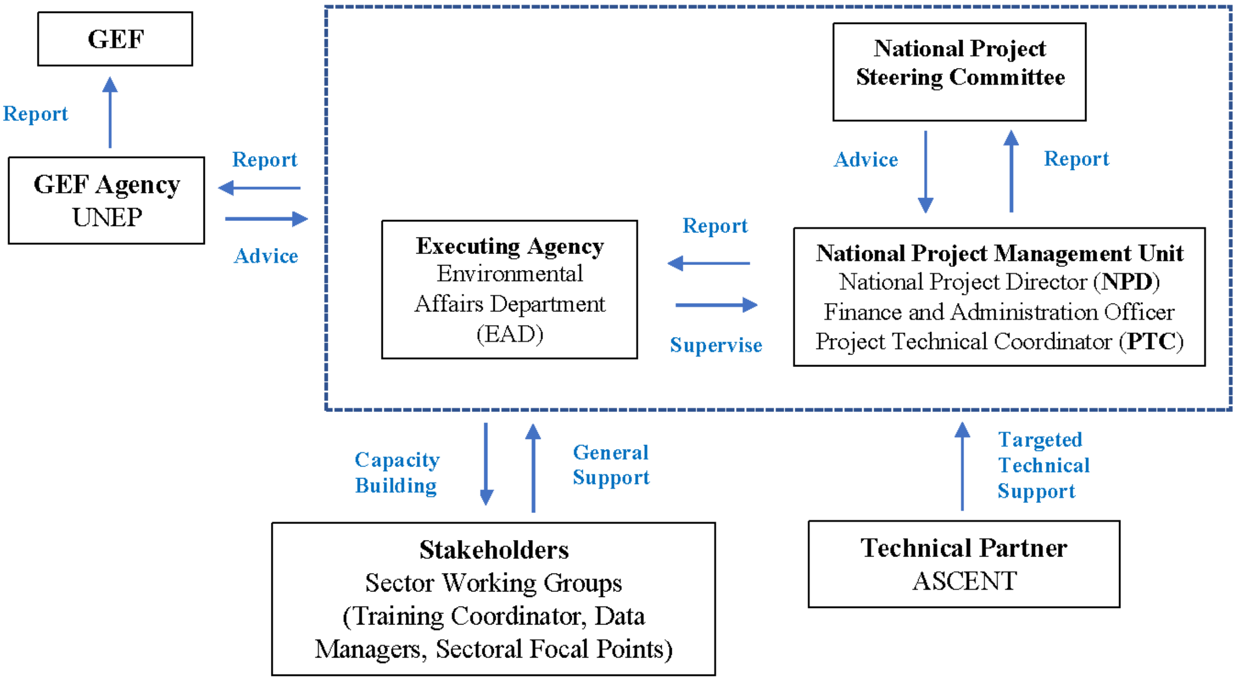

Figure 4: Organigram of the Project with key project key stakeholders

82. The Malawi Climate Transparency Framework Project (MCTFP) was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) serving as the GEF Implementing Agency. UNEP provided overall project supervision, ensuring alignment with GEF and UNEP standards, including oversight of financial disbursement, progress reporting, and coordination of technical support. This included working with ASCENT, the project's technical partner, to develop the online MRV platform, as well as sectoral guidelines and data collection tools that underpin Malawi's national MRV system.

83. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change served as the Executing Agency. EAD led all aspects of day-to-day project implementation, coordination, monitoring, and reporting. It played a central role in establishing institutional arrangements for Malawi's national climate transparency system, ensuring inter-sectoral coordination, managing emissions data, and supporting the development of emissions factors and MRV protocols. EAD also coordinated with other government departments, research institutions, and consultants—most notably overseeing contracting and supervision of ASCENT and national consultants. Contributions from EAD, such as office space, staff time, vehicles, and logistical support, amounted to USD 200,000 in co-financing, significantly enhancing cost-effectiveness. The department's procurement and financial management units ensured compliance with Malawi's Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Act and internal financial procedures.

[24] National Planning Commission (2020) Malawi 2063, *Transforming Our Nation,* MW2063-VISION-FINAL-VERSION.pdf

84. To provide strategic oversight, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established comprising 16 members from key government ministries, academia, civil society, the private sector, and UNEP. The PSC was chaired by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change, while the National Statistics Office (NSO) and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) served as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. The Project Technical Coordinator served as the PSC Secretary. The election of the Chair and Vice Chair was conducted democratically, including virtual votes using the MS Teams hand-raising tool. The Vice Chair, speaking on behalf of both, pledged the PSC's commitment to effective oversight.

85. The first PSC meeting took place on 24 February 2022 at the Ministry's headquarters in Lilongwe, using a hybrid format (7 participants online and 7 in person). A total of 14 members participated, with 4 women and 10 men, representing a 29% female participation rate. During this inaugural meeting, members were briefed on the project's scope and endorsed the 2021/2022 work plan. The PSC met five times during the project lifecycle, providing critical guidance and approving key deliverables.

86. The Project Management Unit (PMU) was hosted within EAD and comprised the Project Technical Coordinator (PTC), the Finance and Administrative Officer (FAO), and a designated EAD desk officer to support technical delivery and institutional alignment. The PTC and FAO were recruited as consultants, while the desk officer played a vital role in maintaining project continuity and institutional memory—an approach EAD favours given its limited technical staff. The PMU managed daily operations, including procurement, reporting, budgeting, and coordinating implementation activities across sectors. The PMU worked in close collaboration with technical staff from EAD, including ICT officers and departmental directors, to provide responsive support during rollout. This open internal coordination facilitated timely drafting of project reports, preparation of financial statements, and communication with UNEP and other partners. Nevertheless, delays in the recruitment of the PTC and FAO in the initial phases, coupled with their resignation toward the project's closure, created disruptions in final implementation and reporting.

87. Further details on stakeholder engagement and cooperation are provided in Section I3, which outlines the depth and breadth of participation throughout the project, including roles of line ministries, research institutions, academia, civil society, and development partners.

E. Changes in design during implementation

88. The CBIT Malawi project underwent a number of adjustments during implementation, though no major formal redesigns of scope or outcomes were recorded. However, there were notable changes in activity sequencing, implementation timing, and resource management to accommodate emerging operational realities.

Early Implementation and Start-up Adjustments (2021–2022):

89. The project experienced a delayed start due to administrative and logistical factors. As recorded in the Inception Workshop Report (February 2022), the project officially launched with its first Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting held on 24 February 2022, although implementation activities had initially been scheduled to commence earlier. The project began with hybrid meetings to accommodate stakeholders in different locations. The Inception Report does not attribute delays to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2022 PIR explicitly states that COVID-19 was a low-risk factor with no significant impact on implementation.

Procurement and Human Resource Adjustments (2022–2024):

90. Throughout implementation, the project faced constraints related to human resource capacity and procurement processes. As reported in PSC minutes and the 2023 PIR, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) had a small procurement team, with only two officers managing all procurements under the project. This limited capacity contributed to periodic delays in contracting consultants and acquiring technical services. Additionally, there were staffing challenges in 2024. According to primary data and project records, both the Project Technical Coordinator and Finance and Administration Officer resigned in the final year of implementation. Their departure led to the appointment of a desk officer and principal accountant to temporarily carry out project-related functions, which slowed the pace of activity completion and financial closure.

Budget Revisions and Currency Volatility (2023–2024):

91. The 2023 PIR introduced the first recorded mention of foreign exchange (forex) challenges. The report cited delays in settling payments to the technical partners ASCENT due to limited access to forex, which affected timely service delivery and procurement of technical services. These constraints contributed to budget revisions in 2024, as confirmed by the 2024 PIR and interviews with UNEP and EAD teams. The budget adjustments were made to accommodate delays in implementation.

92. Termination of Some Consultancy Contracts (2024):

93. During the final year, management also reported the termination of contracts for certain consultants who had failed to complete deliverables on time such as for delivery of agriculture, energy and transport sector emissions factors. EAD officials mention that these cases have been escalated for potential blacklisting, though this did not necessitate a change in project design.

94. While the project remained consistent with its original outcomes and objective, operational adjustments were required to respond to administrative constraints, staffing changes, and forex availability. These changes did not alter the project's scope or outputs, but affected the sequencing and delivery timelines of several activities, particularly in the second half of implementation.

F. Project financing

95. The CBIT project in Malawi was financed by the GEF with a total grant allocation of USD 1,056,000. The project also secured co-financing of USD 150,000, primarily in the form of in-kind contributions from the executing agency, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) of Malawi. These contributions included office space, vehicles, staff time, and administrative support. At the time of the terminal review all co-financing was effectively mobilised, documented and reported.

96. The project received CEO Endorsement on 22 January 2021, and UNEP formally approved the project through its internal decision-making process on 5 May 2021. Implementation formally commenced shortly thereafter, with the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) entering into force on 7 May 2021. The first disbursement of funds, amounting to USD 300, 000 on the 25 June 2021, marked the operational launch of financial activities. The Inception Workshop was convened on 22 July 2021, providing a platform to formally introduce the project to stakeholders, agree on initial workplans, and clarify roles and responsibilities among implementing partners and technical collaborators.

97. By the end of 31 December 2024, the project had received a total disbursement of USD 945,000[25], representing approximately 89.5% of the approved GEF funding. As of the same date, total expenditure stood at USD 845,967, accounting for roughly 80% of the total grant allocation. This increased to USD 962,642 by the end of May 2025, after some unliquidated commitments were paid, as seen in table below. Table 2 shows some remaining unspent funds. These balances are likely linked to implementation delays, staff turnover, and timing differences in disbursement versus expenditure flows, particularly in the final year.

Table 2: Budget and level of expenditure per component over project period

Project component	**Total budget (rev)**	**Actual expenditures**	**Balance**
Component 1	397,000.00	382,074.54	14,925.46
Component 2	331,300.00	330,631.34	668.66
Component 3	171,949.00	159,983.00	11,966.00
M&E	14,751.00	11,964.46	2,787.03
PMC	96,000.00	77,989.13	18,010.87
Total	**1,011,000.00**	**962,642.47**	**48,358.02**

Source: EAD Final Financial Statement of Accounts 2025

[25] Excludes an allocation of USD 45,000 for the terminal review

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

98. The CBIT Malawi project was conceived at a time when the country faced a complex set of institutional, technical, and systemic challenges in meeting its transparency obligations under the Paris Agreement. At the heart of these challenges was the absence of a coherent, nationally owned Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system, compounded by a lack of country-specific emission factors, fragmented and uncoordinated data systems, and a weak culture of data sharing across ministries and agencies. Many institutions operated in silos, lacking clear mandates, shared protocols, or the technical capacity to contribute meaningfully to climate transparency. These constraints were further exacerbated by limited awareness of the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) and its implications for national planning, climate finance, and international reporting.

99. The project's theory of change sought to address these barriers through three interlinked pathways: (1) establishing a well-coordinated institutional and legal framework for ETF implementation; (2) developing technical tools and methodologies for MRV; and (3) enhancing national capacities through targeted training and stakeholder engagement. These pathways were underpinned by the expectation that, once developed and institutionalised, national actors would adopt and sustain ETF-aligned practices. The underlying assumptions were that institutions would be motivated and politically supported, that cross-sectoral collaboration would be feasible, and that financial and human resources would be sufficient to support new mandates.

100. Implementation of the first pathway focused on strengthening institutional coordination and leadership. This was realised through the establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within EAD, and the designation of focal points and data hubs in sectoral ministries. These efforts assumed that institutional mandates would be formalised through legal agreements; however, while the process of developing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) clarified roles and promoted dialogue, the failure to finalise and sign them indicated the fragility of inter-agency commitment without formal enforcement. The Project Steering Committee, chaired by the National Statistics Office and co-chaired by LUANAR, played an instrumental role in strategic oversight and multi-stakeholder coordination. The assumption that institutional leadership would remain stable largely held, but varying capacities across institutions limited consistent engagement.

101. The second pathway centred on the development of practical tools, particularly the national MRV system and the creation of country-specific emission factors across priority sectors. The project assumed that technical partners like ASCENT would be able to operate without interruption. However, initial economic risks in the form of forex constraints represented a bottleneck. In practice, foreign exchange liquidity issues significantly delayed fund transfers, particularly affecting ASCENT's mobilisation and technical delivery. Despite these disruptions, the tools were eventually delivered and tested albeit late. Universities and technical institutions participated actively in the emission factors process, fulfilling the assumption that national research bodies would have both interest and capacity to contribute. However, challenges with completion of some emissions factors in agriculture, energy and transport, revealed weaknesses in local technical readiness and capacities, highlighting the need for ongoing capacity development and links to international and regional best practices.

102. The third pathway aimed to build capacity and promote adoption of these tools. This was addressed through a series of stakeholder trainings, validation workshops, and demonstration sessions, particularly in 2024 and 2025. Gender considerations were integrated into participant targeting throughout implementation. The assumption that inclusive participation would lead to meaningful integration of gender perspectives and safeguards in tool development held, despite the project slightly missing its parity targets.

103. The project also assumed that stakeholder institutions would adopt and integrate the new tools into routine workflows, contingent on usability, institutional buy-in, and alignment with policy priorities. While many stakeholders were trained and engaged in piloting the tools, the uptake remains partial. Subnational governments and local councils, particularly planning staff were not systematically integrated, and engagement with parallel national climate initiatives was limited. The assumption that a shared online platform would drive institutional coherence and information sharing also encountered barriers, including limited interoperability with government systems and unclear custodianship of the data infrastructure.

104. Nevertheless, the creation of the CTU and data hubs, coupled with capacity-building and increased participation in global forums such as the CBIT coordination meetings and the UNFCCC COPs, enhanced national ownership and visibility. Institutions that had previously worked in isolation began to co-create tools and processes, and national actors started engaging with the ETF not just as a reporting obligation but as a framework for strategic planning and accountability. While not all planned outputs were delivered to full scale and adoption remains uneven, the pathways mapped in the theory of change remain relevant. The foundations laid, in terms of institutional structures, technical assets, and stakeholder relationships represent meaningful

progress. Realising their full potential will require deliberate follow-up investments, stronger linkages with national climate policy mechanisms, and a continued focus on inclusion, ownership, and coherence. Table 3 highlights further areas where the project's horizontal logic could have been further enhanced. The ToC diagramme can be found in figure 5 below.

Table 3: Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT	Same	
INTERMEDIATE STATES	Same	
PROJECT OUTCOMES	Same	
Data collecting and sharing protocols and regulations (in line with recent IPCC guidelines) are adopted by key institutions	Proposed indicator target: • Share of targeted institutions that have adopted data collection and sharing protocols a nd regulations	Baseline stated as 0: Target: Yes. This is insufficient to assess progress
OUTPUTS 1.1. Institutional arrangement and inter-ministerial coordination mechanism established and formalized for data management activities 1.2. Country-specific emission factors and activity data for Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU), energy, industry, transport and waste sectors developed and made accessible to stakeholders 1.3. Data collection and sharing protocols and regulations including linkages between hubs customized in line with the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines and made available to institutions	Proposed indicators b) # of MoUs/agreements with institutional partners c) Coordination mechanism d) # of persons reached with country specific emissions factors and activity data disaggregated by gender and sector e) # of data sharing protocols and hubs established f) % of women appointed as Focal point	Project's result framework does not include output level indicators. The gender action plan provides additional indicators, but these could have all been consolidated into the main project logframe
2.1. A data management platform customized to the country's circumstances and operationalized to support the MRV system. 2.2. Sector data collection and reporting tools for GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received customized and made available to relevant stakeholders. 2.3. The climate transparency unit members and other relevant stakeholders trained on the effective management and use of the data platform to track NDC implementation, GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received 2.4. Data from the GHG inventory and MRV system aggregated, entered into the platform and made publicly available.	Proposed indicators: g) Data management platform created h) # of tools for data collection and reporting including gender aspects i) # trained disaggregated by gender and sector; j) # of stakeholders reached with data collection and reporting tools disaggregated by sector and gender k) # of views or downloads from MRV system	Project's result framework does not include output level indicators. The gender action plan provides additional indicators, but these could have all been consolidated into the main project logframe
3.1. Field data teams from the key sectors (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste) assigned and trained in data management. 3.2. Knowledge of relevant national stakeholders on the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement and their respective roles enhanced 3.3. Best practices on transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement, including gender mainstreaming,	Proposed indicators – including from gender action plan • # of field data teams per sector • % of women in assigned field data teams • Number trained disaggregated by gendert	Project's result framework does not include output level indicators. The gender action plan provides additional indicators, but these could have all been consolidated into the main project logframe

shared and scaled up through peer-exchange programs for relevant stakeholders via South-South interactions and the CBIT Global Coordination Platform.	• % of women people participating in sensitization workshops • # of stakeholders participating in peer to peer learning events disaggregated by sector and gender • # participating in CBIT Global Coordination Platform initiatives by sector and gender	

ToC Diagram

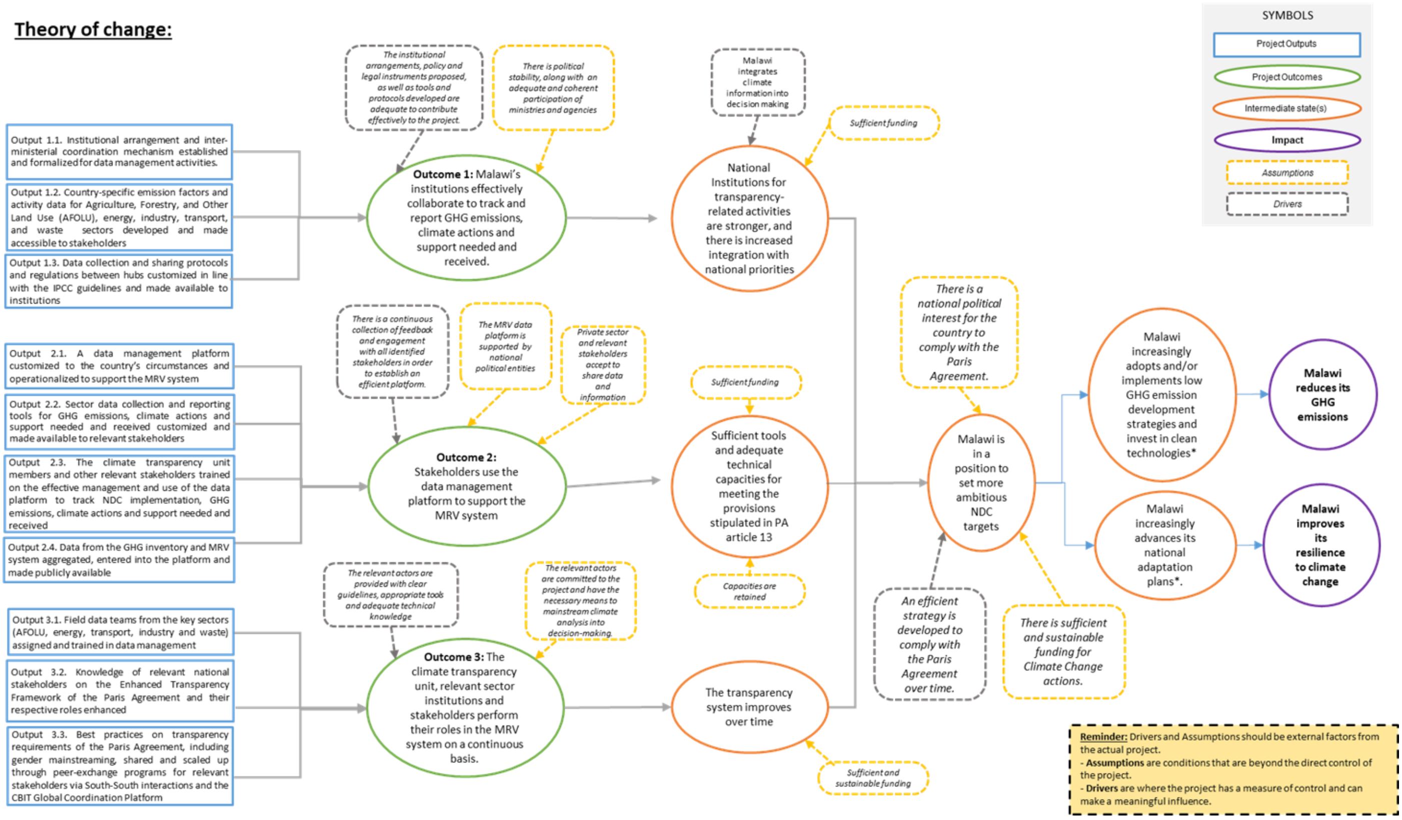

Figure 5: ToC at Review

V. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy[26] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

Alignment with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2025)

105. The CBIT Malawi project is well aligned with the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022–2025, particularly under the Strategic Objective 1: Climate Stability, which seeks to support countries in transitioning to low-emission development pathways and enhancing institutional capacity to implement the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement. The MTS outlines three main outcomes under this objective, and the CBIT Malawi project contributed to all three.

106. Under Outcome C (adoption of transparency arrangements), the project directly supported the establishment of a functional national MRV system, formal institutional coordination mechanisms, sector-specific emission factors, and a web-based platform for climate data collection and reporting. This system enables Malawi to track GHG emissions and monitor progress on its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in compliance with the Paris Agreement.

107. In addition to Outcome C, the project contributed to Outcome A (decarbonization and resilience pathways) and Outcome B (capacity development for climate finance and technologies). It did so by training institutional actors on GHG inventory development and NDC tracking, and by strengthening national knowledge and tools for emissions estimation across sectors such as AFOLU, energy, transport, and industry.

108. The project also reflected the MTS emphasis on science-policy integration, by generating evidence (e.g. peer-reviewed emission factors) and establishing protocols that link scientific data with decision-making. The online platform, once fully operationalized, is intended to provide real-time, harmonized data for climate policy planning across government agencies.

Alignment with UNEP's Programme of Work (PoW 2022–2023)

109. The project falls under the Climate Action subprogramme of the UNEP PoW 2022–2023 and contributes specifically to Outcome 1C, with Indicator (iii): "Number of national, subnational and private-sector actors reporting under the enhanced transparency arrangements of the Paris Agreement with UNEP support" (UNEP, 2022). The project supported this indicator by strengthening the institutional architecture and capacity necessary for climate transparency in Malawi, resulting in the training of 168 direct beneficiaries (71 women and 97 men) by project closure.

110. UNEP's PoW also emphasises national capacity development, data and knowledge systems, and stakeholder engagement. The CBIT Malawi project contributed to these areas by:

- Establishing institutional arrangements, including a Project Steering Committee co-chaired by the National Statistical Office and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources;
- Developing and testing a user-oriented data platform to manage GHG emissions, climate action, and finance information;
- Delivering targeted training to sector focal points and data teams in GHG inventory development, MRV system operations, and emissions projections.
- These efforts reflect the PoW's emphasis on providing tools and frameworks for sustainable climate action while promoting integration of environmental data into national planning processes.

Contribution to UNEP's Strategic Priorities

111. The project made a direct contribution to UNEP's strategic priority of addressing climate change by enabling Malawi to implement the Enhanced Transparency Framework, which is a core requirement under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. It also advanced environmental governance, another UNEP strategic priority, by developing

[26] 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.

institutional coordination mechanisms, data-sharing protocols, and legal instruments that clarify the roles and responsibilities of key ministries and agencies.

112. This contribution was achieved through Component 1 of the project, which formalised the MRV governance structure, and through Component 2, which operationalized the digital infrastructure for climate data collection and management. Furthermore, the project enhanced institutional readiness for sustainable development, by supporting Malawi's capacity to measure and report on progress under SDG 13 (Climate Action) and enabling cross-sectoral integration of climate data into national policies.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

113. UNEP's MTS and PoW both stress the importance of gender equality and social inclusion. The CBIT Malawi project included gender considerations in its design, with a target of 50 percent female participation in training and institutional activities. At closure, the project had reached 168 direct beneficiaries, with women representing 42 percent (71 of 168), a shortfall from the target but a meaningful level of engagement nonetheless. The funding proposal at CEO endorsement acknowledged that the likely outcome was to achieve 40% target. In that way, the project did well to achieve 42%.

114. Women participated in technical trainings, steering committee discussions, and data system development workshops. Gender indicators were tracked in project reporting, and UNEP's task managers noted that the project helped to integrate gender awareness into technical domains such as emissions estimation and MRV operations (UNEP, 2024b). However, the project acknowledged the persistent structural and professional gaps that limited equal participation in certain sectors, particularly energy and industry.

115. There is limited evidence of deliberate engagement with youth, Indigenous groups, or people with disabilities, although future NDC implementation and BTR processes may present opportunities to expand inclusion through the MRV platform and coordination structures established during the project.

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

Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities

Alignment with GEF Focal Area Objectives

116. At the global funder level, the CBIT Malawi project was directly aligned with the transparency pillar of the GEF's climate change mitigation strategy. The GEF CBIT framework identifies key areas of support for transparency systems in developing countries, including:

- Strengthening national institutional arrangements for climate data governance and reporting;
- Developing GHG inventory systems and MRV frameworks;
- Enhancing sector-specific methodologies and data protocols;
- Building sustained human and institutional capacity for transparency.

117. The CBIT Malawi project addressed all four of these objectives. Notably, the project developed customised sectoral emission factors for the agriculture, forestry, and energy sectors; established an integrated digital MRV system that enables structured data collection, storage, and analysis; and supported the formalisation of institutional roles for national reporting to the UNFCCC. These contributions are foundational to the country's ability to meet Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) obligations under the Paris Agreement.

118. Furthermore, the project's logic model, as described in the CEO Endorsement Document and validated in PIRs, mirrors the GEF's expected outcomes under CBIT programming, particularly the strengthening of national transparency systems embedded in government institutions, rather than standalone or externally-driven platforms. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), as executing agency, was central to this institutionalisation process, ensuring long-term anchoring of results within Malawi's public administration.

Alignment with UNEP Strategic Programming

119. As the GEF Implementing Agency, UNEP played a dual role in ensuring that CBIT Malawi adhered to GEF requirements and UNEP's broader strategic objectives. The project is consistent with UNEP's role in supporting developing countries to meet their reporting obligations under the UNFCCC, a core aspect of UNEP's Climate Change Sub-programme. UNEP's added value lay in its technical support for:

- Development of emission factors and sectoral guidelines;
- Knowledge dissemination and peer learning through CBIT regional platforms;
- Capacity development across levels of government and sectors.

120. UNEP also facilitated technical coordination with global partners such as ASCENT, and regional learning through the CBIT Global Coordination Platform, enhancing Malawi's visibility and engagement in global transparency dialogues. These features are directly in line with UNEP's commitment to capacity-building, science-based environmental governance, and regional cooperation.

Responsiveness to Malawi's National Climate Priorities

121. The CBIT Malawi project is strongly aligned with the national priorities articulated in Malawi's climate policy and development strategies. Most significantly, the Revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of 2021 outlines capacity and technology gaps that the project addressed head-on—including the need to develop a national MRV system, strengthen data-sharing protocols, and improve institutional roles for transparency. The NDC (2021) explicitly references the role of the CBIT framework in enabling Malawi to build systems for tracking emissions, adaptation action, and support received and needed. The project's contribution is therefore not peripheral but central to the implementation architecture of the NDC and Article 13 compliance.

122. Additional alignment is evident with the National Climate Change Management Policy (2016) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) vision of developing climate-resilient institutions and infrastructure. At the time of terminal review, stakeholders from the EAD and Ministry of Natural Resources reported that the project's MRV system would be instrumental in preparing the first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). These insights from the final PIRs and primary data collected from project staff affirm the catalytic and integrative role played by CBIT Malawi.

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

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

Alignment with Global Priorities: SDGs and the Paris Agreement

123. The CBIT Malawi project is strongly aligned with global environmental priorities, particularly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. The project directly contributes to SDG 13 (Climate Action) by strengthening national capacities to integrate climate change measures into policies, strategies and planning. Specifically, the project supported progress on Target 13.1 (resilience to climate-related hazards), Target 13.2 (integration of climate change into national frameworks), and Target 13.3 (improving awareness and institutional capacity for climate action).

124. As a country party to the Paris Agreement, Malawi has committed to regularly updating and reporting its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The CBIT Malawi project addressed core transparency elements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement by establishing a national MRV system, building institutional arrangements, and developing sector-specific methodologies. These investments are fundamental for meeting the reporting obligations of Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), and were explicitly recognised in Malawi's 2021 Revised NDC, which highlights the role of the CBIT framework in enhancing GHG inventories, climate action tracking, and information-sharing through platforms such as the CBIT Global Coordination Platform.

Alignment with National Environmental Priorities and Development Strategies

125. The project is closely aligned with Malawi's national development and environmental priorities as outlined in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDS III, 2017–2022), which identifies climate change, environmental resilience, and sustainable natural resource management as national priorities. The MGDS III's overarching theme "Building a Productive, Competitive and Resilient Nation" resonates with the CBIT project's focus on institutional capacity-building for climate transparency and resilience (Government of Malawi, 2017).

126. The project also complements the vision and implementation strategies of Malawi 2063 (MW2063), which aims to transform Malawi into a wealthy, self-reliant, and climate-resilient country. MW2063 recognizes environmental sustainability and effective governance as key enablers of its transformation agenda, and highlights the integration of disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, and MRV systems as essential tools for national resilience and sustainability.

127. Additionally, the CBIT project contributed to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process and the National Climate Change Management Policy (2016), both of which call for improved data systems, institutional coordination, and capacity-building to implement Malawi's adaptation and mitigation priorities. The project further responded to strategic objectives outlined in Malawi's National Climate Change Learning Strategy, which promotes the development of human and institutional capacity for climate change response across sectors and government levels.

128. The project's technical deliverables such as emission factors for agriculture and energy, data-sharing protocols, and national guidelines also address capacity and technology needs identified in Malawi's Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) and referenced in the 2021 NDC. The NDC highlights the importance of MRV systems, climate information platforms, and tracking mechanisms for climate finance and action—components that were central to the CBIT Malawi intervention.

Alignment with Regional and Sub-regional Frameworks

129. At the regional level, the CBIT Malawi project supports objectives articulated in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the African Union's long-term development blueprint, by enhancing environmental governance, resilience, and the integration of climate data into decision-making. These efforts also complement Malawi's commitments under the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015–2063) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) frameworks, which advocate for climate-resilient infrastructure and improved regional coordination on environmental issues. By participating in regional learning events in Zimbabwe, the CBIT project provided the space for engagement and experience sharing with other countries.

130. Malawi is also participating in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which emphasizes climate-resilient economic growth. The CBIT project contributes to this broader agenda by strengthening national climate data systems and governance structures that can support investment readiness and policy coherence in regional trade and climate finance mobilisation.

Responsiveness to National Disaster Risk and Climate Vulnerability Contexts

131. Malawi is highly vulnerable to climate hazards such as droughts, floods, and cyclones, which repeatedly undermine livelihoods and infrastructure. The CBIT Malawi project responded to capacity gaps identified in key government frameworks including the National Resilience Strategy, Post-Disaster Needs Assessments, and the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR). These documents consistently highlight the need for robust MRV systems, harmonised climate data, and institutional strengthening—areas directly addressed by the project.

132. Malawi's participation in the 2023 Regional Scoping Workshop on Loss and Damage further reiterated needs related to sustainable forestry, early warning systems, and capacity-building on ecosystem-based adaptation. The CBIT project addressed aspects of these needs by developing forestry sector-specific emission factors and enhancing institutional mechanisms for cross-sectoral climate data sharing.

