



United Nations Environment Programme

**Terminal Evaluation of Second National Communications
Synthesis of Lessons Learned**

**Joana Talafre
Consultant**

Evaluation Office

December 2013

Table of Contents

Acronyms	3
Introduction	4
Project Information	4
Project Objectives and Components	5
Executing Arrangements	7
Project costs and financing	7
Methodology	8
Summary of Evaluation Findings.....	12
Attainment of Objectives and planned results.....	12
Effectiveness.....	12
Relevance.....	12
Efficiency	13
Review of Outcomes to Impact pathways.....	13
Sustainability and Catalytic Role.....	19
Sustainability	19
Catalytic role and replication.....	19
Monitoring and Evaluation	20
Assessment of processes affecting attainment of project results	21
Preparation and readiness.....	21
UNEP supervision and backstopping.....	21
Complementarities with the UNEP Strategies and Programmes	21
Summary of Findings.....	22
Lessons Learned and Recommendations	25
Lessons Learned	25
Recommendations	26

Acronyms

UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
SNC	Second National Communication
INC	Initial National Communication
TNC	Third National Communication
NC	National Communication
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IA	Implementing Agency
COP	Conference of Parties
ROtI	Review of Outcome to Impact
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

Introduction

1. This report presents a synthesis of evaluation findings and lessons learned from the terminal evaluation of 15 countries' performance in delivering their Second National Communications (SNC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) through the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) assistance.
2. The evaluation was conducted by a team of consultants, each in charge of evaluating the project in 2 to 3 countries according to a set of key evaluation questions and a standardized evaluation matrix (see Annex 1). The evaluation was set against key performance criteria including effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance and performed an analysis of factors affecting the achievement of results. A review of the causal pathways from project 'Outcomes to Impact' was also performed for each country.
3. This Synthesis and Lessons Learned Report amalgamates the key findings from the project evaluation conducted in each country and draws upon the main conclusions and recommendations to offer avenues for improving performance in similar future projects.

Project Information

4. Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) must submit national reports on implementation. The required contents of the National Communications (NC) and the timetable for their submission are different for Annex I¹ and non-Annex I² Parties. The core elements of the NCs for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, consist of information on emissions and removals of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and details on the activities a Party has undertaken to implement the Convention. The NCs also contain information on national circumstances, vulnerability, financial resources and transfer of technology, and education, training and public awareness.
5. An "umbrella programme" was initiated in March 2004, with the release of GEF funds for countries to initiate self-assessment exercises, further to guidance from the UNFCCC Conference of Parties. This funding (\$15,000 per country) allowed each country to prepare a proposal for a National Communication project, for approval by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP, the joint Implementing Agencies (IAs) for the umbrella project. Following expedited procedures and direct approval of the proposals by the IAs, countries were then eligible to receive \$405,000 for the preparation of their NC. The umbrella programme foresaw that UNEP would assist 30 countries, while UNDP would assist 100. This evaluation focuses on the countries among the 30 which UNEP supported who had finalized their Second National Communication at the end of 2012.
6. Parties submit their national communications to the UNFCCC secretariat in Bonn, Germany, which makes them publicly available. Following a request from the Conference of parties (COP), the secretariat synthesizes the most important information from submitted NCs in

¹ Annex I Parties include the industrialized countries that were members of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 1992, plus countries with economies in transition (the EIT Parties), including the Russian Federation, the Baltic States, and several Central and Eastern European States.

² Non-annex I Parties are mostly developing countries.

separate reports for Annex I and non-Annex I Parties, and in turn submits these reports to the Subsidiary Bodies and the COP.

Project Objectives and Components

7. The programme’s **overall goal** is “to provide an integrated package of flexible support to facilitate implementation of enabling activities”³. Through this support, it aims “to assist countries in promoting integration of climate change policy into countries’ national development priorities, on the basis of national needs and priorities”.

8. At the **global level**, the goal of the programme is to assist eligible countries to develop national capacity for reporting under the UNFCCC. Specific objectives are:

- To facilitate implementation of enabling activities related to preparation of National Communications;
- To prepare and disseminate technical materials, including recommended methodologies and tools; and
- To sustain capacity building efforts through knowledge management, best practices, communications and outreach.

9. At the **national level**, the goal is to improve the implementation of the GEF enabling activities for preparing National Communications. Specific objectives are:

- To improve the degree of national ownership of National Communications⁴; and
- To ensure that the enabling activities meet the reporting obligations of the UNFCCC for non-Annex I Parties.

10. This evaluation does not consider aspects related to the Global Support Programme, which is being evaluated separately.

11. Each country has developed its own workplan in line with national specificities and requirements. Table 1 below provides an outline of the **generic project components and expected outputs** for each country NC process that are being considered under this evaluation exercise.

Table 1:Generic Components and Outputs for the National Communications

Component/ UNFCCC Guidelines	Outputs
------------------------------	---------

³ National Communications, Project Document, 2004.

⁴ National ownership is to be enhanced through the self-assessment exercise (stocktaking and stakeholder consultation) that countries will undertake to prepare project proposals. In doing so, countries are expected to build on the previous National Communication, other enabling activities and relevant national initiatives. This process also seeks to build linkages between climate change issues and national development priorities, as well as to broaden the participation of stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of the National Communication.

