Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project

‘Strengthening South Africa’s Capacity to comply with enhanced transparency reporting requirements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement’ (GEF ID 9673)

2019-2024

Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

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This report has been prepared by an external consultant evaluator and is a product of the Evaluation Office of UNEP. 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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(Strengthening South Africa's Capacity to comply with enhanced transparency reporting requirements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement)
(GEF ID 9673)
(Date 07/2025)

Acknowledgements

This Terminal Evaluation was prepared for UNEP by Dr Justine Braby, as an external consultant.

The evaluator would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this evaluation, as listed in Annex 3.

The evaluator would like to thank the project team and in particular Sandra Motshwanedi, Thuso Tserane and Vhutshilo Mavhunga for their support during the county mission. The team at the UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit are also thanked for their support and quick responses during the evaluation.

The evaluator hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will support practical improvements and sustainability of project results, as well as formulation of a possible CBIT Phase 2, and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

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Brief consultant biography

The evaluation was conducted by Dr Justine Braby, contracted as an external evaluator. Justine has an academic background in zoology, education and law, as well as economic development and depth facilitation. Her professional expertise ranges from project development, implementation to evaluation of GEF and other donor-funded projects for agencies like UNEP, UNDP, FAO and IUCN. She has been focusing her expertise on evaluations and has had extensive experience in terminal evaluations spanning across the world. She has technical expertise in climate change, sustainable land management, biodiversity and ecosystem services, alternative development paradigms and economic development, coastal zone management, water resources management, protected areas management and financing, among others (including publications experience in these fields). Justine resides in Namibia.

About the Evaluation

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Brief Description: This report is the Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Strengthening South Africa's Capacity to comply with enhanced transparency reporting requirements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement" (GEF ID 9673) implemented between 2019 and 2024. The evaluation 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 evaluation 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, DFFE, and relevant project partners.

Key words: CBIT, NDC, climate change reporting, BTR, MRV, GHG emissions, GHG inventory, ETF

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use
ARC	Agricultural Research Council
BAC	Bid Adjudication Committee
BMUB - GIZ	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety - German Development Agency
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBIT	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
CEO ER	Chief Executive Officer Endorsement Request
COP-21	21st Conference of the Parties
CRF	Common Reporting Format
DAFF/DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DARLD	Department of Agriculture, Rural Land Reform and Development
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment
DMRE	Department of Mineral Resources and Energy
DoE	Department of Energy
DoST/DoT	Department of Science and Technology
DoT	Department of Transport
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
HRBA	UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach
IGCCC	Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change
IPCC	Intergovernmental Planel on Climate Change
IPPU	Industrial Processes and Product Use
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NCCRD	National Climate Change Response Database
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Project identification table

Table 1: Project Identification Table

<table>
<tr><td>GEF Project ID/SMA ID[1]:</td><td>GEF ID 9673</td><td colspan="2">SMA ID 39131</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Implementing Agency (UNEP Division/Branch/Unit):</td><td>UNEP Climate Change Division - Mitigation
Branch – GEF Climate Mitigation Unit</td><td colspan="2">Executing Agency:</td><td>South Africa's Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)[2]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sources of Funding (Co-finance):</td><td colspan="2">Country[3](ies): South Africa, Norway[4]</td><td colspan="2">Institution[5] Name/Type: DFFE, World Resource Institute</td></tr>
<tr><td>Relevant SDG(s):</td><td colspan="4">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</td></tr>
<tr><td>MTS (at approval):</td><td>MTS 2018-2021</td><td colspan="2"></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022):

OR

POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022)</td><td>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</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022):

OR

POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):</td><td>MTS 2025 Outcome:
1C - State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>POW Expected Accomplishment:
(b) Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies</td></tr>
</table>

[1] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.
[2] Previously called Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF)
[3] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.
[4] Note that the Norwegian co-finance did not materialize.
[5] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund.

Sub-programme:	Climate action (UNEP 2022-2025 MTS)	**Programme Coordination Project:**	Transparency PCP
UNEP approval date:	12 February 2019	**GEF approval date:**	22 October 2018
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-6	**GEF Strategic Priority:**	CBIT
Project type:	Medium-size Project	**Focal Area(s):**	Climate Change Mitigation
***Expected* start date:**	1 February 2019	**Actual start date:**	4 March 2019
***Planned* completion date:**	31 January 2022	**Actual operational completion date:**	31 December 2024
***Planned* total project budget at approval:**	USD 2,118,969	**Actual total expenditures reported as of 31 December 2024:**	USD 1,300,674[6]
GEF grant allocation:	USD 1,100,000 (+ agency fee of USD 104,500)	**GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 December 2024:**	USD 593,031[7]
***Expected* Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:**	In-kind: USD 1,018,969	**Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing as of 31 December 2024:**	In-kind: USD 707,643
No. of formal project revisions:	Project Revision 1 (November 2020) Project Revision 2 (July 2022) Project Revision 3 (November 2023) Project Revision 4 (August 2024)	**Date of last approved project revision:**	15 August 2024
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	4	**Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:**	21 August 2024
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	N/A	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	A Mid-Term Review/Evaluation was not undertaken.
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	January -June 2022	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	January - June 2025
Coverage - Country(ies):	South Africa	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	**Status of future project phases:**	N/A

[6] Includes both co-finance + GEF grant

[7] US$ 252,743 for DFFE and US$ 324,629 for UNDP South Africa. In addition, as of 31 December 2024 UNDP still has US$ 18,116 of unliquidated commitments, which will be settled in Q1 2025.

Executive Summary

Project background

1. The UNEP/GEF project "Strengthening South Africa's Capacity to comply with enhanced transparency reporting requirements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement" (GEF ID 9673) was a GEF-6 medium-sized project (MSP) with a GEF budget of USD 1,204,500 (of which the agency fee was USD 104,500). The project officially started on 4 March 2019 and its planned end date was 31 January 2022. The actual end date was 31 December 2024, constituting a project timeline of just under 6 years (70 months).

2. The project was implemented by the UNEP-GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (under the Climate Change Division) and executed by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) of South Africa through the Directorate of Climate Change Development and International Mechanisms (CCDIM).

3. The project objective was that 'South Africa is meeting the enhanced transparency framework requirement under the Paris Agreement'. The project aimed to do this by (a) strengthening the institutional arrangement that supports operationalisation of the Monitoring and Evaluation System, and (b) conduct training programmes to build institutional engagement and staff capacities on Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of climate actions implemented.

This evaluation

4. In line with UNEP's Evaluation Policy, the Terminal Evaluation was conducted with two main purposes: (1) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (2) to promote operational improvement, leaning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and its key partners toward moving the results towards impact for the country.

5. An external evaluator was commissioned by the UNEP Evaluation Office to conduct the Terminal Evaluation between January and June 2025. This was done through extensive document reviews, online interviews, a country visit and in-person interviews (9 to 15 March 2025), and an online survey (that ran from February through April 2025).

6. The project Theory of Change (TOC) was reconstructed for the purposes of the evaluation (Section IV in the main report) which shows the causal pathways from outputs to project outcomes to intermediate states, and finally the project long-term impact, on the basis that key drivers and assumptions outlined in the TOC would be maintained. The broader impact for the project was to move toward climate resilience and carbon-neutrality.

7. This report encompasses the terminal evaluation of the project (abbreviated to "CBIT South Africa Project" for the purposes of the report).

Key findings

8. The project partially delivered on its outputs. Most notably, the major achievements included the technical support of the GHG inventory specialist who significantly built the capacity particularly of the DFFE GHG inventory team (Output 1.0), the long-term capacity building strategy which is a blue print for capacity development needs for South Africa for climate reporting (Output 2.0), the effort placed on the adaptation M&E workshops (although to varying levels of sustainability) (Output 2.0), and the support to the gender consultations for the Gender Action Plan (GAP) (Output 2.0). The project effectively cancelled an important activity, which was hiring the position of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialist, even though this position was conducted through another funding mechanism but not reported on in this project. It also cancelled the activity of the work of a curriculum assessor and the Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) regarding data collection with relevant departments, as well as municipal feedback road-shows after the provincial adaptation M&E workshops, all of which would have improved the project output delivery.

9. The project outcome statement, which was revised by the evaluation ('South Africa is tracking reporting progress towards achievement of its NDC'), was achieved, although the project's contributions to this were not as planned. Overall, the project made a large effort in the beginning and then was faced with some challenges, particularly procurement and the limitations imposed by COVID-19. That said, the project was extended by almost double its planned time which should have allowed for sufficient recovery from those challenges. Some activities had money left over and the use of this budget went to various activities that were in line with CBIT priorities. Some of these (e.g. the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) work) were achieved and did help towards achieving the outcome, to an extent. Some key aspects like the lack of reporting on the M&E position, the follow-up on the National Climate Change Information System (NCCIS) through roadshows, the more strategic support to some key National Departments (this was not so much a result of the effort by the project but more the lack of response from some departments) were not ultimately conducted, and this unfortunately meant that the outputs could not be fully achieved. As a result, the project's contribution to outcome is not what was envisaged at design.

10. Assumptions and drivers as outlined in paragraph 173 of the main report either only partially held, or did not hold at all. However, South Africa is reporting on its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) was submitted, and the project did support the capacity towards this.

11. Sustainability aspects of some key project outputs, such as the long-term capacity building strategy, the adaptation work at provincial level, particularly the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) work, and the finalisation of the GAP, are likely. The recent promulgation of the Climate Act will significantly strengthen the sustainability in terms of climate reporting in South Africa. The DFFE is a large institution with capacitated staff delivering on their mandate regarding climate reporting, but the BTR was still largely developed by consultants and there is still a lot that needs to be done.

12. Project management and performance could have benefited from a full-time technical position in the Project Management Unit, a more consistent Project Steering Committee, stronger adaptive (and risk) management particularly with regard to procurement, and a Mid-Term Review.

13. Gender equality efforts by the project were excellent and particularly the added activities of provincial gender consultations to the GAP and the ACE studies supported gender empowerment in the country related to climate change.

Conclusions

14. The project performance is assessed as Moderately Satisfactory. A full Table of ratings (Table 10) is presented in the conclusion section of the main report.

15. The CBIT South Africa was a highly relevant project aimed to address the gaps in South Africa's reporting capacity and building on previous interventions. That said, the project was faced with challenges that affected implementation (such as delayed and complicated procurement, as well as limitations imposed by the COVID-10 pandemic), some of which could have been addressed through adaptive (and risk) management (e.g. procurement), and others (e.g. COVID-19) which were not in the project's control. These challenges resulted in the project being delayed and ultimately not fully reaching its original ambition. Despite this, the project managed to advance important CBIT-related priorities (such as the GHG inventory work, the GAP work, the NCCIS work, among others).

16. The following conclusions are drawn from the evaluation findings and framed under the four key strategic questions.

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

17. The project faced several challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions. Early on, the project was dealing with procurement delays due to complicated bureaucratic processes, these were heavily exacerbated by COVID-19 when supply management in Government was affected (because relevant committee members in supply chains in charge of approval at different steps did not have access to computers nor internet during lock-downs). In addition, most activities depended on face-to-face meetings and gatherings which were restricted for almost two years. The project dealt with it by extending the project time, attempting to conduct some meetings (to varying levels of success) virtually; but, generally, the overall productivity during this time was stalled. The project was impacted in that momentum was lost in various important items, most notably the adaptation M&E workshops (which had started off strong in 2019 but then came to somewhat of a halt in 2020), and the procurement of the GHG inventory specialist and the Long-term Capacity Development Consortium was delayed. That said, the project was extended to almost double its planned time and effectively "re-gained" that lost time.

In what ways and to what extent can the project execution capacity be identified prior to project implementation? Given some of the administrative challenges faced particularly in procurement through DFFE, how can partnership and roles be improved between the IA and EA for future project implementation?

18. Arguably the most significant impact limiting the project's success was the procurement issue faced by the project. This delayed the entire project implementation, and while exacerbated by COVID-19, was a problem the project faced without the COVID-19 restrictions. This risk was already identified at design, and a stronger preparation phase and risk mitigation plan should have been implemented at the onset of implementation. Only by 2022 did the EA and IA start discussing a third-party modality based on the challenging experiences faced by procurement. A recommendation to this effect has been made based on the evaluation findings to already conduct due diligence and capacity assessments at design for projects in South Africa that rely heavily on large pieces of work conducted by specialists and experts that need to be hired. This is also true for the project management unit, which would have benefited from a full-time staff member with strong technical capacity. Clear definitions and elaborations of roles and responsibilities by the EA and the IA, as well as any implementing partner will need to already be agreed at design, and then re-evaluated at inception. The inception meeting needs to be used as a strong platform to agree on implementation modalities that the project design proposed, based on any structural changes and risks that might come up.

In what ways, and to what extent, have the needs and interests of differentiated groups been considered in the implementation of the project?

19. The project made a large effort to enhance gender equality, having hosted two virtual and one hybrid gender workshop, as well as catalysing the process of the GAP development (as a new activity added in Revision 3) through hosting 9 provincial gender consultation workshops. These workshops were focused on discussions and recommendations based on participatory studies assessing the needs of differentiated and particularly marginalised sectors of South African society. The ACE work that was also added as an additional activity in Revision 3 also focused on research on supporting and empowering marginalised groups. The adaptation M&E workshops focused a lot on Indigenous knowledge systems around adaptation, creating spaces for dialogue, empowerment and recording of these knowledge systems in the adaptation systems of South Africa.

Did the state and non-state actors participating in the project adopt the new tools developed by the project? If so, what were the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so, and if not, what prevented them from doing so?

20. The project supported capacity and the access and use of reporting tools, particularly through the adaptation M&E workshops, the GHG inventory specialist support, and the long-term capacity building strategy. The adaptation workshops were conducted across 8 provinces and included the showcasing and use of various tools. The evaluation could not ascertain the level of uptake due to limited responses from respondents. The GHG inventory specialist technical support was the most successful aspect of the project and has shown sustainability through an active and capacitated GHG inventory team at the DFFE. The capacity development strategy is of high quality and while the two training workshops did not yield the intended results as was planned at design, the implementation of the strategy will go a long way in supporting the uptake of tools and improved transparent reporting.

21. The project certainly contributed to strengthening South Africa's ability to track and report progress towards the achievement of its nationally determined contribution (NDC), and it also

contributed to the strengthening of transparency mechanisms for reporting. Particularly, the GHG inventory support has been a great intervention by the project.

22. Despite the challenges faced, the project did manage to achieve quite a bit in terms of capacity building around adaptation and mitigation, and support to the BTR. Even if the ambition at project design was not realised, some alternative and additional aspects, particularly the gender mainstreaming that was added, has supported the country a lot. That said, lessons and recommendations should help improve on adaptive and risk management, as well as overall implementation and realisation of project results, in the future.

Lessons Learned

23. Lesson 1: Effective risk mitigation early on, particularly with regard to the procurement of essential project-related services, is a key element to support project results attainment. Delayed procurement (exacerbated by COVID-19) really affected the project implementation; this was a risk already identified at design. Mitigating this risk by having a plan B by a certain timeframe may have helped identify a support partner earlier.

24. Lesson 2: Capacity assessments at design as well as re-assessment/planning at inception phase can support stronger governance, synergy and project management.

25. Lesson 3: A mid-term review (MTR) can be a very important and supportive tool for projects undergoing challenging implementation circumstances. The IA has the discretion to conduct a MTR when necessary. In the case of this project, an early MTR (even within COVID-19 restrictions) may have helped the project strategize and focus, deal with the risk of unspent funds, changing output activities, redefining targets for indicators, support stronger implementation structures and governance issues.

26. Lesson 4: Having strong hand-over processes and good record-keeping can make project implementation and evaluations more efficient, and save time for project managers.

Recommendations

27. <u>Recommendation 1: In case of a future phase (CBIT 2) or a similar project(s) in South Africa, due diligence and capacity assessments of the Executing Agency should be conducted at project design and then re-evaluated at inception.</u> For the next project design, due diligence and technical capacity assessments should be conducted jointly by UNEP and DFFE at the design phase. A project governance structure should be discussed in more detail and agreed upon - finding a strong balance between sustainability and project management capacity, which should include a full-time technical position within the project management unit. Capacity assessment of governance structure should also identify the role and commitments of the Project Steering Committee.

28. <u>Recommendation 2: The Project Steering Committee should consist of a manageable number of people who retain ownership and are technically relevant</u>. The Project Steering Committee has an important role in enhancing synergy through programmatic approaches, as well as guiding the project implementation, particularly when there are problems and challenges

to be addressed and navigated. The PSC in the case of CBIT had a lot of turnover, and while institutions were represented, members were more observers than active members, with a few exceptions. Retaining those active members who participated regularly, and identifying specific technical people to become members should already be conducted at design if CBIT-2 or other UNEP implemented projects are to be done with DFFE.

29. Recommendation 3: UN-to-UN agreement template should be adjusted to include a clause regarding logos to ensure branding of project outputs and their deliverables. Key output deliverables which were managed through procurement by UNDP SA did not include the GEF nor the UNEP logos, despite these being products of a UNEP/GEF project. The PCA with DFFE was clear and had a clause regarding logos, but the UN-to-UN agreement did not.

30. Recommendation 4: Chief Directorates of the DFFE Climate Branch in South Africa should co-plan and co-implement projects, and take a programmatic approach. While different Chief Directorates are receiving funding and managing projects, these are working together towards a common goal. A programmatic approach as a unified entity while implementing different roles, specifically in what are inter-linked climate actions - adaptation, mitigation, reporting - will go a long way in increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the different projects and support-interventions to the Climate Branch at DFFE.

1 INTRODUCTION

31. The UNEP/GEF Project "Strengthening South Africa's Capacity to comply with enhanced transparency reporting requirements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement" (GEF ID 9673) was a GEF-6 medium-sized project (MSP) with GEF contributions coming from funds set aside for CBIT under the GEF Trust Fund (USD 1,204,500[8]) to UNEP as the GEF Implementing Agency (IA).

32. The UNEP-GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, currently part of the Mitigation branch of the UNEP Climate Change Division[9], was the project IA. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment [10] (DFFE), through the Directorate of Climate Change Development and International Mechanisms, was the project Executing Agency (EA).

33. The project's GEF approval date was 22 October 2018. UNEP approved the project on 12 February 2019. The project officially started on 4 March 2019 and its planned end date was 31 January 2022. The actual end date was 31 December 2024, constituting a project timeline of just under 6 years (70 months).

34. The project fell under the GEF-6 Climate Change Mitigation Focal Area Strategy - most notably under the specific Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) focal area. Aligned to UNEP priorities, it was developed under the UNEP MTS 2018-2021 (Climate Change outcome map) POW EA (b) countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies. It also aligned with the MTS 2022-2025 Outcome 1C (State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement) and POW Direct outcome 1.3 (Transparency and accountability of non-government climate action, including from the private sector and finance community is strengthened).

35. The total secured budget as per the Project Document (CEO Endorsement Request (ER), 2018) was USD 1,204,500 (of which USD104,500 was the implementing agency fee) from the GEF Trust Fund, and USD 1,018,969 confirmed in-kind co-financing (USD 163,452 from DFFE, USD 228,291 from World Resources Institute (WRI), and USD 627,226 from the Government of Norway).

36. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[11] and Programme Manual[12], this Terminal Evaluation was undertaken in the months following project closure (evaluation timeline: January - June 2025; Project closure: 31 December 2024). The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and determine

[8] USD 1,100,00 budget + USD 104,500 agency fee. CEO Endorsement Request, 2021
[9] Prior to February 2024, the unit was called 'Climate Change Mitigation' and was in the Energy and Climate Branch of the UNEP Industry and Economy Division.
[10] Formerly the Department of Environment, Fisheries and Forestry, at Project Design it was Department of Environmental Affairs (at CEO ER, 2018)
[11] https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies
[12] https://wecollaborate.unep.org

outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability.

37. The project did not undergo a Mid-Term Review as this was not a mandatory exercise for a project of this size.

38. The evaluation had two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing[13] through results and lessons learned among UNEP, DFFE and all its project partners.

39. The main target audience of the evaluation findings are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Target Audience for the terminal evaluation of the CBIT South Africa project (GEF ID 9673) (Note: project partners outlined in table showed active participation and interest in the evaluation)

Target Audience Institution	Type/Project Role
The GEF Secretariat	Funding Entity
UNEP Climate Change Division - Mitigation Branch - GEF Mitigation Unit UNEP Subprogramme Coordinator on Climate Action	Implementing Agency
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment - Climate Change and Air Quality Branch Chief Directorate of International Climate Change Relations and Reporting, Directorate of Climate Change Development and International Mechanisms	Executing Agency
Other Directorates under Climate Change and Air Quality Branch: Chief Directorate of Mitigation Specialist Monitoring Services (Directorates: GHG Inventory and Systems; Mitigation Research and Analysis; Compliance) Chief Directorate Adaptation (Directorate Adaptation Assessment)	Project partners (under Executing Agency)
Department of Transport	Project partner
Agricultural Research Council	Project partner
Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	Project partner
United Nations Development Programme - South Africa	Project Implementing Partner
Other project partners and consultants (e.g. Zutari, Gondwana)	Project partners and interested parties
Other UN agencies and bi-lateral parties interested in enhancing climate reporting in South Africa and other countries	

[13] The evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a subsequent phase of the project is being considered.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

40. The CBIT South Africa Project Terminal Evaluation was conducted by an external consultant (herein after referred to as the 'evaluator'). The evaluation took place between January and June 2025 under the management and oversight of the Evaluation Office of UNEP, based in Nairobi.

41. The evaluation employed a participatory approach with the UNEP Task Manager and their team as well as the Executing Agency (DFFE). Other project stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to comment on the evaluation findings in the draft Terminal Evaluation Report. The evaluation process is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

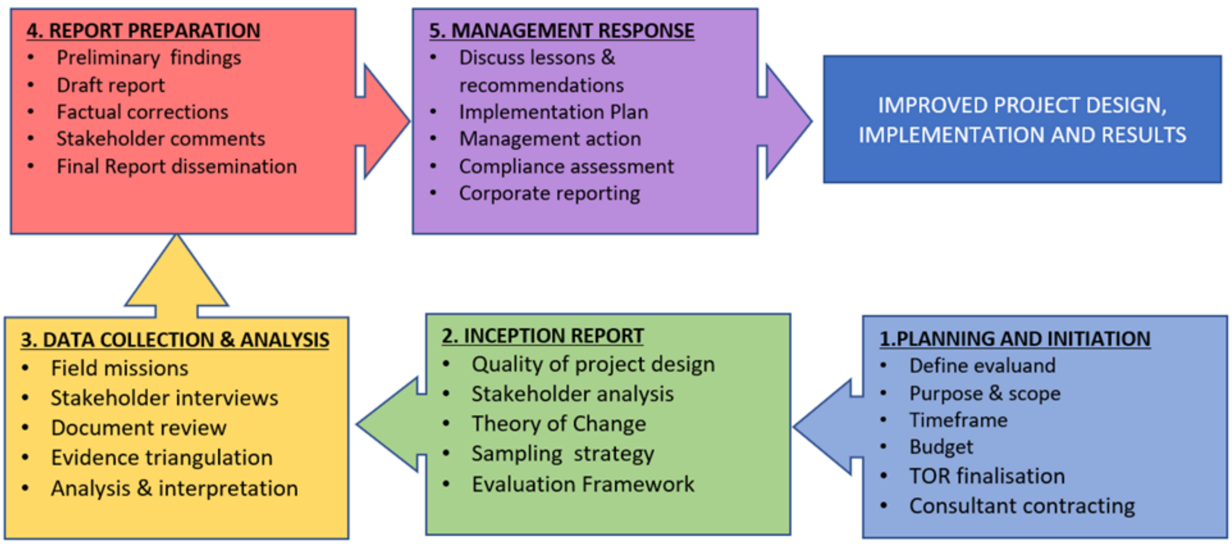


Figure 1. UNEP Evaluation Process

42. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Guidelines, the project was assessed with respect to a minimum set of evaluation criteria grouped into the following 9 categories: Strategic Relevance, Quality of Project Design, Nature of External Context, Effectiveness (availability of outputs, achievement of project outcomes and likelihood of impact), Financial Management, Efficiency, Monitoring and Reporting, Sustainability and the Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-cutting Issues. As per UNEP guidance, the evaluation ratings are on a six-point scale.[14] 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 evaluation criterion. The evaluator has considered all the evidence

[14] Most criteria are rated against the following points on the scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU); Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) down to Highly Unfavourable (HU); Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).

gathered during the evaluation in relation to this matrix in order to generate evaluation criteria performance ratings.

43. The quality at project design was assessed in detail during the Inception Phase of the Evaluation and can be found in the Inception Evaluation Report, available from the Evaluation Office.

44. A Theory of Change was revised during the Inception Phase of the Evaluation based on a desktop review of project documentation, and initial interviews with key project partners. This Theory of Change was shared and discussed in its various aspects as relevant with key project partners involved in the evaluation. The version presented did not need further revision and can be found in Section IV of this report.

45. The project-context key strategic questions for the evaluation provided in the TOR are as follows:

    Q1: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

    Q2: In what ways and to what extent can the project execution capacity be identified prior to the project implementation? Given some of the administrative challenges faced particularly in procurement through DFFE, how can the partnership and roles be improved between EA and IA for future project implementation?

    Q3: In what ways, and to what extent, have the needs and interests of differentiated groups been considered in the implementation of the project?

    Q4: 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?

46. In addition, the Theory of Change (Section IV) provided the framing for the project-outcome related questions, as well as those related to the overall project impact; these are provided below:

    Q5: What evidence is available to show that the project strengthened South Africa's ability to track and report progress towards the achievement of its nationally determined contribution (NDC)? Did the project contribute to strengthening/improving transparency mechanisms of the South African institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting?

    Q6: What evidence is there to suggest that training programmes have resulted in improved tracking reporting?

    Q7: What evidence is there to suggest that the M&E system is being used and is transparent?

    Q8: To what extent is there evidence to suggest that there is ownership and championship around setting NDC targets towards climate neutrality and resilience?

47. During the Inception Phase, the evaluator developed an evaluation matrix (found in Annex 2) which consisted of an extended set of questions based on the above strategic questions (Q1-

4), the questions stemming from the TOC (Q5-8), as well as the questions based on the evaluation criteria set out in the TOR.

48. For projects funded by the GEF, findings from the evaluation are to be uploaded in the GEF Portal.[15] To support this process, evaluation findings related to the 5 topics of interest to the GEF are summarised in Annex 9. 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 Safeguards Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach.

49. A combination of methods and tools were applied during the evaluation to collect information necessary to answer all evaluation questions in an evidence-based manner. These are explained below in six stages:

    a. <u>Inception Phase and Document Review (January-February):</u> This included planning the evaluation, the development of the evaluation questions (Annex 2), the review of the project design, and revising the Theory of Change. Most of the project documentation was provided during the Inception Phase, but additional information and missing information was requested and received by the evaluator beyond the Inception Phase and up to the end of the Data Collection Phase. The final list of documents collected and reviewed can be found in Annex 4. The Inception Phase also included a few key interviews with the IA and the EA. The Inception Report was developed and included the evaluation matrix (Annex 2). During the Inception Phase, the country mission was also discussed and agreed upon: a timeline was agreed, and a key stakeholder list was shared that was revised based on the desktop review and initial interviews (see below b.).

    b. <u>Data Collection Phase (i) Pre-country Mission Stakeholder Interviews, Email Exchanges and Online Survey (February):</u> The evaluator conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a small set of key stakeholders during early February, in advance of the country mission. These interviews were conducted on a virtual video platform (using either Google Meet or Microsoft Teams). The selection of all stakeholders to be interviewed was made by the evaluator: an initial list was received from the EA; a collection of key names was done during the project documentation review (workshops, project steering committee meetings, engagement activities, etc), these lists were compared and discussed with the EA, after which a key set of stakeholders was finalised based on their involvement in and relevance to the project. This purposive sampling approach enabled the evaluator to identify a set of essential stakeholders to be interviewed, based on which she reached out to specific stakeholders for semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted pre-, in-, and post-country mission. The sampling frame can be found in Table 3 below.

    c. In addition, the adaptation M&E training (Sub-output 2.1) was conducted with a large number of participants across eight provinces. To assess the efficacy of this training, a

[15] The GEF Portal is an online platform for accessing information about all projects funded by the GEF Trust Fund.

survey was developed and a census-approach was employed, attempting to target all those who underwent the training. Attendance sheets of the training were kept as handwritten sheets, and no master list was provided to the evaluator.[16] Many of the contacts were illegible as a result; the evaluator typed out all contact details into an excel sheet (leaving out those that were totally illegible), and sent the survey out to this list using Google Forms[17] on 21 February[18]; the survey remained open until 7 April (the survey questionnaire and results can be found in Annex 8). Out of 502 participants, 272 were legible enough to be typed up. Of these, 99 bounced back (either spelling was wrong due to illegibility or respondent was no longer at that email address). Out of 173 respondents who received the survey, only six answered. See Table 3 below.

