Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP-GEF Project

‘Building and strengthening Sierra Leone’s national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement’ – CBIT Sierra Leone Project (GEF ID 10027)

2020-2024

UNEP Climate Change Division

Validation date: June 2025

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

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Building and strengthening Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement – CBIT Sierra Leone Project
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The reviewer would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex III.

The review team would like to thank the project team and in particular Lovetta Yatta Juanah for her contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to all stakeholders who took time to provide comments to the draft report.

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

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

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ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP/Environmental Protection Agency –Sierra Leone project implemented between 2020 and 2024. The project's overall development goal was to establish an integrated transparency system that enables the country to monitor, report, and verify (MRV) climate data effectively, enhancing its ability to track NDC progress, secure climate finance, and make data-driven policy decisions. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

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

Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:

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

Key words: Climate Change; CBIT, NDC Tracking, Sierra Leone, Climate transparency

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use
AU	Africa Union
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
BUR	Biennial Update Report
CBIT	Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency
CBIT-GSP	Capacity-building Initiative – Global Support Programme
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CDS	Capacity Development Strategy
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DNA	Designated National Authority
EA	Expected Accomplishment
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GE	Green Economy
GEAP	Gender Equality Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
ICAT	Initiative for Climate Action Transparency
IPMR	Integrated Planning, Management, and Reporting Solution
IPPU	Industrial Processes and Product Use
IT	Information Technology
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MET	Meteorological Agency
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, and Verification
MTA	Ministry of Transport and Aviation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NAP	National Adaptation Plans

NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NC	National Communication
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPAA	National Protected Area Authority
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
RLW	Regional Learning Workshops
SC	Sustainable Consumption
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SL	Sierra Leone
SLARI	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute
TM	Task Manager
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TR	Terminal Reviewer
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-CCC	United Nations Environment Programme Climate Change Centre
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1: Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA ID:	38697	Grant ID (if applicable):	10027
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division / Mitigation Branch / GEF Climate Mitigation Unit		
Implementing Partners:	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone		
Sources of Funding:	*Country*: Sierra Leone	*Institution Name/Type:* Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (government)	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG-13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts SDG Target 13.3. Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. SDG indicator 13.3.2: Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions		
MTS (all that apply):	MTS 2018-2021	UNEP approval date:	4 June 2020
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR** POW Output(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)*	*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* *POW Output:*	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):*	*MTS 2025 Outcome: 1C - State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement* *POW Expected Accomplishment: (b) Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies*
Sub-programme:	Sub-programme 1 Climate Change	Programme Coordination Project:	Transparency PCP
Expected start date:	1 October 2020	Actual start date:	1 October 2020
Planned completion date:	30 September 2023	Actual operational completion date:	30 June 2024
Planned total project budget at approval:	US$ 1,544,495	Actual total expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024:	US$ 1,412,742[1]
GEF grant allocation:	US$ 1,344,495	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024:	US$ 1,212,742
Planned co-financing:	In-kind: US$ 200,000	Secured co-financing as of 30 June 2024:	In-kind: US$ 200,000
First disbursement:	13 July 2020	Planned date of financial closure:	30 June 2025
No. of formal project revisions:	2	Date of last approved project revision:	28 Oct. 2022
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	8	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	25 June 2024
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	N/A	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	31 December 2024	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	March 2025
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Sierra Leone	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

[1] Includes both GEF grant and co-finance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The Paris Agreement (PA) introduced the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) regime for climate action and support under Article 13. According to the UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2019, countries are far from reaching the global goal of 2°C if only the current levels of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are considered. Hence, the ETF under the PA is critical to enable all countries to track the progress of climate action and raise ambition. The Parties to the PA established the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of developing countries to effectively participate in the ETF. Following this, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Chande (UNFCCC) requested the Global Environment Fund (GEF) to support the implementation of CBIT through voluntary contributions during GEF-6 and future replenishment cycles; hence during COP 21, the GEF established CBIT. Globally, the CBIT program aims to strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities; provide relevant tools, training, and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Agreement and assist in the progressive improvement of transparency efforts.

2. The scope of implementation of Sierra Leone intended contributions on mitigation and adaptation is contingent upon the provision of adequate resources by the international community (financial resources, capacity building and the transfer of technologies). In view of this, there was a need to strengthen Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the different components of the Paris Climate Agreement. As indicated in Sierra Leone's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), additional support is required to develop a transparency system for tracking the performance and the implementation progress of the NDC. The objective of the CBIT Sierra Leone project was to build and strengthen Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the PA. The project represented an important opportunity to support the Government of Sierra Leone in building its institutional and technological capacity, designing methodological tools and indicators, and engaging all relevant stakeholders.

3. The project began with the formalization of the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) on the 05th of June 2020, a responsibility undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP (Implementing Agency) and Environment Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone (Executing Agency). EPA-SL is the Designated National Authority (DNA) for the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the UNFCCC, as well the GEF Focal Point for Sierra Leone. The implementation period spanned from October 2020 to June 2024. This included two project revisions in February and October 2022 mainly in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, administrative delays and legal challenges associated with UDP's transition to the new UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC)[2].

This Review

4. The Terminal Review (TR) was undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes: (1) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (2) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project.

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

[2] Amendment No.2 to the PCA between UNEP and EPA-SL – October 2022

6. To operationalise these questions, the review applied the review criteria as per GEF guidelines. The set of criteria includes: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance.

7. The TR applied a theory of change approach. The process included mixed data collection and analysis methods including documentary review, online and face to face semi-structured interviews, field visits and observations as well as focus group discussions. Thirty-five persons (67% male and 33% female) took part through online and face to face data collection, while thirty-one persons took part in the online survey representing response rates of 97% and 94% of those requested to participate in the TR respectively. A combination of content, descriptive and thematic analytical techniques were applied, with triangulation of findings, to ensure reliability and robustness. But for time constraints which limited the field visit to one region, no other consequential challenges were faced during the TR.

Key findings

8. The CBIT Project in Sierra Leone responded to national development and climate priorities. It has strengthened the country's climate transparency framework, aligning with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Climate Agreement. The project established institutional structures, built technical capacity, and introduced digital transparency tools, guidelines and toolkits laying the foundation for better coordination, reporting, and accountability in climate action.

9. Capacity development for transparency and reporting was another major achievement. The project trained over 1,312 stakeholders from government agencies, municipal councils, and non-state actors, equipping them with GHG inventory, MRV, data management, Training of Trainer (ToT) skills and broader awareness on climate change, NDCs, climate transparency and the role of gender and private sector. Regional peer-learning exchanges and participation in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform enabled knowledge-sharing beyond national borders.

10. The development of a gender inclusive NDC implementation plan and private sector engagement strategy were key milestones. The NDC Transparency Platform, which is hosted by EPA serves as a centralized system for climate data collection, reporting, and tracking NDC implementation in accordance with the UNFCCC modalities, procedures and guidelines. This tool should enhance data accessibility, reporting accuracy, and coordination between national and international climate actors. By delivering on these achievements, the project aligned with UNEP, GEF and regional development and climate objectives.

11. A strong and effective PMU ensured efficient financial management, execution and adaptive management, with the supervision of UNEP. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) provided high-level oversight, ensuring strategic alignment. The project successfully mainstreamed gender throughout implementation, while youth engagement through NDC committees enhanced inclusiveness and outreach to wider communities in the country.

12. Stakeholder engagement was a major success factor, with participation from government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and academia. The high level of country ownership, particularly by EPA and sectoral ministries, provision of cofinancing, and mobilisation of post project financial resources for the 4NC, BTR, GEF funded Guinean forest and ICAT projects significantly increased the likelihood of sustainability.

13. With these achievements, the project has paved the way for long-term impact, as governments and other stakeholders start to apply knowledge and learning acquired and use the data available for evidence-based decision and policy making. Government remains committed to reducing its GHG emissions and building national resilience to climate change. This is seen in the country engagement to revise its 2021 NDCs, positing it to set even more ambitious NDC targets. The gender inclusive NDC plan and private sector engagement strategy provide the needed ingredients to achieve this, while also enhancing its ability to mobilise climate finance and advance national adaptation plans and transition to green economic development model.

14. While MoUs and other sectoral tools and guidelines have been developed, there is significant evidence that the lack of legal mandates and funding for data collection and reporting remains a risk for the future. There is limited capacity for climate finance mobilisation within various sectorial ministries and local councils in the regions and districts.

Conclusions

Answers to Key Strategic Review Questions

- The project successfully supported the adoption of enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement. Institutional reforms, training programs, and digital transparency tools contributed to significant progress in Sierra Leone's climate reporting. However, full ETF compliance will require continued investment in capacity-building.
- The project also strengthened transparency mechanisms for national and international climate reporting. Improvements in data coordination, GHG inventory processes, and climate reporting capacity—particularly through the NDC Transparency Platform and sectoral reporting frameworks—were major outcomes.
- In terms of the adoption of new climate transparency tools, the project introduced the NDC Transparency Platform and various tools and sectoral guidelines, which have been partially adopted. Full institutionalization is still ongoing, requiring sustained training, government commitment and funding.
- To address the challenges posed by COVID-19, the project shifted to virtual engagements, extended timelines, and adapted training methodologies. These strategies mitigated major disruptions but resulted in some delayed field activities.

15. With its strong project management, stakeholder engagement, and institutional capacity-building, the CBIT project has laid a solid foundation for long-term sustainability and impact. By improving climate data accuracy and transparency, the project enhances Sierra Leone's chances of securing additional climate finance for adaptation and mitigation. EPA has already leveraged CBIT's success to attract further funding, including from the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT).
16. Institutionalized reporting mechanisms and the NDC platform will ensure that Sierra Leone sustains and scales its climate monitoring efforts. The improved tracking of GHG emissions will help target reductions in key sectors such as energy, waste, and AFOLU, supporting Sierra Leone's transition to a low-carbon economy. The project aligns with the Vision 2030 strategy for a climate-resilient economy, ensuring Sierra Leone's continued engagement in global climate action.

Challenges faced

17. While the project delivered results, some challenges remain. With the delayed delivery of some project outputs, the time for application of learning was limited. Some of the trainings were one off, and limited opportunities for further ongoing support following the trainings and delivery of tools has limited mastery and use of learning acquired. Limited MEL capacity also constrained the project's ability to track application of learning.
18. At the level of the technical team, there are increasing demands on their expertise and time, and new areas of work such as GHG inventories and MRV require expertise, which is currently lacking internally, which means that dependence on international consultants will continue beyond the CBIT project.
19. Delays due to external factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 elections, and administrative transitions, required two non-cost extensions. The project adapted effectively through virtual engagement and flexible scheduling, but some field activities and data collection efforts were postponed.
20. Limited engagement from the private sector also posed a challenge. The development of the private sector strategy is a first step but requires significant engagement for private sector to play its role effectively in addressing the country's climate challenges and its efforts to transition towards and green climate resilient economy.
21. While the project incorporated gender and inclusivity measures, the participation of persons with disabilities remained limited. Additionally, there is a noticeable gap between national/regional interventions and the needs of local communities, particularly at the village and chiefdom levels, in enhancing transparency.
22. In view of the successes and drivers, but also the challenges faced during implementation, the reviewer concludes that **the performance of this project is Satisfactory.**

Lessons Learned

23. Lesson 1: Strong institutional anchoring and government ownership are critical for sustainability.
24. Lesson 2: Digital platforms improve data coordination, but adoption requires ongoing support.
25. Lesson 3: Capacity-building efforts must be paired with sustainability measures
26. Lesson 4: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) should capture both quantitative and qualitative data to assess real impact.
27. Lesson 5: Flexibility and adaptive management are essential for project resilience.

28. Lesson 6: Multi-stakeholder engagement enhances buy-in and likelihood of impact.
29. Lesson 7: Climate transparency is a key enabler for climate finance mobilization.
30. Lesson 8: Engagement with children and academia is crucial for sustainable behavioural change and addressing the national capacity gap

Recommendations

31. Recommendation 1: Ensure that climate data transparency and reporting are mandated under the Climate Change Act.
32. Recommendation 2: Strengthen resource mobilization efforts and link climate transparency with funding opportunities.
33. Recommendation 3: Advocate for CBIT phase 2 to further consolidate transparency gains + institutional linkages with academia to integrate lessons into curriculum and address national capacity gap on emerging technical areas (HE education, technical institutions and lower)
34. Recommendation 4: Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems to assess qualitative changes in climate transparency practices.
35. Recommendation 5: Strengthen gender and social inclusion mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation in climate transparency efforts.

Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the CBIT Sierra Leone Project, set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, for the criteria of Effectiveness (Achievement of project outcomes), Sustainability (correction of the criterion's overall weighted rating) have been adjusted as a result. The overall project performance is validated at the **'Satisfactory'** level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be **'Highly Satisfactory'** (see Annex XIII).

I. INTRODUCTION

36. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[3] and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual[4], the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes:

    - to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and
    - to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project.

37. The TR covers the period from approval of the project until completion. The Project Cooperation Agreement was signed in June 2020 and the implementation period spanned from October 2020 to June 2024. This included two project revisions in February and October 2022. Furthermore, the TR also assesses the degree to which the overall project budget of US$ 1,544,495 (inclusive of GEF grant and co-finance) was effectively mobilised and spent.

38. The project was financed through the 6th Global Environment Facility (GEF) Operational Programme as a Medium-Sized Project and forms part of the GEF Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Trust Fund. This project is aligned with the country's nationally determined contributions. Sierra Leone's updated NDC aims to transition to a green economy through a combination of mitigation and adaptation strategies. It focuses on reducing GHG emissions, building resilience, and addressing key gaps in the initial NDC, such as traceability, institutional capacity, and coordination. The NDC Implementation Plan outlines actions for 2025 and 2030, emphasizing stronger institutional arrangements, enhanced capacity, and improved monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV)[5]. There is a key role for the Ministry of gender and children's affairs to ensure that gender perspectives are introduced into the implementation. Procurement and delivery are also expected to be aligned with the Public Procurement Act of 2016 which regulates and harmonise public procurement processes within the public service[6]. The Act seeks to ensure transparency, efficiency, and fairness in public procurement.

39. Finally, the project aligns with UNEP's[7] aims to address the three major environmental crises—climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution—by promoting sustainable development pathways. More specifically, the project is guided by UNEP's Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023. Its relevant stated outcomes are designed to ensure that "Countries and stakeholders have increased capacity, finance and access to technologies to deliver on the adaptation and mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement" and that "State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement". At design, the project was guided by the UN Environment Medium-Term Strategy (2018-2021) Climate change sub programme goals.

    - Mitigation Expected Accomplishment: Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies;
    - Adaptation Expected Accomplishment: Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans, which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation.

40. As mentioned above, the project review is implemented for accountability and learning purposes. The findings will be directly relevant to the donor agency - GEF, UNEP and EPA-SL. Other government agencies such as the national MET office, sectoral ministries such as energy, transport and aviation, environment and climate change, gender and children's affairs, local government, agriculture, trade and industries, and others also stand to gain learning from the TR results. Other non-state actors such as academia and civil society organisations, could also draw lessons and learning from the intervention for their own decision makings.

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[3] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114

[4] https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752

[5] United Nations Environment Programme Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC) (2024). Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Implementation Plan, Sierra Leone., Copenhagen, Denmark.

[6] CBIT Project Procurement plan

[7] Medium-Term Strategy 2022—2025 The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for tackling climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution and waste from 2022—2025.

II. REVIEW METHODS

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

1. UNEP's review model/approach

Definitions of review criteria

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

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

Matrix of ratings levels for each criterion

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

Strategic questions

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

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

46. For projects funded by the GEF, findings from the review are to be uploaded in the GEF Portal. To support this process, review findings related to the 5 topics of interest to the GEF are summarised in Annex XI. The intended action/results on the 5 topics were described in the GEF CEO Endorsement and Approval documents. The 5 topics are: i) performance against GEF's Core Indicator Targets; ii) engagement of stakeholders; iii) gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; iv) implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach.

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

2. Review Process

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

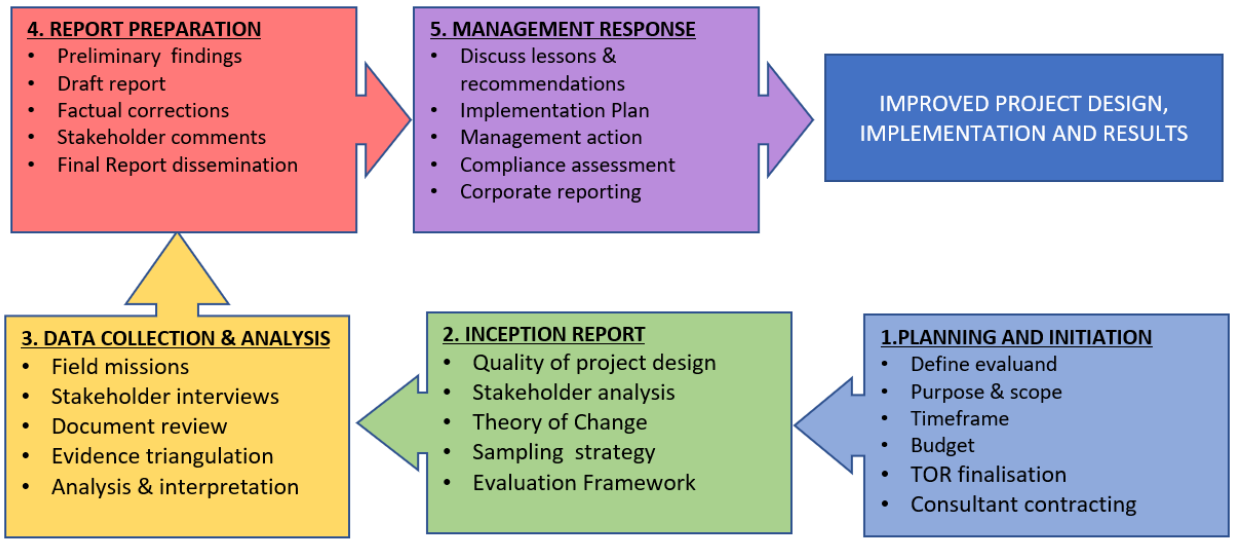

Figure 1: UNEP Review Process

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

3. Data Collection

3.1. Primary data sources

Sampling strategy

49. The review adopted a purposive sampling approach[9] to identify potential participants in the TR. Purposive sampling allowed the reviewer to select participants by sector, those who possess specific knowledge, experiences, participation in the project and roles, gender and location. For instance, stakeholders with direct involvement in climate transparency efforts, such as government officials, NGO representatives, and technical experts were identified. Additionally, this approach enhanced Depth and Richness of Data through selecting information-rich cases that provide detailed and nuanced insights. For instance, field visits to Port Loko enabled the review to interact with beneficiaries in the regions, women and youth, to understand their unique experiences and challenges in participating in climate transparency initiatives. Finally, this sampling approach was more practical and cost-effective than probability sampling, especially when working with limited resources or hard-to-reach populations. It allowed the reviewer to focus on a smaller, targeted sample rather than attempting to survey a large, random population. With all these considerations, the number of potential respondents was

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

selected in collaboration with the PMU team during the project inception phase ensuring a broad representation across all sectors influenced by the project while balancing availability, logistical and time constraints.

Data collection tools

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

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

52. *Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):* several FGDs were conducted with stakeholders during the field mission to Freetown and Port Loko with project staff, government agencies, beneficiaries (women and youth representatives from national NDC committees from three districts[10]) to discuss the project's contributions to national climate transparency and capacity-building.