Component/ UNFCCC Guidelines	Outputs
1. National Circumstances	1.1. Description of their national and regional development priorities, objectives, and circumstance, on the basis of which they will address climate change and its adverse impacts. 1.2. Provide a summary of relevant information in tabular form 1.3. Description of existing institutional arrangements relevant to the preparation of the national communication on a continuous basis.
2. National Greenhouse Gas Inventory	2.1. National GHG inventory for the year 2000 2.2. Emissions of CO ₂ , CH ₄ , N ₂ O (obligation). Other gases: HFCs, PFCs, SF ₆ , CO, NO _x , NMVOCs, and SO _x . 2.3. Brief description of the emission factors and activity data and information on methodologies used. 2.4. Level of uncertainty associated with inventory data and assumptions
3. Programmes containing measures to facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change	3.1. General description of steps taken or envisaged towards formulating, implementing, publishing, and updating programmes containing measures to facilitate adaptation to climate change 3.2. Information on their vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change, and on adaptation measures being taken to meet their specific needs and concerns arising from the adverse effects.
4. Programmes containing measures to mitigate climate change	4.1. General description of steps taken or envisaged towards formulating, implementing, publishing, and updating programmes containing measures to mitigate climate change
5. Other information considered relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention	5.1. Transfer of Technologies: Provide information on activities relating to the transfer of, and access to, environmentally sound technologies and know-how, the development and enhancement of endogenous capacity and the enabling environment for development and transfer of technologies. 5.2. Research and systematic observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide information on climate change research and systematic observation, including their participation in and contribution to activities and programmes of national, regional and global research networks and observing systems ▪ Provide information on research relating to programmes containing measures to mitigate to climate change, to facilitate adaptation, and the development of emission factors and activity data 5.3. Education, training and public awareness: Provide information on activities relating to climate change education, training and public awareness 5.4. Capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide information on how capacity building activities as contained in decision 2/CP.7 are being implemented at national level and, where appropriate, at regional level. This could include options for capacity building, involvement of stakeholders, co-ordination and sustainability of capacity building activities. ▪ Include information on capacity building activities for integrating adaptation to climate change into medium and long-term planning. 5.5. Information and networking
6. Constraints and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity needs	6.1. Research and systematic observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide information on climate change research and systematic observation, including their participation in and contribution to activities and programmes of national, regional and global research networks and observing systems ▪ Provide information on research relating to programmes containing measures to mitigate to climate change, to facilitate adaptation, and the development of emission factors and activity data

Component/ UNFCCC Guidelines	Outputs
	6.2. Information on financial resources and technical support provided for the preparation of NCs and activities relating to climate change
	6.3. A list of project proposals for financing in preparation for arranging the provision of technical and financial support
	6.4. Information on opportunities for the implementation of adaptation measures, including demonstration projects. It may include barriers to the implementation of adaptation measures.
	6.5. Provide information on technology needs and assistance received from developed country Parties and the financial mechanism of the Convention and, as appropriate, how they have utilized assistance in support of the development of endogenous capacity, technologies and know how.

Executing Arrangements

12. Country-level projects were nationally executed and execution activities were project-specific. The UNEP and UNDP assisted countries in identifying potential linkages between the exercise and other relevant United Nations (UN) initiatives by providing national teams with pertinent information.

13. An Advisory Committee comprising GEF, UNFCCC, UNDP, UNEP, and World Bank, and chaired by the GEF Secretariat, was formed in order to focus on the co-ordination issues. The Committee was intended to meet at regular intervals to keep the Implementing Agencies fully informed of the implementation of the programme and to seek their advice. Each IA was required to report on the progress of their enabling activities. In particular, the IAs were required to report on difficulties arising from implementation of GEF projects in countries, experiences of monitoring and evaluation, and progress on capacity building and mainstreaming.

14. A Project Implementation Committee comprised of UNDP, UNEP and World Bank was made responsible for reviewing management of technical issues, and to ensure that close collaboration took place between the implementing agencies for all activities.

15. At the national level, institutional arrangements varied, but a general model was followed where technical experts were appointed to lead on various sections of the National Communication. Oversight and project management mechanisms also varied among countries.

Project costs and financing

16. The overall umbrella programme counted 130 participating countries, with 30 of these working with UNEP as their Implementation Agency, 15 of which are the object of this evaluation (See Table 2 below). Each country was eligible to receive up to 405,000 US\$ for their National Communication. All country project documents indeed planned to spend that amount, along with national co-financing of a mostly in-kind nature.

17. The programme began in 2005 with the first country projects being approved, and continues to this day, since many countries have not yet finalized and submitted their Second National Communication. Table 2 below presents the chronology and financing for the 15 countries concerned by this evaluation.

Table 2: Chronology and financing

	Start date (ProDoc)	Intended completion	Completion Date / Publication date	Intended budget (ProDoc ⁵ (USD))	Actual Budget (USD) ⁶
Angola	Sept 2008	Aug. 2011	Dec. 2011	405,000	400,000
Bahrain	January 2007	Dec 2009	Dec 2011	405,000	301,334
Cote d'Ivoire	June 2005	Jun. 2008	Apr 2012	405,000	390,000
D. R. Congo	Oct 2005	Sep. 2008	Nov 2009	405,000	386,029
Madagascar	Nov 2005	Oct. 2008	Dec 2010	405,000	379,967
Mauritania	Jun 2005	May 2008	Nov 2008	405,000	390,271
Mauritius	Jan 2007	Dec 2009	Nov. 2011	405,000	400,000
Moldova	Oct. 2005	Sept 2008	Jan 2010	405,000	405,000
Mongolia	Sept 2006	Aug 2009	Dec 2010	405,000	309,820
Rwanda	Nov 2006	Oct 2009	June 2012	405,000	321,380
Senegal	June 2006	May 2009	Sept 2010	405,000	390,000
South Africa	Oct 2007	Sept 2010	Aug 2010	420,000	411,000
Turkmenistan	Jun 2006	May 2009	Nov 2010	405,000	387,396
Uzbekistan	Feb 2005	Jan 2008	Dec 2008	420,000	416,780
Vietnam	June, 2006	May, 2009	December, 2010	\$405,000	389,212

Methodology

18. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁷, the UNEP Evaluation Manual⁸ and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations⁹ this evaluation was undertaken at the end of the project to assess each country's 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, governments, universities, local communities, the GEF and their partners. Therefore, the evaluation seeks to identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

19. Based on a performance evaluation of individual countries in delivering their projects, the evaluation aims to aggregate lessons and achievements in order to answer the following **key questions**:

⁵ Exclusive of co-financing.

⁶ Id.

⁷ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁹ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE_guidelines7-31.pdf

- (a) How successful was the project in developing national capacity for reporting under the UNFCCC?
- (b) To what extent did the project assist the countries to build and sustain capacity for understanding and addressing climate change?
- (c) How successful was the project in enhancing national ownership of National Communications as potential tools for integrating climate change in development planning?