Table 3. Respondent's sample for the Terminal Evaluation of the CBIT South Africa Project (GEF9673)

(a) Semi-structured interviews

Respondent Category	**Entity**	**# People Involved (M/F)**	**# People Contacted (M/F)**	**# Respondent (M/F)**	**% Respondent**
Project team *(those with management responsibilities)*	Implementing agency	8 (4/4)	7 (3/4)	5 (2/3)	71
	Executing Agency	4 (3/1)	4 (3/1)	4 (3/1)	100
Respondent Category	**# Entities Involved**	**# People Involved (M/F)**	**# People Contacted (M/F)**	**# Respondent (M/F)**	**% Respondent**
Project (implementing/ executing) partners *(receiving funds from the project)*	6	30 (18/12)	26 (15/11)	19 (12/7)	73
Project (collaborating/ contributing[19]) partners *(not receiving funds from the project)*	13	21 (10/11)	15 (12/3)	7 (5/2)	46
Total	21	73 (35/38)	52 (33/19)	35 (23/12)	67

(b) Online survey

Respondent Category	**# Entities Involved**	**# People Involved (M/F)**	**# People Contacted (M/F)**	**# Respondent (M/F)**	**% Respondent**
Capacity building beneficiaries for survey	unknown	502 (unknown)	272 (unknown)	6 (2/4)	2

[16] The evaluator asked for this list during Inception and was told it did not exist. During the interview with the former NPC, the evaluator was told this list indeed did exist, but despite various follow-ups never received it - by this time, the evaluator had already written up the attendance sheets and sent out the survey.
[17] https://forms.gle/4CVatCRVxcMZtVhA7, survey closed 7 April 2025.
[18] A reminder was sent out 14 March.
[19] Contributing partners may be providing resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc).

d. Data Collection Phase (ii) Country mission and Post-Country Interviews (February - April 2025): The country mission took place between 9 and 15 March 2025. The country schedule was developed and coordinated by the evaluator, scheduling and logistics were supported by the PMU. Interviews were organised three weeks in advance, with several follow ups and confirmations leading up to the mission. Some respondents were unavailable to meet within the timeframe of the country mission; some of these individuals were interviewed online post-mission (5 respondents), some did not respond (19 respondents, interview requests were made with two follow-up emails). In order to accommodate some individuals' schedules as well as follow up on some final clarifications, interviews were held up to end-April 2025 (some of these were connected to the data validation phase below).

e. Validation of data (April): Once the data were gathered through the document review (a), the data collection phases (b and c), including online interviews, emails, in-country interviews and survey, as well as document checks, this data was organised according to the criteria and evaluation questions as laid out in the evaluation matrix (Annex 2). Where data from the three areas of collection demonstrated complementarity, these were used directly in the findings. In cases where information did not coincide, additional interviews with relevant stakeholders were held (either through (i) direct follow up with the project team and through documentation verification e.g. request for email evidence, or (ii) through triangulation with other stakeholders and written sources).

f. Preliminary Findings: No time could be secured at the end of the Country Mission to conduct a Preliminary Feedback session; this was subsequently organised online on 29 April 2025 after the presentation brief was circulated with the EA (where the IA and the Evaluation Office were present). An additional Preliminary Findings discussion was held with the IA on 3 April 2025, in conjunction with the Terminal Evaluation of another CBIT project under the same IA.[20]

g. Development of the Terminal Evaluation Report (April-June): The evaluator developed a draft TE report and submitted it (1st) to the evaluation manager at the Evaluation Office who reviewed it and shared it with (2nd) the IA. Afterwards, the evaluator revised the draft for the evaluation manager to finally share it (3rd) with the EA and project stakeholders for comment. Comments were shared with the evaluator for response and/or revision for finalisation of the Terminal Evaluation Report.

50. This evaluation was bound to the Ethical Code of Conduct as per the UNEP Evaluation policy, which includes the following key factors: (a) all interviews and information were provided in confidence and anonymously and no information can be traced back to a direct source/individual, (b) those involved in the evaluation have had the opportunity to review the evaluation findings as well as the main evaluation report, (c) the evaluator was sure to have empathy and sensitivity to different contexts and cultures in which stakeholders work.

[20] This was held in conjunction with another Preliminary Findings presentation on another evaluation the evaluator was evaluating in parallel.

51. The evaluation made attempts to ensure gender representation as much as was possible given those directly involved in the project. Twelve out of 23 respondents who took part in interviews were female. The evaluation also conducted an extensive review of documentation to identify gender disaggregation and analyse the level to which the project made efforts to include gender, facilitate gender-specific activities, and overall conduct interventions that empower women and marginalised sectors of society.

52. The evaluation was faced with the following limitations which may have had some influence on the evaluation in terms of having a comprehensive package of information on project delivery:

    a) The National Project Coordinator (responsible for financial and administrative management of the project), who was with the project up to August 2024 and then left because Project Management funds ran out, was no longer with the DFFE during the evaluation. While initially this individual made themselves available for a face-to-face interview during the evaluation country mission, was finally only able to meet with the evaluator online for one hour. Several follow up requests were made for additional documentation and clarifications, but these went unanswered. Other staff members tried to fill these gaps, but the insights of the National Project Coordinator, given the background and knowledge of a project he managed for five years, cannot be replaced. This move also affected record keeping as handover to the new manager was quick and access to the laptop and folders were limited (the new National Project Coordinator managed to retrieve the majority, but some items were retrieved only by going through records of emails, etc, which was time consuming).

    b) The survey of Output 2's M&E adaptation training activities yielded only 6 responses out of a total of 502 participants who attended these trainings across eight provinces (see paragraph 18c). The project itself had done its own evaluations during the training sessions (on day 2 of each of the 17 workshops), but these evaluation forms were received as scanned handwritten individual forms (many of which were illegible) and also did not speak to application of capacity (the evaluator was informed there was a consolidated report on these evaluation forms, but never received it).

    c) Despite requesting interviews with key stakeholders in different departments (a total of 52 individuals were engaged of which 35 responded), some were not available for interviews or did not respond at all. This meant that some key institutions were not interviewed, including the South African Weather Service, the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, and the Department of Human Settlements.

3 THE PROJECT

3.1 Context

53. At the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP-21) in 2015, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Paris Agreement[21]. This Agreement is a legally binding international treaty that refers to the contribution that each individual country should make to achieve the worldwide goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The success of the Agreement hinges on enhanced transparency of action and support as a critical foundation to making its bottom-up, country-led approach work, as well as building mutual trust and confidence amongst the Parties.

54. This enhanced framework for transparency necessitates significant and immediate advancements in the domestic Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems of countries and in their strategic decarbonization planning. This entails establishing novel governance structures for transparency, formulating and executing measurement and reporting methodologies, and modernizing, implementing, and integrating fresh data and information streams within specified timelines.

55. This transition towards data and information sourcing and management presents a significant barrier for many countries. As a result, The Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) was set up to support country Parties, upon request, in meeting enhanced transparency requirements as defined in Article 13 of the Agreement.

56. South Africa has already undertaken several transparency related initiatives. However, gaps remain which need to be addressed for the system to be fully operational and functional. Progress has been made in implementing climate-compatible sectoral plans, for example the integrated energy and electricity planning, industrial policy action plans, and the growth path. In addition to sectoral plans, South Africa started working on programmes and initiatives towards the development of Monitoring and Evaluation/ Monitoring Reporting and Verification (M&E/MRV) systems.

57. South Africa's National Climate Change Response Strategy (2011) calls for the National Climate Change Response Database (NCCRD) to be used as a tool to track the extent to which the country is making the transition towards a lower-carbon economy and climate-resilient society. To address this gap, South Africa has developed a broader climate change M&E system, within which the NCCRD falls. The NCCRD acts as a repository for information on climate change mitigation, adaptation and research projects within the M&E System.

58. Building on several milestones that South Africa has already achieved with the support from other donors and partners, South Africa requested GEF to support the following additional activities to complement these projects that target to operationalize the M&E system, in terms of coverage, accuracy, quality control, analysis and communication, namely

[21] https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement

(a) setting up of quality assurance/quality control for regular data processing to assess and improve information and data quality coverage and to enhance coordination for reporting and data quality improvement mechanisms,

(b) integration and streamlining of reporting systems and associated guidelines and templates,

(c) improved alignment of the M&E system with international reporting requirements,

(d) cascading, aligning and embedding the M&E system in all spheres of government,

(e) building capacity of key stakeholders across government, private sector and civil society to use the M&E system,

(f) building the capacity of staff in key departments, to regularly process data, to provide quality control feedback to reporting departments, thereby facilitating improved standardized data and information collection.

59. The CBIT project aimed to provide strategic support to the coordination and implementation of the activities outlined above.

60. The CBIT project fell under the UNEP Climate Change Subprogramme under the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2021 (POW 2020-2021) and Climate Action Subprogramme under the MTS 2022-2025. The project was implemented by the UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, currently part of the Mitigation Branch of the UNEP Climate Change Division. The project was executed by the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE)[22]. The Project Management Unit was established within DFFE and oversaw day-to-day management of the project and the functions of the consultants and/or service providers under the project.[23] The team was to comprise a National Project Coordinator, Technical Expert in M&E System Information Management and a Technical Expert in GHG Inventory information system, along with other consultants for specific activities in the results framework.

61. The national advisory panel (established under output 1), whose secretariat is the DFFE, was to appoint a task team to act as the Project Steering Committee (PSC)[24]. According to the CEO ER, the PSC was to meet once a year to, among other things, ensure the coordination across initiatives.

62. The focus of this CBIT project was to enhance government reporting, including in the decentralization of monitoring and reporting across national and subnational departments, and in the use of standardized and international guidelines. As a result, various departments were to be involved, including the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Transport (DoT), the

[22] Previously called the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, and called Department of Environmental Affairs at GEF CEO ER.
[23] Although some of this was eventually managed under UNDP during implementation.
[24] During implementation (at Inception Meeting, 28 August 2019), the panel and the PSC essentially became one committee.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)[25], the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and scientific and research institutions.

3.2 Results Framework

63. The CBIT South Africa project objective was that 'South Africa is meeting the enhanced transparency framework requirement under the Paris Agreement'.

64. The table below reflects the project results hierarchy as stated in the Project Document (CEO Endorsement Request, 2018) and as revised in Project Revision 1[26].

Table 4. Project Results Hierarchy of the CBIT South Africa Project

Stated Project Outcomes	Outputs
Project Component: Strengthening South Africa's capacity to meet enhanced transparency requirement of the Paris Agreement	
South Africa is tracking and reporting progress towards achievement of its nationally determined contribution	Output 1.0. An institutional arrangement that supports operationalisation of the Monitoring and Evaluation System established. (sub-headings/un-numbered sub-outputs were: "embedded technical support", "financial audits", "strategy development and guidance")
	Output 2.0. Training programmes to build institutional engagement and staff capacities on Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of climate action implemented Sub-output 2.1. Undertake training workshops on adaptation M&E system Sub-output 2.2. Conduct long-term capacity building strategy on GHG inventory and mitigation actions at national level Sub-output 2.3. Training relevant entities on international MRV guidance

3.3 Stakeholders

65. A full stakeholder analysis was provided in the TE Inception Report, describing roles and relevance to the project design, implementation and evaluation. Stakeholder involvement and communication channels were further analysed during the evaluation, particularly in terms of sustaining the project results - the uptake of the tools, databases and further use for climate reporting. The table analysis done in the Inception Phase was updated based on the evaluation findings and is provided below (Table 5).

[25] At CEO ER, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

[26] Here sub outputs were made for both output 1.0 and output 2.0, although sub-outputs for 2.0 were clearly stated and numbered.

Table 5. Stakeholder analysis by the Terminal Evaluation of the CBIT South Africa Project

Stakeholder	Power/Interest over Project	Role in Project Design	Role in Project Implementation	Changes in behaviour expected through implementation of the project
Type A: *High power / high interest = Key player*				
UNEP Climate Change Mitigation Unit	Implementing Agency	Partner in project design	Oversight	Continuous learning and improvement of CBIT implementation support to countries
DFFE	Key Player, executing agency, secretariat of the Advisory Committee.	Key partner/main designer of project (although responsible individuals might no longer be there).	Executing Agency, coordinating project and also beneficiary in terms of capacity development.	Capacitated to track progress reporting, main champion of CBIT.
Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change (IGCCC)	Coordinates across government departments and is subsidiary to and reports within the NCCC.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.
Department of Science, Technology and Innovation	Key in terms of databases, research and tracking and reporting, MRV.	Same as above.	PSC/Advisory Committee, beneficiary of training.	Beneficiary of training and application. Use of M&E system. Input into long-term capacity, research.
Department of Transport	Use of M&E system important, and especially GHG inventory.	Same as above.	PSC/Advisory Committee, beneficiary of training.	Beneficiary of training and application. Use of M&E system.
Department of Mineral Resources and Energy	Use of M&E system important, and especially GHG inventory.	Same as above.	PSC/Advisory Committee, beneficiary of training.	Beneficiary of training and application. Use of M&E system.
Agricultural Research Council (ARC)	Use of M&E system important, and especially GHG inventory.	Same as above.	PSC/Advisory Committee, beneficiary of training.	Beneficiary of training and application. Use of M&E system.
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	As with ARC, but less involved/active.	Same as above.	Beneficiary of training.	Use of M&E system.
Provincial and local government in all provinces	Adaptation training and use of M&E system.	Same as above.	Beneficiary of training.	Application of training and use of M&E system.
Type B: *High power/ low interest over the project =Meet their needs*				
NRF	Ability to provide burseries to grow expertise as a result of the training of the GHG inventory.	Same as above.		Support expertise development through burseries for long-term capacity development.
Department of Women, Youth and	Gender mainstreaming vital.	Same as above.	PSC/Advisory Committee. Gender	Gender component and mainstreaming gender equality,

Stakeholder	**Power/Interest over Project**	**Role in Project Design**	**Role in Project Implementation**	**Changes in behaviour expected through implementation of the project**
Persons with Disabilities			component and mainstreaming gender equality.	integration of climate change and reporting considerations.
National Disaster Risk Management centre	Dealing with climate resilience (TBD).	Same as above.	TBD	TBD
Type C: *Low power/ high interest over the project= Show consideration*				
UNDP	Supporting contracting.	Came on board at implementation.	Supporting contracting and procurement as per inter-UN agreement.	N/A.
CSIR	Part of consulting team	Not directly involved in project but consultants for the BTR	Not directly involved in project but consultants for the BTR	N/A
Gondwana Environmental Solutions	Part of consulting team	Came on board at implementation.	GHG information systems technical expert.	N/A
Zutari	Part of consulting team	Came on board at implementation.	Long-term capacity building strategy.	N/A
Promethium carbon	Part of consulting team	Not directly involved in project but consultants for the BTR	Not directly involved in project but consultants for the BTR	N/A
Academic / research bodies	TBD	Same as above.		
Type D: *Low power /low interest over the project= Least important*				
None				

66. The DFFE, through its Climate Change Development and International Mechanisms Directorate[27] had the overall execution responsibility, under the Chief Directorate of International Climate Change Regulation and Reporting. The two other Chief Directorates under the Climate Change and Air Quality Branch were involved in aspects of project implementation (Chief Directorate of Mitigation Specialist and Monitoring Services and the Chief Directorate of Adaptation).

[27] Sitting under the Chief Directorate of International Climate Change Regulation and Reporting, which sits under the Climate Change and Air Quality Branch at DFFE.

3.4 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

67. The UNEP-GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, currently part of the Mitigation Branch of the UNEP Climate Change Division, was the project Implementing Agency. The role was well outlined in the project document as well as the Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and included, *inter alia*,

    a. Provide project oversight to ensure that GEF policies and criteria are adhered to and that the project meets its objective and achieves its outcome in an efficient and effective manner;

    b. Have a representative on the Steering Committee;

    c. Inform the GEF Secretariat whenever there is a potentially substantive co-financing change (i.e. one affecting the project objectives, the underlying concept, scale, scope, strategic priority, conformity with GEF criteria, likelihood of project success, or outcome);

    d. Undertake a mid-term review or request UNEP Evaluation Office to perform an independent mid-term review (this was not a prerequisite in the project document and was under the discretion of the IA if necessary);

    e. Rate, on an annual basis, progress in meeting project objectives;

    f. Advance the first instalment of USD 150,000 to the EA within four weeks of signing the PCA;

    g. Advance the second and third instalments to the EA within two weeks after a financial report and other agreed-upon documentation was received and approved by UNEP showing satisfactory progress and adequate management and use of GEF resources;

    h. Make the final disbursement (5% of total GEF budget), upon submission and acceptance of the final report, outputs, final audited expenditure statement, co-finance report and final inventory of non-expendable equipment.

68. The UNEP IA team consisted of a Task Manager based in Nairobi supported by a Programme Assistant, who managed the day-to-day oversight of the project, and a Financial Management Officer (FMO). This team oversaw the project throughout the implementation period.

69. The Executing Agency (EA), the DFFE (Directorate of CCDIM), also had its role well defined in the Project Document as well as the PCA, and this included, *inter alia*:

    a. Inform UNEP in writing whenever there is a substantial co-financing change;

    b. Notify UNEP in writing about any expected variations on the project budget on an annual basis;

    c. With regard to sub-contracts, ensure that the EA (i) includes reporting and audit obligations, (ii) maintains primary responsibility for completion of project, (iii) monitors the performance of the contracts;

    d. Be solely and completely responsible and accountable for all services performed by personnel and contractors;

e. Ensure the technical capacity matches that of project personnel needed;

f. Before commencement of procurement, furnish the project procurement plan to be reviewed at the Project Inception Meeting and cleared by UNEP;

g. Ensure that the project management costs do not exceed the GEF-approved amount in the project budget in accordance with GEF rules; any increase in management costs as a result of extending the duration of the project is the sole responsibility of the EA;

h. Should there remain a balance from the total GEF-approved budget after operational completion of the project, the EA shall return the unspent funds to UNEP within two months of the expiry of the PCA;

i. Be responsible for reporting half-yearly on technical and financial progress.

70. According to the CEO ER, 2018 (under A.6 institutional arrangement), the national advisory panel established under Output 1 whose secretariat was to be the DFFE, was to appoint a task team to act as the Project Steering Committee (PSC). It was to meet once a year to ensure the coordination across initiatives. The PSC was to include representatives from DFFE, Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) and National Treasury. The national advisory panel was to keep the existing Inter-Government Committee on Climate Change (IGCCC) informed on a regular basis (no less than annual).

71. The Project Management Unit (PMU) was to sit under the EA (DFFE, in this case it was moved from the previous Climate Change Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate to the Directorate of CCDIM). The PMU was to consist of the following personnel (procurement plan as per CEO ER, 2018): a National Project Coordinator, a Technical Expert in M&E System Information Management; a Technical Expert in GHG inventory information systems, a regional adaptation facilitator (just for the adaptation M&E stuff); and an independent curriculum assessor was to be contracted to assess the long-term capacity building strategy.

72. Annex E of the CEO ER outlines the roles and terms of reference of the consultants and project personnel to be hired for the project using GEF resources. The National Project Coordinator had overall management and project implementation responsibility and was to supervise consultants, reporting, work plans, and undertake general administrative duties. The technical expert in M&E systems was to support the operationalisation of the M&E system including for both mitigation and adaptation, collect data and information relevant to M&E system, set up and manage database for all mitigation actions and measures, support MRV of data that feeds into the M&E system, report annually on capacity gaps in the M&E system, support national reporting, foster and manage data sharing arrangements with relevant organisations and individuals, support national and sub-national level capacity building and support peer reporting within the M&E system including within adaptation and mitigation training programmes. The technical expert on GHG inventory information systems was to support collection, processing and accounting of emissions data for each of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emissions categories, support the implementation of the GHG inventory information system, and support national level capacity building. The regional adaptation workshop facilitator was to collaborate and design the M&E adaptation training

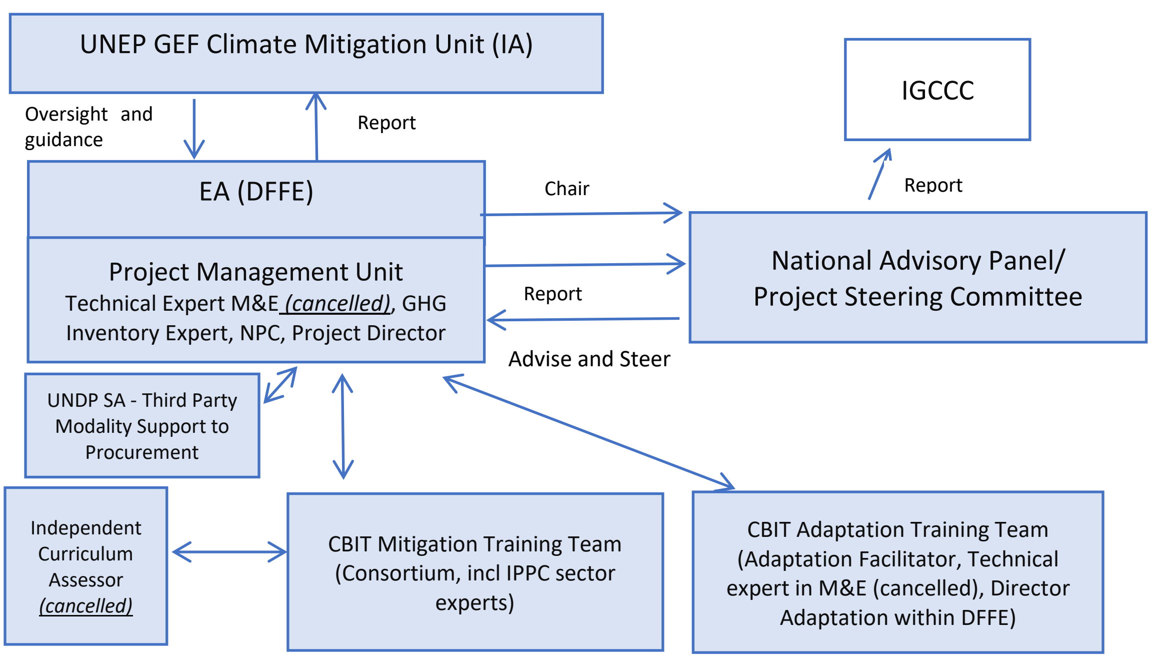
programme. Finally, an independent curriculum assessor was to conduct a formative assessment of the training programme on GHG inventory and mitigation actions (as part of the long-term capacity building strategy. The training consortium was to consist of a GHG and mitigation programme director, programme coordinator, and technical experts in each IPCC sector (waste, energy, industrial processes and product use (IPPU), and agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU)).

73. During project implementation, the PMU actually consisted of the Project Director who was also the Technical Project Manager (the Director of the UNFCCC and working under the Directorate of the CCDIM), and an administrative Project Manager (i.e. the National Project Coordinator) who ran the day-to-day activities of the project. The M&E specialist was not hired under the project, the GHG inventory specialist was hired but conducted most of its work in 2023 and 2024, and the curriculum assessor was not hired (the reasons for these changes are detailed in further sections of the report under evaluation findings). For certain activities, different directorates were involved, including that the Director of Adaptation and another staff member ran the adaptation M&E workshops (so, the facilitator became an in-house position), and the GHG inventory expert sat within the Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems.

74. On 29 July 2022 UNEP entered into a UN-to-UN agreement for UNDP to serve as a Project support partner for procurement of service providers and was placed in charge of USD 653,610 of the previously EA-managed project budget to do procurement for the GHG inventory technical expert, the consortium for the long-term capacity building strategy, and the curriculum assessor (which was later cancelled because no qualified bids were received).

75. The organogram of the project was refined from the CEO ER and is provided in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Organogram of the Project with key project key stakeholders (refined from CEO ER, 2018)



3.5 Changes in Design during Implementation

76. The project underwent four project revisions, as follows:

a. The first project revision was the result of a request letter by DFFE dated 6 October 2020. The letter stated that while the project was scheduled to start in March 2019 and some work and engagements had been undertaken in the first months since project start, the National Project Coordinator (i.e. the administrative project manager, NPC) was only appointed 1 June 2019 and effective implementation only started in July 2019. Ever since project implementation, the project workplan was affected by COVID-19 related restrictions in South Africa (including the inability to undertake in-person meetings, key personnel working from home with limited internet access and no laptops). As a result of these restrictions, technical completion was being revised to 30 September 2022 with the understanding that DFFE had not yet fully done an assessment of the COVID-9 impact and that the project completion date may still be extended beyond this date based on that assessment. The DFFE submitted a revised workplan and budget which had been presented to PSC members by email on 28 August 2020 with no objection. The date of the project completion was then extended from 31 January 2022 to 30 September 2022. The name change from the Department of Environmental Affairs to the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries was also formally noted. The budgetary information included that the actual expenditures reporting by the EA by this point (20 months into implementation) was USD 53,445 and that it was necessary to re-phase unspent funds of USD 1,047,555 for future years as per the revised budget but that the total cost remained unchanged. At this point the procurement delays were mentioned but that recruitment would be finalised by the end of 2020, and that some output activities were to be postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19. Revision 1 also included the output changes to sub-outputs in the workplan. Approval for the revision was given by UNEP in November 2020.

b. The second project revision had started from the first letter dated 12 April 2022 which DFFE outlined various challenges that the project faced; these included lengthy supply chain management of procurement within the DFFE due to a backlog from COVID-19 (most officials in the committees in supply chain management did not have access to IT equipment during the hard lockdown), lack of appetite from the market in some cases where few bids had been received (and disqualification of bidders for not meeting minimum requirements by the supply chain committees), and other restrictions of COVID-19 lockdowns and procedures which made it near impossible to implement the project during 2020 and 2021. This started a conversation on using a third-party modality to support procurement. A letter dated 13 June 2022 was a formal request by the DFFE to UNEP to provide authorisation to obtain assistance from UNDP South Africa for project activities associated with the procurement of service providers and consultants. This was a result of joint consultations between DFFE, UNDP SA and UNEP the weeks preceding the letter where an agreement had been reached on budget and workplan revision to reflect the split of the work and responsibilities between the portion of the project that would continue to executed by the DFFE and the portion of the project where UNDP SA would provide support on procurement activities. DFFE was to manage a total of USD 406,390 and was to continue reporting and overseeing all implementation of the project in collaboration with UNDP SA. UNDP SA was to receive USD 653,610 and take charge of the following procurement aspects: hiring of the GHG inventory expert, hiring the consortium of experts to undertake the long-term capacity building strategy on GHG inventory and mitigation actions, and hiring the independent curriculum assessor. The formal request letter asked UNDP to (1) prepare and amendment to the PCA, and (2) prepare a UN-to-UN agreement between UNEP and UNDP SA. This amendment was signed on 29 July 2022. Revision 2 letter also requested a no-cost extension of the project's technical completion date to 31 August 2024 to allow DFFE to finalise all remaining project activities. The letter also included the official name change from the DEFF to the DFFE. UNEP approved the revision in June 2022.

c. The <u>third project revision</u> was based on a letter dated 28 September 2023 from DFFE to UNEP requesting for the approval to reprioritise unspent project funds to new activities. Discussions prior to this letter revolved around the fact that UNDP had an excess of USD 474,694 to spend after the procurement of service providers was finalised (i.e. the GHG inventory specialist and the long-term capacity development consultants had been hired, the curriculum assessor activity had been cancelled due to lack of bids). DFFE thus requested that these uncommitted funds be channelled and used for other purposes which were still aligned to the objectives of the CBIT. As a result, DFFE and UNDP submitted a budget for the proposed activities. Approval was given end October 2023, and included the addition of the following activities:

   i. Purchasing of seven laptops for officials responsible for technical/substantive work in relation to climate change data collection, analysis and reporting to enhance technical capacity for climate change transparency and reporting within the DFFE, a detailed list of officials was attached;

   ii. Funding for DFFE officials visit to other countries for the P2P learning exchanges on climate change M&E systems to support reporting under the ETF;

   iii. Funding for improving NCCIS and development of the Gauteng Province sub-system which was to be linked to NCCIS;

   iv. Funding for provincial consultations for the development of the SA GAP including designing and printing final copies of the SA GAP;

   v. Funding for a research study and two workshops on climate change education, training and awareness as part of implementing the Action Plan for Climate Empowerment under UNFCCC in SA and reporting the outcomes in the BTR;

   vi. Funding for all expenses for the CBIT project coordinator to attend COP-28 in Dubai in December 2023 as well as the meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies under the UNFCCC in June 20.

d. The <u>fourth project revision</u> was the result of a letter dated 5 August 2024 requesting for the revision and extension following correspondences in June and July 2024 requested an extension for technical completion date of 31 December 2024 to ensure all activities could be completed. DFFE, in consultation with UNDP, prepared a revision to the project budget and workplan to re-allocate some of the unspent funds as well as the rescheduling of the project activities. The PCA and UN-to-UN agreement were revised accordingly, and the revision was approved mid-August.

77. The following output activities were cancelled:

78. Under Output 1.0, an important activity, namely the hiring of the Technical Expert in M&E System Information, was cancelled early on and this cancellation is already present in the first reporting/first revision. Effectively this position was "co-financed" under a different funding mechanism (World Resources Institute) and the position was placed as directly reporting to the Chief Director of Mitigation Specialist and Monitoring Services. Minimal general reporting on this position was done in the first and second year (PIRs 2020 and 2021), but the activity was marked as cancelled already in the first reporting and first revision. So, effectively, this was a large part of the output that was not achieved under this project. At the time of project design, the DEA Climate Change Monitoring and Evaluation team was responsible for the M&E system (the structure at the DEA was different at design than at implementation). This team was responsible for setting up the system, system improvements, data requests for monitoring, analysis of indicators for tracking transition to a lower-carbon economy, administration of the web-based platform as well as the M&E system. At the time, there was a need to set up quality assurance and control measures within the M&E system for better data quality coverage and coordination of reporting and data quality improvement mechanisms as well as establish processes for quantification of reporting of mitigation measures in support of the tracking of South Africa's progress towards NDCs. As a result, the request was for GEF to support to (i) strengthen the DEA's capacity in monitoring and verifying of climate change information that feeds to the M&E system, (ii) ensure enhanced coordination among sectors in verification of cc info and data, and (iii) improve accuracy in quantification of mitigation measures - on completion of the project, the GRN of SA was to have trained additional experts and staff members who will sustain the operations of the M&E system - this was the whole point of Output 1. The first activity, namely the technical expert in M&E system information management, was to implement, administer and manage the M&E system, through:

    a. Support operationalisation of M&E system information management including for both adaptation and mitigation;
    b. Collect data and information relevant to the M&E system;
    c. Set up and manage the database for all mitigation actions and measures;
    d. Set up and manage the database for tracking achievement of Desired Adaptation Objectives;
    e. Support the monitoring and verification of data and information feeds to the M&E system;
    f. Document all information collection progresses, sources, communications and contacts for the purposes of transparency, and for annual replication and improvement;
    g. Report annually on capacity gaps in M&E system for related reporting, data collection and information management systems;

h. Support the GHG inventory expert in their work to archive all datasets, methodologies, assumptions and calculations in the national GHG emissions data system;

i. Support national reporting;

j. Foster and manage data sharing arrangements with relevant organisations and individuals;

k. Support national and subnational capacity building peer reporting within the M&E system.