Inclusion and the "Leave No One Behind" Agenda

133. The CBIT Malawi project partially addressed the principle of "leaving no one behind" by targeting a broad cross-section of government institutions and facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement through its steering committee and training activities. While participation of women reached 42 percent of total direct beneficiaries (71 of 168), and several district-level technical officers were included, the project documentation indicates limited deliberate engagement with youth, Indigenous groups, or people with disabilities. Nevertheless, the institutional systems and MRV platform established provide a foundation for expanding inclusive participation during subsequent NDC implementation cycles and future adaptation planning.

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

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

134. The CBIT Malawi project was explicitly designed to complement and build upon a number of past and ongoing initiatives that targeted similar climate transparency and institutional capacity challenges in Malawi. From the outset, the project demonstrated a clear awareness of national programmes, GEF-financed activities, and UNEP sub-programmes already supporting climate mitigation, adaptation, and governance. These complementarities informed project design, implementation strategy, and stakeholder engagement processes.

Integration of Lessons and Gaps from Baseline Initiatives

135. The Project Document and CEO Endorsement document provided a detailed mapping of ongoing and previous initiatives in Malawi that directly informed project design. The project was conceived in response to specific weaknesses identified through the preparation of Malawi's Second National Communication (SNC) and Biennial Update Report (BUR), particularly the lack of country-specific emission factors, poor coordination among data-generating institutions, and insufficient integration of MRV systems into national decision-making frameworks.

136. Lessons from the Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) and the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR) were also central to project formulation. The TNA highlighted gaps in institutional capacity to manage climate information systems, while the PPCR revealed challenges in integrating climate risks into sectoral planning due to fragmented and unreliable data systems. CBIT Malawi directly responded to these findings by establishing a legal and institutional framework for MRV governance, developing standardised sectoral tools and guidelines, and launching a centralised platform for climate data management. In this way, CBIT Malawi was not a stand-alone intervention, but a strategically positioned initiative that sought to address well-defined and documented structural barriers to climate transparency, building on credible diagnostic evidence generated by earlier national and GEF-supported projects.

Complementarity with Other Partner and Donor Priorities

137. Beyond the primary donor, the project demonstrates soft alignment with broader development partner priorities. EAD and UNEP's engagement in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform and its collaboration with technical partners such as ASCENT reflect international best practice approaches to transparency, system integration, and institutional capacity development.

138. Moreover, while GEF was the principal financier, the Government of Malawi contributed USD 150,000 in co-financing, largely in-kind (e.g. office space, personnel, vehicles). This signals strong domestic buy-in and policy coherence with Malawi's long-term development aspirations under the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDS III, 2017–2022) and Malawi Vision 2063 (MW2063). These national frameworks identify environmental sustainability, data-driven governance, and climate resilience as priority themes. The MRV tools, data-sharing protocols, and stakeholder coordination models developed through CBIT Malawi directly support these cross-cutting development outcomes. This includes ongoing work on the country's first BTR report.

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

Rating for Strategic Relevance:	**Highly Satisfactory**

B. Quality of Project Design

139. A. Operating Context is rated as satisfactory. Malawi is politically stable with no conflict-related risks to project implementation identified during design. However, the country is highly vulnerable to natural disasters like floods and cyclones. Given that activities effectively started in 2022, the post Covid-impacts were minimal. A 2020 political transition occurred before project approval and there was no evidence during the TR, that climate engagements had changed.

140. B. Project Preparation is rated as satisfactory. The project document clearly outlines key barriers to transparency, including insufficient data, weak institutional coordination, and limited technical capacity, all of which hinder Malawi's compliance with the Paris Agreement. While key stakeholders are identified, the document lacks a detailed stakeholder analysis and does not systematically assess participation by women, minority groups, or indigenous peoples. Stakeholder consultations were conducted during the PPG stage and informed project design. Gender is acknowledged and reflected in disaggregated indicators, but broader human rights and inclusion issues are not explicitly addressed. Despite the project's low risk, the ESES checklist affirms the continued relevance of human rights and the empowerment of vulnerable groups. Interviews with stakeholders however, highlighted that in hindsight, ASCENT's role should have been reviewed and the provision of technical services opened up for competition.

141. C. Strategic Relevance is rated as Highly satisfactory. The project demonstrates highly satisfactory strategic relevance through its strong alignment with regional and international priorities, including engagement with regional NDC committees, climate networks, and West Africa learning platforms. It highlights south-south cooperation by organising lesson-sharing exchanges and participating in regional knowledge platforms. While

the project presents baseline initiatives, further assessment is needed to determine the extent to which synergies were effectively established with these cited projects. Additionally, its alignment with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is briefly stated in the results framework.

142. D. Intended Results and Causality is rated as satisfactory. The projects ToC outlines key limiting behaviours to be addressed, pathways, and assumptions. The stated outputs are sufficient to deliver the intended outcomes. The roles of various stakeholders are identified under each outcome.

143. E. Logical Framework and Monitoring is rated as satisfactory. The projects vertical logic is strong. However, the horizontal logic could have been strengthened by including gender disaggregated output indicators. This is slighted addressed by the gender action plan. Annex B has included suggested improvements. The M&E plan is budgeted.

144. F. Governance and Supervision Arrangements is as Highly satisfactory. The governance and supervision arrangements are fully articulated in the funding proposal, drawing on existing structures. Key outcomes also seek to strengthen the institutional framework for climate transparency in the country.

145. G. Partnerships is rated as satisfactory: The project document articulates ongoing initiatives on which the project will be built. Key partners are identified. The roles of different stakeholders are identified in the project document as well as coordination mechanisms. There is evidence that needs assessments were conducted prior to development and delivery of training packages.

146. H. Learning, Communication, and Outreach is rated as satisfactory. The prodoc includes a knowledge management section. Outcome three of the project also focuses on lesson learning and peer learning. For each outcome, key deliverables and knowledge products are identified.

147. I. Financial Planning / Budgeting is rated as satisfactory: Project budget was coherent at design.

148. J. Efficiency at design is rated as satisfactory. The duration of the project is line with other mid-sized CBIT projects. The objectives, targets and interventions are feasible during the duration of the project. There was a clear narrative on synergies and complementarities and building on existing structures as opposed to creating new ones. The project built on existing government structures. There was no explicit mention of value for money. The project however faced challenges due to administrative and technical issues during implementation leading to revision of timelines.

149. K. Risk identification and Social Safeguards is rated as satisfactory. Logframe and ToC have adequate risks and assumptions. In terms of safeguards, project was rated as low risk. The prodoc does not provided a narrative regarding any potential unintended effects of the intervention. There is no clearly articulated stands on the project's approach to minimising its carbon footprint. While the project monitors and reports on risks during implementation, this was increased to moderate due to technological challenges which delayed implementation.

150. L. Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects is rated as satisfactory: The project demonstrates satisfactory potential for sustainability, replication, and catalytic effects, with measures such as capacity building, development and use of transparency platform, and the establishment of focal points, guidelines and quality assurance systems. However, financial sustainability remains underdeveloped. The technological challenges faced during implementation mean that there has been less time for the online platform to be fully embedded and utilised. During TR implementation, the team will explore any concrete steps taken towards financial sustainability. Additionally, evidence of scaling up, replication, and catalytic action will also be explored during TR implementation.

151. M. Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps is rated as Satisfactory. The prodoc demonstrates that the project design team responded to the concerns of reviewers and provided responses that were considered sufficient to clear the project for funding.

152. Overall, the project design can be rated as Satisfactory as per Table below Quality Score.

Table 4: Quality of Project Design rating table

SECTION	SELECT RATING	SCORE (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
Operating Context	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
Project Preparation	Satisfactory	5	1.2	0.6
Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.8	0.48
Intended Results and Causality	Satisfactory	5	1.6	0.8
Logical Framework and Monitoring	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.4	0.24
Partnerships	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
Learning, Communication and Outreach	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
Financial Planning / Budgeting	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.20
Efficiency	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
Risk identification and Social Safeguards	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	Satisfactory	5	1.2	0.6
Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
		TOTAL SCORE (Sum Totals)/ **10**		5.12
				Satisfactory

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

Rating for Project Design: **Satisfactory**

C. Nature of the External Context

153. The CBIT Malawi project was implemented in a context marked by a combination of economic volatility, climatic shocks, and an overall stable political and security environment. These factors together rendered the external operating conditions moderately favourable for project implementation.

Climatic Events:

154. Malawi experienced multiple natural disasters during the life of the CBIT project, including Tropical Storm Ana in January 2022[27], Cyclone Gombe in March 2022[28], and the particularly devastating Cyclone Freddy in early 2023[29], which severely impacted infrastructure and communities. As the CBIT project was not a field-based intervention, stakeholders reported limited impacts on interventions. The 2023 PIR and national reports

[27] https://actalliance.org/alerts/malawi-tropical-storm-ana/#:~:text=The%20tropical%20storm%2C%20that%20originated%20in%20the%20Indian,left%2011%20people%20dead%20and%20107%20with%20injuries.

[28] Cyclone Gombe Kills 7, Damages Houses and Roads in Malawi

[29] https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/malawi/malawi-tropical-cyclone-freddy-flash-update-no-11-31-march-2023

confirmed that post-disaster recovery efforts dominated policy attention in several ministries involved in CBIT delivery, especially during and after Cyclone Freddy.

Security and Political Context:

155. Malawi remained politically stable and secure throughout the implementation period (2021–2025). There were no significant political upheavals, governance transitions, or security incidents that impeded project execution. Steering Committee meetings were held regularly and included both virtual and physical participation, even during disaster periods and post COVID-related constraints, which suggests robust institutional functioning and continuity in government operations. Furthermore, no staff security risks or operational restrictions were reported in any of the project management documentation, audit reports or interviews with key stakeholders.

Economic Conditions:

156. The economic environment was marked by persistent macroeconomic instability, with foreign exchange shortages emerging as a significant implementation constraint by 2023–2024. According to the 2023 and 2024 PIRs, as well as audit management letters, delays in fund transfers, procurement challenges, and slowed implementation of specific activities (especially consultant recruitment and equipment procurement) were observed due to forex liquidity constraints and currency devaluation. These economic challenges were not project-specific but part of a broader national context that affected multiple donor-funded initiatives across sectors.

157. When asked about the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war, respondents to the online survey didn't know whether there had been any impacts or mentioned that it had no impacts (figure 6).

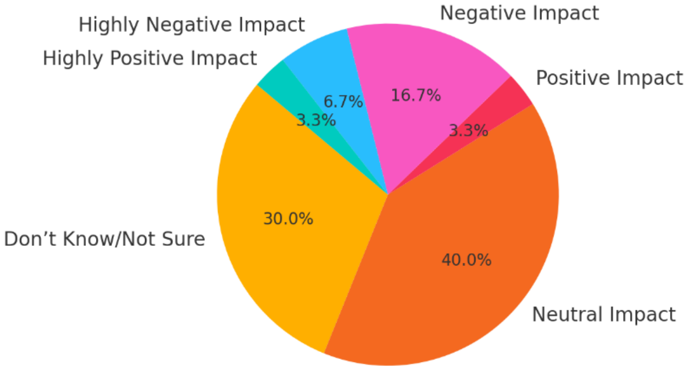

Figure 6: Perceptions of respondents regarding the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on CBIT Project

Health and Pandemic Context:

158. The COVID-19 pandemic did not significantly disrupt implementation. While the project began shortly after the height of the global pandemic, documentation confirms that implementation was not materially affected by COVID-19, and there were no reported project delays, suspensions, or budget reallocations due to pandemic-related measures. The 2022 PIR risk matrix explicitly stated that COVID-19 had no impact on implementation, and the Inception Report (2021) made no mention of COVID-related risks or mitigation measures, suggesting minimal operational impact.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Favourable

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

Outcome 1: Malawi's institutions effectively collaborate to track and report greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, climate actions, and support needed and received

Output 1.1 – Institutional arrangement and inter-ministerial coordination mechanism established and formalised for data management activities

159. This output aimed to establish a functional and formalised institutional framework to coordinate climate transparency reporting in line with the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework. Central to this was the establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), supported by nominated focal points in sectoral Data Collection Hubs (DCHs) and underpinned by legal and procedural instruments such as Terms of Reference (ToRs), Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).

Deliverable 1.1.1: Report on stakeholder analysis and engagement as well as assessment of legal & regulatory framework on climate initiatives

160. Finalised and validated in June 2023, this report mapped the institutional landscape supporting Malawi's MRV system and assessed the legal environment for climate data governance. It identified key actors—including ministries, academia, civil society, and the private sector—and recommended legal reforms, institutional capacity building, and improved coordination.

Deliverable 1.1.2: Government Gazette notice establishing the CTU and defining roles and responsibilities

161. Finalised by December 2023, this deliverable confirmed the establishment of the CTU through a gazette notice and functional review. The CTU was embedded in EAD's structure, and its mandate to coordinate climate data management was formally recognised.

Deliverable 1.1.3: Memorandum of Understanding signed between the CTU and data collection hubs

162. As of March 2025, the MoUs had been finalised and cleared by the Ministry of Justice. Final signatures were pending, expected by end of Q2 2025. By the time of the TR, no further progress had been reported on the signing of the MoUs. These MoUs define the data-sharing obligations of sectoral partners and formalise inter-ministerial cooperation.

Deliverable 1.1.4: Formal documentation appointing DCH focal points

163. By July 2024, most DCH focal points had been appointed, although some nominations from the private sector (particularly in IPPU) were still outstanding.

Deliverable 1.1.5: Terms of Reference and Key Performance Indicators for CTU and DCHs

164. Finalised in December 2023, these instruments provide operational guidance and accountability benchmarks for the CTU and DCH focal points. KPIs cover data timeliness, completeness, quality, and inter-agency collaboration.

165. The deliverables under Output 1.1 were generally of high quality and developed through participatory stakeholder engagement. Respondents confirmed the relevance of the stakeholder mapping and institutional framework reports, noting they were used to guide implementation and sector engagement. While the MoUs remained unsigned at closure, their finalisation was well-advanced. Overall, the tools developed are expected to underpin Malawi's climate reporting architecture beyond the life of the project.

Output 1.2 – Country-specific emission factors and activity data for AFOLU, energy, industry, transport and waste sectors developed and made accessible to stakeholders

166. This output intended to replace IPCC default values with nationally derived emission factors (EFs) and activity data (AD) tailored to Malawi's context. The goal was to strengthen the scientific accuracy and policy relevance of GHG inventories and NDC tracking.

Deliverable 1.2.1: Inception reports detailing methodology, approach and timelines

167. Completed in early 2023, inception reports for AFOLU, IPPU, energy, and transport were reviewed by stakeholders at a technical inception meeting. The reports outlined methodologies for data collection, estimation procedures, and project timelines. Waste was excluded due to funding limitations.

Deliverable 1.2.2: Reports on country-specific emission factors

168. By project closure, peer-reviewed EFs were finalised and published for the FOLU sector. Draft EF reports for cement and lime production in the IPPU sector were submitted and reviewed. However, EF reports for energy, transport, and agriculture remained incomplete due to non-performance by consultants, with some experts

disengaging without submitting deliverables. The EAD has escalated the issue to officials and to ensure their blacklisting.

Deliverable 1.2.3: Reports on country-specific activity data

169. As with EFs, AD reports were completed and peer-reviewed for FOLU and submitted for IPPU. Drafts for other sectors were not delivered. The quality of completed deliverables in FOLU and IPPU was validated by sector experts and peer-reviewed publication. Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the outputs they were involved in and identified learning outcomes from training events. However, gaps in energy, transport, and agriculture outputs limit immediate use across all sectors. Respondents noted poor communication between some consultants and sector actors as a key barrier to ownership.

Output 1.3 – Data collection and sharing protocols and regulations customised in line with IPCC guidelines and made available to institutions

170. This output focused on the development of standardised protocols and procedures for inter-institutional data sharing, underpinned by quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) guidelines to ensure transparency and consistency in climate data.

Deliverable 1.3.1: Proposed data collection and sharing protocols and regulations

171. A technical guide on data collection and sharing protocols was developed by ASCENT and submitted to EAD in September 2024. The guide draws on IPCC 2006 Guidelines and provides a comprehensive roadmap for metadata standards, secure communications, and institutional roles.

Deliverable 1.3.2: Report on the adoption of data sharing protocols

172. Adoption was confirmed in late 2024, with EAD and sectoral actors agreeing to apply these protocols during future ETF reporting cycles. Integration with the MRV platform (Output 2.1) is expected to enhance operationalisation.

173. Stakeholders found the protocols to be comprehensive and aligned with international best practices. However, full institutionalisation remains dependent on finalisation of MoUs and operational readiness of digital infrastructure.

Outcome 2: Stakeholders use the data management platform to support the MRV system

174. The second outcome of the CBIT Malawi project focused on enabling national stakeholders to routinely use a fully developed, customised, and operational data management platform for tracking climate actions, GHG emissions, and climate finance. This was a core pillar of the project's theory of change and vital to fulfilling Malawi's transparency obligations under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. The outcome was supported by four key outputs, as described in the CEO Endorsement Document.

Output 2.1 – A national online system for managing GHG inventory and climate transparency data developed, operationalised and deployed

175. At project design, this output was intended to deliver a user-oriented MRV platform tailored to Malawi's specific institutional, technical, and reporting requirements. The platform would allow for centralised collection, management, and access to GHG inventory data, mitigation actions, adaptation progress, and climate support received and needed. It was also envisioned that the system would be hosted nationally, ensuring long-term government ownership and integration with policy processes.

Deliverable 2.1.1: Needs assessment report on technological and institutional capacity for MRV

176. This report, completed in 2023 under the CBIT Malawi project, offers a thorough review of Malawi's current Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems and presents a technical blueprint for a centralized, digital MRV platform—the Malawi Climate Change Management Information System (MCCMIS)[30]. The report begins by situating MRV within the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), emphasizing

[30] South Pole, EAD, & Bon Company. (2023). Review of Existing MRV Systems in Malawi and Design of the Online Platform Management System (Deliverables D2.1.2 & D2.1.3). Government of Malawi, Environmental Affairs Department.

Malawi's obligations for tracking emissions, mitigation actions, adaptation efforts, and support received or provided.

177. Findings showed that Malawi's existing MRV landscape is fragmented, ad hoc, and largely project-driven, with a functional GHG Inventory but underdeveloped systems for mitigation tracking, adaptation monitoring, and support reporting. Key sectors covered include AFOLU, Energy, Waste, and IPPU, with emissions primarily from energy use. Despite a strong foundation in GHG reporting through periodic National Communications and BURs, institutional gaps persist.

178. To address these, the report proposes an integrated online MRV platform designed with secure architecture, role-based access, a metadata-driven database, and APIs for data integration. According to ASCENT, the system is modelled on best practices from South Africa, Burkina Faso and recent experience in Togo, and includes features such as a knowledge library, communities of practice, satellite portals, and content management tools. The report outlines technical specifications, testing protocols, and stakeholder roles for operationalization. Key recommendations included institutionalizing the MRV process through legal mandates, integrating support tracking systems, establishing metadata standards, and sustaining the MCCMIS post-project with Azure-based hosting and active administrative management.

Deliverable 2.1.2: Stakeholder validation workshop and design consultation

179. Two workshops were conducted in late 2023 to validate the findings of the needs assessment and gather inputs on the structure of the platform. Attendees included representatives from AFOLU, IPPU, energy, transport, waste, and civil society. Feedback informed interface design, metadata categories, and user access levels.

Deliverable 2.1.3: Online MRV platform development and operationalisation

180. The platform was completed in September 2024 and deployed via a temporary domain (https://cbit-etf-malawi.org). It features user authentication, sectoral dashboards, file uploading, automated GHG estimations, and metadata tagging. However, integration into Malawi's Government Wide Area Network (GWAN) was finalised very close to project close. The migration delays were due to institutional hesitations over server availability, cybersecurity standards, and digital infrastructure protocols. respondents during the evaluation questioned the expertise of ASCENT and their willingness to handover the system. As a result, the platform had not yet been formally adopted into national systems, and its integration with the Ministry of Finance's climate finance tracking tools remained incomplete. EAD officials have questioned the capacity of ASCENT to deliver on its responsibilities under this project. they mentioned that they felt helpless when faced with the challenges highlighted, because ACSENT had been written into the funding proposal. They would rather have had the opportunity secure the services of a technical provider through an open competitive process.

181. Respondent feedback during the terminal review highlights a mixed perception of the online data management platform. This is corroborated by the by responses to the online survey shown in figure 7 below.

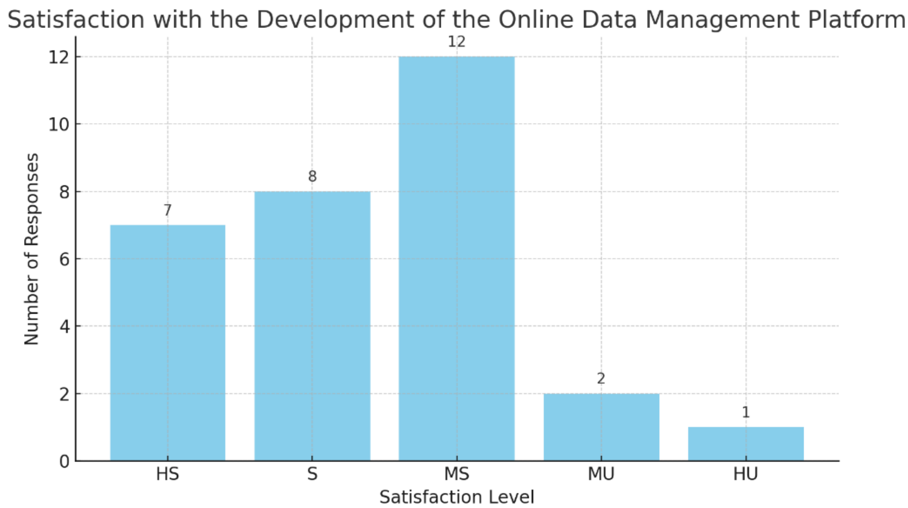

Figure 7: Respondent's perception regarding the development of the online data management platform

182. Out of 30 respondents, nearly a quarter (7) rated the process as Highly Satisfactory, indicating strong appreciation for the platform's relevance and technical features. Another 8 respondents found the process Satisfactory, while the majority (12) judged it Moderately Satisfactory, reflecting moderate engagement and some concerns about inclusivity and timeliness. However, two respondents considered it Moderately

Unsatisfactory, and one rated it Highly Unsatisfactory, suggesting dissatisfaction with either the level of consultation or technical challenges. Several sectoral stakeholders expressed limited engagement during the design and development phases, indicating they were informed and trained only at the end. This late involvement has hindered their sense of ownership and confidence in using the system. One noted that "we cannot say that we know and can use it", reflecting a disconnect between system functionality and user readiness.

183. Additionally, the platform is seen by some as more of a data-sharing portal than a fully integrated MRV system, since data analysis still occurs offline before being uploaded. Despite this, stakeholders acknowledged the presence of well-established data collection structures at district and regional levels, with robust internal verification processes in place. This suggests a strong foundation that could support future platform integration—if further training and system improvements are undertaken.

184. From the energy sector, respondents acknowledged the platform's value for tracking NDC indicators and emissions data, and reported improved sectoral collaboration and role clarity due to the project. They also cited ongoing initiatives—such as proposals for sector-specific platforms—as evidence of momentum and growing institutional interest. Overall, the feedback suggests that while technical potential is high, early involvement and continuous capacity-building are critical for full platform adoption and sustained use.

Output 2.2 – Sector-specific tools and templates for MRV data collection and reporting customised and adopted

185. This output aimed to support Outcome 2 by ensuring that sectoral data providers had the necessary standardised tools and templates for consistent and IPCC-compliant reporting. The tools would include pre-formatted Excel sheets, guidance notes, metadata collection protocols, and emission estimation templates tailored to Malawi's priority sectors.

Deliverable 2.2.1: Gap analysis report of existing tools and templates

186. Finalised in May 2024, this report assessed the completeness and applicability of current MRV tools across sectors. It highlighted the absence of tailored templates for IPPU and waste, and lack of consistency in NDC tracking formats.

Deliverable 2.2.2: Country-specific tools and templates for data collection

187. Deliverable D2.2.2 introduced tailored data collection tools for the IPPU and waste sectors, as well as for tracking NDC implementation. These tools are central to operationalising Malawi's MRV system in line with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement. Completed in June 2024, tools were developed for the IPPU (cement sector), waste (five subcategories), and NDC tracking. Each was aligned with IPCC 2006 and 2019 guidelines.

188. The IPPU tool targets cement production—Malawi's key industrial emissions source—gathering data on clinker output, Calcium Oxide content[31], and kiln dust recirculation to enable Tier 2 GHG estimations using IPCC methods. The waste sector templates collect disaggregated data across five subcategories (e.g. landfills, incineration, wastewater) and reflect national conditions such as waste composition and treatment practices, supporting improved emission estimates.

189. An Excel-based NDC tracking tool complements these by capturing mitigation actions, indicators, and performance metrics across sectors, aiding alignment with Common Reporting Tables. Together, the tools promote consistent, sector-specific data flows, strengthen institutional accountability, and enhance Malawi's capacity for transparent, evidence-based climate reporting. Stakeholders appreciated the usability and sector-specific orientation, though some recommended field piloting.

Deliverable 2.2.3: National GHG Manual on data processes and reporting

190. Delivered in October 2024, the manual provides step-by-step guidance on data sourcing, estimation methodologies, metadata documentation, and QA/QC procedures.

191. Respondents in the TR endorsed the tools as clear and practical. The GHG manual was distributed during training sessions and reviewed positively. As mentioned above, further time is required for stakeholders to pilot and use the tools and guidelines developed.

[31] Measuring the CaO content helps estimate process-related CO_2 emissions using IPCC methodologies, especially Tier 2, which requires country-specific or plant-specific data. In short, CaO content is used to calculate how much CO_2 is emitted during the chemical process of cement production, not just from energy use but from the raw material transformation itself

Output 2.3 – The Climate Transparency Unit members and other relevant stakeholders trained on the effective management and use of the data platform to track NDC GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received.

192. The third output under Outcome 2 was to ensure that stakeholders could confidently use the MRV platform and associated tools through structured training. The establishment of a climate transparency unit was expected to play a lead role in delivering on the climate transparency objectives. The EAD has successfully established the CTU in its new organizational structure following a functional review process. The designated CTU members have been actively involved in the development of the Online Data Management Platform which provided an opportunity for learning while doing. The CEO Endorsement envisioned early and repeated capacity-building sessions targeting data providers, platform administrators, and focal points in all priority sectors. In practice, training was delivered but heavily delayed.

Deliverable 2.3.1: Training module and manual

193. Finalised by July 2024, the module detailed platform functionalities such as user roles, project tracking, data visualisation, and file sharing. It was developed jointly by ASCENT and EAD.

Module 1: Platform overview

194. This learning module supports the implementation of Malawi's national MRV (Measurement, Reporting, and Verification) platform under the CBIT initiative. It introduces users to the platform's architecture, navigation, and tools that enable transparent, real-time tracking of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, mitigation actions, and climate support in line with the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework. The training explains how users at various levels—public, data managers, and technical experts—can access and interact with the platform. It demonstrates practical use of integrated tools like interactive maps (Maps Marker Pro), file sharing (Google Drive), data tables (wpDataTables), online forms (Forminator), and project tracking (WP Project Manager). These features streamline data collection, reporting, and collaboration across sectors. By the end of the module, users are equipped to manage and report climate data efficiently through the platform, strengthening Malawi's national climate transparency system.

Module Part 2: Platform Management

195. This module introduces users to Malawi's national MRV platform developed under the CBIT initiative. It trains stakeholders on managing climate data through the digital system, supporting transparency and reporting under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). Key features include project tracking, geolocation mapping, data visualization, form creation, and cloud integration. The module explains role-based access, platform navigation, and embedded tools such as Maps Marker Pro, Forminator, wpDataTables, and WP Project Manager. The aim is to enhance national capacity to report on GHG emissions, NDCs, and climate support through real-time, verifiable systems.

Deliverable 2.3.2: Delivery of training

196. Dedicated training workshops were conducted in March 2025 to build the capacity of the key stakeholders on the effective management and use of the platform. The session involved 32 participants (14 women and 18 men) from the key ministries responsible for data provision under the ETF. Post-training assessments and surveys revealed a high level of engagement and satisfaction with the training content. Participants expressed a strong desire for expanded hands-on sessions and localized follow-up training, indicating a clear demand for continued capacity-building in this area. stakeholders. While participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive—92% rated the content as "very good" or "excellent"—the timing of the training left little room for iterative learning, hands-on piloting, or systematic follow-up. Several participants indicated in the post-training survey that they would require further support to fully operationalise data reporting responsibilities, especially those from institutions not historically involved in UNFCCC reporting processes. As a result, while technical materials were delivered and initial capacity built, the late timing of the training constrained institutional absorption and posed a risk to medium-term sustainability unless future training is continued through national mechanisms.

Output 2.4 – Data from the GHG Inventory and MRV System aggregated, entered into the platform and made publicly available

197. The fourth output aimed to ensure that real-time data collection and public reporting through the MRV system would begin before project close. This would involve loading validated emissions data, mitigation actions,

climate support information, and adaptation indicators onto the platform, followed by the system's launch for public or inter-agency access.

Deliverable 2.4.1: Data on GHG emissions, climate actions, support needed and received, challenges and vulnerabilities uploaded in the online data management platform

198. This output was not achieved by the end of the project. The Department conducted data collection exercise in March 2025 with support from the key stakeholders. Currently the data is being screened and used for estimating GHG emissions for the GHG inventory supporting the ongoing process of preparing the first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). While the platform had been tested, and its functionality for data uploading confirmed, no actual GHG emissions data or finance tracking records had been inputted at the time of closure. The primary reasons were:

- Incomplete data flow agreements with key line ministries (still pending MoU signatures),
- Unresolved hosting arrangements, which limited full deployment of the live system,
- The late delivery of training, which meant stakeholders had limited opportunity to enter, review, and validate datasets.
- Incomplete delivery of EF for agriculture, energy and transport. This means that the country is not fully ready to report against the most important sectors identified in the country's NDCs as being critical to achieve adaptation and mitigation goals.

199. As of March 2025, the platform remained in a "ready but dormant" state—functionally developed but not yet used by line agencies to generate reports or feed into national communication cycles.

Outcome 3: The Climate Transparency Unit, relevant sector institutions, and stakeholders perform their roles in the MRV system on a continuous basis

200. Outcome 3 sought to ensure that Malawi's institutional and technical capacities for climate transparency would be sustained beyond the project period. This required establishing permanent structures, assigning clear roles and responsibilities, and developing the capacity of individuals and institutions to manage, report, and validate MRV data in line with international expectations. The outcome was supported by three outputs.

Output 3.1 – Field data teams from the key sectors (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste) assigned and trained in data management

201. At CEO endorsement, this output aimed to establish and train permanent data teams in all five priority sectors (AFOLU, energy, IPPU, transport, and waste). The expectation was that each sector would have a designated data hub with a technical team responsible for routine data collection and coordination with the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU). Deliverables included formal nomination of teams, delivery of technical training, and development of sector-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Deliverable 3.1.1: Training modules/manuals for field data collection teams on data management

202. Finalised by August 2024, three comprehensive training modules were developed and disseminated to field data teams and stakeholders across all five priority sectors. These included presentations, handouts, and user guides tailored to IPCC 2006 and 2019 methodologies.

Deliverable 3.1.2: Training report including survey results

203. The project developed training modules for the use and management of the Online Data Management Platform which will support capacity building and maintenance of the system beyond the project life span. Key sectoral experts from AFOLU, Energy, Transport, IPPU and Waste were trained on data management (mostly in March 2025) including functionalities and use of the Online Data Management Platform. Post training assessments and surveys revealed a high level of engagement and satisfaction with the training content. Participants expressed a strong desire for expanded hands-on sessions and localized follow-up training, indicating a clear demand for continued capacity-building in this area. A training report was completed in March 2025, detailing proceedings, attendance (disaggregated by gender), and feedback. The report highlighted positive outcomes in stakeholder understanding but also recommended follow-up sessions, especially for subnational actors with limited prior exposure to MRV systems. Participants also emphasised the need for more practice-based and decentralised follow-up sessions to ensure long-term effectiveness. Ownership is emerging but would be strengthened through continuous institutional support.