53. *Field visit to Port Loko Region:* the aim of the field visit was to explore the experience of stakeholders in the regions regarding the project. It provided the opportunity to mainstream the views of women, youth and local authorities in the process.

54. A total of 35 persons (67% male and 33% female) participated in face to face and online data collection out of 36 contacted representing a 97% response rate. The full list of stakeholders consulted is presented in annex III, disaggregated by role, sector and gender. Figure 2 below presents the summary.

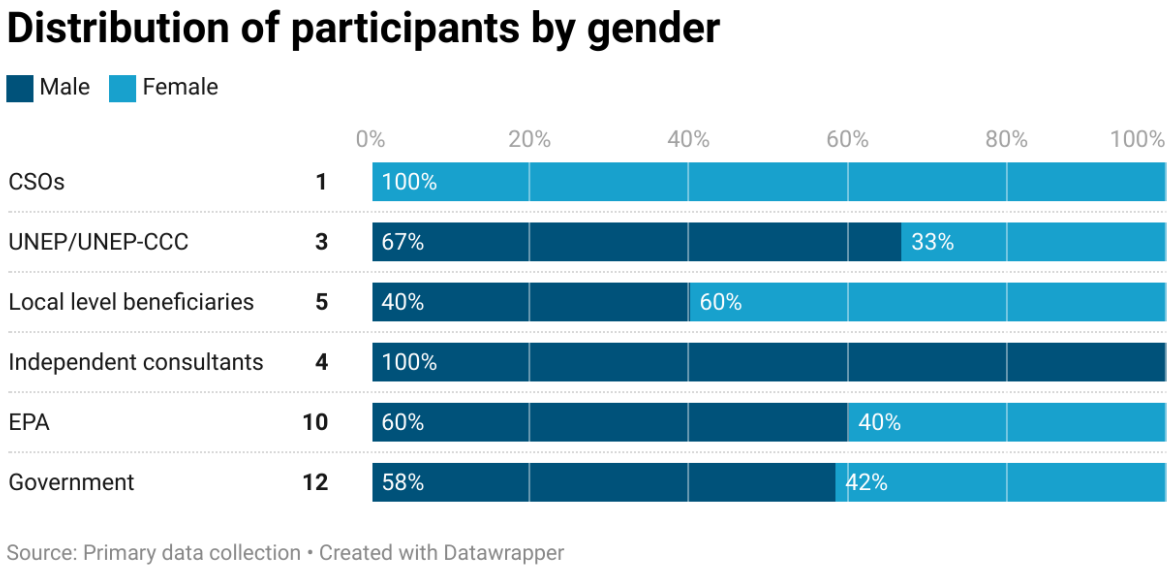

Figure 2: Distribution of participants by gender in interviews and focus group discussions

55. *Online quantitative perception survey of stakeholders:* A total of 31 persons took part in the online survey out of 33 contacted through the PMU distribution list, representing a 94% response rate. Out of 31 responses received, 30 provided consent to participate, while one person declined to complete the survey. The analysis is therefore based on 30 complete responses. The online survey enabled the reviewer to obtain quantitative information regarding stakeholders' perspectives regarding the delivery of the project. This enhanced inclusiveness as it enabled those who could not take part in the face-to-face meetings to participate. The survey also included open ended questions, enabling respondents to also surface their views, identify perceived challenges and formulate recommendations for the future. Figure 3 shows the distribution of participants in the online survey. As expected,

[10] Out of 22 districts nationally

most respondents were from government or state agencies considering that this was primarily an institutional strengthening project. The mix of respondents provided a diversity of views and perspectives.

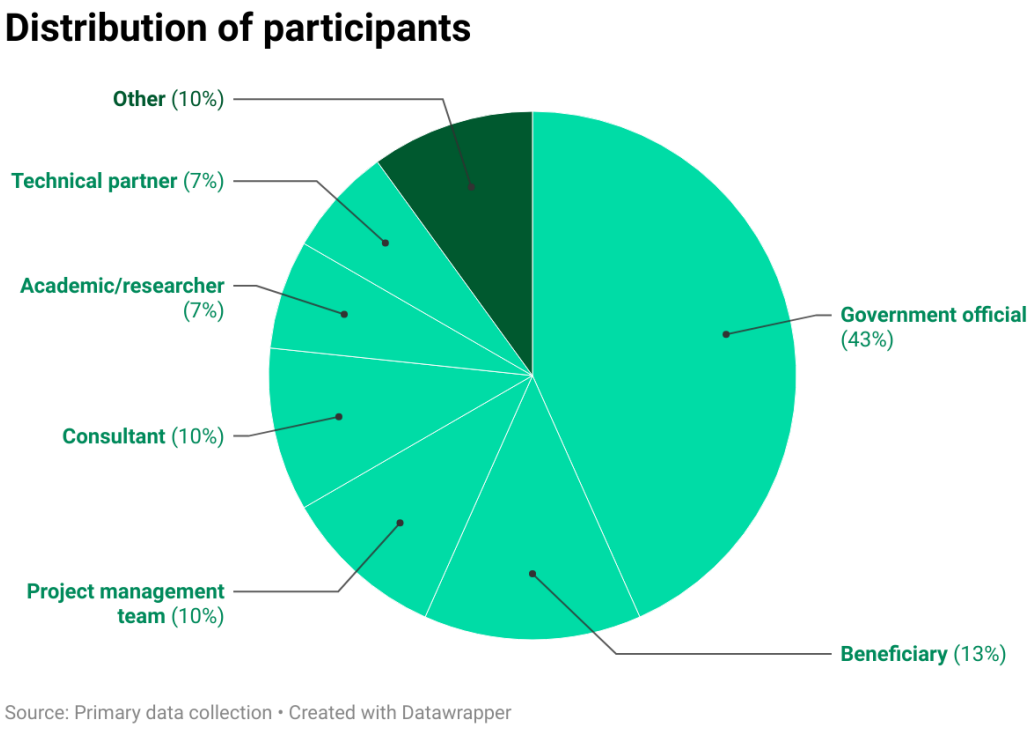

Figure 3: Distribution of participants in the online survey

56. Primary data collection took place between the 17th of January and the 26th of February 2025. Throughout the data collection process, respect for ethics and human rights perspectives were applied. Verbatim notes were taken for all interviews and focus group discussions ensuring a detailed documentation of discussions throughout. This has ensured that all insights have been documented for analysis. All pictures were taken, and other information gathered after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to relevant UNEG guidelines and UN standards of conduct.

Actions taken to increase response

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

3.2. Secondary Sources

58. Initial documentary review commenced at inception continued during data collection as additional information became available. A documentary review helps the reviewer to understand the context, objectives, and theoretical framework of the programme. This ensures that the review is grounded in the programme's original intent and context, reducing the risk of misinterpreting its purpose or outcomes[11]. Furthermore, this process provides triangulation of data, which enhances the credibility and validity of review findings[12]. Finally, the review helps identify lessons learned and best practices from the programme's implementation – evidence what worked well, what did not, and why[13]. The documents reviewed included the following:

- Annual and semi-annual project reports
- Project design documents
- Audit reports
- Training materials and records

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

- Documentation related to stakeholder engagement
- Project publications
- Relevant peer reviewed and grey literature online
- UNEP evaluation guidelines and directives.

59. This review provided a comprehensive understanding of the project's progress, enabling cross-referencing of data from interviews, FGDs and the online survey.

60. The list of documents consulted throughout the review process is presented under annex F.

3.3. Limitations and mitigation strategy

61. The limitations of the methodology are those of assessments based on qualitative and quantitative tools. Secondary and primary sources whether qualitative or quantitative in nature have their respective challenges. The former, especially in the case of progress reports from which most of the statistical information is drawn, refer to authors who are not independent, in this case internal staff involved in the implementation of the programme, who may therefore develop biases unknowingly or intentionally. The primary sources, on the other hand, even if carefully chosen and inclusive, remain a non-random qualitative sample, and therefore always a questionable representation of the general population. In other words, the extent to which the views of one or more actors are objective and/or significant of what happened in the programme as a whole can always be questioned.

62. Consequently, the review combined field visits, interviews, group discussions, and administration of an online survey of stakeholders and therefore benefit from the advantages of mixed methods. An additional strategy for mitigating the challenges identified lied in the rigour of a systematic triangulation of sources and data. In this respect, at a first level of internal confrontation, the documents are first examined in terms of their intrinsic coherence in order to determine their own quality and the reliability likely to result from them. Then, on the same subject, the different documents available are compared with each other to identify a second level of consistency and possible discrepancies. The primary data are in turn called upon and their indications compared with what emerges from the secondary data, to determine a third level of confidence.

63. Given that the reviewer had a week in country, the region of Port Loko was prioritised for the field visit for its proximity to Freetown. The focus on convenience and access means that the views might not be representative of all regions. However, by comparing and triangulating evidence from this region with existing evidence from other sources, it mitigates the potential bias. The reviewer has prioritised quality over quantity of stakeholders involved in the review. In this direction, the most critical and priority stakeholders have been included. The high response rates secured demonstrate a high level of engagement and commitment from selected stakeholders. Flexibility was built into data collection including the use of WhatsApp, organising interviews in the evenings to respond to gender needs of respondents. The use of Creole by the reviewer during field visits also contributed to bolster interactions and inclusiveness, ensuring that potentially excluded groups such as women and youth respondents expressed themselves freely and fully as they saw fit.

4. Data analysis

64. We have used content analysis in the review of secondary data. The reviewer implemented a thorough and systematic approach to verify the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data provided by the project. Accuracy checks and consistency analyses were performed on the data, focusing on key performance indicators and output measures to ensure reliability and internal consistency. Thematic analysis was conducted on the primary data in line with the TR criteria and sub-questions highlighted in the TR matrix while being sufficiently flexible to develop new themes based on emerging issues in the data. We proceeded to triangulate data from multiple sources highlighted in table 1 to reach evidence-based conclusions. Table 2 below highlights the framework for analysis, criteria and key information sources utilised to address the TR questions.

Table 2: Analysis Framework

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

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

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

67. Review findings have been presented in accessible forms including tables, figures, graphs etc. All figures were generated using data wrapper which enables high quality and potentially interactive graphics to be presented. The assignment. Quotes and testimonials from respondents have also been included to showcase the lived experiences of beneficiaries. By working closely with the UNEP Task manager and PMU team, we have ensured that the recommendations are co-created and consequently can be fully utilised by the project team and stakeholders for their own decision-making requirements.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

68. Sierra Leone, identified as one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by the United Nations, faces profound challenges in its pursuit of sustainable development and climate resilience. Sierra Leone is ranked among the lowest-performing countries in human development, according to the recently released 2023-24 Human Development Index (HDI) by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). In the latest report, Sierra Leone ranks 184th out of 193 countries, with an HDI score of 0.458 for 2022. This represents a decline from its 2021 position, where it was ranked 181st out of 195 countries with a score of 0.477[14].

69. Decades of civil conflict, episodes of the Ebola pandemic, widespread poverty, and fragile economic structures have significantly hampered progress. The Covid 19 pandemic outbreak further compounded these challenges, reversing many of the developmental gains achieved since the end of the civil war in 2002. These historical and structural vulnerabilities intersect with the growing impacts of climate change, making Sierra Leone one of the most climate-vulnerable nations globally. In fact, according to the Notre Dame Gain country index, the country has a high vulnerability score and low readiness score, ranking it the 11th most vulnerable country and the 155th most ready country out of 187. The country therefore has both a great need for investment and innovations to improve readiness and a great urgency for action[15].

70. Agriculture plays a crucial role in ensuring food security, poverty reduction and improving public health. Agriculture employs more than half of the country's formal and informal workforce and accounts for about half of GDP and is a women dominated sector[16]. Unfortunately, the sector and livelihoods are increasingly vulnerable to climate change, which poses significant challenges to food security and economic stability[17]. In fact, about 788,000 (9.3 percent of Sierra Leone's population) were food insecure in January 2023, expected to have risen to 1.1 million (13 percent of the population) in August 2023; with those in extreme (food) poverty estimated at 12.9 percent (about 974,000) of the total population[18].

71. The impacts of climate change manifest through erratic weather patterns, affecting crop yields and livestock production. Farmers have adopted various coping strategies, yet the underlying vulnerabilities remain pronounced. Extreme weather events, such as the catastrophic mudslide in Freetown in August 2017, underscore the devastating human and environmental toll of climate impacts. The mudslide killed over 500 people, displaced thousands, and triggered a cholera outbreak, highlighting the country's inadequate capacity to adapt to and manage climate-induced disasters. Similarly, rising sea levels threaten coastal areas, exacerbating flooding, erosion, and habitat loss. These impacts are expected to intensify in the future, even though Sierra Leone's contribution to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions remains negligible. Figure 4 below highlights the annual natural hazard occurrence of the country between 1900-2018.

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[14] UNDP (2024) Vice President of Sierra Leone launches Global Human Development Report, Vice President of Sierra Leone launches Global Human Development Report | United Nations Development Programme

[15] Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative.2024, Rank countries by ND-GAIN Country Index, Vulnerability and Readiness. https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/rankings/

[16] Government of Sierra Leone (2021) Nationally Determined Contributions.

[17] Morrison, Lahai. (2024). Exploring the Link Between Climate Change and Farming in Rural and Peri-Urban Communities in Sierra Leone. doi: 10.32388/x9f4bt.2

[18] Government of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024 – 2030 A Transformative Acceleration Agenda for Food Security, Human Capital Development and Job Creation, https://mof.gov.sl/documents/medium-term-national-development-plan-2024-2030/

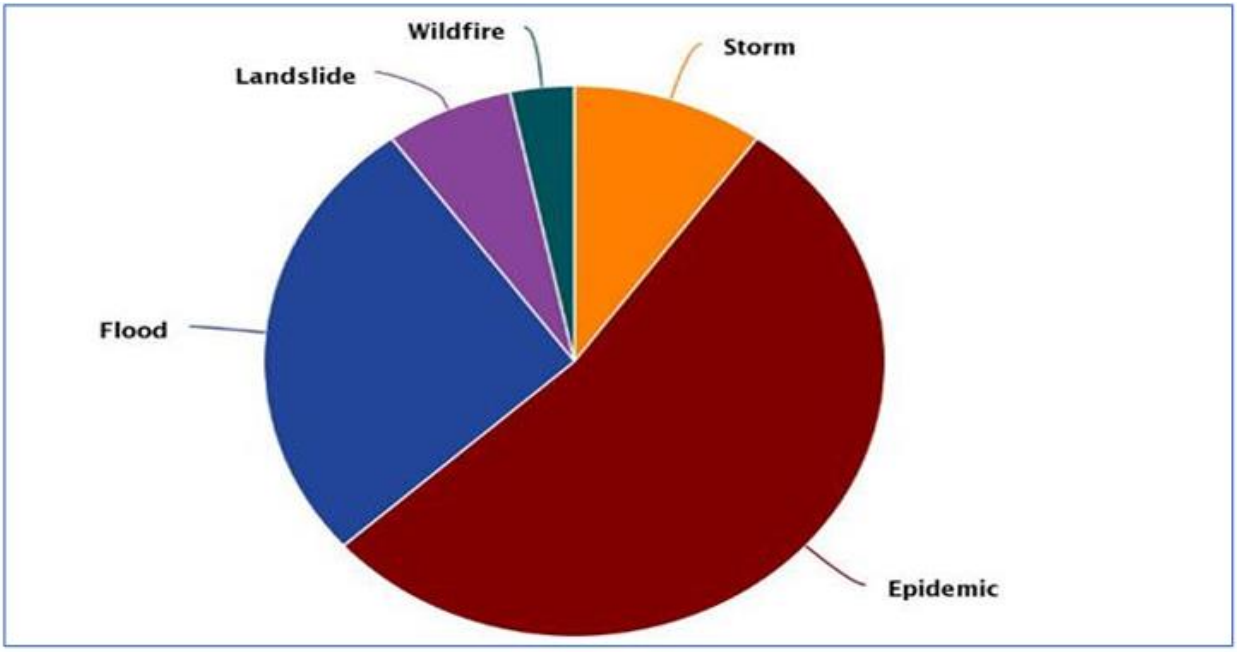

Figure 4: Annual natural hazard occurrence for 1900-2018

Source: NDC 2021

72. Sierra Leone aims to reduce vulnerability by half by 2030 through increased risk awareness, improvements in rule compliance, increased institutional capacity and an integrated approach to adaptation in development policy and programs across sectors and scales19. Enabler 3 of the national development plan highlights the national commitment to advancing climate resilience and environmental action[20]. It has also demonstrated a strong commitment to international climate frameworks, including the Paris Agreement. The country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) outline a vision for integrating mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development in line with its national priorities and circumstances[21]. The NDC aims to achieve long-term mitigation goals by reducing CO_2 emissions by 5% by 2025, 10% by 2030, and 25% by 2050, while transitioning to a low-emission development pathway[22]. This will focus on priority sectors, including implementing REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and fostering innovation and technology transfer to enable sustainable advancements in energy, waste management, transport, and agriculture. Partnerships with the private sector for technology transfer will open new markets, create jobs, and stimulate economic growth while reducing GHG emissions. For adaptation, the objective, aligned with the iNAP, is to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience, and reduce vulnerability by 50% by 2030. The NDC emphasizes integrating climate considerations into sustainable development strategies to build local resilience and achieve environmental benefits at the national level. To maximize impact, the Government of Sierra Leone will prioritize actions that create synergies between national and subnational levels, ensuring cohesive and effective implementation of the proposed plans.

73. The NDCs and iNAP acknowledges the need for addressing the country's challenges related to its approach to climate reporting and transparency. Previous efforts, such as the development of National Communications (NCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), were implemented through a project-based model. These initiatives relied heavily on external academic consultants and lacked institutional integration, leaving government agencies with minimal capacity to sustain or build upon the work completed. For instance, the Third National Communication (TNC), submitted in 2018, was managed by a task force comprising ten individuals working in sectoral groups, including energy, industrial processes, agriculture,

[19] NDC Partnership 2024. Sierra Leone, https://ndcpartnership.org/country/sle

[20] Government of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024 – 2030 A Transformative Acceleration Agenda for Food Security, Human Capital Development and Job Creation, https://mof.gov.sl/documents/medium-term-national-development-plan-2024-2030/

[21] Morrison, Lahai. (2024). Exploring the Link Between Climate Change and Farming in Rural and Peri-Urban Communities in Sierra Leone. doi: 10.32388/x9f4bt.2

[22] Government of Sierra Leone (2021) Sierra Leone First Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (Updated submission), https://unfccc.int/documents/497896

forestry, and waste. However, this approach did not foster long-term capacity-building or institutional ownership[23].

74. The data management processes during the TNC preparation highlighted critical gaps. Sierra Leone relied on default emission factors and struggled with limited access to reliable activity data. The absence of a legal framework for data collection and management further impeded progress, as institutions lacked the mandate or mechanisms to enforce systematic data gathering. The Meteorological Agency, responsible for GHG inventory preparation, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), tasked with coordinating climate responses, were constrained by limited technical expertise and resources. Consequently, the national climate transparency framework remains fragmented and underdeveloped, unable to meet the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) requirements under the Paris Agreement. As part of the Paris Agreement, all countries agreed to an enhanced transparency framework for action and support, with built-in flexibility for those developing country Parties that need it. The scope of implementation of Sierra Leone intended contributions on mitigation and adaptation is contingent upon the provision of adequate resources by the international community (financial resources, capacity building and the transfer of technologies). In view of this, there is a need to strengthen Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the different components of the Paris Climate Agreement.