20. The main tool for the country evaluation consisted in a detailed evaluation matrix that lists the key questions and elements of information needed to assess each of the evaluation criteria and indicators. The matrix is included in Annex 1, along with an explanation of the scales of rating that were used. Some of the criteria will be evaluated at the aggregate level, based on synthesized lessons learned from individual country studies.

21. As per the Terms of Reference, the Evaluation matrix (see Appendix 1) seeks to assess three major evaluation elements: the degree to which countries have attained their expected objectives and results; the degree of sustainability and the extent to which the project has had a catalytic role; and the elements that may have affected the achievement of results. A summary of the methodology, sources of information and key analytical questions is indicated in Table 3 below:

22. In addition to the analysis performed using to the evaluation matrix, an analysis of the project design and Theory of Change analysis was also conducted for each country/at the aggregate level, using a combination of the methodology suggested in the Terms of Reference and the methodology proposed in the “Review of Outcome to Impacts: Practical Handbook for Practitioners” published by the GEF in 2009. Preliminary results of the ROtI were presented in the January 2013 inception report.

Table 3: Summary of Evaluation Matrix

Indicators	Inputs and sources of information	Analysis
1. attainment of objectives and planned results		
<i>Effectiveness</i>		
	SNC preparation documents: project document, logframe and indicators, project reports, interviews	Analysis of delays in delivering the planned SNC outputs and SNC; degree to which the country achieves the activities, milestones and indicators indicated in their own workplans. Analysis of the extent to which the SNC represents a change compared to the 1st NC or to ongoing policy and work.
<i>Relevance</i>		
	SNC document, country policy documents as available	Analysis of the explicit linkages and synergies between the SNC and the national development frameworks, such as PRSPs, National Development Plans, sectoral policies or programmes. Analysis of the relevance and linkages between the SNC and UNEP's mandate; analysis of the relevance of the SNC programme to UNEP's and GEF mandate
<i>Efficiency</i>		

Project Preparation documents (Project document), project financial reports, project milestone reports or annual implementation reports. Interviews and focus group meetings.

Analysis of the relevance of the means used to deliver project outputs in terms of effectiveness, timeliness, and an explanation of any delays; comparison of planned and spent budgets.; As a contribution to the overall Review of Outcome to Impact, an analysis of the extent to which the SNC has contributed to strengthening the policy framework on climate change, or has created or increased awareness and knowledge

2. Sustainability and catalytic role

Sustainability

SNC preparation documents; SNC; interviews

Analysis of the degree to which the SNC identifies programming or implementation priorities and whether there is a financing strategy to address these issues. Analysis of the degree of political buy-in for the SNC and its integration into ongoing policy making; Assessment of the degree of technical capacity built or created

Catalytic Role

SNC outputs and technical reports, SNC, interviews

Analysis of the extent to which the incentives for action against climate change are identified by the stakeholders and in the SNC. Analysis of the degree to which the SNC has contributed to improvements in national action to address mitigation or adaptation

Replication

1NC, NAPA if available, SNC, interviews

Analysis of the learning process starting from the first NC onto the TNC and other climate change related exercises (ex. NAPAs, NAPs), ascertain the extent to which lessons from one process are replicable to another

Monitoring and Evaluation

SNC project preparation documents, workplans, Monitoring and Evaluation plans

Assessment of the effectiveness of the Monitoring and evaluation system in each country as a potential learning mechanism

3. Assessment of processes affecting the attainment of project results

Preparation and readiness

SNC preparation documents, SNC guidelines

Analysis of the adequacy of planning documents, including of the expectations and assumptions regarding national capacity to execute the SNC and the degree to which implementation mechanisms were clear

Financial planning and management

SNC preparation documents, initial project budgets, financial and audit reports

Assessment of the effectiveness of financial planning and management processes, including the maintenance of project records, accounts and the application of standards of due diligence

Implementation and adaptive management

Project planning documents, project narrative reports, annual and quarterly reports, audit reports, interviews

Analysis of project management practices, including the effectiveness of project management and coordination structure, and adaptive management lessons learned; analysis of the degree to which the SNC process reaches the appropriate and relevant stakeholders

UNEP backstopping

interviews

Analysis of UNEP's role as provider of technical backstopping for the country process, including the perception of stakeholders of the quality and availability of advice received, as well as the way in which UNEP has addressed any technical or management problems

4. Complementarities with the UNEP strategies and Programmes

Linkages to UNEP Expected Accomplishments

SNC, UNEP Mid-Term Strategy 2010-2013, Bali Strategic Plan

Analysis of the SNC and of the programme's relevance to the UNEP Programming priorities as set forth in the Bali Strategic Plan and the Mid-Term Strategy, as well as of any avenues explored for promoting South-South Cooperation during the SNC process

23. This evaluation was undertaken as a team effort, with the team comprised of 5 independent evaluators, each responsible for the evaluation of projects in a cluster of 2 - 4 countries, and one Team Leader from among these acting as the overall coordinator of the assignment. Each consultant completed a project evaluation for each country including country-specific recommendations.

24. The consultants undertook their evaluation as a combination of desk-based reviews and in-country interviews. The purpose of the in-country missions was to validate the findings of the documentary analysis and to fill in any remaining information gaps. Terms of reference to guide the in-country missions were developed and are included in Annex 2.

Summary of Evaluation Findings

25. The following pages present a synthesis of key evaluation findings for each of the major criteria with a view to highlighting potential lessons learned and emerging trends.

Attainment of Objectives and planned results

Effectiveness

26. A synthesis of country studies shows Satisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory ratings for the effectiveness criteria. While all countries have indeed completed their National Communications, all also experienced significant delays, ranging from a few months to 2 years. In most cases, countries cited difficulties in recruiting adequate expertise and changes in institutions (e.g. Angola and South Africa) as factors of delay. Nevertheless, all countries achieved at least 95% of their intended activities and outputs. Among the outputs that appeared as the most challenging to deliver, countries cited the development of nationally appropriate mitigation actions or adaptation strategies and the integration of climate change into development plans. In all cases, the evaluators were able to detect a qualitative progress between the first and second national communications, providing evidence of a continuous process of learning.