204. A key highlight of the trainings was the training delivered for the waste sector - CBIT Malawi In-Country Waste Sector Training. The training aimed to build national capacity for greenhouse gas (GHG) data collection, reporting, and transparency in the waste sector. Specific objectives included:

- Enhancing understanding of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines and 2019 Refinements.
- Providing practical tools and templates for GHG estimation in solid waste, wastewater, and open burning.
- Supporting the integration of Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) processes into Malawi's national inventory systems.
- Promoting sectoral coordination and knowledge-sharing.
- The training covered theoretical and hands-on sessions, including:
- Overview of the waste sector's role in GHG emissions.
- IPCC methodologies (Tiers 1 and 2) for solid waste disposal, wastewater treatment, and waste incineration.
- Data collection needs and emission factor development.
- Sector-specific data templates and quality control principles.

205. Participants reported increased understanding of MRV requirements and data reporting standards. Key strengths identified included the clarity of presentations, relevance of tools, and sector-specific focus. However, challenges cited included limited technical background among some participants and inadequate time for practical exercises. Furthermore, other sectoral trainings were not delivered due to time and resource constraints.

Output 3.2 – Knowledge of national stakeholders on ETF requirements and institutional roles strengthened

206. This output focused on awareness-raising and institutional sensitisation to the ETF and its implications for national climate reporting obligations under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

Deliverable 3.2.1: Regional awareness workshops on the ETF

207. As part of Output 3.2 of the CBIT Malawi project, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) convened a Regional Awareness Workshop in 2023 aimed at strengthening national understanding of the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement. This initiative responded to the recognized need for increased awareness and institutional readiness for Malawi's climate reporting obligations, particularly as the country prepares to submit its Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs).

208. The workshop brought together 58 participants representing a wide cross-section of stakeholders, including national ministries, district-level offices, academia, civil society organizations, and the private sector. It served as a key platform for cross-sectoral dialogue on climate transparency and promoted alignment between different institutional actors on ETF implementation. The content of the training covered critical themes such as the structure and requirements of the ETF, Malawi's national roadmap for BTR submission, and institutional arrangements required for effective MRV (Measurement, Reporting, and Verification). Presentations by EAD provided clarity on the timeline, reporting formats, and specific capacity gaps identified in earlier national communications.

209. Participants reported a significant increase in their understanding of the ETF and its relevance to their institutions' work. The workshop's participatory approach was praised for fostering open discussion, although participants highlighted the need for more simplified training materials and greater outreach to technical officers at subnational levels. Several actionable recommendations emerged, including the development of ETF briefs in local languages, tailored sensitisation sessions, and formalisation of data-sharing protocols. Participants also called for the establishment of a national helpdesk or knowledge hub to provide ongoing technical support.

210. Two further regional workshops were also organised in Blantyre and Lilongwe in March and April 2023. A total of 27 participants attended across the two events, including representatives from government ministries, regulatory agencies, universities, city assemblies, industrial companies, and civil society organizations. The workshops provided an in-depth introduction to the ETF, clarifying its reporting obligations such as Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), and the need for robust national Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems.

211. Participants were also sensitized on the structure and progress of the CBIT Malawi Project, with emphasis on the roles of proposed institutional mechanisms such as the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) and Sectoral Data Collection Hubs. Practical discussions focused on sector-specific data needs and emission categories, the importance of national emission factors, and the challenges of data access and harmonization. Feedback from participants highlighted an increased appreciation of their institutional responsibilities and the strategic

importance of ETF compliance for Malawi's global climate reporting. However, concerns were raised about the slow pace of institutionalization, data-sharing barriers, and sustainability risks after CBIT funding ends.

212. Recommendations emerging from the workshops include the need to fast-track the operationalization of the CTU and data hubs, provide regular technical support and follow-up training, develop national emission factors, and foster stronger collaboration among sectors. Participants also called for a national roadmap that links ETF implementation to broader development planning and climate finance mechanisms.

Deliverable 3.2.2: ETF policy brief for national dissemination

213. The ETF policy brief, developed by EAD in late 2023, was designed to communicate Malawi's transparency obligations in accessible language. It outlines ETF components—including GHG inventory, NDC progress, adaptation actions, and support received—and distinguishes ETF from MRV. It also encourages stakeholders to engage as UNFCCC-trained expert reviewers and proposes integrating ETF priorities into sectoral plans and budgets.

Output 3.3 – Best practices on transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement, including gender mainstreaming, shared and scaled up through peer-exchange programs for relevant stakeholders via South-South interactions and the CBIT Global Coordination Platform

214. Output 3.3 was designed to ensure that Malawi could learn from, and contribute to, global and regional transparency practices by engaging with other countries through structured knowledge exchange. This was to be achieved through participation in both South-South exchanges and the CBIT Global Coordination Platform, enabling the Climate Transparency Unit and other stakeholders to build networks, share innovations, and scale lessons across contexts. The CEO Endorsement Document anticipated that the country would participate in regional events, contribute case studies, and collaborate with global CBIT initiatives.

Malawi's Participation in COP27 and COP28 under the CBIT Project

215. As part of its commitment to building institutional readiness for the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement, the Government of Malawi through the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD)—actively participated in the 27th and 28th Conferences of the Parties (COP27 and COP28). These engagements were supported by the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Project, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented in partnership with UNEP.

216. At COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh (2022), Malawi's Technical Coordinator under the CBIT project, Mr. Clifford Mkanthama, served as a panelist at the Capacity Building Hub, sharing insights on ETF implementation in sub-Saharan Africa. His participation helped spotlight Malawi's efforts to establish foundational systems for measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV), including the institutionalization of a Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) and data collection hubs. Bilateral meetings with global partners such as the UK Government and the UNFCCC Strategy Unit opened discussions on long-term support for Malawi's transparency systems. The delegation engaged in a series of thematic discussions around tracking support to developing countries, aligning ETF with national development goals, and addressing capacity gaps in climate reporting. Notably, Malawi connected with CBIT peers from Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe to exchange strategies and challenges in project implementation.

217. At COP28 in Dubai (2023), the Malawi delegation deepened its technical engagement, participating in capacity-building workshops focused on greenhouse gas (GHG) calculation tools across the AFOLU, Energy, Waste, and IPPU sectors. The sessions also included practical training on the ETF reporting templates and the pathway to becoming certified technical expert reviewers (TERs) under the UNFCCC. This exposure demystified the reviewer certification process and encouraged national experts to consider contributing to global review mechanisms.

218. The Malawi team used COP28 as a platform to strengthen collaboration with academic institutions involved in developing country-specific emission factors—a key output of the CBIT project. Emphasis was also placed on improving gender balance and youth engagement in national MRV systems, drawing on shared lessons with peer countries. Despite notable progress, both events underscored challenges around delayed procurement, limited staffing, and sustainability risks post-CBIT funding.

Regional peer learning and technical training events

219. From 26 to 28 February 2024, EAD officials attended a regional workshop in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, followed by a peer learning exchange in Harare (25–27 March), where Malawi joined national transparency teams from

across Africa. Key lessons included the importance of legal instruments for data-sharing, robust QA/QC systems, and institutional coordination platforms—drawing notably on Zimbabwe's model.

220. In June 2024, Malawi's CBIT team joined the Kigali Peer Learning Event on GHG Inventory Preparation. Sessions covered QA/QC, institutional frameworks, and time series consistency. Malawi gained practical insights from peers like South Africa and Uganda, especially around MRV-NDC integration and the role of legal frameworks. The events reinforced the value of South-South learning and sustained capacity-building for long-term MRV system ownership.

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Moderately Satisfactory

Achievement of Project Outcomes

221. The CBIT Malawi project was designed to support Malawi's compliance with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement by delivering three key outcomes: (1) strengthening institutional coordination for MRV, (2) enabling stakeholders to use a national data management platform, and (3) building the technical and institutional capacity to sustain climate transparency functions. The project's reconstructed Theory of Change articulated that these outcomes would collectively contribute to an intermediate state in which Malawi regularly generates, manages, and reports climate data in line with ETF requirements.

Table 5: Level of progress towards outcome 1 targets

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	End-of-project target	Progress as of current period	Summary by the EA of attainment of the indicator & target as of 31 March 2025	Progress rating
Outcome 1: Malawi's institutions effectively collaborate to track and report Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, climate actions and support needed and received	Indicator 1.1: Data collecting and sharing protocols and regulations (in line with recent IPCC guidelines) are adopted by key institutions	Baseline: 1.1: No	End-of-project target 1.1: Yes	Protocols and Regulation finalized	Report on the proposed data collection and sharing protocols and regulations has been developed and finalized. The protocols have been adopted by key stakeholders for the reporting under the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement.	S
	Indicator 1.2: # of institutions using data collection and sharing protocols	Baseline: 1.2: 0	End of project Target 1.2: At least 20 institutions[32]	32 Institutions[33]	The data collecting and sharing protocol and regulations have just been finalized. Emerging feedback from interviews and primary data collection shows that the tools are not being used.	MU

[32] 20 institutions among the following: EAD ; National Technical Committee on Climate Change ; National Steering Committee on Climate Change ; Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining ; Ministry of Trade and Tourism ; Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare ; Ministry responsible for information and civic education ; Ministry responsible for local government ; Ministry of Disaster and Public Events ; Ministry of Transport and Public Works ; Ministry of Health and Population ; Ministry of Education ; Department of Energy Affairs ; Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS) ; Department of Forestry ; Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority ; National Statistical Office ; Research Institutions ; Universities / Colleges (LUANAR, Polytechnic, Chancellor College, Malawi University Science Technology) ; National Youth Network on Climate Change (NYNCC) ; Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) ; etc.

[33] The institutions include 1. National Statistical Office, 2. Ministry of Energy Affairs 3. Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, 4. Department of Forestry, 5. Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services, 6. Ministry of Agriculture, 7. City Councils- Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu, 8. Water Boards- Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu, 9. Department of Road Traffic and Safety Services, 10. Department of Economic Planning and Development, 11. Ministry of Local Government, 12. Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 13. Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences, 14. Civil Society Network on Climate Change, 15. National Commission for Science and Technology, 16. LAFARGE, 17. Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, 18. Ministry of Information and Digitalization, 19. National Planning Commission, 20. National Youth Network on Climate Change, 21. Department of Land Resources and Conservation, 22. Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority, 23. Energy Generation Company, 24. Electricity Supply Company of Malawi, 25. Ministry of Mines 26. Department of Geological Surveys 27. Balaka lime Industry, 28. Njezereza cement production limited, 29. Shayona Cement Production Company, 30. Malawi University of Science and Technology, 31. University of Malawi, 32. Mzuzu University.

222. Outcome 1 aimed to establish the conditions for sustained institutional collaboration in tracking and reporting GHG emissions, mitigation actions, and climate finance under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement. It was expected that by formalising institutional arrangements, developing country-specific emission factors and activity data, and adopting harmonised data-sharing protocols, relevant institutions would be empowered to work together in delivering high-quality, timely, and verifiable climate reports.

223. The project's outcome indicator targets were only partially achieved. While the data-sharing protocols were finalised and formally adopted by relevant actors, their actual usage remained limited. Although the project exceeded its target of engaging at least 20 institutions with 32 institutions reportedly engaged, feedback from the terminal review survey and interviews revealed that most had not begun using the protocols as part of their standard data management and reporting practices. Consequently, the indicator measuring institutional usage of the protocols was rated as 'Moderately Unsatisfactory.'

224. Institutional structures, such as the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) and sectoral Data Collection Hubs (DCHs), were legally formalised and supported by gazette notices, terms of reference, and draft Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). However, the MoUs remained unsigned at the time of the terminal review, limiting the formalisation of inter-ministerial collaboration. Several respondents noted that their involvement came too late in the process to meaningfully influence outputs or integrate new systems. Many described their roles as "being informed rather than engaged," which undermined a sense of institutional ownership.

225. Progress in developing and using country-specific emission factors (EFs) and activity data (AD) was uneven. While final peer-reviewed deliverables were produced for the FOLU sector, work in other sectors such as energy, transport, and agriculture remained incomplete due to consultant underperformance and disengagement. This gap limited technical capacity and the potential for institutions to adopt more accurate, context-specific methodologies in national greenhouse gas inventories. Respondents in the energy and transport sectors cited limited communication from consultants and exclusion from key stages of tool development, which further affected uptake.

226. By contrast, institutions involved in sectors where engagement was stronger, such as FOLU and waste, reported greater learning outcomes and a readiness to apply the outputs in upcoming reporting exercises. These sectors benefited from hands-on participation in data collection, peer review, and training, reinforcing the importance of inclusive and iterative engagement in translating outputs into outcome-level change. Adoption of data protocols and procedures aligned with IPCC guidelines also faced practical challenges. Although the quality of these documents was praised, with stakeholders affirming their comprehensiveness and alignment with international standards, their practical use remained limited. Some institutions received the documents late, and without operational MRV infrastructure or signed MoUs, implementation was delayed. Figure 8 shows that respondents were overall satisfied (70%) with achievement of outcomes 1, while 30% were moderately to highly unsatisfied.

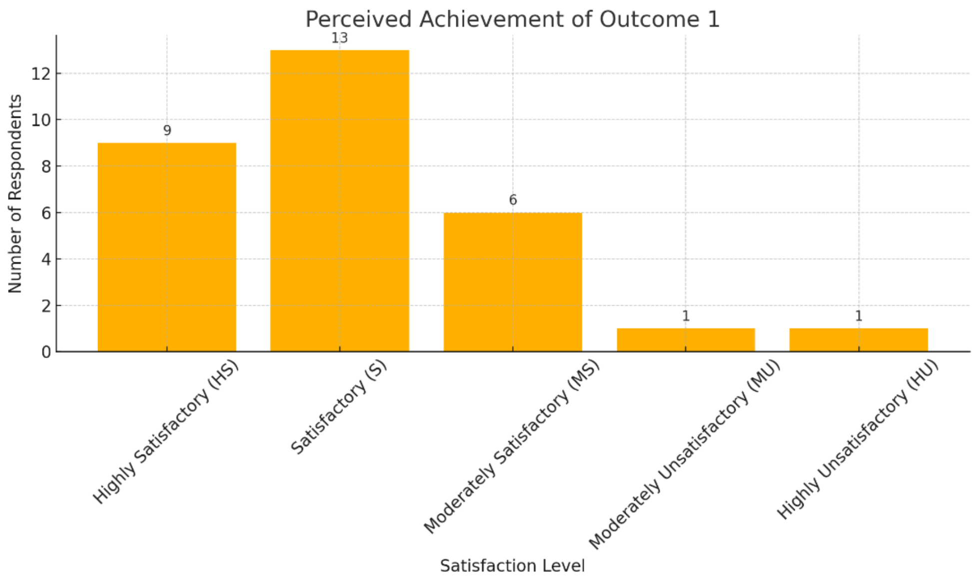

Figure 8: Perceived achievement of outcome 1

227. Three key factors limited the full achievement of Outcome 1:

- Timing and sequencing: Many key outputs were delivered late in the project cycle, allowing insufficient time for testing, feedback, and integration into institutional routines.
- Uneven stakeholder engagement: Engagement levels varied significantly across sectors, affecting ownership and confidence in using project tools.
- Consultant performance issues: Non-performance and disengagement in some technical areas undermined continuity and left gaps in sectoral readiness.

228. Despite these challenges, the project laid important groundwork for future transparency efforts. The institutional framework, legal instruments, and technical tools developed are expected to inform the implementation of future initiatives such as the Biennial Transparency Report and ICAT projects. However, translating these outputs into sustained institutional collaboration will require ongoing support, targeted training, and formalisation of cross-sectoral mechanisms. In summary, Outcome 1 was partially achieved. Foundational systems were established and received positively, but sustained behavioural change, cross-institutional data sharing, and systematic use of tools had not yet materialised by the time of the terminal review. Outcome 1 is assessed as moderately satisfactory.

Outcome 2: Stakeholders use the data management platform to support the MRV system

229. Outcome 2 aimed to ensure that national institutions routinely apply a functional digital system to support the measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) of GHG emissions, climate actions, and financial flows. While the development of the data platform and tools progressed substantially, actual usage and integration into institutional practices remained limited at the time of the terminal evaluation.

230. By March 2025, the data platform had been completed and temporarily deployed, with training provided to 32 participants, including 14 women (44%). The training event in March 2025 generated positive short-term learning gains: 80% of participants indicated improved confidence in using MRV tools, and 92% rated the training content highly. In terms of self-assessed capacity to implement MRV systems, the results exceeded the project's target. However, the transition from learning to applied usage was less evident. At the time of the review, few users had uploaded actual data or used the platform for reporting, underscoring a gap between availability and application.

231. Respondents reported several factors inhibiting platform uptake. Key among them was the delayed integration into the national server infrastructure, which restricted system accessibility and undermined confidence in its long-term reliability. Stakeholders also expressed concerns about limited engagement during the system's design phase, leading to low ownership and insufficient familiarity with its capabilities. Some viewed the platform primarily as a document repository rather than a fully functional MRV system, reflecting the continued reliance on offline data processing.

232. Institutional arrangements and formal agreements to support data exchange were still being finalised, and several sector focal points reported that they had not begun regular data submission. Although the platform's technical features—such as user dashboards, sectoral templates, and metadata tagging—were seen as robust, they had not yet been mainstreamed into routine MRV practices. Standardised data templates and a national GHG manual were developed for sectors such as IPPU and waste, along with NDC tracking tools. These materials were aligned with international standards and reviewed positively during training sessions. However, limited piloting and the late delivery of these resources reduced opportunities for real-world testing and adaptation before project closure.

233. This reflects the failure of two key ToC assumptions: (i) that technical systems would be completed early enough to allow for user testing, and (ii) that institutional partners would have sufficient absorptive capacity to integrate the tools into their workflows. The decision to grant a no-cost extension and conduct stakeholder training in Q1 2025 illustrates effective adaptive management, although sustainability risks remain due to time compression and a lack of user engagement at scale. In sum, the project succeeded in establishing the digital and technical infrastructure necessary for MRV reporting and transparency. Yet full institutionalisation and sustained usage by line ministries remained a work in progress. Future efforts should prioritise expanding training, resolving hosting and cybersecurity concerns, and finalising MoUs to embed the platform within national systems. The outcome is assessed as moderately satisfactory.

Table 6: Level of achievement of outcome 2 targets

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	End-of-project target	Progress as of current period	Summary by the EA of attainment of the indicator & target as of 31 March 2025	Progress rating
Outcome 2: Stakeholders use the data management platform to support the MRV system	Indicator 2.1: # of government staff and other relevant stakeholders using the data management platform (gender-disaggregated)	Baseline 2.1: 0	End-of-project target 2.1: At least 24 (of which at least 50% are women)	32 (out of which 44% women)	The EAD with support from ASCENT completed the operationalization of an Online Data Management Platform. 32 (18 men and 14 women) government staff and other relevant stakeholders from all the sectors (AFOLU, IPPU, energy, transport and waste) were trained on the data management including the functionalities and use of the Online Data Management Platform during workshops organized in March 2025.	**MS**
	Indicator 2.2: % of trained officers from the climate transparency unit and other sectors specific focal points declaring to be in a better position to implement MRV systems (gender disaggregated)	Baseline 2.2: 0	End-of-project target 2.2: 50% (of which at least 50% are women)	80% (out of which 48% were women)	Key stakeholders from all sectors (AFOLU, IPPU, energy, transport and waste) were trained on the data management including the functionalities and use of the Online Data Management Platform during workshops in March 2025. The post training survey revealed that over 80% of participants reported a significant improvement in their confidence levels when it came to managing climate transparency data using the Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) tools that had been covered in the workshop. Out of the total respondents who declared to be in a better position, 48% were female. The project has also trained 5 officers (3 Men and 2 Women) from the CTU who have been designated to serve in the unit while plans have been made to recruit additional officers.	**MS**

Outcome 3: The climate transparency unit, relevant sector institutions and stakeholders perform their roles in the MRV system on a continuous basis.

234. Outcome 3 aimed to ensure that Malawi's institutional architecture and stakeholder ecosystem could consistently support MRV functions under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). The establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within EAD and the designation of sectoral data teams represented important structural milestones.

235. Progress under this outcome is best assessed through the GEF qualitative rating scale for institutional capacity. At baseline, Malawi was rated at Level 1, indicating minimal institutional arrangements for transparency. By project end, this rating had improved to Level 2. This denotes the existence of partially functional systems with assigned roles, but with limited continuity or institutional embedding. While the original end-of-project target was Level 3—signifying functional institutional arrangements and regular performance of MRV tasks, this proved ambitious given the project's timeline and capacity constraints.

236. The advancement to Level 2 reflects notable achievements: the formal establishment of the CTU, improved awareness of ETF roles among institutions, and strengthened coordination through workshops and policy dialogues. Malawi's active engagement in regional and global peer learning such as participation in COP27, COP28, and workshops in Zimbabwe and Rwanda also contributed to institutional learning.

Table 7: Level of achievement of outcome 3 targets

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	End-of-project target	Progress as of current period	Summary by the EA of attainment of the indicator & target as of 31 March 2025	Progress rating
Outcome 3. The climate transparency unit, relevant sector institutions and stakeholders perform their roles in the MRV system on a continuous basis.	Indicator 3.1: Qualitative rating of Malawi'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)[34]	Baseline 3.1: Level 1	End-of-project target 3.1: Level 3	2 (+1 increment)	The CBIT project activities and results have led to a +1 increment in the qualitative rating of Malawi's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities, bringing the rating to level "2". While this is slightly below the end-of-project target of "3", the target that was set at project design can be considered ambitious, retrospectively. Therefore, the achievement of a rating of "2" is considered satisfactory. The establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit through the CBIT project has led Malawi to having dedicated staff to support the reporting both under the convention and Paris agreement. This will ensure that Malawi retains its technical capacity and use the available resources efficiently, beyond the life of the project. At the time of the TE the CTU is not fully operational and stakeholders have not had the opportunity to deliver on their roles	**MS**
	Indicator 3.2: # of trained sectoral field data teams declaring to be in a better position to manage data	Baseline 3.2: 0 teams	End -of-project target 3.2: At least 3 teams out of the 5 sectors (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste)	5	All 5 sector data teams (AFOLU, IPPU, energy, transport and waste) were trained on the data management including the functionalities and use of the Online Data Management Platform during workshops organized in March 2025. A post training survey revealed that 92% of respondents (52% being Men and 40% Women) rated the training content as either "Very Good" or "Excellent," suggesting a high degree of satisfaction with the information and materials presented. Also, more than 80% of participants reported a significant improvement in their confidence levels when it came to managing climate transparency data using the Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) tools that had been covered in the workshop. Anecdotal evidence during the Tr shows mixed understanding and application of learning.	**MS**

However, the CTU was not fully operational by project closure, and sector teams had yet to demonstrate routine engagement with MRV tasks. Institutional arrangements, including clear mandates and workflows for data collection, verification, and reporting, were still evolving. Additionally, data-sharing protocols were not fully formalised, and subnational outreach remained limited. In line with the GEF rating framework, the outcome is rated as moderately satisfactory. While foundational capacity has improved, further steps are needed to consolidate institutional functions and ensure sustained MRV performance beyond the life of the project.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Satisfactory

[34] 1. No designated transparency institution to support and coordinate the planning and implementation of transparency activities under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement exists.
2. Designated transparency institution exists, but with limited staff and capacity to support and coordinate implementation of transparency activities under Article 13 of Paris Agreement. Institution lacks authority or mandate to coordinate transparency activities under Article 13.
3. Designated transparency institution has an organizational unit with standing staff with some capacity to coordinate and implement transparency activities under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. Institution has authority or mandate to coordinate transparency activities under Article 13. Activities are not integrated into national planning or budgeting activities.
4. Designated transparency institution(s) has an organizational unit with standing staff with some capacity to coordinate and implement transparency activities. Institution(s) has clear mandate or authority to coordinate activities under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, and activities are integrated into national planning and budgeting activities

Likelihood of Impact

237. The CBIT Malawi project was designed to support the country's ability to meet its obligations under the Paris Agreement's ETF by institutionalising MRV systems, building technical capacity, and fostering data-driven policymaking. Its intended long-term impact was to support Malawi in transitioning to a low-emission development pathway by enabling more accurate and transparent tracking of GHG emissions, climate actions, and associated support.

Progress Toward Intermediate States

238. The project's Theory of Change envisioned a transition from strengthened institutional capacities and systems (Outcomes 1–3) toward an intermediate state in which Malawi sustains regular, transparent, and comprehensive MRV processes. These MRV practices would inform national policy, enhance accountability, and support international climate commitments, eventually contributing to global environmental benefits and low-emission development. Foundational elements of the MRV system including the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU), a centralised online data management platform, and trained sectoral data teams were put in place. However, most deliverables were completed only in the final stages of the project, limiting time for institutional routines to stabilise. For example, although all five sectors were trained on data management, the short window between training and project closure meant few opportunities to apply new skills in practice.

239. Critically, assumptions in the Theory of Change such as early and consistent use of the platform, fully operational institutional arrangements, and formalised data-sharing protocols did not fully hold. The CTU, while formally established within EAD, was not yet functional by project end, and MoUs to formalise interagency cooperation had not been signed. Consequently, regular and systematic MRV practices had not yet emerged at the time of the Terminal Review. Nevertheless, there are concrete signs of movement toward impact. A key achievement was the development of country-specific emission factors for the transport and industrial sectors, replacing default IPCC values. This innovation strengthens the accuracy and credibility of Malawi's upcoming Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). Field-based research and laboratory work undertaken through the project provided a technical evidence base that enhances national ownership of reported emissions data. This is likely to influence future climate reporting and may support national baselines for carbon markets.

Catalytic Effects and Replication

240. The project has already demonstrated catalytic potential in both policy and academic spheres. In the academic sector, laboratory equipment and data generated under CBIT are supporting postgraduate research and have opened new pathways for integrating MRV concepts into university curricula. Stakeholders noted the potential to institutionalise these innovations through a dedicated university centre for emissions modelling and MRV systems, which could attract regional collaboration and research funding.

241. Policy-level effects are also emerging. The formal gazettement of the CTU and the government's stated intention to host the MRV platform within national infrastructure offer a pathway to sustainability. However, delays in finalising data-sharing agreements and transferring the platform to government servers represent a critical bottleneck. If unaddressed, these could jeopardise long-term functionality and weaken institutional memory.

Unintended Effects

242. A couple of negative unintended effects were recorded. Risks remain that key outputs such as the MRV platform, the National Transparency Manual, and sector-specific emission factors may be underutilised if institutional commitments weaken. Feedback during the review highlighted the need to embed MRV-related research and policy functions more deeply within universities and government units to safeguard continuity. The failure to deliver on emissions factors for agriculture, transport and energy sectors also lead to huge disappointment. The decision by the EAD to blacklist the consultants involved represents an unexpected negative impact of the project. Furthermore, the perception of the role of ASCENT in this project has raised credibility concerns that could affect the ability of the organisation to secure future contracts in the country. There is further significant demand for additional capacity building and support to help transform the project outputs into sustainable long-term outcomes.

243. Following this analysis, table 8 presents the flow to estimate the likelihood of impact. This is derived from the model provided by UNEP for use during the TR process. Completing this table leads to the conclusion that impact is likely.

Table 8: Likelihood of impact estimate

Impact	Likelihood
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to Project Outcomes are …	Partially in place
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes ...	Partially hold
Proportion of Project Outcomes fully or partially achieved?	Some
Which Project Outcomes? (the most important to attain intermediate states / impact or others)	The most important to attain intermediate states/impact
Level of Project Outcome achievement?	Partial
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcome(s) to Intermediate States are …	Partially in place
Assumptions for the change process from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States ...	Hold
Proportion of Intermediate States achieved?	Some
Level of Intermediate State achievement?	Partial
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact are …	Partially in place
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact …	Partially hold

Implications for Long-Term Impact

244. The project made significant contributions to Malawi's transparency architecture, with infrastructure and institutional arrangements now largely in place. However, intermediate states such as routine data flows, embedded MRV practices, and responsive decision-making had not yet materialised by closure. If these systems are reinforced through domestic resources, follow-up programming, or technical assistance, future CBIT project phase II, Malawi will be well-positioned to meet its future transparency obligations and to contribute credibly to global emission reduction efforts. The project aligns with SDG 13 (Climate Action), UNEP's environmental governance goals, and GEF-7 priorities.

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Likely

Rating for Effectiveness:	**Moderately Satisfactory**

245. The following section provides responses to terminal review strategic questions.

Q1: Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) arrangements under the Paris Agreement? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so? **Assessment: Partially Adopted** While the CBIT Malawi project introduced key technical tools, capacity-building processes, and institutional dialogues aligned with ETF requirements, the adoption of ETF arrangements by State and non-State actors was partial and still in progress at the time of terminal review. The project successfully supported the institutionalisation of the climate transparency unit, creation of data hubs with sectorial ministries, developed the country's emissions factors for FOLU and IPPU sectors, developed the online national data management portal, and provide training to stakeholders on its functionalities and use. Although government institutions such as EAD,

NSO, and sectoral ministries were engaged, their operational alignment with ETF requirements (e.g., institutional mandates, budgeting, and policy integration) remained at an early stage.

Key enabling elements included training on ETF components, national consultations and stakeholder engagement, establishment of thematic working groups, and clear national ownership and commitment from the government. The active participation of academia and technical institutions (e.g., LUANAR, MUBAS) was highly valued. However, MoUs destined to institutionalise data collection were not signed at TR. The non completion of emissions factors for key sectors also constrained adoption. Furthermore, the delayed start of implementation (effectively in early 2022) and rushed completion/hand over and trainings in March 2025, reduced the timeframe for actors to fully internalise and institutionalise ETF practices .

Q2: Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting? If so, please explain how.

Assessment: Yes, but improvements are still consolidating

The project contributed meaningfully to strengthening transparency mechanisms in several ways: (i) development and testing of a national MRV system; (ii) sector-specific data collection and validation processes and protocols; (iii) enhanced collaboration between EAD, NSO, sectoral actors and universities; and (iv) training on GHG inventory and ETF reporting requirements. These efforts laid the groundwork for improved institutional readiness for domestic and international climate reporting. As mentioned earlier, the creation of the CTU within EAD marks a new beginning in institutionalising climate transparency in the country. This will enable Malawi going forward to have a focal point responsible for coordinating and delivery of its obligations under the PCA ETF and UNFCCC obligations. During the TR, the country organised its first consultative meeting to develop its first BTR. Stakeholders involved in the CBIT project, are playing a lead role in this process. There is therefore evidence of a legacy created by the CBIT project, that will facilitate UN Conventions reporting. At national level, the country is also engaged in developing its climate change law. TR participants emphasised that advocacy actions were to be implemented to mandate climate reporting obligations as part of the new law. On the other hand, the NSO and EAD demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthen data sharing, which would further enhance the quality of national reporting going forward. There is a clear need for further sustained support to ensure that national actors effectively transition from the capacity building provided during this phase of the project, to fully institutionalising domestic and international reporting.

Q3: 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?

Assessment: Partial

Several new tools were developed, including the online MRV platform, sectoral emissions factors, and training modules have been delivered. These were piloted through workshops and hands-on sessions. However, actual adoption—meaning integration into day-to-day institutional workflows remains limited. Reasons include: (i) lack of technical capacity in some institutions; (ii) inadequate time for iterative testing and refinement; (iii) limited follow-up to training activities; and (iv) lack of formal data-sharing arrangements.