75. The Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) supports developing countries to build institutional and technical capacity to meet enhanced transparency requirements as defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. The CBIT has three aims: to strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities 86 countries as of September 21, 2022; provide relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement; and Assist in the improvement of transparency over time[24]. In view of this opportunity, the government designed the CBIT project to address the gaps and challenges identified. It aimed to transition Sierra Leone from a fragmented, project-based approach to a programmatic and institutionalized framework for climate transparency. This shift is essential to sustain and scale the progress made in previous initiatives. By strengthening the EPA and Meteorological Agency, establishing legal and institutional arrangements for data collection, and developing sectoral guidelines, the project aimed to lay the groundwork for a robust National Climate Transparency System. This system would enable Sierra Leone to fulfill its commitments under the Paris Agreement, including the development of high-quality GHG inventories, tracking NDC implementation progress, and contributing to the global stocktake process.

B. Objectives and components

76. In response to the challenges identified above, the CBIT project seeks to achieve the following objectives as presented in table 3 below.

Table 3: CBIT project outcomes and outputs

Project Outcomes	Project Outputs
Outcome 1 Sierra Leone adopts upgraded institutional arrangements and tools to track NDC implementation in accordance with the UNFCCC modalities, procedures and guidelines	Output 1.1 Institutional arrangements for data collection and management established under EPA's coordination and operationalized in key ministries, agencies, departments and other stakeholders Output 1.2 Sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies and indicators for mitigation and adaptation developed and distributed. Output 1.3 Continuous quality control and assurance program for Sierra Leone's transparency instruments designed and operationalized (e.g. National Communications, Biennial Update Reports)

[23] See prodoc
[24] GEF (2022) The Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT), GEF_CBIT_2022_11.pdf

Project Outcomes	Project Outputs
Outcome 2 Key Ministries, Agencies, Departments and other stakeholders use the NDC transparency system	Output 2.1 Data teams from the three prioritized sectors trained in collection, processing and management of data Output 2.2 Peer-to-peer learning activities in the region for key stakeholders undertaken and through participation in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform Output 2.3 NDC online platform for collecting and managing all NDC information, including data about climate finance, developed and hosted by EPA

77. The project seeks to improve the coordination and sustainable development of the monitoring, reporting and verification of national mitigation and adaptation actions. It seeks to build and strengthen Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the Paris Climate Agreement through the development of an effective transparency framework. The transparency framework will enable the government of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders to track impacts in prioritized sectors, namely the energy, IPPU, AFOLU and waste sectors, and provide a concrete basis for the country to meet its mitigation and adaptation targets and achieve a low carbon climate resilient development pathway. It is also expected that a transparency system tracking these efforts will have the potential to unlock additional sources of climate finance for Sierra Leone.

78. The vertical logic of intervention of the project was analysed to be sound and feasible to achieve. The six formulated outputs are sufficient to deliver the two project outcomes. The achievement of the outcomes was predicated on a number of assumptions including the availability of data, retention of capacities, buy in from national actors, willingness to accept and share information, political stability and coherent participation of ministries, agencies and relevant stakeholders. Transitioning from the project outcomes towards contributing to achieve national climate goals, GHG emissions reductions, application of NAP, and resilience to climate change require sufficient funding, maintained national commitment towards the Paris Climate Agreement.

79. The horizontal logic consisted of objective and outcome level indicators only, with accompanying means of verification. No output level indicators were formulated. The objective and outcome indicators were mainly geared towards demonstrating progress against CBIT measuring rubrics. For the project objective, progress was to be measured against a rubric of four measures (Improvement in the quality of Institutional capacity for transparency based on GEF score 1 to 4 as per Annex IV of CBIT programming directions with a target of 2 - *Designated transparency institution exists, but with limited staff and capacity to support and coordinate implementation of transparency activities under Article 13 of Paris Agreement. Institution lacks authority or mandate to coordinate transparency activities under Article 13*). This target recognised the very low starting position and weak capacities of national institutions. Interviews with UNEP and EPA teams suggested that the main aim of the project was to build the basis for future action, without need for being overly ambitious. As one respondent mentioned, the idea *was just to help move the needle in the right direction reading institutional strengthening on climate transparency framework*. The details of the rubrics can be seen in table 7 section D2. Achievement of Outcomes.

80. For outcome 1, the indicator consisted of a rubric of 1-10 on the CBIT MRV systems qualitative rating levels (target of 4 - *Measurement systems are strong in a limited set of activities however, analyses still need improvement; periodic monitoring and reporting although not yet cost/time efficient; verification is only upon specific request and limited*), while for outcome 2, two indicators measuring perceived ability and use of the NDC platform were formulated. The project could have developed further qualitative indicators to assess the level of use an application of learning by different stakeholders as well as more detailed output disaggregated indicators. The following output indicators were suggested during inception.

81. *For component 1:*
    - *# of MoUs with institutional partners*
    - *# of persons reached with sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies and indicators (disaggregated by gender)*
    - *% of stakeholders reporting improved quality of transparency instruments (e.g. National Communications, Biennial Update Reports)*

82. *For component 2:*

- *# of Data team members trained disaggregated by gender and sector;*
- *# of people participating in learning disaggregated by gender;*
- *NDC online platform established and operational.*

83. The means and sources of verification were generally sound and sufficient. In the absence of any other qualitative measures, the need for outcome harvesting or process tracing to assess the levels of adoption and use of the tools adopted were not included in the results framework. The horizontal logic of the project was complemented by a detailed costed M&E plan. The assessment of project M&E and reporting can be found in section G.

84. Considering that there was no theory of change narrative in the project document, a new narrative has been formulated under section IV, showcasing the pathways from the outputs towards achievement of the outcomes, objectives, assumptions and the necessary enabling factors.

C. Stakeholders

85. The CBIT project in Sierra Leone targets a diverse group of stakeholders, organised based on their interests, influence, roles, and expected contributions. Central government agencies, such as the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS), serve as key change agents with significant influence and responsibility for climate change coordination, policy formulation, and the development of the transparency system. The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) hosts the climate change secretariat responsible for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The EPA is the Executing Agency and is the key actor. A key actor is the Ministry of Finance which also serves as the Chair the National Climate Change Finance Steering Committee and is engaged in the implementation of the project.

86. Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency and Statistics Sierra Leone will play critical roles in generating and managing reliable data for emissions tracking and climate analysis. Sierra Leone's Meteorological Agency also services as the Focal Point for the UNFCC. Statistics Sierra Leone is the government agency responsible for collecting, managing, analyzing, disseminating, and setting quality standards for statistical data. Sectoral ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security (MAFFS), Ministry of Transport and Aviation (MTA), as well as the Ministry of Energy will provide sector-specific data and technical input, contributing to the integration of mitigation and adaptation strategies into their operations. The National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) and Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) will focus on sustainable resource management and research to support climate-friendly policies. They are expected to provide data for the AFOLU sectors.

87. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society groups, and local communities act as essential partners in implementing grassroots adaptation and mitigation measures, ensuring community engagement and inclusiveness. The project also emphasizes the involvement of marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons living with disabilities, aligning with the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) to incorporate gender perspectives into Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) processes. There is a key role for the Ministry of gender and children's affairs which ensures that gender perspectives are introduced into the implementation. Sub-national actors, such as regions and municipalities, will support a decentralized approach, anchoring the project's impact at all societal levels and fostering local ownership.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

88. Figure 5 below illustrates the roles and responsibilities of the various bodies involved in the implementation of the project.

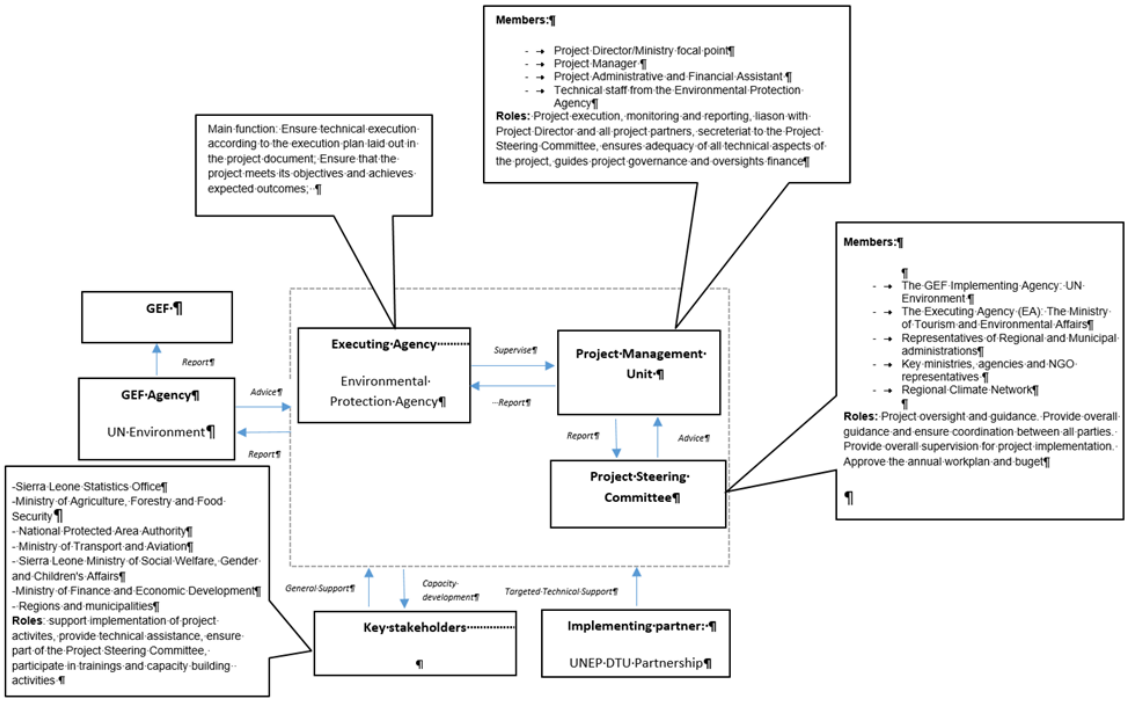

Figure 5: Organigram of the project with key project stakeholders

89. Project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) acting as the GEF Implementing Agency. It provided overall project supervision and guidance to ensure the project is aligned with UNEP and GEF standards. UNEP also oversaw financial disbursement and reporting to GEF and coordinated technical support through UNEP-CCC for the development of the NDC platform, guidelines and tools for data collection and reporting.

90. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone was the Executing Agency. EPA led and coordinated the implementation of this project, ensuring the day-to-day implementation, administration, monitoring and reporting. This included coordinating the establishment of institutional arrangements for a robust national system for tracking progress of NDC implementation, GHG inventories and adaptation actions. It also ensured that meetings were held and facilitated communications and information flow among partner institutions and other stakeholders. It played a central role to coordinate implementing partners including government institutions and departments, and research institutions and universities to ensure data collection, analysis and publication on the NDC platform. The project leveraged contributions from EPA (e.g., office space, vehicles, and staff) to optimize resources. For instance, the procurement and financial management units played a key role in ensuring efficient financial management of the project, through ensuring compliance with national procurement act as well as internal financial management guidelines at the EPA.

91. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established by the ministry of environment and climate change. It was composed of 14 representatives (57% male and 43% female) from key government ministries, CSOs, private sector, and UNEP. The PSC is chaired by the ministry of environment and climate chance, while Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency acts as co-chair. The project manager of CBIT served as the secretary of the PSC. Its first meeting took place on the 30.11.2020 with the participation of 14 persons (8 male and six female). This meeting also served as the inauguration meeting for the PSC, endorsing the ToRs and workplan for 2020/2021. Members were briefed on the project and their functions. The quorum agreed that the number of meetings expected per year to be increased to three instead of two. The PSC's role includes providing strategic direction and oversight, approving annual work plans and reviews project progress, ensuring alignment with national and international climate objectives. In total eight PSC meetings were organized during the implementation of the project.

92. The Project Management Unit (PMU) include Team Members of the project, the Project Manager, the Finance Officer, and the Administrative Assistant. The PMU oversees day-to-day project operations, including financial management, procurement, and activity coordination. This also included drawing on technical expertise from the organization such as from the climate change secretariat to provide support towards implementation. There was seamless coordination between the PMU and the technical teams within the organization contributing to the successful delivery of the project. This open and transparent interaction between the technical and project

management teams facilitated the drafting of the project's narrative, financial reports and other project deliverables and external communications.

93. Section I3. Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation, presents an analysis of overall stakeholder engagement and cooperation in the project.

E. Changes in design during implementation

94. The implementation of the CBIT project in Sierra Leone was shaped by several external challenges that required adaptive measures and adjustments throughout its duration. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on project activities, particularly in the early stages. Stakeholder engagement was also disrupted as many participants, especially from regional areas, faced difficulties in joining virtual meetings due to limited internet connectivity. Lockdowns and social distancing measures further affected planned field activities and institutional capacity-building events, leading to the project's extension until June 2024 to allow the project to recover lost time and complete key activities. While virtual engagements were introduced as an alternative, the transition to online platforms presented challenges that affected the depth and effectiveness of stakeholder participation.

95. The political climate, particularly the June 2023 presidential elections, introduced additional difficulties. Stakeholder meetings were paused due to concerns that they might be misinterpreted as political gatherings, while regional stakeholder dialogues on MRV and other engagements were postponed until after the elections. The national launch meeting for the NDC implementation plan, initially planned for the capital city, was also reconsidered due to concerns over political sensitivities. Additionally, a planned peer-to-peer learning trip to Ghana had to be postponed because senior civil servants were restricted from traveling abroad during the election period. These disruptions required careful rescheduling of activities to ensure they could be conducted without political interference.

96. Administrative and procurement delays further slowed project execution. The transition of UNEP-DTU Partnership (UDP) to UNEP CCC required administrative and legal adjustments, delaying the signing of agreements and disbursement of funds. These delays affected the recruitment of consultants and the procurement of necessary resources, as funds had to be transferred multiple times during the transition before implementation could resume smoothly. National procurement procedures also created challenges in securing international expertise, leading to additional efforts in identifying local and regional experts who could step in and support project activities.

97. The project also underwent strategic adjustments in response to changing circumstances. Initially designed to support the review of the 2016 NDCs, the project adapted when UNDP's Climate Promise Project funded the NDC review in 2021. This shift allowed CBIT funds to be reallocated to develop a private sector engagement strategy, addressing an emerging need identified during the review process. These adjustments ensured that the project remained relevant and responsive while maintaining its core objectives. Through these adaptive measures, the project successfully navigated multiple disruptions and ensured that key activities were completed within the extended timeframe.

98. Further details are provided under findings, **section C on Nature of External context.**

F. Project financing

99. The CBIT project in Sierra Leone was financed through a combination of GEF grant funding and in-kind co-financing contributions.
    - The total planned project budget at approval was US$ 1,544,495, with actual expenditures reported at US$ 1,412,742 as of 30 June 2024 (inclusive of co-finance mobilized).
    - The GEF grant allocation amounted to US$ 1,344,495, of which US$ 1,212,742 had been spent by the same date.
    - The project also secured US$ 200,000 in in-kind co-financing, matching the planned contribution.

Table 4: Summary of project financial information

Planned Items	US$ Amount	Expenditure summary	US$ Amount
Planned total project budget at approval:	US$ 1,544,495	Actual total expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024	US$ 1,412,742
GEF grant allocation:	US$ 1,344,495	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024	US$ 1,212,742
Planned co-financing:	In-kind: US$ 200,000	Secured co-financing as of 30 June 2024	In-kind: US$ 200,000

Source: PIR 2024

100. Further details on financial management and project efficiency can be found under sections E and F respectively.

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

101. The Theory of Change for the CBIT project in Sierra Leone (see original ToC diagram in figure 6) addresses the nation's pressing need for a sustainable, transparent climate reporting framework in line with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement. Sierra Leone faces significant barriers to effective climate action, including fragmented data management systems, weak institutional capacity, and limited technical resources. These gaps prevent Sierra Leone from tracking progress on its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), accessing critical climate finance, and making informed policy decisions to strengthen resilience against climate impacts. The project's overarching goal is to establish an integrated transparency system that enables the country to monitor, report, and verify (MRV) climate data effectively, enhancing its ability to track NDC progress, secure climate finance, and make data-driven policy decisions. To achieve this, the Theory of Change follows several pathways, each designed to overcome identified barriers and supported by specific assumptions, mitigation strategies for associated risks, and critical drivers and enablers.

102. The Terminal Reviewer finds that the project's ToC is sound and realistic. The project seeks to achieve two outcomes, through the delivery of 6 project outputs. The related interventions, risks and assumptions are clearly articulated and comprehensive. There are, however, a number of areas where the project design and target setting could have been more realistic in terms of gender equality. At design, the project intended to train 140 staff, 50% men and women. The project has successfully reached beyond this number, demonstrating an underestimation of its ambitions. However, the representation has been far more skewed towards men, more in line with the national representation of men and women in the public service. Additionally, the metrics to assess progress towards project outputs could have been further developed. The suggested improvements at the level of output measurements were mentioned under section B above and summarized in table 3 below.