79. Under Output 1.0, the two activities (updating NCCIS + collection and mapping of projects and model outputs of climate risks in Gauteng province/Gauteng NCCIS subsystem) added in Revision 3 were cancelled in revision 4 due to time limitations.

3.6 Project Financing

80. The total planned project budget was USD 2,223,469, of which the GEF allocation was USD 1,100,000 (excluding IA fee which was USD 104,500), with planned co-financing of USD 1,018,969. See Annex 6 for the project budget and expenditure tables, as well as co-financing.

81. The total GEF budget expenditure at closing was USD 593,031[28] (excluding the agency fee, so 54% expenditure of the GEF USD 1,100,000), with co-financing committed spending of USD 707,643, reaching a grand total of USD 1,285,014.63.

82. Project Preparatory Grant (PPG) funds were USD 30,000 and were spent accordingly on the PPG.

83. Planned and committed co-financing was USD 163,452 from DFFE; USD 228,291 from WRI; and USD 627,226 from the Government of Norway (CEO ER, 2018) bringing the total to USD 1,018,969. Final co-financing was reported as USD 450,386 from the DFFE, USD 257,257 from the WRI and no co-financing was reported from the Government of Norway.[29] The evaluation found out through email communication being shared between the IA and the EA, that the co-financing that was coming from a separate project funded through the Government of Norway had ended before the CBIT project began and thus could not be included (see paragraph 214 for more details).

[28] USD 252,743 DFFE final statement of accounts + USD 340,288 UNDP final statement of accounts.

[29] The 2020 reporting actual total was USD 58,375 from DFFE, WRI 257,257; 2021 DFFE 116,750; WRI 257,257; Government of Norway not reported; 2022 DFFE 163,452; WRI 257,257 and no reporting on Government of Norway; 2023 DFFE 181,919; WRI 257,257, and no reporting on Government of Norway; 2024 DFFE USD 450,386, WRI 257,257, and no reporting on Government of Norway. Co-financing report 2020. 23 October 2020. Co-financing report 2021. 7 July 2021. Co-financing report 2022. 5 July 2022. Co-financing report 2023. 17 July 2023. Co-financing report 2024. 3 February 2025.

4 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

84. The GEF Chief Executive Officer Endorsement Request (CEO ER, 2018) included a Theory of Change (TOC) based on the results framework, the CBIT National Project Problem Tree, and the CBIT National Solution Tree. During the Inception Phase of the Terminal Evaluation, the results framework and the TOC were reviewed and analysed for purposes of understanding the causal pathways and which assumptions and drivers allow for the causal pathways to be achieved. The evaluator revised this Theory of Change to better understand the project (and its activity-related revisions) in a coherent manner, including causal pathways and intermediate states that were not outlined in the original TOC.

85. The revision of the TOC also included revising some results statements, which was also done at the Inception Phase of the evaluation. The original and revised results statements can be found in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Original and revised project results statements to inform the TOC and evaluation of the CBIT South Africa project (GEF ID 9673)

Formulation in original project document(s)/TOC	**Formulation for Revised ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)**	**Justification for Reformulation**
LONG TERM IMPACT		
South Africa is in a position to set more ambitious NDC targets.	South Africa is on a carbon-neutral, climate-resilient pathway.	The long-term impact reads more like an intermediate state and thus has been moved accordingly to provide for more coherence in terms of the causal pathways. The ultimate goal of GHG emission reduction and adaptation - and the tracking there-of, is for countries to be carbon-neutral and resilience to the impacts of climate change. As a result, South Africa being on this path is a long-lasting result which the project, if successful, will contribute to.
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
None given	IS1: Regular reporting results in improved understanding of South Africa's capacity to set appropriate NDC targets. IS2: South Africa is setting more ambitious NDC targets.	IS2 was moved from original impact statement to here. There were steps missing between the project outcome and the impact/intermediate states. This entire causal pathway needed more elaboration.
PROJECT OUTCOME		

Formulation in original project document(s)/TOC	**Formulation for Revised ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)**	**Justification for Reformulation**
South Africa is tracking and reporting progress towards achievement of its nationally determined contribution	Unchanged.	
Outcome indicator 1: A functional M&E system that support tracking and reporting of South Africa's NDC (one functional M&E system in place)	Unchanged.	
Objective-level indicator to be measured as part of outcome achievement: N. of verified Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) reports regularly submitted to the UNFCCC (Baseline 1 unverified, EOP 1 verified)	Unchanged.	
OUTPUTS		
Output 1. An institutional arrangement that supports operationalisation of the M&E is established	Unchanged.	
Output 1 Indicator: Quality of South Africa's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities improved (using GEF Indicators in CBIT Programme Directions; rank 4)	Unchanged.	
Output 2. Training programmes to build institutional engagement and staff capacities on MRV of climate action implemented Note: the following three sub-outputs clustered Output 2 activities. This change was made in Revision 3 of project implementation: 2.1. Undertake training workshops on adaptation M&E system 2.2. Conduct long-term capacity building strategy on GHG inventory and mitigation actions at national level 2.3. Training relevant entities on international MRV guidance	Institutional engagement strengthened and staff capacities on MRV of climate action built through the implementation of training programmes. The evaluator has kept 2.1-2.3 as sub-outputs/activity clusters, for the purpose of the evaluation.	This output has been adjusted to better clarify the intended product/service as viewed from the perspective of the beneficiary. Outputs under Output 2 have been re-phrased as sub-outputs merely to cluster activities.
Output 2 Indicator: Types of training programmes implemented on Monitoring, Reporting and Verification	Unchanged.	

Formulation in original project document(s)/TOC	Formulation for Revised ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
of climate action (10 adaptation workshops at national and subnational; 4 institutions trained on MRV and transparency; 4 key national institutions trained in theory and practice of selected mitigation topics at level fundamentals, intermediate and expert)		

86. The revised theory of change (rToC) that is presented by this evaluation in Diagram 1 thus demonstrates more complex interrelationships and change pathways, but in a more coherent manner. Stakeholders involved in decision-making processes are included.

87. Diagram 1 illustrates three main causal pathways that, together, lead from project activities to impact:

a) Use of technical expertise to operationalise the M&E system and set up the GHG inventory system, as well as use of IT support, will drive the set-up of an institutional arrangement that supports the operationalisation of the M&E system (this would include the two consultants that the project aimed to hire). The support and applied use of the systems by the relevant government officials (the key departments outlined in the stakeholder analysis in Section 4 above, including from DFFE, DMRE, DoST, DoT, provincial departments, etc) (if that assumption holds) will result in South Africa tracking reporting towards the achievement of its NDC. Regular reporting results in an improved understanding of South Africa's capacity to set appropriate NDC targets (IS1), leading to more ambitious targets (IS2), ultimately leading to long-term impact that South Africa is on a carbon-neutral, climate resilient pathway. This includes the move from Output 1.0 to Outcome to Intermediate States through to Impact.

b) If the National Advisory Committee performs as planned (driver), the training programmes and M&E system will be appropriately reviewed and improved (by the curriculum assessor), leading to improved reporting (by DFFE in partnership with data providers). Improved reporting will lead to a better understanding of South Africa's capacity to set appropriate (IS1) and ambitious NDC targets (IS2) and allowing the country to move towards carbon neutrality and resilience (impact). This includes the move from Output 1.0 to Outcome to Intermediate States through to Impact.

c) Training programmes (adaptation, GHG inventories, and MRV) that are well attended by the appropriate stakeholders (interested to attend and continue training, most notably DFFE, DMRE, DoT, DoST, DARLD, provincial departments) will lead to enhanced capacity at an institutional and individual level; if this capacity is sufficiently applied, then South Africa will be able to track reporting progress towards its NDC, leading to IS1 and IS2 and towards long-term impact. This includes the move from Output 2.0 to Outcome to Intermediate States through to Impact.

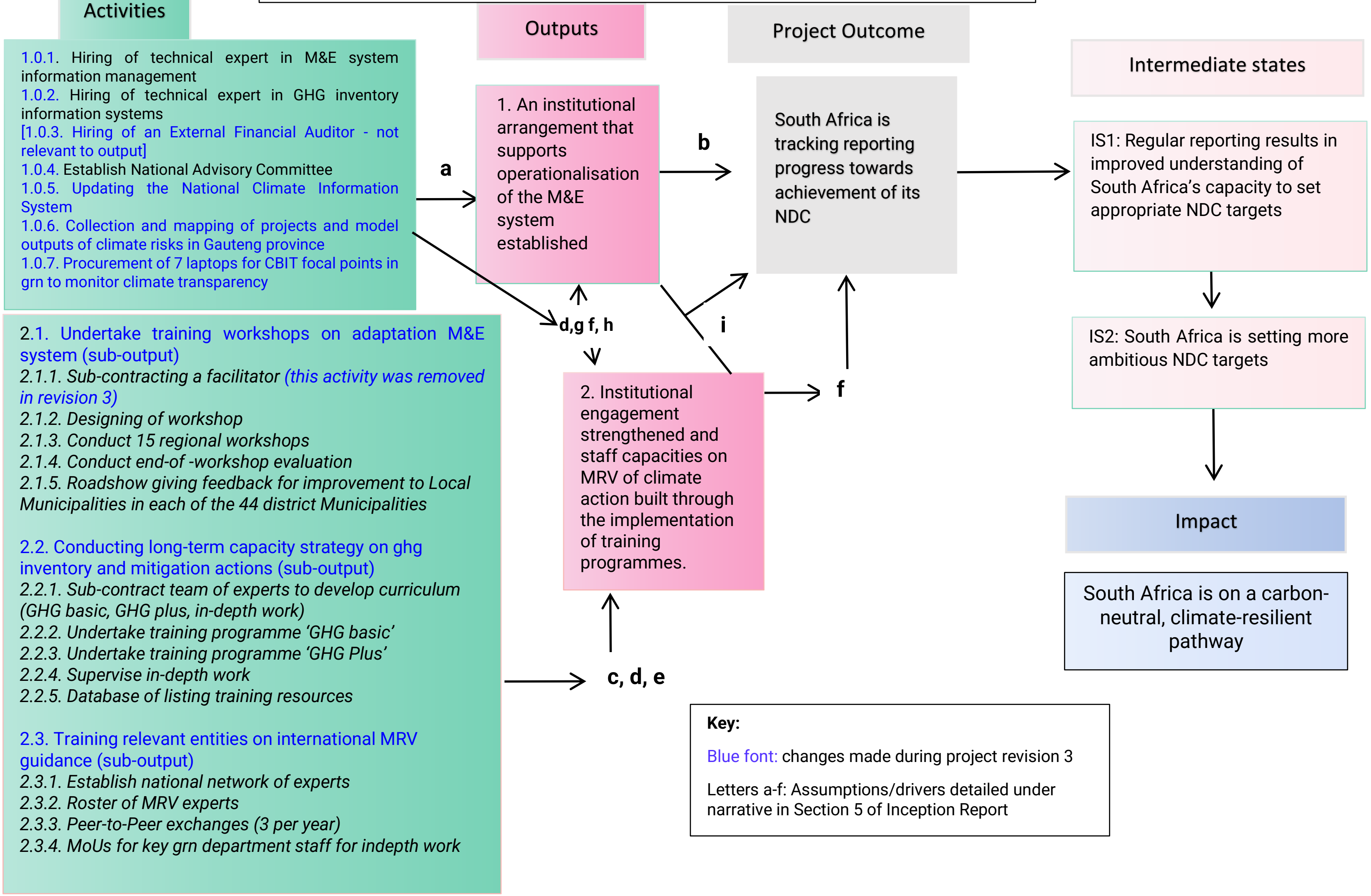
88. All the causal pathways above are also contingent that the project has put into effect an appropriate exit strategy during project implementation to ensure uptake of capacity and use of M&E system and sustainability of project results. The project has also made an effort to mainstream gender and human rights into project implementation, most notably in its training programmes which should lead to enhanced equality in climate reporting.

89. Together with the results statements and pathways, the TOC diagram also contains information on the preconditions for the changes to happen - assumptions and drivers. On the TOC diagram they are marked as numbers next to the arrows and their corresponding description is provided below:

a	Driver	Use of expertise and IT support supports M&E establishment.
b	Assumption	Relevant government officials support and use the M&E system (edited from original TOC at design, and from risk in CEO ER)
c	Driver/Assumption	Stakeholders are interested and willing to participate and provide constructive feedback in the various training programmes30
d	Assumption	Availability of bursary funding within Ministry of Education to support research on identified capacity needs (in original TOC at design)
e	Driver	Gender and human rights inclusions into training programmes enhances access to analyse and contribute to reporting, enhancing equality.
f	Assumption	Enhanced capacity due to training leads to application of capacity
g	Driver	Advisory Panel is meeting regularly and providing adequate feedback on training needs and quality
h	Assumption	Procurement processes do not cause delays (risk in CEO ER)
i	Driver	An appropriate exit strategy is included during project implementation to ensure uptake of capacity and use of M&E system and sustainability of project results.

[30] The project has some influence over this in terms of how it communicates the invitations to stakeholders in terms of raising the profile of the need for capacity development (driver), but ultimately interest and willingness to participate will also be out of the project's influence (assumption).

Diagram 1. Revised Theory of Change for the CBIT South Africa Terminal Evaluation



5 EVALUATION FINDINGS

5.1 Strategic Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

90. The project design (CEO ER, 2018) does not speak directly to the alignment with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) or the relevant Programmes of Work (POWs). That said, at design, the project did align to the MTS 2018-2021 and the POWs 2018/2019 at the time.

91. In project implementation, the Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) noted alignments to the UNEP MTS. These included the project's alignment to the POW 2020-2021, Subprogramme 1 of Climate Change, most notably Expected Accomplishment 1(b): countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies. The last PIR (2025) also stated that the project was aligned to the UNEP Subprogramme on climate stability (countries increasingly transition to low-emission economic development pathways and enhance their adaptation and resilience to climate change), and the corresponding POW indicator (iii) number of national, subnational and sub private sector actors reporting under the enhanced transparency arrangements of the Paris Agreement with UNEP support.

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

5.1.2 Alignment to UNEP/GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

92. The project did not outline the alignment to GEF priorities other than through the CBIT focal areas in the design. However, the project was aligned strongly to the GEF priorities under climate change and particularly the CBIT focal area. Specifically, as a GEF-6 project, it aligned to the GEF-6 programming directions climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation (corporate results framework included to mitigate carbon dioxide emissions). The CBIT was implemented first through GEF-6 and South Africa was one of the first projects under this programme; this came as a request from the Paris Agreement for GEF to support the establishment of the CBIT through voluntary contributions during GEF-6 and future replenishment cycles.

93. It was a GEF-6 designed project and thus did not have corresponding core indicators (which were only introduced in GEF-7).

Rating for Alignment to UNEP/GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities: Satisfactory

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

94. In the project design, there is an extensive section that spoke to the country's priorities and that the project directly responded to South Africa's existing gaps in the M&E system. It aligned with the national climate policy in support of M&E system to "…evolve with international measuring, reporting and verification systems…". It also aligned with the overarching National Development Plan goal to manage the transition to a low-carbon economy. It also linked with South Africa's National Adaptation Strategy and its technology needs assessment for update of prioritized mitigation and adaptation response technologies.

95. The project aligned to the Sustainable Development Goal 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) and its target 13.3. (improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning). It also outlined various corporate results in terms of its contributions to Global Environmental Benefits.

96. The project was also relevant to regional priorities, most notably the alignment to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which prioritised climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts to enhance the resilience of the Southern African region. Specifically, SADC focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly from deforestation, and on adapting to the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods.

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

5.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

97. The Project Document (CEO ER, 2018) outlined in much detail how the project would build on previous interventions in its baseline scenario as well as the existing Climate Change Response M&E system at design. It outlined the following projects that were complementary to the project, namely (a) the BMUB-GIZ funded project on the development of a web-based climate change M&E system to design, develop, test and operationalise a web-based platform to support climate change M&E (2015-2020) (the CBIT project was to build and improve on this platform), (b) the World Bank Partnership for Market Readiness Project (2014-2020) which included the modification of the web-based emissions reporting platform (National Atmospheric Emission Inventory System) to allow reporting of GHG emissions by industry (there was not detail provided in the project document on the exact complementarity), (c) the Norwegian Embassy project on the development of the National GHG inventory system for implementation of a national system for the sustainable management of the GHG emissions inventory compilation (2015-2017) (the CBIT project was to build the capacity of inventory compilation started by this project), and (d) the MRV of AFOLU support programme to provide training of South African technical experts in the use of different tools used for the compilation of the GHG inventory (Government of Australia project, 2013-2017) (the CBIT project was to build on this technical expertise through further capacity development).

98. While these projects were well outlined in design, and the Norwegian project was listed as a co-financier (although since it ended before CBIT began, it was ultimately not included as co-finance), none of these projects were directly named in implementation reporting. The CBIT did build on the GIZ work through support to the GHGIMS updating, the NCCIS work and the gender consultations.

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

5.2 Quality of Project Design

99. At Inception, the evaluator reviewed the performance of project design for 12 critical areas determining the soundness of the design (see Inception report, most notably its Annex 3 for the depth assessment of the project design). These areas with their scores and

weights are summarized in the below table, and the total weighted score shows that the overall quality of the project's design is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory.**

Table 7. Summary table for project design quality assessment

	Section	Rating[31]	Weighting	Total
A	Operating Context	4	0,4	0,16
B	Project Preparation	4	1,2	0,48
C	Strategic Relevance	5	0,8	0,4
D	Intended Results and Causality	4	1,6	0,64
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	4	0,8	0,32
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	5	0,4	0,2
G	Partnerships	4	0,8	0,32
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	0,4	0,2
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	4	0,8	0,32
J	Efficiency	4	0,4	0,16
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	4	0,8	0,32
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	3	1,2	0,36
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	4	0,4	0,16
	Total Weighted Score	**4,04**		

100. The project external operating context was rated as Moderately Satisfactory in terms of how it was assessed at design, but also at design there was no expected challenging factors that would have had any significant impact on project performance.

101. The project design strengths included:

a. Well-described alignment to national priorities and gaps,

b. A good situation analysis and alternative scenario based on the project intervention, and

c. A clear knowledge management approach with appropriate methods (such as the CBIT Global Coordination Platform) of sharing project lessons and experiences within and outside of South Africa.

102. The project design had some weaknesses to which the following may have helped strengthen:

a. The Theory of Change (and intended results and causality) could have had a more robust analysis of assumptions and drivers, and especially an assumption/driver around capacity development and the application of that capacity;

[31] Rating scores: 6=highly satisfactory, 5=satisfactory, 4=moderately satisfactory, 3=moderately unsatisfactory, 2=unsatisfactory, 1=highly unsatisfactory, 0=not applicable

b. A logical framework that could have benefited from some more descriptive output-level indicators for the capacity-building interventions; and some considerations in terms of risks already known at design that could have been integrated into work planning and budgeting, especially the procurement issue;

c. A more robust capacity analysis of partners and their roles;

d. A strong sustainability narrative and strategy, particularly an exit strategy on how South Africa will build on and maintain project results.

Rating for Project Design: Moderately Satisfactory

5.3 Nature of the External Context

103. During the Inception Phase, a rating was established for the project's external operating context; where a project is rated as facing either an unfavourable or highly unfavourable external operating context, the ratings of effectiveness, efficiency and/or sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the evaluation consultant and evaluation manager together - a justification must be given for this. In the context of highly unfavourable or favourable, more than one of the following conditions need to have been present: climatic events disturbed project operations for prolonged periods of time, a security situation affected operations, the political context significantly hampered project operations, economic conditions hampered project operations.

104. The only significant event that had a major disruption on the project was COVID-19, which effectively caused the country to go into lockdown for most of 2020 and 2021, and some of 2022. The project faced challenges through not being able to organise in-person meetings, as well as the already challenged procurement process which caused major delays. As a result, activities were put on hold to an extent where the project was not operational for two years. It also had economic implications in terms of causing government to limit spending on non-essential services to provide more support to essential services (this even affected the project budget where Treasury limited travel budgets of government staff as a result, even if there was project budget specifically for this).

105. That may have been a major event in and of itself, the first extension (to September 2022) was a direct result of this, and the EA had explained in this extension that after a thorough assessment of COVID-19 impacts in the country, it might ask for more time. The subsequent project revisions did not include such an assessment, but the second revision did ask for an extension to August 2024 and the final revision asked for an extension until December 2024. As a result, the project essentially received an extension of 2.5 years which essentially covered the years under COVID-19. In addition, the larger item that was affected and delayed was the procurement issue which was already raised as a risk in project design, and which was exacerbated by COVID-19.

106. Due to (a) the project receiving enough extension time to cover the time that COVID-19 impacted the project, and (b) the project did not face such extreme challenges that activities had to be stopped completely through the majority of the project time (some activities were running virtually during COVID-19), the nature of external context does not qualify for highly unfavourable nor unfavourable. That said, South Africa was particularly affected by COVID-19, and the project was impacted and had to be extended. The evaluation assessment rates the project operating context as Moderately Unfavourable.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Moderately Unfavourable

5.4 Effectiveness

5.4.1 Availability of Outputs

107. The availability of outputs is discussed below through a narrative and a summary of level of achievement of indicators.

Output 1.0. An institutional arrangement that supports operationalisation of the M&E is established

Output-level indicator (1.0)	TE Comments
Quality of south Africa's institutional capacity for transparency-related activities improved (using GEF Indicators in CBIT Programme directions, rank 4)	Improved to rank 3, apparently setting target at rank 4 was too ambitious for a USD 1.1 mil project - reaching rank 3 by end of project can be considered satisfactory. The evaluation opines that this may have received a higher ranking if reporting on the M&E position had been included in the project

108. Overall, this output was partially achieved. The findings are discussed under each of the un-numbered "sub-outputs" as per the workplan of Revision 1.

Embedded technical support

109. The achievement of Output 1.0 largely hinged on the hiring of a Technical expert in M&E System Information Management, whose role was outlined in paragraph 50(c) under Changes to Project Design during Implementation. Already in the half yearly report (Jul-Dec 2019) the hiring of the technical expert in M&E was cancelled because, according to the report, the "M&E Manager" (now the position is the Chief Director of MSMS) received funding for permanent positions in this section and the M&E manager decided that in order to build capacity, one of the permanent employees was going to be enrolled for the work. The team was apparently already in place and operational and the project was to find alternative gaps where the funds could be utilised (an amount of USD 146,935 for the consultancy according to the Project budget of the CEO ER 2018).

110. The PIR 2021 then stated that the Chief Directorate for CC M&E (where the expert was to be based, now the Chief Directorate of MSMS) received another source of donor funding to fulfil this position and that they preferred this option because DFFE could directly employ the expert for a period longer than 3 years thus "ensuring more sustainability after completion of the CBIT". The expert was hired in 2020[32] and the activities the expert had undertaken were reported in the PIR as the following:

· Supporting the operationalization of the M&E system information management for mitigation and adaptation.
· Collecting of data and information relevant to M&E system.
· Managing database for mitigation actions and measures.

[32] It is unknown whether this was an existing position, as per the Half Yearly Report 2019 July-Dec, or whether a consultant was hired, but the stakeholder list did refer to this specialist as a "WRI consultant".

· Managing the database for tracking achievement of Desired Adaptation Objectives.
· Supporting the monitoring and verification of data and information that feeds into the M&E system.
· Reporting annually on capacity gaps in M&E information collection and reporting.

111. The PIR 2022 also reported superficially the activities undertaken during the considered reporting period included the following: North-West Province climate change response policy, planning, implementation M&E carbon sinks atlas. The PIR 2023 also reported superficially on the activities undertaken which included: "climate change response policy, planning, implementation, M&E, tools and systems; carbon sinks atlas; Indigenous knowledge systems as part of the climate change information systems; forecasted climatic changes in the provinces; situational needs analysis in the provincial climate change response implementation". There were no deliverables or further information on these activities, and this was the extent of the reporting on the role. PIRs 2024 and 2025 did not report on the position. The final project report relayed the same narrative as PIR 2021 in terms of why the position under CBIT was cancelled, and did not give any update or description on how this work aligned with the CBIT.

112. The evaluation tried to investigate further to identify how this effectively 'co-financed' position may have directly supported the delivery of the intended output (through a synergised, programmatic approach by the EA). There was a lack of information. The evaluation could not secure interviews with the specialist (despite various follow up email requests), and findings from evaluation interviews found that it had been challenging getting inputs for project reporting and output delivery. So, effectively, as far as the CBIT project was concerned, this activity was cancelled, even though it is likely that the M&E position directly contributed towards the output achievement. It was not treated as a partnership working towards a common result, and thus not reported as such. In fact, one of the interviews held with DFFE highlighted that M&E system improvements would be appreciated for phase 2 of CBIT despite the fact that the particular position on M&E improvements has been ongoing since 2025.

113. The second important technical support aspect towards the successful achievement of Output 1.0 and overall project results delivery was the hiring of a technical expert in GHG inventory information systems. The PMU started the hiring process of this position early on, as soon as the National Project Coordinator was hired. The 2019 S2 progress report stated that the submission of hiring the technical expert had been approved on 25 July 2019, and still needed to go through the Bid Specification Committee (which was only held on 26 February 2020 to finalise the TORs), then would have to go through various approvals through the Deputy Director General for Supply Chain Management to advertise the TORs on the Government Tender Bulletin, then the bids would go to the Bid Evaluation Committee, then after the bidder was identified, the submission would go to the Bid Adjudication Committee to issue an appointment letter. At this stage, it was planned to be done by June 2020.

114. Then COVID-19 hit the country in early 2020. The PIR 2020 stated that the TORs had been finalised and that the process had been delayed to November 2020 due to COVID-19, mostly because apparently committee members involved did not have internet nor laptops to work from home.

115. The second half yearly report of 2020 reported that the Acting Chief Director of the EA at the time raised concerns about the long procurement process compounded by the

lockdown and the project being held back, and had considered cancelling the procurement process. However, the PMU managed to persuade the Chief Director to proceed with the process. At the time the progress report highlighted that the main challenge was that South Africa had not fully assessed the impact of COVID-19 especially on procurement (the evaluation did not see any further reporting on full assessment of COVID-19 impact).

116. The PIR 2021 outlined the process again, but did not detail where exactly the process got stuck;[33] it merely said that factoring COVID-19 implications, the procurement was likely to be completed by November 2021; interviews about the process during that year was that the country was in a second-lock down and that the project was effectively paused because nothing could be done due to lack of meetings, lack of internet access, among other restrictions.

117. The PIR 2022 detailed that the TORs for the procurement had been presented to the Bid Adjudicaton Committee (BAC) on 19 January 2022 and that the BAC had approved the TORs with some amendments on 31 January 22. However, due to the delays experienced in the process of this (and other) procurements under the project, a decision was taken between DFFE and UNEP to secure a support partner to facilitate the procurement. UNDP South Africa was chosen as the project support partner for the procurement of service providers (UNDP was chosen because UNEP and UNDP were already working together on an enabling project, and DFFE had an existing working relationship). The UN-to-UN agreement went into effect on 1 July 2022, which included the hiring of the GHG inventory expert as part of three different services procurement support (others were curriculum assessor and the consortium of experts to develop the long-term capacity building strategy under Output 2.0).

118. The PIR 2023 outlined that the procurement process had been completed and that Gondwana was hired on 10 May 2023; the inception meeting was held on 30 May 2023 to discuss the support of the GHG inventory expert. The PIR 2024 shared that Gondwana Environmental Solutions (Pty) Ltd had delivered on the reporting templates for all IPCC sectors online with the IPCC Common Reporting Format (CRF) tables, completed GHG inventory training report and updated the GHG inventory management system. The consultancy had four main objectives: update inventory and compilation files and create reporting templates to ensure all ETF reporting requirements were being met, update and operationalise the GHGIMS, train and support DFFE staff to compile the GHG inventory, with particular focus on the AFOLU sector, and update the activity data and report for the AFOLU sector.

119. The GHG inventory expert consultancy, based on the needs identified during implementation and time remaining the project, was to provide technical services for a period of 18 months (with a contract starting in May 2023 and ending 30 December 2024). Training was to be focused on DFFE, and particularly the Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems who at the time had a relatively new, upcoming team of professionals (although interviews found that some training was also conducted with one partner outside DFFE,

[33] "The process of hiring the Technical Expert in GHG information is currently underway. So far the procurement of hiring the expert has been approved by the head of the DFFE, referred to as the Director-General. To date, the draft Terms of Reference were developed and approved. SCM will advertise the Terms of Reference for 30 working days, after which bidding proposals will be evaluated. The recommended service provider by the evaluation committee will then have to be approved internally within the DFFE, after which appointment will be done. This process, factoring in Covid-19 implications, will likely be completed by November 2021 after which the expert could come on board. New tentative completion date: 30 November 2021." PIR 2021

namely the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Unit on Environmental Policy, Planning and Coordination - Climate Change).