27. Among the key difficulties experienced by countries, despite the training that was available, some noted a lack of adequately formatted activity data, the confidentiality of business information and data, challenges in the application of various software packages (UNFCCC inventory software, Long range Energy Alternatives Planning (LEAP) and Water Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) systems), difficulties in scenario development and use of methodologies, such as the methods for testing uncertainties and development of local emissions factors (e.g. Madagascar, Senegal, Viet Nam).

Relevance

28. The relevance of National Communications was a little more difficult to assess. All project documents noted appropriate linkages between the NC and the national policy context. However in practice, the linkages were somewhat more difficult to observe. In some cases (e.g. Uzbekistan, Mauritius) the exercise was somewhat limited to the experts participating in the drafting and research, with little linkages to the broader policy processes. This explains in part why mainstreaming was difficult to achieve under the SNC process. This could also mean that in these cases, the NC is considered as a useful research and reporting exercise, one that is the result of a mandatory requirement under the Convention, but that is not conceived to enable policy change. In all other cases, however, the stakeholders involved felt strongly that the NC was a useful and relevant tool for addressing climate change in their country and that it provided useful avenues for raising awareness and analysing the challenges of climate change (e.g. Moldova, Bahrain).

29. In their particular context, the NCs continue to be relevant to the countries, UNEP and the GEF, inasmuch as they allow for gradual capacity building to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, in incremental ways. For example, in Viet Nam, the SNC is considered as a neutral source of information, and was used as a basis for developing the National target Plan and the National Climate Change Strategy, which were in turn used as a basis for dialogue with

development partners. All countries report a qualitative change in the quality of the reports, as well as in the quality of the process, between the INC and the SNC, and all expect similar improvements between the SNC and the TNC.

Efficiency

30. As regards efficiency, the SNCs took a similar path in all the countries, with basic activities prescribed by the UNFCCC guidelines and the project documents. None of the countries varied in their implementation of their original plans. All countries spent less than originally anticipated (up to 22.7% in Bahrain), indicating that the originally planned budgets were a close reflection of the real costs of completing the work.

31. Not all countries took the same pathway to the development of the SNC: Some countries, for example Uzbekistan, Mauritius, or Madagascar, considered the work as almost exclusively expert-based, and involved only a limited number of ministerial stakeholders. Other countries, like Bahrain and Rwanda used the SNC as an opportunity to broaden stakeholder consultation, including with NGOs.

32. All countries experienced delays that led to project extensions being approved by UNEP. Among the key constraints were:

1. Human capacity: the inability to identify appropriate expertise, lengthy recruitment processes, or the unavailability of human resources due to competing priorities, or the non-availability of the previously developed capacities due to the long period (almost 10 years in some cases) between the first and second national communications.
2. Technical capacity: delays in securing the appropriate training on methodologies, modelling and analysis required, or in some cases the inadequacy of the training or the operational means received which left national teams unable to complete the task as required.
3. Operational constraints: delays in obtaining feedback from UNEP, the need to translate documentation in many cases, and general operational constraints attributable to the institutions in which the project was housed.

Review of Outcomes to Impact pathways

33. As noted in the Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) Practitioners' handbook, "the key premise of the ROtI methodology is that, once the project's theory of change has been mapped out and understood, it should then be possible to confirm whether each of the means- ends linkages in a results chain has either already occurred or is likely to occur, and therefore, ultimately, whether the project is on track in delivering its intended impacts". The ROtI method provides a way in which an evaluator can assess whether a project is in the process of delivering its intended impacts. The ROtI methodology involves identifying the project's intended impacts, reviewing the results framework and the underlying theory of change, and analysing the project's Outcome to Impact pathways.

34. In the context of this analysis, a few key concepts are defined as follows:

35. **Activities** are the practical, time-bound actions that the project carries out to deliver the desired project outputs. **Outputs** are the goods and services that the project must deliver in order to achieve the project outcomes. **Outcomes** are defined as short to medium term behavioural or systemic effects to which the project contributes. Achievement of outcomes is influenced both by project outputs and additional factors that may be outside the direct control of the project. Finally, **impact** is defined as the fundamental and durable change in the condition of people and their environment brought about by the project. The intended project impacts provide the overall justification for a project.

36. Furthermore, the Theory of Change analysis calls for the explicit recognition of **intermediate states** that represent the transitional conditions between the project's outcomes and impacts that must be achieved in order to deliver the intended impacts. Other elements that are likely to contribute to the realization of project impacts also include **impact drivers**, factors that the project can influence or **assumptions**, but that are largely beyond the power of the project to influence or address.

37. The ROTI analysis was conducted according to a combination of methodologies as proposed in the Terms of Reference and as contained in the Guide for Practitioners published by the GEF Evaluation Office. It should be noted that this ROTI analysis was a challenge, for a number of reasons: firstly, there were stark weaknesses in the overall project design as well as in the individual project documents that prevented a reconstruction of intended impact pathways, outcomes and impacts; second, the methodology for ROTI does not apply well to projects whose intended objective is the production of a documentary product.

38. Nevertheless, the following is an attempt at a reconstruction of outcomes and impact pathways based on the project document for the whole of the NCs, on which all of the other country project documents were based¹⁰.

39. For the purposes of this analysis, since the global programme is being assessed separately, the ROTI will focus on national-level objectives and impact statements.

Project intended impact, goal and objectives

40. The 2004 UNEP Project document cites one goal and a number of objectives at national and global levels. The stated goal is "to provide an integrated package of flexible support activities to facilitate implementation of enabling activities". However, the project document also states that "by doing so, it will assist countries in promoting integration of climate change policy into countries' national development priorities, on the basis of national needs and priorities".