A notable success was the academic collaboration with postgraduate students involved in emissions factor development, which linked project outputs with teaching and research. However, non-State actors such as CSOs and the private sector had marginal engagement with tool development or use. There were no reported engagement of wider civil society organisations beyond NYCCC and CISSONEC in the project. Private sector role was acknowledged, but their role was limited to data provision during the development of IPPU emissions factors. Subnational actors played a minor role in the project as the main interventions targeted sectoral actors in the capital city.

Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

Assessment: Minimal COVID-19 Impact

Although the project was formally approved in mid-2021 during the COVID-19 period, it effectively began implementation in early 2022, by which time pandemic restrictions had largely eased in Malawi. The July 2021 inception workshop did adhere to public health protocols (e.g., mask-wearing, social distancing), but most field activities, stakeholder engagements, and training events occurred post-COVID. As such, the need for major COVID-19-driven adaptations (e.g., full transition to virtual platforms) was minimal.

Where virtual engagements were needed, such as early planning sessions and some thematic working group discussions, UNEP and EAD facilitated them without significant disruption. Therefore, COVID-19 had no substantive impact on the project's design or performance trajectory. More critical challenges to performance stemmed from forex-related disbursement delays and compressed implementation timelines.

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

246. The CBIT Malawi project demonstrated overall strong adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures throughout the implementation period. The Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed between UNEP and the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) served as the primary framework guiding the project's financial practices. The PCA stipulated clear obligations regarding procurement transparency, expenditure tracking, reporting timelines, and financial accountability. Evidence from project documentation, interviews with key stakeholders, and independent audit reports from 2022 and 2023 confirms that these obligations were met.

247. A central strength of the project's financial management system was the clear segregation of duties. Financial transactions followed a three-tiered process: they were prepared by one staff member, reviewed by a second, and authorized by a third. This ensured accountability and minimised the risk of errors or misuse. Procurement followed Malawi's national public financial management regulations, requiring competitive bidding with at least three quotations, and the use of a procurement committee to adjudicate all significant purchasing decisions. Despite constraints, particularly the lack of a full-time procurement officer at EAD, these processes were consistently upheld. Stakeholders confirmed that procurement was carried out transparently and that any challenges encountered, such as delays related to foreign exchange volatility or vehicle unavailability were managed within UNEP's procedural frameworks.

248. Monthly financial reporting was carried out on schedule, with expenditure reports submitted to UNEP by the 15th of each month. Each report was signed off by an authorized officer and maintained in both electronic and hard copy formats, ensuring traceability and compliance with audit standards. These reports were used by both internal management and external stakeholders to assess project performance and inform financial oversight. In addition to monthly reports, 15 quarterly reports were produced, providing an overview of financial expenditures and forecasts.

249. The findings from external audits conducted for the 2022 and 2023 financial years provide further assurance of the project's financial integrity. The 2022 audit noted several minor weaknesses, including instances of late remittance of Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax to the Malawi Revenue Authority, a payment voucher that was not rubber-stamped, and insufficient documentation (such as receipts and participant registers) for selected activities. These findings were not classified as material but flagged areas for improvement.

250. Crucially, the 2023 audit confirmed that all previously raised issues had been addressed. The auditors noted that PAYE remittances had been brought up to date and that financial documentation was now complete, with stamped vouchers and receipts provided for sampled transactions. There were no findings of financial mismanagement or unsupported expenditures. The audit concluded that internal controls were functioning as intended, and that project funds had been used for their intended purposes in line with UNEP's requirements.

251. The responsiveness of the EAD team to audit recommendations was commendable. After the 2022 audit, EAD instituted internal controls to prevent the recurrence of identified weaknesses, including tighter supervision of payment processing and improved filing systems. Staff were reminded of the importance of timely tax remittance, and procedures for stamping and filing vouchers were reinforced. These corrective measures

resulted in a clean audit opinion for the subsequent year, reflecting a strong commitment to continual improvement and accountability.

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

Completeness of Financial Information

252. The CBIT Malawi project established a robust and transparent financial reporting system that ensured timely and accurate tracking of expenditures, disbursements, and co-financing. Throughout the implementation period, the project team maintained quarterly financial reports aligned with UNEP's reporting requirements. These reports offered detailed line-item breakdowns of budget utilisation and disbursements, enabling project management and UNEP to monitor financial performance and support informed decision-making.

253. Each of the 15 quarterly reports also included forward-looking projections of anticipated expenditure for the next quarter. This facilitated advance planning and cash flow management, allowing UNEP to disburse funds in a timely manner and the implementing partner to manage expenditures efficiently. At the end of the project, a comprehensive final financial report was submitted, detailing cumulative expenditures, any budget adjustments made over the project lifecycle, and the co-financing contributions received.

Table 9: Levels of disbursements compared to spend at terminal review

Year	Cummulative Level of Disbursement (USD)	Cummulative Level of expenditures (USD)	Difference	% spent
Dec-22	300,000	239,388	60,612	0.80
Dec-23	760,000	518,425	241,575	0.68
Dec-24	945,000	845,967	99,033	0.90
Jun-25	945,000	962,642	(17,642)	1.02

Source: Annual disbursement reports and annual financial statements (2021-2025)

254. Figure 9 below further highlights that average spend for the first two years of the project were just up to 70% of available funding. This highlights the delays that were experienced during implementation as already discussed under effectiveness. At the time of the evaluation, a final disbursement was being prepared to cover for the overspend reported by EAD in its final statement of accounts.

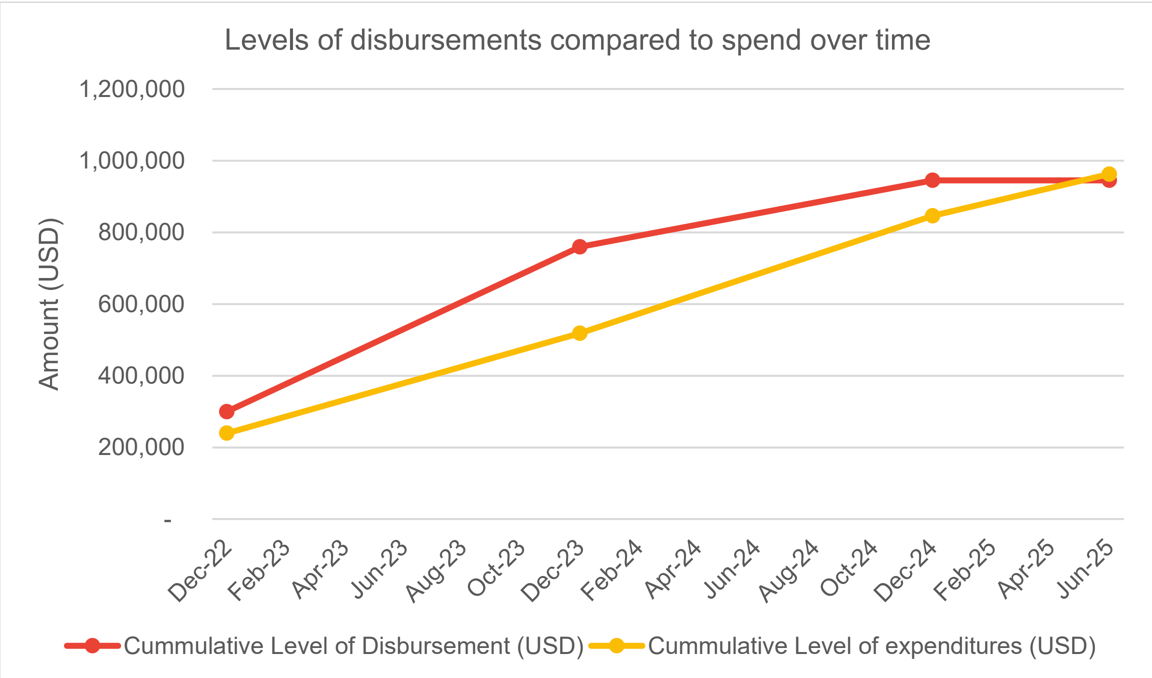

Figure 9: Evolution of GEF funding cash advances and expenditures over time
Source: Quarterly project financial statements (2021-2025)

255. The original GEF financing allocation was USD 1,056,000, with the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) committing an additional USD 150,000 in co-financing. This co-financing was mobilised in the form of in-kind contributions, including office space, utilities, administrative staff time, and vehicle use and maintenance. The terminal reviewer verified documentation confirming that this co-financing commitment was fully realised, demonstrating EAD's strong ownership and commitment to the project. Table 10 provides a summary of project expenditure compared to budget.

Table 10: Planned budget versus spent at terminal review

Outcome	GEF Funding	Co-Financing	Total planned funding	Actual spent	% Spent
Outcome 1:	397,000	50,000	447,000	432,074.54	97%
Outcome 2:	331,300	40,000	371,300	370,631.34	100%
Outcome 3:	171,949	10,000	181,949	169,983	93%
M&E	14,751.00		14,751	11,964.46	81%
Project Management Costs	96,000.00	50,000	146,000	127,989.13	87%
Total	1,011,000[35]	150,000	1,161,000	1,112,642.47	96%

Source: Project Financial Statements (2022-2025)

256. Overall, 96 percent of the total GEF project budget had been spent by the time of the terminal review. This utilisation rate would increase if the planned USD 45,000 for the terminal review-related expenditures were included. The project's strong adherence to both budgetary discipline and co-financing obligations reflects sound financial stewardship and a high level of national engagement in transparency capacity building under the CBIT framework. It is important to note that there was no disaggregated information per project output. This information would have provided even finer grained information on project delivery.

Table 11: Financial Tables

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS			
Financial management components:		**Rating**	**Evidence/ Comments**
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		**HS:HU**	**HS**
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[36] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes/No	NO
2. Completeness of project financial information[37]:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		**HS:HU**	HS
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes – at design, both the GEF budget and co-finance cost costs tables arranged by budget line for each component an
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes/No or N/A	Yes All information related to revisions was provided
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes –all legal agreements provided
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/No or N/A	Yes Cash advance confirmations provided

[35] Excludes USD 45,000 for TR costs
[36] 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.
[37] See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes annual co-finance reports were provided
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes 15 quarterly expenditure reports provided by budget line for all relevant reporting periods; final project financial account statements provided as well
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes/No or N/A	Yes All audit reports and management responses provided, but for the final audit report which was being finalised during the TR. However, the final agreed statement of accounts was agreed with UNEP.
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	No
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		**HS:HU**	HS
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS:HU	HS There was s a clear line of communication between the Project Manager and financial staff, such as the Finance Manager within EAD, and the UNEP Budget Holder. Regularly, there are meetings were conducted between the Project Manager and technical support teams (e.g., ASCENT)
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS:HU	HS The UNEP Budget Holder was actively involved in the project implementation, ensuring proper financial management standards were adhered
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS:HU	HS Financial management issues have been addressed following the recommendations of the audit
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS:HU	HS The progress and implementation reports and interviews with project team and task manager demonstrate that there has been contact between the project manager and the fund manager. Regular exchanges during budget revisions and during closing of the project demonstrated regular communication even though this was disrupted with the resignation of the project technical coordinator and finance teams towards the end of the project. Rapid action by EAD to replace coordinator with the desk officer and reassignment of principal accountant to the project, helped to facilitate project closure.
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS:HU	HS. The UNEP and EAD team were very responsive to the requests of information and clarifications during the TR. All information and clarifications were provided promptly.
Overall rating		**HS**	

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Highly Satisfactory

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

257. The CBIT Malawi project exhibited highly satisfactory communication between financial and project management staff, both within the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) and in coordination with UNEP. Throughout implementation, a structured and responsive line of communication was maintained between the Project Manager (PM), Finance Manager at EAD, and UNEP's Task management team, contributing to effective financial oversight, timely disbursements, and adaptive management. Evidence from interviews and project documentation suggests that the Project Manager maintained a strong awareness of the project's financial status at all stages of implementation. Likewise, the Task Manager demonstrated an in-depth understanding of project progress, enabling disbursements to be made on the basis of solid technical and financial reporting. All

narrative and financial reports were reviewed collaboratively by both finance and project staff prior to submission, ensuring consistency, quality, and shared ownership of project performance.

258. Regular communication between the EAD and UNEP team was a consistent feature of the project. This included email exchanges, virtual meetings, and telephone calls as needed, as well as structured interactions during budget revisions, financial planning, and project closure. UNEP team's participation in Project Steering Committees further deepened the understanding of on-ground realities and facilitated strategic responses to emerging challenges. As one team member noted, "Open communication also helped the project team to adapt to unexpected challenges by allowing for a rapid adjustment to the project plan and budget."

259. Both teams were proactive in raising and resolving financial management issues. For instance, budget revisions required in the final year triggered by implementation delays, early exchange rate fluctuations and consultancy payment adjustments were addressed collaboratively and in a timely manner. While the resignation of the Technical Coordinator and Finance and Administration Officer in 2024 temporarily disrupted communication, the EAD moved swiftly to assign replacement staff. The reassignment of the project desk officer and principal accountant ensured continuity in financial reporting and supported the preparation of final closure documents.

260. During the Terminal Review, both UNEP and EAD demonstrated strong responsiveness to information requests. All requested documents and clarifications were provided, underscoring the quality of communication among the implementing and executing teams. Overall, the project's internal and external communication structures proved robust and contributed significantly to effective financial oversight and adaptive management. It must be mentioned that the resignation of key staff at EAD towards the end of the project, constrained communication and coordination as the EAD took steps to fill the gaps.

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff: Satisfactory

Rating for Financial Management: Highly Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

261. The CBIT Malawi project demonstrated a generally high level of efficiency, delivering the majority of planned activities within the approved timeframe and budget, while navigating contextual and institutional challenges. Strategic cost containment, effective use of national systems, and flexible collaboration between UNEP and EAD contributed to this performance.

Cost-Effectiveness and Use of Resources

262. The project was cost-effective, leveraging existing institutional infrastructure and in-kind contributions to minimise direct expenditure. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) provided co-financing of USD 150,000 fully realised by project closure which covered office space, utilities, staff time, vehicles, and equipment. Over 15 EAD staff members contributed to project delivery, including the use of two project oversight desk officers. This co-financing helped reduce operational costs and demonstrated strong national ownership.

263. Procurement followed a planned and structured approach, adhering to national procurement guidelines. Despite not having a dedicated procurement officer, EAD managed competitive processes with oversight from procurement committees. Strategic procurement and resource use such as deploying government vehicles and leveraging existing office facilities helped control expenditures and ensured activities remained aligned with the approved budget.

264. The project's overall strategy focused on strengthening existing institutions rather than creating new ones. It builds on focal points within the ministries to establish data collection hubs, while the climate Transparency Unit, was integrated within the EAD structure following an institutional review. This approach ensures the sustainability of the initiative and capacity building objectives of the project. The same applies for working with national academic institutions which helped to embed project learning into teaching and research.

265. Other efficiencies were achieved through organisation of project events in the regions instead of the capital city. This reduced the costs of hosting activities, while enhancing cost effectiveness. The same applied to organisation of virtual events, even though participants in the online survey were not particularly satisfied with the delivery. Respondents thought that ASCENT's experts were engaged in a money saving exercise for themselves as opposed to prioritising travelling to the country to deliver better appreciated face to face events.

Respondents mentioned that ASCENT was repeatedly requested to make efforts to travel in country to provide support, but this proved unsuccessful.

266. The TR assessed the resource efficiency use levels through comparing the levels of financial spend and the rate of achievement of outcomes. This was done at the level of outcomes due to lack of output level disaggregated figures. Table 12 provides an overview of the assessment.

Table 12: Resource use efficiency of GEF funds estimate at TR

Outcome	% Spent	% achievement of outcomes	Rate
Outcome 1:	97%	70%	0.72
Outcome 2:	99%	70%	0.70
Outcome 3:	93%	70%	0.75
Project Management Costs	87%	77%	0.89
Total	94%	72%	0.76

Source: Final Financial Statement 2025 and PIRs

267. An efficiency resource use rate of above 1, highlights a highly efficient project, exceeding targets. Values between 0.8-1, show that the project was efficient with the various outputs achieved. Figures between 0.6-0.8 demonstrate moderate efficiency with gaps in achievement of outputs, while values of less than 0.6 showcase highly inefficient projects[38]. Consequently, the value of 0.76 suggests that the project was moderately efficient with gaps in the achievement of outputs. his assessment is line with the challenges identified under the effectiveness section of this report.

Timeliness and Responsiveness

268. Project delivery adhered closely to the agreed work plan. Monthly expenditure reporting was consistently completed and submitted to UNEP by the 15th of each month, with all financial reports reviewed and archived in both electronic and hard copy formats. Financial transactions maintained a clear segregation of duties, supporting accountability and internal controls.

269. However, implementation timelines required some adjustment due to emerging needs and contextual constraints. Two budget revisions were formally approved: the first in March 2023, responding to initial implementation delays partly caused by the exchange rates issue; and the second in May 2024, addressing changes delays in the development of the online data management platform and related training. Additionally, while the Project Cooperation Agreement was originally expected to expire in June 2025, UNEP approved a no-cost extension to December 2025 to allow for the completion of final closure activities and audit procedures. Implementation activities effectively concluded by March 2025, allowing some final deliverables (including MRV platform migration and training) to be completed during the extension period. Table 13 provides an overview of project revisions and extensions.

Table 13: Timeline of project revisions and extensions

Version	Type	Signed/Approved by UNEP	Entry into Force (last signature Date)	Agreement Expiry Date	Main changes introduced in this revision
Original legal instrument		5 May 2021	7 May 2021	30 June 2025	N/A
Revision 1	Revision	14 March 2023	N/A	30 June 2025	Workplan revised to accommodate delays in implementation of activities- technical completion date remains the same.
Revision 2	Extension	24 May 2024	27 May 2024	31 Dec 2025	Workplan revised to ensure completion of remaining project

[38] This is a snapshot at the end of the project

					activities. The new technical completion date is 31 December 2024, and the PCA expiry date is 31 December 2025.

Source: PIR 2025

Audit Status and Unspent Funds

270. At the time of the Terminal Review (TR), the final external audit had not yet been completed. However, based on available expenditure records and correspondence with project staff, the reviewer notes that more than USD 50,000 in unspent funds were expected to be returned to the GEF Trust Fund. See table 14 below.

Table 14: Overall project spend of GEF funds compared to planned budget

Project component	Total budget (rev)	Actual expenditures	Balance
Component 1	397,000.00	382,074.54	14,925.46
Component 2	331,300.00	330,631.34	668.66
Component 3	171,949.00	159,983.00	11,966.00
M&E	14,751.00	11,964.46	2,787.03
PMC	96,000.00	77,989.13	18,010.87
Total	**1,011,000.00**	**962,642.47**	**48,358.02**

Source: Final Financial Statement 2025

271. While this reflects disciplined budget execution and adherence to financial protocols, the reviewer notes that greater flexibility in GEF rules could have allowed these residual funds to be absorbed into additional institutional strengthening activities, particularly the institutionalisation of training curricula, the dissemination of lessons learned, or continued capacity-building support to embed MRV practices within national systems. The inability to absorb underspent funds represents a missed opportunity for strategic reinforcement of project outcomes.

Time-Saving Measures and Adaptive Management

272. Efficiency gains were supported by adaptive management and strong coordination between UNEP and the national team. UNEP's regular participation in Steering Committee meetings and flexible support for financial queries, contract amendments, and budget revisions were critical to keeping the project on track. Project implementation benefited from frequent email exchanges and virtual meetings between the Project Manager and the UNEP Fund Management Officer. These lines of communication enabled quick resolution of administrative bottlenecks and ensured budgetary alignment with evolving implementation needs.

273. The project also adapted effectively to management challenges. When the Project Technical Coordinator and Finance and Administration Officer resigned in 2024, the EAD reassigned senior officers (the Desk Officer and Principal Accountant) to oversee project closure, ensuring continuity despite their competing workloads. Consultant performance, however, varied, with some failing to deliver final outputs in time, which constrained the operationalisation of critical components such as the MRV platform and sectoral emission factors. While efforts were made to mitigate these issues, their impact was most acutely felt in the final quarter of implementation.

Environmental Footprint

274. Although not an explicit focus, the project adopted operational measures that indirectly reduced its environmental footprint, including reliance on digital communication tools, shared vehicle use, and reduced reliance on air travel. The organisation of online events also reduced the need for long distance travel. Indirectly, this project will have a long term impact on the overall country's environmental footprint as it transitions to a more transformative, climate resilient green economy.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Satisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

275. The CBIT Malawi project was supported by a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) design that was broadly aligned with GEF and UNEP standards. As outlined in the CEO Endorsement Document, the M&E framework included structured processes and assigned responsibilities to enable tracking of results throughout the implementation period. While the design was procedurally complete, it showed several limitations with respect to indicator quality, behavioural tracking, and institutional learning.

M&E Framework and Planned Routines

276. The M&E system was composed of multiple elements that were generally appropriate for a project of this size and complexity. These included:

- An inception report and workshop to validate the project logic and stakeholder roles.
- Biannual technical progress reports, coordinated by the executing agency (EAD), to report on activities and outputs.
- Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), undertaken with UNEP, to assess implementation progress, challenges, and alignment with the Theory of Change.
- Quarterly financial reporting managed through UNEP's financial systems.
- Annual Steering Committee meetings to ensure coordination and strategic oversight.
- A final project report and Terminal Review.

277. These mechanisms established a functional framework for project accountability and learning. Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined, with EAD leading implementation-level monitoring and UNEP providing oversight and guidance. However, despite these planned routines, the lack of stronger participatory and adaptive monitoring practices limited the use of M&E as a tool for real-time decision-making.

Indicators and Results Framework

278. The project's results framework incorporated several indicators at both outcome and output levels, which were intended to measure the achievement of institutional capacities, system development, and stakeholder engagement. While these indicators provided a basic structure for tracking performance, their design only partially met the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

- Specific: The indicators were moderately specific. For example, indicators such as the number of stakeholders trained provided a clear direction. However, others focusing on the use of data were less specific. Gender disaggregated indicators were also formulated which supported tracking of gender participation in the project.

- Measurable: Several indicators were mostly quantitatively measurable (e.g., "32 stakeholders trained," "at least 24 using the platform"), which helped facilitate performance tracking. The proposed means of verification such as online counting and interviews with government staff assumed that the online platform would be functional before the end of the project, which didn't materialise. Mechanisms for post monitoring tracking of outcome level indicators were missing. In other areas, the results framework failed to formulate output indicators were missing. Annex B provides suggestions of improvements that could have strengthening monitoring. The lack of qualitative indicators limited the project's ability to assess behavioural and institutional shifts. Though the GEF rating scales on institutional capacity were built into the results framework, the means of verification assumed full delivery of the project within the timeframe.

- Achievable: Most targets were realistically set for a medium-sized, time-bound project. For instance, training targets and system deployment were within scope. However, some expectations around institutional behavioural change, such as continuous MRV system use—were ambitious given the three-year timeframe and the timing of system roll-out near project closure. As mentioned above, the delayed delivery of the online platform and key trainings limited achievability.

- Relevant: The indicators were aligned with the project's immediate outputs and partially with the intended outcomes. However, they inadequately captured critical intermediate changes such as frequency of system use, improvements in cross-sectoral coordination, or gender responsiveness of institutions which were essential for achieving lasting impact.

- Time-bound: The results framework provided end-of-project targets, which helped establish temporal boundaries.

Budget Allocation for M&E

279. The project allocated USD 48,000 to M&E activities, covering inception reporting, technical monitoring, PIRs, steering committee meetings, and the Terminal Review. Additional resources were further allocated to support the PSC during the first budget revision. The TR considers that was in line with other medium sized medium-sized GEF project and aligned with UNEP's guidance. However, it could have benefitted from additional resources for an M&E officer. There were also no resources dedicated to systematically tracking the behavioural use of MRV outputs across institutions.

Causal Pathways and Theory of Change

280. The project's Theory of Change identified appropriate pathways from capacity-building and institutional arrangements to the long-term goal of improved climate transparency and MRV system sustainability. However, some of the enabling conditions such as institutional uptake, platform integration, and continued technical ownership were not adequately captured in the results framework. Assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change, such as timely platform delivery, sectoral collaboration, and policy uptake were not considered.

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting: Satisfactory

Monitoring of Project Implementation

281. The monitoring system for the CBIT Malawi project was operational throughout the implementation period and generally fulfilled its role of tracking project progress against planned activities.

Operationalisation of Monitoring Activities

282. From inception through to closure, monitoring routines were implemented as outlined in the project design. The EAD, as the executing partner, coordinated periodic data collection and reporting. Annual PIRs were consistently produced from 2022 through 2025. These reports documented the status of outcome indicators, summarised deliverables against output targets, and reflected on risks and mitigation measures. Each PIR incorporated a qualitative rating of indicator achievement, and in most cases, reported delivery against financial disbursements and procurement schedules.

Quality and Use of Monitoring Data

283. While the monitoring system tracked implementation progress adequately at the output level, its effectiveness was limited at the outcome level due to the weaknesses in the design highlighted above. The annual PIR reports provided assessments of progress towards technical delivery, whilst the quarterly and annual financial statements provided an update on the state of financial resource utilisation. This reporting surfaced the various delays experienced and their implications on the budget, leading the project management team to suggest budget revisions and project extensions.

284. Five PSC meetings were convened providing an opportunity for partner review and strategic oversight. However, they were never utilised as a medium to explore the application of learning or the institutionalisation of the tools and protocols developed by the project. The CBIT Malawi project maintained a systematic approach to risk monitoring throughout implementation. Risk assessments were integrated into the Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), with updates provided annually. While most risks identified at CEO endorsement including delays due to COVID-19, limited stakeholder capacity, and misappropriation of funds were downgraded to 'Low' through effective mitigation, a few Moderate risks persisted. These included delays in operationalising the online data platform and limited evidence of training effectiveness. Adaptive actions were introduced in response, such as post-training surveys, and collaboration with the Department of E-Government to address platform hosting issues.

Gender and Inclusivity Monitoring

285. The monitoring of gender-disaggregated indicators was implemented. The project had committed to tracking women's participation across data teams, training events, and institutional arrangements. The PIRs indicate an average 40% female representation across training and consultation events. The prodoc approved at CEO endorsement phase recognised that this was the more achievable target as opposed to the 50% target. The shortfall was attributed to structural gaps in the representation of women in technical and climate institutions rather than implementation bias.

286. Gender-sensitive targets such as integrating gender into reporting tools and facilitating women's participation in decision-making workshops were documented in monitoring reports, but actual evidence of institutional change in gender responsiveness was not captured beyond participation counts. The project steering

committee benefited from the presence of a gender focal point from the ministry of gender affairs. However, the evidence suggests a very passive role during project implements and M&E.

Use of Monitoring Budget

287. M&E budget amounted to USD 48,000. This consisted of USD 3,000 for the project inception report and USD 45,000 for the TR. Consequently, resources for routine monitoring, consultant reporting, PIR preparation. As mentioned above additional resources were allocated to support PSC facilitation. However, no budget appears to have been used for field verification, stakeholder-led monitoring, outcome monitoring and learning which could have enriched the reliability and utility of monitoring results. At the time of the terminal review, USD11,964 had been spent on M&E compared to USD14,751 planned. This excludes the costs related to the TR review.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Satisfactory

Project Reporting

288. The CBIT Malawi project consistently met its reporting obligations to both UNEP and the GEF throughout the implementation period. Reporting was timely, aligned with institutional requirements, describing progress against project milestones.

UNEP and GEF Reporting Requirements

289. The project was compliant with UNEP and GEF reporting expectations. The TR found that there was substantial collaboration and communication with UNEP colleagues. Specifically:

- Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) were submitted each year from 2022 through 2025. Each PIR tracked implementation progress across the project's three components and presented updated risk ratings, sustainability assessments, stakeholder engagement records, and gender equality performance. The March 2025 PIR, submitted shortly before project closure, provided a final synthesis of achievements and remaining gaps.
- A final project report was submitted by the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), covering technical progress, financial delivery, gender-disaggregated beneficiary data, challenges encountered, and lessons learned. The report was structured and aligned with GEF and UNEP requirements for project closure documentation.
- Financial reporting was managed through UNEP's internal systems, with quarterly expenditure summaries prepared and reviewed by the Task Manager and Finance Officer. No major gaps in financial reporting or record-keeping were observed during the review as confirmed under Financial Management and Efficiency sections of this report

290. All project documents were made available through UNEP's PIMS system and uploaded in line with internal milestone schedules. During the terminal review, full access to project deliverables was provided.

Quality and Consistency

291. The quality of reporting was generally high, with detailed activity summaries, consistency in output tracking, and descriptions of risk events, such as delays in consultant performance and the hosting of the MRV platform. The narrative explanations in PIRs were particularly useful in understanding the evolution of key deliverables, such as institutional arrangements under Outcome 1 and the late-stage training of sectoral teams under Outcome 3.

292. However, progress reports tended to focus on deliverable completion rather than outcome-level change. Reporting did not consistently distinguish between the existence of tools (e.g. MRV platform, emission factors) and their actual uptake or use, understandably due to their late delivery. This limited the reports' ability to provide clear, evaluable statements on effectiveness or sustainability without triangulation from interviews and final project assessments. As mentioned earlier, the lack of dedicated M&E officer charged with facilitating learning and tracking behavioural change, limited the potential for identifying progress at institutional and individual levels because of the project interventions.

Reporting on Disaggregated Groups

293. Each annual PIR included a section on gender equality and reported on the number of direct beneficiaries reached, disaggregated by sex. The project had aimed to reach 75 men and 75 women, and by March 2025 had trained 88 men and 62 women, falling slightly short of parity. PIR narratives offered explanations for this gap,

often citing structural underrepresentation of women in technical roles and public-sector climate institutions. Reports did not assess how gender dynamics influenced participation or institutional decision-making.

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	**Satisfactory**

H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

294. The CBIT Malawi project made commendable strides in fostering national ownership and technical collaboration around climate transparency, laying a strong foundation for long-term sustainability. Several promising elements emerged—especially in terms of stakeholder commitment, integration within national policy discourse, and the cultivation of institutional partnerships. Nonetheless, some socio-political factors remain in development and will require sustained engagement, coordination, and policy reinforcement to fully support the continuation of project outcomes.

National Commitment and Ownership

295. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), serving as the executing agency, played a pivotal role throughout the life of the project. Its coordination of technical institutions and integration of CBIT activities into routine operations reflects a high level of institutional ownership. The establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU), following a functional review and awaiting formal approval by the Office of the President and Cabinet, demonstrates a clear intent to institutionalise climate reporting systems. Moreover, Malawi's revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which includes unconditional and conditional emission reduction targets, indicates political alignment with the transparency goals supported by CBIT. Government participation in regional climate leadership events also points to sustained interest in climate diplomacy and reporting obligations. The failure of the project to sign all MoUs with sectoral ministries, highlighted gaps in commitment from different government agencies.

296. However, while the technical leadership from EAD and sectoral focal points was strong, stakeholders noted that the upward communication of achievements to senior policymakers could be improved. Some respondents suggested that creating dedicated opportunities to brief Principal Secretaries and cabinet-level actors might help embed transparency objectives more firmly in national development planning.

Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusivity

297. The project fostered meaningful collaboration among technical actors across government departments, academia, and selected private sector entities. Ministries responsible for energy, transport, and industry were particularly active in the technical committees. Academic institutions contributed to the development of national emission factors and expressed enthusiasm for integrating CBIT methodologies into research, teaching, and postgraduate supervision. The project steering committee also created a space for stakeholder engagement in the project, though as will be seen under performance factors, the level of participation of designated members was not always effective.