120. Training sessions were needs-based. Each time a training session was held the needs at the time were discussed to determine the topic of the following session. The first training session was held on 3 July 2023. Twenty-six (26) trainings were held in total at two hours each, and included GHGI compilation, GHGIMS, and individual sessions on IPPU, Energy, Waste, AFOLU.[34]

121. Several side meetings were held with the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) team regarding analysis of land cover maps, trying to eliminate the seasonal change and not the actual human-induced changes seasonal changes large and masking the actual changes; so to include the actual changes only in the inventory.

122. The GHGIMS was updated according to the needs of the DFFE GHG inventory team and submitted in August 2024. The expert did all to make sure to assist DFFE in compiling transparent inventories and ensuring the DFFE is fully prepared for reporting to the ETF. The AFOLU activity date and report was completed. The GHG inventory report for 2022 was completed in February 2024 and included a component to institutionalise the GHGIMS and support the inventory review process.

123. Feedback during the evaluation revealed that the GHG inventory team benefited from the expert support immensely. The relatively new team needed to fully understand what is required to be done in terms of the compilation process and the training also included the overall process of GHG inventory compilation. The expert gave that head start and for everyone to get that understanding. The expert had been working on the inventory as a consultant before the team was established and so needed to find a way to transfer the knowledge from the consultancy side to the team. This endeavour was seen as successful by the inventory team who are now able to compile the inventory. The expert assisted the team with the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) which included looking at the compilation files and aligning them to the new reporting requirements; and also with initial support to targeting the archives 1990 - 2024 which is an ambitious endeavour.

124. A lot of work was done on LULUCF, including developing a manual with instructions on how to complete an inventory. The GHG inventory team now has a dedicated person on this with remote sensing and GIS background. The energy sector was already established but the expert supported the transition to the CRT templates. All sectors, including waste, energy and IPPU were supported through specialised trainings.

125. The expert also put a lot of work into updating the whole GHGIMS, updating the site, making it useful for more consistent use and access, based the update on demands by the team on what they would need and want out of the system. The final system was demonstrated to the team in August 2024 and final trainings were given on archiving and cleaning up for the next inventory cycle.

[34] An interview illustrated the following in terms of feedback and progress: "Meetings were very useful and gave the inventory team a glimpse into each sector and started to show similarities between sectors - sector compilers were having challenges with tracing down the data source from earlier years and this was due to lack of transparency in the documentation ; it is important to note something that must be addressed in the upcoming inventory and in the future: is where the NGHGIMS becomes important - part of this assignment is that the NGHGIMS is updated and ensures that all methodologies, data sources and assumptions are incorporated so that inventory compilers can focus on improving data rather than spending time on searching for historical data sets that should have been documented."

126. While the expert position was delayed by COVID-19 which exacerbated procurement challenges, the delay was actually useful to the GHG inventory team. When the project started, there was no team internally that was looking at the inventory compilation; even though the work was done, it was done by consultants. Because the procurement was delayed, it came at a good time, just when there was a team established with different experts focusing on the different sectors. This meant they could have tailored training of what was needed by the team. Another positive part of the delay is that if they had started sooner, they would have had outdated software and templates, the timing of the support coincided with the delivery of the BTR.

127. The GHGIMS administrator (who also administers the NCCIS) came in recently (November 2023) and was also walked through the GHGIMS and the process of hosting it, and the expert promised further support if needed (despite the contract ending in December 2024).

128. The GHG inventory specialist also managed to support the Gauteng Department on their activities between 6 March and 7 October 2024 which they appreciated very much, specifically because it was also demand let and so they got to focus on institutional arrangements, QA/QC issues, among others - needs were custom-made.

129. The GHG inventory tailored support to the DFFE was arguably the most successful aspect of the project and greatly enhanced the DFFE's ability to perform inventory compilation for the BTRs.

Financial Audits

130. Even though auditing was part of the reporting under outputs achievement in the project's progress reporting, this was a financial management issue and not part of the substantive output delivery. Accordingly, the status and review of financial audits is discussed under the financial management criterion (Section 5.5.).

Strategic Development and Guidance

131. A national advisory committee was supposed to be enacted for the project, particularly to discuss strategic synergy, avoid duplication, and guide the CBIT-related work towards a programmatic approach. The NAC was supposed to choose a smaller task team to act as the Project's Steering Committee.

132. The attainment of this part of the output will be discussed here merely in terms of output achievement - the process of how the PSC guided the project as part of the project's implementation structure is discussed in detail below under Project Performance (Section 5.5.).

133. The Advisory Committee was established on 12 August 2019 (during the inception meeting of the project). The entire advisory committee was constituted as the PSC. It met four times in the six years. The committee was presented project results and in some cases also presented on other work of e.g. the BTR process, and other relevant projects. While there was a list of institutions, there was no list of members and observers and members were not delineated (to an extent that the committee sometimes had more than 50 participants). While there was presenting of different projects, the evaluation did not find that the committee was fully used to create synergy (in fact, the position of the M&E

might have been a good example to cover in terms of synergy and programmatic approaches).

134. The PIR 2021 stated that progress on CBIT implementation was also presented at the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change on 9 July 2020 which comprised PSC members and other members from provincial government.

135. The committee was basically used as a sounding board, for approvals, but from the minutes it seems there were more presentations than discussions. When there were discussions and or issues that needed clarifying, the committee Chair (also the Technical Manager of the project) responded appropriately.

136. In short, the sub-output was to establish the NAC, and to host meetings. This was done, but whether it served the purpose that was intended is questionable for the following reasons (a) too many members and too much turnover to really perform its function, (b) the project presented on project results but never were challenges truly discussed and dealt with at this level, and (c) the evaluator was told through interviews that there was not always the necessary capacity represented within the committee (which means that some items might be discussed but without the background knowledge necessary to make informed decisions).

National Climate Change Information System Improvement and Development of Gauteng Climate Change Information System

137. This sub-output included a new pair of activities that was introduced in revision 3 in September 2023: updating the NCCIS and the setting up of a subsystem for Gauteng.

138. The 2024 and 2025 PIRs, as well as the final project report, detailed that the activity had to be cancelled due to delays incurred and the lack of time to properly undertake this activity. The reason for delays could not be detailed when asked, although the evaluator was informed that discussions around the Gauteng subsystem was initiated at the beginning of 2024. By the time the project underwent its final revision (4), UNEP, UNDP and DFFE conducted a joint analysis of the outputs and their activities and identified those that would not be completed with the extension to 31 December 2024. As a result, a joint agreement was taken to cancel this sub-output. .

139. So, in short, the NCCIS was not updated nor was a subsystem for Gauteng developed.

IT capacities of national focal points to monitor climate transparency are strengthened

140. This was also a new activity that was added after revision 3, where money was left over, and included the purchasing of seven laptops for officials who are responsible for technical/substantive work in relation to climate change data collection, analysis and reporting to enhance technical capacity for climate change transparency. The laptops were all high-end data processors specifically geared towards heavy data processing needs.

141. The procurement process was completed by the UNDP and the laptops were handed over to the DFFE in April 2024. The final project report stated that the DFFE distributed the laptops to the CBIT focal points to monitor climate transparency data. One laptop was stolen, a police report was submitted to this effect, and another laptop was bought to replace it.

142. A list of officials (roles) to receive laptops was appended to project revision 3. The final list of those receiving laptops did not fully overlap with the original list. Of the seven, three GHG inventory-specific positions were to receive laptops, where instead Chief Directorate/Directorate level positions received these (all working directly in climate reporting).[35] Additionally, the National Project Coordinator also received a laptop although strictly speaking this was an administrative role and not dealing with data processing. The National Project Coordinator should rightly have a working laptop (already from the beginning of the project, 2019), but ideally this should have been a project-management related laptop, not a laptop with processing power for advanced data analysis that was only issued late 2023. The laptop was retained by the DFFE when the CBIT project administrative manager/NPC position ended.

Output 2.0 Institutional engagement strengthened and staff capacities on MRV of climate action built through the implementation of training programmes (original project statement: training programmes to build institutional engagement and staff capacities on MRV of climate action implemented)

Output-level indicators (2.0)	TE Comments
Types of training programmes implemented on Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of climate (10 adaptation workshops at national and sub-national; 4 institutions trained on MRV and transparency; 4 key national institutions trained in theory and practice of selected mitigation topics at levels fundamentals, intermediate and expert)	17 NCCIS workshops were organized including on IKS The PIR 2025 stated that 9 institutions in long-term capacity building strategy for transparency covered MRV, focus on GHG inventory and mitigation assessment - they say DoST, DoT, ARC, Gauteng Department of Economic Small Business Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Environmental Resource and Waste Management Department, Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, KwaZulu Natal Department of Environment and Traditional Affairs

143. Output 2.0 was partially delivered. The different elements of level of delivery are discussed per each numbered sub-output below.

Sub-output 2.1. Undertake training workshops on adaptation M&E system

144. This piece of work was the first to be done and much effort was placed early into the implementation of the project, with five provincial adaptation workshops (out of the 15 planned) having been completed by 2019. The first activity under this sub-output was to contract a facilitator (there was a specific budget line for this), but already in the first

[35] (Those allocated to six DFFE officials, namely: the Chief Director of CCRR, the Director of CCDIM, the Director of the UNFCCC and the CBIT project - who is also the head of the international reporting for the BTRs and NCs, the Director of Adaptation, the Director of GHG Inventory and Systems. The Director of GHG inventory systems and the GCIS specialist are dealing directly with data analysis. Three Control Environmental Officers (GHG Inventory and Systems, GHG inventory specialist in Waste, and M&E Mitigation) were on this list who did not receive laptops.

progress report (Jul-Dec, 2019), this activity was removed. The evaluator was told the decision was made early on by the EA to use the in-house facilitator (the whole Climate Change and Air Quality Branch at the time had a facilitator). But early into implementation this individual moved to the Biodiversity Branch and the Director of Adaptation, and an officer led and facilitated the adaptation M&E workshops instead.

145. The workshop design (content, structure, teaching materials) was conducted and finalised in June 2019. The following knowledge products were offered:

a. National Climate Change Response Database (NCCRD): provides a central portal for climate change response projects in the country and can indicate climate change projects happening in different sectors, provinces and municipalities
b. Desired Adaptation Outcomes: tracks progress in climate change adaptation in South Africa and help capture the country's unique circumstances to aid reporting on adaptation at national and international levels.
c. Tracking and Evaluation Portal: contains structured information on details of actions, indicators, impacts, related challenges, targets, wider impacts, investments and constraints.
d. Let's respond toolkit: provides information and tools to respond to climate change at local level (climate change related maps, municipal census data relevant to climate change and project management information)
e. National Hazardous Events Database (in partnership with the National Disaster Management Centre): aimed at tracking event details, impacts and responses.
f. Other provincial relevant systems not managed by DFFE, such as South African Risk and Vulnerability Atlas, Green Book, South African Weather Service Systems and Tools.

146. The purpose of the two-day workshops in each province was to demonstrate the National Climate Change Information System (NCCIS), the collection of baseline data of climate risks to inform the development of the provincial risk profile in the NCCIS, and the collection of baseline data to understand the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), as well as conduct a situational needs assessment. They focused on profiling existing tools and systems in assisting the provinces with evidence-based climate change response policy, planning, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) including identifying and understanding what additional climate change tools and systems or enhancements are required by provinces to improve evidence-based response policy, planning, implementation and M&E. Early on, the Directorate in charge at the time (Climate Change Development) struggled to get responses from the Free State and Western Cape province, and a decision was taken to support the organisation of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) workshops with Traditional Leaders under the Monitoring and Evaluation Chief Directorate (the work of which now falls under the Adaptation Directorate).

147. The PIR 2020, as well as the half-yearly progress report of 2019 stated that the workshops had an average ratio of 40% of women and a ratio of 60% men. The second day of each workshop, evaluations were conducted to ascertain what worked well and what didn't and included a section on future improvements, which the project took on

board.[36] The PIR 2020 stated that the biggest challenge was the start of COVID-19, which paused workshop activities when the lockdowns started in the first quarter of 2020.

148. According to the second half-yearly progress report of 2020, as well as evaluation interviews, and project revisions documentation, the project had to pause the provincial workshops due to COVID-19 restrictions. When the country experienced a second wave of the virus (late 2020), the regional workshops were to continue virtually (some did) in remaining provinces Limpopo, Free State, North West, Western Cape. The progress report stated: A meeting was held to discuss way forward and a decision was taken to do virtual and some of the funding from the Regional Adaptation Budget will be used for buying data for participants who do not have access to the internet - these virtual workshops will start in March 2021.

149. The PIR 2021 outlined some challenges regarding the virtual meetings: The challenges faced under this output for the Limpopo province virtual workshop held on 24 March 2021 included poor internet connections, participants not having access to IT equipment, as well as the duration of the workshop being too short. The report went on to say that the prohibition of public gatherings due to recurrent Covid-19 measures, could prevent the hosting of all 15 workshops by 31 January 2022 as per the workplan. The Directorate has resumed with organizing the workshops and anticipated in doing them by a means of a combination of physical and virtual workshop (hybrid). At that point, South Africa had organised workshops in 6 different provinces.

150. By 2022 (PIR 2022), seven provincial adaptation workshops had been organised, the seven including North West Province on 18 December 2021, again virtually. This workshop experienced logistical challenges related to poor internet connections, participants not having access to IT equipment. Although the Western Cape province had not responded to the invitations for the adaptation workshop, this Cape province already had a climate change information system. As such, there was no demand nor need for the province to undergo the workshop on adaptation. DFFE was to make follow ups with the last province (Free State province) regarding the organization of the adaptation workshop in year 2022. The workshops are anticipated to be done by means of a combination of physical and virtual workshop (hybrid).

151. By 2023 (PIR 2023), the country had conducted 11 provincial adaptation workshops These workshops were led by the Directorate M&E of adaptation under the Chief Directorate of Climate Change Adaptation. During 2023, a hybrid workshop took place in the KwaZulu-Natal province from 13-14 October 2022. A physical workshop was held in Mpumalanga Province from 5-6 December 2022. DFFE also organised a workshop in the Eastern Cape province on 14-15 June 2023, as well as one in Gauteng on 28-29 June 2023 with 60 people in attendance. These workshops had attendances ranking from 46 to 150 people, with an average ratio of 40% women.

[36] PIR 2020: "The workshops yielded positive expectations where more than invited people attended. In addition, a few negative comments from participants with regards to the general evaluation of the capacity building adaptation workshops were reported, which the project team will use as lessons learned to improve the future workshops. The workshops were very helpful to the participants, most participants expressed further interest in the following training materials: The Green Book from the CSIR, the Let's Respond tool kit, presentations from the South African Weather Services (SAWS), South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) and the Association of Water and Rural Development (AWARD) flow tracker. The challenges faced under this output include poor internet connections at the venues, participants not having access to IT equipment, the sizes of venues being too small as well as the duration of the workshop being too short."

152. By the time the PIR 2024 report came out, the project had conducted 17 NCCIS and IKS workshops (i.e. M&E adaptation), of which three were municipal workshops specifically focusing on IKS. According to the final project report, there was an evaluation report with gaps identified and recommendations. The evaluator did not receive this report, and instead received a folder with handwritten evaluation forms, so could not verify the delivery of this report.

153. The activity under this sub-output also included hosting roadshows giving feedback for improvement to local municipalities in 44 district municipalities. This activity was delayed because the PMU wanted to finalise all the provincial workshops which were being delayed by COVID-19 - the PIR 2024 stated: "According to the workplan, the roadshows were to follow after all the regional adaptation workshops had taken place. Since DFFE is facing challenges to get confirmations from the different provinces for this activity, it is unlikely to happen due to the remaining." The final project report rated that this sub-output was 90% completed stating that all had been completed with the exception of the roadshows.

154. Given that some of the regional workshops had gotten quite a bit of traction, e.g. Northern Cape and KZN, it may have been good to focus on a few of those to follow up with municipalities.

155. The final project report stated that this activity was not conducted due to limited time to implement the project and limited staff capacities. According to the original workplan, the roadshows were to follow after all the regional adaptation workshops had taken place. However, the project faced challenges to get confirmations from the different provinces to organize this activity, so it could not be undertaken.

156. That said, of the 17 workshops[37] taken place regionally, the project did manage some municipal level workshops, although focusing on slightly different topics (namely IKS).

157. Overall attendance sheets were given for 502 people; these were handwritten (see paragraph 18). An online survey was developed by the evaluator to ascertain the efficacy of the training; only 6 responded (two male, four female) representing local government, provincial government and private companies. All have a good understanding of climate change impacts in their province, half felt that they had adequate training on the NCCIS and the NCCRD to be able to track climate change adaptation, none were using the systems, 4 of the 6 had received information and guidance on developing a provincial climate change information sub-system, one already had a subsystem in their province, two were developing one, and the rest did not know. The private sector respondent

[37] Northern Cape (Kimberly) - 6-7 August 2019 and another one in Upington (report does not give date), Kwazulu-Natal (Durban) - 20-21 August 2019 + 13-14 October 2022, Eastern Cape (East London) - 14-15 June 2023, Freestate (Bloemfontein) - 5-6 September 2023, Gauteng (Johannesburg) - 28-29 June 2023, Limpopo (Polokwane) - 13-14 September 2023, Mpumalanga (Nelspruit) -29-30 August 2019 + Emalahleni 5-6 December 2022; did also do three IKS workshops in district municipalities IKS workshop Nkangela District Municipality (Siyabuswa) 11-12 June 2024; Gert Sibande Municipality IKS Workshop 3-4 June 2024; Enhlazani District Municipality 20-21 June 2024, North West NCCIS 18 November 2021(online) + 2-3 August 2023 (BON Hotel)

believed there is no motivation to do climate change reporting from the different managers. The respondent claimed that it would be great to do environmental and social governance reporting at government level as this would encourage reporting on climate change action. A respondent also claimed that a lot of the work being done in government is currently not being reported.

158. One respondent gave a structured response to what more is needed to improve the tracking and reporting of climate change in their province:

a. Implement advanced technologies such as remote sensing, satellite imagery, and IT devices to gather real-time data on climate variables, including temperature, precipitation, and greenhouse gas emissions.
b. Establish uniform guidelines for data reporting across different sectors and organizations to ensure consistency and comparability of climate data. Develop programs to educate the public about climate change impacts and the importance of data reporting.
c. Engage communities can lead to better data collection through citizen science initiatives.
d. Foster partnerships between government agencies, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations to share resources, expertise, and data, enhancing the overall quality of climate information.
e. Allocate funding for research projects focused on climate change impacts specific to the province, which can lead to more localized and relevant data.
f. Implement user-friendly data visualization platforms that make climate data accessible and understandable to the general public, policymakers, and businesses.
g. Ensure that the local municipalities and Districts incorporate climate change strategies in their disaster management plan

159. Under this sub-output was also an activity on gender differentiation and equality on climate change. The PIR 2020 noted that South Africa had developed a national Gender Action Plan - the CBIT aligned to this action plan - the objective of the plan is to provide empowerment to women to eliminate discrimination and achieve gender equality and equity through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects. A climate change gender differentiation workshop was scheduled for 2020 but was delayed by COVID-19 lockdowns which prohibited public gatherings. The PMU instead started organising an alternative virtual high-level gender differentiation workshop with the provincial gender focal points - the in-person workshop was postponed to 2021. The virtual meeting was held on 28 August 2020, the PIR 2021 reported on this. The workshop had three main objectives: introducing the support from the CBIT project towards gender and climate change; sharing knowledge and experience and on gender and climate change within the South African context; highlighting the gaps in National Climate Change policies and encourage gender mainstreaming in the development, implementation and reporting; enhancing the capacity of South Africa's decision-makers, policy developers and stakeholders to develop gender-responsive policies, plans and programmes on climate change.

160. PIR 2022 then reported that South Africa had a second virtual meeting on gender differentiation on 14 September 2021, which included introducing the support from the

CBIT project towards Gender and Climate Change, sharing knowledge and experience on Gender and Climate Change within the South African context, highlighting the gaps in the National Climate Change policies and encourage gender mainstreaming in the development, implementation and reporting, as well as enhancing the capacity of South Africa's decision makers, policy developers and stakeholders to develop gender-responsive policies, plans and programmes on climate change.

161. The final project reported that the activity had been completed, having organised two gender virtual gender workshops.

162. A new activity included provincial consultations for the South Africa Gender Action Plan (as per Revision 3). The final project report stated that the DFFE managed to host 9 provincial consultations on the Gender Action Plan in 9 provinces in SA. The nine provincial workshops all have workshops reports; and a draft GAP was developed but had not been finalised at the time of writing this report.

Sub-output 2.2. Conduct long-term capacity building strategy on GHG inventory and mitigation actions at national level

163. This sub-output was delayed by the procurement delays, and these were further exacerbated by COVID-19 very much like the hiring of the GHG inventory expert. The PIRs 2020, 2021 and 2022 all described the same challenges: lengthy procurement, and then COVID-19 impacting this even further because procurement-related committee members were unable to meet online due to lack of IT and internet access.

164. The PIR 2022 detailed that the first round of TOR advertisements only yielded one bid which was submitted past the deadline and thus the process had to start from the beginning. The initiation form to restart the process was signed in September 2021, but by this time the project and UNEP had already agreed to use UNDP as a support partner for the procurement activities of the project. UNDP conducted the procurement and a service provider was hired on 8 June 2023 (PIR 2023). The PIRs 2024 and 2025 stated that the strategy had been developed (and that DFFE was to take forward the recommendations beyond 2025) and that the training programme was offered to key national institutions, but that the curriculum assessor could not be procured (due to procurement challenges).

165. The delayed procurement process[38], therefore, was eventually resolved through the onboarding of UNDP as a support partner.

[38] Half Yearly Progress Report 2019 (Jul-Dec): submission of hiring consortium of experts approved by DG on 4 Dec 2019, Bid Specification Committee took place 21 Jan 2020 to finalise TORs and Bid Evaluation Committee meeting will follow to evaluate the proposals; after the final decision has been made by the BEC, a submission will be written to the DDG to approve the final TORs then Supply Chain Management will advertise the TORs on the grn tender bulletin for 30 days for invitation of tenders; after the name of the bidder has been identified a submission will be written to the Department Bid Adjudication Committee to issue an appointment letter. This should be completed by end May 2020 and letter signed by June 2020; PIR2020: The process of procuring is underway. To date, the draft ToRs have been developed and an internal approval process has been initiated to approve and finalise them. Following finalisation of the ToRs, they will be advertised for 30 working days, after which bidding proposals will be evaluated. The recommended service provider by the evaluation committee will then have to be approved internally within the DEFF, after which appointment will be done. This process, factoring in COVID19 implications, will likely be completed by November 2020 after which the work will begin. New tentative completion date: November 2020; Half Yearly Progress Report 2020 (Jul-dec): TOR for procurement of consortium are with Supply Chain Management for advertising. After the name of the bidder has been identified, a submission will be written to the Department Bid Adjudication Committee to issue an appointment letter - tentatively service provider on board by April 2021; PIR2021: ToRs were advertised on 30 March 2021 but SCM could not evaluate proposals because only one service provider submitted its proposal, which was received after the closing date / time. Since it is against SCM policies to evaluate late proposals, advice from SCM was that Directorate CCDIM obtain DDG

166. The first few activities of the sub-output supported by UNDP were to sub-contract a team of experts to develop a curriculum (GHG basic, GHG plus and in-depth work), including undertaking a training programme GHG basic, undertaking a training programme GHG plus, and supervising in-depth work, as well as developing a database of training resources. In revision 1, this was changed to "procurement of a consortium of experts to jointly develop training programme curriculum".

167. The consortium of experts was to be sectoral experts in the field of GHG Inventory compilation and mitigation actions and impact assessment for the following IPCC sectors: Energy, Waste, AFOLU and IPPU. Upon appointment, the experts were to develop a capacity building strategy after which it would be rolled out through the training courses. Most of the participants were planned to be from different government departments, especially those in the PSC as they have mandates and responsibilities in climate change mitigation.

168. The PIR 2022 reported that the TORs had been shared with UNDP for advertising and that procurement was completed in June 2023. The inception meeting was held on 20 June 2023.

169. The UNDP contract with Zutari was from 11 June 2023 to 15 December 2024, and the capacity building strategy was to be developed by 4 December 2023. The strategy outlined the current MRV system including the institutional arrangements based on 2021 DFFE data. It assessed the capacity building needs and priorities through discussions with DFFE, it was decided at the inception meeting that DFFE needs were prioritised. The service provider did an assessment survey which was completed by appointed participants and in the strategy refers to capacity building enablers and opportunities (lists countries, projects, and partners who are supporting capacity building for ETF). The strategy developed covers a period of ten years: near term (2023-2024 within contract time, first BTR), medium term (2025-2028, second and third BTR), and long-term (2029 and beyond). It covers intensive learning and improvement in the first two terms focusing on National Departments (DoST, DoT, DMRE, DALRD, and other institutions like ARC, CSIR, provincial departments, metropolitan municipalities, relevant strategic public and private companies (Eskom, Transet, Sasol, etc).

170. The strategy gives a total of 17 strategic interventions, the first three of which focus on formal and focused training programmes under existing CBIT project in preparation for the first BTR, then similar training programmes proposed every three to four years as new

approval for cancellation and subsequent re-advertisement of the tender. After approval was submitted to SCM on 3 June 2021, SCM later said that the Bid Specification Committee has to re-evaluate the ToRs before they could be re-advertised, although the committee had already evaluated them before they were advertised on 30 March 2021. This matter has been escalated to the DDG to intervene since the Directorate is struggling to get direct instructions from SCM. The Directorate has already informed SCM that the CBIT project is a funded project and the risks associated with this project and the likely freezing from the funders have been highlighted, and an internal approval process has been initiated to approve and finalise them. Following intervention by DDG, SCM will advise the Directorate as to what step should be taken regarding the procurement process. This process, factoring in Covid-19 implications, will likely be completed by November 2021 after which the work will begin. It is noteworthy to mention that this procurement process started over 18 months ago (with the DG's approval on 4 December 2019 and the Bid Specification Committee meeting on 21 January 2020) and its completion has been postponed several times over the past months due to a number of setbacks, leaving little assurance on when it could be fully finalized. Although the PMU expects the recruitment will likely be completed by November 2021, the overall uncertainty and lack of control over the procurement process poses a risk to the project's ability to deliver this activity before the planned technical completion.

team members join the DFFE. Table 5 in the strategy gives detailed examples with timelines, including those that were done through the CBIT as well as other partners, e.g. peer-to-peer exchanges with Canada, GHG inventory training as part of the Zutari contract, the WRI-funded MRV post, etc.

171. As part of the strategy and consultancy, two training workshops for focusing on (a) compilation of GHG inventories (focusing on introduction, energy, AFOLU, IPPU and waste, 18-24 June 2024) and (b) mitigation action impact assessment (25-28 June 2024) were conducted. These workshops were hybrid format, meaning that they were conducted online and in person. The majority attended online with only a handful attending in person, some registered and then did not attend, some only attended some of it.

172. These workshops were more basic training, although some participants felt it was too much information in too short a time. The project design intended that training programmes conduct basic, GHG plus as well as supervising in-depth work. While the consultancy did the basic, arguably the GHG inventory specialist did the supervising of in-depth work. When the project was starting the thought was to focus on National Departments, as well as municipalities, because they wanted individuals who are implementing the mitigation actions to understand what the data is for. Some interview respondents who were part of design claimed the roll-out of the strategy under the project was not what was originally intended, that there was too much information in too short a time, and the initially they wanted a course that had certifications. The internal process (i.e. procurement) contributed to a lot of delays, given the time available, the project and the service provider managed to do the best they could.

173. Most respondents who participated in the training felt that there should not have been an option to do the training online. Given that some participants who registered did not attend the workshop at all, and some only partially attended, it meant that online attendance can be non-committal and ineffective as an option.

174. One participant had the following to say during the evaluation interview interview: "it does not help to bombard people with information, better to take it easy and not try to squeeze everything in…for my sector its already a lot on its own, you can't tell me that you can cover the most important aspects in one day, maybe dedicating an entire week to one sector and then have online refresher courses could be one way to support us".

175. Because the service provider was limited in time, there was pressure to complete a lot in a small timeframe; even in three years this may have been a tough feat. At the end what was delivered was apparently closer to advanced than introductory, i.e. started with the first module which was basic training and then got into specific advanced training based on responding to the needs from the survey[39] that the service provider did in advance of the training. They came a little short of being advanced in the sense that some of the tools the service provider wanted to use were not ready (e.g. GHG emission reporting tool was not ready, the LEAP modeling tool that they had planned to use DFFE could not get for free and did not have budget so was dropped[40]).

[39] Respondents were given a link to a survey with questions that were around which institutions are supposed to do what, what capacity is required

[40] It was not budgeted for DFFE at the end felt it is too specific and advanced to be part of the training not immediate for Paris Agreement on the requirement and then it was taking up too much time to get; was not worth something that may delay the whole training programme (interview with stakeholder during country mission 9 - 15 March 2025)

176. The list of trainees, while there was some overlap, had generally different people who attended than were on the original list who were to be trained (particularly outside of DFFE). Six to eight people max attended in person out of the ~45 in each attendance register for the two workshops. Those who attended virtually did so in an ad-hoc manner. Training material was circulated to everybody the day before the training.

177. The PIRs for 2024 and 2025 as well as the final project report stated that the following institutions were trained: DFFE, the Department of Science and Technology, The Department of Transport, Agricultural Research Council, Department of Transport, Agricultural Resource Council, Gauteng Department of Economic Small Business Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Environmental Resource and Waste Management Department, Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Kwa Zulu Natal Department of Environment and Traditional Affairs. While the attendance sheet shared with the evaluator confirms this list, the actual attendance and participation (through interviews with those in the attendance sheet) was spotty and the evaluation cannot say with confidence that all these departments were fully present and trained to the extent envisaged by the project.

178. In terms of the strategy, the evaluation found that the Directorate of CCDIM is on board and implementing the strategy, including the recommendations (although this is dependent to an extent on a CBIT-phase 2).