41. The document also states that the goal of the project at the national level is "to improve the implementation of the GEF enabling activities for preparing National Communications". The document further states 2 national-level objectives, as follows: "To improve the degree of national ownership of National Communications; and to ensure that the enabling activities meet the reporting obligations of the UNFCCC for non-Annex I Parties". Far from being formulated as

¹⁰ note that all country project documents followed a standard results architecture and, with only a few variations, presented similar intended objectives, impacts, outputs and indicators.

distinct objectives, these two statements are rather more indicative of the manner in which an objective would be achieved, rather than objectives in and of themselves. For example, nothing from these two statements imply the production of a new National Communication. One could therefore deduce that the true objective of the project was “the production of the National Communication”, as it was in many of the country project documents.

42. From this it results that the **reconstructed goal** of the project (intended impact) could be “the integration of climate change policy into countries national development priorities”, which would be achieved through the objective of “producing the national communication, in line with principles of country ownership and the reporting obligations of the UNFCCC”. This goal is also reflected in many of the country project documents.

Outcomes, outputs and indicators

43. Neither the global project document nor the national project documents contain any statement of expected outcomes. Rather, all project documents move straight to a description of activities and, in some cases, outputs. In country project documents, the outputs are also identified as indicators, although some of the statements categorized as such are actually activities or means of verification. Some of the project documents implicitly identify what could be considered as outcomes, by stating for example that the successful implementation of this project will “lead to increased capacity in dealing with climate change”.

44. The global project document lists a number of generic outputs that are also mirrored in the country project documents: “a) national project documents, including detailed workplans, documented stocktaking exercises and stakeholder consultations; b) technical reports for each thematic component of the National Communication that is undertaken and c) a final draft of the National Communication to be submitted to the Implementing Agencies”.

45. There are no indicators at the national level provided in the global project document and it seems implied that these will be provided through national project documents. However, the quality of the results statements in all country project documents analysed was very weak, with only very few real indicators, and none of those SMART¹¹. In fact, none of the project documents contain a results framework in the usual form.

46. From this a reconstructed standard logical framework for the global and national projects could be as reflected in table 4 below:

Table 4: proposed reconstructed generic results framework

Goal: The integration of climate change policy into countries national development frameworks	Objective: To produce the national communication, in line with principles of country ownership and the reporting obligations of the UNFCCC	
Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators
National Circumstances Chapter	Improved sources of climate change information	Availability of updated climate change information
National GHG Inventory		
Vulnerability, Adaptation and Impact Assessments		

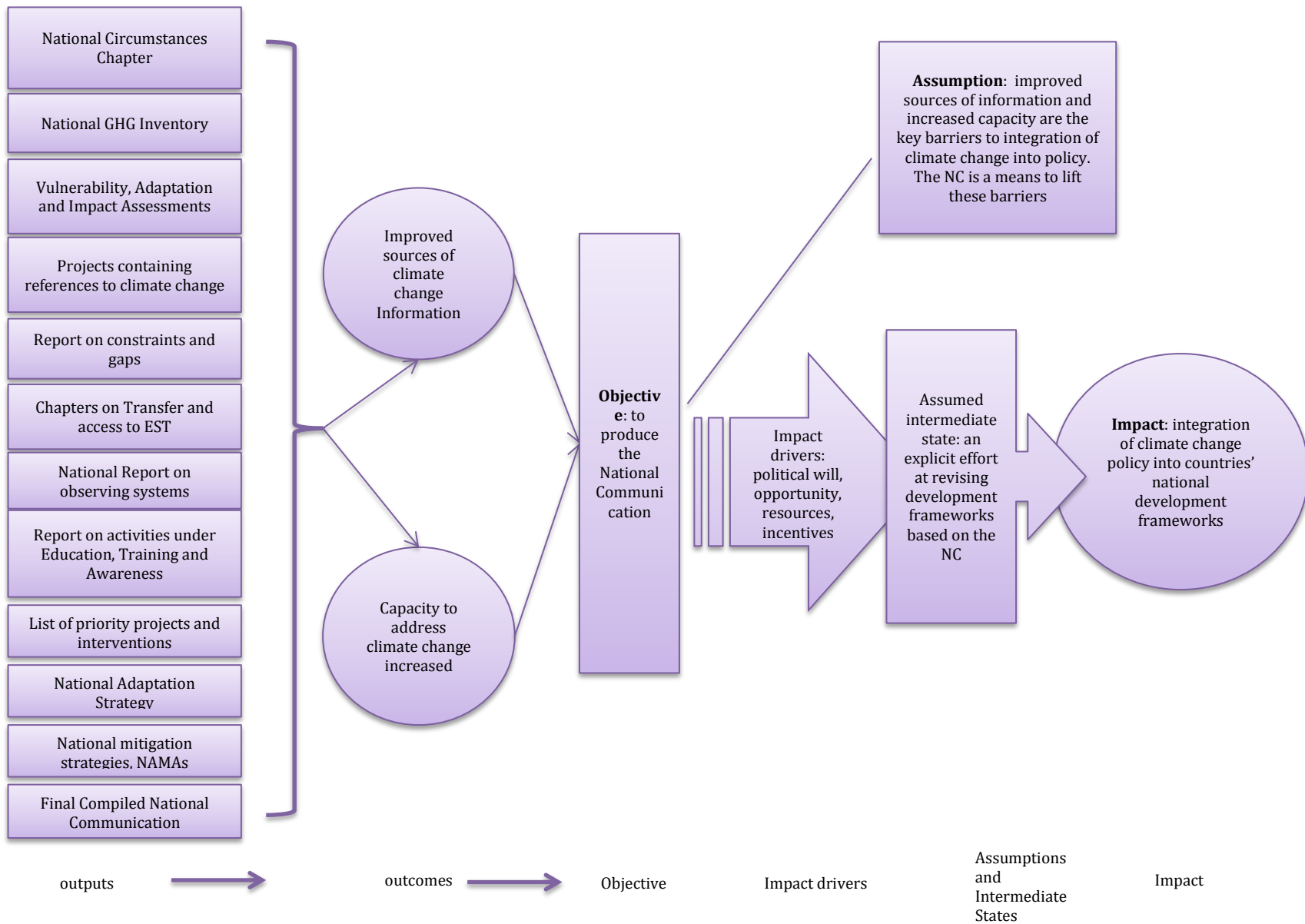
¹¹ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