298. Nevertheless, several respondents indicated that engagement could have been deepened in some areas. Subnational institutions—especially local councils and district offices—were not fully engaged, despite their importance in data collection and environmental management. This is particularly relevant given Malawi's ongoing decentralisation efforts, which aim to strengthen local decision-making and service delivery. There was also recognition that private sector involvement remains limited. Concerns were raised about potential regulatory or fiscal implications of disclosing emissions-related data. Participants encouraged stronger public-private dialogue to build trust and co-develop mechanisms for private sector data sharing, especially in sectors such as energy and transport.

Institutional Mandates and Data Custodianship

299. A notable theme emerging from stakeholder reflections concerned the role of the National Statistics Office (NSO) in supporting climate data management. The NSO is legally mandated under the Statistics Act to compile and manage official national data, including administrative and survey-based statistics across sectors. While NSO was formally represented in project governance and consulted on data needs, several stakeholders, respondents felt that the Office could have played a more prominent and consistent role in supporting EAD's data aggregation efforts. For instance, although sectoral data hubs and focal points were established and trained under the project, NSO was not systematically integrated into the development and operationalisation of the Online Transparency Platform.

300. This situation reflects broader questions around institutional mandates and clarity in roles. As one respondent noted, "NSO is mandated to collect official statistics across sectors, but we rely on cooperation with ministries. When this is not clear or formalised, we cannot fulfil our role effectively." Encouragingly, both EAD and NSO expressed a strong willingness to strengthen collaboration going forward. Several interviewees proposed the development of formal Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between EAD and NSO, with clearly articulated responsibilities for climate-related data collection, validation, dissemination, and custodianship. Others recommended establishing data-sharing protocols or integrating climate data flows into NSO's existing dissemination platforms, thereby creating a more seamless and sustainable data ecosystem.

301. There is also growing interest in ensuring that any data generated through CBIT is recognised as part of Malawi's official statistics. This would not only enhance the credibility and visibility of transparency outputs but also ensure that the data are protected under existing legal safeguards and accessible to decision-makers across sectors.

Contextual Risks and Opportunities

302. Malawi has long been regarded as a stable political actor in the region, and its technical climate governance structures are relatively well-established. That said, the current political and economic environment presents some uncertainties:

- Upcoming general elections in 2025 may affect continuity in climate leadership is political priorities change in the case of a new administration.
- Macroeconomic pressures, including high inflation and budgetary constraints, may challenge the allocation of sustained domestic funding to institutions such as EAD and NSO.

303. In light of these dynamics, stakeholders emphasised the importance of embedding transparency requirements in law; for example through the ongoing development of the Climate Change Bill, to insulate climate reporting systems from political or institutional change. Several respondents also advocated for greater involvement of the NSO in shaping data-related clauses in this legislation, as a way to safeguard the integrity and flow of climate information. When asked about their perceptions regarding socio-political sustainability of the project, a majority of respondents said it was likely to highly likely as shown in figure 10.

Figure 10: Perceptions regarding socio-political sustainability

304. Triangulating the qualitative and quantitative data, there sufficient evidence to conclude that socio-political sustainability is Moderately likely.

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Financial Sustainability

305. Based on the review of project documents and evidence, the financial sustainability of the CBIT Malawi project is assessed as Moderately likely, primarily due to the high dependency of project outcomes on continued financial flows, limited secured future funding, and the absence of a formal exit strategy. Figure 11 provides stakeholders' perspectives regarding the financial sustainability of the project. 60% of respondents to the online survey thought that financial sustainability was highly unlikely to moderately likely, whole 40% said likely.

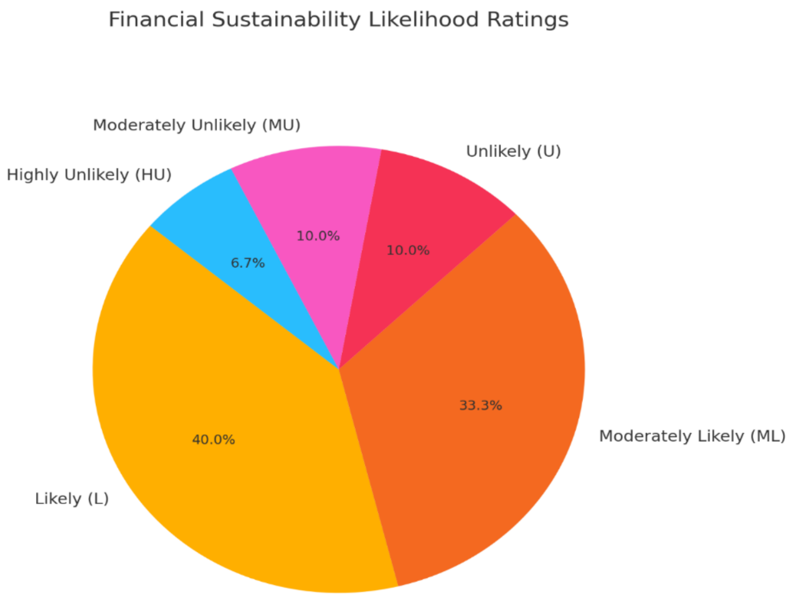

Figure 11: Perception of financial sustainability

Dependency on Continued Financial Inputs

306. The CBIT Malawi project outcomes particularly the operationalisation of the MRV system and continued institutional performance are inherently dependent on ongoing financial investment. For example:

- The operation of the Climate Transparency Unit, recently formalised within the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), requires training, and budgetary support from government resources.
- The MRV platform, although technically finalised and transferred, still requires additional work to be fully implemented and maintained. Further technical support, capacity development, and periodic system upgrades will entail recurrent costs. Future financial resources are required to operationalise the CTU and the data management platform.
- The country's commitment to climate transparency, provides an opportunity to mobile other climate finance to support its ambition.

Lack of Secured Future Funding

307. No clear evidence was found of secured follow-on funding at the time of review to support the maintenance or scaling of CBIT investments. While the project design (ProDoc) highlighted the potential for synergy with GCF and other climate finance mechanisms, there is no indication that the EAD or UNEP has successfully mobilised

such resources to date. Moreover, although co-financing was anticipated from national institutions and in-kind contributions, these were largely limited to the project implementation period and have not been formalised into sustained financial commitments post-project. there was overall request for a CBIT phase II project to help land the gains achieved through this project, but no formal discussions have taken place between EAD and UNEP to design a new project for GEF 9 round of funding.

Absence of a Financial Exit Strategy

308. The project lacks a documented exit strategy with a financial sustainability component. While the functional integration of the Climate Transparency Unit within the EAD is a positive development, there is no evidence of:

- A medium-term costed sustainability plan for the MRV platform or data collection routines;
- Budget line allocations within the national treasury to cover ongoing MRV-related operations or platform hosting and security services;
- Dedicated staff financing mechanisms within EAD for the climate transparency mandate post-project.

309. This significantly weakens the mitigation of financial risks associated with institutionalisation. Therefore, while respondents might have a more positive outlook of the project's financial sustainability, the gaps and risks identified, suggests a moderately likely situation.

Rating for Financial: Moderately Likely

Institutional Sustainability

310. The institutional sustainability of the CBIT Malawi project is assessed as Moderately Likely. The project established a solid foundation for building long-term institutional capacity in support of Malawi's climate transparency commitments under the Paris Agreement. However, continued support and coordination will be necessary to fully embed and sustain these achievements.

311. One of the project's most important institutional contributions was the establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD). The CTU has been formally integrated into EAD's structure and awaits final confirmation from the Office of the President and Cabinet. This unit, along with the sectoral focal points and data hubs established during the project, represents an emerging architecture for climate data collection, processing, and reporting. Maintaining their functionality, however, will require ongoing staff support, predictable financing, and stronger regulatory backing.

312. The project also invested significantly in building technical capacity across key government ministries and departments. Training sessions improved stakeholders' knowledge of MRV tools, GHG inventory development, and data management systems. These efforts were complemented by opportunities for peer learning and South-South exchange, such as regional workshops in Zimbabwe and Rwanda, and participation at COP27 and COP28. While these initiatives strengthened individual and institutional capacity, high staff turnover remains a challenge, potentially affecting the retention and application of skills over time.

313. A notable example of institutional capacity development emerged from the project's collaboration with academia. One of the consultants involved in developing emissions factors worked closely with two postgraduate students, providing them with hands-on experience in applying Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) methodologies. Feedback from the students suggests that the partnership was instrumental in deepening their technical understanding and appreciation of global climate standards. This example highlights the value of integrating project themes into academic programmes, which could support long-term national capacity development.

314. The project also produced high-quality technical outputs, including peer-reviewed emission factors and a policy brief on ETF implementation. These materials offer valuable inputs for future policymaking and academic training. However, their integration into formal government guidelines or national training systems has not yet occurred. In addition, the lack of structured science-policy dialogues and limited engagement with senior decision makers may have constrained broader institutional uptake of the project's findings and tools. At the subnational level, participation was relatively limited. Local councils and planning officers who are key actors in resource planning and implementation—were not consistently engaged. More targeted inclusion of these stakeholders in future projects could enhance the decentralisation of climate reporting and strengthen grassroots-level institutional resilience.

315. The National Statistics Office (NSO) plays a critical role as the official custodian of national data and expressed strong interest in deeper collaboration with EAD. Strengthening institutional partnerships between

NSO and EAD could improve data quality, access, and integration across sectors. Some progress was made toward this through the development of data-sharing protocols and proposed memoranda of understanding (MoUs), though these had not been finalised at the time of the terminal review. Many respondents viewed the ongoing review of the national climate change bill as a timely opportunity to embed climate data sharing in law. Legal recognition of climate reporting obligations could help departments plan and budget for climate data management more effectively.

316. The development of the national MRV platform was a milestone achievement. However, its late-stage delivery meant that opportunities for training, practice, and refinement were limited. Although training was conducted before project closure, several stakeholders reported insufficient time to fully engage with the system. Going forward, establishing clear roles for data custodianship and providing follow-up support to platform users will be essential to ensuring sustained platform use. Partnerships with international technical experts, such as ASCENT, added significant value to the project. However, their limited local presence posed challenges for ongoing mentorship and in-country capacity building. Future interventions might benefit from more deliberate pairing of international and national experts to foster hands-on learning and greater national ownership.

317. Finally, the upcoming Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) offers an important opportunity to apply the systems, data, and lessons developed through CBIT. Stakeholders consulted during the terminal review confirmed that CBIT outputs such as the MRV platform, emission factors, and trained focal points will feed into the BTR. Nonetheless, realising this potential will depend on sustained technical support, resource availability, and a coordinated approach to institutional follow-through.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Likely

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

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness

318. The preparation and readiness phase of the CBIT Malawi project reflects a well-structured inception process, supported by timely mobilisation and foundational institutional arrangements, despite facing some initial operational constraints. The project was formally approved by UNEP on 5 May 2021, with the first disbursement occurring on 25 June 2021. The inception workshop took place shortly thereafter, on 22 July 2021. This two-and-a-half-month period between approval and inception was sufficient to initiate core coordination mechanisms and set the stage for implementation.

319. During this period, the project formalised its institutional setup, including the establishment of the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC), chaired by the National Statistics Office. The committee began meeting early in the project cycle, providing strategic oversight and facilitating coordination among key national stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement during the inception phase was broad and inclusive, laying a solid foundation for buy-in across government departments, academic institutions, and technical agencies.

320. While financing arrangements were clearly defined—comprising a GEF grant of USD 1,056,000 and in-kind co-financing of USD 150,000 from the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD)—the project encountered early challenges due to a national foreign exchange liquidity crisis. This delayed the transfer of funds to the contracted implementation partner, ASCENT, temporarily affecting the timeline for critical activities such as the development of the MRV platform. Although the issue was eventually resolved, it disrupted the sequencing of planned outputs during the first year.

321. Staff mobilisation presented an additional constraint. The project manager and finance and administrations officers was not onboarded until January 2022, several months into implementation. This led to a slower-than-anticipated rollout of early activities and limited the project's ability to immediately respond to implementation demands. However, UNEP and EAD were proactive in bridging this gap through interim coordination and maintaining oversight through regular communication. During inception, EAD also allocated a desk officer to support the project manager throughout implement. This approach was to ensure institutional oversight over the activities of the external consultants recruited for management and finance and accounting roles in the project.

322. Despite these challenges, the project proceeded with the development of a costed annual work plan, a compliant procurement plan, and various terms of reference for upcoming consultancies and studies. Legal arrangements with ASCENT as main technical partner were also signed during inception.

Rating for Preparation and Readiness: Satisfactory

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

Executing Agency Performance – Environmental Affairs Department (EAD)

323. The EAD, as the project's executing agency, delivered competent and structured management of the project. The implementation structure was composed of a National Project Director, Project Technical Coordinator (PTC), and Finance and Administration Officer. Despite some initial delays in staffing mentioned above particularly the late onboarding of the Project Manager in early 2022, this structure allowed the EAD to provide effective oversight and maintain operational continuity. This report under effectiveness, financial management and efficiency, the terminal review revealed that the project management unit played its role satisfactorily.

324. The Project Steering Committee (PSC), consisting of 16 members, chaired by the National Statistics Office, functioned as a coordination and accountability mechanism. It convened regularly, with five meetings documented over the course of implementation. These meetings were inclusive, bringing together key stakeholders from ministries, academic institutions, and civil society, and focused on ETF awareness, deliverable validation, and strategic planning. The level of participation in these meetings are presented in figure 12 below.

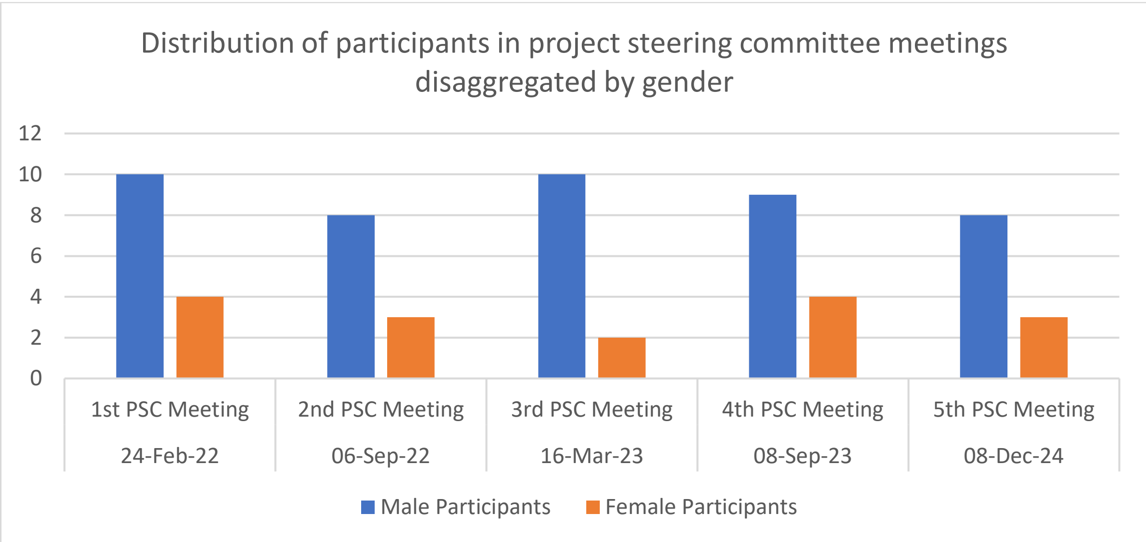

Figure 12: Level of participation of stakeholders in PSC meetings

325. A key observation from the terminal review is the inconsistent participation of designated PSC members in these meetings. An analysis of absences shows that for each meeting, at least 4 members were missing representing 25% of designated members. This does not speak well for national ownership and commitment.

326. The EAD also facilitated coordination across key technical areas, engaging sector focal points and academic partners such as LUANAR, MUBAS, MUST, and NSO. Institutional linkages were cultivated for emissions factor development and MRV system design, and internal appointment of alternates in ministries mitigated the risk of staff turnover. Although some challenges emerged such as delays in platform operationalisation and technical limitations of some consultants, EAD showed willingness to adjust timelines and improve collaboration to ensure deliverables were achieved. EAD respondents also highlighted early challenges in the management of the partnership with ASCENT, which affected the quality of the relationships between the organisations during implementation. There appeared to be a perception that ASCENT did not fulfil its mandate and thus didn't demonstrate value for money considering the significant financial resources allocated to them. When stakeholders were asked to assess the perception of ASCENT and its role in implementation, figure 13 shows that 70% thought that the role was satisfactory to highly satisfactory, while another 30 rated the role as highly unsatisfactory to moderately satisfactory.

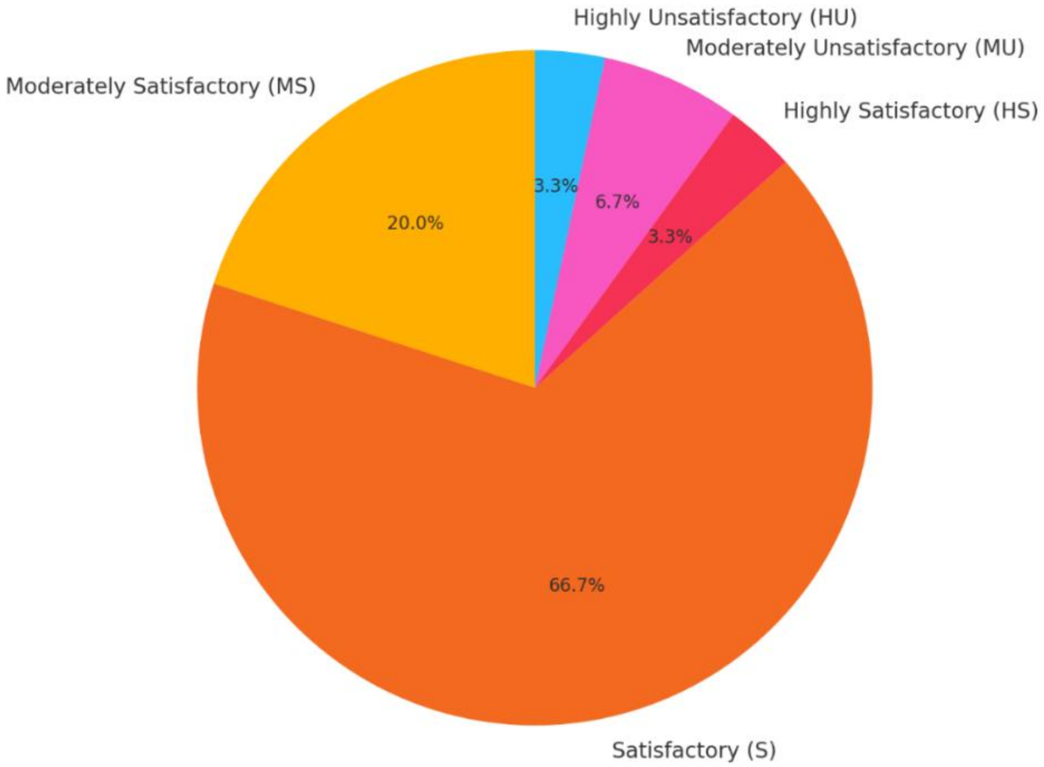

Figure 13: Perception of ASCENT's role in the project

327. From EAD side, as mentioned earlies financial and progress reporting obligations were fulfilled in a timely and structured manner. While some elements of adaptive learning, particularly mechanisms for post-training follow-up could have been strengthened, EAD's leadership enabled the project to remain broadly on track and responsive to contextual risks. This includes consistent efforts to enhance the participation of women in project activities. When asked on rank the effectiveness of EAD in delivering on this project, 90% of respondents thought that implementation was between satisfactory to highly satisfactory.

Implementing Agency Performance – UNEP

328. UNEP, in its role as the GEF Implementing Agency, provided consistent technical supervision and strategic guidance throughout the project. This included timely reviews of Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), proactive risk management, and participation in steering committee meetings. PIR documentation indicates that UNEP maintained a "Low" risk assessment across key operational and strategic dimensions during implementation.

329. The UNEP Task Manager engaged constructively with the EAD and project team, offering feedback on work plans, results frameworks, safeguard compliance, and reporting. When challenges arose such as forex-related delays in disbursing funds to ASCENT or the evolving training needs linked to the MRV platform, UNEP worked with partners to revise schedules, shift resources, and identify feasible adjustments without undermining project quality.

330. Supervisory communication with the executing agency was regular and informed by a shared commitment to adaptive management. Although UNEP's involvement was not on the ground day-to-day, its engagement was well aligned with the support needs of the EAD, particularly in technical backstopping and fulfilment of GEF reporting requirements. When asked to assess the role of UNEP in implementation, 70% of respondents were satisfied to highly satisfied with UNEP's role. One area of negative feedback related to the management of the challenging relationship with ASCENT, where respondents thought UNEP could have played a stronger role. Respondents argued that because ASCENT was introduced as a partner in the project by UNEP, it should have also been more strongly involved in finding solutions directly with ASCENT. Ohers also suggested that strict focus on budget lines limited the flexibility of the project team to respond to changing priorities. For instance, the left over funds could have been reassigned to support delivery, but this has to be returned to GEF. Overall, both UNEP and EAD exhibited an ability to respond to challenges and recalibrate implementation plans. Specific examples include:

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Satisfactory

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

331. The CBIT Malawi project demonstrated a strong commitment to stakeholder engagement, as envisioned in the Project Document's stakeholder engagement plan and confirmed through interviews and documentation. From the outset, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), acting as the executing agency, prioritised the inclusion of a wide range of actors spanning government, academia, civil society, private sector, and international partners. This inclusive approach was embedded in national coordination mechanisms and reinforced through working groups and steering structures.

Stakeholder Mapping and Inclusion Mechanisms

332. During the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase, a comprehensive stakeholder analysis was conducted, identifying institutions with mandates intersecting climate transparency. This mapping laid the groundwork for engagement across differentiated actors, including the National Statistics Office (NSO), Environmental Health Department, Malawi Revenue Authority, and academic institutions such as LUANAR, MUST, and MUBAS. Engagement mechanisms included inception workshops, sectoral consultations, Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings, and Thematic Working Groups for key sectors (AFOLU, Energy, Transport, Waste, and Industry). These forums facilitated technical reviews, data validation, and policy dialogue. Stakeholder ownership was further encouraged through the preparation of draft Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and co-design of technical tools.

Participation Across the Project Lifecycle

333. While stakeholders such as the ASCENT, NSO, sector ministries, and universities played an active role particularly in emissions factor development and platform development, highlighted a mixed experience in participation. Some stakeholders noted robust collaboration, while others expressed that their involvement was limited, particularly during project inception and early implementation phases. Despite these limitations, stakeholder participation increased during later stages of implementation. These engagements included data validation workshops, training sessions, regional awareness raising events, and project steering meetings.

Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange

334. Collaboration with academia was particularly noteworthy. The emissions factor work involved postgraduate students from national universities, providing them practical exposure to international methodologies. This created opportunities to integrate transparency themes into academic curricula and future research. The project also organised joint training sessions and knowledge-sharing with national institutions and benefited from South-South cooperation through regional workshops, participation at COP27 and COP28, and active engagement with the CBIT Global Coordination Platform. Private sector actors were engaged through consultations and thematic events linked to the IPPU emissions factors development and participation in steering committees' meetings. Civil society was also engaged through the wider youth and civil society networks (NYNCC and CISONECC). Gender considerations were mainstreamed throughout stakeholder engagement.

335. When respondents in the online survey were asked to score their participation in the project, a majority (76.7%) of respondents were either satisfied or highly satisfied with their participation, a notable minority (13.3%) expressed dissatisfaction, highlighting areas for improvement in engagement, particularly in inclusive consultation and decision-making

Engagement with Local Councils and Subnational Actors

336. While national stakeholders were engaged extensively, subnational actors including district councils and planning officers were underrepresented. This was a missed opportunity, given their critical role in budget advocacy and local data management. Future projects would benefit from systematically integrating local government actors in transparency planning and MRV system rollout.

Data Custodianship and Institutional Coordination

337. As mentioned earlier, the NSO, as the legal custodian of national statistics, expressed strong interest in deeper collaboration with EAD. Despite being part of the PSC, the NSO had limited input during the MRV platform development stage. Both agencies acknowledged the need to institutionalise collaboration through formal MoUs and shared protocols to ensure data quality, access, and integration. Enhanced coordination is also necessary to avoid duplication and ensure coherence in national reporting systems.

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Highly Satisfactory

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

338. The CBIT Malawi project was moderately responsive to human rights and gender equity considerations during implementation, though several structural and contextual constraints limited its effectiveness. The project took deliberate steps to integrate gender concerns in line with the UN Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment, and Malawi's own constitutional and policy commitments.

Rights-Based Framing

339. Malawi's Constitution firmly enshrines human rights principles. Section 20 guarantees non-discrimination, while Section 13 and Section 24 specifically uphold gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. These commitments are reinforced by Malawi's ratification of key international human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The CBIT project was therefore implemented in a governance context with explicit recognition of the rights of both women and men to participate in and benefit from development initiatives, including those related to climate change and environmental governance.

340. From an HRBA perspective, the project sought to address disparities in access to environmental data and decision-making power by identifying both rights-holders (e.g. staff of various agencies from priority sectors) and duty-bearers (e.g. decision makers from ministries, EAD, sectoral institutions). While there was no standalone human rights strategy within the project, its mainstreaming of gender and transparency in environmental governance aligns with HRBA objectives of participation, accountability, and non-discrimination.

Implementation of Gender Action Plan

341. The project scored 2a at approval for gender mainstreaming—indicating that gender considerations were well integrated across the project's context analysis, logframe, and budget. The project had a specific gender action plan which demonstrated the project's intensions to mainstream gender in its interventions. During implementation, the following key aspects were surfaced.

- **Participation**: The project's gender action plan aimed to achieve 50% female participation in data collection teams, trainings, and policy workshops. At the time of completion, the project registered a total of 168 direct beneficiaries 71 women (42%) and 97 men (58%). For instance, 32 (18 men and 14 women) government staff and other relevant stakeholders from all the sectors (AFOLU, IPPU, energy, transport and waste) were trained on the data management including the functionalities and use of the Online Data Management Platform during workshops organized in March 2025. The engagement of civil society organisations such as NYCCC and CISSONEC was intended to enhance representation of youth in the project. However, interviews with these organisations, revealed that there were some feedback sessions organised within the organisations to popularise knowledge on the ETF.
- **Implementation Measures**: Gender-responsive strategies included ensuring women's representation in data governance structures, encouraging ministries to nominate women to capacity-building events, and embedding gender in sectoral reporting templates. For instance, out of the 5 members of the newly established CTU trained, 40% were women.
- **Budget and resourcing**: While there was no dedicated gender budget line, affirmative actions (e.g., targeted invitations) and sectoral incentives were used to address disparities.
- **Representation and voice**: the prodoc acknowledged the challenge of achieving gender parity targets during implementation of the project. The leadership at EAD was intentional in improving the participation of women in the project. The letters sent out to request nomination of focal points on the project steering committees and data hubs encouraged leadership in the various ministries to ensure female representation.

342. The CBIT Malawi project demonstrated clear responsiveness to human rights and gender equality. It built upon Malawi's constitutional and policy commitments, followed UNEP and GEF gender frameworks, and monitored gender-related targets during implementation. However, persistent structural barriers such as the underrepresentation of women in environmental and climate sectors, limited their representation across project activities.

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Satisfactory

Environmental and Social Safeguards

343. The CBIT Malawi project was categorised as low environmental and social risk at the CEO Endorsement stage. This was due to its normative and institutional focus, specifically on enhancing Malawi's capacity to meet the transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement through MRV systems, policy frameworks, and institutional strengthening. Nonetheless, UNEP's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) was applied and relevant principles were integrated into the project design. Key elements demonstrating performance across the five safeguard domains are summarised below:

- **Management Plan for Addressing Safeguarding Issues:**
  A safeguards management plan was established during project preparation, guided by the UNEP ESSF. The plan included precautionary approaches and commitments to human rights, gender equality, and inclusion of vulnerable groups. These principles were integrated into stakeholder engagement and capacity building strategies.
- **Review of Risk Ratings:**
  Risk ratings were reviewed regularly through annual PIRs. Across all reporting periods (2022–2024), the project was consistently rated as **low risk** by both the Executing Agency and UNEP Task Manager. No escalation or emergence of new safeguard-related risks was recorded.
- **Monitoring of Project Implementation for Safeguard Issues:**
  Although no specific safeguard violations were reported, safeguard considerations were embedded within stakeholder processes, gender-sensitive reporting, and data management training. The project monitored its footprint and inclusion of women in project events, governance structures and data collection hubs.
- **Response to Safeguard Issues:**
  No complaints or grievances were reported during implementation across all PIRs. Nevertheless, the project applied precautionary measures regarding the Covid 19 pandemic. Note that respondents stated that the pandemic did not have material impact on activities considering that effective activities started in 2022.
- **Reporting on Safeguarding Issues:**
  Safeguards management was consistently covered in the PIRs, affirming no violations or emerging risks.

Environmental Footprint

344. Given the project's non-infrastructure, policy-oriented nature, it had a minimal environmental footprint. Nevertheless, UNEP and the executing partners made conscious efforts to reduce travel-related emissions by hosting virtual meetings and adopting efficient digital tools. These efforts align with UNEP's commitment to minimise environmental impacts in operational terms.

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Highly Satisfactory

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

345. The CBIT Malawi project demonstrated a commendable level of country ownership and government-driven leadership, particularly in steering project outcomes toward intermediate impacts. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) played a central role not only as the project's executing agency but also in mobilising in-kind co-financing, coordinating data systems, and ensuring alignment with national climate reporting obligations. As of March 2025, EAD had fulfilled its co-financing commitment of USD 150,000 representing 100% of its pledged contribution, through the provision of staff time, office space, logistical support for training workshops, and the use of infrastructure and equipment for project delivery.

346. Strategic guidance was provided through Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC included representatives from key public institutions such as the National Statistics Office, LUANAR, Department of Forestry, Energy Department, and others. The committee was active from project inception and held five meetings to provide technical oversight and policy guidance. As noted earlier, up to 25% of the designated members were consistently absent from meetings put a dent on the effectiveness of the committee.

347. Additionally, the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) hosted by EAD and staffed by government employees was deliberately designed to ensure continuity beyond project closure. Training, peer learning, and the operationalisation of the online data platform were structured to embed MRV capacities into national systems and budgeting processes. The use of in-service government staff for CTU positions was a strategic decision to increase long-term sustainability and reduce dependency on external consultants.

348. Interviews with stakeholders however, raised concerns about the ability of EAD to effectively manage the relationship with ASCENT. There was a feeling that ASCENT had been imposed to the project via the PRODOC, and so did not feel that they had full control of its activities. As discussed under financial sustainability, the continuity of this project is highly dependent on future external financial support which was not secured at the time of the terminal review. When respondents to the online survey were asked to assess country ownership, 60% were satisfied to very satisfied, with 30% moderately, corroborating the mixed perception regarding national ownership of the project. As mentioned earlier, the inability of EAD to get data sharing MoUs signed highlighted gaps in national ownership and drivenness.

349. While the project successfully catalysed institutional commitment and policy dialogue, challenges related to delayed implementation of training and difficulties migrating the data platform to a national server suggest that full institutional uptake may still evolve over time. Further details can be seen under management and supervision sections, socio political sustainability and stakeholder engagement sections of the report.