179. The training programme was supposed to have a curriculum assessor with some activities surrounding the assessment of the training programme. The PIR 2024 (and revision 4) reported that this activity was cancelled when no bids were received after UNDP advertised the position.

Sub-output 2.3. Training relevant entities on international MRV guidance

180. The PIR 2024 stated that relevant entities were trained on international MRV guidance as part of the training conducted during the courses in June 2024 (see delivery of sub-output above), as well as through the organisation of several peer-to-peer interactions in climate transparency. The PIR 2025 and final project report reported that the sub-output was 85% achieved.

181. The first activity under this sub-output was to establish a national network of experts. The PIRs 2020 to 2023 reported that South Africa was busy with establishing a national network of experts, some of which were already on the UNFCCC roster and that more would be added through training programmes. The second activity was to establish a roster of MRV experts. The project document nor other documentation was fully clear here on the difference between the two rosters.

182. The lists provided for the national network of experts were the participants registers for the training sessions under sub-output 2.2 (some of which did not attend all sessions, some of which did not attend at all), and the roster of MRV experts was a list provided of the roster of UNFCCC experts. This list includes 44 experts of which 8 were involved

directly in the project, and others were indirectly involved - in essence this list was an original expert list that the project contributed additional experts to.

183. The project did very well to maximise the peer-to-peer exchanges. While these exchanges were hampered by COVID-19, the project (and partners who supported through co-financing and even fully financing) managed to organise the following international exchanges:

a. DFFE led the South African delegation to COP-26.

b. The DFFE also visited the United Kingdom in August 2024 as part of continued learning from developed countries on how they developed and maintained as well as used their monitoring and evaluation systems for reporting and informing national policy development. This also included SA sharing its experiences with the development of Institutional Arrangement and M&E system.

c. Two DFFE officials went to the USA (30-31 October 2023), through support received from Climate Action Africa to build DFFE officials' capacity through learning from another country's experience. During this visit, both countries went through their BTR roadmaps. In addition, the USA (White House Climate Policy Office) shared their experience on how they developed their monitoring and evaluation systems, the Department of State presented on tracking climate finance and how they use the climate tracking tool, the Environmental Protection Agency presented on how they conduct their policies and measure projections and volunteered to offer technical assistance for modelling and the plan was to continue engaging on this (although this has been hampered by the political changes in the USA since last year).

d. DFFE officials also went to Canada for a similar exchange on 14-15 February 2024. The Environment and Climate Change Canada hosted the capacity building workshop after the DFFE reached out to Canada to explore holding an in-person exchange among BTR production leads and contributing reporting experts. The same two officials as with USA planned to go, but a short-notice change meant that the National Project Coordinator of CBIT went instead (which may have been a good capacity building experience for the individual but may not have been an investment into BTR development for DFFE). The official who could not go in person attended online, as did another official involved in the GHG inventory.

e. Finally, a UK visit was organised 15-16 August 2024 through a peer-to-peer exchange for international experts to share knowledge and experience on monitoring and evaluation of climate action, one DFFE official attended in person and others (two) attended online. This was a focused exchange on the implementation of the ETF, UK brought their different teams including those responsible for tracking NDCs, tracking adaptation, the projects and the two countries also discussed the Just Transition Energy partnership.

f. The project also organised an SA exchange with other African countries in Pretoria 11-15 February 2024. This was jointly organised between DFFE and Climate Action Africa[41] on learning and sharing best practices in the establishment of GHG inventory and measurement and reporting. Six African countries participated: Ghana, Namibia,

[41] This collaboration later extended to include the UNEP- CBIT-GSP and the Partnership for Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA)

Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, the Gambia and South Africa. It was a good capacity-building platform.

g. CBIT-Zimbabwe also organised a peer workshop which the CBIT South Africa team attended, in Victoria Falls in February 2024 which also included Malawi, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone.

h. The PIR 2024 stated that South Africa participated in all transparency trainings including the one in Rwanda in June 2024, organised by CBIT GSP and PATPA, the CGE regional workshop for Africa in May 2024, the Global BTR dialogue by Patap in April 2024 as well as the Global Transparency Forum by CBIT GSP in Japan in May 2024 as well as workshop on empowering Africa to submit BTRs in Togo in September 2024 (these were not directly part of the project).

184. The final activity under this sub-output was the development of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for key government department staff for in-depth work. These were planned (as per PIR reporting and the initial workplans) to only take place once the "courses were offered" and relevant staff had been put in place and were going to include MoUs with the Department of Water and Sanitation, DoST and DMRE, among others. This may have also been more strongly supported if the M&E person role had been connected to the activity.

185. By the time the courses were done which was halfway through 2024, there had not been much activity nor time to get this done. The PIR 2024 stated that this activity could not be conducted due to limited time to execute the CBIT project (even though the project had six years, four of which were not directly affected by COVID-19), as well as challenges associated with signing MoUs across different departments, and that this activity "may be considered in future CBIT projects" and that more work needed to be put into strengthening the relationships between data providers and creating networks of technical experts across contributing institutions.

186. The evaluator was told that MoUs turned out to be quite a complicated task, and while things were left late, the need to get legal departments to agree takes a lot of time. That said, the DFFE did send a request letter to National Treasury which the treasury responded positively to providing details of those sections and officials who would regularly share climate finance data with DFFE for the purpose of tracking of financial support received and reporting sustainability in future BTRs.

187. Revision 3 added an activity to this sub-output in 2023 when there were funds left over from the service provider budget lines (which turned out to be cheaper than budgeted for). This activity was a gap analysis study on climate education and two training workshops. The PIR 2024 stated that the service provider for conducting the gap analysis research study in South Africa in implementing the Action for Climate Empower (ACE) had been procured and the DFFE and the service provider were working on organising the two workshops. These workshops took place in August 2024, and the study was completed. The PIR 2025 and the final project report (also verified through review by the evaluation of the deliverables) reported that the service provider produced several reports, including the ACE report, the Public Awareness Report, the Education Report, the Policy Sensitivity Report, and two workshop reports.

OVERALL AVAILABILITY OF OUTPUTS FINDINGS

188. Below is a summary of the level of delivery of the outputs planned under the project (Table 8). Overall, the project partially delivered its outputs.

Table 8. Level of delivery of project outputs for the CBIT South Africa Project

Output	Level of delivery
Output 1.0. An institutional arrangement that supports operationalisation of the M&E is established	Hiring of Technical expert in M&E System was effectively cancelled although may have delivered on project output through the position having been funded through different funding entity - but in terms of verifying project is effectively considered as cancelled and thus an activity not completed which has a large bearing on the achievement of this output. Delays in procurement for the GHG inventory expert were incurred but also these delays may have had a silver lining in that GHG inventories team (who had only come in 2023/24) are now capacitated through the GHG inventory expert. National Advisory Committee was established and run but through project. Two additional activities ended up being cancelled. Some officials were equipped with laptops.
Output 2.0. Institutional engagement strengthened and staff capacities on MRV of climate action built through the implementation of training programmes	The project made a strong effort to do provincial consultations and COVID-19 got in the way of what started out as a strong process which then had to be replicated in some instances and essentially "steam" was lost, so was finalised without municipal feedback roadshows, although IKS is continuing. Gender work was done at high level and virtually although the additional activity to conduct provincial consultations for the GAP was well received. Long-term capacity building strategy developed late and basic/advanced training conducted, the GHG inventory expert did quite a bit of expert-level training on GHG inventories, this was super helpful. The lack of independent assessor meant that the training programmes could not be assessed. Peer to Peer learning exchanges were helpful.

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Moderately Satisfactory

5.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcome

Outcome-level Indicators	TE Comments
A functional M&E System that supports tracking and reporting of South Africa's NDC	PIR 2025 stated that South Africa currently has an M&E system as well as a National GHG Emissions Inventory System in place. The current M&E system is used for GHG, mitigation and adaptation and it includes reporting by local and sectoral authorities on a regular basis. The DFFE has also hired

	personnel for operating the overall M&E system Not much could be said about the work and how the M&E system is functioning now as to before the project - nor could the project take credit fully for this indicator. However, the project did add M&E adaptation capacity, build capacity for the GHG inventory compilation, some mitigation action impact assessment capacity, and has a strategy for long-term capacity building on GHG inventory and mitigation action, as well as work in gender and ACE - all of which have contributed to the M&E system.

189. The Project Outcome statement for the evaluation was revised to "South Africa is tracking reporting progress towards achievement of its NDC." The evaluation found that this outcome was partially achieved, but not exactly as the project design had intended.

190. The (first) PIR 2020 reported this on its outcome achievement: "South Africa is tracking and reporting progress towards achievement of its nationally determined contribution. South Africa currently has a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system as well as a National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory System in place. The system is still subject to further improvement, but it is currently supporting the compilation of BURs and NCs and is expected to be fully functional and operational by 2022, in order to support the compilation of the BTR. It is also noteworthy to mention that the DEFF's Monitoring & Evaluation Manager has received funding to hire personnel that will be dedicated to operating the overall M&E system. In addition, South Africa has already organised 5 provincial adaptation workshops focusing on profiling existing tools and systems in assisting the provinces with evidence-based climate change response policy, planning, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), including identifying and understanding what additional climate change tools and systems or enhancements are required by provinces to improve evidence-based response policy, planning, implementation and M&E. The trainings of key national institutions on MRV & Transparency related programmes and on mitigation topics will take place in the next 2 years of project implementation. Looking forward, South Africa is working on updating its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), which are likely to be submitted by September 2021. In this perspective, the country has received some capacity building relating to adaptation as part of this CBIT project. This has been particularly helpful in the work South Africa is doing to update the adaptation component of the NDC. South Africa officially opened the CBIT project with the inception workshop and 1st PSC meeting held on August 12, 2019".

191. The Final Project Report did not explicitly state how the project had managed to deliver on its outcome. The (final) PIR 2025 did outline with regard to the achievement of the outcome based on the outcome-level indicators that "South Africa currently has a M&E system as well as a National GHG Emissions Inventory System in place. The current M&E system is used for GHG, mitigation and adaptation and it includes reporting by local and sectoral authorities on a regular basis. The DFFE has also hired personnel for operating the overall M&E system (although this could not be confirmed through the evaluation). The

system is operational and there is also the South African GHG Reporting system for companies to report their emissions information online" (this is apparently mandatory now and reporting is under the Directorate of Compliance under the Chief Directorate of MSMS). It further states "it is noteworthy to mention that the previous BUR/TNC GEF project supported with the establishment of the system, including the formalisation of some institutional arrangements for data collection. In addition, the system serves a portal for data archiving and documenting of all procedures to allow for sustainable development for future bURs (including transition to BTRs), NCs and NIRs."

192. A big missing element was the fact that the role of the M&E was left out, even though it was hired under different funding, there was a lack of reporting of how all this fit together and thus this was seen as essentially a cancelled activity that would have had a large bearing on the project results attainment under the outcome.

193. The strategic question around the outcome is "what evidence is available to show that the project strengthened South Africa's ability to track and report progress towards the achievement of its nationally determined contribution (NDC)?"

194. Coming back to the assumptions (A) and drivers (D) and the final outcome question (did the project contribute to strengthening transparency mechanisms of South African institutions for climate reporting?):

i. Use of expertise and IT support supports M&E establishment (Da): this driver was held to an extent only so far as the GHG inventory is concerned, the M&E expert position was cancelled and it was impossible to verify to what an extent the M&E position effectively contributed to the results the project had intended in this position;

ii. Relevant government officials support and use the M&E system (edited from original TOC at design, and from risk in CEO ER) (Ab): in terms of the GHGIMS yes, although there did not seem to have been full use of NCCIS as of yet;

iii. Stakeholders are interested and willing to participate and provide constructive feedback in the various training programmes (D/Ac): this held to an extent only for some stakeholders: given that responses were slow and sometimes not given in the context of project feedback, only six responses received for the survey;

iv. Availability of bursary funding within Ministry of Education to support research on identified capacity needs (in original TOC at design) (Ad): the evaluator could not verify if this assumption held as none of the implementation reporting covered this;

v. Gender and human rights inclusions into training programmes enhances access to analyse and contribute to reporting, enhancing equality (Ae): the evaluation did find that through the added activities regarding the ACE and the GAP, that additional effort was placed into this;

vi. Advisory Panel is meeting regularly and providing adequate feedback on training needs and quality (Dg): met once in 2019, then twice in 2023 and twice in 2024, the evaluation did not find that the advisory panel (on its own) gave sufficient and direct feedback on training needs and quality other than the PMU putting in effort to make sure that the panel nominates names;

vii. Procurement processes do not cause delays (risk in CEO ER) (Ah): this assumption did not hold and heavily delayed the project resulting in finding a partner to support procurement;

viii. An appropriate exit strategy is included during project implementation to ensure uptake of capacity and use of M&E system and sustainability of project results (Di); this was not included.

195. Overall, the project made a large effort in the beginning and was faced with some challenges, particularly procurement and the limitations imposed by COVID-19. That said, the project was extended by almost double its planned time which should have allowed for sufficient recovery from those challenges. Some activities had money left over and while the use of this budget through revision 3 towards the GAP and ACE work panned out, other activities did not come to fruition. Some key aspects like the lack of reporting on the M&E position as well as the follow up on the NCCIS through roadshows, the more strategic support to some key National Departments (this was not so much a result of the effort by the project but more the lack of response from some departments) unfortunately meant that the outputs could not be fully achieved, and thus the project's contribution to outcome is not what was envisaged at design. The project tried to use some left-over funds to conduct activities that were in line with CBIT priorities and did help towards achieving the outcome to an extent. That said, assumptions and drivers as outlined in paragraph 194 either only partially held, or did not hold at all. South Africa is indeed reporting on its NDC, and the BTR was submitted, and the project did support the capacity towards this, but not at the level of ambition of the project design.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcome: <u>Moderately Satisfactory</u>

5.4.3 Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

Objective-level Indicators	TE Comments
Number of verified NDC reports submitted regularly to the UNFCCC	The PIR 2025 reported that South Africa submitted its updated NDC in September 2021 but not fully attributed to the project; South Africa received capacity development relating to adaptation from the CBIT, which had been particularly helpful in the work SA is doing to update the adaptation component of the NDC. More and more stakeholders were able to contribute meaningfully to the adaptation component and how it can be improved as compared to previous contributions, shows some impact but on the adaptation front.

196. The achievement of likelihood of impact is discussed below considering the causal pathways in the Theory of Change, starting from the Outcome achievement through intermediate states through to the impact statement.

197. For the Intermediate State 1, the question was: 'What evidence is there to suggest that training programmes have resulted in improved tracking reporting?' (IS1). Also, 'What evidence is there to suggest that the M&E system is being used and is transparent?':

i. The M&E adaptation training was a large part of the project and even though was impacted by COVID-19, the project still managed to conduct 17 workshops, 14 of which were provincial, and 3 of which were IKS focusing at municipal level. While 502 participants took part in this training, there was not much of a sample (6) to ascertain the impact. That said, helpful feedback was received from six respondents who did claim that they had training in NCCIS, although were not directly using the NCCIS in their work. (Assumption b and Driver/Assumption c)

ii. The GHG inventory expert support to the GHG inventory team at DFFE was a successful endeavour and definitely supported improved GHG inventory tracking and reporting. (Assumption b, c, f)

iii. The GHG inventory training and mitigation action impact assessment training, while short and loaded, was supportive in terms of building some capacity for those who attended. (Assumption b, c, f)

iv. The long-term capacity building strategy is a helpful output from the project to the DFFE that will support the DFFE in building further capacity towards the M&E system. (Assumption b, c, f)

v. The fact that the BTR was developed and submitted and the project reported on the M&E system shows that it is being used, but more strategic alignment, particularly the work of the M&E specialist that was brought on board through other funding, may have given more evidence and clarity on the functioning and needs of the M&E system.

198. For Intermediate State 2 (South Africa is setting more ambitious NDC targets):

i. The evaluator did not find whether the project actually supported South Africa in setting more ambitious NDC targets (some interviewees claimed that the current NDC is too ambitious and might need to be reduced). That said, with the enforcement of the recently enacted Climate Act, much reporting (e.g. private sector too) is mandatory and will improve overall transparent reporting in the country.

199. The impact statement can be measured by the question 'to what extent is there evidence to suggest that there is ownership and championship around setting NDC targets towards climate neutrality and resilience'?

200. South Africa is relatively far advanced in relation to many other countries in terms of its reporting. The project did contribute a lot to improving its ability particularly in the adaptation and GHG inventory teams. That said, the project might have reached more people, been more efficient and strategic, and made better use of its time if the procurement process had not held the project up for so long (and then was further exacerbated by COVID-19 which was not under the project's control).

201. CBIT did have a lot to do with supporting the BTR. The project's main achievements around moving to impact included the GHG inventory expert capacitating the GHG inventory team and now the sectors have leads for all except AFOLU, the GHGIMS was updated and DFE can run on it now (although the current IT person is voluntary), the GAP provincial consultation work really supported the consultative development of the GAP, and the effort placed into the adaptation work has laid a solid foundation that, if continued, could set the provincial and municipal levels into strong M&E adaptation reporting. At the

institutional level, particularly DFFE, has benefited from the CBIT project and is in a more capacitated state now than it was before the project. Some other institutions, like ARC, Gauteng Department of Environment, Provincial departments of KwaZulu Natal, and the national Department of Transport were also capacitated.

***Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact:** <u>Moderately likely</u>*

Rating for Effectiveness:	**Moderately Satisfactory**

5.5 Financial Management

5.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

202. The roles of financial management and reporting were delineated in the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the Implementing Agency (IA) (GEF Climate Mitigation Unit) and the Executing Agency (EA) (DFFE). The PCA stipulated that UNEP would furnish cash advances in accordance with the project budget annexed to the PCA. UNEP was to disburse the initial instalment (USD 150,000) to the EA within four weeks following the execution of the Agreement. Subsequent instalments, namely the second and third, were to be advanced within two weeks following the receipt of a financial report, while the final disbursement of 5% was contingent upon the submission of the final project report and the conclusive audited expenditure statement. UNEP was also to withhold USD 40,000 for a Mid-Term Review (if necessary) and the Terminal Evaluation.

203. In terms of procurement, UNEP's approval was requisite for any items not encompassed in the procurement plan and exceeding USD 2,500.

204. The four project budget revisions adhered to the procedures of UNEP.

205. When UNDP South Africa came on board as a support partner for procurement (revision 2), with a contribution of USD 653,610, the PCA between UNEP and DFFE was amended accordingly, and a UN agency to UN agency contribution agreement was signed between UNEP and UNDP South Africa for the amount agreed for specific set of service providers (consortium of experts for the long-term capacity building strategy, a curriculum assessor for the strategy, a GHG inventory expert). This agreement was started on 1 July 2022 and was to end on 31 August 2024 (although this agreement was extended to 31 December 2024). Under B. budget of the UN-to-UN agreement, a table outlined the budget and other budget lines (e.g. UNDP fees, advertising costs).

206. In Project Revision 3, the service provision of the GHG expert as well as the experts conducting the long-term capacity building strategy was significantly lower than expected; this coupled with the failure to procure a service provider for the curriculum assessor (insufficient applicants), meant that UNDP (and this the project and the EA) had a large amount of unspent funds (USD 474,694) which was then allocated during this revision towards other activities[42]. Procedures followed were aligned with the guidelines.

***Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures:** <u>Satisfactory</u>*

[42] Some figures where money was not spent: M&E expert budget line was USD 155,751, most of this was re-allocated, but unspent funds from this line was USD 43,451 (Revision 3); the GHG inventory expert budget line was USD 155,751 but the contract was USD 30,384.46; the Long-term Capacity Building Strategy and Training Programmes consultancy budget line was USD 71,572 but the contract was USD 49,545; curriculum assessor USD 22,040 - cancelled.

5.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

207. Quarterly expenditure reports were availed to the evaluation as follows: all quarterly reports from Q3 2019 to Q4 2024 were availed from DFFE, and half yearly reports were availed from UNDP from S2 2022 to S2 2024. The final statement of accounts was made available to the evaluation in mid-April 2025 from the DFFE; The UNDP final statement of accounts was made available during the revision of this report.

208. Cash advances were made available to the evaluator. The first cash advancement to the DFFE of USD 150,000 was sent on 23 April 2019.

209. The second cash advancement included a letter signed on 25 January 2021 stating that another UNEP/GEF project (development of the TNC3 and BUR2) was completed with an unspent balance of USD 227,446.23 which was at National Treasury and needed to be returned to UNEP. There apparently were several bureaucratic challenges that made it difficult to return the money back to UNEP from the Treasury (estimated that it could take a year), and that USD-ZAR exchange rates may mean that the SA now had to pay more than it had actually received. It had made a proposal to use the unspent balance within the National Treasury account for the CBIT, and that the money was in the Treasury CBIT South Africa account. UNEP (in a letter dated 3 March 2021) confirmed that the unspent balance could be transferred to the ongoing CBIT project. The folder for this provided to the evaluation included a financial summary of the TNC/BUR project - the amount transferred to CBIT project was USD 228,121.61, which included an exchange gain of USD 675.38 as well as an email exchange agreeing on way forward during a discussion about the transfer agreement.

210. The third cash advancement took place on 28 September 2022 and went to UNDP with an amount of USD 266,602.00. An email (4 October 2022) was shared with the evaluation confirming receipt and that procurements would start as soon as possible.

211. The fourth cash advancement of USD 351,083 to UNDP was on 27 March 2024. The cash advance statement outlined amounts received and spent (without dates), had only spent USD 42,2828.60 by 4 March 2024, with a cash balance by the partner of USD 224,319.40; UNDP requested USD 351,082.63 because of projected spending in the first half of 2024.[43]

212. Planned co-finance reporting established the following figures at design (CEO ER, 2018): DFFE USD 163,452; WRI USD 228,291; Government of Norway USD 627,226 total of USD 1018,969. The co-finance reporting was shared yearly for the project[44] and final figures were: DFFE USD 450,386, WRI USD 257,257, and no reporting from Government of Norway. When the PMU was asked about this, the evaluation was told that "international

[43] An email between UNDP and UNEP starting 20 November 2023 was a discussion about the reporting requirements outlined in Section D of the UN-to-UN agreement stating that they would need UNDP to prepare a Half-Yearly progress report covering 1 July to 31 December 2023 period for the UNDP support, UNEP attached a template that was annotated to guide through the process. This was needed a first draft by 15 January completed and signed version by 31 January 2024 then reminder email a month later about this (18 Dec 2023) then a response on 9 Jan 2024 that UNDP was awaiting feedback from the PMU asking about UNDP's own fees to which UNEP responded that the UNDP finance team themselves should have this information (same day), then from UNDP asking who submitted the 2023 S1 report, then an email on 15 January attaching the half yearly report in which the wrong template had been used asking for revision (30 Jan) - by 5 Feb, then responded with the right one 2 February - then UNEP responding 8 Feb saying that UNDP spent USD 42,283 and committed USD 41,633 but was projecting to spent USD 436,968 in S1 of 2024 - and a suggestion to already submit the funds transfer request form - he attached a template - then UNDP asking another colleague, no response on that but assuming from the comms that this was done.

[44] Co-finance reports for all years were as follows: the 2020 cofinance reporting actual total was nothing from Norway, 58,375 from DFFE, WRI 257,257; 2021 DFFE 116,750; WRI 257,257; Norwegian embassy nothing; 2022 DFFE 163,452; WRI 257,257 and nothing Norwegian embassy; 2023 DFFE 181,919; WRI 257,257, ne nothing; 2024 DFFE USD 450,386, WRI 257,257, NE nothing.

partners" were initially included in the project proposal because others were supporting the M&E work under the former Chief Directorate but this co-finance they did not specifically track the contribution and "focused only on DFFE finance." It turns out from email communications shared between UNEP and DFFE in 2020 that the Norwegian-funded project was implemented from 15 December 2014 to 31 March 2017, which was before the CBIT South Africa project actually received the GEF's approval (22 October 2018). As a result, it did not qualify as co-financing and was subsequently not reported. The project reported on work done by other partners like the support from Climate Action Africa for the P2P learning exchanges and GIZ on the Gender Action Plan, but no figures and for some partners apparently it was not policy to provide information on figures.

213. Three audits were conducted through Rossal 98 contracted through the EA. Audit reports were made available for 1 April 2019 to 31 May 2020; 1 June 2020 - 31 May 2021; 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022 (in accordance with PCA signed 4 March 2019). No audit reports were available as of writing this report for the project timeline after 2022. Procurement was done by DFFE for the timeline of the project, once the project was extended, needed to hire again which had procurement challenges. UNDP took this task over toward the end of 2024 UNDP had hired an auditor in January 2025 - internal record-keeping issues at UNDP and at DFFE meant that UNEP had to share with UNDP what UNDP and DFFE had submitted to UNEP including all the gaps in the interactions that UNDP which has apparently delayed the process. At the time of writing this report, the final audits were not available yet.

214. There was one inventory report for 7 laptops, one was stolen and as such a police report was shared to this effect and a laptop was replaced totalling to 8 laptops bought. Cost for laptops equalled USD 23,235.41 (planned budget was USD 14,952.00).

215. The financial tables can be found in Annex 6 and the financial management table can be found in Annex 7.

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

5.5.3 Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

216. Overall feedback from the IA and EA and the IA FMO (and from the email communications that the evaluation was exposed to) indicated that communications from the UNEP included clear guidance on reporting requirements regarding what was needed to receive cash advance installments.

217. There seems to have been a strong communication trail also for the project revisions and budget changes, discussions on this, as well as discussions on the unused funds from BUR/TNC being used for CBIT.

218. Project budget issues especially with regards to the budget for the PTC (even though money was left over, this could not be moved as per GEF regulations) was clearly communicated as per clause 31 (project management cost - EA shall ensure that the project management cost for the EA do not exceed the GEF approved amount in the project budget in accordance with GEF rules - any increase in management costs as a result of extending the duration of the project shall be the sole responsibility of the EA).

219. UNEP also made several requests to UNDP to have more visibility on the procurement status of the auditor to indicate timeline for the three outstanding audit reports. The

auditor was finally contracted on 9 January 2025 (De Villiers and Associates) and they started collating the information. There seems to have been some record-keeping issues both within DFFE (from when the National Project Coordinator left and turnover was not totally clear) and with UNDP (which also experience turnover of responsible staff members).

Rating for Communication between Finance and Management Staff: Satisfactory

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

5.6 Efficiency

220. The project underwent four project revisions as outlined in Table 9 below and detailed under the section 3.5. Changes to design during implementation. The first revision was a result of delayed procurement exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions as well as other project implementation activities being limited and even paused during COVID-19 lockdowns (e.g. all training and capacity building, all DFFE staff were locked down at home, many without internet or working laptops). The first revision stated that further revisions would be necessary to allow for the government to fully assess the impact of COVID-19. No reporting on this assessment was shared with the evaluation, so it is not certain to what detailed extent COVID-19 impacted the project other than the documentation provided in the PIRs and interviews with project respondents. The second, third and fourth revisions were a result of procurement issues being affected and other delays and budgetary issues which necessitated adaptive management (some of these were exacerbated by COVID-19 in 2020-2022). The procurement issue itself was already identified as a risk in the Project Design but the project did not mitigate this effectively given that it knew that these lengthy processes might take place, and then COVID-19 exacerbated this even further and effectively no procurement was done (with the exception of the audit for the first three years) until when UNDP came on board in July 2022 to support with procurement.

221. The PMU explained the process as follows: when structural changes took place at the *then* DEA, the Chief Directorate of M&E was removed and various other Chief Directorates (MSMS, ICCRR, Adaptation) were instituted. The project was moved to the Chief Directorate of the ICCRR instead of the other Chief Directorates because the project was seen to cut across adaptation and mitigation. The processes within government were bureaucratic which generally take long. At the time, Government also had new procedures in place to curb corruption; these procedures, while very robust, are lengthy and inefficient. The project started with the adaptation M&E/NCCIS workshops first to make sure the provinces understood the database, how they could build their own sub-systems, etc. The first procurement they managed to get through was the Auditor (for the three years of planned implementation), and they managed to hire the National Project Coordinator, but even this process took almost an entire year. But then just when the project was taking off strong with the adaptation workshops and making headway, COVID-19 hit and the country went into complete lockdown. Based on the experience of the auditor taking almost an entire year to procure, after COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed, management took a decision to introduce a third party and that is when the official request was done (revision 2).

Table 9. Summary of project revisions of the CBIT South Africa 9673 project

Version	Date	Main changes introduced in this revision
Revision 1	30 November 2020	Extension of the project's technical completion date to 30 September 2022 to factor in delays related to COVID-19 restrictions and lengthy procurement processes
Revision 2	19 July 2022	Extension of the project's technical completion date to 31 August 2024 to allow UNDP to procure service providers on behalf of DFFE
Revision 3	28 September 2023	Project workplan and budget revision based on excess funds of USD 474,694 in UNDP account due to consultancy bid being cheaper than anticipated (also curriculum assessor and activity was cancelled) - added new activities including IT equipment, NCCIS updating and subsystem for Gauteng, mapping and climate modelling for Gauteng, ACE work and GAP consultations.
Revision 4	5 August 2024	Extension of project's technical completion date to 31 December 2024 to ensure all activities are completed

222. Essentially the project went into an almost "pause" mode during 2020 and 2021, with only a few activities taking place online (the gender differentiation workshops, some of the provincial adaptation M&E workshops). Covid-19 restrictions in South Africa prevented traveling and in-person meetings from March 2020 up until 2021.