Projects containing references to climate change (list)		
Report on Constraints and Gaps		
Chapters on Transfer and Access to Environmentally sound technology		
National Information Report on observing systems		
Report on proposed activities under Education Training and Public Awareness	Capacity to address climate change increased	Capacity assessment scores increase
List of priority projects and interventions		
National Adaptation Strategy		
National mitigation strategies based on Nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) submitted to UNFCCC		
Final compiled National Communication document		

47. This imperfectly reconstructed logical framework makes a number of assumptions. First, the improvement of information and capacity will lead to the integration of climate change into national development planning processes. The assumed intermediate state in this chain of logic is that an explicit attempt at mainstreaming will be undertaken by the newly capacitated stakeholders. This also assumes that the main barriers to mainstreaming were in fact a lack of information and capacity, and it ignores other impact drivers such as political will, opportunity (for example timing of the revision of a policy document), financial resources, and a clear understanding of incentives.

48. The second assumption is an operational one, that levels of capacity from one NC to the next can effectively be measured. This may not be true if there is a change in the people whose capacity is being strengthened from one NC to the next, or if there are institutional changes that impact these indicators. Capacity to address climate change can itself be subject to a much broader range of drivers, including institutional contexts, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure, political stability, etc. None of these drivers are being addressed by the NC project, so its impact on broader climate change capacity has been found to be limited.

49. The graphic on the next page seeks to illustrate the reconstructed chain of results.



50. Ratings for the ROTI analysis are based on the degree to which the project achieves its intended outcomes and on the likelihood of achieving the long-term impact, based on an assessment of the intermediate states and impact drivers. Based on this reconstructed chain of results, the assessment of the achievement of outcomes and the likelihood of achieving impacts was assessed for each country and rated according to the following scale:

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project's intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

Likelihood of achieving impact

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

51. Based on this scale, the combined ROTI analysis for all projects included in this evaluation was "B: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding". Overall, the assessment of progress towards intermediate states was D: no measures were taken to move towards intermediate states, except in a few cases (see table 5 below). The project as a whole therefore obtains a rating of **Unlikely** in terms of likelihood of impact achievement. A summary of individual country ratings is included in the table below:

Table 5: Summary of ratings for the review of outcome to impact analysis

Country	Achievement of outcomes	Achievement of intermediate states	Likelihood of impact achievement
Angola	C	D	CD – Highly Unlikely
Bahrain	B	D	BD - Unlikely
Cote d'Ivoire	B	D	BD – Unlikely
DRC	B	C	BC – Moderately Likely
Madagascar	B	D	BD – Unlikely

Mauritania	B	C	BC – Moderately Likely
Mauritius	B	C	BC – Moderately Likely
Moldova	B	B	BB – Likely
Mongolia	B	B	BB – Likely
Rwanda	B	B	BB – Likely
Senegal	B	D	BD – Unlikely
South Africa	B	C	BC - Moderately Likely
Turkmenistan	B	C	BC – Moderately Likely
Uzbekistan	B	C	BC – Moderately Likely
Vietnam	B	B	BB – Likely

Sustainability and Catalytic Role

Sustainability

52. The analysis of sustainability of the National Communications also posed some challenges. As a project whose overall objective is the production of a document and information products, and as a project that is intended to be repeated, there has been little attention paid to the conditions for sustainability. Many of the stakeholders and participants who participated in the evaluation noted that they had indeed learned and that their technical capacity had been built by the SNC process, and that expectations were high of similar progress in the upcoming third NC (TNC).

53. However, National Communications also contain lists of projects and recommended actions for which there is no concrete identified implementation mechanism or financing. Except with the notable case of Mauritius, there was little evidence that countries had been able to identify means by which they could sustain or further the outcomes of the SNC. The result could be a long list of un-implemented projects and initiatives from various successive NCs.

54. On the socio-political aspects of the SNC, the results were also mitigated. Some countries reported specific institutional achievements that will serve to create conditions for sustainability. For example in Senegal, Madagascar, Rwanda and Mauritius, a system for continuous data and information collection was established to serve as a core service for future NCs. In the case of Mauritius this has led to an annual update of the national GHG inventory, enabling it to make separate GHG inventory submissions to the UNFCCC in anticipation of the BURs. This will not only greatly reduce the cost and time spent delivering NCs, it will also ensure traceability and progress monitoring from a qualitative point of view, since data will be comparable across reports. The absence of such a system of institutionalization for the NC process was noted as a challenge in the DRC and Rwanda.

Catalytic role and replication

55. NCs occur in a context where many other climate change initiatives are taking place, and therefore it is difficult to attribute a change in policy or any new initiative to the SNC itself. As part of a broader package of CC initiatives, the SNC can be said to contribute to enhancing the information and information base on climate change, enhancing awareness among stakeholders, and improving the way in which countries deal with climate change. For example during the SNC process, Mauritius developed the “Maurice Ile Durable” framework, which

enabled it to attract investments for renewable energy projects. The Framework used information arising from the SNC, but the policy process would have been undertaken even in the absence of an SNC. Turkmenistan is another country where the SNC has helped catalyse policy change, for example through the development of the National Strategy on Climate Change (2012) which was reportedly based on SNC findings and outcomes.

56. In South Africa, the SNC inscribed itself in a long-term process, through which the Government published its white paper on the National Climate Change Response Policy (NCCRP) (2005-2012). The policy process was driven by earlier comprehensive in-country studies -the long-term mitigation scenarios (LTMS), which had principally a mitigation focus with limited adaptation coverage. The SNC then built on the LTMS and was used as the major driver for the multi-stakeholder climate change conferences in Midland 2009, Durban 2010 and towards COP 17 in December 2011, hosted by south Africa.