Table 5: Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Review Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT	Same	
INTERMEDIATE STATES	Same	
PROJECT OUTCOMES	Same	
OUTPUTS *Output 1.1 Institutional arrangements for data collection and management established under EPA's coordination and operationalized in key ministries, agencies, departments and other stakeholders* *Output 1.2 Sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies and indicators for mitigation and adaptation developed and distributed.* *Output 1.3 Continuous quality control and assurance program for Sierra Leone's transparency instruments designed and operationalized (e.g. National Communications, Biennial Update Reports)*	a) Proposed indicators b) # of MoUs with institutional partners c) # of persons reached with sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies and indicators disaggregated by gender d) % of stakeholders reporting improved quality of transparency instruments (e.g. National Communications, Biennial Update Reports)	Project's result framework does not include output level indicators. This would have also enabled the project team to better gender disaggregate results as these are the aspects which the project has full control compared to the delivery of outcomes during the project's lifespan
Output 2.1. Data teams from the three prioritized sectors trained in collection, processing and management of data; *Output 2.2. Peer-to-peer learning activities in the region for key stakeholders undertaken and through participation in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform;* *Output 2.3. NDC online platform for collecting and managing all NDC information, including data about climate finance, developed and hosted by EPA.*	Proposed indicators: a) # of Data team members trained disaggregated by gender and sector; b) # of people participating in learning disaggregated by gender; c) Share of beneficiaries reporting capacity improvements due to peer learning d) NDC online platform established and operational	Project's result framework does not include output level indicators. This would have also enabled the project team to better gender disaggregate results as these are the aspects which the project has full control compared to the delivery of outcomes during the project's lifespan

103. The original theory of change diagram is presented in figure 6 below.

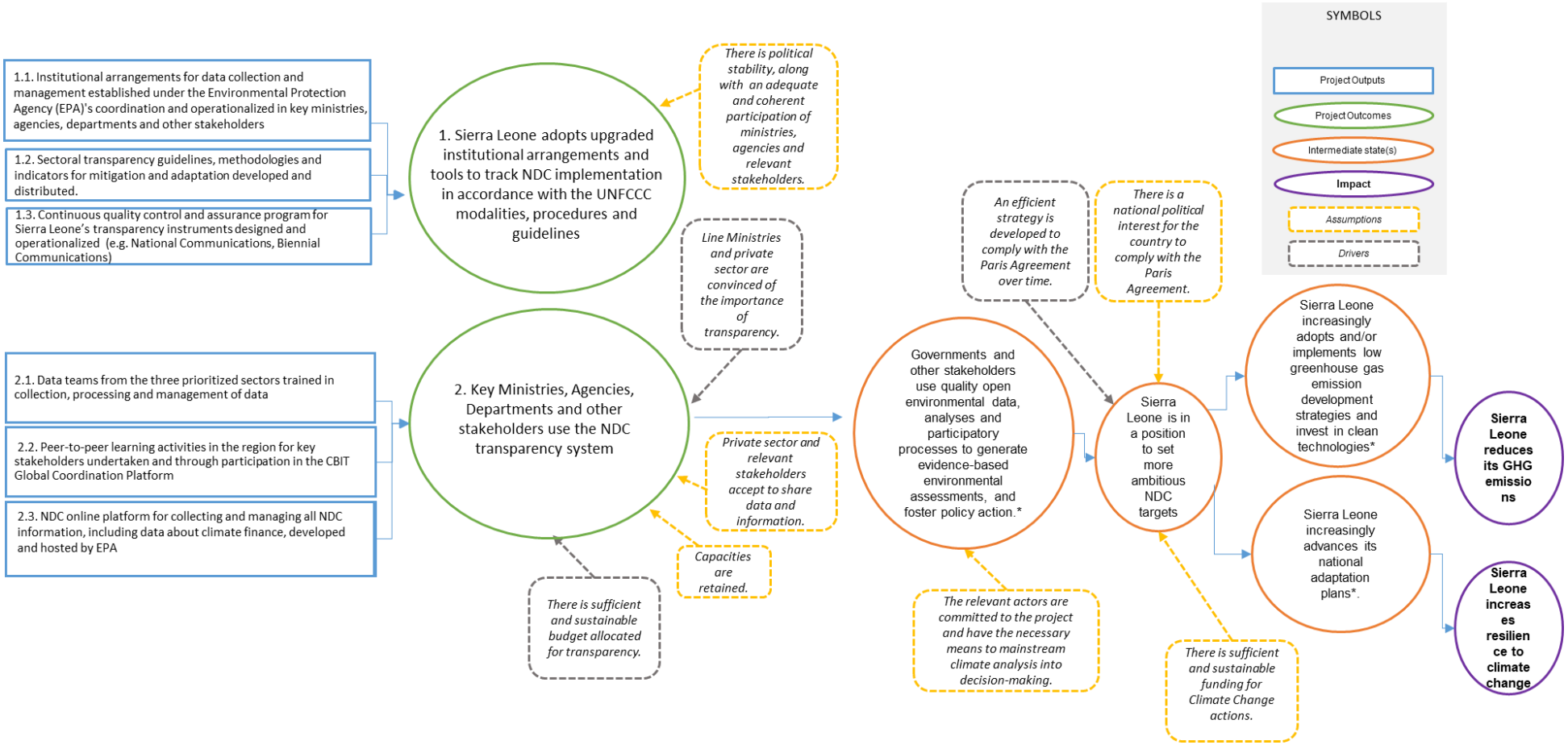

Figure 6: Original ToC

104. As there was no narrative of the ToC in the prodoc, the following narrative has been proposed based on the figure presented in figure 6 aboveand findings emerging from the TR.

105. The project's first causal pathway involves establishing institutional and legal frameworks to create a sustainable foundation for climate transparency in Sierra Leone. By strengthening the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) as the central coordinating body for climate data and formalizing data-sharing and management roles across government ministries, this pathway aims to build cohesive, reliable data practices within government institutions. This effort will include developing regulatory frameworks that mandate data collection and reporting. The success of this pathway assumes high-level political support and willingness from ministries to collaborate, recognizing the mutual benefits of a coordinated transparency system. Risks include potential resistance to data-sharing and high staff turnover, which could disrupt continuity. To address these risks, the project will secure government endorsement, establish formal agreements, and engage stakeholders early to foster ownership and trust. Implementing a "training of trainers" approach further mitigates risks by embedding data management expertise within institutions rather than relying solely on individuals.

106. The second pathway focuses on building stakeholder capacity through a structured training program across government ministries, civil society, and academia, ensuring they can effectively contribute to MRV processes. Employing a "training of trainers" model, the project will develop a pool of national experts who can sustain and expand the system's reach over time. This pathway assumes that trained personnel will remain in their roles, with support from academic institutions to continue skill-building and knowledge-sharing. Risks include high turnover among trained personnel and limited local expertise. The project mitigates these risks by institutionalizing MRV knowledge, emphasizing inter-departmental collaboration, and engaging universities as long-term partners in technical training.

107. A third pathway involves the creation of a centralized, accessible NDC online platform hosted by the EPA. This platform will serve as the primary repository for climate data, facilitating public access, transparency, and ease of use for stakeholders, including government decision-makers. By consolidating climate data, the platform aims to overcome data fragmentation, ensuring that Sierra Leone's climate information is accurate, accessible, and reliable. This pathway assumes the necessary IT infrastructure can be established and maintained by the EPA, and that stakeholders will actively use and contribute to the platform. Risks include limited IT resources, potential technical constraints, and reluctance to adopt a digital system. To address these, the project will conduct a thorough IT needs assessment, ensure the platform is low-bandwidth compatible, and provide technical support to encourage active engagement.

108. In the fourth pathway, standardizing data collection through methodologies and QA/QC processes aims to ensure that climate data meets IPCC standards and aligns with international MRV requirements. This involves developing sector-specific guidelines and a QA/QC program to enhance data accuracy and reliability across ministries and sectors. The pathway assumes that ministries will adhere to established guidelines and that the EPA can effectively coordinate QA/QC processes. Risks include persistent inconsistencies in data practices across sectors and limited technical capacity to conduct QA/QC. To mitigate these, the project will deliver hands-on training and foster inter-departmental workshops to build shared understanding and confidence in data quality.

109. The fifth and final pathway emphasizes public access and transparency through stakeholder engagement, involving civil society, academia, and the private sector. By making climate data accessible to a broader audience, through the NDC platform, the project aims to promote accountability, build public trust, and strengthen support for climate actions across society. This pathway assumes active engagement from stakeholders and that access to data will help raise awareness about climate resilience and mitigation. Risks include limited engagement from non-governmental stakeholders and public mistrust in data accuracy. The project plans to address these risks through continuous stakeholder engagement, regional workshops, and public awareness initiatives to strengthen ownership and trust in the transparency system.

110. Several drivers and enablers are anticipated to support these pathways. Sierra Leone's commitment to the Paris Agreement serves as a powerful driver, encouraging alignment with international MRV standards and prioritizing transparency efforts. Additionally, Sierra Leone's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) amplifies the urgency of establishing a transparent MRV system, which will contribute to climate action, clean energy, and resilience goals. High-level government support from the EPA and ministries further enables cross-sectoral engagement, ensuring that transparency efforts are integrated into national policies. International donors, including UNEP, provide critical financial resources and technical expertise, allowing the project to follow global best practices and adapt tools to Sierra Leone's context. Partnerships with academia offer a long-term foundation for ongoing training and capacity-building, while regional knowledge-sharing platforms facilitate mutual learning and support.

111. Through these interconnected pathways, the CBIT project aims to transform Sierra Leone's climate data management from fragmented, inconsistent practices to an integrated, reliable transparency system that meets international standards. By building institutional capacity, formalizing data-sharing frameworks, establishing a centralized online platform, and fostering public engagement, the project is positioned to overcome technical, institutional, and resource-based barriers to effective climate MRV. Ultimately, Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Climate Agreement is enhanced through delivery of more ambitious NDC targets. SL requires national and international funding to facilitate achievement of its NDC targets. Consequently, there is a strong assumption that the country will be able to mobilise sufficient resources for this to happen. If achieved, then the country will deliver on low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, investing in clean technologies as it advances its national adaptation and mitigation plans. Finally, the country will reduce its GHG emissions and bolster its resilience to climate change.

V. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

A1. Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy[25] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

Alignment with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS)

112. The CBIT project demonstrates strong alignment with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy, particularly in addressing climate change, strengthening science-policy linkages, and improving environmental governance. UNEP's MTS emphasizes six cross-cutting thematic priorities, and the CBIT project directly contributes to several of these, especially climate change and environmental governance. The project's primary focus was on strengthening Sierra Leone's capacity to meet its transparency obligations under the Paris Agreement, including the development of GHG inventories, Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This aligns with UNEP's climate change priority, which seeks to enhance countries' abilities to report on and mitigate climate impacts. For instance, one stakeholder noted, the project was really looking at transparency in GHG reporting—building capacity to respond to those obligations. We are seeing the impacts of climate change, and actions have to be reported on. It's a government priority. This quote underscores the project's relevance to UNEP's climate change goals.

113. Additionally, the project emphasized the development of tools, guidelines, and data platforms, which aligns with UNEP's science-policy priority. By creating an online platform for data sharing and sectoral guidelines, the project also contributes to bridge the gap between scientific data and policy-making. A stakeholder highlighted this, stating the platform was developed to ensure harmonized data collection and reporting. It will be a one-stop shop for climate data, which will enhance transparency and decision-making. This demonstrates the project's contribution to strengthening science-policy linkages, a key pillar of UNEP's MTS. Finally, the project enhanced environmental governance by establishing institutional frameworks, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with sectoral ministries and the creation of a functional Project Steering Committee (PSC). This aligns with UNEP's environmental governance priority, which seeks to improve institutional arrangements for environmental management.

Alignment with UNEP's Programme of Work (POW)

114. The CBIT project also aligns closely with UNEP's Programme of Work, particularly in the areas of capacity building, data and knowledge management, and stakeholder engagement. UNEP's POW emphasizes the importance of strengthening national and local capacities for environmental management, and the CBIT project delivered extensive training on GHG inventories, waste management, and data collection. A stakeholder reflected on this, stating, the trainings were very impactful. We now understand how to calculate GHG emissions and report on waste management. This was a game-changer for us. This demonstrates the project's success in building capacity, a core component of UNEP's POW. In terms of data and knowledge management, the project developed an online platform and sectoral guidelines for data collection and reporting. This aligns with UNEP's emphasis on improving data systems to support evidence-based decision-making. A participant highlighted this, saying, the online platform is a major achievement. It will help us collect, validate, and share data more efficiently. The project also engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, local councils, and civil society organizations, which aligns with the ethos espoused in UNEP's POW.

Alignment with UNEP's Strategic Priorities

115. The CBIT project is strongly aligned with UNEP's strategic priorities, particularly in tackling climate change and supporting sustainable development. UNEP's strategic priorities include addressing climate change, restoring ecosystems, reducing pollution, and supporting sustainable development. The CBIT project directly supported Sierra Leone's efforts to meet its climate transparency obligations, contributing to global climate action. A stakeholder emphasized this, stating, the project was crucial for us to fulfill our Paris Agreement commitments. It strengthened our capacity to report on GHG emissions and track progress on our NDCs. This demonstrates the project's alignment with UNEP's priority of tackling climate change. The project also supported sustainable development by strengthening institutional frameworks and capacity for climate reporting, which aligns with SDG 13 (Climate Action). A participant noted, the project has helped us integrate

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

climate reporting into our national development plans. This is a big step forward for sustainable development in Sierra Leone. This highlights the project's contribution to UNEP's sustainable development priority.

Consistency with UNEP's Gender and Social Inclusion Priorities

116. UNEP emphasizes gender equality and social inclusion in its programs, and the CBIT project made efforts to mainstream gender and engage marginalized groups. However, stakeholders noted that more could have been done to ensure inclusive participation particularly for persons with disabilities. The project included gender considerations in its design and implementation, with women participating in trainings and steering committees. A participant highlighted this, stating, gender was a key focus, and we ensured that women were involved in all activities. However, achieving gender parity was challenging due to limited expertise in some sectors. The project also engaged youth through NDC committees, which provided a platform for young people to participate in climate action. A youth representative noted, the NDC committees empowered us to take action in our communities. We now have the knowledge and tools to advocate for climate resilience.

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

A2. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities

117. Sierra Leone's Medium Term National Development Plan 2024-2030 focusses on: Strengthening governance and accountability; Promoting climate resilience and sustainable development; Enhancing Data systems for evidence-based policy. Sierra Leone's current climate change mitigation strategy is outlined in its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). The country aims to reduce domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 10% by 2030 compared to a no-policy scenario, with an intermediate target of a 5% reduction by 2025. The long-term goal is to achieve a 25% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050, incorporating additional sectors and gases in future NDCs. These targets will depend on the availability of financial support.

118. The project responded to the capacity building, partnership and financial needs of the country identified during the 3rd national communication of the country[26]. The CBIT project in Sierra Leone is closely aligned with national priorities, contributing to key climate and development frameworks. It supports the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) by strengthening individual, institutional, and organizational capacities for climate transparency, directly advancing NAP goals to enhance resilience and integrated climate policy-making. The project also aligns with Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), fostering cross-sectoral synergies to enable emission reductions in line with Sierra Leone's low-carbon development strategies. Furthermore, the project is fully aligned with Sierra Leone's New Direction (PRSP4), the country's five-year development plan (2019-2024), which outlines a green growth trajectory. By generating data for NDC reporting and tracking progress on economic transformation and environmental goals, the CBIT project supports PRSP4's objectives. It also aligns with the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), which emphasizes participatory climate action, inclusive of vulnerable groups, and sustainable socio-economic development.

119. It advances Sierra Leone's commitment to the SDGs, particularly SDG 13 on climate action, by integrating climate measures into national policies and strengthening institutional capacity for adaptation and mitigation. Additionally, at design, it was aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2015-2018, supporting sustainable natural resource management and community resilience to disasters.

120. Sierra Leone's legislative and policy frameworks, such as the Mines and Minerals Development Act (2022), National Disaster Management Agency Act (2020), and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act (2023), reflect a dense institutional framework that is supportive of the country's efforts to tackle climate chain. These frameworks, alongside sectoral policies on forestry, energy, water, and tourism, underscore the country's commitment to integrating climate resilience and sustainability into socio-economic development. The CBIT project thus reinforces Sierra Leone's national priorities by enhancing transparency, capacity, and alignment with climate and development goals.

121. GEF's Climate Change Mitigation objective emphasizes building capacity for transparency and accountability in climate reporting, which is central to the CBIT project. The project aimed to strengthen Sierra Leone's institutional and technical capacity to meet its transparency obligations under the Paris Agreement, including the development of GHG inventories, Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). GEF prioritizes capacity building and institutional strengthening to enable countries to meet their climate goals. The CBIT project delivered extensive training on GHG inventories, waste

[26] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/FinalThird%20Nat.%20Com.%20document%20111.pdf

management, and data collection, while also establishing institutional frameworks such as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with sectoral ministries and an online data platform.

122. The GEF emphasizes the importance of robust data and knowledge management systems for effective climate action. The CBIT project developed an online platform and sectoral guidelines for data collection and reporting, which aligns with this priority. The project's focus on data systems is consistent with GEF priorities. While the primary focus was on climate change mitigation, the project also indirectly contributed to other GEF focal areas, such as Chemicals and Waste through its work on waste management. For instance, a stakeholder noted, the waste management training helped us understand how to reduce emissions from landfills and improve waste segregation. This demonstrates the project's ability to create synergies across GEF focal areas.

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

A3. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

123. Regionally, the CBIT project aligns with the priorities of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU). Sierra Leone's climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable land management efforts mirror the AU's Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy (2022-2032) and the ECOWAS Regional Climate Strategy (2022-2030), which emphasize food security and vulnerability reduction. The country's renewable energy investments, including solar and hydropower, align with the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP), while its reforestation efforts support the AU's Great Green Wall Initiative. Sierra Leone's disaster risk reduction measures, such as early warning systems, are consistent with the ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2015-2030), and its participation in regional initiatives like the Mano River Union (MRU) further demonstrates its commitment to regional cooperation on climate challenges.

124. Moreover, the CBIT project supports Sierra Leone's alignment with the 2030 Agenda of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 on climate action. By integrating gender equality and social inclusion into climate policies, Sierra Leone reflects the AU's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy and ECOWAS Gender Policy, ensuring that vulnerable groups, such as women farmers, are central to climate adaptation efforts. Overall, the CBIT project strengthens Sierra Leone's national and regional climate commitments while fostering sustainable development and resilience.

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

A4. Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

125. The CBIT project in Sierra Leone aligned closely with ongoing national and regional initiatives, leveraging lessons and data from key projects to enhance climate transparency, adaptation, and mitigation efforts. Nationally, the project integrated insights from initiatives such as the UNDP/GEF Adapting to Climate Change Induced Coastal Risks Management project, which provided critical data for Sierra Leone's updated NDC platform. Additionally, the African Development Bank/GEF Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector project, the UNDP/GCF National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process, and the UNEP/GEF First Biennial Update Report (BUR) project have all contributed to the CBIT project's focus on long-term adaptation planning, climate finance, and improved data collection. The CBIT team also took advantage of other available financial support in the country through leveraging funds from UNDP's Climate Promise initiative to support the revision of the 2016 NDCs in 2021. By complementing CBIT resources with those from UNDP, the project ensured significant stakeholder engagement more than would have been possible with only CBIT funding. Funding freed up from the project through this collaboration was utilised to develop a private sector strategy as part of the gender inclusive NDC implementation plan. Through its focus on strengthening climate transparency and resilience, the CBIT project aligned with Sierra Leone's UNSDCF (2020-2023), which emphasizes climate resilience and sustainability.

126. Project efforts also benefited from UNEP's role in delivering the Global CBIT Coordination platform. Through this platform, project teams participated in regional and international peer to peer learning visits and exchanges (see more details under output 2.2). Furthermore, project actors took part in various online trainings and webinars hosted by UNEP, CBIT platform as well. To ensure sustainability, EPA also build on CBIT experience to mobilise further resources through the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) project, that will provide further resources to replicate and upscale the achievements of the current project. Similarly, the design of its GEF funded project (strengthening conservation and effective governance of SL's critical forests in the Gola Forest Landscape) with Conservation International drew on lessons from the

current CBIT project. In fact, output 1.1.4 of this project aims to further strengthen national data collection and reporting, training on land use mapping and provision of resources to host online data platforms.

127. Furthermore, CBIT's focus on developing educational materials for primary schools such as the "Environment and I" animated booklet aligns with objectives of the national ministry of education and international partners such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Interviews with officials from the Ministry of local government and gender, also surfaced complementarities and coherence with ongoing efforts to strengthen the role of women in climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as improving national waste management through local councils. Council officials mentioned how training involving health sector actors and hospitals, had helped to build alliances around the need for better disposal of hospital/clinical wastes.

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

B. Quality of Project Design

128. Operating Context is rated as satisfactory. The prodoc identified the emergence of the Ebola virus as potential risks for the project. Though no incidence of this virus occurred during implementing, the project's operating context was impacted by the unforeseen emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused delays in implementation. The TR will review other impacts of the pandemic and the adaptive measures introduced by the project. Presidential elections also took place during implementation, but appeared not to have had a significant impact on delivery.

129. Project Preparation is rated as satisfactory. Project preparation was satisfactory, with detailed analysis and efforts to draw on lessons from past projects. While evidence of wider stakeholder consultations during design was limited, the documentation demonstrated significant efforts to foster stakeholder engagement and integrate gender perspectives during implementation.

130. Strategic Relevance is rated as satisfactory. The project demonstrates satisfactory strategic relevance through its strong alignment with regional and international priorities, including engagement with regional NDC committees, climate networks, and West Africa learning platforms. It highlights south-south cooperation by organising lesson-sharing exchanges and participating in regional knowledge platforms. Additionally, its alignment with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is briefly stated in the results framework.

131. Intended Results and Causality is rated as satisfactory. The projects ToC outlines key limiting behaviours to be addressed, pathways, and assumptions. The 6 stated outputs are sufficient to deliver the intended outcomes. The roles of various stakeholders are identified under each outcome. As an institutional project, significant effort was expected to address gender gap, albeit unsuccessful due to underlying gender disparities in the country.