223. Once people were hired, 2023 and 2024 were busy years as far as the GHG inventory and the long-term capacity building strategy were concerned. This said, there was turnover (two project liaison turn-overs) at UNDP and handover and communication was affected by this. Revision 3 took place in September 2023 (more than a year after the agreement had been signed) where UNDP still had USD 474,694 left after procuring two of the three bids (of which the two were substantially cheaper than planned: Long-term Capacity Building Strategy USD 71,572 planned versus USD 49,535 spent; GHG inventory specialist USD 155,751 planned versus USD 30,384.46 spent, of course these pieces of work were planned to be over three years but then got condensed to 18 months). The curriculum assessor was cancelled because no bids received filled minimum requirements (which had a budget line of USD 22,040).

224. Revision 3 had all these activities planned with an end date of August 2024, but almost a year later the project realised it was not able to finalise all of these on time, and then tried to extend further but were only given until 31 December 2024. Some activities (planned, e.g. MoUs with National Departments; new additional, e.g. updating NCCIS and NCCIS Gauteng sub-system) the project had to cancel as they did not have enough time to close of those activities. This said, these (new) activities were planned with the knowledge that they had a year to complete them.

225. Communication from the Chief Directorate MSMS did not seem to be effective in terms of working together towards a common goal, especially given the potential for project

synergies (particularly regarding the M&E specialist position which was reporting directly to the Chief Director of the MSMS), despite having the Advisory Panel and presenting on various projects together. The evaluation, despite various efforts, did not get a response from the Chief Director of MSMS nor of the M&E Specialist for an interview so could not ascertain the levels of cooperation. Of course, the unit is not accountable to the project and it is their prerogative to speak to an external evaluator or not, but this and the feedback received for the evaluation and the inputs into the different aspects also reflects the possibility that projects might not be implemented in a programmatic way that uses an overall Theory of Change process.

226. The PIR 2021 outlined several risks that would hamper the achievement of outcome, these included detailed process-related explanations of the procurement challenges the project was facing, as well as the uncertainty within future development of COVID-19 significantly delaying the project ability to undertake most of the activities and finally, the risk of running out of project management costs. This last item led to a budgetary analysis during the second extension request in 2022 leading to the conclusion that the PMC budget would ultimately be exhausted by August 2024, which became the new completion date. When DFFE requested another extension past this date until 31 December 2024, UNEP invoked clause 31 in the PCA clarifying that DFFE would need to support management/coordination functions through its own in-house staff. The NPC contract expired and an in-house staff member under the Directorate of CCDIM was seconded to manage the closing off of the project.

227. The PIR 2022 declared that the COVID-19 situation had improved and that restrictions had been lifted. Together with the procurement having been moved to the UNDP SA, the activities that had been stalled for two years were to resume without issue, and the project gained momentum during the second half of year 2022.

228. The PIR 2024 identified the main risks being that DFFE and UNDP experienced additional implementation delays which would affect the project's ability to complete by August 2024. As a result, revision 4 requested an extension, which was given to 31 December 2024. The second challenge was that already stated in paragraph 205 about the budget being exhausted for the project management. The PIR stated that "as such, the project will no longer be able to support the Project Technical Coordinator position beyond August 2024. To compensate for this situation, the DFFE will have to establish alternative project management arrangement until project completion in December 2024 and to support the Terminal Evaluation. In particular, the DFFE will have to appoint a focal point from its in-house staff to endure proper coordination of the project and reporting until its completion."

229. The project was left with a significant amount of unspent budget, namely a total of USD 470,807 (DFFE: USD 153,647 and UNDP USD 326,160)[45]. This unspent budget was a mix of cancelled activities and cost-savings, such as the cancellation of M&E which was a large chunk of budget (USD 155,751), and cost savings for the procurement of consultancies (e.g. USD 134,337 cost-savings for the two consultancies GHG inventory specialist and long-term capacity building strategy; also through co-financed peer-to-peer exchanges meant that the project did not spend as much on these as was planned). With procurement under DFFE and UNDP, the lowest bidder is selected once the minimum

[45] Final Financial Statement for DFFE, final 2024 financial reporting for UNDP, then verified through final figures with FMO during interview 2 May 2025

technical requirements are met. Apparently, the subproject with the Gauteng would have taken a large amount of the unspent budget, but time ran out.

230. It was not mandatory for a medium-sized project to do a Mid-Term Review, but it is indicated that the IA should conduct one (even independently, if necessary, through the Evaluation Office) if it deems necessary. In the case of this project, the evaluator opines that a Mid-Term Review would have been a helpful process to have allowed the project to get on track and more strategically adjust its outputs and activities.

231. Effectively, the project received two and a half years extension to account for COVID-19, procurement was a risk already identified and not effectively mitigated. Essentially, there should have been sufficient time to fulfil activities.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory

5.7 Monitoring and Reporting

5.7.1 Monitoring Design and Budgeting

232. The CEO ER (2018) described the monitoring and evaluation at design, and the project was to follow UNEP monitoring, reporting, and evaluation procedures. The project results framework was included in Annex I of the CEO ER and indicators were generally SMART, although the outcome indicator in particular may have been limited (especially since the target was achieved with limited project intervention). Indicators were gender disaggregated.

233. The project M&E plan was presented in Annex G of the CEO ER, and the costs were fully integrated into the project budget. The following monitoring activities were included: a project inception workshop was to be held within two months of the start of the project and was to involve key stakeholders identified during the national consultation process; a workshop report was to be prepared and shared with participants. UNEP was to conduct a visit to the project office to assess project progress. The National Project Coordinator would be responsible for the preparation of half-yearly project reports, PIRs could substitute for those for overlapping periods. A terminal evaluation was to be conducted independently through the evaluation office; annual financial audits were to be done

234. Overall, the M&E plan was appropriately costed (USD 53,410 GEF contribution) and technically outlined at design.

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting: Satisfactory

5.7.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation

235. The inception meeting and the first steering committee meeting was held at the same time and by the same people (12 August 2019), the report doubled as the minutes of the meeting.

236. The governance structure was laid out as per the project logical framework although some important consultants were not hired through the project and ultimately had an impact on the attainment of project results (in particular, the M&E specialist, as well as the curriculum assessor).

237. The results framework was implemented, PIRs measured progress between 2019 and 2024, and a final project progress report was completed. This said, the indicators measured and output achievements described were limited in technical depth, as well as in some cases in terms of the indicators (e.g. outcome-level), were not attributed to the project. Gender was disaggregated for all workshops and consultations. Adaptive management and risk mitigation was also limited given that some risks were not ultimately dealt with or dealt with very late (e.g. procurement, activities not being completed).

238. Overall, an MTR should have been done to support the project direction; ideally in 2021 when COVID-19 was slowing down.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Satisfactory

5.7.3 Project Reporting

239. The PCA between UNEP and DFFE outlined reporting obligations under Clause 34 (and under Clause 32 for financial expenditure reporting): Progress reports (half-yearly); PIRs annually - the PIR report was to be accepted as the progress report for the period Jan-June; Final report within two months of operational closure; financial report quarterly; signed final statement of accounts within three months of operational closure; co-financing report annually; third party co-financing reporting required partners to report on an annual basis the actual co-financing received versus committed at the time of project approval by the GEF.

240. The half yearly reports and PIRs were sufficient in reporting although some were not as detailed as they could have been, i.e. not as technical (this may have been because the National Project Coordinator was administrative but also in charge of technical reporting). The PIRs could also have been more clearly and technically written and included delineation between co-finance items and what the project actually contributed to and where others did as well as reporting from the cancelled activity M&E and some to of the challenges, particularly the last report could have outlined these in more detail. PIRs detailed issues of gender and marginalised sectors of society by reporting on specific activities supporting empowerment, as well as disaggregating data by gender when reporting on events and interventions.

241. Expenditure reporting was made available, some minor errors in reporting did not significantly affect the final statement of accounts.

242. The Steering Committee Meeting minutes were made available for the four SC meetings (including Inception Meeting) minutes reflected what was talked about, mostly presentations from the PMU. The last meeting had separate presentations - first BTR and outstanding steps (done by CSIR) and public consultations of the draft NC4 and outstanding steps (also a consultant) and then an independent review of the BUR5/NC4 (Promethium Carbon). No questions or comments were reported from participants. Generally, there were minimal interactions from members although at one meeting did say they wanted to have DoST join more in the training of the CB strategy.

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	**Satisfactory**

5.8 Sustainability

5.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

243. DFFE is a large institution that prioritises climate change and has a large branch dedicated to climate change in South Africa. The branch has increased its directorates, and already some are expanded to include sector-led teams (like the GHG inventory and systems Directorate); the ownership of climate reporting is evident within the DFFE.

244. National and provincial departments are engaged, although the turnover at the PSC level and the lack of response from various national departments for the evaluation reflects limited prioritisation. That said, some championship exists, most notably in the ARC, the Gauteng Department of Environment, the provincial departments of KwaZulu-Natal, the Department of Transport, among others.

245. That said, the promulgation of the Climate Change Act in March 2025 has contributed significantly to supporting climate change and reporting in South Africa. Already, the reporting of GHG emissions at private sector is mandatory and there is a Directorate set up within the Chief Directorate of MSMS that deals specifically with mandatory reporting (mandatory reporting for the private industry in terms of the mitigation actions and also GHG inventory reporting which is done under Chief Directorate MSMS under Directorate of Compliance). The national promulgation act being signed at the same time is apparently also an empowerment to advance climate change.

246. South Africa also submitted its BTR on time, has increased its staff contingent within the relevant Chief Directorates in the Climate Branch, and various aspects of the project, including the capacity-building strategy and the NCCIS work is being taken forward.

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: <u>Likely</u>

5.8.2 Financial Sustainability

247. The work of the M&E adaptation seems to be carrying on (e.g. Directorate of Adaptation was busy conducting IKS workshops in the provinces building on the project's work), the M&E official is still sitting directly reporting to the Chief Directorate of MSMS and continues to be funded by the WRI.

248. The promulgation of the new climate act means that whatever projects that are in the process of being implemented will receive guidance particularly in decarbonizing the economy. There is a large drive to decarbonize the economy in South Africa with funding streams going directly to this.

249. Large efforts were made for the adaptation M&E workshops and there has been some knowledge retainment, and a lot of focus is being put on IKS. The NCCIS is to be updated, but there seems to be a lacking budget to support sub-system development.

250. That said, the fact that the DFFE has twice now (the NC/BUR project as well as the CBIT) dealt with under-spending of budgets and in the case of CBIT did not finalise some of the project results, means that some aspects of financial sustainability need to be looked at more strategically in future projects.

Rating for Financial Sustainability: <u>Moderately Likely.</u>

5.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

251. The Greenhouse Gas inventory team's capacity has really been built through the project and the team is capacitated now to do more things; the inventory team is also now bigger with someone leading each sector, including having brought in a mapping specialist.

252. DFFE has developed capacity over time and now are doing the whole inventory report (through support from the project through the GHG inventory specialist) and there is a lot more self-organisation as a result. However, turnover is an issue, apparently people get started and then they leave, and training has to start again. In addition, the BTR was largely developed through a consultancy (CSIR).

253. Some institutions, particularly the ARC and the Gauteng Department of Environment felt that they really benefited from the project contributions and look forward to more involvement in the future. This is also true for the Department of Transport.

254. The evaluation was assured that the long-term capacity development strategy was taken up, although some other directorates had not seen the final strategy or really knew its contents.

255. The final project report stated that the project nurtured sustainability in ensuring data providers on climate change understand the requirements in which systems and channels to use. The long-term capacity building strategy implementation has provided long-term benefits in building expertise around the ETF which would allow for sustainable development of BTRs. The strategy could easily be implemented by other countries in building the capacities of those countries. Due to the peer-to-peer exchanges, South Africa had gotten requests for more of these from Botswana and Malawi.

256. One project respondent at DFFE noted that the strategy of the project was to first focus on internal benefits, then secondly focus on the benefits at national level and then thirdly moving to provincial. The workshops on GHG inventories participants were drawn from the provincial level too. While the project may not have plugged the gap, it did allow participants a sense of the important of reporting requirements of various pillars of their climate-related work. This should plant the seed for when the Climate Change Act kicks in, which will compel stronger reporting requirements including public private sector responsible reporting.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Likely

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

5.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

5.9.1 Preparation and Readiness

257. The project was designed to address gaps that the DFFE outlined at the time (of course this was when the structure was quite different and so what was planned versus what actually came about and how the governance structure worked was quite different (see under section 3.5. project implementation changes above).

258. The project started in March 2019, but the National Project Coordinator (NPC) only came on board in July 2019. The first PSC and Inception Meeting was held in August 2020. The NPC was administrative in its role and the technical person (Project Manager) was actually the Director of the Directorate of UNFCCC (under the Chief Directorate of ICCRR) with many other obligations beyond the project which may have limited the project in terms of technical reporting and monitoring.

259. The Inception Workshop was held on 12 August 2019 and was the first steering committee meeting. The objectives of the inception meeting were to constitute the PSC, deliver project background, create space for dialogue between key actors of the project in order to refine and approve activities, budget and deadlines of the project, and promote coordination and collaboration among stakeholders. UNEP was represented by the Regional Programme Coordinator at the time and the actual role of UNEP was not well defined in this meeting (although the PCA and the CEO ER outlined the role very well), the National Project Coordinator was on board by then and presented on the project. Various interactions were had and at the time the Director of CC M&E was still part of the structure; structural changes took place shortly after where the project was placed under CCDIM.

260. The project did not use the initial stages effectively to deal with the procurement risk nor the structure change, it would have been beneficial to have a strategic meeting among the new Chief Directorates at the time as to how to do the project effectively including the M&E specialist role.

Rating for Preparation and Readiness: Moderately Unsatisfactory

5.9.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

5.9.2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

261. The Implementing Agency was actively involved and performed its role as outlined in the Project Document and PCA.

262. The disbursement of resources were conducted as per the PCA, and where the EA made requests, if reporting was right, as with UNDP, this process worked.

263. Most communications between the IA and the EA were conducted via email. The IA did conduct one physical visit to the project when the IA had gone to attend another project and then made a courtesy call. The IA didn't attend the PSC meeting in person but attended every meeting virtually. Ideally, the IA should have been alerted well in advance if a SC meeting was to happen to allow them to attend in-person, but this was not done and so often the alert was too short-notice for the IA.

264. The individual taking over from the NPC after August 2024 to close the project was new to GEF project implementation and highlighted that UNEP was very good during the process of closing up, made sure the reports required were clear, provided descriptive comments to support in what they were looking for, templates were provided on time to focus on what was actually required, gave enough time to work on reports, communication was good with quick responses also to acknowledge receipt. The evaluator also found this to be the case when provided with email communication with UNDP SA. Other comments from DFFE were supportive, although there was some feedback that based on previous experiences with UNEP through enabling activities there had been more autonomy in project management and the case of CBIT there was some level of micro-

management, impatience with delays and sometimes limited understanding of the national circumstances and the COVID-19 issues, along with mounting pressure to close the project. However, the evaluation, through the review of the PIRs, various interviews, as well as email communications reviews, found that the UNEP IA fulfilled its role as outlined in design and as is standard and appropriate.

265. If anything, a MTR should have been conducted to actually determine the extent of the damage of COVID-19. If the IA had commissioned a MTR, perhaps in 2021, it could have been a useful exercise to ascertain the challenges and strategically plan for project results attainment based on overcoming or mitigating these challenges.

266. UNEP supervision is rated as Satisfactory.

5.9.2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

267. The implementation structure changed during the early part of the project implementation from CC M&E Chief Directorate to the different directorates and so the project was moved to Chief Directorate of ICCRR and under Directorate of CCDIM as they were in charge of reporting and mainstreamed across mitigation and adaptation. This made sense, but it meant that then the MSMS section was not coordinating and so some elements of the project were separated out (e.g. Adaptation did M&E parts, the MSMS had their own M&E role and so did not participate as much in the project other than the GHG inventory support work and the initial stages of the Long-term Capacity Building Strategy, Compliance was hardly involved). The Project Director was the Director of CCDIM, the Project Technical Manager was within this directorate but then also the Director of UNFCCC under the Chief Directorate of the ICCRR, and the only full-time project staff was the National Project Coordinator who was more administrative/organisational. The technical aspects were referred to the Project Manager/Director. While this fits within the Directorate structure and has positive impacts on sustainability, this role is already full-time within government and meant that project implementation lacked a full-time technical staff member.

268. Regarding the work between the Chief Directorates, while everyone had their piece of the puzzle, many respondents claimed there were not enough communications between them.

269. The GHG inventory specialist consultants who were supposed to come in at the onset of implementation only came in after UNDP was supporting procurement in late 2023. The GHG inventory specialist had an intern supporting, but most of the work was conducted directly by the specialist and together with the Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems. Based on interviews with some stakeholders, it seems that it was not always clear who reporting would go to and who was approving the reports. The NPC shared that he was not reviewing reports as he is not technical, but the evaluator was informed that UNDP was reviewing all deliverables, and so was the Project Director/Project Technical Manager. The Project Technical Manager stated that the reports were approved by the Director of GHG Inventory and Systems and once approved, the PMU would approve payment.

270. The NPC contract ended when project extension exhausted all possible project coordinator funds at the end of August 2024. Another DFFE in-house NPC came in and had as part of their contract some performance agreements based on CBIT. The level of handover was limited in time. The new NPC came to assist with the closure of the project work and reporting needs (this was already planned early in 2024 as CBIT was part of this

role's performance agreements in May 2024). The individual was doing five key performance areas - mainly BTR, then NCs, then the financial, then CBIT 10% (assist with coordination and closure of CBIT SA). The work to close was mainly organising all reporting UNEP asked for all the deliverables and closing up. There was only a brief meeting with previous NPC explaining the left-over tasks (the ACE work, the gender action plan, GHG inventory expertise reporting) and the laptop was left with a walk-through of the folders, but it was subsequently not easy to access all folders because of inhouse privacy regulations (could only access storage, not email, as an example).

271. Particularly in developing the PIR 2025, it was not easy to track all the information that was still needed, the NPC had to go through various more lengthy channels to access information which reflects limited clean reporting and record keeping of the project.

272. The steering committee meetings took place as follows: 12 August 2019 - 22 people, 30 March 2023 - 65 people, 22 November 2023 - 17, 21 August 2024 - 33 people. Of these four steering committee meetings, only four people attended all (only one was not in the EA, and not all four were strictly speaking "members," like e.g. the NPC), two attended three times (both of these were from the EA), 18 attended twice, and 80 attended only once. No master SC list was provided, so it was impossible to see who was a PSC member, all of these were named as PSC members in the stakeholder list provided to the evaluation. An institutional list was provided in the first SC meeting report. Generally, a PSC should be consistent, represent key stakeholders (institutions were named in the CEO ER TOR for the PSC, as well as outlined again in the Inception Meeting Report), and provide overall higher-level guidance and oversight of the project. This process seemed more like stakeholder engagement in terms of presenting about the project and taking in requests from stakeholders when feedback was provided.

273. In the case of this project, the role of the Steering Committee was important. It was chaired by the Project Director (who was also the technical project manager). During COVID-19 it was difficult to host a virtual meeting and so things were shared via email. There was a lot of turnover in the PSC and members were not always reflecting the key capacities necessary to give constructive feedback, sometimes with no responses after documents were circulated.[46]

274. UNDP South Africa got involved as an implementing/support partner halfway through 2022. There were two projects under UN-to-UN agreements NC4/BUR5 and the CBIT. The evaluator was told that UNDP was involved in technical assurance checks of the deliverables. There was turnover, and as a result, not one person working on this throughout. Reporting was done but reminders had to be sent from UNEP, and there were some issues with the audits in terms of record keeping at UNDP SA too (from handover issues during turnovers). In addition, important deliverables of the project (e.g. the Long-term Capacity Building Strategy) did not have GEF or UNEP logos or were reported as part of the CBIT project. While the PCA with DFFE outlines the branding protocol, the UN-to-UN agreement does not, although it is mandatory to include the GEF logo in all GEF-funded projects. These deliverables, having been primarily UNEP/GEF and DFFE project outputs, should have been branded accordingly.

275. Overall, DFFE was pleased with UNDP support as third party. The process of procurement was rigorous and since they had a physical office in country, it was generally

[46] This was derived from interviews with PSC members and the EA.

a smooth process in terms of the DFFE and UNDP partnership, apart from project officer turnover at UNDP SA.

276. The consultants hired delivered high quality work, especially the GHG inventory, the long-term capacity building strategy, and together with the inventory work did cover the basic and in the case of DFFE (and Gauteng to an extent) advanced training, but not as anticipated in the project design.

277. The procurement mitigation could have been done much earlier given that this risk was established already at design, and on top of this the project was effectively extended more than double its intended time, and if you erased the time of COVID-19 and its relevant extensions, the project essentially had the original allocated time to finalise its project outputs.

278. Partner/Execution Agency is rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Moderately Satisfactory

5.9.3 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

279. Overall, it seems that the project made strong efforts in engaging stakeholders, both in the steering committee as well as through multiple activities under the different outputs.

280. The PIR 2020 outlined that the PSC members (Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries; Department of Human Settlements; Department of Mineral Resources and Energy; Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs; National Disaster Management Centre and UNEP) were engaged to approve the revised CBIT budget as well as the workplan. In addition, the CBIT was presented to the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change (IGCCC). The IGCCC is not the PSC, but rather provides general oversight on the implementation of South Africa's National Climate Change Response Policy. Therefore, all climate change response work and projects also get consulted through the PSC in South Africa. The PSC is specifically focused on oversight over international reporting on climate change including BURs, NCs, CBIT as well as NDCs. South Africa had also organised 5 provincial adaptation workshops which included engagements with stakeholders in the Northern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape Gauteng provinces.

281. The PIR 2021 reported that the Project Steering Committee members (including Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment; Department of Human Settlements; Department of Mineral Resources and Energy; Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs; National Disaster Management Centre and UNEP) were engaged to review and provide their inputs to the draft workplan and budget revisions and in order to get their buy-in support to implementation. In addition, the CBIT project was presented to the Gender Coordinators Forum meeting on 28 June 2021. The Gender Coordinators Forum (which includes stakeholders from Government Departments, Business and NGOs) is not part of the Project Steering Committee, but rather provides general oversight on the implementation of South Africa's gender-responsive policies. The CBIT project was also presented at the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change (IGCCC), a national committee represented through sector departments at national level as well as from provinces on 07 May 2020. During that period, South Africa also organised one provincial adaptation workshop in Limpopo province, on 24 March 2021).

282. The PIR 2022 reported that the DFFE (as the UNFCCC focal point for South Africa) led the South African delegation to COP26. Completion of negotiations on the Paris rulebook for implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement was one of the major outcomes of the COP. South Africa was a key party in these negotiations and co-ordinated transparency negotiations for the African Group. South Africa organised one online provincial adaptation workshop with the Northwest province during this period and was attended by 29 participants from Government departments, Academia and Business. A gender mainstreaming information sharing workshop was held on 14 September 2021 to engage national stakeholders.

283. The PIR 2023 reported that the DFFE led the South African delegation to COP27 in November 2022. A key outcome was the launch of the Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation initiative. South Africa organised four Regional Adaptation workshops with the Kwa-Zulu Natal province on 13-14 October 2022, Mpumalanga province on 05-06 December 2022, Eastern Cape province on 14-15 June 2023 and Gauteng province on 28-29 June 2023 during that year.

284. The PIR 2024 reported that the DFFE led the South African delegation to COP28 in November and December 2023. A key outcome was the conclusion of the first 'global stocktaking of the world's efforts to address climate change under the Paris Agreement. Having shown that progress was too slow across all areas of climate action from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to strengthening resilience to a changing climate, to getting the financial and technological support to vulnerable nations. Countries responded with a decision on how to accelerate action across all areas by 2030. This includes a call on governments to speed up the transition away from fossil fuels to renewables such as wind and solar power in their next round of climate commitments. The project held three National Climate Change Information Systems (NCCIS) workshops and 3 provincial Climate Change and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) workshops. These were held in the Free State province, the Limpopo province and the Northern Cape province. The first Climate Change IKS workshop was held in Gert Sibande District Municipality, then in Nkangala District Municipality and then in Enhlanzeni District Municipality. DFFE visited the USA in September 2023 and Canada in February 2024. These visits were for DFFE to learn from developed countries on how they developed and maintained as well as used their monitoring and evaluation systems for reporting and informing national policy development. DFFE also participated in the CBIT peer workshop organized by Zimbabwe in February 2024 to share good practices and lessons learned with Zimbabwe, Malawi and Sierra Leone. Finally, DFFE invited other African countries for the peer-peer workshop that organised in March 2024 in Pretoria to learn the same. The visiting countries were Kenya, Namibia, Malawi, Ghana, Gambia, and Zambia.

285. The PIR 2025 reported that the PSC meeting was attended from members from the following national departments: Department of Transport, Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Women, Youth and Persons with disabilities, Department of Science and Innovation as well as UNDP and UNEP (remotely). The PSC was chaired by DFFE. The PSC also included presentations from the various stakeholders involved in transparency work with DFFE, including the CSIR, Zutari, the Greenhouse and Promethium Carbon. South Africa also co-hosted the Ministerial Meeting on Global Climate Transparency with the COP 29 Presidency during COP 29. The high-level event was attended by Minsters from all over the globe and reiterating their commitments to submit BTRs by 31 December 2024. South Africa was honoured with a certificate by the COP 29 Presidency for being a BTR champion and in this regard, South Africa submitted the 1st

BTR to the UNFCCC by 31 December 2024 together with the CTFs for NDC tracking and support needed and received. The NID was submitted on 23 December 2024.

286. Overall, the M&E adaptation engaged 502 stakeholders across 9 provinces, although records were handwritten and so follow up in terms of the evaluation survey was difficult. The project also conducted gender consultations in the regions.

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Satisfactory

5.9.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

287. The project CEO ER (2018) outlined in detail how it would integrate gender into the project, and gave a detailed background to Gender Equality processes in South Africa and its policies. Gender analysis done during the PPG of the project noted that women were equitably represented in the design phase, with an average of 40% of the participants during project design. Table 18 in the CEO ER outlined specific gender activities.

288. The PIR 2020 reported that South Africa developed the national Gender Action Plan. The CBIT project aimed to align with the objectives of South Africa's action plan. The objective of the action plan was to provide for empowerment of women to eliminate discrimination and to achieve gender equality and equity through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects. A climate change gender mainstreaming workshop was scheduled for 2020 but unfortunately had to be postponed due to national lockdown restrictions which prohibited public gatherings imposed due to the COVID-19 crisis. The project was therefore in the process of organising an alternative virtual high level Gender differentiation workshop with the provincial gender focal points. The in-person workshop was postponed to year 2021. The project had at that point already organised 5 provincial adaptation workshops with an average attendance ratio of 40% of women and 60% of men.

289. The PIR 2021 reported that the project held a gender mainstreaming information sharing workshop (28 August 2020) virtually. The project was also in the process of organising a hybrid high level Gender differentiation workshop with the provincial gender focal points.

290. The PIR 2022 reported that the second gender mainstreaming information sharing workshop was held on 14 September 2021 on a hybrid format with the provincial gender focal points, with 60% of women and 40% of men attending the workshop. Attendees included representatives of: Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Western Cape Government, South African Weather Services (SAWS), South African National Parks (SANParks), Gauteng Government, Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (Ledet), Gender CC South Africa, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and National Business Initiative (NBI). The workshop presented the findings and recommendations of Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry Policy Assessment report.[47] In that year, the project organised one provincial adaptation workshop in the North West province, which included 29 participants f of which 55% of men and 45% of women attended the online workshop.

[47] Recommendations included education; raising awareness and sensitization of gender & climate change. • Collaboration between the city and civil society (gender & climate change experts) • Collection of data disaggregated by sex and gender. • Approachable language in sending out the message & raising awareness on Climate C • Policies should provide unlimited access for women to mobility, electricity, water & sanitation.

291. The PIR 2024 reported on the nine provincial GAP consultations as follows: Western Cape province with 58 people attending (19 males 33%, 37 females 64% and 2 other gender 3%); Northern Cape province with 32 people attending (12 males 37% and 20 females 63%); North-West province with 70 people attending (24 males 34% and 46 females 66%); Mpumalanga province with 165 people attending (34 males 21% and 131 females 79%); Free State province with 40 people attending (11 males 27%, 21 females 54% and 8 other gender 20%); Eastern Cape with 69 people attending (30 males 43% and 39 females 57%); Gauteng province with 61 people attending (12 males 20% and 49 females 80%); Limpopo province with 115 people attending (37 males 32% and 78 females 68%); KwaZulu natal province with 44 people attending (14 males 31% and 30 females 69%).

292. The PIR 2025 reported that the project organized a provincial consultation on the Gender Action Plan in Mpumalanga province, with the attendance of 165 people, 34 males (21%) and 131 females (79%).

293. The project made an excellent effort in enhancing gender equality. It offered several opportunities and workshops and training on gender mainstreaming into climate change which provided an opportunity on learning more about gender mainstreaming. Gender representation was important to the project, and disaggregation was conducted for most consultations and events. The ACE research study conducted under the CBIT project provided an opportunity to receive recommendation on how climate education, training and awareness can be enhanced in South Africa, especially for marginalised and previously disadvantaged groups such women, children and people with disabilities. Notably, the project provided support to conduct the 9 national stakeholder consultations in provinces on South Africa's draft Gender Action Plan which once approved will be a key plan driving gender mainstreaming into climate change in South Africa.

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

5.9.5 Environmental and Social Safeguards

294. The UNEP Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note was outlined in the project design, which included the screening checklist for safeguards (Annex M of the CEO ER).

295. This project was on reporting and not generally an intrusive project. It was supportive of environmental goals and ensuring mitigation and adaptation. None of the social or environmental safeguards were shown to have negative impacts, and any risks were low to none.

296. The project especially made efforts to also include IKS knowledge systems which was probably a strong contribution to empowerment of Indigenous environmental knowledge through the work it did on M&E adaptation.