57. Regarding replicability, given that the SNC is both a process and a product that was designed to be repeated, the replicability of the project is obviously built-in. The extent to which the SNC yielded lessons applicable to another area depended on the willingness of the country to extend the SNC process into other spheres (e.g. Turkmenistan, Mauritius, Moldova). In many other cases, there was no evidence that the SNC yielded benefits beyond the smaller group of participants or participating institutions. As mentioned, however, there was evidence of gradual improvements in efficiency and in technical capacity from the first national communications, indicating that the series of NCs, along with the anticipated biennial updates, will eventually lead to significant capacity improvements in Non Annex 1 countries.

Monitoring and Evaluation

58. Monitoring and Evaluation systems in each of the individual projects were relatively basic. For the most part, the M&E system was based on the production of periodic reports to UNEP, including financial and narrative reports. The extent to which the M&E systems were used in each country to promote learning was difficult to determine. Many countries used the M&E system to the minimum, meaning only to report on milestone achievement or on output production, as required by the UNEP standards. However, the stocktaking exercise undertaken before the SNC did help in identifying activities completed and gaps that would be filled during the project, serving as a sort of self evaluation of the first process. A similar process in the lead up to the TNC could also provide a useful learning tool. The report on constraints and needs, which forms part of the NC, also helped identify various issues that can serve as a tool for M&E. Only Madagascar undertook a self-evaluation of the SNC process, which has led to a number of recommendations to be put in place to facilitate delivery of the TNC.

59. Another challenge with the M&E system was the weakness in the project design, and the confusion regarding the appropriate definition of objectives, outputs, outcomes and activities. While all SNC activities and components were delivered, the objectives of the project were diffuse, leading to more attention being paid on the outputs (SNC chapters) than on the outcomes (capacity built or climate change mainstreamed). This weakness in the projects design means that a valuable opportunity to leverage broader impact from the SNC – if indeed that was the intention - was probably missed.

Assessment of processes affecting attainment of project results

Preparation and readiness

60. Despite the weaknesses in the project design mentioned above, the countries all benefited from a high level of preparedness for the SNC. This was in part due to the experience left from the Initial National Communication (INC) (although some countries were not able to retain the same experts due to the long period of time between INC and SNC), and in part to the level of detail with which the activities are described in the various project documents. All project documents contain a list of activities completed and identified gaps under INC, and a list of activities to complete, including the way in which they will be completed.

61. As a result, no country had any difficulty in devising a strategy for achieving its SNC outputs and results. Some countries, such as DRC, Rwanda and Mauritania were not able to undertake development of country-specific emission factors due to the insufficiency of technical capacity and infrastructure. The mechanisms for implementation were also very clearly spelled out, as were the roles and responsibilities for all partners.

UNEP supervision and backstopping

62. The quality of UNEP backstopping was greatly appreciated by all countries, who did however note delays in obtaining responses and feedback on technical documents due to the frequent absences of the UNEP Task Management. Not many countries raised the usefulness of the global support programme, but all countries mentioned that UNEP was forthcoming with offers of support and technical assistance, particularly with the identification of technical experts for trainings.

63. With the exception of Moldova, Uzbekistan and Angola, few countries availed themselves of any opportunities for South-South cooperation during the SNC. These countries individually used opportunities presented by meetings of Parties, or by regional meetings on other topics, to discuss progress on their National Communication. There was no identifiable result from this cooperation. As for the countries that did not partake in any form of South-South cooperation, the reason has been attributed to a lack of opportunities and to competing priorities, in particular when the NC was experiencing delays.

Complementarities with the UNEP Strategies and Programmes

64. The NCs, as a mandatory requirement of the Convention, is less subject to the obligation of being relevant to the UNEP programme of work and Medium-Term Strategy. As an enabling activity, National Communications must be facilitated through a GEF Agency and as such, they are assumed by UNEP as their contribution to the UNFCCC implementation. However, the NCs remain relevant to the Bali Strategic Plan and, even today, with the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) of UNEP. It is hoped and expected that TNCs will also bear more linkages to the MTS, particularly if the linkages between NCs and national planning processes, such as Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks, national development plans and such, are strengthened.

Summary of Findings

65. In summary, all countries concerned by this evaluation performed in a satisfactory manner, with only a few technical challenges. There remains work to be done to strengthen the technical capacity of NC teams, in particular as it regards the use of the recommended models and methodologies (such as, emissions factors, methods for uncertainty reduction, data quality control, and sector-specific modelling tools like WEAP, LEAP, or DSSAT). From available evidence, it appears that many of the teams were not able to deliver local emissions factors, and that some of the proposed models were not applied either due to a lack of data or due to a lack of capacity.

66. Another key finding is that countries were able to put the NC exercise to more use when the process was somewhat institutionalised, either through the appointment of teams that remain from one NC to the next, or through the creation of stable organizational structures that allow for regular data collection and updating. This helps transform the NC from an expert-led documentation exercise to a potential tool for raising awareness and perhaps, ultimately, leveraging policy influence

67. A summary of ratings for the main criteria is provided in Table 4 below.

Table 6: Summary of ratings

Country/ Criteria	Attainment of objectives and planned results			Sustainability and Catalytic role				Assessment of processes affecting attainment of results				Completeness with UNEP Strategies and Programmes
	Effectiveness	Relevance	Efficiency	Sustainability	Catalytic role	Replication	M&E	Preparation and Readiness	Financial Planning and Management	Implementation and adaptive management	UNEP Backstopping	
Angola (INC)	MS	S	S	S	S	NA	S	MS	S	MS	S	HS
Bahrain	S	MS	S	S	HS	S	MS	MS	HS	HS	HS	HS
Cote d'Ivoire	MS	S	MS	MS	HS	HS	MS	MS	MS	MS	HS	HS
D. R. Congo	S	HS	S	S	HS	HS	MS	S	MS	MS	HS	HS
Madagascar	MS	MU	MS	MU	MS	MS	MU	S	S	S	MS	MS
Mauritania	S	HS	HS	MS	HS	HS	MS	S	S	S	S	HS
Mauritius	MS	S	MS	S	S	S	S	S	S	HS	S	S
Moldova	S	S	HS	HS	HS	HS	S	MS	HS	HS	HS	HS
Mongolia	S	HS	MS	S	HS	HS	S	HS	S	S	S	S
Rwanda	HS	HS	S	S	HS	HS	MS	MS	S	S	S	HS
Senegal	S	HS	HS	HS	HS	HS	HS	MS	HS	HS	HS	HS
South Africa	S	HS	HS	HS	HS	S	S	MS	HS	HS	HS	HS