132. Logical Framework and Monitoring is rated as satisfactory. The projects vertical logic is strong. However, the horizontal logic could have been strengthened by including gender disaggregated output indicators. The M&E plan is budgeted.

133. Governance and Supervision Arrangements are satisfactory. Project document describes the institutional arrangements and relationships. During inception the number of planned steering meetings increased from 2 to 3. In the end 8 meetings were held. Project demonstrates significant multistakeholder engagement at local and national levels. Other governance structures such as the national climate secretariate and local authorities played a role in regional level stakeholder engagement. Project document describes the institutional arrangements and relationships in Annex J with explicit roles for UNEP as the GEF Agency.

134. Partnerships is rated as satisfactory: Documentary reviews demonstrate significant studies and needs assessments, leading to production of tailoured products such as guidelines and trainings. The roles of various external stakeholders are presented under section A.3 of the prodoc. Efforts were expended during implementation to engage with private sector through development of a stakeholder engagement strategy and private sector role in the NDC implementation plan.

135. Learning, Communication, and Outreach is rated as satisfactory. The proposal had a learning, communications and outreach objective. This included participation in the CBIT Global coordination platform, south-south learning opportunities. Communication is based on internal project management meetings, requests for authorization, telephone calls, e-mails, donor meetings, information meetings, training workshops, and the CBIT project website. Members of the steering committee take part in radio shows to

present the project. Project interventions were also posted online on LinkedIn as well. Project also foresaw engagement with educational institutions to enhance outreach and sustainability.

136. Financial Planning / Budgeting is rated as satisfactory: Project budget was coherent. The government offered co-financing even if it was not a requirement for the grant demonstrating ownership.

137. Efficiency is rated as moderately satisfactory. The duration of the project is line with other mid-sized CBIT projects. The objectives, targets and interventions are feasible during the duration of the project. There was a clear narrative on synergies and complementarities and building on existing structures as opposed to creating new ones. The project built on existing government structures such as EPA-SL, Met Office, Statistics SL amongst others. There was no mention of value for money. Two extensions were granted due to the incidence of the Covid 19 pandemic and procurement delays.

138. Risk identification and Social Safeguards is rated as satisfactory. Logframe and ToC have adequate risks and assumptions. In terms of safeguards, project was rated as low risk. The prodoc does not provide a narrative regarding any potential unintended effects of the intervention. There are no clearly articulated stands on the project's approach to minimising its carbon footprint.

139. Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects is rated as satisfactory: The project demonstrates satisfactory potential for sustainability, replication, and catalytic effects, with measures such as capacity building, curriculum development, development and use of transparency platform, and the establishment of focal points, guidelines and quality assurance systems. However, financial sustainability remained underdeveloped in the proposal.

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

Table 6: Overall quality of project design score

	SECTION	**RATIING/SCORE** (1-6)	**WEIGHTING**	**TOTAL** (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
B	Project Preparation	5	**1.2**	**0.6**
C	Strategic Relevance	5	**0.8**	**0.4**
D	Intended Results and Causality	5	**1.6**	**0.8**
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	5	**0.8**	**0.4**
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
G	Partnerships	5	**0.8**	**0.4**
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	5	**0.4**	**0.2**
J	Efficiency	4	**0.8**	**0.32**
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	5	**0.8**	**0.4**
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	5	**1.2**	**0.6**
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	6	**0.4**	**0.24**
			TOTAL SCORE (/10)	**4.96**

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

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

C. Nature of the External Context

141. The implementation of the CBIT project in Sierra Leone was significantly influenced by several external factors that posed challenges and disruptions. The most prominent among these were the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 presidential elections, administrative and procurement delays, and broader structural limitations within the national implementing institutions. **The below section also responds to the TR strategic question 4:**

> **Box 1: Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?**
>
> The COVID-19 pandemic was a major and unexpected external event that severely impacted project implementation. Travel restrictions hindered UNEP-CCC experts from traveling for consultations, resulting in a lost year at the outset of the project. The pandemic also affected stakeholder engagement, as many participants from regional areas faced difficulties joining virtual meetings. Lockdowns and social distancing measures disrupted planned field activities, and institutional capacity-building events had to be postponed. These disruptions necessitated a project extension, originally set for 36 months but extended until June 2024 to allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to recover lost time and complete key activities.
>
> Despite efforts to mitigate these disruptions through virtual engagements and remote consultations, the transition to online platforms presented challenges. Limited access to stable internet connections in some regions further complicated stakeholder participation. While the PMU adapted by ensuring online participation, these limitations affected the depth and effectiveness of engagement in certain aspects of the project.

Political Climate and 2023 Presidential Elections

142. The June 2023 presidential elections introduced additional challenges, particularly in terms of stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder meetings were halted for fear of them not being misunderstood as political meetings. Regional stakeholder dialogue on MRV and other stakeholder engagements were suspended till after the elections. The national launching meeting for the NDC implementation plan, originally planned for the capital city, was also reconsidered due to concerns that it could be politically sensitive. The uncertainty during this period meant that engagements with government stakeholders had to be carefully timed, and some planned activities were deferred to avoid disruptions. Peer to peer learning trip to Ghana did not hold when initially planned because senior civil servants were restricted to travel out of the country[27].

Administrative and Procurement Delays

143. In addition to the pandemic and political challenges, administrative and procurement delays further slowed project execution. The transition of the UNEP-DTU Partnership (UDP) to the UNEP CCC required administrative and legal adjustments, delaying the signing of agreements and the disbursement of funds. These changes affected the recruitment of consultants and the procurement of necessary resources. Funds had to be transferred back and forth during the transition, leading to additional delays before implementation could resume smoothly. Procurement bottlenecks in also hampered progress, delaying the hiring of key technical experts and the acquisition of required materials. Lengthy national procurement procedures led to challenges in securing international expertise for activities, requiring additional efforts to identify local and regional experts who could step in.

Structural and Capacity Constraints

144. As a Least Developed Country (LDC), Sierra Leone faces challenges in terms of institutional frameworks and expertise required for technical projects such as CBIT. Many stakeholders were more familiar with adaptation-focused initiatives and required additional time to grasp the importance of mitigation, greenhouse gas (GHG) data collection, and transparency requirements under the project. While these challenges did not significantly affect the project budget, they required additional efforts in awareness-raising and stakeholder capacity-building.

Economic Constraints and Budget Adjustments

145. Rising fuel costs presented another external challenge, leading to budget revisions. The increased cost of fuel and logistics required an adjustment in financial planning. The budget had to be revised to accommodate

[27] UNEP GEF PIR Fiscal Year 2023 Reporting from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

these changes and ensure that planned activities could still be implemented within the allocated financial resources.

Adaptive Measures and Project Continuity

146. Despite these external challenges, the project team adopted several adaptive measures to ensure progress. Project extensions provided the necessary time to recover from disruptions and complete activities effectively. Table 3 shows the timelines for the various project extension requests.

Table 7: Project revisions

Version	Type	Signed / Approved by UNEP	Entry into Force (last signature Date)	Technical completion date	Agreement Expiry Date
Original legal instrument		4 June 2020	5 June 2020	30 September 2023	30 September 2023
Revision 1	Extension	02 February 2022	02 February 2022	31 March 2024	31 March 2025
Revision 2	Extension	28 October 2022	28 October 2022	30 June 2024	30 June 2025

147. Other adaptive measures included the use of local and regional consultants helped mitigate the impact of travel restrictions and international procurement delays. Virtual engagement strategies, including WhatsApp groups and online meetings, were used to maintain stakeholder communication and decision-making processes.

148. While these adaptive strategies enabled the project to navigate external disruptions, some challenges persisted, such as time constraints leading to rushed activities and limited time for piloting certain tools. Nonetheless, the project ultimately succeeded in overcoming major disruptions and completing planned activities within the extended timeframe.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Moderately favourable

D. Effectiveness

D1. Availability of Outputs

149. The project objective was to build and strengthen Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Climate Agreement. This was to be achieved through the delivery of the six outputs.

Output 1.1: Institutional arrangements for data collection and management established under EPA's coordination and operationalized in key ministries, agencies, departments and other stakeholders

150. As a Party to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, Sierra Leone is expected to meet its reporting obligations, albeit being a Least Developed Country (LDC). Key obligations and recommendations include:

- To prepare and publish National Communication (NC) every four years.
- To submit BiennialTransparency Report (BTR) followed by technical and multilateral reviews with flexibility for LDCs as far as their capacity permits Besides (from 2024).
- To meet requirements in the Modalities Procedures and Guidelines (MPGs) adopted under Article 13 on the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement.
- To use the methodologies in the latest IPCC Guidelines for the Preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventory.
- To establish a national arrangement or functional data management that can support the regular preparation of the national inventory document as part of the BTR and climate reporting.

151. A primary intervention conducted by the project consisted of assessing availability of climate data, data sources and data generation systems[28]. This report surfaced capacity needs of various actors as well as the recommendations to improve GHG data collection, management and implementation of data management system in the country through a highly participatory process. For instance, the stakeholder consultation[29] of the 22nd of August 2022, at Lodge Valley Hotel Makeni, brought together 55 participants from priority sectors. During this workshop, the different structures to provide GHG data were identified: energy, transport, AFOLU, Waste, and industries and clarifications provided regarding the tools and guidelines for data collection and dissemination to be developed. Institutional data collection and management arrangements were established under EPA's coordination. Data teams were formed in prioritized Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) consisting of data collectors and validators/supervisors. Four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for data collection and dissemination of GHG data have been signed between the EPA-SL and sectoral actors (Energy, AFOLU, IPPU, Waste) following standardised formats[30]. The data collection mechanisms have been fully established and will be used to support the 4th NC, NDC 3.0 and the BTR processes.

152. To further demonstrate its commitment and ownership, the government established the Ministerial NDC Implementation Committee[31]. The vision of the committee of 18 members from priority ministries, and other state agencies such as the National Protected Area Authority, National Water Resources Management Agency, Statistics Sierra Leone and the Forestry Department, is to lead NDC implementation while providing strategic guidance for adaptation, mitigation and resilience to foster national sustainable development. The project allocated up to $22,000 to support the quarterly meetings and breakfast meetings for the interministerial NDC implementation. This high-level engagement of officials in the project demonstrated significant ownership and buy-in. For instance, ministerial breakfast meeting and stakeholder interface were held on the 10th and 17th February 2023 respectively to discuss the CBIT project and NDC implementation in Bo. The minister of environment met with colleague ministers/representatives on the 10th and had the interfaced with stakeholders on the 17th in Bo. Officials and council staff interviewed from Port Loko regional area also appreciated this ministerial-level engagement in their area, suggesting that the presence of the high-level officials during public consultations and dialogues, sent the message to everyone that government was not only committed to the achievement of the project but to address climate change. The reviewer assesses that this output was satisfactorily delivered as planned.

Output 1.2: Sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies and indicators for mitigation and adaptation developed and distributed

153. UNEP-CCC spearheaded activities under this output. To harmonise data collection, analysis and dissemination the project developed guidelines for the AFOLU[32], IPPU[33], waste[34] and energy sectors[35] through a highly participatory process. These technical data management guidelines developed in alignment with the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for all 4 prioritized sectors Unfortunately, due to delays incurred due to contractual changes with UNEP-CCC, these guidelines were delivered in March 2024, three months to the end of the project. The project was also instrumental in providing necessary technical assistance via UNEP-CCC and logistical support in the development of a gender sensitive NDC implementation plan in 2023 to follow revision and updating of the country's NDCs in 2021[36].

154. Five regional consultation and dialogues were conducted which ensured that all national stakeholders were involved. A high-level launch of the updated NDC implementation Plan was also organised to ensure national

[28] EPA-SL 2022 Report on GHG Inventory Data Sources in Sierra Leone
[29] REPORT ON THE REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER'S CONSULTATION ON THE INSTITUTIONAL MAPPING FOR GHG DATA COLLECTION, Date 22nd August, 2022 Venue: Loge Valley Makeni
[30] EPA SL Deliverable 2a MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR GHG DATA EXCHANGE
[31] EPA SL Creation of the Ministerial NDC Implementation Committee, Sierra Leone Terms of Engagement
[32] EPA -SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline AFOLU Sector
[33] EPA-SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU) Sector
[34] EPA -SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline Waste Sector
[35] EPA -SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline Energy Sector
[36] Revision of the NDCs was done through funding from a different project even though initially planned under the project

ownership. The gender sensitive NDC Implementation Plan[37] aims to outline strategies for meeting Sierra Leone's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, focusing on both mitigation and adaptation. The plan details actionable steps for emission reductions, climate adaptation, and gender inclusivity within the national context, aiming for a 10% GHG emission reduction by 2030, and a 25% reduction by 2050. The plan includes a roadmap for improving institutional coordination, developing an MRV (Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification) system, and securing financial resources to support NDC actions. It provides a unique tool that the country can use to mobilise support from both domestic and international sources to achieve its NDC targets and build resilience to climate change. In addition to international finance and technology transfer, significant funding and technical expertise will be needed from both the public and private sectors within Sierra Leone to ensure effective NDC implementation.

155. With the NDCs updated using funding from UNDP's Climate Promise Project, project resources were reallocated to facilitate a private sector engagement strategy. This was in response to the need identified during consultations during the NDC implementation plan development process. A deep assessment of the role of private sector surfaced several challenges and recommendations for stronger engagement. Key challenges included:
    - A lack of understanding of NDC procedures, risk mitigation strategies, and financial tools hampers private sector contributions to building resilience and transitioning to a low-carbon economy.
    - Insufficient information and awareness of climate investment opportunities further deter investment. Beyond organizations like the World Bank, African Development Bank, and UN agencies, most private sector actors remain uninformed about the NDC's implications. Access to climate funds is particularly challenging due to complex application processes, while limited knowledge and skills on climate change further restrict participation.
    - The absence of strategic leadership with expertise in leveraging opportunities and smart investments also inhibits private sector involvement in the NDC process.

156. The capacity gaps identified for NDC implementation[38] in Sierra Leone highlighted distinct needs on both the government and private sector sides. On the government side, the need to ensure coherence between NDC priorities and sectoral and cross-sectoral programs was highlighted. Government was also enjoined to strengthen coordination and provide tailored training for government entities on research, monitoring, reporting, verification (MRV), data management climate change regulations while strengthening the ability to monitor progress and utilize data collection mechanisms effectively. As for private sector entities, the private sector engagement strategy development process recommended the need to improve private awareness of their role, provide capacity building and creation of a favourable environment to incentivise private sector engagement.
157. The deliver of this output was impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic and administrative constraints related to the change of institutional change from UDP to UNEP-CCC. These events caused serious delays in the delivery of the guidelines. Project extensions were granted by UNEP to enable UNEP-CCC to implement planned activities. In the end, the sectoral guidelines were delivered in March 2024, three months to the end of the extension period. For this reason, project teams, data teams/focal points in sectorial ministries did not have any opportunity to trial or practice using these tools before the project officially closed. At the time of the terminal review, there was scant evidence that any of the data teams had effectively utilised the guidelines developed. However, EPA has secured funding to produce the 4th national communication and the BTR in 2025. These provide an opportunity for data teams to receive refresher training support and to effectively pilot the guidelines and methodologies developed. Additionally, EPA is mobilising funding from the European Union and the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) to update the NDCs revised with project support in 2021. This provides a further opportunity to review the gender inclusive NDC implementation plan developed with project support, thereby ensuring sustainability. Having reviewed all the deliverables

[37] Sierra Leone CBIT NDC Implementation Plan (2024) United Nations Environment Programme Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC). (2024). Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Implementation Plan, Sierra Leone. UNEP-CCC. [Sierra Leone CBIT D7 NDC Implementation Plan Sierra Leone final.
[38] United Nations Environment Programme Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC) (2024). Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Implementation Plan, Sierra Leone., Copenhagen, Denmark.

produced under output 1.2, the reviewer considers that it was satisfactorily implemented as planned, while demonstrating adaptiveness as seen with the development of the private sector engagement plan.

Output 1.3: Continuous quality control and assurance program for Sierra Leone's transparency instruments designed and operationalized

158. The development of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Sierra Leone's greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory process was a critical step in strengthening the country's capacity to meet its transparency obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Without a structured QA/QC system, the integrity of GHG data could be compromised, leading to uncertainties in emission estimates and undermining the credibility of national climate reports. The absence of clear guidelines also posed a risk of inconsistency in data collection, processing, and reporting, especially with potential changes in personnel over time.

159. The project successfully delivered Output 1.3, which included the development of a comprehensive QA/QC[39] plan and SOPs[40] tailored to Sierra Leone's context. Key achievements include:
    - Operational QA/QC Plan: The QA/QC plan, based on IPCC 2006 guidelines, was developed and populated with relevant climate data. This plan provides a clear framework for ensuring the quality and accuracy of GHG inventories, including procedures for data validation, uncertainty assessment, and error minimization.
    - Capacity Building: Training sessions were conducted for stakeholders and IT teams, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to implement the QA/QC plan effectively. This capacity-building initiative is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the inventory process.
    - Support for National Reporting: The QA/QC plan and SOPs will be instrumental in supporting Sierra Leone's 4th National Communication and Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), due by December 2025. While initial discussions on the application of QA/QC standards for these reports were ongoing at the time of the TR, the foundational framework is now in place to ensure high-quality reporting.
    - Sustainability and Consistency: The development of SOPs ensures that the GHG inventory process remains consistent and transparent, even with potential changes in personnel. These procedures provide detailed guidelines for quality control and assurance, ensuring that the inventory process adheres to international best practices.

160. The institutional arrangements for the Quality Assurance (QA) system in Sierra Leone involve a structured collaboration among various ministries, agencies, and institutions to ensure the accuracy and reliability of greenhouse gas (GHG) data. Key components of the arrangement are summarised in figure 7 include:

[39] Prof Ronnie Frazer-Williams & Dr Alhaji Sankoh, 2023. QUALITY ASSURANCE & QUALITY CONTROL FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) PROJECT

[40] Prof Ronnie Frazer-Williams & Dr Alhaji Sankoh, 2023. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) OF QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) FOR INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN GHG INVENTORY IN SIERRA LEONE

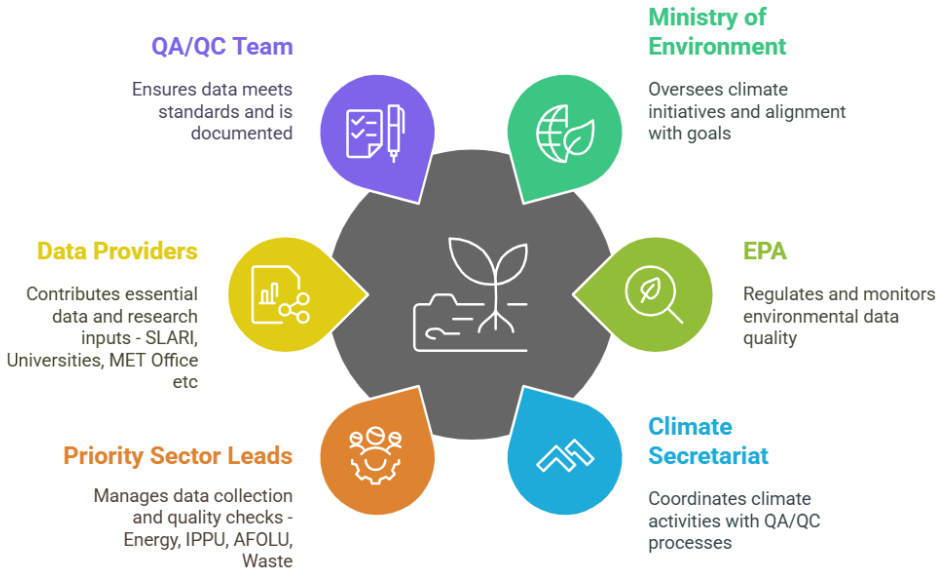

Figure 7: Institutional arrangement for QA/QC

161. Following the introduction of these arrangements, stakeholder engagement was held to assess the effectiveness of institutional arrangements and strengthen committees for implementing climate actions. Participants included CSOs, NDC Committees, the private sector, community members, including women and youth leaders, and local government from Port Loko, Makeni, Kenema, and Bo from the 12th to the 16th of February 2024. The reviewer assesses that this output was satisfactorily delivered as planned.