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Satisfactory

Communication and Public Awareness

350. The CBIT Malawi project has demonstrated a moderate to strong focus on communication, experience sharing, and public awareness, both within national contexts and through regional and global platforms. Communication activities have been anchored under Output 3.3 of the project, with a strong emphasis on sharing best practices through peer exchange. CBIT Malawi facilitated learning through South-South exchange programmes and the CBIT Global Coordination Platform, enabling technical teams to participate in events hosted in countries such as Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and in global forums such as the UNFCCC Conference of Parties. These exchanges supported not only technical learning but also raised visibility and credibility of Malawi's climate transparency efforts.

351. Stakeholder awareness workshops especially under Output 3.2 targeted government officials, EAD staff, and members of the newly established Climate Transparency Unit. However, while these activities demonstrate structured efforts, public-facing communication and community outreach were not as systematically documented. The emphasis leaned more heavily on institutional partners and technical stakeholders rather than general public engagement or media campaigns. This may limit behavioural change outcomes among the broader population, particularly in terms of raising climate literacy at the community level.

352. Regarding gender and inclusion, the project made concerted efforts to ensure women's participation in communication activities. Invitations to sensitisation workshops and peer-to-peer events explicitly encouraged gender-balanced participation, and results tracking aimed to reach a 50-50 gender ratio in participation rates. Figure 14 shows that stakeholders were 50% satisfied to highly satisfied with the project's communication and awareness. 37% were moderately satisfied, while another 13% were unsatisfied.

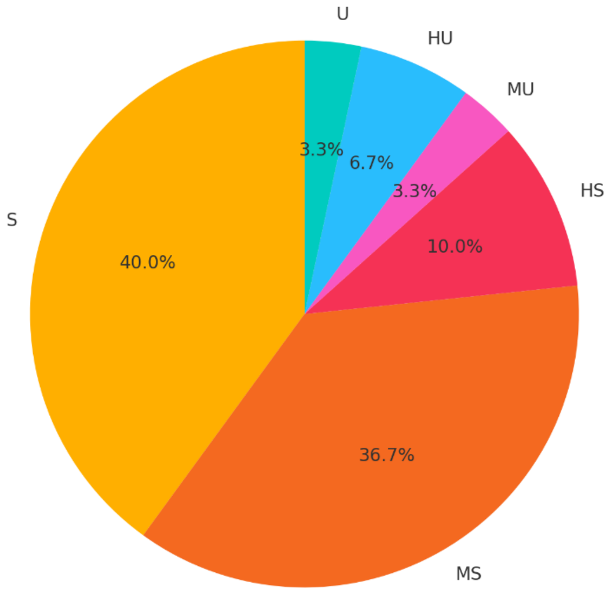

Figure 14: Levels of perceived satisfaction with the level of communication and awareness of the CBIT project

353. The TR found no evidence interactive or feedback-responsive communication mechanisms or ongoing monitoring of communication effectiveness, such as surveys assessing changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours resulting from project messaging. Moreover, although communication strategies were referenced, the available documentation does not confirm the preparation or full implementation of a formal project-wide communication plan. A significant number of knowledge products have been produced through this project including training modules, guidelines, quality assurance guidelines, peer reviewed papers on emissions factors. These remain high level and respondents expressed the need for some of these products to be translated to easily accessible formats and languages to facilitate uptake and replicability. Furthermore, there was a call for stronger science policy dialogues, to ensure that learnings are used to engage with policy makers and influence policy processes towards stronger climate transparency and transformation towards climate resilient economy.

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Satisfactory

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance: **Satisfactory**

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

354. The CBIT Malawi project was a timely and necessary intervention that responded to Malawi's strategic priorities under the Paris Agreement. It was developed to address long-standing institutional, technical, and procedural gaps that limited the country's ability to comply with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). The project design was broadly relevant and aligned with UNEP's climate transparency agenda, GEF's programming directions, and Malawi's national development and climate policy frameworks. At completion, the project achieved several key results despite facing operational delays and external challenges.

355. Among the project's strongest achievements was the establishment of foundational institutional and technical infrastructure for climate transparency. The creation of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD), and designation of data hubs across line ministries, laid the groundwork for cross-sector coordination. While the absence of signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) limited the formalisation of inter-agency roles, these efforts promoted dialogue and clarified mandates. The Project Steering Committee (PSC), PMU and UNEP played a consistent role in strategic delivery and oversight.

356. The project also developed a national online data management platform to enhance national climate transparency. It made modest progress on generating country-specific emission factors for the FOLU and IPPU sectors, though similar efforts in agriculture, energy and transport were uncompleted by TR. Technical trainings and institutional partnerships with local universities helped to anchor some of this expertise nationally. Despite delays resulting from forex liquidity issues and recruitment bottlenecks earlier on and delays in the delivery of the online platform and related trainings, the technical deliverables were largely achieved, albeit toward the end of the project period.

357. Capacity development activities, including data management training and sectoral workshops, were conducted across all thematic areas. Gender participation was in line with national expectations, though slightly behind parity goals and targets. The assumption that inclusive participation would yield strong mainstreaming outcomes in gender and ESS was realised. The project applied a human rights-based approach as issues of transparency respond to key access to information rights. Engagement with rights bearers and rights holders on transparency issues was well achieved. The project made modest progress in strengthening institutional transparency mechanisms for domestic and international reporting. The country's recent engagement in producing the first BTR, provides a unique opportunity to strengthen international report and delivery of national climate reporting obligations. Data sharing practices improved within targeted sectors, and the visibility of the ETF increased through Malawi's participation in global CBIT coordination platform events and UNFCCC COPs 27 and 28.

358. While the project successfully introduced new tools and built awareness of their relevance, the adoption of these tools into institutional workflows has so far been limited. The project's performance was further shaped by delays linked to operational and contextual challenges. While the project was approved in mid-2021, meaningful implementation began in early 2022 due to recruitment delays and a foreign exchange crisis affecting disbursements to ASCENT. COVID-19 had minimal direct impact as most project activities commenced after restrictions had eased, although the July 2021 inception workshop was conducted under social distancing measures. These timing issues compressed the implementation window, reducing opportunities for iterative testing and institutionalisation of tools.

359. Despite these challenges, national ownership was generally strong. EAD provided consistent leadership, and stakeholders across key ministries, universities, and technical departments remained engaged through the life of the project. The PSC met regularly and played a supportive role in navigating delays and aligning interventions. The level of state actor ownership was stronger than that of non-state actors, and private sector involvement remained limited beyond early consultations.

360. Answers to the Strategic Questions:

1. Adoption of ETF arrangements: The project partially supported the adoption of ETF arrangements. State actors demonstrated growing ownership of ETF mandates through the establishment of the CTU, data hubs and participation in CBIT global platforms. However, full operationalisation of ETF practices remains a work in progress. Emissions factors for FOLU and IPPU sectors were effectively developed and submitted to a peer review process in line with IPCCC standards. However, planned work on agriculture, energy and transport proved unsuccessful partly due to weak national capacities in these newly emergent topics.

2. Strengthening transparency mechanisms: The project moderately contributed to strengthening institutional transparency systems through the creation of the CTU, the MRV platform, and improved stakeholder coordination. Draft MoUs were circulated to key sectoral ministries for signature in order to institutionalise transparency mechanisms. However, at TR these were yet to be signed.
3. Adoption of new tools: Most tools were delivered and demonstrated, with several stakeholders participating in piloting exercises. However, adoption has been uneven and largely restricted to demonstration levels due to late delivery of the online platform and training. Quality assurance protocols and data collection templates have yet to fully incorporated into institutional workflows in key priority sectoral ministries. As mentioned above, MoUs were not signed at TR. The development of the country's BTR and upcoming processes to develop a national climate change policy provide opportunities for application of tools and mandates for climate data collection and reporting.
4. Adaptation to COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic had limited direct effect on project implementation. The project's inception occurred during the tail end of pandemic restrictions, and core activities began in 2022. The main delays stemmed from foreign exchange constraints and recruitment gaps rather than COVID-specific disruptions.

Overall Assessment:

361. The CBIT Malawi project made significant progress toward establishing the institutional and technical foundations for climate transparency, though it fell short of full realisation and uptake of its outputs. Key assumptions around formal institutional buy-in, seamless inter-agency coordination, and immediate tool adoption proved optimistic. Nonetheless, the project has laid an important base for further investment and has elevated awareness and capabilities around the ETF agenda in Malawi. Further capacity building support is required to ensure competition of the other emissions factors and full institutionalisation of tools, guidelines and platforms. The review concludes that the overall performance of the project is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

B. Summary of project findings and ratings

362. The table 15 below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter V. 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 XIII) 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 assesses the quality of the Report at the Satisfactory level and validates the overall project performance rating at the **'Satisfactory'** level.

Table 15: Summary of project findings and ratings[39]

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 aligns with Malawi's national climate commitments under the Paris Agreement by prioritizing transparency and strengthening data collection systems. Its emphasis on capacity building enhances institutional readiness, playing a key role in improving the country's environmental governance.	**HS**	The rating is validated.	**HS**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	The project demonstrated strong alignment with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2022–2025), Programme of Work (2022–2023), and strategic priorities by enhancing national capacity to implement the Enhanced Transparency Framework through institutional coordination, MRV system development, and stakeholder training. It also contributed to UNEP's cross-cutting goals of climate action, environmental governance, and gender inclusion, though engagement with some marginalized groups remained limited.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	The project was highly aligned with the strategic priorities of the GEF, UNEP, and the Government of Malawi by addressing all core CBIT objectives and directly contributing to national systems for Enhanced Transparency Framework implementation. Its institutional anchoring, technical outputs, and integration into Malawi's NDC and recent engagement in BTR processes affirm its strong strategic relevance and catalytic positioning.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	The project was highly relevant to global and regional frameworks including the Paris Agreement, SDG 13, Agenda 2063, and SADC strategies, by addressing core climate transparency and resilience objectives. It also responded directly to Malawi's national policies and development strategies by building institutional capacity and MRV systems critical for NDC implementation, climate adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS

[39] 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
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	The project was strategically designed to complement existing national and donor-supported initiatives by addressing clearly identified gaps in MRV systems, data integration, and institutional coordination highlighted in prior assessments such as the Technology needs assessment, Biennial Update Reports. Its alignment with ongoing policy priorities such as the NDCs, co-financing from government, and participation in regional platforms reinforced coherence and avoided duplication. Recent engagement with the BTR process demonstrated further complementarity.	S	The rating is validated.	S
Quality of Project Design	The project scored 5.12/10 when assessed for quality of design.	**S**	The rating is validated.	**S**
Nature of External Context	The external context was generally favourable, with stable political and security conditions supporting project continuity, despite climatic shocks and macroeconomic instability. While disasters like Cyclone Freddy and forex shortages posed challenges, their impact on CBIT implementation was limited due to the non-field-based nature of the project and adaptive institutional mechanisms.	**F**	The rating is validated.	**F**
Effectiveness	Malawi climate transparency framework has been strengthened in line with plans. However, there remains the need for more significant capacity strengthening.	**MS**	The rating is validated.	**MS**
1. Availability of outputs	The project delivered a significant number of planned outputs, including the establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit, development of MRV tools, and training modules, but key deliverables remained incomplete or delayed; emission factors, platform integration, and data entry limiting full operationalisation and use. While the quality of finalised outputs was generally high, uneven consultant performance and late-stage capacity-building constrained institutional uptake and sustainability, justifying a rating of Moderately Satisfactory.	MS	The rating is validated.	MS
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The project partially achieved its intended outcomes by establishing foundational institutional structures, developing technical tools, and enhancing awareness and capacity for climate transparency. However, late delivery of outputs, limited use of data systems, and underutilisation of protocols and online platform.	MS	The rating is validated.	MS
3. Likelihood of impact	The project established key institutional, technical, and legal foundations for climate transparency in Malawi, with early signs of catalytic effects in academia and policy. While the full realisation of intermediate states is still emerging due to late-stage output delivery and limited system uptake, the conditions for long-term impact are partially in place.	L	The rating is validated.	L

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Financial Management	Financial resources were managed efficiently with timely reporting and compliance with UNEP policies. Strong oversight and clear financial procedures ensured the optimal use of funds.	**HS**	The rating is validated.	**HS**
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The project adhered to UNEP's financial policies, maintaining clear documentation and financial controls. This ensured accountability and transparency in fund utilization.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS
2. Completeness of project financial information	Financial reporting was comprehensive, timely, and transparent, with complete records maintained to ensure clarity and consistency throughout implementation.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Communication between financial and project teams was effective, with trust and responsiveness from EAD and UNEP. Online meetings and field visits facilitated coordination. The changes within the PMU increased pressure on the communication and coordination effectiveness towards the end of the intervention.	S	The narrative in this section clearly supports a Highly Satisfactory rating. Therefore, the rating has been adjusted from Satisfactory **to Highly Satisfactory** for consistency with the evidence presented. Note that there is a discrepancy in the rating for "Communication between finance and project management staff." In Table 11, this criterion is rated as Highly Satisfactory, while in paragraphs 257–260, it is rated as Satisfactory. However, paragraph 257 explicitly states that "*The CBIT Malawi project exhibited **highly satisfactory** communication between financial and project management staff, both within the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) and in coordination with UNEP.*"	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**
Efficiency	The project delivered most activities within budget and timelines by leveraging national systems, adaptive management, and strategic cost-saving measures, despite some implementation delays and consultant underperformance. However, moderate outcome achievement relative to resource use, underspent funds, and compressed final-stage delivery limited efficiency.	MS	The rating is adjusted to **Satisfactory** as para 261 indicates that "*The CBIT Malawi project **demonstrated a generally high level of efficiency**, delivering the majority of planned activities within the approved timeframe and budget, while navigating contextual and institutional challenges. Strategic cost containment, effective use of national systems, and flexible collaboration between UNEP and EAD contributed to this performance*".	S
Monitoring and Reporting	The project maintained a consistent and structured monitoring and reporting system that fulfilled UNEP and GEF requirements, supported by adequate budgeting and timely submissions. However, limited outcome-level tracking, weak behavioural indicators, and the absence of dedicated learning facilitation constrained deeper insights into institutional change and adaptive learning	**S**	The rating is validated.	**S**
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The project's M&E design met UNEP and GEF procedural standards and was supported by an adequate budget, but weaknesses in indicator quality, lack of behavioural tracking limited its ability to inform adaptive management or assess institutional change.	S	The rating is validated.	S
2. Monitoring of project implementation	The monitoring system was consistently implemented and fulfilled its basic function of tracking project progress, with regular reporting and risk updates. However, its ability to support adaptive learning and outcome-level assessment constrained achieve of full M&E potential.	S	The rating is validated.	S
3. Project reporting	Project reporting was timely, complete, and aligned with UNEP and GEF requirements, with consistently submitted PIRs, final reports, and financial documentation.	S	The rating is validated.	S
Sustainability		**ML**	The rating is validated.	**ML**
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project demonstrated strong national ownership, institutional leadership from EAD with steps taken toward formalising climate transparency structures. However, gaps in cross-sectoral coordination, weak subnational and failure to secure MoUs demonstrated gaps in national ownership. Consequently, while momentum exists, sustained political commitment and structured data governance are needed to secure long-term socio-political sustainability.	ML	The rating is validated.	ML

Criterion	**Summary assessment**	**Rating**	**Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)**	**EOU Validated Rating**
2. Financial sustainability	Despite efforts to institutionalise transparency functions within EAD, the project's long-term financial viability is undermined by high dependency on external funding, lack of secured follow-on resources, and absence of a costed exit or sustainability plan. Without dedicated national budget lines or financing mechanisms, the financial sustainability is more uncertain.	ML	The rating is validated.	ML
3. Institutional sustainability	The project laid a robust institutional foundation through the establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit, sectoral data hubs, and partnerships with academia and NSO, with clear potential to support long-term climate reporting. However, sustaining these gains will require stronger regulatory frameworks, ongoing capacity support, and deeper engagement across government levels to ensure full institutionalisation and use of CBIT tools.	L	To ensure consistency with the evidence presented in the narrative, the rating is adjusted from Likely to **Moderately Likely**. There is a discrepancy in the rating for "Institutional Sustainability." Paragraph 310 clearly states that "*The institutional sustainability of the CBIT Malawi project is assessed as **Moderately Likely***" and the narrative throughout the section supports this assessment. However, the sub-criterion is rated as Likely in the rating statement and summary table.	ML
Factors Affecting Performance		**S**	With the Evaluation Office adjusted ratings for this criterion, the overall rating for Factors Affecting Performance is **Satisfactory.**	**S**
1. Preparation and readiness	The project benefited from a timely and structured inception phase, including early stakeholder engagement, establishment of the Steering Committee, and development of key planning documents. While initial delays in fund transfers and staff mobilisation slightly affected implementation pace, proactive mitigation by UNEP and EAD ensured readiness foundations were solidly laid.	S	The rating is validated.	S
2. Quality of project management and supervision		S	The rating is validated.	S
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UNEP delivered consistent technical backstopping and strategic oversight. Budgetary flexibility was highly appreciated by stakeholders as well as the willingness to approve extensions when requested to complete interventions	S	The rating is validated.	S
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	The EAD provided competent day-to-day management, maintained timely reporting, and engaged stakeholders across institutions, though inconsistent PSC participation and strained relations with ASCENT slightly affected coherence.	S	The rating is validated.	S

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. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	The project demonstrated a strong and inclusive stakeholder engagement strategy, with active participation from government, academia, civil society, and regional partners across key stages of implementation. While subnational engagement and early-phase inclusion were limited, overall cooperation, knowledge exchange, and institutional collaboration was positive.	HS	The rating has been adjusted to **Satisfactory**. Paragraph 12 notes that "*National ownership of the ETF agenda increased during the project, with strong leadership from EAD and sustained engagement of academic and technical institutions. However, private sector participation was limited, and subnational engagement was minimal despite decentralisation being a national priority*." This is further supported by paragraph 336, which states that "*While national stakeholders were engaged extensively, subnational actors including district councils and planning officers were underrepresented. This was a missed opportunity, given their critical role in budget advocacy and local data management*." These observations confirm that while ownership was strong at the national level, gaps in subnational and private sector engagement justify a Satisfactory rating rather than a higher one.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	The project was successful in integrating gender and human rights considerations, aligning with Malawi's legal framework and UNEP's gender policy through a gender action plan, inclusive participation targets, and intentional representation strategies. 40% of participants in the project were women.	S	The rating has been adjusted to Moderately Satisfactory. Paragraph 338 states that "*The CBIT Malawi project was **moderately responsive** to human rights and gender equity considerations during implementation, though several structural and contextual constraints limited its effectiveness.*" While paragraph 342 concludes that the project demonstrated clear responsiveness to human rights and gender equality, the overall assessment reflects intentionality and effort, but with limited scope, reach, and institutional integration. The section highlights a solid foundation; however, there remains room for improvement, particularly in addressing structural barriers and expanding inclusion beyond gender.	MS
5. Environmental and social safeguards	The Project maintained a low risk rating for environmental and social safeguards, with no significant issues arising during implementation. The project adhered to principles like free prior and informed consent, reduced its environmental footprint through measures like transport sharing and online tools, and aligned with UNEP's "leave no one behind" principles. There were no reported safeguarding concerns.	HS	The rating is validated.	HS
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	The CBIT Malawi project demonstrated strong leadership by national institutions, especially the EAD, in coordinating implementation, meeting co-financing obligations, and institutionalising climate transparency functions. However, mixed stakeholder perceptions, gaps in MoU finalisation, and dependence on external partners tempered the extent of national control, yielding a satisfactory overall assessment.	S	The rating is validated.	S
7. Communication and public awareness	The project facilitated regional learning and technical visibility through peer exchanges and targeted awareness workshops, contributing to institutional knowledge-building and gender-responsive participation. However, limited public-facing outreach, absence of a formal communication strategy, and weak feedback mechanisms constrained broader behavioural impact and public engagement.	S	The rating is validated.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Overall Project Performance Rating	**Based on UNEP's 04_TR weighted rating scale, the overall performance of the CBIT Malawi report is Moderately Satisfactory.**	**MS**	**Based on UNEP's Terminal Review weighted rating scale and the Evaluation Office adjusted ratings, the overall performance rating is revised to Satisfactory. The Evaluation Office notes that there may have been a miscalculation in the Review Consultant's overall performance rating, which should also have read Satisfactory.**	**S**

C. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	Institutional embedding of climate transparency units within existing government structures can enhance continuity and ownership.
Context/comment:	The integration of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within EAD demonstrated that locating project functions inside existing administrative systems fosters a greater sense of institutional responsibility and long-term engagement. Rather than creating parallel project structures, the approach allowed the CTU to operate within government routines and priorities, which has the potential to maintain momentum after the project initial period. The model provides a promising pathway for reinforcing national ownership of emerging climate mandates.

Lesson Learned #2:	Engagement of national data custodians from the outset is crucial for coherence, credibility, and alignment with national statistical systems.
Context/comment:	Although the National Statistics Office (NSO) was included in the project steering structure, its role in developing the MRV platform and climate data systems remained peripheral. This limited the extent to which climate data outputs were linked to the national statistical architecture. The experience highlighted the importance of positioning national data authorities not just as stakeholders but as integral actors in system design, data custodianship, and institutional legitimacy. Given that the NSO has a national mandate on official statistics, a stronger alignment has the potential to enhance compliance of national actors with climate reporting obligations. This is even more critical, in a context where climate reporting is not yet written into law.

Lesson Learned #3:	Engaging subnational institutions remains a critical but underutilised entry point for inclusive climate data governance.
Context/comment:	Despite Malawi's decentralisation agenda, district councils and planning officers were largely excluded from project activities (see Stakeholder Participation). Given their proximity to data sources and community realities, future projects would benefit from design inclusive models that involve local governments, budget for subnational capacity building, and support bottom-up reporting systems. Without robust mechanisms for bottom up reporting, national level data collection and reporting might prove ineffective.

Lesson Learned #4:	Efforts to enhance gender equity in climate transparency benefit from clearer incentives and structured mechanisms for participation.
Context/comment:	While the project tracked women's participation and encouraged balanced representation in trainings and committees, there was limited evidence of structural approaches to incentivise or sustain their engagement. Interviews revealed that many women were underrepresented in technical roles from the outset, limiting their ability to influence project processes. The experience points to the need for deliberate approaches that recognise and respond to barriers facing women and youth, including measures that create enabling conditions for their meaningful involvement across the project lifecycle.

Lesson Learned #5:	Sustainability of transparency systems is constrained when financial continuity is not addressed early and explicitly.
Context/comment:	The project achieved technical and institutional milestones yet lacked a financial exit strategy or committed post-project resources for continued operations. As a result, the institutional structures and tools created during implementation are left dependent on uncertain future funding. This highlighted how the absence of financial transition planning can limit the durability of even well-performing transparency

	systems, especially in contexts where national budget allocation processes are constrained.

Lesson Learned #6:	Long-term capacity for climate transparency is best nurtured through early engagement, hands-on practice, and phased skill application.
Context/comment:	Many participants were trained in the final stages of implementation, which curtailed opportunities for iterative learning and application of skills. The development of technical competencies, such as GHG inventory and data platform use, requires repeated exposure and real-time problem-solving. The Malawi project showed that where technical systems are new or complex, starting training early and embedding opportunities for practical use can deepen learning and foster greater institutional confidence.

Lesson Learned #7:	Collaborative arrangements between international and national consultants can strengthen both delivery and national capacity.
Context/comment:	Linked to lesson 6 above, some technical outputs, such as emissions factors, remained incomplete partly due to capacity gaps and limited co-working arrangements between external experts and local institutions. In other countries such as Sierra Leone, this paring approach ensured knowledge transfer and delivery of outputs. Where collaboration did occur for example, between consultants and university students, it contributed to both knowledge transfer and national skill development. The CBIT experience suggests that national expertise benefits when international actors are intentionally positioned to work alongside and build up local capacities throughout implementation.

Lesson Learned #8:	Flexibility in partner selection and early alignment of digital infrastructure with government systems can prevent operational challenges.
Context/comment:	The naming of ASCENT in the ProDoc constrained the project's ability to reassess implementation arrangements based on performance or contextual changes. In parallel, the late-stage migration of the MRV platform to government servers introduced complexities for the government in handling the online platform. The Malawi experience illustrated that pre-defined implementation roles and off-platform hosting arrangements in prodocs may create rigidity, even where national institutions are well positioned to take ownership or to source other service providers during implementation.

D. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	UNEP and EAD should collaboratively develop and resource a Phase 2 CBIT Malawi project
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	This follow-on project should finalise the pending emissions factors (agriculture, energy, and transport), ensure signing of MoUs, operationalise the online MRV platform across ministries and subnational levels, reinforce the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU), strengthen data management hubs, embed capacity building tools and protocols, institutionalise science-policy dialogues to improve the uptake of knowledge products by decision makers, facilitate stronger links between the NSO and EAD. In addition to potential CBIT resources, EAD should also continue efforts to secure dedicated domestic budget lines for transparency structures such as the CTU and MRV platform maintenance.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Strategic/project continuity
Responsibility:	UNEP Task Manager, EAD Climate Change Department
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months of terminal review validation

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
• Section 5.2 Effectiveness
• Section 6.3 Sustainability
• Lessons Learned #1, #3, #6, #8

Recommendation #2:	Upcoming Climate Change Law should explicitly include data collection and reporting obligations aligned with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), with mandates for all key sector ministries
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	This should include legal requirements for data sharing, formal roles for the CTU, and provisions for institutional reporting standards. The absence of formal mandates and signed MoUs limited the institutionalisation of transparency practices and created ambiguity in sectoral responsibilities. Without these mandates, data sharing will continue to be a challenge. Integrating these into mandates also enhances the potential for sectoral ministries to secure budgets for these activities, and consequently enhance sustainability.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Legal
Responsibility:	EAD, Ministry of Justice
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within the drafting and validation timeline of the Climate Change Law

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
Section 5.2.3 Institutional Sustainability
• Section 5.5.6 Country Ownership
• Lessons Learned #2

Recommendation #3:	Future project designers should ensure CBIT projects include structured gender and youth participation mechanisms, formalised academic partnerships, and co-delivery modalities between national and international consultants
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	This includes budgeting for university-student involvement, research application, and performance-based incentives for women and youth to take part in training, reporting, and data governance. Women and youth were underrepresented in technical areas of climate and climate transparency, and national expertise was insufficient to independently deliver key outputs like emissions factors. Stronger links with national universities would continue to build national capacity and overtime reduce dependency on international consultants. By including project budgets which allow national consultants to work alongside international consultants, would alongside work with universities also enhance knowledge transfer in the short term. Furthermore, future projects should ensure that all service providers are contracted through competitive bidding processes even if they are named as potential partners in the funding proposal. drawing on the experience with ASCENT, this provides EAD with the ownership of the process and emerging results of the collaboration.
Priority Level:	Medium
Type of Recommendation	Capacity development and gender and inclusion
Responsibility:	EAD, UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
• Section 5.5.2 Responsiveness to Gender and HR
• Section 5.3 Stakeholder Participation
• Lessons Learned #4, #6, #7

Recommendation #4:	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) should capture both quantitative and qualitative data to assess real impact.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	M&E systems should allocate resources for evaluating institutional and behavioural change, not just numeric benchmarks, and support participatory learning reviews throughout implementation. The project tracked numeric targets and compliance indicators but lacked outcome-level assessments of learning, institutional uptake, and behavioural shifts.
Priority Level:	Medium
Type of Recommendation	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
Responsibility:	EAD
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6-12 months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
• Section 5.4 Monitoring and Reporting
• Section 5.2.2 Outcome Achievement
• Lessons Learned #6

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 16: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
	Xxx	Xxx

ANNEX II. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
A. Strategic Relevance			
Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities			
To what extent was the project aligned to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities	Was the project design consistent UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities?	Project documents, Inception reports National policy documents and development plans GEF strategic goals and objectives *UNEP Medium Term Strategy*[40] *(MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities*	Documentary review
Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities			
To what extent was the project aligned to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities	Was the project design consistent with the GEF focal area objective and priorities?	Project documents, Inception reports National policy documents and development plans GEF strategic goals and objectives	Documentary review
Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities			
To what extent was the project relevant to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities	The extent of evidence of alignment with global, regional, sub regional and national environmental priorities	National development policies and plans Relevant national environmental and development policies CBIT global and regional initiatives	Documentary review
Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence			
Does the project add value to ongoing efforts at the country level, and to what extent?	To what extent were ongoing initiatives and lessons from past initiatives integrated into design? Were there synergies between the project and other initiatives in the same country and/or region? If so, to what extent and	Prodoc Stakeholder engagement plan PIRs, progress reports Project stakeholders	Documentary review Interviews: FGDs

[40] 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.