Turkmenistan	S	MS	S	MS	S	MS	S	S	HS	S	S	HS
Uzbekistan	S	S	S	MS	S	MS	S	S	HS	S	HS	HS
Vietnam	S	HS	S	S	S	HS	S	HS	S	S	S	S

TABLE KEY:

HS = Highly satisfactory

S = Satisfactory

MS = Moderately Satisfactory

MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory

U = Unsatisfactory

HU = Highly Unsatisfactory

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lessons Learned

68. The analysis of individual evaluation reports delivered the following lessons learned, that could be applicable to other enabling activity projects or to upcoming cycles of recommendations. Some lessons are also presented here on the conduct of future similar evaluation exercises, for consideration in future project design or evaluation.

69. **It may be overly ambitious to seek to influence national development processes through a National Communication.** Indeed, in many Non Annex I countries, the institutional and technical capacity to deliver NC outputs and elements may be merely sufficient. The highly technical nature of the assessments involved, in particular as regards the emissions inventories, could prevent the document from being easily understandable by policy makers. That said, NCs constitute a solid, recognized reference on climate change in any country, and therefore can help shape the policy agenda indirectly by providing neutral information.

70. **Countries in which National Communications are well integrated into a broader portfolio of climate change policies and projects usually perform better** in delivering outputs and leveraging funding, support and other institutional capacity. National communications that are treated as separate isolated projects handled by small experts teams typically radiate less, are less well known, less publicized, and are therefore less relevant. Countries that are able to build on achievements from one NC to the next also perform better, as repeated tasks become easier, such as data gathering and conservation, reporting, analysis and modelling. This highlights the importance of building national systems for NCs for continuous update, coordinated by the relevant government departments, comprising identifiable collaborating ministries, departments, agencies, universities, research and centres of excellence, consultancies that can retain capacities built within the institutions through training and/or research on continuous basis. Alternatively maintaining the same teams within NCs as much as possible to avoid losing on capacity built for shorter periods between submissions for the biennial inventory reporting and 4-year NC reporting cycle beginning 2014.

71. **NC projects and initiatives, whether adaptation or mitigation, have a high risk of going unaddressed** if they are not immediately connected to a broader planning framework, partnership or financing opportunity. Countries that have succeeded in leveraging resources for the implementation of projects listed in their NCs are rare. Continuing this practice could lead to the creation of high expectations, separate pipeline of projects, and mounting costs. The NC guidelines do not contain any guidance on how to proceed with the implementation of these projects. Similarly, there is no certainty on how resources can be mobilized to address the constraints and gaps contained in many NCs, making their usefulness as a tool for on-going capacity development less evident. Discussions underway on the modalities for accessing the Green Climate Funds may provide an avenue for addressing this challenge.

72. **The evaluation criteria are not well adapted to the reality of enabling activities and activities that concern national reporting to Conventions.** The evaluation of such initiatives

cannot be subject to the same criteria of relevance, Review of Outcome to Impact and performance assessments that other, substantive projects with intended long-term impacts, are subjected to. Because of the fact that these projects help countries deliver an obligation to the Convention in the form of a documentary output, project design is often weaker, the results chain is not as clearly developed, and many of the evaluation criteria are not relevant. Furthermore, the team-based approach for conducting the evaluation, while useful, often leads to different interpretations of similar data from one country to the next, which could impact the comparability of evaluation ratings across countries.

73. **Countries are usually not able to complete national communications in the imparted time of three years.** Factors such as lengthy recruitment processes, difficulties in identifying local capacity and experts, setting up of new administrative procedures for each new project, language issues and general functional constraints all contribute to the delaying of NCs in all countries.

Recommendations

74. **Project design for future NCs and enabling activities should be strengthened by UNEP.** This should include concrete outputs, SMART indicators and a clear statement of objectives. Objectives and intended impacts should remain realistic, and the expectations regarding policy influence of NCs and other national reports should be reconsidered, as they place countries in a position of failure. Countries should also be given longer duration to complete NCs, with adequate management costs included at the start. NCs should no longer be regarded as a project or evaluated under the same conditions and with the same parameters. The Evaluation Office of UNEP could devise a specific methodology for evaluating processes such as NCs, NAPs and other planning initiatives.

75. On the other hand, in order to increase the national relevance of NCs and such reports, **countries should be encouraged by Agencies, including UNEP, to institutionalize the process,** and provided the means to do so, on a continuous basis, particularly now that it is envisaged for the biennial updated report (BUR). This could require changing the way in which NCs are managed within the GEF and Agencies: rather than creating individual projects that have to be closed before a new one can start, countries could benefit from on-going support from the Agency, under a speedily renewable umbrella programme. This would enable countries to effect real change and progress in terms of technical capacity and to effectively integrate this new capacity within government institutions. It would also lead to cost and time savings in the future.

76. **Training provided through UNEP or global support programs should be provided through a learning-by-doing approach,** rather than a one-time classroom approach. This would require mobilizing technical support for longer durations, to ensure that experts can assist countries in troubleshooting and in applying methodologies and models. Language issues, as well as the technical means to perform the tasks (including computers and connections), should be given appropriate consideration by Implementing Agencies during the provision of technical support. Regional meetings or regional trainings should also be encouraged by UNEP.

77. **UNEP backstopping for NCs and other enabling activities could be strengthened and accelerated** through the institution of a deputy task manager function that could fill the gaps in the absence of the TM; the establishment of a no-objection procedure for approvals; and the

development of standard pre-approved TORs for facilitating recruitment. Language requirements also need to be considered so that countries benefit from adapted advice.

78. The guidelines on the production of NCs should be revised by the UNFCCC Secretariat to address the issue of resource mobilization for priority activities listed. This should include providing guidance to countries on how to access resources for activities listed under the Constraints and Needs sections of the NCs.