Output 2.1: Data teams from the prioritized sectors trained in the collection, processing and management of data

162. Capacity building interventions within the CBIT project were implemented in line with the Capacity Development Strategy (CDS) developed in 2022[41]. The CDS was designed to address the capacity gaps identified through a Training Needs Assessment (TNA), which engaged 25 out of 30 targeted government agencies responsible for climate management (EPA, AFOLU, Energy, MET office, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment, Local government councils, SLARI, academic, Transport, Health and Sanitation, Statistics-SL). The TNA focused on understanding the institutions' approaches to defining national circumstances, setting mitigation targets, determining budgets, and engaging stakeholders. It also assessed practitioners' functional capacities in using climate reporting templates, applying the 2006 IPCC guidelines, leading multi-sectoral dialogues, and mobilizing finance for climate actions. The findings revealed significant gaps in technical and managerial skills, particularly in data collection, analysis, and reporting, as well as the need for improved stakeholder engagement and regulatory frameworks.

163. The CDS was framed around six strategic objectives:

    i. Ensuring adequate human resources for coordinating a whole-of-government approach to NDC implementation.
    ii. Integrating NDC priorities into sectoral and cross-sectoral programs.
    iii. Enhancing technical and managerial skills for NDC implementation.
    iv. Improving stakeholder engagement and regulatory frameworks.
    v. Strengthening monitoring, reporting, and data collection mechanisms.
    vi. Increasing interest in utilizing data collection mechanisms for governance decision-making.

[41] Massaquoi, A. S. 2022. Capacity development strategy for training trainers in NDC design and implementation, September 2022, prepared for the EPA-SL

To operationalize the CDS, a Training Toolkit[42] was developed, comprising five modules:

i. Climate Change Basics: Introduction to climate change science and policy.
ii. Thinking Through a Climate Lens: Integrating climate considerations into decision-making.
iii. Climate Data Collection and Analysis: Techniques for collecting and analyzing climate data.
iv. Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV): Processes for tracking and reporting climate actions.
v. Effective Climate Governance: Strengthening institutional frameworks for climate action.

164. The toolkit was designed to be delivered through a 2-day training workshop, with each day structured into five-hour sessions (9 am–2 pm). Following the development of the toolkit, the 2-day training on NDC implementation was conducted on the 27th and 28th of October 2022[43]. This training brought together 17 (12 male, 5 female) representatives from key government agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and Ministry of Lands, Housing, and the Environment. Participants were introduced to the toolkit's modules, with a focus on applying the 2006 IPCC guidelines, using climate reporting templates, and integrating NDC priorities into sectoral programs. The training also emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement and the role of regulatory frameworks in streamlining climate actions.

165. The adoption of the Training of Trainers (ToT) model empowered local experts to replicate training within their institutions. This approach enhanced the sustainability of capacity-building efforts by creating a pool of local trainers who could continue to build capacity nationally. A stakeholder remarked, t*he ToT approach ensured that knowledge was transferred to local experts, who can now train others in their institutions.* At the time of the review, several testimonies from participants affirmed that they has been able to replicate trainings within their organisations drawing on learning acquired through he ToT training and others.

166. Building on the success of the NDC implementation training, a series of **thematic trainings** were conducted to address specific sectoral needs. These included:

1. **AFOLU Sector Training (May 27–31, 2024)**: Focused on GHG inventory development for the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector[44], this training equipped participants with the skills to collect, process, and report data on emissions and removals. It also highlighted the importance of land-use data and the role of academic research in supporting the inventory process. A total of 28 participants attended, including 22 men and 6 women.

2. **Waste Sector Training (April 29–May 3, 2024)**: This training intended to enhance the capacity of national experts in developing GHG inventories for the waste sector[45], using the 2006 IPCC guidelines and related software tools. In preparation for actual delivery of the training event, a pre-face-to-face webinar via Microsoft Teams was organized on Friday, 19 April 2024 to discuss the identified data needs, and gaps in the national tools for the development of national sectoral improvement plans. Key challenges, such as gaps in solid waste data collection and the need for improved integration of GHG data into institutional workflows, were addressed during the training. A total of 40 (36 male, 4 female) participants attended the workshop.

167. The integration of GHG data into institutional workflows and legal frameworks such as the national Climate change Act (under review) was highlighted as an area requiring further attention to enhance reporting accuracy and transparency, not only in the waste sector but throughout all sectors. Drawing on the facilitator's Ghanaian experience, participants identified additional capacity support required to support integrating GHG data into institutional frameworks as shown in figure 8 below.

[42] Massaquoi, A. B. S. (2022). Toolkit for Training Trainers in NDC Design and Implementation. [Training Toolkit]
[43] Massaquoi, A. B. S. (2022). CBIT Training of Trainers Workshop Report (Oct. 27-28, 2022)
[44] EPA SL- AFOLU GHG INVENTORY SIERRA Leone Training : 27th - 31st of May 2024
[45] Acquah, P. (2024). Sierra Leone Waste Sector GHG Inventory Training Final Report. UNFCCC CBIT Project.

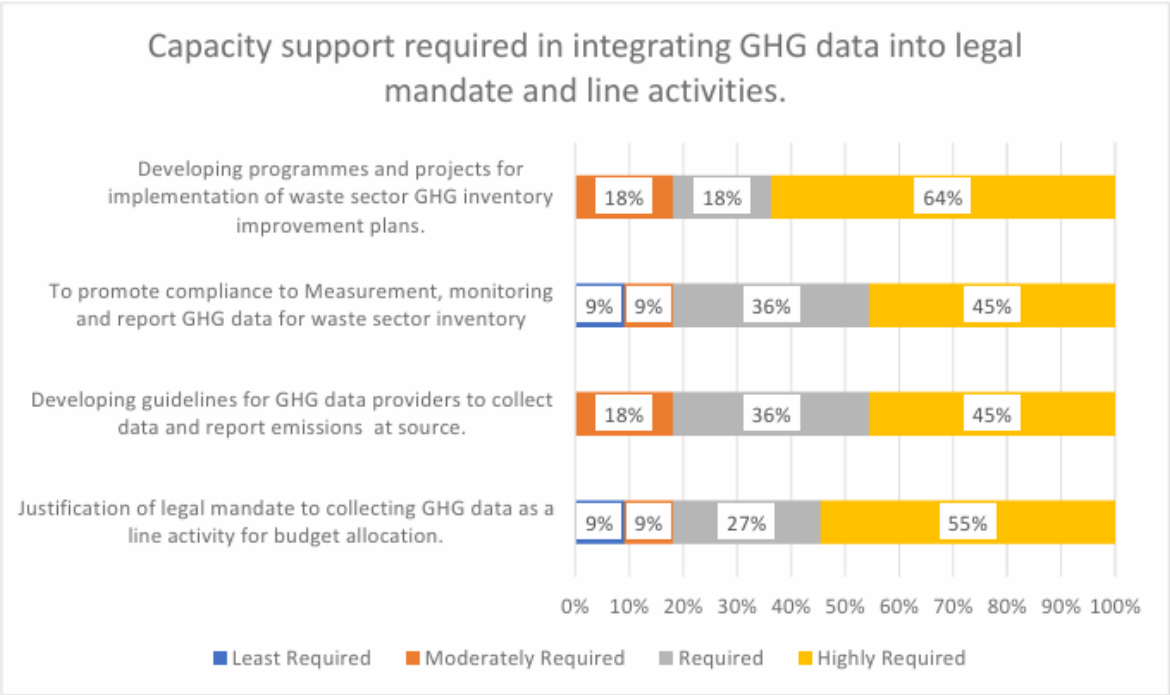

Figure 8: Capacity support required for integrating GHG into legal mandates.

3. **GIS and Remote Sensing Training (June 17–28, 2024)**: Aimed at enhancing the EPA's capabilities in monitoring and evaluating climate adaptation actions, this training introduced participants to GIS basics, remote sensing, mobile data tools, and map production[46]. Practical sessions using GIS hardware and software were conducted, with a focus on improving data management for climate action monitoring. A total of 36 participants from various EPA divisions were trained, with a mix of staff from different backgrounds, many of whom had no prior GIS experience. Training of regional NDC Committees, GHG data providers, MDAs, and other stakeholders in climate information systems and GHG inventory development using the TOT approach was conducted in Port Loko on the 28th of June, in Makeni on the 1st of July, in Kenema on the 3rd of July and in Bo on the 4th of July.

168. Due to the inability to source sector specific expertise and consultants in energy and IPPU, specific GHG emissions inventory training was not implemented. Achievement of this output is moderately satisfactorily.

Output 2.2: Peer-to-peer learning activities in the region for key stakeholders undertaken and through participation in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform

169. Under Output 2.2, a series of peer-to-peer learning activities and knowledge exchange initiatives were implemented. These activities were designed to foster regional collaboration, share best practices, and enhance the technical expertise of key stakeholders.

Peer-to-Peer Learning Exchanges

Exchange visit to Ghana

170. Three staff from the EPA from the project management and technical teams took part in a peer-to-peer exchange visit to Ghana in July 2023. Considering Ghana's advancements in the development of its MRV system, this provided a unique opportunity for the team to experience the functionality of their system and to draw lessons. It also provided the team with the opportunity to exchange with local experts and consultants working in the area of climate transparency. These exchanges were subsequently, useful in the development of ToRs and recruitment of regional experts to support the national waste sector GHG trainings and sectoral guidelines.

Exchange Visit to Zimbabwe

[46] **GIS and Remote Sensing Training Report for EPA (June 2024)**
Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD). (2024). *Training on applied GIS and Remote Sensing in Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning for Climate Adaptation Actions and Interventions*. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Sierra Leone. [RCMRD EPA Training June, 2024.

171. A peer learning exchange workshop was held in Zimbabwe, hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe's Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI) and supported and facilitated by the Capacity-building Initiative – Global Support Programme (CBIT-GSP)[47]. The exchange focused on the establishment of Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHGI) and Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems. Participants from Sierra Leone, including the Project Manager and Deputy Director of the Climate Change Secretariat, engaged in discussions on best practices, technical insights, and challenges in implementing national CBIT projects. The visit also provided an opportunity to network with CBIT teams from Malawi, Togo, and Ghana, fostering regional collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Exchange Visit to Liberia

172. From June 19 to 21, 2024, a delegation from Sierra Leone's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) visited Liberia to strengthen capacity in implementing the transparency components of the Paris Agreement[48]. The visit included meetings with the EPA Liberia Executive Director and senior management, as well as technical sessions with 20-24 participants from relevant government sectors and academia. Discussions focused on sharing experiences, knowledge, and best practices related to CBIT projects, GHG data collection methodologies, and MRV processes. This exchange highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in addressing common challenges and advancing climate transparency.

Participation in Global Forums and Webinars

Global Transparency Forum in Tokyo, Japan

173. The CBIT-Sierra Leone project implementation update was presented at the Global Transparency Forum in Tokyo, Japan. This forum provided a platform for sharing progress on the project. The forum also facilitated discussions on global best practices in climate transparency and reporting[49]. These discussions highlighted the critical need for robust data collection and management, institutional arrangements, stakeholder engagement, and continuous capacity building to enhance transparency and accountability in climate action.

COP-27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

174. The Project Manager and Deputy Director of the Climate Change Secretariat attended the 27th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP-27) in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. They participated in plenaries, meetings, and side events on adaptation, mitigation, gender, loss and damage, climate financing, and capacity building. The team also met with CBIT project coordinators from Malawi, Togo, and Ghana to discuss project implementation and share experiences and lessons learned.

COP-28 in Dubai

175. The Project Manager and the Director of the National Climate Change Secretariat attended COP-28 in Dubai. They participated in discussions on climate action and transparency, further strengthening Sierra Leone's engagement in global climate initiatives.

Regional Learning Workshops (RLWs)

176. Regional NDC Committees (RNCs) were established in all regions of Sierra Leone to support the implementation of NDCs at the subnational level. These committees play a crucial role in coordinating climate actions and ensuring that regional stakeholders are engaged in the NDC process. In December 2022, four Regional Learning Workshops (RLWs) were held in Port Loko, Makeni, Kenema, and Bo[50]. These workshops engaged youth groups involved in climate action at the subnational level, with a total of 60-70 participants. The workshops introduced participants to the components of the updated NDC and trained them in stakeholder identification and analysis, PESTLE analysis, resource mapping, and work plan development. Government officials were engaged from July 7th to 9th 2024 to conduct a stock take for the NDC update held in Bo. This engagement was to understand the successes and challenges of different MDAs in the NDC implementation. Stocktake of the NDC conducted, and the NDC Implementation Plan popularized to policymakers for consideration during the development of the National Climate Change Act.

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[47] Peer Learning Exchange on Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Monitoring Reporting and Verification Systems and Sharing Technical Insights on the Implementation of National CBIT Projects in four Anglophone African Countries, 26-28 February 2024. Victoria Falls Rainbow Hotel, Zimbabwe

[48] EPA 2024. Report of the Peer-to-Peer Learning Exchange Visit in Monrovia, Liberia

[49] CBIT-GSP 2024. Tokyo Hosts Groundbreaking Global Transparency Forum on Climate Action27 May 2024, Tokyo Hosts Groundbreaking Global Transparency Forum on Climate Action | Climate Transparency Platform

[50] Massaquoi, A 2022. Workshop report on NDC Delivery Best Practices and Formation of Regional NDC Committees

Development of Animated Book on Climate Change

177. An animated book on climate change effects and impacts was developed to educate primary school children (ages 6-12) about climate change in a fun and engaging way. The book, which includes illustrations, was launched by the EPA and drew significant interest. The EPA is working with the Ministry of Education to integrate the book into the school curriculum. This initiative aims to raise awareness about climate change among young children and encourage their participation in climate action. A stakeholder noted, *the animated book is a groundbreaking tool for educating children about climate change. It's fun, engaging, and has the potential to influence their behaviour and that of their parents.* The reviewer assesses that this output was satisfactorily delivered as planned.

Output 2.3: NDC online platform for collecting and managing all NDC information, including data about climate finance, developed and hosted by EPA

178. Under Output 2.3, the development and implementation of the NDC online platform were central to enhancing Sierra Leone's capacity for collecting, managing, and sharing climate data, including information on climate finance. The platform was developed by Nella Interactive Company, an international IT firm, in collaboration with UNEP-CCC. The goal was to create a centralized system that aligns with Sierra Leone's existing data systems and national circumstances, ensuring it meets the country's specific needs for climate transparency and NDC implementation.

179. The development process began with a thorough needs assessment, where Nella Interactive worked closely with the EPA to understand the requirements for the platform[51]. This involved analyzing existing data systems, identifying gaps, and determining the functionalities needed to support NDC data collection, management, and reporting. The platform was designed to be user-friendly and adaptable, with features that allow for data entry, storage, analysis, and sharing. Feedback from IT administrators and stakeholders was integrated throughout the development process to ensure the platform met user needs. Once the initial development was completed, the platform underwent user acceptance testing to identify and address any technical issues. This testing phase was crucial for refining the platform and ensuring its functionality and usability. Feedback from IT administrators and stakeholders was carefully considered and incorporated into the final version of the platform.

180. To ensure the effective use of the platform, a training program was implemented. A two-day participatory training workshop was held on March 3–4, 2024, in two sessions: the first at the EPA head office in Freetown and the second at the Galliness Paradise Hotel in Bo-Gawula, southern Sierra Leone[52]. The workshop was attended by a total of 61 participants, including IT administrators from the EPA, data providers, representatives from relevant NDC ministries, and CBIT focal persons. The gender distribution of participants was 79% male and 21% female. The training was divided into two groups. On the first day, IT administrators received technical training on platform setup, maintenance, and troubleshooting. On the second day, stakeholders, including data providers and NDC focal persons, were trained on data entry, management, and reporting using the platform. The training covered various topics, including an introduction to the NDC online platform and its functionalities, hands-on sessions on data entry and management, best practices for ensuring data accuracy and consistency, and troubleshooting and user support.

181. In addition to the training, Nella Interactive provided detailed documentation to guide the platform's operations, ensuring that IT administrators and stakeholders could reference the materials for future use. Continuous support was emphasized, with Nella Interactive maintaining open communication with the EPA until users were fully proficient in operating the platform. Feedback from IT administrators and stakeholders was collected during the training and testing phases and used to refine the platform further. During the terminal review, the project teams demonstrated the functionalities and operational capacity of the online platform. At the time of the review, no new data has been uploaded on to the platform from sectoral teams, apart from the test data utilised during its development. Regional workshops and outreach activities were conducted to raise awareness and encourage adoption among key stakeholders, including government agencies, data providers, and NDC focal persons.

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[51] DESIGN OPTIONS REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NDC PLATFORM FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) PROJECT FOR SIERRA LEONE

[52] Nella Interactive. (2024). Training Workshop Report held at Galliness Paradise Hotel, Bo, Sierra Leone to the Environmental Protection Agency for the Development of the NDC Platform for the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Project for Sierra Leone. Nella Interactive.

182. The platform will play a critical role in supporting Sierra Leone's NDC implementation by providing a centralized system for data collection, management, and reporting. It will also facilitate tracking of climate finance and progress toward NDC targets. The development of the NDC online platform represents a significant milestone in Sierra Leone's efforts to enhance climate transparency and meet its obligations under the Paris Agreement. However, as mentioned earlier, the platform has not been used by those trained following project completion. At the time of the review, no outreach had been conducted towards the sectoral data collection teams, though the reviewer was informed about earlier discussions with some key actors regarding how the platform could be utilised during the production of the 4th national communications and BTR. Concerns were also raised through interviews with sectoral actors, who were concerned about the cost of hosting the platform post the project. Others also raised concerns regarding the ownership of the platform and the need for a stronger role for the Ministry of Environment and climate Change. It was argued that this would mitigate the perception of an "EPA platform" versus one which is led by whole of government and hosted at EPA. The reviewer assesses that this output was satisfactorily delivered as planned.

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Satisfactory

D2. Achievement of Project Outcomes

Outcome 1: Sierra Leone adopts upgraded institutional arrangements and tools to track NDC implementation in accordance with the UNFCCC modalities, procedures and guidelines

Table 8 summarises the level of attainment of the indicator and target for outcome 1 as of 30th June 2024.