297. The PIR 2025 reported that the project was rated at "Low" safeguard risk category as it mainly focused on normative issues, i.e. institutional capacity building toward improved reporting on NDC so the government meets the transparency requirements on the climate change commitments and reports the progress in a reliable manner.

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

5.9.6 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

298. South Africa is generally in the forefront of climate reporting and has something to show other countries in terms of what is possible. Many actions are already mandatory in terms of reporting, and with the Climate Act having been promulgated recently, the country is advanced in terms of its climate reporting.

299. The Directorates under climate reporting under DFFE have grown since project start (although this is not directly aligned to the project). High level of capacity exists within the walls of these directorates, although much still depends on consultancies.

300. The level of ownership of project results differs among partners, but particular championship was found to be the case with the EA, the Department of Transport, the Gauteng Environmental Department and the ARC. Some elements are bureaucratic in nature because of the size of government and the country but those in championship positions seem to be doing their part to move climate reporting and climate action forward. The fact that the country is driving processes toward decarbonizing the economy is a powerful reflection of the ownership it is taking to promote carbon-neutral development.

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Satisfactory

5.9.7 Communication and Public Awareness

301. The project design included a strong knowledge management approach, which included supporting active partnership on the CBIT Global Coordination Platform, exchanging knowledge and resources with other countries (which the project did excellently through its many peer-to-peer exchanges).

302. The PIRs outlined well the communications and public awareness as well as the knowledge management of the project.

303. The adaptation M&E workshops in particular were strong awareness builders, and included 17 workshops which focused on adaptation resources, data sharing platforms and consultations on IKS. Gender consultations were done at national level and provincial level which included climate awareness and the importance of gender empowerment in climate action. The ACE work in particular, focused on empowerment of climate action by the public. .

304. The strong engagement process is outlined above under Stakeholders and Partnerships and provides some detail into the public awareness efforts by the project.

305. A lot of additional awareness was created through the gender consultations for the GAP as well as the ACE work which were additional activities.

A***Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Highly Satisfactory***

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

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

306. The CBIT South Africa was a strategic and relevant project aimed to address the gaps in South Africa's reporting capacity and build on previous interventions. That said, the project was faced with challenges that affected implementation, some of which could have been addressed through adaptive (and risk) management (specifically the procurement challenges faced which were already identified at design), and others which were not in the project's control (most notably COVID-19).

307. The following conclusions are drawn from the evaluation findings and framed under the four strategic questions.

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

308. The project faced several challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions. Early on the project was dealing with procurement delays due to complicated bureaucratic processes, these were heavily exacerbated by COVID-19 when supply management in Government was affected (because relevant committee members in supply chains in charge of approval at different steps did not have access to computers nor internet during lock-downs). In addition, most activities depended on face-to-face meetings and gatherings which were restricted for almost two years. The project dealt with it by extending the project time, attempting to conduct some meetings (to varying levels of success) virtually; but generally the productivity during this time overall was stalled. The project was impacted in that momentum was lost in various important items, most notably the adaptation M&E workshops (which had started off strong in 2019 but then came to a somewhat halt in 2020), and the procurement of the GHG inventory specialist and the Long-term Capacity Development Consortium was delayed. That said, the project was extended to almost double its planned time and effectively "re-gained" that lost time.

In what ways and to what extent can the project execution capacity be identified prior to project implementation? Given some of the administrative challenges faced particularly in procurement through DFFE, how can partnership and roles be improved between the IA and EA for future project implementation?

309. Arguably the most significant impact limiting the project's success was the procurement issue faced by the project. This delayed the entire project implementation, and while exacerbated by COVID-19, was a problem the project faced without the COVID restrictions. This risk was already identified at design, and a stronger preparation phase and risk mitigation plan should have been implemented at the onset of implementation. Only by 2022 did the EA and IA start discussing a third-party modality based on the challenging experiences faced by procurement. A recommendation to this effect has been made based on the evaluation findings to already conduct due diligence and capacity assessments at design for projects in South Africa that rely heavily on large pieces of work conducted by specialists and experts that need to be hired. This is also even true for the project management unit, which would have benefited from a full-time staff member who has strong technical capacity. Clear definitions and elaborations of roles and responsibilities by the EA and the IA, as well as any implementing partner will need to already be agreed at design, and then re-evaluated at inception. The inception meeting

needs to be used as a strong platform to agree on implementation modalities that the project design proposed, based on any structural changes and risks that might come up.

In what ways, and to what extent, have the needs and interests of differentiated groups been considered in the implementation of the project?

310. The project made a large effort to enhance gender equality, having hosted two virtual and one hybrid gender workshop, as well as catalysing the process of the Gender Action Plan development (as a new activity added in Revision 3) through hosting 9 provincial gender consultation workshops. These workshops were focused on discussions and recommendations based on participatory studies assessing the needs of differentiated, and particularly marginalised, sectors of South African society. The Action for Climate Empowerment work that was also added as an additional activity in Revision 3 focused also on research on supporting and empowering marginalised groups. The adaptation M&E workshops focused a lot on Indigenous knowledge systems around adaptation, creating spaces for dialogue, empowerment and recording of these knowledge systems in the adaptation systems of South Africa.

Did the state and non-state actors participating in the project adopt the new tools developed by the project? If so, what were the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so, and if not, what prevented them from doing so?

311. The project supported capacity and the access and use of reporting tools through the following:

a. The 17 adaptation M&E workshops, which focused on showcasing and training, as well as needs assessment for improvements to the National Climate Change Information System (NCCIS), the National Climate Change Response Database (NCCRD), the Desired Adaptation Outcomes, the Tracking and Evaluation Portal, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and various other toolkits for adaptation responses. The participants who attended appreciated the training and attendance was strong. The uptake and use of the tools post-project could not be fully assessed as response was low from those participants reached out to during the evaluation. That said, the small number of respondents gave strong feedback in terms of their understanding and use of the tools.

b. The GHG inventory specialist support and the updating of the GHGIMS as well as the development and training around the new reporting templates for the GHG inventory. This technical support was arguably the most successful (in terms of uptake and sustainability). The new GHG inventory team was capacitated through demand-led and focused training timed along with the submission of the BTR. The team now has sector leads and all highlighted the appreciation and uptake of the training.

c. The long-term capacity building strategy and the two training workshops (GHG inventory and mitigation action impact assessment). The short-term part of the strategy was implemented over the course of the last year of the project, most notably through the two training workshops (but also included other aspects of project implementation such as Peer-to-Peer exchanges, as well as the GHG inventory specialist support). The fact that the training workshops were conducted in a hybrid manner meant that most participants attended online. This attendance came with mixed success as participants tended to come and go, with some registering and not attending at all. Many also claimed that too much information was crammed into too short a time (each workshop took place over multiple days).

d. Overall, the project built on previous foundations and tools developed and particularly the capacity to use and understand them. However, more needs to be done to build on this capacity and with more stakeholders from different and relevant institutions. The implementation of the medium- and long-term activities in the strategy will make all the difference in this regard.

312. The project certainly contributed to strengthening South Africa's ability to track and report progress towards the achievement of its nationally determined contribution (NDC), and it also contributed to the strengthening of transparency mechanisms for reporting. Particularly, the GHG inventory support has been a great intervention by the project.

313. Despite the challenges faced, the project did manage to achieve quite a bit in terms of capacity building around adaptation and mitigation, and support to the BTR. Even if the ambition at project design was not realised, some alternative and additional aspects, particularly the gender mainstreaming that was added, has supported the country a lot. That said, lessons and recommendations should help improve on adaptive and risk management, as well as overall implementation and realisation of project results, in the future.

314. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter 5. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of 'Moderately Satisfactory'.

Table 10. Summary of project findings and ratings[48]

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		**HS**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	Not directly outlined in Project Document, but in checklist, addressing both MTS 2019-2021 and MTS 2022-2025 and their POWs. Also included in TOC.	**S**
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	Not really outlined in Project Document, but aligned to climate change and CBIT focal area.	**S**
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Extensive section on alignment in Project Document, highly aligned to national priorities and directly addressing gaps.	**HS**
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	Listed projects in project design, and built on these.	**S**
Quality of Project Design	Project design strengths included well-described alignments to country priorities and gaps, good situational analysis, clear knowledge management approach; weaknesses included a limited TOC, limited capacity analysis of partners and roles, sustainability of project results.	**MS**
Nature of External Context	Significant event, COVID-19, disrupted project for two years, but project got extensions to cover this period.	**MU**
Effectiveness		**MS**
1. Availability of outputs	Partially delivered outputs, with some delivery of high value, particularly the GHG inventory support work.	**MS**

48 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
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Outcome was partially achieved but not exactly as project design intended. Assumptions and drivers only partially held.	**MS**
3. Likelihood of impact	Projects main achievements were connected to the GHG inventory, capacity building strategy, adaptation M&E work, ACE and gender work really supportive. Intermediate states only partially held, more needs to be done to reach impact.	**ML**
Financial Management		**S**
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Project financial management and revisions as per budget changes aligned to the PCA and other agreements and to UNEP policy.	**S**
2. Completeness of project financial information	Financial reporting was complete with some pending items that will be completed.	**S**
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	FMO and UNEP IA provided clear information and guidance, no significant delays, financial issues were dealt with appropriately.	**S**
Efficiency	The project underwent four project revisions as a result of procurement issues and COVID-19, as well as other delays incurred. The project underspent its budget and did not complete some activities. A full-time project management team (i.e. technical staff and admin staff full time) and an MTR may have supported stronger adaptive management approaches.	**MU**
Monitoring and Reporting		**S**
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	M&E plan well laid out at design, and appropriately costed. Results framework could have been stronger in its indicators.	**S**
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Governance structure and PSC did not function as well as was planned. MTR should have been done.	**MS**
3. Project reporting	Project delivered its reports effectively, although some could have had more technical depth.	**S**
Sustainability		**ML**
1. Socio-political sustainability	The climate act will support political sustainability, as well as a strong DFFE.	**L**
2. Financial sustainability	Some aspects are still in need of financial support.	**ML**
3. Institutional sustainability	Much capacity has been built within DFFE, GHG inventory team bigger now, some other national departments and provincial departments displayed strong partnerships.	**L**
Factors Affecting Performance		**MS**
1. Preparation and readiness	Project did not use the initial stages effectively to deal with project risks such as procurement and structural/governance changes.	**MU**
2. Quality of project management and supervision		**MS**
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	*IA performed its role as outlined in PCA, was responsive and gave guidance when needed; may have benefited from taking the decision to do an MTR.*	***S***

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	*PMU could have benefited from a full-time technical manager, risk of procurement issues could have been mitigated earlier, the record-keeping was limited although final records were mostly present, strong effort to implement project facing several challenges and still managed to achieve quite a lot.*	***MU***
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Strong stakeholder engagement processes by the project, although some key partners were not as engaged (not through lack of effort from EA though) as was hoped.	**S**
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Project made a strong effort to mainstream gender into climate change reporting.	**HS**
5. Environmental and social safeguards	Review note was completed, low risk, no real issues affecting environmental and social safeguards.	**S**
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Country is pushing for decarbonisation at least through the partners involved in the project.	**S**
7. Communication and public awareness	Strong knowledge management approach.	**HS**
Overall Project Performance Rating	**Project managed to achieve much of its intended results although was faced with challenges outside and within the project's control. Adaptive management should have come in sooner to deal with these challenges that were within the project's control.**	**MS**

6.2 Lessons learned

315. The following lessons have been derived from the project evaluation findings.

Lesson Learned #1:	Effective risk mitigation early on, particularly with regard to the procurement of essential project-related services, is a key element to support project results attainment
Context/comment:	Delayed procurement (exacerbated by COVID-19) really affected the project implementation. This was a risk already identified at design. Mitigating this risk by having a plan B by a certain timeframe may have helped identify a support partner earlier. This is an important lesson for other projects in putting active thought into risk mitigation at design and early implementation.

Lesson Learned #2:	Capacity assessments at design as well as re-assessment/planning at inception phase can support stronger governance, synergy and project management
Context/comment:	Capacity and due diligence assessments at design including analyses of the project governance structure may have supported the following: - procurement ability and the need for external support - project management unit needs and structure, particularly full-time technical positions

	- the effectiveness and availability of the Steering Committee to have consistent members and give guidance to project implementation, as well as build synergies across directorates working on programmatic capacity building for mitigation, adaptation analysis and reporting Projects in future can gain from a thorough capacity and due diligence assessment at design.

Lesson Learned #3:	A mid-term review can be a very important and supportive tool for projects undergoing challenging implementation circumstances
Context/comment:	The IA has the discretion to conduct a MTR when necessary. In the case of this project, and early MTR (even within COVID-19 restrictions) may have helped the project strategize and focus, deal with the risk of unspent funds, changing output activities, redefining targets for indicators, support stronger implementation structures and governance issues. At the mid-point (or perhaps even earlier), the IA has the opportunity to review how the project is doing and can take the decision to undertake an MTR if deemed necessary - this can often be a cost-effective and important activity that is overlooked. MTRs are highly useful in shaping the project towards success, especially when facing implementation challenges.

Lesson Learned #4:	Having strong hand over processes and good record keeping can make project implementation and evaluations more efficient, and save time for project managers
Context/comment:	It seems to have been difficult for DFFE and UNDP to verify and find certain documentation and email communications when there was project management turn-over. Keeping clean records, including management decisions and processes, can support handover processes and also streamline and save time for evaluations, audits and other necessary project management cycle activities. Hand-over processes are extremely important and help projects run more smoothly.

6.3 Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	In case of a future phase (CBIT 2) or a similar project(s) in South Africa, due diligence and capacity assessments of the Executing Agency should be conducted at project design and then re-evaluated at inception.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	For the next project design, due diligence and technical capacity assessments should take place at the design phase. A project governance structure should be discussed in more detail and agreed upon - finding a strong balance between sustainability and project management capacity, which should include a *full-time* technical position within the project management unit. Capacity assessment of

	governance structure should also identify the role and commitments of the Project Steering Committee. Identification of prospective third-party support organisations should be done jointly by UNEP and DFFE at design and assessed based on the above, including how the implementation modality would work. Preferably the project management unit should be housed at DFFE, but the procurement could be outsourced, administratively managed by the entity, but content and oversight conducted by DFFE; the project management unit should have technical full-time staff and include DFFE staff for oversight and implementation. It is important that DFFE has the ownership of the project, but that administrative management of the unit is supported by a third-party modality.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project-level
Responsibility:	UNEP project team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months

Recommendation #2:	The Project Steering Committee should consist of a manageable number of people who retain ownership and are technically relevant
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The Project Steering Committee has an important role in enhancing synergy through programmatic approaches, as well as guiding the project implementation, particularly when there are problems and challenges to be addressed and navigated. The PSC in the case of CBIT had a lot of turnover, and while institutions were represented, members were more observers than active members, with a few exceptions. Retaining those active members who participated regularly, and identifying specific technical people to become members should already be conducted at design if CBIT-2 or other UNEP implemented projects are to be done with DFFE.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project-level
Responsibility:	EA-level
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months

Recommendation #3:	UN-to-UN agreement template should be adjusted to include a clause regarding logos to ensure branding of project outputs and their deliverables
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Key output deliverables which were managed through procurement by UNDP SA did not include the GEF nor UNEP logos, despite these being products of a UNEP/GEF project. The PCA with DFFE was clear and had a clause regarding logos, but the UN-to-UN agreement did not. The key deliverables that came from the project should have had consistent branding, and if UNDP SA had supported implementation, it could have added its logo to this branding. There should be clear guidance on this integrated into the UN-to-UN agreement template.

Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	UNEP-wide
Responsibility:	UNEP Legal Unit
Proposed implementation time-frame:	12 months

Recommendation #4:	Chief Directorates of the DFFE Climate Branch in South Africa should co-plan and co-implement projects, and take a programmatic approach
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While different Chief Directorates are receiving funding and managing projects, these are working together towards a common goal. A programmatic approach as a unified entity while implementing different roles, specifically in what are inter-linked climate actions - adaptation, mitigation, reporting - will go a long way in increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the different projects and support-interventions to the Climate Branch at DFFE. Key Chief Directors or their nominated officials should sit regularly on combined project steering committees, meet regularly to discuss synergies in implementation and reporting.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Partners
Responsibility:	DFFE
Proposed implementation time-frame:	At the discretion of the EA

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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

Paragraph	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
52 (a)	Coordinator, not manager	The reviewer is correct, and the evaluator has revised this and harmonized throughout - National Project Coordinator. (Financial and Administrative Management of project).
52 (a)	My understanding is that he clarified that he was unwell.	The first meeting was scheduled for Monday, 10 March at 10:00 (while the evaluator was in-country). During this scheduled time, the evaluator was called and informed the NPC was travelling and could not make it the meeting. The meeting was postponed to Wednesday, 12 March, at 12:00. During this time, the NPC called in sick and for this reason the interview was conducted online instead. At this meeting it was agreed that various outstanding interview questions and requests for clarification would be sent via email once the NPC was well again; however, the various email follow ups sent to the NPC went unanswered. The evaluator does not believe all this detail was pertinent and it was sufficient to just state that we had one online interview.
52 (c)	Weather service never played a major role in the implementation of the CBIT	Various stakeholders, including the Director, from SAWS, were on the list of key stakeholders and when reviewing all workshop reporting the evaluator found that the Director and others at SAWS played an active role (in some cases chaired, presented, supported facilitation) at the majority of the Adaptation M&E workshops.
111	The extent to which the DFEE was reporting was being guidance by the UNEP CBIT office and whenever clarity was requested, it was provided so we do not understand the word superficially.	This paragraph follows on from the paragraphs before it (109, 110) where the evaluator makes the point that the achievement of the output largely hinged on the hiring of the Technical Expert in M&E Information System Management; this role was actually filled (using another source of funding), but not under the project and thus was "cancelled" under the project even though it could have been argued that the position was filled (under other funding) and thus could have been reported on towards achieving the output in this project. However, whether the work under this technical position was achieved as the project envisaged could not be verified because the PIR-level reporting was superficial - i.e. not substantive enough to say whether the activities envisaged under this particular role were achieved or not. The evaluator goes on to detail exactly what the PIRs (2021, 2022, 2023) outlined. If the activity was completely cancelled, then that has an impact on the output delivery.

Paragraph	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
		Ideally, this could have been a 'co-financed' activity and the M&E position, since it was hired, could have equally reported as such for this project - the reporting though, as stated, was too superficial. There may have been too little guidance on this point given, but this paragraph is under output achievement and not oversight and management - and thus the level of guidance does not affect the substance of the paragraph.
142	Correct to coordinator, for a long time his laptop could not be procured due to cost containment within the Department and the time it was allocated to him, the one he received from the department was no longer working and redundant. Furthermore, this para is untrue, only the Director and Chief Director deviated from the original list. The Director adaptation received, who does M & E of adaptation and does not have an officer on the structure, THE GHG Inventory Director who also does QA/QC of SA's inventory and is the coordinator of the entire inventory, the GCIS specialist who also contributes to the LULUCF sector of the GHG Inventory and NDC tracking, the overall transparency manager which is, all approved from the onset. Please let us make truthful and informed statements in TE reports.	The evaluator asked for the final list, which was received from the DFFE. The evaluator then made a comparison with the list that was submitted with the Revision 3 documentation; this was done by making a comparison table and thus this is the evidence. It is ultimately the prerogative of DFFE who should get the laptops, and the evaluator makes very clear that all positions are in climate reporting. This said, given the costs of the laptops and what they are for, and that this is an evaluation, it is important to at least state that strictly speaking *some* of these heavy data processing machines did not go to officials who are doing hardcore data analysis (strictly speaking, only two did). The evaluator revised/expanded footnote 35 to clarify: "*Those allocated to six DFFE officials, namely: the Chief Director of CCRR, the Director of CCDIM, the Director of the UNFCCC and the CBIT project - who is also the head of the international reporting for the BTRs and NCs, the Director of Adaptation, the Director of GHG Inventory and Systems. The Director of GHG inventory systems and the GCIS specialist are dealing directly with data analysis. Three Control Environmental Officers (GHG Inventory and Systems, GHG inventory specialist in Waste, and M&E Mitigation were on this list who did not receive laptops.*"
188, Below table 8, referring to 'moderatel y	this seems satisfactory to me, considering that even the African one was done, would like motivation for this rating	As per the UNEP Criterion Rating Descriptions Matrix, the requirements for moderately satisfactory are the following: - 61 - 80% of the programmed outputs are available to the intended beneficiaries/users. - The most important outputs to achieve outcomes were made available to the intended beneficiaries/users on time and they fulfilled their intended use. - Among the delivered outputs, the most important to achieve outcomes were deemed to be of good quality / utility by users and reviewers.

Paragraph	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
satisfactory'		- Acceptable levels of user ownership - intended users of key outputs somewhat involved in / party to their preparation. The evaluation extensively details and provides evidence of the output availability under 5.4.1. Availability of Outputs from paragraph 107 to 187, as well as summarised in Table 8, and as such has made the evidence-based conclusion to MS.
191	this is really petty, the project achieved so much as outlined in this report, the long-term capacity building strategy was developed, training was done, experts on the UNFCCC RoE was increased, provinces were trained on the M & E system which enhanced data collection, all provinces wanted even more workshops, including developing their own MRV systems to link to the national one, peer to peer exchange were very valuable to participants	The reviewer is right, there was a lot done, and this is all stated in the outcome achievements section. The evaluation is merely stating that the Final Report did not specifically speak to the outcome achievement, which it did not. This just a factual statement outlining the level of reporting - the fact that outcome achievement was not explicitly reported in the final project report has no bearing on the rating nor on the substance of the outcome achievement, as (a) it was reported on sufficiently in PIR 2025 (and all other PIRs), and (b) the evaluation does not merely use the project reporting to ascertain the outcome achievement, it makes its own independent analysis based on all evidence acquired through the evaluation process. The section 5.4.2. Achievement of Outcome, and paragraphs 189 to 195 give evidence-based detail on the achievement of outcome and makes its conclusion based on these statements as a whole.
225	which M n E expert is being referred to here that was unable to meet with the evaluator?	The evaluation refers to the Technical M&E specialist that was to be hired under Output 1 but was hired using different funding and thus 'cancelled' under this project.
229	This is biased reporting, almost 2/3 of the funds were spent and we reported other unintended cost saving measures in procurement processes with the evaluator, such going for the lowest bidder for which context is not provided here, and the evaluator agreed to provide the positive side during the presentation of preliminary finding, so this type off reporting is very disappointing and unacceptable.	The evaluator noted this request during the Preliminary Findings Presentation, but it is standard to report unspent funds in evaluations *because* the budget that is planned is *supposed* to be spent; if not, the budget is *underspent*. This paragraph actually gives the context: it outlines in detail the reason for the unspent budget, namely that it was a mix of cancelled activities and cost-savings. In fact, it even goes into detail comparing the cost savings on the exact consultancies the reviewer is talking about, including giving the reason, i.e. the lowest bidder. It is mandatory for the evaluation to state spending - and when such a large amount is unspent, then this needs to be clearly stated. The evaluation has to critically analyse spending, and it has factually provided for this in this paragraph. There is a large expenditure variation in this project, and it is the evaluation's job to state that. It is usual in a standard, satisfactory project that project budgets are spent, it is usually problematic when funds need to be sent back. The evaluator is merely stating a fact.

Paragraph	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
231	we do not accept this rating based on the comments above	The evaluator is unsure which comments the reviewer is referring to - there was only one comment under the section Efficiency for which the rating was provided, and even if the comment were addressed as the reviewer wishes (saying 2/3 of the budget was spent versus 1/3 was unspent) would not change the substance or evidence and thus would not affect the rating.
269	Another untrue statement without context, the reports by the GHG Inventory specialist were correctly being approved by the GHG Inventory Director and once approved, the PMU, through me would approve payment, the PC , to whom you incorrectly refer to as Project Manager in some parts of the reports , is correct, he can approve the reports because the people receiving the service in the GHG inventory unit should be	The evaluation made this finding based on interview notes with those involved (without identifying source). The evaluator has revised the paragraph as follows: *"The GHG inventory specialist consultants who were supposed to come in at the onset of implementation only came in after UNDP was supporting procurement in late 2023. The GHG inventory specialist had an intern supporting, but most of the work was conducted directly by the specialist and together with the Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems. Based on interviews with some stakeholders, it seems that it was not always clear who reporting would go to and who was approving the reports. The NPC shared that he was not reviewing reports as he is not technical, but the evaluator was informed that UNDP was reviewing all deliverables, and so was the Project Director/Project Technical Manager. The Project Technical Manager stated that the reports were approved by the Director of GHG Inventory and Systems and once approved the PMU would approve payment."*
278	what is the basis for this rating? is it really fair? I find it quite unfair.	Please refer to the Quality of Project Management and Supervision (12) under the Criterion Rating Descriptions Matrix shared by the Evaluation Office, under "Moderately Unsatisfactory" you can view the points to which the evaluation found evidence pointed towards. This included that the Steering Committee did not function as planned (records of infrequent/irregular meetings but partial attendance - in this case high turnover, described in Paragraph 272); functioning of PMU (structure of PMU could have been set up better with more technical full time staff, see paragraph 267); the working relationship between the IA and EA has been constructive and effective to a moderate extent (see paras 261 to 265); turnover of staff associated with adequate handover processes and limited information exchange between incoming and outgoing staff (see paragraph 270); speed of responses to execution challenges or contextual changes (see, e.g. para 277); adequacy of management response to any financial issues (see under financial management)

Paragraph	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
General	*Regarding: "Record-keeping challenges at UNDP and DFFE delayed final audits:* *Consider outsourcing procurement early in the project lifecycle to avoid delays"* Please note that the auditing of the DFFE was delayed due to the Project Manager's contract ending. The UNDP provided all the documents requested in a timely manner since all our processes are automated and evidence is retrievable.	Given the turnover of project oversight at UNDP during the project, the evaluator was informed that some documentation (including audit recruitment processes and documentation needed for the audits) for the final audit was not provided in a timely manner, and additionally that audits were delayed up until beyond project closure (and the project manager contract ended in August 2024). In fact, UNDP confirmed that someone had been recruited in early January, but by April, the IA had not received the final audits.
General	*Regarding: "Branding issues: Deliverables procured via UNDP lacked UNEP/GEF logos due to missing clauses in the UN-to-UN agreement.* *Adjust UN-to-UN agreement templates to include branding clauses"* Please note that all products were quality controlled by DFFE and no comments were received around branding.	This comment is understood. However, the evaluator would bring up two important points that illustrate even if the EA did not make this clear, that: 1. given that UNDP is (also) an IA for GEF and thus knows the usual operating procedures for the branding of GEF projects, and 2. UN agencies are supposed to be cooperative and working in partnership and this would presumably include shared branding of project outputs, especially when the overall project is led by UNEP/GEF, that it would be self-evident to include UNEP/GEF branding in what are key project deliverables. The evaluation here is attempting to make that clearer by recommending that it be clearly stated in future UN-to-UN agreements.

ANNEX II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

Note: Questions highlighted in orange are strategic higher-level questions as **per Section II in this Terminal Evaluation Report**, questions in green are GEF-portal questions.