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
	how did the project take advantage of them (e.g., by establishing partnerships)?	Other in country climate project teams	
B. Quality of Project Design			
To what extent was the project design adequate to address the barriers to achieving government's objectives and aims under the PCA?	How does the project score against the key design features set out by GEF/UNEP? See annex D	Prodoc Design quality assessment template Project result framework	Qualitative assessment against criteria Quantitative ranking based on provided project design quality assessment template
C. Nature of External Context			
To what extent was the project implementation context facilitating/constraining to project delivery	What external contextual factors beyond the control of the affected the delivery of the project including the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, presidential election and other changes	PIRs Steering Committee Meeting report/minutes PMU Other Kis, UNEP	Documentary review Interviews Thematic analysis of emerging factors and adaptive measures taken
	Evidence of adaptive measures adopted by the project team and to what effect?	PIRs SCM reports/minutes PMU Other Kis, UNEP	
D. Effectiveness: To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to meet its objectives and outcomes			
Availability of outputs			
How successful was the project in delivering its outputs?	Evidence of outputs delivered against the results framework	PIRs PMU SCM members and minutes of meetings KIs and beneficiaries UNEP	Documentary review: comparison of project targets (indicators) and level of realization Interviews and FGDs Online survey
Was the quality and quantity of outputs adequate	To what extent do beneficiaries consider the outputs to be of quality and adequate		
How useful were the outputs for different stakeholders	Level of assessment of usefulness from TR participants Evidence of use of deliverables and outputs		

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
To what extent were outputs delivered on time?	Level of satisfaction with timeliness in delivery of project outputs Evidence of delays	PIRs PMU SCM members and minutes of meetings KIs and beneficiaries UNEP	
Achievement of project outcomes			
To what extent did the stated project outcomes achieved?	Evidence of the level of progress against outcome targets in the results framework regarding adoption and use of transparency framework and instruments by state and non-state actors	PIRs Prodoc SCM minutes PMU UNEP KIs	Online survey of KIIs and beneficiaries Interviews and FGDs Quantitative analysis comparing set targets and levels of achievement at the end of the project
Likelihood of Impact			
What is the likelihood of project results and outcomes contributing to long lasting effects	To what extent has the project played a catalytic role and exuded potential for scalability/replication?	PIRs Prodoc SCM minutes PMU UNEP KIs	Online survey of KIIs and beneficiaries Interviews and FGDs Quantitative analysis comparing set targets and levels of achievement at the end of the project
	What evidence exists considering the likelihood that long lasting effects will be achieved because of the intervention		
	Did the project produce any positive or negative unintended/unexpected results? (applicable to each outcome)?		
E. Financial Management:			
To what extent did the project team adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Level of perceived adherence to policies and procedures by project teams	Financial reports Audit reports Project management team UNEP team FMO SCM minutes	Documentary review Interviews with project management unit and finance staff
To what extent have financial reports been kept and complete	Level of completeness of required financial information in line with UNEP guidelines		

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
To what extent was communication between the project manager and fund manager fluid and facilitated adaptive management	Level of overall awareness of overall financial situation and proactiveness in addressing concerns		
F. Efficiency: To what extent was the project delivered in an efficient manner in terms of outcomes, outputs and goals			
To what extent was the project delivered in a timely manner and within budget	Level of resource use efficiency Annual budget variations	Financial reports Audit report PIRS	Compute rate of achievement of output targets versus levels of spend. If value above 1, highly efficient project, exceeding targets; 0.8-1, efficient project with achievement of outputs, 06-08 moderately efficient, gaps in achievement of outputs, <0.6 inefficient project with gaps in implementation.
	What measures were taken to ensure value for money – cost savings, leveraging existing structures etc and timely delivery of this intervention?	Key informants Project management unit UNEP SCM minutes Extension requests and approvals Procurement office FMO	Qualitative analysis of interviews and FGDs Online survey to assess perception of project efficiency
G. Monitoring and Reporting			
i. Monitoring design and budgeting			
How relevant and appropriate were the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress?	Evidence of SMART indicators Sufficiency of indicators to fully capture change pursued including disaggregated effects	Prodoc M&E plan Project budget Results framework PIRs Field monitoring activities Activity reports, training reports	Interviews and thematic analysis of responses
To what extent was the M&E plan and budget sufficient	Evidence of how the M&E plan and budget was comprehensive Level of spending on M&E budget		

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
to track progress towards targets		Steering committee members UNEP	
ii. Monitoring of project implementation			
To what extent did the M&E plan operate as planned?	Evidence of progress monitoring and adjustments Level of satisfaction with project M&E	PIRs Monitoring reports UNEP PMU Steering committee meeting reports	Qualitative analysis of interviews and FGDs Online survey to assess perception of project M&E
	Evidence of efforts to collect data beyond quantitative - harvesting changes and outcomes		
	Evidence of how M&E data was used for decision making		
To what extent did the project deliver on GEF Core indicators **(GEF Portal question 1)**	% achievement of targets	Core indicator tracker	Compared planned targets versus achieved
iii. Project reporting			
To what extent were UNEP and donor reporting commitments and guidelines fulfilled?	Evidence of any gaps in reporting	UNEP Project progress reports	Documentary review Interview with PMU and UNEP
H. Sustainability:			
i. Socio-political		Government agencies Project team UNEP team KIIs Project reports	Documentary review – Interviews: Focus group discussions
Are project achievements likely to live beyond the project initial period from a socio-political perspective?	What is the likelihood that the results of the project will continue to be useful or remain even after the project has ended? Evidence of specific actions undertaken by the project that promote socio-political sustainability?		
ii. Financial sustainability			

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
Are project achievements likely to live beyond the initial project period from a financial perspective?	What is the likelihood that the results of the project will continue to be useful or remain even after the project has ended? Evidence of specific actions undertaken by the project that promote financial sustainability?		
iii. Institutional sustainability			
Are project achievements likely to live beyond the project initial period from an institutional perspective?	What is the likelihood that the results of the project will continue to be useful or remain even after the project has ended? Evidence of specific actions undertaken by the project that promote financial sustainability?		
	What are the main risks that may affect the sustainability of the project benefits (considering socio-political. financial, institutional aspects)?		
I. Factors affecting performance:			
What factors (internal and/or external) contributed to or constrained the delivery of the project	**i. Preparation and Readiness** Level of perceived preparedness of the project from design to first disbursement of funds Any evidence of changes introduced following PCA Evidence of stakeholder engagement prior to commencement of implementation	Prodoc Inception report Capacity development plans Implementation arrangements and contracts Project teams KIs	Documentary review Interviews:
	ii. Quality of Project management and supervision To what extent did UNEP provide project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, monitoring and supervision (technical, administrative and operational)?	Project team Prodoc KIs PMU PIRs UNEP SCM minutes	Documentary report: Interviews: Online survey
	iii. Project implementation and management : How effectively did EPA carry out its role and responsibilities in the management and administration of the project? What were the main challenges in terms of project management and	Project team KI, UNEP, EAD PMU Progress reports, PIRs, prodoc SCM minutes	Documentary report: Interviews: Online survey

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
	administration? To what extent were risks identified and managed? To what extent did the steering committee and other governance structures operate as planned?		
	iv. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation		
	To which extent did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with stakeholders to achieve project results? What were the challenges and benefits/outcomes of this engagement? **(GEF Portal question 2).** What measures were taken to ensure inclusivity in implementation	Project team KI, UNEP, EPA PMU Progress reports, PIRs, prodoc SCM minutes	Documentary review Interviews Online survey
	v. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality		
	To which extent cross cutting issues including human rights and gender equality were adequately considered in project design and implementation? **GEF Portal question 3**: Were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)	Project team KI, UNEP, EPA PMU Progress reports, PIRs, prodoc SCM minutes	Documentary review Interviews Online survey
	vi. Environmental and social safeguards		
	To what extent were environmental safeguard concerns effectively identified and addressed during project implementation? Were UNEP SES adhered to#? **GEF Portal question 4:** 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	UNEP SES policy Prodoc Monitoring reports PIRs Audit repors	Documentary review Interviews

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
	verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. (Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)		
	vii. Country ownership and driven-ness Perceived level of quality of engagement of government and public sector agencies in the project and role in scaling up and ensuring sustainability/ Are stakeholders utilizing the benefits and products from this project	Allied ministries – agriculture, energy, waste, gender, transport, finance, climate change secretariat, education/research Parastatals Project team UNEP team	Interviews Documentary review Online survey
	viii. Knowledge management, communication and public awareness How does the project evaluate, document and share its results, lessons learned and experiences? What actions were undertaken to ensure public awareness and ownership and to what effect?	PIR reports, training reports, publications, studies, project website (if exist)	Documentary report: Interviews:
	GEF Portal question 5: 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? (This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)	PIR reports, training reports, publications, studies, project website (if exist) Monitoring reports Kis UNEP	Documentary review Online survey

ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

Table 17: People consulted during the Review

Name	Title/Position	Organisation/Entity	Gender	Email	Date
UNEP - GEF Climate Change Mitigation Unit (Implementing Agency)					
Julien Lheureux	Task Manager	UNEP	Male		15.05.2025
Kerubo Moseti	Programme Assistant	UNEP	Female		15.05.2025
Environmental Affairs Department (Executing Agency)					
Tawonga Mbale	Executing Entity Director	EAD	Female		27.05.2025
John Mathadalizwe	Ex- Finance and administration Officer	EAD	Male		26.05.2025
Yamikani Idriss	Executing Entity Project Coordinator	EAD	Male		26.05.2025
Stella Maunga	Finance and administration Officer	EAD	Female		26.05.2025
Jairos Nyirenda	ICT Officer	EAD	Male		26.05.2025
Project Partners -ASCENT					
Hamady Kante	Project Partner- Manager	ASCENT	Male		16.05.2025
Smita Krishnan	Project Partner- Coodinator	ASCENT	Female		16.05.2025
Key counterparts from other ministries / institutions					
Lovemore Ngalande	Deputy Director	Department of Road traffic	Male		28.05.2025
Geoffrey Chilenga	Energy Specilist	Malawi Energy Regulatory Authroity (MERA)	Male		28.05.2025
Dinala Zalinga	Principal Crops Officer	Department of Crops	Male		27.05.2025
Suzgo Chapa	Chief Livestock Officer	Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development	Male		28.05.2025
Jeremot Masoambeta	Deputy Director	National Statistical Office	Male		30.05.2025
Fred Simwaka	Deputy Director	Ministry of Gender	Male		27.05.205
Anne Mapulanga	Economist	DODMA	Female		29.05.2025
Dominic Nyasulu	National Coordinator	NYNCC	Male		

Julius Ng'oma	National Coordinator	CISONECC	Male		28.05.2025
Thoko Mkaka	Deputy Director	Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu City Council	Female		28.05.2025
Temwani Ndiako	Economist	Ministry of Mining	Female		29.05.2025
Mark Chilambe	Business development manager	Portland Cement Company	Male		29.05.2025
Key consultants/ Experts/ Subcontractors					
S.C. Kaunda	Consultant	MUBAS	Male		14.05.2025
Kenneth Gondwe	Consultant	MUBAS	Male		29.05.2025
Henry Kadzuwa	Consultant	MUBAS	Male		16.05.2025
Ian Dauti	Consultant	MUBAS	Male		29.05.205
Sam Jumbe	Consultant	MUBAS	Male		29.05.2025
Wilfred Kadewa	Consultant	MUST	Male		16.05.2025
Lawrence Chilimampunga	Senior Environment Management Officer	Electricity Generation Company	Male	-	28.05.2025

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

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6. Environmental Affairs Department (2023) Minutes of 05-Apr-23 3rd PSC Meeting
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ANNEX V. REVIEW ITINERARY

There were no field visits planned as part of the mission. The list of people met is below

Name	Title/Position	Organisation/Entity	Gender	Date
Tawonga Mbale	Executing Entity Director	EAD	Female	27.05.2025
John Mathandalizwe	Ex- Finance and administration Officer	EAD	Male	26.05.2025
Yamikani Idriss	Executing Entity Project Coordinator	EAD	Male	26.05.2025
Stella Maonga	Finance and administration Officer	EAD	Female	26.05.2025
Jairos Nyirenda	ICT Officer	EAD	Male	26.05.2025
Lovemore Ngalande	Deputy Director	Department of Road traffic	Male	28.05.2025
Geoffrey Chilenga	Energy Specialist	Malawi Energy Regulatory Authroity (MERA)	Male	28.05.2025
Dinala Zalinga	Principal Crops Officer	Department of Crops	Male	27.05.2025
Suzgo Chapa	Chief Livestock Officer	Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development	Male	28.05.2025
Jeremot Masoambeta	Deputy Director	National Statistical Office	Male	30.05.2025
Fred Simwaka	Deputy Director	Ministry of Gender	Male	27.05.205
Anne Mapulanga	Economist	DODMA	Female	29.05.2025
Dominic Nyasulu	National Coordinator	NYNCC	Male	27.05.2025
Julius Ng'oma	National Coordinator	CISONECC	Male	28.05.2025
Thoko Mkaka	Deputy Director	Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu City Council	Female	28.05.2025
Temwani Ndiako	Economist	Ministry of Mining	Female	29.05.2025
Mark Chilambe	Business development manager	Portland Cement Company	Male	29.05.2025
Kenneth Gondwe	Consultant	MUBAS	Male	29.05.2025
Ian Dauti	Consultant	MUBAS	Male	29.05.205
Sam Jumbe	Consultant	MUBAS	Male	29.05.2025
Lawrence Chilimampunga	Senior Environment Management Officer	Electricity Generation Company	Male	28.05.2025

ANNEX VI. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Table 18: Project Funding Sources Table

Funding source **All figures as USD**	**Planned funding**	**% of planned funding**	**Secured funding**	**% of secured funding**
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund	1,056,000	100%	1,056,000	100%
Funds from the Regular Budget				
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):				
Sub-total: Cash contributions				
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs				
Regular Budget staff-post costs				
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)				
Sub-total: In-kind contributions				
Co-financing*				
Co-financing cash contribution				
Co-financing in-kind contribution	150,000	100%	150,000	100%
Sub-total: Co-financing contributions	150,000	100%	150,000	100%
Total	**1,206,000**	**100%**	**1,206,000**	**100%**

*Funding from a donor to a partner which is not received into UNEP accounts, but is used by a UNEP partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UNEP – approved project.

Table 19: GEF Expenditure by Outcome/Output

Project component	Total budget (rev)	Actual expenditures	Balance
Component 1	397,000.00	382,074.54	14,925.46
Component 2	331,300.00	330,631.34	668.66
Component 3	171,949.00	159,983.00	11,966.00
M&E	14,751.00	11,964.46	2,787.03
PMC	96,000.00	77,989.13	18,010.87
Total	**1,011,000.00**	**962,642.47**	**48,358.02**

ANNEX VII. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Table 20: Financial Management Table

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS			
Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		HS:HU	HS
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[41] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes/No	NO
2. Completeness of project financial information[42]:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		HS:HU	HS
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes – at design, both the GEF budget and co-finance cost costs tables arranged by budget line for each component an
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes/No or N/A	Yes All information related to revisions was provided
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes –all legal agreements provided
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/No or N/A	Yes Cash advance confirmations provided

[41] 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.

[42] See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes annual co-finance reports were provided
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes 15 quarterly expenditure reports provided by budget line for all relevant reporting periods; final project financial account statements provided as well
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes/No or N/A	Yes All audit reports and management responses provided, but for the final audit report which was being finalised during the TR. However, the final agreed statement of accounts was agreed with UNEP.
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	No
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		HS:HU	HS
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS:HU	HS There was s a clear line of communication between the Project Manager and financial staff, such as the Finance Manager within EAD, and the UNEP Budget Holder. Regularly, there are meetings were conducted between the Project Manager and technical support teams (e.g., ASCENT)
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS:HU	HS The UNEP Budget Holder was actively involved in the project implementation, ensuring proper financial management standards were adhered
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS:HU	HS Financial management issues have been addressed following the recommendations of the audit
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS:HU	HS The progress and implementation reports and interviews with project team and task manager demonstrate that there has been contact between the project

		manager and the fund manager. Regular exchanges during budget revisions and during closing of the project demonstrated regular communication even though this was disrupted with the resignation of the project technical coordinator and finance teams towards the end of the project. Rapid action by EAD to replace coordinator with the desk officer and reassignment of principal accountant to the project, helped to facilitate project closure.
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process	HS:HU	HS. The UNEP and EAD team were very responsive to the requests of information and clarifications during the TR. All information and clarifications were provided promptly.
Overall rating	HS	

ANNEX VIII. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH TOOLS

Not applicable

ANNEX IX. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name: Prof Aurelian Mbzibain

Profession	Director ACE D&H Consultants Ltd, Senior Evaluation Specialist		
Nationality	United Kingdom		
Country experience	Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Tunisia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa Europe: Belgium, France, Germany, Slovakia, United Kingdom (UK) Middle East: Afghanistan, Iraq Americas: United States of America Caribbean Region: Guyana, Haiti, Turks and Caicos, Saint Vincent and Grenadine Asia/south East Asia: Bhutan, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam		
Education			
University – City - Country	Period	Diploma	Major
University Of Wolverhampton, UK	2021	Professor	International Development
University of Wolverhampton, UK	2019	Associate Professor	International Development
University Of Wolverhampton, UK	2009-2013	PhD	Business and Strategic Management
Ghent University, Humboldt University Berlin, Slovak University of Agriculture, Agro-Campus Rennes, France	2007-2009	MSc	International Msc Rural Development (With the Greatest Distinction)
University of Dschang	1997-2002	Diplome d'Ingenieur Agronome	Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

Short biography
Prof. Aurelian Mbzibain is a leading expert in international development, with a PhD in Business and Strategy Management, an MSc in Rural Development, and a degree in Agricultural Engineering. He brings over 20 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation, specializing in mid-term reviews (MTRs), Terminal Reviews (TR) and Theory of Change (ToC) analyses. His expertise spans adaptation, mitigation, biodiversity, conservation finance, and climate resilience, ensuring projects align with strategic objectives and deliver measurable outcomes.
As Founder and Co-Director of ACE D&H Consultants Ltd, Aurelian has led over 60 evaluations for organizations such as FAO, UNDP, WWF, World Resources Institute, UNEP and ClientEarth UK. He has delivered over a dozen GEF/GCF assignments, including evaluations in Bhutan, DRC, Kenya, and Togo, applying OECD criteria and integrating human rights and gender approaches. Aurelian has successfully conducted UNDP Country Programme Evaluations in Ethiopia, DRC, South Africa, and Benin, as well as EU-funded forestry and landscape management evaluations in Cameroon and Vietnam.

His ability to facilitate hybrid sense-making sessions and stakeholder consultations enhances project impact and learning. With over 100 publications, he is a recognized thought leader in sustainable and inclusive development.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Research;

- Results based management, logframes and theories of change;
- Natural resource governance and climate change
- Conduct of project identification, formulation and bid development;
- Indigenous peoples' rights and participation
- Community forestry and biodiversity based enterprises
- Facilitation of multistakeholder processes in climate and natural resource governance;
- Training engineering: Identification of training needs, elaboration of training guidelines, training modules and evaluation of adult capacity building activities;
- Preparation, organization and management of events: Training workshops, seminars, expert missions;
- Realization of institutional and organizational diagnosis;
- Strategy development;
- Administration and management of development projects;
- Mobilised and regranted over 39 million euros in project and consultancy funding;
- Socio-economic studies (quantitative and qualitative surveys);
- Processing and analysis of survey data (quantitative and qualitative);
- Civil society effectiveness;
- Drafting of narrative reports, policy and advocacy briefs.

Selected assignments and experiences

Period	**Assignment**
10/2024-01/2025	**FAO Global** – Team Leader to develop GEF Global Diversity Framework Fund proposal for Community-based conservation for biodiversity and livelihoods in the context of climate change in DRC. Lead a team of 8 national and international consultants to develop GEF Global Diversity Framework Fund proposal for Community-based conservation for biodiversity and livelihoods in the context of climate change in the DRC, $6,656,000 GEF Funding, co-financing $12,000,000. This includes significant consultations with national and international stakeholders, field visit to Nyunyu and Kabalo and Kalemie, analyse and craft funding proposal.
01-04/01/2025	**FAO Global** – Team Leader - Evaluation of the GEF Funded - Restoration of arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) of Kenya through bio-enterprise development and other incentives under The Restoration Initiative GCP /KEN/090/GFF
10/2024-04/2025	**UNEP** – Team Leader for Review of 02 GEF projects - CBIT Sierra Leone (10027) and CBIT Malawi (10149) - Building and strengthening Sierra Leone and Malawi's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement" projects
10/2024-03/2025	**World Resource Institute** – Team Leader to develop WRI Country Strategy for DRC
11/2024-03/2025	**ClienEarth UK** - Team Leader facilitation of ClientEarth UK Africa Strategy
05-07/2024	**FAO Global –** Develop overarching evaluation methodological framework for 4 Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded projects in DRC, Kenya, Sao Tome and Principe and DRC and carry out the terminal evaluation of the GCP/DRC/054/GFF (August 2024) "The Restoration Initiative, DRC child project: Improved Management and Restoration of Agro-sylvo-pastoral Resources in the Pilot Province of South-Kivu - Democratic Republic of Congo" using the methodology developed
04-07/2024	**UNDP Independent Office of Evaluation** – UNDP County Programme Evaluation, Ethiopia – Nature, Climate and Environment Evaluation Specialist
03-06/2024	**World Resources Institute –** Midterm Evaluation of the Open Timber Portal – Independent Forest Monitoring Project Cameroon
02-06/2024	**UNDP Independent Office of Evaluation** – UNDP County Programme Evaluation, South Africa – Nature, Climate and Environment Evaluation Specialist

01-04/2024	**Mid-term review** of the Landscape management through deforestation-free jurisdiction project in Lam Dong and Dak Nong Viet project, with funding from the European Union (EU).
02/2024 – 30/2029	**MEL Hub Lead (0.20FTE)** for DEFRA Biodiverse Landscapes Fund Cameroon, Congo and Gabon
11/2022-date	**FHI 360 United States:** Long Term Master Consultancy Services – Call down Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Research Consultant Francophone Africa – Chad, DRC, Congo on USAID funded programmes
10/2023 – 04/2024	**FAO** Sri Lanka - Evaluation of The FAO Emergency Response to the Economic and Food Crisis in Sri Lanka - USD 55 million
09/2023 – 01/2024	**ClientEarth UK –** Mid-term review of the "Building legal foundations for sustainable forests and livelihoods project" – Liberia, Gabon and the European Union funded by NORAD – € 7 million
09/2023 – 12/2023	**European Forestry Institute** – Forest Governance Assessment, Democratic Republic of Congo
07/2023 – 10/2023	**FAO** Country Programme Evaluation Rwanda – Portfolio USD 25 million
10/2023 – 12/2023	**FAO** Rwanda – Mid Term Review of Capacity development for innovation in Rwanda: strengthening innovation partnerships in six districts: Burera, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, and Ruhango" – EU funded – €2 million
07/2023-11/2023	**UNDP Independent Office of Evaluation - UNDP** Independent Country Programme Evaluation, Democratic Republic of Congo - Environment and Climate Evaluation Specialist - > USD 60 million
03/2023-11/2023	**Milieudefensie Netherlands:** Mid-term review for Green Livelihoods Alliance, Forests for a Just Future Programme, 46 million euros operating in 11 countries in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia (Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia). Evaluation also focuses on global programmes implemented at EU level by the Alliance. The programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
05/2023-07/2023	**WWF Cameroon** – Documentation of project best practices and lessons learned from the African Youth Transformation Leadership Programme through online publication and video documentary. See here https://wwfafrica.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/documentation-of-the-ltc---africa-youth-thematic-hub-2018-2022-results--lessons-learnt.pdf and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjudec1v6Rs
04/2013-07/2023	**United States Forest Services:** Research on the sustainability of independent forest monitoring funding in the **Democratic Republic of Congo, with USAID funding**
04/2013-09/2023	**World Resources Institute USA:** Cross border trade between the Democratic Republic of Congo and KAZA region with funding from US State Department
02/2023-07/2023	**ClientEarth UK:** Scoping research into forest governance, indigenous peoples' rights, extractive sector and carbon markets in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**
09/2022-02/2023	**Norwegian Refugee Council:** Team Leader Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council Shelter Programme **Cameroon including USAID funded projects - >** USD 25 million
02/2013-01/2024	**Fern Belgium: technical assistance and** Advocacy research into EU levers for improving forest and extractive sector governance in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and Republic of Congo
11/2022-01/2023	**FOKABS INC: Team member** Midterm Evaluation: RRR+ 2 (Reporting for Result-based REDD+ actions) project - Belize, Bolivia, Cameroon, Congo, Dominica, Dominican Rep, DRC, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Honduras, Mozambique, Saint Lucia - > € 5 million
09/2022-12/2022	**UNDP Bhutan:** Team Leader Interim Evaluation of UNDP-supported GCF-financed project: Supporting Climate Resilience and Transformational Change in the Agriculture Sector in Bhutan **–** USD 58 million

05/2022-07/2022	**UNDP Bhutan:** Team Leader Terminal evaluation of the Bhutan Sustainable Low-emission Urban Transport Systems (SLEUTS) Project – USD 12 million **– see report** **https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/21625**
03/2022-07/2022	**FAO:** Team leader terminal evaluation of the Sustainable Forest management (SFM) under the Authority of **Cameroonian** Councils" GCP/CMR/033/GFF **- USD 25 million SEE report** **https://www.fao.org/3/cc6223en/cc6223en.pdf**
03/2022-11/2022	**UNDP IEO:** Team member Consultant (Inclusive and Sustainable Growth) - Independent Country Programme Evaluation, **Benin – USD 20 million** **see report** **https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/22475**
02/2022-03/2022	**IOM/UNDP:** Cross-Border Engagement between Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire to strengthen Social Cohesion and Border Security, Phase II project **Ivory Coast and Liberia**
08/2021-01/2022	**Conservation International:** Team member Terminal Evaluation of the GEF-funded project entitled "Building and strengthening Liberia's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Climate Agreement" program, **Liberia – 12 million euros**
04/2018-12/2022	FCDO: Team Leader Strengthening Forest Monitoring and Wildlife Law Enforcement – **DRC, Cameroon, Congo, CAR and Gabon – 2 million pounds**
01/2021-12/2022	**European Union/FCDO:** Team Leader - Strengthening of Civil Society for Independent Non-Mandated Observation and of the Independent Forest Observation System in general, **Congo – € 2.2 million**
10/2021-11/2021	**UNDP Madagascar:** Team member development of Local economic development plans, **Madagascar**
09/2021-10/2021	**Concordis International:** Team Leader terminal evaluation Peace Building Programme in **Central African Republic**
08/2021-10/2021	**UNDP Barbados:** Team member Revision of Nationally Determined Contributions **Saint Vincent and Grenadine**
07/2021-2022	**GCF: Team member** Development of Green Climate Fund - REDD+ Project for **Cameroon**
01/2017-12/2020	**European Union/FCDO:** Team Leader **-** Citizen Voices for Change – Independent Forest Monitoring Project; Strengthening Forest & Wildlife Monitoring and Law Enforcement Project in Congo Basin – **DRC, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and CAR**
11/2020-03/2021	**Danish Refugee Council:** Team Leader Terminal Evaluation Strengthening rural resilience and supporting the recovery of producers and promising agropastoral sectors by building local capacity and creating jobs in northern CAR", Central African Republic
01/2021	**UNDP: Team member** terminal evaluation of Climate risk finance for sustainable and climate resilient rainfed farming and pastoral systems in **Sudan.**
12/2020-03/2021	**WWF Sweden: Team member** terminal evaluation of "Our City 2030" project led by Plan International and WWF in **Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda and the Philippines**
02/2020-05/2020	**WWF Cameroon:** Participatory Learning Review of the Leading for Change Project, **Cameroon**
04/2020-06/2020	**WWF Africa:** Mid-term evaluation of leading the change project: Africa Youth Thematic Hub, **Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda**
12/2019-12/2020	**Green Climate Fund: Indigenous Peoples' Expert** Review of GCF concept notes & full proposals – **Global**
07/2020-12/2020	**FAO/FCDO/EU: Team Leader** research on COVID 19 Impacts on Indigenous Forest Peoples (IPs) and women in the Congo Basin, **DRC, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and CAR**
07- 09/2019	**IIED:** Final evaluation of the CoNGOs project, DRC, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and CAR

ANNEX X. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE: Terminal Review of the UNEP project
“Malawi Climate Transparency Framework” (10149)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA[43] ID:	44220	Grant ID[44] (if applicable):	S1-32GFL-000672
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division / Mitigation Branch / GEF Climate Mitigation Unit		
Implementing Partners:	Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) - Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change		
Sources of Funding:	*Country[45](ies)*: Malawi	*Institution[46] Name/Type:* Government	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG-13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts SDG Target 13.3. Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. SDG indicator 13.3.2: Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions		
MTS (all that apply):	MTS 2018-2021	UNEP approval date:	5 May 2021
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR**	*POW Direct Outcome:* *1.3 Transparency and accountability of government and non-government climate action, including from the private sector and finance community is strengthened*	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR**	*MTS 2025 Outcome:* *1C - State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement*

[43] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.
[44] For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.
[45] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.
[46] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

POW Output(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)*	*POW Output:*	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	*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:	Transparency PCP
Expected start date:	7 May 2021	Actual start date:	7 May 2021
Planned completion date:	30 June 2024	Actual operational completion date:	31 December 2024
Planned total project budget at approval:	US$ 1,206,000	Actual total expenditures[47] reported as of 31 December 2024	US$ 995,758
GEF grant allocation:	US$ 1,056,000	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 December 2024:	US$ 845,758[48]
Planned co-financing:	In-kind: US$ 150,000	Secured co-financing as of 31 December 2024:	In-kind: US$ 150,000
First disbursement:	25 June 2021	Planned date of financial closure:	31 December 2025
No. of formal project revisions:	2	Date of last approved project revision:	31/12/2025
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	03/12/2024
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	N/A	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	30 June 2025	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	tbd
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Malawi	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

2. Project Rationale

Malawi is a Least Developed Country (LDC) and was rated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR, 2007) as one of the most vulnerable countries to the deleterious impacts of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa. This is largely because it is highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Major climate related hazards that wreak havoc in the country are floods and droughts leading to seasonal shortages of food supply as a result of poor harvests and soil erosion. The overall total rainfall received over Malawi shows a high degree of inter- and intra-seasonal variability which has been increasing. The vulnerability of the agriculture sector to climate change means that the Malawian economy as a whole is vulnerable as well, given that 30-40% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from agriculture. In 2015, floods affected 15 out of 28 districts in Malawi. About 1.1 million people were affected, 230,000 displaced, 176 killed and 172 reported missing. The total cost of loss and damage that the Government of Malawi incurred during these severe floods was estimated to be US$ 335 million, and the recovery and reconstruction costs stood at US$ 494 million. Climate change poses a threat to national development with regard to sustainable development and wealth creation goals.

[47] Includes both the GEF grant and the co-financing.
[48] Note that the EAD still had a total of US$ 99,242 of unliquidated commitments to be spent as of 31 December 2024.

Even if there is still uncertainty about its magnitude, the impacts of climate change are likely to slow or even reverse the current pace of development. Extreme weather events resulting from a changing climate that could affect Malawi more frequently include heat waves, floods, cyclones, droughts and forest fires.

The challenges associated with risk reduction strategies include: political and institutional challenges in translating early warning into early action; communication challenges related to Early Warning Systems (EWS); conveying useful information in local languages and communicating EWS in remote areas; national-level mistrust of locally collected data, which are perceived to be inflated to leverage more relief resources; the call for improved user-friendliness of early warning information, including at smaller spatial scales; the need for increased capacity in national meteorological centers; and the need for better linkages between early warning, response, and prevention. Malawi signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 10 June 1992 and ratified it on 21st April 1994. Malawi also signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on 26th October 2001. Moreover, Malawi has produced its National Communications (NC), GHG inventories, a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), a Technology Needs Assessment (TNA), an Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) and its first Biennial Update Report (BUR), prepared in 2017 and awaiting national validation for official submission to UNFCCC.

Malawi's climate change science and data resources provided an adequate information basis upon which to improve climate transparency by means of this CBIT project. It has been possible to identify gaps and needs in order to promote the implementation of the Transparency Framework in the country. The climate information available at project start was approximately one decade old – it dated back to 2005-2006. More recent data may exist, but it was not captured in the national systems; rather, it still lied in external sources which are not required to share such crucial information with the Government of Malawi. Thus, this CBIT Project sought to integrate existing and future information in the national information systems.

At project design, data available in Malawi included:

- Informational data from scientific studies and environmental conservation entities. This is mostly limited in scope and scattered. It can be integrated;
- GHG Inventories in Initial National Communication (INC, reported in 2002), Second National Communication (SNC, reported in October 2011) and ongoing TNC to the UNFCCC.

There was therefore still large sets of data needed in order to achieve comprehensive monitoring, reporting and verification of GHG emissions in the country.

In 2012 and subsequently, the World Bank commissioned technical assistance on the identification of potential opportunities for Malawi's engagement in carbon markets, as well as an institutional assessment of the country's capacity to effectively secure those opportunities. This included mapping of the stakeholders and their comprehension of the subject. This has helped identify sector capacity gaps that have been partly addressed, some of which this CBIT project sought to bridge. This CBIT Project helped assess what previous work regarding GHG capacity-building initiatives with the World Bank and other partners could be leveraged. Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi (PERFORM), 2014-2019, is one of USAID/Malawi's primary activities under the Presidential Global Climate Change Initiative, working with the Government of Malawi and a wide range of Malawian organizations to mitigate the country's vulnerability to climate change. The program provided support in implementing the national REDD+ strategy/action plan; establishing GHG inventory capacity priorities; providing technical assistance for Malawi's intended nationally determined contribution (INDC). Thus, among the activities in cooperation with USAID, stood the development of a National GHG Inventory System: Malawi established a cross-ministerial network to compile a GHG inventory, led by the environmental affairs Department with MOU's between the different government departments. U.S. climate change experts worked with Malawi's Environmental Affairs Department to improve the quality of GHG inventory data and reporting. Under PERFORM, data collection protocols and a computerized National GHG management systems were developed, and Ministries, Departments and key sectors have designated their focal points. The National GHG Management System was finalized under such cooperation, and results were officially launched on 4th April 2019. It, therefore, set a basis for inventory management upon which this CBIT project could build. All work resulting from this cooperation with the US were expected to be leveraged for this CBIT Project, providing the basis for future work on GHG inventories.

Finally, the CBIT project was expected to build upon previous and concurrent participation in activities and especially African Regional Workshops organized by the former International Partnership on Mitigation and MRV, renamed “Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement” (PATPA). Representatives from Malawi have attended workshops on GHG inventories, BURs, INDCs and other themes related to climate transparency.