Table 8: Level of progress towards outcome 1 targets

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	End-of-project target	Progress as of current period	Attainment of the indicator & target as of 30 June 2024	Level of achievement
Outcome 1: Sierra Leone adopts upgraded institutional arrangements and tools to track NDC implementation in accordance with the UNFCCC modalities, procedures and guidelines	Indicator 1.1: Improvement in the quality of MRV of NDC Implementation based on GEF score 1 to 10 as per Annex III of CBIT programming directions [53]	1	+3 (=4)	+3 (=4)	The rating at project completion is estimated to be 4, reaching the target. Available climate change data were assessed for data generation systems and data sources needed to comply with the 2006 IPCC Guidelines and the Modalities, Procedures, and Guidelines (MPGs) for the ETF identified. Institutional arrangements for GHG reporting were developed. MOUs for data sharing were developed. Sectoral guidelines were developed for the AFOLU, energy, IPPU, and waste sectors. The MRV system is in place (with less capacity nonetheless). QA/QC system in place. Developed a QA/QC Plan for UNFCCC reporting including Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) based on IPCC 2006 guidelines. Formal agreements and TORS developed An NDC implementation plan with gender-sensitive indicators was developed. A private sector engagement plan was developed (In place of NDC review), and a series of stakeholder consultations were held during the implementation of these activities..	Satisfactory

[53] MRV systems qualitative rating levels:
1. Very little measurement is done; reporting is partial and irregular, and verification is not there
2. Measurement systems are in place, but data is of poor quality and/or methodologies are not very robust; reporting is done only on request or to limited audience or partially; verification is not there
3. Measurement systems are in place for a few activities, improved data quality and methodologies, but not cost or time efficient; wider access to reporting is still limited and information is partial; verification is rudimentary/non-standardized
4. Measurement systems are strong in a limited set of activities however, analyses still need improvement; periodic monitoring and reporting although not yet cost/time efficient; verification is only upon specific request and limited
5. Measurement systems are strong for a limited set of activities and periodically report on key GHG related indicators i.e. mainstreamed into the activity implementation; reporting is improved through few pathways but limited audience and formats; verification limited
6. Measurement systems are strong and cover a greater percentage of activities – feedback loops exist even if they are not fully functioning; reporting is available through multiple pathways and formats but may not be complete/transparent; verification is done through standard methodologies but only partially (i.e. not all data is verifiable)
7. Measurement regarding GHG is broadly done (with widely acceptable methodologies), need for more sophisticated analyses to improve policy; Reporting is periodic with improvements in transparency; verification is done through more sophisticated methods even if partially
8. Strong standardized measurements processes established for key indicators and mainstreamed into institutional policy implementation; reporting is widely available in multiple formats; verification is done for a larger set of information
9. Strong Monitoring and Reporting systems – robust methodologies, cost effective and efficient, periodic; verification done to a significant degree
10. Strong MRV systems that provide quality GHG related information in a transparent, accurate and accessible to a wide audience, with feedback of information from MRV flowing into policy design and implementation

183. Based on table 8, the CBIT project has made significant progress towards achieving Outcome 1, which focuses on upgrading institutional arrangements and tools to track NDC implementation in line with UNFCCC guidelines. The project has addressed the limiting behaviours identified in the Prodoc, particularly the reluctance of public and private stakeholders to engage in data compilation and sharing due to perceived burdens and mistrust. Through a series of targeted interventions, the project has fostered a shift in attitudes and behaviours, laying the groundwork for sustained improvements in climate transparency and data management.

184. One of the key achievements of the project was the establishment of institutional arrangements for data collection and management under the EPA. The project conducted a comprehensive assessment of climate data availability and identified capacity gaps, leading to the formation of data teams in key ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). These teams, consisting of data collectors and validators, were supported by memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed between the EPA and sectoral actors, ensuring a structured approach to data collection and dissemination. The establishment of the Ministerial NDC Implementation Committee further demonstrated high-level government commitment and ownership, with regular meetings and stakeholder engagements fostering a sense of shared responsibility for climate action. This institutional framework has created a foundation for systematic data compilation and reporting, addressing the initial reluctance of stakeholders by clarifying roles and the purpose of data sharing.

185. The project also focused on developing sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies, and indicators for mitigation and adaptation. Despite delays caused by contractual changes and the COVID-19 pandemic, the project successfully delivered guidelines for the AFOLU, IPPU, waste, and energy sectors, aligned with IPCC 2006 guidelines. These guidelines, developed through a participatory process, aim to harmonize data collection and analysis across sectors. Additionally, the project supported the development of a gender-sensitive NDC implementation plan, which outlines actionable steps for achieving Sierra Leone's climate commitments. While the late delivery of these tools limited their immediate application, the EPA has secured funding for future reporting processes, providing opportunities to pilot and refine the guidelines. The project also demonstrated adaptability by reallocating resources to develop a private sector engagement strategy, addressing identified capacity gaps and fostering greater private sector involvement in NDC implementation.

186. The project also designed and operationalized a Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) program for Sierra Leone's transparency instruments. The development of QA/QC guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) ensures the integrity and consistency of GHG data, addressing the risks of data inconsistency and personnel changes. Training sessions equipped stakeholders with the skills needed to implement the QA/QC plan, which will support Sierra Leone's upcoming 4th National Communication and Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). The institutional arrangements for QA/QC, involving collaboration across ministries and agencies, further strengthen the country's capacity for high-quality climate reporting.

187. The project's progress towards achieving the intended behavioural improvements is evident in the increased engagement and ownership demonstrated by stakeholders. High-level ministerial involvement and participatory processes have fostered a sense of ownership and commitment to the National Climate Transparency System. The establishment of formal data collection mechanisms and the development of sectoral guidelines have contributed to address historical mistrust and reluctance, creating a clearer understanding of the purpose and benefits of data sharing. However, the full realization of these behavioural changes will depend on the sustained application of the tools and frameworks developed, particularly as the country moves forward with future reporting processes. Achieving the highest levels of transparency with strong MRV systems that provide quality GHG related information in a transparent, accurate and accessible to a wide audience, with feedback of information from MRV flowing into policy design and implementation[54], will require more sustained future funding to consolidate and land the initial gains achieved through this project.

[54] Level 10 on GEF score as per Annex III of CBIT programming directions, a future 3 years project could aspire to level 8-10

Outcome 2: Key Ministries, Agencies, Departments and other stakeholders use the NDC transparency system

188. Table 9 summarises the level of attainment of the indicator and target for outcome 2 as of 30th June 2024.

Table 9: Level of progress towards achievement of outcome 2 targets

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	End-of-project target	Progress as of current period	Attainment of the indicator & target as of 30 June 2024	Level of achievement
Outcome 2: Key Ministries, Agencies, Departments and other stakeholders use the NDC transparency system	Indicator 2.1: % of specialized trained staff who declares to be in a better position to implement MRV systems (gender-disaggregated)	N/A	70%	90% (out of which 65% males and 35% females)	90% of staff trained claim to be in a better position to implement MRV systems, thus exceeding the planned target. This is based on post training evaluations / surveys conducted with training participants. A capacity development strategy was developed. Training of trainers conducted for GHG inventory development in the waste and AFOLU sectors. Data teams trained on NDC implementation. Peer-to-peer visits were made to learn from the implementation of the CBIT in anglophone African countries and, specifically, Ghana and Liberia due to the similarities in the landscape, tools used, lessons learned, engagement strategies, people's perception, economies, and weather.	Satisfactory
	Indicator 2.2: Number of government staff using the platform in their day-to-day work	0	30	45	45 government staff trained and expected to use the NDC platform The 45-government staff are from the following entities: Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs, Ministry of Water Resources, Fisheries and Marine Resources, Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, departments of Forestry, and several parastatal agencies (EPA, Meteorology, Statistics, Electricity and Distribution, Electricity Generation and Transmission, Road Safety, Water Resources). The NDC Platform has been developed, **and ready for use** by the Climate Change Secretariat and other MDA data focal points. Trainings were conducted for data entry persons and data validators. Platform is currently not being used as expected.	Satisfactory[55]

189. The CBIT project in Sierra Leone has made progress towards achieving **Outcome 2**, which focuses on ensuring that key ministries, agencies, departments, and other stakeholders use the NDC transparency system. The project has contributed to address the limiting behaviours identified in the ProDoc, particularly the lack of ownership of the NDC and its implementation among stakeholders, as well as the perception of climate change as a distant and complex issue.

Behavioural Changes and Enabling Environment

190. The project has successfully fostered positive behavioural changes among stakeholders, particularly in how they perceive and engage with climate data and NDC implementation. As with outcome 1, through stakeholder consultations, engagement, and capacity-building activities, the project has improved understanding of climate change, the NDCs and the need for evidence-based decision making in climate change policy making and practice.

191. The project conducted extensive capacity-building interventions, including the development of a Capacity Development Strategy (CDS) and a Training Toolkit tailored to address identified gaps in technical and managerial skills. The Training of Trainers (ToT) model empowered local experts to replicate training within their institutions, enhancing the sustainability of capacity-building efforts. Thematic trainings, such as those for the AFOLU and waste sectors, equipped participants with the skills needed to collect, process, and report

[55] While more people than planned have been trained, there was no data on the platform at the time of the TR indicating that it was not in use

data, while the GIS enhanced the EPA's capabilities in monitoring and evaluating climate adaptation actions. These capacity-building activities have not only improved technical skills but also fostered a culture of data-driven decision-making among stakeholders.

192. Peer-to-peer learning activities and regional knowledge exchanges further enhanced knowledge about climate change, NDC processes and transparency obligations under the PCA. Exchange visits to Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Liberia provided opportunities for Sierra Leonean stakeholders to learn from more advanced countries in areas such as MRV systems, GHG inventory development, and climate transparency. Participation in global forums, such as the Global Transparency Forum in Tokyo and COP-27 and COP-28, further strengthened Sierra Leone's engagement in global climate initiatives and facilitated the sharing of best practices. These exchanges have been instrumental in fostering regional collaboration and enhancing the technical expertise of key stakeholders.

NDC Online Platform and Data Management

193. the development of the NDC online platform represents a significant milestone in Sierra Leone's efforts to enhance climate transparency. The platform, designed to be user-friendly and adaptable, provides a centralized system for data collection, management, and reporting, including information on climate finance. Training sessions for IT administrators and stakeholders ensured that users were equipped with the skills needed to operate the platform effectively. While the platform has the potential to improve evidence-based climate planning, its full adoption will depend on continued support and capacity-building efforts.

194. This project highlighted the value of innovative educational initiatives, such as the animated book on climate change for school children. These initiatives have the potential to influence long-term behavioural change by raising awareness and fostering a culture of climate action among younger generations.

Assumptions

195. The assumptions for progress from project outputs to outcomes have largely held true. The participatory approach to developing tools and frameworks has fostered stakeholder buy-in, while capacity-building activities have enhanced the skills needed for effective data management. The drivers supporting the transition from outputs to outcomes include high-level government commitment, the establishment of formal data collection mechanisms, and the development of tools and frameworks aligned with international best practices. However, the delayed delivery of tools and the limited opportunity for their immediate application highlight the need for continued support and capacity-building to ensure their effective use.

Challenges

196. The project faced several challenges that impacted the full realization of Outcomes 1 and 2. The late delivery of the tools, guidelines and the NDC online platform, limited the time available for piloting and embedding them into daily operations. Additionally, the one-off nature of trainings highlighted the need for continuous capacity-building efforts to address knowledge gaps and staff turnover. Furthermore, specific trainings on energy and IPPU sectors were not delivered due to lack of national specialists further emphasizing the need for strengthening expertise within the EPA and nationally. Stakeholders also faced challenges in data collection and integration, particularly due to limited financial, material and human resources and institutional barriers such as lack of mandates for data collection within different sectors. While the project made efforts to include women and youth, there was limited engagement with persons with disabilities.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Satisfactory

D3. Likelihood of Impact

197. The CBIT project in Sierra Leone aimed to build and strengthen national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Climate Agreement. The project's Theory of Change (TOC) outlined a causal pathway where the delivery of six outputs would lead to two key outcomes: (1) upgraded institutional arrangements and tools to track NDC implementation, and (2) the use of the NDC transparency system by key stakeholders. These outcomes were expected to contribute to the broader impact of improved climate transparency and enhanced capacity to meet Sierra Leone's obligations under the Paris Agreement. This was to be perceived through improvement in the quality of Institutional capacity for transparency based on GEF score 1 to 4 as per Annex IV of CBIT. From a baseline of 1 (No designated transparency institution to support and coordinate the planning and implementation of transparency activities under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement exists), the project intended to attain a target of 2 (Designated transparency institution exists, but with limited staff and capacity to support and coordinate implementation of transparency activities under

Article 13 of Paris Agreement. Institution lacks authority or mandate to coordinate transparency activities under Article 13).

Causal Pathways and Change Processes

198. The project's causal pathways were designed to address key barriers to climate transparency in Sierra Leone, including limited institutional capacity, lack of stakeholder ownership, and insufficient data collection and reporting systems. The outputs were intended to create the necessary tools, frameworks, and capacities to enable systematic tracking of NDC implementation and foster a culture of data-driven decision-making.

Institutional Arrangements and Tools:

199. The EPA Act was reviewed in 2022, and provisions were made for prioritizing climate adaptation and mitigation, as indicated in section 17 subsection (1) h and subsection 2 of the Act. The EPA-SL through the national Climate Change Secretariat serves as the institution that coordinates the planning and implementation of Transparency activities in the country (objective indicator).

200. The country's NC4 is currently being developed. The country's INDC was developed in 2015 and was reviewed as an NDC in July 2021. Funding secured for the revision of the NDCs and production of the NC and BTR will facilitate application of learning. The establishment of institutional arrangements through the CBIT project, such as the Ministerial NDC Implementation Committee and data teams in key ministries, created a foundation for systematic data collection and reporting. The development of sectoral guidelines, QA/QC systems, and the NDC online platform provided the necessary tools for transparency. These interventions have contributed to contributed to tackle the initial reluctance of stakeholders by clarifying roles and the purpose of data sharing, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the National Climate Transparency System.

Use of the NDC Transparency System

201. Capacity-building activities, including training of trainers (ToT) and thematic sectoral trainings, equipped stakeholders with the skills needed to collect, process, and report data. Peer-to-peer learning exchanges and participation in global forums further enhanced technical expertise and regional collaboration. The NDC online platform, though not yet fully operationalized, represents a significant milestone in enhancing climate transparency. Its success will depend on continued support and capacity-building to ensure its effective use. Integrating mandates for climate reporting within the Climate Change Act under review will provide the necessary institutional framework needed for sustainability of the ETF.

Roles of Key Actors and Change Agents

202. The project's success in driving behavioural change and institutional transformation was heavily influenced by the roles of key actors and change agents:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

203. As the lead institution, the EPA played a central role in coordinating data collection, developing tools, and building stakeholder capacity. The EPA's leadership in establishing formal agreements (MoUs) and institutional arrangements was critical in fostering trust and collaboration among stakeholders.

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change:

204. While the ministry's involvement was limited, its role in policy coordination and decision-making is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the project's outcomes. Strengthening the ministry's capacity and mandate will be essential to ensure broader government ownership of the transparency system.

Stakeholders and Data Teams:

205. Stakeholders from key sectoral ministries (Energy, AFOLU, IPPU, Local government/waste), agencies (MET, SLARI, Transport, NPAA), civil society, local governments, academia, youth organisations through the NDC committees were actively engaged in capacity-building activities and the development of tools. Their participation in trainings and consultations fostered a sense of ownership and commitment to the transparency system.

International Partners (UNEP-CCC, Nella Interactive, international, regional and national consultants):

206. Technical assistance from international partners was instrumental in developing sectoral guidelines, the QA/QC system, and the NDC online platform. However, delays in delivery and limited time for piloting tools affected their immediate application.

Drivers and Assumptions

207. The project's success was underpinned by several key drivers and assumptions, many of which held true during implementation.

High-Level Government Commitment:

208. The review of the EPA Act of 2022 and the establishment of the Ministerial NDC Implementation Committee and high-level stakeholder engagements demonstrated strong government commitment to climate transparency. The provision of required co-financing further demonstrated ownership. This commitment was a critical driver of behavioural change and institutional transformation.

Participatory Approach:

The participatory approach to developing tools and frameworks fostered stakeholder buy-in and ownership. Respondents testified that this had led to increase trust amongst different agencies, which is crucial in delivering a whole of government approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Capacity Building:

209. Capacity-building activities, including ToT and thematic trainings, enhanced technical and managerial skills.

Box 2: Testimonial from training participant

I have been actively involved in research focused on waste and pollution, particularly working on dumpsites and household waste across the country. I had the privilege of participating in specialized training, which significantly enhanced my skills and knowledge in this field. As a consultant for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), I have applied these techniques in various projects, including a household waste audit with Infinitum. This project involved characterizing waste around Freetown, assessing its greenhouse gas emissions potential, and exploring its energy generation capabilities through calculations and other scientific tests. My consultancy work primarily revolves around greenhouse gas emissions, and the training has positively influenced my professional practice. Additionally, I have shared these techniques with environmental science students at both BSc and MSc levels. One of the challenges I faced in my research was the lack of reliable information, which often constrained my focus areas. However, the training provided me with tools and methods to better manage this issue. I am currently in the process of writing manuscripts based on this work and plan to publish them soon. The knowledge gained has been seamlessly integrated into my research and academic endeavours, and I look forward to continuing this impactful work in the future.

Regional and Global Collaboration:

210. Peer-to-peer learning exchanges and participation in global forums strengthened regional collaboration and technical expertise. These activities were instrumental in fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making.

Challenges

211. Despite the project's achievements, several challenges were identified:

Limited Time for Piloting Tools:

212. The late delivery of tools, such as the sectoral guidelines and NDC online platform, limited the time available for piloting and embedding them into daily operations. This affected their full adoption.

Resource Constraints:

213. Stakeholders faced challenges in data collection and reporting due to limited resources and institutional barriers. The project was also unable to deliver targeted training on GHG inventories in the energy and IPPU sectors.

Limited Engagement of Marginalized Groups:

214. While the project made efforts to include women and youth, there was limited engagement with persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

Coordination and Mandate Issues:

215. Coordination between the EPA and the Ministry of Environment remains a challenge, affecting the broader government ownership of the transparency system. Strengthening the ministry's role and mandate will be essential to ensure the sustainability of the project's outcomes. Furthermore, ensuring that climate reporting become institutionalised as part of the Climate Change Act, could further address coordination and mandate issues.

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

Table 10: Likelihood of impact estimate

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

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Likely

Box 3-5 below presents answers to the terminal review strategic questions.

Rating for Effectiveness: Satisfactory

Review questions

Box 3: Q1: Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?

Yes, the State and non-State actors participating in the project successfully adopted the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) arrangements under the Paris Agreement. Several key elements from the project contributed to this outcome:

1. **Institutional Structures and Coordination Mechanisms**:
   The project established robust institutional arrangements under the coordination of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone, which included clear roles for key ministries, departments, and agencies. This structural setup facilitates improved collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, enhancing the transparency of climate data collection, reporting, and verification processes.

2. **Capacity Building and Training**:
   The project significantly strengthened capacities through targeted training, reaching over 1,312 stakeholders from government agencies, municipal councils, and non-state actors. Training topics included greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV), data management, and awareness on climate transparency, which equipped participants to implement ETF arrangements.

3. **Digital Transparency Tool**:
   The establishment of the NDC Transparency Platform was a crucial milestone, providing the foundation for stakeholders to systematically collect, manage, and report climate-related information in line with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under the Paris Agreement.

4. **Gender Inclusivity and Private Sector Engagement**:
   The project developed a gender-inclusive NDC implementation plan and a private-sector engagement strategy, which mainstreamed gender considerations and helped initiate engagement with non-state actors. This enhanced the inclusivity and comprehensiveness of the transparency framework, contributing to broader stakeholder buy-in.

Some factors have constrained complete adoption:

- **Limited Legal Mandates**: The absence of explicit legal mandates for compulsory climate data collection and reporting posed barriers to widespread adoption. Stakeholders lack enforceable incentives or obligations, for consistent participation in transparency activities.

- **Dependence on External Expertise**: Continued reliance on external consultants due to limited internal technical capacities in certain areas (e.g., GHG inventories and MRV) posed challenges to delivery of all planned trainings and full adoption.