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
Criterion A: Strategic Relevance		
A.1. Alignment to MTS and POW 1. Were the project objectives and outcomes consistent with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy, its Sub-programmes and Expected Accomplishments, as well as the PoWs? What were the linkages (indicators?)?	Fit to UNEP mandate – qualitative Alignment and continuation to MTS and PoWs – qualitative	Comparison of CEO ER and annual reports with UNEP MTS and PoWs, PIRs, interview with Task Manager
2. What was the level of alignment to the Bali Strategic Plan and south-south cooperation?	Fit to Bali Strategic Plan	Comparison with documents
A.2. Alignment to GEF Priorities and other donors		
3. What was the level of alignment to the GEF CBIT FA strategy, especially with regard to capacity development?	Level of alignment GEF	Comparison of CEO ER and annual reports
A.3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities		
4. Did the project respond to the relevant SDG(s) and in terms of direct contributions to targets (most notably SDG 13 and target 13.2)? How were these measured?	Descriptive input on match, evidence of stakeholders' participation and cooperation; ownership	Interviews, review of key related country policies
5. What was the level of alignment to the regional (SADC) and national policy on climate change and development?	Level of alignment to SADC and national climate change policy	Review of policies, review of project design documentation and review of implementation records (PIRs)
6. Were the relevant needs of all project beneficiary groups met?	Level of alignment with needs of project beneficiaries	Interviews with experts on list and training beneficiaries
A.4. Complementarity with existing interventions		
7. To what extent did the project take into account and collaborate with ongoing projects identified in the CEO ER (including, but not exclusively, the BMUB-GIZ project, the Partnership for Market Readiness project (World Bank), the Norwegian government supported project, and the MRV of AFOLU Support Programme?	Evidence of synergies, collaboration	Review of CEO ER, interviews with partners

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
8. Were cross cutting issues including human rights and gender equality adequately considered in project design and implementation?	Qualitative	CEO ER, interviews / questionnaires with country level and other internal/ extremal stakeholders, project products
9. How well did the project improve on any lessons learnt from previous (or ongoing) CBIT projects?	Qualitative	Interviews with project partners, project implementation documentation
Criterion B. Quality of Project Design	See quality of design matrix attached – Annex 2	
Criterion C. Nature of External Context		
10. Did the political, environmental, social or institutional context change during the project implementation and how did the project adapt to this?	Descriptive; potential to measure effect in months of delay	Interviews with key project partners
11. How has COVID-19 affected project implementation? (also related to Factors affecting Project Performance)	Level of influence / measures of adaptiveness	Interviews with project partners
Criterion D. Effectiveness		
D1. Availability of Outputs		
12. Was the project successful in producing its two programmed outputs and milestones as per the logical framework, as well as its usefulness and timeliness?	Logframe indicators	PIMs, annual reporting, final project report, as well as interview with project leaders and partners
13. What were the reasons behind any failures/successes of the project in producing its different outputs?	Consider preparation and readiness; quality of project management and supervision, external context	Interviews with all project partners involved in implementation
14. Were stakeholders appropriately involved in producing programmed outputs?	Stakeholder participation and cooperation	Interviews with cross section of internal and external stakeholders
D2. Achievement of Project Outcome		
15. 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?	Logframe indicators; use of M&E system	PIRs, interviews, project outputs, output verification, stakeholder interviews, PAN coverage

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
16. What evidence is available to show that the project strengthened South Africa’s ability to track and report progress towards the achievement of its nationally determined contribution? Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of the South African institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting?	Logframe indicators; use of M&E system	PIRs, interviews with experts trained, DFFE and survey, project outputs, output verification, stakeholder interviews, PAN coverage
D3. Likelihood of impact		
17. What evidence is there to suggest that training programmes have resulted in improved tracking reporting?	Level of use of NNCIS and NCCRD	Interviews with experts trained, questionnaires, documentation
18. What evidence is there to suggest that the M&E system is being used and is transparent?	Level of SLM uptake, level of spread	Interviews with experts trained as well as survey responses, exit strategy
19. To what extent is there evidence to suggest that there is ownership and championship around setting NDC targets toward climate neutrality and resilience?	Qualitative	Interviews with experts trained, DFFE and survey responses
E. Financial Management		
E.1. Adherence to UNEP’s policies and procedures		
20. How did the financial reporting and management adhere to the policies and procedures of UNEP?	Descriptive with reference to norms as benchmarks	Interviews with Task Manager, FMO, Review of contracts /agreement Financial reports
21. Were audits done, and what were the results?	Audit reporting, management responses	Interview with Task Manager, FMO, documentation
E.2. Completeness of financial information		
22. Is financial information accurate, complete and up-to-date?	Level of documentation in order	FMO and partners - documentation
23. How has co-financing been reported - is this complete, accurate and up-to-date?	Completeness of information on co-financing	FMO interview and final co-financing report
E.3. Communication between financial and project management staff		
24. Were there any aspects of financial management that affected project performance?	Descriptive, with reference to timing	Interviews with Task Manager/FMO Interviews with Implementing Partners
F. Efficiency		

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
25. To what extent did the project build on existing institutions, lessons of other initiatives and ongoing projects (how well did the project align to the greater programmatic approach i.e. follow on from previous projects and existing government process)?	Descriptive	Background documentation, partner interviews
26. What have been the main reasons for delay/changes in implementation, if any? What were the reasons for the extending the project by double the intended timeframe? What lessons can be learnt from this? To what extent did the delays have an impact on the delivery of project outcomes?	Comparison of actual and planned deliverables timing	Interviews with Project implementers, Members of Steering Committee Review of documentation related to extensions
27. Were financial means sufficient to deliver planned project outputs? (check here issues highlighted in the design review)	Review of income and expenditure relative to original budget	Review of income and expenditure relative to original budget
28. Were available human resources (skills, number) sufficient to deliver planned project outputs in a timely manner? How did the SC contribute to steering the project efficiently and effectively?	Review of staffing arrangements relative to original plans and to actual requirements	Review of staffing arrangements relative to original plans and to actual requirements (check with UNEP and DFFE)
29. Was the governance structure of the project (PMU) the most efficient way to produce project results and enhance sustainability?	Review of staffing arrangements relative to original plans and to actual requirements	Review of staffing arrangements relative to original plans and to actual requirements (check with UNEP and DFFE)
G. Monitoring and Reporting		
G.1. Monitoring Design and Budgeting		
30. Was the monitoring plan sound, does it track progress against SMART results appropriate to the outcomes and outputs, disaggregated by gender?	Availability of logframe, PIRs and quarterly reports, workplans, roles of oversight bodies	Availability of monitoring tools, interviews with Project Team
31. Were funds sufficient to cover the monitoring plan and TE (what kind of contingency was put in place at mid-term to track progress)?	Review of M&E plan and costing	M&E plan and implementation reporting review, interviews
3. Monitoring of Project Implementation		
32. Was the monitoring plan put into full operation, did it track the progress toward results in a timely fashion, was baseline data appropriately collected for adequate measuring?	Review of monitoring practice Review of oversight arrangements	Availability of monitoring results, project team interviews, Steering Committee
33. Was the monitoring budget used appropriately?	Level of budget use	Financial records, FMO interview

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
34. What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided)	Retrospective identification of indicators	Interviews
G.3. Project reporting		
35. To what extent have UNEP reporting requirements been fulfilled - all reports as planned are there? (six-monthly progress reports, PIRs - complete?)	Comparison of actual reporting to requirements	Availability of reporting
H. Sustainability		
H.1. Socio-political sustainability		
36. Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impact?	Qualitative	Interviews with Steering Committee
37. What was the level of ownership by the executing partner (DFFE)?	Qualitative	Interviews with DFFE key partners, Steering Committee, stakeholders
38. What was the level of ownership and level of championship among those trained and tasked with sustaining project results?		Questionnaire/survey, interviews
H.2. Financial sustainability		
39. Assess the extent to which the project outcome is dependent on future funding to reach intermediate states and impact.	Level of financial dependence on running NCCIS/NCCRD and futher refinement	Interviews, review of capacity development strategy
H.3. Institutional sustainability		
40. Assess the extent to which the sustainability of the project outcome is dependent on institutional frameworks and governance.	Qualitative	Interviews with Steering Committee, other project partners
41. Has the capacity development and other project activities related to improved transparent reporting led to robust enough agreements, frameworks, platforms to continue delivering data-driven reporting?	Qualitative	Interviews with Steering Committee, other project partners
I. Factors Affecting Project Performance (x-cutting)		
I.1. Preparation and readiness (focuses on inception stage of project)		

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
42. Were appropriate measures taken to either address weaknesses in theproject design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, securing of funds and project mobilisation?	Qualitative	Interview with Task Manager and/or project designers, if possible
43. What was 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?	Qualitative	Interview with Task Manager and/or project designers, if possible
I.2. Quality of Project Management and Supervision		
44. Was the performance appropriate per role of the implementing agency (technical backstopping, supervision)?	Qualitative	Interviews with TM, PC, and reviews of timely reporting and quality of reporting and comms
45. What the performance appropriate per role of the executing agency (project implementation)?	Qualitative	Interviews with TM, PC, and reviews of timely reporting and quality of reporting and comms
46. Was leadership and (adaptive) direction towards achieving planned outcomes sufficient in the project? (includes Steering Committee)	Qualitative, adaptation mechanism	Interviews with all project implementers
47. How well was the project management capacitated and positioned to produce effective results - how well did it engage the key stakeholders - how was the composition (appropriate)?	Qualitative	Review of project implementation docs, interviews with project partners
48. What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?	Qualitative, adaptation mechanism	Interviews with all project implementers
49. What other adjustments were necessary - how well did the project adapt?	Qualitative, adaptation mechanism	Interviews with all project implementers
50. In what ways and to what extent can the project execution capacity be identified prior to the project implementation? Given some of the administrative challenges faced particularly in procurement through DFFE, how can the partnership and roles be improved between EA and IA for future project implementation?	Qualititative	Interviews, evaluator experience
I.3. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation		

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
51. What has been the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders (most notably in working together to produce reliable data)?	Participation and involvement, ownership, qualitative	Interviews with all project implementers
52. What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project, based on the description of the stakeholder engagement plan?	Level of engagement	CEO Endorsement Request, and project implementation documentation
53. In what ways, and to what extent, have the needs and interests of differentiated groups been considered in the implementation and monitoring of the project?	Level of consideration / inclusion Gender disaggregated engagement	Stakeholder engagement in PIRs Indicators - level of disaggregation Workshop attendance sheets and breakdowns
I.4. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity		
54. Were cross cutting issues including human rights and gender equality adequately considered in project design and implementation? What opportunities has the evaluation identified to improve the integration of gender and human rights considerations in CBIT?	Qualitative	Project implementation documentation, interviews with project team and partners
55. Has the project appropriately considered the uniqueness and rights of Indigenous people? To what extent has the project applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.	Qualitative	Project implementation documentation, interviews with project team and partners
56. What was the level of results-measurement in terms of gender disaggregation in the project?		
57. 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)	Level of gender response	Project implementation documentation
I.5. Environmental and social safeguards		
58. To what extent did the project adhere to the environmental and social safeguards laid out in UNEP policy?	Level of implementation	Project implementation documentation, interviews with project team and partners

Main Evaluation Criteria / Questions	**Evaluation Indicators**	**Means of Verification**
59. How did the project minimise its environmental footprint?	Risk mitigation action	Risk table, PIR, mitigation, output delivery, interviews
60. Did the ESG plan hold up, and how was it implemented? (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)	Level of implementation	Project implementation documentation, interviews with project team and partners
I.6. Country ownership and drivenness/championship		
61. What has been the quality and degree of engagement of government relevant agencies in owning and championing the project outcome?	Level of national leadership	Interviews with key stakeholders involved in implementation including list of experts
62. What is the level of movement, due to level of ownership at country level, towards effective and transparent reporting and MRV?	Qualitative	Interviews with EA (DFFE) and key stakeholders involved in training
I.7. Communication and Public Awareness		
63. What was the level of learning and sharing among project partners?	Qualitative	Interviews with project implementers
64. What public awareness activities took place, and how effective were they in supporting the realization (and further sustaining) of project results?	Level of events, event impact	Interviews with project implementers
65. 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)*	Level of knowledge management	Interviews, project documentation

ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

People consulted during the Evaluation

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Mitigation Branch, Climate Change Division	Portfolio Manager, Head of Mitigation Unit	IA Portfolio Manager	M
UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Mitigation Branch, Climate Change Division	Programme Officer	IA Task Manager	M
UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Mitigation Branch, Climate Change Division	Programme Assistant	IA Support to Task Manager	F
UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Mitigation Branch, Climate Change Division	Programme Assistant	IA Support to Task Manager	F
UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit, Mitigation Branch, Climate Change Division	Administrative Officer	IA Financial Management Officer	F
DFFE Directorate of CCDIM and Directorate of UNFCCC	UNFCCC Director	EA/PMU Project Director/Technical Project Manager	F
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	Director	EA Project Partner (GHG Inventory Team Leader)	F
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	Control Environmental Officer - AFOLU	EA Project Partner (AFOLU)	F
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	Control Environmental Officer - LULUCF	EA Project Partner (LULUCF)	F
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	Control Environmental Officer - Energy	EA Project Partner (Energy)	F
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	Systems Administrator	GHGIMS and NCCIS administrator	M
DFFE Directorate of CCDIM	Director	Oversight	M
DFFE Directorate of CCDIM	Projects Administrator (BTR/CBIT)	EA/PMU National Project Coordinator, Sep-Dec 24	M

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	Overview of inventory - oversees IPPU	EA Project Partner (IPPU)	F
DFFE Directorate of CCDIM	National Project Coordinator CBIT	EA/PMU Project (Admin) Manager	M
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	Control Environmental Officer - Waste	EA Project Partner (Waste)	M
DFFE Directorate of Mitigation Research and Analysis	Director	EA Project Partner	M
DFFE Directorate of Mitigation Research and Analysis	IPPU Sector Lead, now in Policy Regulation and Planning	EA Assisting IPPU	F
DFFE Chief Directorate International Climate Change Regulation and Reporting	Chief Director	EA Oversight	F
Department of Transport Environmental Coordination	Director	Project Steering Committee Member	F
Agricultural Research Council (ARC) (Belvedere)	Head of Climate Monitoring	Project Partner	M
ARC (Irene)	Specialist Researcher - Animal Breeding and Genetics	Project Partner	M
Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development - Environmental Policy, Planning and Coordination - Climate Change	Control Assistant Director Climate Mitigation Analys and System (Inventory and MRV)	Project Partner	M
Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development - Environmental Policy, Planning and Coordination - Climate Change	Deputy Director	Project Partner	M
Zutari	Consultant	Consultant for CB Strategy	M
Gondwana	Consultant	Consultant - GHG inventory technical expert	F
ARC (Belvedere)	Researcher	GHG Inventory List of Experts	F
ARC	Researcher	GHG Inventory List of Experts	M
UNDP	Head of Nature, Climate and Energy Portfolio	Project Implementing Partner (Third Party Modality)	F
UNDP	Project Officer	Project Implementing Partner (Third Party Modality)	F
Engaged but not interviewed	**Reason for decline**		
DFFE	No longer at DFFE	Gender Focal Point	F

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
Department of Mineral Resources and Energy	No response	PSC Member	M
DFFE Directorate of Adaptation	Initially accepted, then no response	Led Adaptation M&E	F
DFFE Directorate of Adaptation	Declined interview, not available	Supported Adaptation M&E	F
DFFE South Africa Weather Service	No response	Director SAWS, Project Partner	F
DFFE Directorate of Adaptation	Declined, no longer at DFFE	IT Systems Administrator, Adaptation M&E	F
ARC	No response	GHG Inventory List of Experts	M
ARC	No response	GHG Inventory List of Experts	M
ARC	No response	GHG Inventory List of Experts	M
UNDP	No longer at UNDP	Project Officer	M
Department of Science and Technology	No response	PSC member	M
Department of Science and Technology	No response	PSC member	M
DFFE Directorate of GHG Inventory and Systems	No response	Training beneficiary	M
Department of Agriculture	No response	PSC member	M
Department of Human Settlements	No response	PSC member	M
ARC	Initial response, then no response	Main project liaison	M
DFFE Chief Directorate of Mitigation Specialist and Monitoring Services	No response	M&E Specialist (WRI)	M
DFFE Chief Directorate of Mitigation Specialist and Monitoring Services	No response	Chief Director	M

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Documents reviewed for the CBIT South Africa Terminal Evaluation include:

- Evaluation Terms of Reference
- GEF MSP CEO Endorsement Request and Annexes
- GEF Submission and Review Documentation
- Project PIRs/Half Yearly Progress Reports
- All project agreements and amendments thereof
- Initial Budget Plans, Budget Revisions
- Financial Reporting, including co-financing and all expenditure reports
- All component-related outputs, publications and extras
- Steering Committees written reports and minutes
- Outreach and Communications materials
- Training reporting
- Project Revision Documentation
- Additional email communications requested for verification and triangulations

ANNEX V. EVALUATION ITINERARY

Day, Date	Time	Person	Role/Institution	Location
Arrival Sunday, 9 March 2025, 15:45 CAT at ORT JNB on Flight 4Z142				
Monday, 10 Mar	09:00/09:30	Thuso and Vhutsilo admin set up, logistics		
	10:00	Sello Chuene (*moved to Wednesday*)	Project Technical Coordinator	DFFE Boardroom
	12:00	Sandra Motshwanedi	National Project Director	DFFE Boardroom
	14:30	Sindisiwe Mashele	Director, Climate Change Monitoring and Evaluation	DFFE Boardroom
		Sewela Malaka	Control Environmental Officer, Climate Change Monitoring and Evaluation	
		Lungile Moyo	Control Environmental Officer, Climate Change Monitoring and Evaluation	
		Rhumbidzai Mhundru	Control Environmental Officer, Climate Change Monitoring and Evaluation	
Tuesday, 11 Mar	09:00	Thando Kunene	Systems Administrator, Climate Change Mitigation Specialist Monitoring Services	DFFE Boardroom
	10:00	Mkhuthazi Steleki	Director, Climate Change Development and International Mechanism	Office of Director
	11:00	Pulane Manale	Department of Transport	DFFE Boardroom
	13:00	Rebecca Malebo Seeletse	Control Environmental Officer/Environmental Specialist	DFFE Boardroom
	14:30	Thuso Tserane	NPC, Climate Change Development and International Mechanism	DFFE Boardroom
Wednesday, 12 Mar	10:00	Chris Kaempffer	Agricultural Research Council	ARC, Arcadia
	12:00	Sello Chuene	NPC CBIT	Online (respondent was ill)

Day, Date	Time	Person	Role/Institution	Location
	14:30	Pemy Gasela	Chief Director, International Climate Change Regulations and Reporting	Office of Chief Director
Thursday, 13 Mar	10:30	Tshamaano Khalushi	Control Environmental Officer, M&E: GHG Inventory System	DFFE Boardroom
Friday, 14 Mar	09:30	Giel Scholtz	ARC Livestock	
	11:00	Aristotelis Kapsideris	Gauteng Departmen of Agriculture and Rural Development	Gauteng Department of Environment 56 Eloff Street, Umnotho Building, Johannesburg, 2000
		Mathews Sebonego	Environmental Policy, Planning and Coordination: Climate Change Mitigation Analysis and Systems, Gauteng Department of Environment	
	12:00	Sandra Motshwanedi follow up interview	National Project Director	DFFE Boardroom
Depart Saturday, 15 March 2025, 10:20 ORT JNB on Flight 4Z141				

ANNEX VI. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Table 1. Expenditure by Outcome/Output (for both GEF and non-GEF projects)

Component/sub-component/output All figures as USD	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure Q4 2024 (UNDP) vs	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Output 1.0	343,624 (256,645.65 - Rev 4)	10,957 (DFFE) + 54,565.08(UNDP) = **65,522.08**	19%
Output 2.0	594,119 (396,964 - Rev 4)	141,788(DFFE) + 285,723.14 (UNDP) = **427,515.14**	72%
Project Management	100,000	100,000 (DFFE)	100%
TOTAL	1,037,743	593,037.22	57%

Table 2: Co-financing Table (GEF projects only)

Co-financing (Type/Source)	**UNEP own Financing (US$1,000)**		**Government (US$1,000)**		**Other* (US$1,000)**		**Total (US$1,000)**		**Total Disbursed (US$1,000)**
	Planned	**Actual**	**Planned**	**Actual**	**Planned**	**Actual**	**Planned**	**Actual**	
– Grants									
– Loans									
– Credits									
– Equity investments									
– In-kind support			163,452				163,452	450,386	450,386
– Other:									
WRI			228,291					257,257	257,257
Government of Norway			627,226					0	0
Totals								1,018,969	707,643

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development

ANNEX VII. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Table 1: Financial Management Table

Financial management components:		**Rating**	**Evidence/ Comments**
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		**S**	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[49] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	
2. Completeness of project financial information[50]:		**S**	
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	EO ER 2018
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	All budget revision documentation
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Yes, PCAs and amendments as well as UN-to-UN agreement and amendments
D.	Proof of fund transfers -	Yes	Routing slips and emails
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Yearly co-finance reports for DFFE which included WRI
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	Full expenditure reporting provided
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes/No or N/A	Only for years 2021 and 2022, 2023 and 2024 pending
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	Communications emails provided.
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		**S**	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS	
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS	FMO strong awareness of financial situation and status.
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		S	
Contact/communication between Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		S	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		S	
Overall rating		S	

[49] If the evaluation 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.
[50] See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

ANNEX VIII. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	Justine Braby
Nationality	Namibia (and Germany)
Languages	English, German, Spanish

Academic Qualifications
PhD Zoology, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, June 2011
Postgraduate Diploma (International) Environmental Law, University of Cape Town, February 2007
Postgraduate Certificate Education (Senior Phase and Further Education), University of Cape Town, December 2005
Bachelor of Science (Zoology), University of Cape Town, December 2004
[Training certificate in the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, GIZ and Government of Namibia (2011)]

Summary of Professional Background
Professional expertise ranges from project development, implementation to evaluation of GEF and other donor-funded projects for agencies like UNDP, UN Environment, FAO and IUCN; communication strategy development, implementation and evaluation for various institutions; capacity-building interventions and facilitation of participatory processes; development of NAPAs, national development plans, strategies and action plans. Justine has thematic expertise and extensive experience in international environmental law (reporting and implementation), climate change (adaptation mostly), sustainable land management, biodiversity and ecosystem services, alternative development paradigms (alternative economics), coastal zone management, water resource management, and renewable energy as it pertains to climate change. She has worked for African governments and international and national development agencies all over Africa, and had experience working in several countries in Latin America, Europe, and Asia.

Regional Experience
Africa (West, East, South, Central), Latin America, Europe, Asia

Professional Associations
Appointee to the High Level Panel on the Economy advising the President of Namibia (2019-2020)
Steering Committee Member of the Balaton Network on Sustainability (www.balatongroup.org) (2018-2022)
Steering Committee Member of the Namibia Small Grants Programme (2018-2021)
Advisory Panel Member of the NUST PAC Regional and Rural Development Honours Programme (2019-ongoing)
BIOPAMA Regional Advisor (2019-2021)
Member and Task Force Member of the Wellbeing Economy Africa Research Action Network (www.we-africa.org)
Core Team Member of the Research Group of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (www.wellbeing-economy.org)
Founder of the Namibia Youth Coalition on Climate Change (www.youthclimate-namibia.org)
Climate Change Focal Point and Member of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (www.iucn.org/cec)
Roster of Experts of UNDP Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Management Portfolio

Publications experience
Wellbeing Economy, Climate Change Adaptation, Community Resilience, Communication, Education and Public Awareness, Zoology, Marine Biology, Ecology, Alternative Economics/Beyond GDP

ANNEX IX. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Evaluation 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.

GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[51], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[52]).
Response: *(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)* This was a GEF-6 project. The Objective-level indicator for the project was described by the PIR 2025 that South Africa submitted its updated NDC in September 2021 but not fully attributed to the project; South Africa received capacity development relating to adaptation from the CBIT - had been particularly helpful in the work SA is doing to update the adaptation component of the NDC, more and more stakeholders were able to contribute meaningfully to the adaptation component and how it can be improved as compared to previous contributions, shows some impact but on the adaptation front. As part of the CBIT programming directions, the project achieved a ranking improvement of 3.
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 struggled to get effective response and participation from key institutions, as did the evaluation (like, e.g. Department of Mineral Resources and Energy). This said, the engagement from the project was strong and efforts were placed into consultations, trainings and capacity across different institutions. Key institutions involved included provincial departments (most notably from Northern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, and Mpumalanga), national departments such as the ARC, DoST, and most notably the capacity of DFFE was built.
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)* Gender equality efforts by the project were excellent and particularly the added activities of provincial gender consultations to the Gender Action Plan and the Action for Climate Empowerment studies supported gender empowerment in the country related to climate change.
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

[51] 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)
[52] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

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 Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO approval was followed, risks were low and no impact was envisaged in terms of the safeguard standards.
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)* Strong knowledge management approach at design. Various trainings and consultations which included 17 adaptation M&E workshops, two national training workshops on GHG inventories and mitigation action impact assessments, gender virtual workshops, gender consultations in nine provinces, and ACE empowerment workshops.
Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?
Response: The project partially delivered on its outputs. Most notably, the major achievements included the technical support of the GHG inventory specialist who significantly built the capacity particularly of the DFFE GHG inventory team (Output 1.0), the long-term capacity building strategy which is a blue print for capacity development needs for South Africa for climate reporting (Output 2), the effort placed on the adaptation M&E workshops (although to varying levels of sustainability) (Output 2), and the support to the gender consultations for the Gender Action Plan (GAP). The project effectively cancelled an important position (the M&E specialist) even though this position was conducted through other another funding mechanism but not reported on in this project, as well as the curriculum assessor and MoUs, as well as municipal feedback road-shows after the provincial adaptation M&E workshops, all of which would have improved the project output delivery. The project outcome statement was revised by the evaluation (South Africa is tracking reporting progress towards achievement of its NDC) was achieved, although the project's contributions to this were not as planned. Overall, the project made a large effort in the beginning and was faced with some challenges, particularly procurement and the limitations imposed by COVID-19. That said, the project was extended by almost double its planned time which should have allowed for sufficient recovery from those challenges. Some activities had money left over the use of this budget through revision 3 towards the GAP and ACE work panned out, other activities did not come to fruition. Some key aspects like the lack of reporting on the M&E position as well as the follow up on the NCCIS through roadshows, the more strategic support to some key National Departments (this was not so much a result of the effort by the project but more the lack of response from some departments) unfortunately meant that the outputs could not be fully achieved, and thus the project's contribution to outcome is not what was envisaged at design. The project tried to use some left-over funds to conduct activities that were in line with CBIT priorities and did help towards achieving the outcome to an extent. That said, assumptions and drivers as outlined in paragraph 173 either only partially held, or did not hold at all. South Africa is indeed reporting on its NDC, and the BTR was submitted,

and the project did support the capacity towards this, but not at the level of ambition of the project design.

Sustainability aspects of some key project outputs, such as the strategy, are likely. The recent promulgation of the Climate Act will significantly strengthen the sustainability in terms of climate reporting in South Africa. The DFFE is a large institutions with capacitated staff who are delivering on their mandate regarding climate reporting, but the BTR was still largely developed by consultants and there is still a lot that needs to be done.

Project management and performance could have benefited from a full-time technical position in the Project Management Unit, a more consistent Project Steering Committee, stronger adaptive (and risk) management particularly with regard to procurement, and a Mid-Term Review.

Gender equality efforts by the project were excellent and particularly the added activities of provincial gender consultations to the Gender Action Plan and the Action for Climate Empowerment studies supported gender empowerment in the country related to climate change.

ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project "Strengthening South Africa's Capacity to comply with enhanced transparency reporting requirements under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement" GEF ID 9673 Evaluator: Justine Braby

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	**Final Report Rating**
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary Purpose: acts as a stand alone and accurate summary of the main evaluation product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the evaluation object • clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope • overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic evaluation questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are addressed including a summary response to the key strategic questions. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: The Executive Summary represents a concise and accurate summary of the evaluation report.	5.5
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 evaluation 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 evaluation (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.) • concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements adequately addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The Introduction well situates the evaluand identifying the main parameters.	5

Quality of the 'Evaluation Methods' Section Purpose: provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of evaluation methods, demonstrates the credibility of the findings and performance ratings. To include: • description of evaluation 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) • evaluation 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 evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation 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.*	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements adequately addressed. The section includes a Table with the Respondents' Sample. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section provides a clear description of the evaluation methods including the limitations faced during the evaluation.	5.5
Quality of the 'Project' Section Purpose: describes and verifies 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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All required elements are well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a comprehensive analysis of the key dimensions of the evaluand required.	5.5

• *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		
Quality of the Theory of Change Purpose: to set out the TOC at Evaluation 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 Evaluation*[53] was designed (who was involved etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions • 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 Evaluation report.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The ToC at Evaluation is well presented both in narrative and diagrammatic forms. The causal pathways are articulated, and the drivers and assumptions discussed.	5.5
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 evaluation 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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Although the report does not contain specifically labelled 'Findings Statements' it does provide considerable feedback and insights into the challenges faced by the project and verifies its achievements. Nature of evidence is also clear.	5.5

[53] During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation 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 evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

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.		
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[54]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* All elements are covered to a satisfactory level.	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 elements well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents a summary of the project design's strengths and weaknesses.	5
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[55]), 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 elements well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Apart from COVID-19, no major events had a significant impact on project implementation (i.e., natural disasters, conflict, change in government/political upheaval).	5
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section **(i) Availability of Outputs:** Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements are well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):*	6

[54] 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.

[55] 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.

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).	This section includes a detailed and evidence-based assessment of the level of achievement of the two project outputs and respective 'sub-outputs'.	
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):* All elements are well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* A detailed evidence-based assessment of the achievement of the outcome indicators is presented.	5.5
(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: • 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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements are well addressed. A discussion/assessment of the extent to which the drivers and assumptions presented in the ToC at Evaluation are expected to hold is also presented. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents an integrated analysis following the causal pathways.	5.5

disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).		
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). 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 elements are well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents a concise analysis of the dimensions evaluated under financial management.	5
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section <u>Purpose:</u> 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):* Elements addressed to a satisfactory manner. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section discusses aspects related to timeliness, cost-effectiveness of project execution.	5.5
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section <u>Purpose:</u> 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):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The three sub-criteria under Monitoring and Reporting are briefly discussed.	5
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements are adequately addressed.	

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 *(strengths/weaknesses):* An analysis of the three dimensions under sustainability is provided.	5
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 evaluation 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[56] • 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):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* An assessment of the factors affecting performance is presented as a stand-alone section within the report.	5.5
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 evaluation 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 elements well addressed including a response to the key strategic questions. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section presents a summary of the project strengths and weaknesses, findings and ratings.	5
ii) Utility of the Lessons: Purpose: to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Four lessons learned identified.	5

[56] 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 use (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit evaluation findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) • briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful • do not duplicate recommendations	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The lessons learned are derived from project experiences and challenges identified.	
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: <u>Purpose:</u> 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 recommendations 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 Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. <u>NOTES:</u> **(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 *(coverage/omissions):* Four recommendations are presented. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Recommendations provided aim to resolve challenges faced by the project. Some revisions are required in the *type* and *responsibility* of recommendations.	5
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation **(i) Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report is complete and follows the Evaluation Office guidelines.	5.5
(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 *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Overall, the report is clear and well written. The tone is adequate.	5.5

OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5.3**

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. <u>The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.</u>

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	**Compliance**	
	Yes	**No**
Independence:		
1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	**X**	
3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate?	**X**	
6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		**X**
7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		
Financial Management:		
8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation?	**X**	
9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process?	**X**	
Timeliness:		
11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?	**X**	
12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed?	**X**	
13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	**X**	
Project's engagement and support:		
14. Were the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference?	**X**	
15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	**X**	
16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	**X**	
17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	**X**	
18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation?	**X**	
19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established?	X	
20. Were the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on the draft evaluation report?	**X**	
Quality assurance:		
21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions, peer-reviewed?	**X**	
22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed?	**X**	
23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments?	**X**	
24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft	**X**	

and final reports?		
Transparency:		
25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the cleared draft report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments?	**X**	
27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments?	**X**	
28. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	**X**	
29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	**X**	
30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	**X**	