3. Project Results Framework

The project's results framework (i.e. indicators and targets) as per the Project Document is provided below:

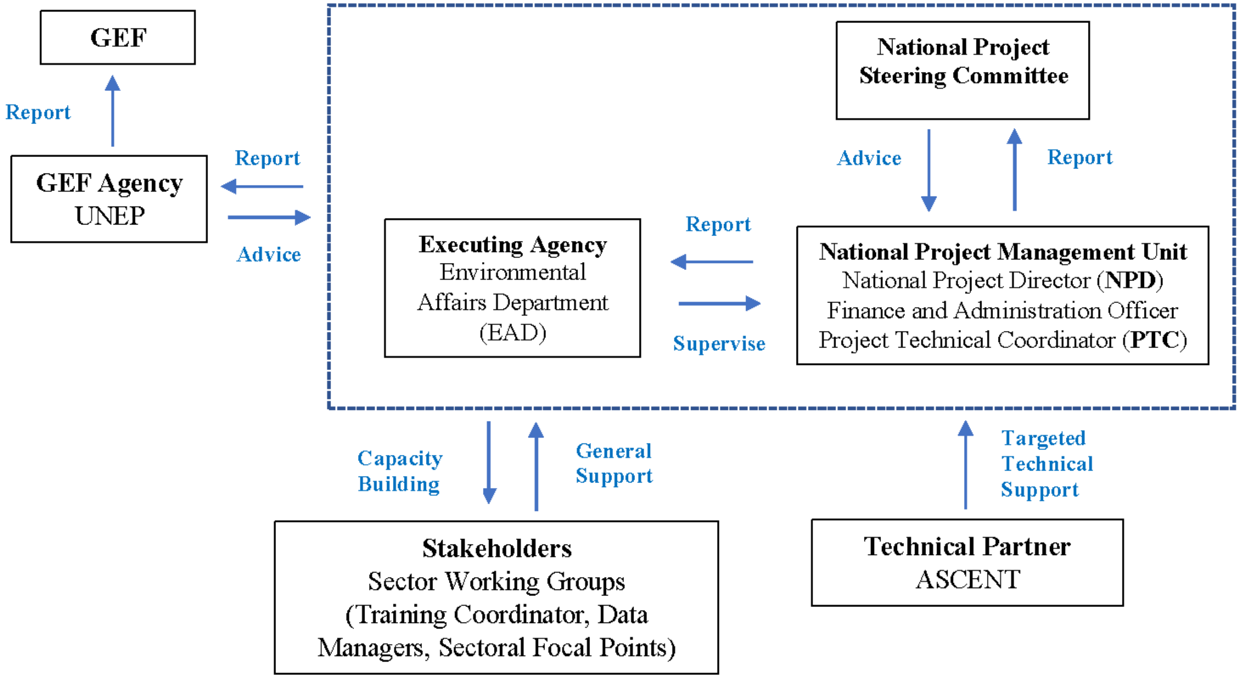
Indicators:		Baseline	Target	Means of verification
Objective level Indicator:	Indicator A: # sectors on which the country is collecting and processing data on GHG emissions, climate actions, support needed and received	1(AFOLU - Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Uses)	End-ofproject target A: 5 (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste)	Reports generated on GHG emissions, climate actions, support needed and received
Component 1	**Establishing the National Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system.**			
Outcome 1	**Outcome 1: Malawi's institutions effectively collaborate to track and report Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, climate actions and support needed and received**			
Outputs	*1.1. Institutional arrangement and inter-ministerial coordination mechanism established and formalized for data management activities* *1.2. Country-specific emission factors and activity data for Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU), energy, industry, transport and waste sectors developed and made accessible to stakeholders* *1.3. Data collection and sharing protocols and regulations including linkages between hubs customized in line with the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines and made available to institutions*			
Indicator 1.1	Data collecting and sharing protocols and regulations (in line with recent IPCC guidelines) are adopted by key institutions	*No*	Yes	• Official statement on the adoption of the data collecting and sharing protocols and regulations
Indicator 1.2	Number of institutions using data collection and sharing protocols	*0*	At least 20 institutions	• Stakeholder engagement reports
Component 2	**Developing and operationalizing an integrated platform for data management**			
Outcome 2	**Stakeholders use the data management platform to support the MRV system**			
Outputs	*2.1. A data management platform customized to the country's circumstances and operationalized to support the MRV system.* *2.2. Sector data collection and reporting tools for GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received customized and made available to relevant stakeholders.* *2.3. The climate transparency unit members and other relevant stakeholders trained on the effective management and use of the data platform to track NDC implementation, GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received* *2.4. Data from the GHG inventory and MRV system aggregated, entered into the platform and made publicly available.*			

Indicator 2.1	Number of government staff and other relevant stakeholders using the data management platform (gender-disaggregated)	0	At least 24 (of which at least 50% are women)	Online counting mechanism and interviews with government staff and other relevant stakeholders
Indicator 2.2	% of trained officers from the climate transparency unit and other sectors specific focal points declaring to be in a better position to implement MRV systems (gender disaggregated)	0	50% (of which at least 50% are women)	Training surveys and attendance lists (gender-disaggregated)
Component 3	**Targeted capacity building to strengthen institutional and individual capacities to meet the Paris agreement requirements on an Enhanced Transparency Framework.**			
Outcome 3	**The climate transparency unit, relevant sector institutions and stakeholders perform their roles in the MRV system on a continuous basis.**			
Outputs	*3.1. Field data teams from the key sectors (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste) assigned and trained in data management.* *3.2. Knowledge of relevant national stakeholders on the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement and their respective roles enhanced* *3.3. Best practices on transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement, including gender mainstreaming, shared and scaled up through peer-exchange programs for relevant stakeholders via South-South interactions and the CBIT Global Coordination Platform*			
Indicator 3.1:	Qualitative rating of Malawi'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)	Level 1	Level 3	• CBIT Global Coordination Platform self-assessment tool • Climate change information management system • Survey of the system's use by the targeted organizations / stakeholders
Indicator 3.2:	Number of trained sectoral field data teams declaring to be in a better position to manage data	0 teams	At least 3 teams out of the 5 sectors (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste)	Training surveys

4. Executing Arrangements

Malawi appointed UNEP as the GEF Implementing Agency for this CBIT project. The Executing Agency for the CBIT project was the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) (Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Wildlife).

The activities in the proposed project cut across several sectors and state departments, which are agriculture, environment, energy, water and trade & industry, among others. Therefore, for effective implementation, a management structure that brought together the various experts and stakeholders from these departments was formed. The implementation structure is illustrated in the organogram below:



5. Project Cost and Financing

The table below provides the budget breakdown at CEO approval

Project Components/ Programs	Component Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	(in $) GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
Component 1. Establishing the National Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system.	TA	Outcome 1: Malawi's institutions effectively collaborate to track and report Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, climate actions and support needed and received	1.1. Institutional arrangement and inter-ministerial coordination mechanism established and formalized for data management activities 1.2. Country-specific emission factors and activity data for Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU), energy, industry, transport and waste sectors developed and made accessible to stakeholders 1.3. Data collection and sharing protocols and regulations including linkages between hubs customized in line with the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines and made available to institutions	409,100	50,000
Component 2. Developing and operationalizing an integrated platform for data management	TA	Outcome 2: Stakeholders use the data management platform to support the MRV system	2.1. A data management platform customized to the country's circumstances and operationalized to support the MRV system. 2.2. Sector data collection and reporting tools for GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received customized and made available to relevant stakeholders. 2.3. The climate transparency unit members and other relevant stakeholders trained on the effective management and use of the data platform to track NDC implementation, GHG emissions, climate actions and support needed and received	331,300	40,000

			2.4. Data from the GHG inventory and MRV system aggregated, entered into the platform and made publicly available.		
Component 3. Targeted capacity building to strengthen institutional and individual capacities to meet the Paris agreement requirements on an Enhanced Transparency Framework.	TA	Outcome 3. The climate transparency unit, relevant sector institutions and stakeholders perform their roles in the MRV system on a continuous basis.	3.1. Field data teams from the key sectors (AFOLU, energy, transport, industry and waste) assigned and trained in data management. 3.2. Knowledge of relevant national stakeholders on the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement and their respective roles enhanced 3.3. Best practices on transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement, including gender mainstreaming, shared and scaled up through peer-exchange programs for relevant stakeholders via South-South interactions and the CBIT Global Coordination Platform.	171,600	10,000
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)				48,000	-
Subtotal				960,000	100,000
Project Management Cost (PMC)				96,000	50,000
Total project costs				**1,056,000**	**150,000**

6. Implementation Issues

The project faced challenges that impacted implementation including delays in recruiting the Project Technical Coordinator (PTC) due to administrative challenges; delays in the international firm (ASCENT) starting implementation of its activities because of Malawi lacking foreign currency in the Country, a move that hinder a transfer of the 1st instalment of funds to the firm. These challenges facing implementation were later overcome and the Project did pick up momentum.

The project has undergone two (2) revisions. Revision 1 was approved by UNEP on 14 March 2023 to accommodate delays in implementation of activities. The technical completion date remained the same. Revision 2 was approved on 24 May 2024 that saw the extension of the Project to 31 December 2024 to ensure completion of all remaining project activities.

Finally, towards the very end of the project, the EAD has faced challenges to host the MRV system in its own national server, which led to some of the final closing activities (i.e. training of stakeholders on the MRV systems) to spill over into the beginning of year 2025.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

7. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[49] and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual[50], the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) of Malawi. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project, where applicable.

8. Key Review principles

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

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

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

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

[49] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114
[50] https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752

9. Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions**[51] listed below (no more than 5 questions are recommended). These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

Q1: Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?

Q2: Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting? If so, please explain how.

Q3: 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?

Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

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

10. Review Criteria

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

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

A. Strategic Relevance

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

i. Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy[52] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[53] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international

[51] The strategic questions should not duplicate questions that will be addressed under the standard review criteria described in section 10.

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

[53] http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm

environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

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

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

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

iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence[54]

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[55], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within Cooperation Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

B. Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[56] should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

C. Nature of External Context

At review inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval[57]). This rating is entered in the final review ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an *Unfavourable* or *Highly Unfavourable* external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and UNEP Task Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

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[54] This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

[55] 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.

[56] In some instances, based on data collected during the review process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Review Report.

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

i. Availability of Outputs[58]

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc[59]). Any *formal* modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes[60]

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[61] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

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

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

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[62] or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component

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

[59] Also called CEO Endorsement Document for GEF projects

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

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

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

or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

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

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

E. Financial Management

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

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

F. Efficiency

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

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Review will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Review will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[63] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[64] results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Review will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed, where applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

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

iii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised project information management system[65] in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the UNEP Task Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

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

H. Sustainability

Sustainability[66] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and

[63] Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

[64] SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

[65] Prior to 2022 it was the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and from 2022 UNEP has the Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) solution.

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

implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

ii. Financial Sustainability

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

iii. Institutional Sustainability

The Review will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the Review will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

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

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

Global Environment Facility	For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review whether the segregation of responsibilities met the GEF requirements[67] (the GEF Agency must separate its project implementation and execution duties and establish each of the following: (a) A satisfactory

[67] GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards: Separation of Implementation and Execution Functions in GEF Partner Agencies (2019).

	institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation and executing functions in different departments of the GEF Agency; and (b) Clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the GEF Agency between the project implementation and execution functions.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[68].

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

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

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, or mitigation of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements[69] were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned, are reviewed above under Quality of Project Design).

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

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

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

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

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

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

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

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

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

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

Relevant background documentation, inter alia*:*

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

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

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

Reviews of similar projects.

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

UNEP Task Manager and Programme Assistant:

Executing Agency Project Manager and project management team;

UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);

Project partners, including UNEP-CCC;

Relevant resource persons.

Representatives from civil society and specialist groups.

Surveys to be determined at inception phase

Field visits to Lilongwe, Malawi

Other data collection tools to be determined at inception phase

11. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12. The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Task Manager Julien Lheureux in consultation with the Fund Management Officer Fatma Twahir.

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

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of 06 months (tentatively from January 2025 to June 2025) and should have the following: Advanced university degree (i.e. master's degree or higher) in management, business administration, economics, engineering, energy or other relevant area is required. A first level degree with additional two years of qualifying experience maybe accepted in lieu of an advanced university degree. A minimum of 2 years of experience in the evaluation and monitoring of development Projects in developing countries is required. Within the 2 years, experience working on technical aspects of development Projects in the environmental / climate change sector in Africa is desirable. Experience in working with national governments in Africa or developing countries is required. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency (both oral and written) in English is required. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

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

13. Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	Indicative dates
Inception Phase	

Milestone	Indicative dates
TR Inception Meeting	26 March 2025
Desk Review of project documentation	26 March – 16 April 2025
Draft TR Inception Report	18 April 2025
Final TR Inception Report	25 April 2025
Data Collection Phase	
Stakeholder survey / e-based interviews	18 April – 16 May 2025
Review mission	Mid-May 2025 (tbd)
Individual interviews	May 2025 (tbd)
Presentation of preliminary findings (ppt)	4 June 2025
Reporting Phase	
Draft Main Review Report shared with UNEP Task Manager	20 June 2025
Draft Main Review Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	27 June 2025
Consolidated comments on Draft Main Review Report returned to Reviewer by UNEP	4 July 2025
Updated Final Main Review Report with Comments table prepared and shared with UNEP Task Manager	11 July 2025
Final Main Review Report submitted to the UNEP Evaluation Office for validation and quality assessment	14 July 2025
Final Main Review Report validated by UNEP Evaluation Office with quality assessment	11 August 2025
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	13 August 2025

14. Contractual Arrangements

The Review Consultant(s) will be selected and recruited by the UNEP Task Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sigh the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance and approval by the UNEP Task Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment:

Deliverable	Amount (US$)
Approved Inception Report ***(as per Guidance Note)***	4,000
Approved Draft Main Review Report ***(as per Guidance Note)***	9,000
Approved Final Main Review Report ***(as per Report Template)***	4,000

<u>Fees only contracts:</u> Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the UNEP Task Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g. PIMS, IPMR, Anubis, SharePoint, etc.) and, if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review Report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Task Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Branch/Unit until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to the UNEP Task Manager in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, UNEP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultant's fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the project team to bring the report up to standard or completion.

ANNEX XI. GEF PORTAL INPUTS *(for GEF funded projects)*

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

Table X: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[70], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[71]).
Response: *(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)* The CBIT Malawi project aimed to achieve gender parity among its direct beneficiaries, with an end-of-project target of 150 individuals, split equally between 75 men and 75 women. By the time of completion, the project had exceeded its overall target, reaching 168 direct beneficiaries. However, gender balance was not fully achieved, with 71 women (42%) and 97 men (58%) participating in project activities. While this reflects a strong effort towards inclusivity, this is slightly below the intended 50-50 gender representation. At CEO endorsement, there was acknowledgement that representation of women in the climate space is about 40%, consequently, achieving 42% is in line with the reality on the ground. The EAD acknowledges that more needs to be done to encourage more women and girls into the climate space.
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)* The project successfully engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including government ministries, academia, civil society, and private sector actors. Key mechanisms included a multi-sectoral Project Steering Committee, technical working groups, and partnerships with universities, which enhanced technical capacity and visibility. Subnational actors and the National Statistics Office (particularly on the design of the online data management profile) were insufficiently involved in key phases, limiting data integration and local ownership. Some stakeholders reported limited engagement during early implementation, and private sector and civil society participation was uneven. 76.7% of respondents to the terminal online survey indicated reported that thet were satisfied with stakeholder engagement.
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)* The CBIT Malawi project aimed to achieve gender parity among its direct beneficiaries, with an end-of-project target of 150 individuals, split equally between 75 men and 75 women. By the time of completion, the project had exceeded its overall target, reaching 168 direct beneficiaries. However, gender balance was not fully

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

achieved, with 71 women (42%) and 97 men (58%) participating in project activities. While this reflects a strong effort towards inclusivity, this is slightly below the intended 50-50 gender representation. At CEO endorsement, there was acknowledgement that representation of women in the climate space is about 40%, consequently, achieving 42% is in line with the reality on the ground. Participation was mainly through participation in project events, regional awareness learning workshops and protect steering committee meetings

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. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*

The CBIT Malawi project was classified as a low-risk intervention at CEO approval, with no significant environmental or social risks anticipated. This classification was maintained throughout implementation, as confirmed in the latest Project Implementation Report (PIR). The Safeguards Plan focused on adherence to UNEP's Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability Framework, ensuring principles such as free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), inclusion, and do-no-harm were respected.

Implementation measures included the promotion of inclusive participation across stakeholder groups, minimisation of environmental footprint through virtual meetings and shared transport for field visits, and integration of gender-sensitive planning. No grievances were reported during the project, and no negative environmental or social impacts were recorded.

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? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*

The CBIT Malawi project produced a suite of knowledge and learning deliverables, including training manuals, sectoral guidelines, data collection templates, and peer-reviewed papers on emission factors. The national online MRV platform was developed as a key KM deliverable to support data storage and access, although its operationalisation was delayed due to technical and institutional constraints. Knowledge products were primarily targeted at institutional stakeholders and were disseminated through capacity-building workshops, peer exchanges, and regional events. However, limited translation of these products into simplified, publicly accessible formats constrained their reach and uptake.

While communication activities were carried out, including regional learning events and stakeholder workshops, a formal communication strategy was not fully developed or implemented. Adaptive management was evident in UNEP and EAD's response to implementation delays, with flexible budget reallocations and extended timelines. However, feedback loops for learning from implementation to assess outcomes of the various interventions were underutilised.

Overall, the KM approach delivered valuable technical content and raised institutional awareness, but challenges related to accessibility, public engagement, and structured learning mechanisms limit its broader influence. There were opportunities to facilitate policy dialogues and to translate the various knowledge products to inform policies.

Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?

Strategic Relevance: The project was highly relevant to Malawi's national climate goals and global transparency commitments under the Paris Agreement, aligning well with UNEP's and GEF's strategic frameworks. Effectiveness: The project delivered key outputs, including the establishment of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU), a national MRV platform, and training modules. However, outcomes such as full adoption of tools and emission factor development were only partially achieved due to late-stage implementation and limited institutional uptake. Efficiency: Despite some delays and underperformance by consultants, the project was delivered within budget. Adaptive management and cost-efficiency measures were applied, but compressed timelines reduced overall efficiency. Sustainability: Institutional sustainability was promising, with strong national leadership and coordination mechanisms established. However, financial sustainability is at risk due to reliance on external funding and absence of a costed exit strategy. Gender and Human Rights: The project integrated gender considerations and human rights principles, achieving 42% female participation. Structural barriers and limited incentives, however, constrained fuller gender equity. Stakeholder Engagement: The project successfully engaged a wide range of institutional stakeholders but had limited involvement of subnational actors and non-state stakeholders. Ownership was stronger among government actors than the private sector or civil society. Knowledge Management: Technical knowledge products were produced and shared regionally, but public engagement and structured communication mechanisms were limited, reducing broader knowledge uptake and influence. **Overall Performance:** The project is rated Moderately Satisfactory, having laid strong foundations for transparency but requiring further support to fully institutionalise and operationalise its tools and systems.

ANNEX XII. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Title and Reference No.: Malawi Climate Transparency Framework (GEF ID: 10149)

Contact Person (TM/PM): Julien Lheureux

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	**ACCEPTED (YES / NO / PARTIALLY)**	**WHAT WILL BE DONE?**	**EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE**	**REPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY**
UNEP and EAD should collaboratively develop and resource a Phase 2 CBIT Malawi project	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the EAD and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EAD once the Terminal Review report is completed. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EAD by January 2026 and by July 2026 to assess the progress on implementing this recommendation.	By August 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By January 2026 and by July 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EAD
Upcoming Climate Change Law should explicitly include data collection and reporting obligations aligned with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), with mandates for all key sector ministries	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the EAD and the Ministry of Justice. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EAD once the Terminal Review report is completed. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EAD by January 2026 and by July 2026 to assess the progress on implementing this recommendation.	By August 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By January 2026 and by July 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EAD
Future project designers should ensure CBIT projects include structured gender and youth participation mechanisms, formalised academic partnerships, and co-delivery modalities between national and international consultants	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the EAD and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EAD once the Terminal Review report is completed. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EAD by January 2026 and by July 2026 to assess the progress on implementing this recommendation.	By August 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By January 2026 and by July 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EAD
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) should capture both quantitative and qualitative data to assess real impact.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the EAD. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EAD once the Terminal Review report is completed. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EAD by January 2026 and by July 2026 to assess the progress on implementing this recommendation.	By August 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By January 2026 and by July 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EAD

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

Lesson Learned #1:	Institutional embedding of climate transparency units within existing government structures can enhance continuity and ownership.
Context/comment:	The integration of the Climate Transparency Unit (CTU) within EAD demonstrated that locating project functions inside existing administrative systems fosters a greater sense of institutional responsibility and long-term engagement. Rather than creating parallel project structures, the approach allowed the CTU to operate within government routines and priorities, which has the potential to maintain momentum after the project initial period. The model provides a promising pathway for reinforcing national ownership of emerging climate mandates.

Lesson Learned #2:	Engagement of national data custodians from the outset is crucial for coherence, credibility, and alignment with national statistical systems.
Context/comment:	Although the National Statistics Office (NSO) was included in the project steering structure, its role in developing the MRV platform and climate data systems remained peripheral. This limited the extent to which climate data outputs were linked to the national statistical architecture. The experience highlighted the importance of positioning national data authorities not just as stakeholders but as integral actors in system design, data custodianship, and institutional legitimacy. Given that the NSO has a national mandate on official statistics, a stronger alignment has the potential to enhance compliance of national actors with climate reporting obligations. This is even more critical, in a context where climate reporting is not yet written into law.

Lesson Learned #3:	Engaging subnational institutions remains a critical but underutilised entry point for inclusive climate data governance.
Context/comment:	Despite Malawi's decentralisation agenda, district councils and planning officers were largely excluded from project activities (see Stakeholder Participation). Given their proximity to data sources and community realities, future projects would benefit from design inclusive models that involve local governments, budget for subnational capacity building, and support bottom-up reporting systems. Without robust mechanisms for bottom up reporting, national level data collection and reporting might prove ineffective.

Lesson Learned #4:	Efforts to enhance gender equity in climate transparency benefit from clearer incentives and structured mechanisms for participation.
Context/comment:	While the project tracked women's participation and encouraged balanced representation in trainings and committees, there was limited evidence of structural approaches to incentivise or sustain their engagement. Interviews revealed that many women were underrepresented in technical roles from the outset, limiting their ability to influence project processes. The experience points to the need for deliberate approaches that recognise and respond to barriers facing women and youth, including measures that create enabling conditions for their meaningful involvement across the project lifecycle.

Lesson Learned #5:	Sustainability of transparency systems is constrained when financial continuity is not addressed early and explicitly.
Context/comment:	The project achieved technical and institutional milestones yet lacked a financial exit strategy or committed post-project resources for continued operations. As a result, the institutional structures and tools created during implementation are left dependent on uncertain

	future funding. This highlighted how the absence of financial transition planning can limit the durability of even well-performing transparency systems, especially in contexts where national budget allocation processes are constrained.

Lesson Learned #6:	Long-term capacity for climate transparency is best nurtured through early engagement, hands-on practice, and phased skill application.
Context/comment:	Many participants were trained in the final stages of implementation, which curtailed opportunities for iterative learning and application of skills. The development of technical competencies, such as GHG inventory and data platform use, requires repeated exposure and real-time problem-solving. The Malawi project showed that where technical systems are new or complex, starting training early and embedding opportunities for practical use can deepen learning and foster greater institutional confidence.

Lesson Learned #7:	Collaborative arrangements between international and national consultants can strengthen both delivery and national capacity.
Context/comment:	Linked to lesson 6 above, some technical outputs, such as emissions factors, remained incomplete partly due to capacity gaps and limited co-working arrangements between external experts and local institutions. In other countries such as Sierra Leone, this paring approach ensured knowledge transfer and delivery of outputs. Where collaboration did occur for example, between consultants and university students, it contributed to both knowledge transfer and national skill development. The CBIT experience suggests that national expertise benefits when international actors are intentionally positioned to work alongside and build up local capacities throughout implementation.

Lesson Learned #8:	Flexibility in partner selection and early alignment of digital infrastructure with government systems can prevent operational challenges.
Context/comment:	The naming of ASCENT in the ProDoc constrained the project's ability to reassess implementation arrangements based on performance or contextual changes. In parallel, the late-stage migration of the MRV platform to government servers introduced complexities for the government in handling the online platform. The Malawi experience illustrated that pre-defined implementation roles and off-platform hosting arrangements in prodocs may create rigidity, even where national institutions are well positioned to take ownership or to source other service providers during implementation.

ANNEX XIII. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: Terminal Review of the UNEP-GEF Project 'Malawi Climate Transparency Framework' (GEF ID 10149) 2021-2024

Consultant: Aurelian Mbzibain

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

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary Purpose: acts as a stand alone and accurate summary of the main review product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the review object • clear summary of the review objectives and scope • overall review rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic review questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Most required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: Provides a clear summary of the project, methodology, findings, strategic questions, conclusions, and recommendations. Refers to the strategic questions but does not include their full text. This section would have benefited from Including the full wording of these questions to make the summary a stronger standalone section. It could have benefited from a clearer separation of findings vs. conclusions. Reference to the ratings table is present but not prominently highlighted in the Executive Summary.	4.5
Quality of the 'Introduction' Section Purpose: introduces/situates the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the review itself. To include: • institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates • number of project phases (where appropriate) • results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome) • coverage of the review (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been reviewed/evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.) • concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Most required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Clearly states the purpose of the review and intended audience. Does not indicate the institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc). However, table 1 mentions it.	5
Quality of the 'Review Methods' Section Purpose: provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of review methods, demonstrates the credibility of the findings and performance ratings. To include:	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):*	6

<table>
<tr>
<td>description of review data collection methods and information sources
justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face)
number and type of respondents (see table template)
selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited
strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation
methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc)
details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.)
methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc)
review limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc)
ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. 'Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.</td>
<td>Comprehensive description of methods, including sampling, triangulation, and ethics.

Includes gender-disaggregated respondent data and strategies to increase participation.

Table 1: Analysis Framework is clear and informative.

Addresses limitations and mitigation strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the 'Project' Section
<u>Purpose:</u> describes and <u>verifies</u> key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance.

To include:
Context: overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses)
Results framework: summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)
Stakeholders: description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics
Project implementation structure and partners: description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners
Changes in design during implementation: any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order
Project financing: completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing</td>
<td>Final report (coverage/omissions):

All required elements are addressed.

Final report (strengths/weaknesses):

Thorough coverage of context, results framework, stakeholders, implementation structure, and financing.

Describes changes in design during implementation with timelines.

Could have benefited from a summary of stakeholder influence.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the Theory of Change
<u>Purpose:</u> to set out the TOC at Review in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance.
To include:
description of how the TOC at Review[72] was designed (who was involved etc)
confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions</td>
<td>Final report (coverage/omissions):

Most required elements are addressed.

Final report (strengths/weaknesses):

Includes both narrative and diagrammatic representation. The diagram identifies drivers and assumptions.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</table>

[72] 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*.

• articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process • summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. *The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.* This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.	Provides a reformulation table comparing original and reconstructed results. Does not provide a description of how the *TOC at Review* was designed (who was involved etc).	
Quality of Key Findings within the Report Presentation of evidence: nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. Consistency within the report: all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. Findings Statements (where applicable): The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual review criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. **A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand.** In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Evidence is triangulated and sources are clearly mentioned (interviews, surveys, documents). Findings are consistent with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix and are consistent across the report.	5
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section Purpose: to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: • 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[73]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Thorough description of the project's alignment with UNEP MTS, GEF priorities, and Malawi's national strategies. The report would have benefited from a deeper analysis of complementarity with existing interventions during implementation.	5
Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section Purpose: to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Summarizes design strengths and weaknesses. Identifies key areas where design could have been stronger.	5

[73] 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.

Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section Purpose: to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key external features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[74]), and how they affected performance. While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Balanced assessment of climatic, economic, and political factors.	5
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section **(i) Availability of Outputs:** Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: • 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).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Most required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Overall, the section clearly and comprehensively assesses the extent to which outputs were delivered as planned. This section does not identify positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation. However, paragraphs 242 and 243 under 'Likelihood of Impact' elaborate on unintended effects.	5
ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes: Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. To include: • 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).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Most required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Clear link between outputs and outcomes. Includes behavioural change and institutional uptake analysis. This section does not identify positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation. However, paragraphs 242 and 243 under 'Likelihood of Impact' elaborate on unintended effects.	5
(iii) Likelihood of Impact: Purpose: to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding. To include:	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Most required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Assesses the sustainability and potential long-term impact of the project interventions.	5

[74] 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.

• an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown • an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents • explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • 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).	Uses UNEP's impact likelihood model. This section would have benefited from a more explicit description of roles of played by key actors.	
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). 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 (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • *communication* between financial and project management staff	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Adherence to policies, completeness of financial data, and fund management are well-documented. Includes informative financial tables. There is a discrepancy in ratings for "Communication between finance and project management staff." In table 11, it is rated as Highly Satisfactory, and in paragraphs 257-260, as satisfactory.	5
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include: • time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Comprehensive assessment that includes resource use efficiency calculated and benchmarked. Includes informative tables.	6
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section Purpose: to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • quality of the monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)* • quality of monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • quality of project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor reports) *	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Comprehensive analysis, including SMART criteria of indicators, of the quality of the monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring of project implementation, and quality of project reporting	5.5
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section Purpose: to 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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Comprehensive assessment and clear identification of risks and mitigation strategies.	5.5

	There is a discrepancy in ratings for "Institutional Sustainability". Paragraph 310 indicates that "The institutional sustainability of the CBIT Malawi project is assessed as 'Moderately Likely'. However, this sub-criterion was rated as 'Likely'.	
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section Purpose: 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 review report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes: • preparation and readiness • quality of project management and supervision[75] • 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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* It provides a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of each cross-cutting theme, along with a separate rating for each sub-criterion. Based on UNEP's TR weighted rating scale and the reviewer's sub-criterion ratings, the Review Consultant's overall rating for "Factors Affecting Performance" should have been Highly Satisfactory, not Satisfactory.	5
Quality of the Conclusions Section **(i) Conclusions Narrative:** Purpose: to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the performance of the evaluand as a whole, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process. To include: • compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project • clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Responds to strategic questions and summarizes strengths and limitations. The answers to the strategic question presented in paragraph 245 would have been more appropriately placed under this section. Without the miscalculation of the overall rating for Factors Affecting Performance, the overall rating for the project performance should have been Satisfactory instead of Moderately Satisfactory.	5
ii) Utility of the Lessons: Purpose: to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit review findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) • briefly describe the context from which they are derived	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Lessons are rooted in real project experiences. Contextualized and actionable. The lessons could have been grouped thematically for clarity.	5

[75] 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.

and those contexts in which they may be useful • do not duplicate recommendations		
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: Purpose: to present proposals 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 lessons achieve the following: • 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 UNEP Unit/Branch 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.	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Recommendations are specific, actionable, and feasible within available resources to be implemented. Cross-references to sections of the report supporting the recommendations are provided. One recommendation relating to strengthening human rights and gender is included. The recommendations are generally presented in accordance with UNEP Evaluation Office guidance. However, under the "Type of Recommendation" column, the information does not fully align with the Evaluation Office's prescribed approach for categorising recommendations.	4.5
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation **(i) Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the UNEP Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Follows UNEP format. Includes all required annexes. Clear language and tone. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Slightly exceeds recommended length.	5
(ii) Writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The Review report is well-written and easy to understand. It provides informative tables.	5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5.1**

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.