- **Delayed Activities**: External disruptions, such as COVID-19 and administrative delays, hindered timely delivery and uptake of certain tools and capacity-building activities, slowing down the pace of institutionalization.

Box 4: Q2: Did the project contribute to strengthening / improving transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting? If so, please explain how.

Yes, the project significantly strengthened transparency mechanisms of national institutions for domestic and UN conventions reporting. Liked to Q1 above, key contributions include:

1. **Establishment of the NDC Transparency Platform**:
   Provides a centralized digital system for consistent data collection, reporting, and monitoring, aligning with UNFCCC guidelines and improving data accuracy and accessibility.

2. **Capacity Building and Training**:
   Over 1,312 stakeholders from government ministries and non-state actors were trained in climate data collection, MRV processes, and reporting standards, enhancing institutional capacity.

3. **Sectoral Guidelines and Indicators**:
   Developed specific transparency guidelines, methodologies, and indicators for prioritized sectors (energy, agriculture, waste, AFOLU, IPPU), providing the framework for consistent and reliable reporting aligned with international standards.

4. **Quality Assurance Mechanisms**:
   Introduced systematic quality control procedures, to ensure the reliability and credibility of national reporting instruments (e.g., National Communications, Biennial Transparency Reports).

These elements have enhanced the country's ability to produce transparent, accurate, and timely climate reporting domestically and to international bodies such as the UNFCCC. Funding secured for from the ICAT project, 4NC, BTR and revision of the country's 2021 NDCs provide the opportunity to effectively apply the tools and learning acquired.

Box 5: 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?

Yes, the State and non-State actors participating in the project partially adopted the new tools developed. The adoption was particularly strong among institutional actors, including key ministries, departments, and agencies, who benefited from targeted training, clear sector-specific guidelines, and the establishment of the NDC Transparency Platform hosted by EPA, fostering ownership and continuity.

However, adoption by non-state actors, especially civil society organizations, was more limited due to the project's primary emphasis on institutional capacity building. Nonetheless, meaningful engagement with youth through the regional NDC committees significantly improved inclusivity and broadened awareness. The engagement with academia and the development of the private sector engagement strategy marked efforts to enhance adoption of tools by non-state actors.

Barriers to broader adoption included limited post-training support, absence of explicit mandates for compulsory use of transparency tools. Thus, while significant progress was made, broader institutionalization and deeper involvement of non-state actors would require sustained engagement efforts, clear mandates, and ongoing support mechanisms

E. Financial Management

E1. Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

217. The CBIT Sierra Leone project followed UNEP's established financial policies and guidelines, ensuring proper documentation and accountability in fund utilization. The Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed between UNEP and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone laid the foundation for financial management practices. The project implemented the following measures to adhere to UNEP's financial protocols:

- Regular financial reporting and audits to track expenditures, ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of funds.
- Compliance with UNEP's procurement policies to ensure transparency in hiring consultants and acquiring project resources.
- Maintaining a dedicated financial management team within the Project Management Unit (PMU), with oversight from UNEP's Finance and Budget Office.
- Ensuring financial disbursements were made based on milestone achievements and approved financial plans.

218. The EPA also ensured that guidelines set out in the public financial management and procurement acts were respected. As a member of the UNEP team stated, *I was happy with the delivery – we did not have any notable concerns with the financial management of the project.*

219. Four project audits were implemented by an independent external agency. The initial audits of 2021 and 2022 accounts noted that while adherence to financial policies was generally strong, some financial management concerns needed to be addressed[56][57], particularly regarding fund commingling in EPA's accounts (the project did not have a dedicated project account). The audits identified that funds allocated to the CBIT project were mixed with other project funds, posing challenges in tracking donor-specific expenditures, and being able to conclude on the fund balances of the project. However, by the 2023 audit, all other issues identified and pending from 2021 and 2022 audits such as inconsistencies with foreign transactions, respect of some procurement procedures and filing, were cleared. The final issue regarding the project's special account could not be addressed as the account and project were already operational and could not be changed. The audit concluded that this did not pose a risk to the project as no substantive issues were identified by having the CBIT accounts domiciled in a common account. It was recommended

[56] EPA-SL 2021 CBIT Audit report Management letter for the eighteen months period July 01.2020-December 31.2021 – audit and management response
[57] EPA-SL 2022 CBIT Audit report Management letter for the eighteen months period Jan 01.2022-December 31.2022 – audit and management response

that future projects should ensure to have a separate account[58]. In all, project records from the EPA and UNEP-CCC which implemented part of the funding were clear and well maintained.

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

E2. Completeness of Financial Information

220. The financial reporting for the CBIT project included detailed records of expenditures, disbursements, and co-financing contributions. The project maintained a robust financial tracking system, ensuring that quarterly expenditure reports were provided for all relevant reporting periods. These reports detailed budget utilization by line item, enabling transparency and accountability. The reports provided critical insights into budgetary performance at regular intervals, allowing project management to adjust plans accordingly. Importantly, each report included projected expenditure for the following quarter, facilitating better financial planning and advance cash payments. Additionally, a final financial report was submitted at project completion, summarizing total expenditures, budget adjustments, and co-financing contributions.

221. The original budget allocation for the project was USD 1,344,495, with an additional USD 200,000 expected in co-financing from the EPA. These included:

- Office space and utilities.
- Administrative staff salaries.
- Vehicle usage and maintenance.

222. The planned co-financing amount of USD 200,000 was successfully realized, demonstrating strong financial commitment from the Sierra Leonean government. This contribution supported project delivery.

223. Figure 9 below summarises the level of project expenditures (inclusive of GEF and Co-financing mobilised) against the overall project budget. This shows that at the time of the review, 94% of the overall resources mobilised from the GEF and national government was reported spent as planned. This rate would reach 99% if TR costs are included.

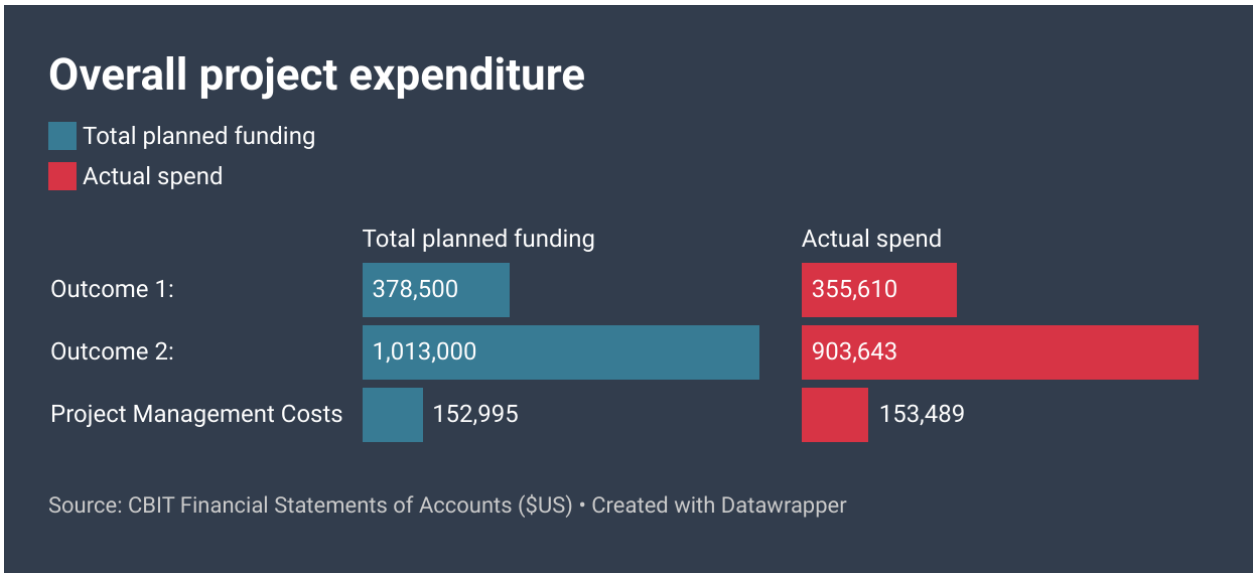

Figure 9 : Overall report project expenditure (GEF and co-financing mobilised)

224. A further breakdown of the level of spend per output of the project can be seen in figure 10.

[58] EPA-SL 2023 CBIT Audit report Management letter for the eighteen months period Jan 01.2023-December 31.2023 – audit and management response

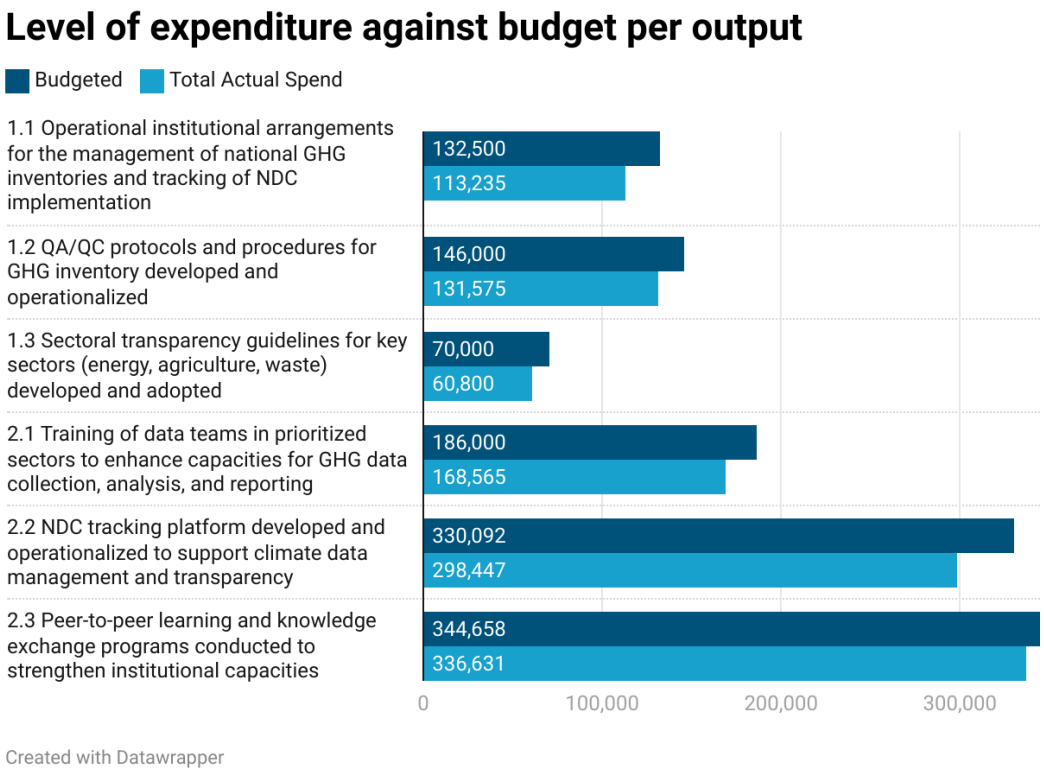

Figure 10: Level of expenditure of GEF resources by output

This evidence suggests that the most significant volume of the project was spent on peer learning and knowledge exchange, and the development of the NDC tracking platform. This represents over 52% of the overall GEF allocation, compared to the other outputs. There are significant capacity strengthening needs which has not been fully addressed by this project, partly due to the amount funding available. A reallocation of funding towards output 2.1 could have further enhanced opportunities not only for training, but also for post training monitoring and mentorship. Table 11 summarises the rating for the various financial management components that have been assessed.

Table 11: Financial Management Table

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS			
Financial management components:		**Rating**	**Evidence/ Comments**
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		**HS:HU**	**HS**
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[59] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes/No	NO
2. Completeness of project financial information[60]:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		**HS:HU**	**HS**
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes – at design, both the GEF budget and co-finance cost costs tables arranged by budget line for each component an

[59] If the Review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

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

B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes/No or N/A	Yes Requests for revision 1 and 2 provided. Addressed delays due to Cov-19, procurement and contracting challenges with UNEP - CCC
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes –all legal agreements provided
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/No or N/A	Yes Cash advance confirmations provided
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes annual co-finance reports were provided
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes quarterly expenditure reports provided by budget line for all relevant reporting periods; final project financial account statements provided as well
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes/No or N/A	Yes All audit reports and management responses provided.
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	No
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		**HS:HU**	**HS**
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS:HU	HS There was s a clear line of communication between the Project Manager and financial staff, such as the Finance Manager within EPA, and the UNEP Budget Holder. Regularly, there are meetings were conducted between the Project Manager and technical support teams (e.g., UNEP-CCC)
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS:HU	HS The UNEP Budget Holder was actively involved in the project implementation, ensuring proper financial management standards were adhered
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS:HU	HS Financial management issues have been addressed following the recommendations of the audit
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS:HU	HS The progress and implementation reports and interviews with project team and task manager demonstrate that there has been contact between the project manager and the fund manager.
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS:HU	HS
Overall rating		**HS**	

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: High Satisfactory

E3. Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

225. Effective communication between financial and project management teams was a key factor in ensuring smooth financial execution. The Project Manager, Administration, Finance and Procurement Officers, and UNEP's Fund Management Officer and Task Manager maintained regular coordination to:

- Address budget reallocations promptly.
- Resolve financial discrepancies identified in audits.
- Ensure timely submission of financial reports to UNEP.

226. To facilitate communication, financial review meetings with UNEP-CCC and EPA were organised with UNEP Team. Financial management teams also used WhatsApp groups with project teams for real-time financial updates when needed. EPA's procurement team was highly involved, ensuring that financial management

was in line with national guidelines set forth in the country's procurement act of 2018. All requests for procurement identified by the project management team were scrutinised by the finance teams and where needed adjustments were made, before being validated by EPA authorities in line with internal procedures. Project management teams worked hand in glove in the preparation of all financial and narrative reporting which enhanced collaboration but also transparency. These measures improved financial coordination and expedited decision-making processes. As one respondent mentioned, *EPA has been very responsive, we managed to create an environment of trust – anytime they had an issue, they would proactively inform us of the issues and to collectively find solutions. They were able to anticipate and make adjustments.*

227. This was particularly the case regarding the requests for project extensions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic and contracting delays experienced with UNEP-CCC. Regular updates regarding the effect of the presidential elections and modification of workplans were regularly communicated, not only to UNEP, but also through the project steering committee. The PSC reviewed, provided guidance and direction regarding any proposed changes and modifications to activities and budgets. Through UNEP's participation in the PSC, communication was further improved as the task manager was apprised of the major decisions taken by the PSC. In all, the project communication and financial management benefited from a highly dedicated, dynamic, committed and experienced team, that was highly trusted by national partners and external stakeholders involved in the financial management of the project.

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Financial Management: Highly Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

Cost-Effectiveness

228. The project demonstrated a commendable level of financial discipline, with expenditures largely aligning with planned activities. The project's procurement plan resource allocation for GEF resources is presented in figure 11 below.

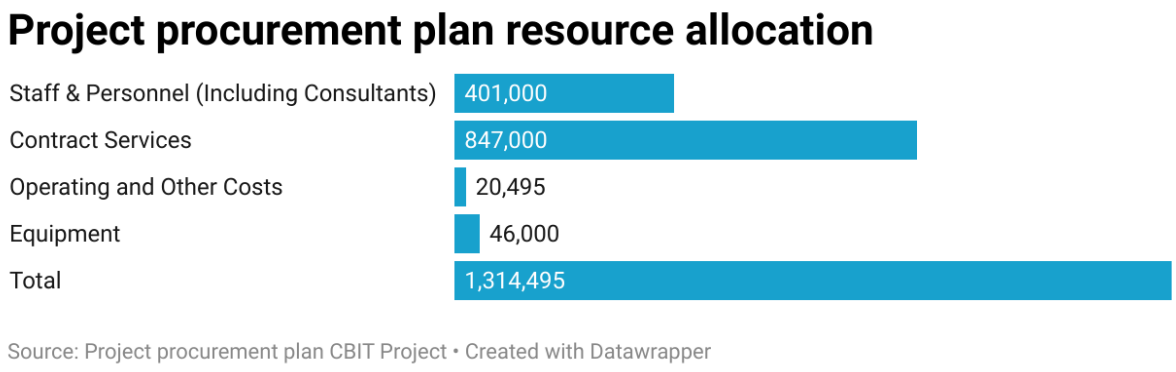

Figure 11: Resource allocation plan

229. Figure 11 shows that a significant amount of resources were allocated to contract services and personnel considering that this was an institutional capacity building project. This included significant reliance on international and national consultants as well as UNEP-CCC to deliver on the project. Significant stakeholder engagement in the regions also required organisational and promotional costs of events to enhance awareness raising and buy-in. The use of community and national radio enhanced outreach and impact. Furthermore, the creation of NDC Committees in the regions with district level representatives also facilitated the dissemination of information about the project at local level.

230. One further advantage for organising events in the regions, was that it helped focus the minds of high-level officials at these events. Traditionally, these would be highly distracted by their day-to-day activities in Freetown. The same applied to the organisation of the high level interministerial committee meetings as well. Interviews with officials and consultants affirmed that this enhanced their participation during events. Similarly, drawing on some members of the steering committee to lead radio and TV communication

sessions also helped to reduce dependency on consultants, while alleviating the workload of the project management team.

231. As mentioned earlier, by June 2024, over 94% of the total GEF resources had been disbursed, ensuring that all major deliverables were achieved. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) covered operational costs, including office space, utilities, and administrative support, reinforcing national ownership and reducing additional financial burdens on the project. Despite some budgetary reallocations necessitated by rising operational costs, including increased fuel prices, financial resources were efficiently managed to ensure that the intended outcomes were met. Table 12 presents the resource efficiency use rate of the project

Table 12: Resource use efficiency

Outcome	% Spend[61]	Level of Achievement (%)	Resource Efficiency (Achievement/Spend)
Outcome 1	94%	100%	1.1
Outcome 2	89%	85%	1.0
Project Management	100%	100%	1.0
Total	**94%**	**95%**	**1.0**

232. An efficiency resource use rate of above 1, highlights a highly efficient project, exceeding targets. Values between 0.8-1**, show that the project was efficient with the various outputs achieved**. Figures between 0.6-0.8 demonstrate moderate efficiency with gaps in achievement of outputs, while values of less than 0.6 showcase highly inefficient projects[62].

233. Efficiencies were secured through competitive procurement processes which ensured that value for money was achieved in line with national procurement standards and guidelines. Significant a number of events were implemented in the regions, taking advantage of buy in from regional councils to organise events in council halls and meeting venues. This significantly, reduced the cost of events compared to those held in Freetown. However, certain financial inefficiencies emerged in the form of procurement delays and inconsistencies in budget execution. These challenges were primarily linked to national procurement procedures, which resulted in prolonged consultant recruitment and equipment acquisition[63]. The procurement of more computers than initially planned, along with some slight overpayments to project staff, were noted in earlier audits, but these were addressed. Despite these hurdles, the project maintained a high level of transparency in financial planning. Regular financial review meetings between UNEP, EPA, and the project team facilitated real-time adjustments to spending plans. Additionally, innovative communication strategies, including the use of WhatsApp groups, strengthened coordination, allowing for the swift resolution of budgetary and operational concerns. Ultimately, the project's financial efficiency was upheld through a combination of strong coordination, adaptability in spending, and proactive problem-solving.

Timelines, adaptive measures and other efficiency measures

234. Although the project was initially scheduled for completion within 36 months, multiple delays necessitated an extension, with the final completion date revised to June 2024. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted early implementation phases, affecting stakeholder engagement, training sessions, and procurement processes. Furthermore, the 2023 presidential elections in Sierra Leone led to reduced government engagement, as key decision-makers were involved in one way or the other (see details under section C – Nature of external context).

235. Furthermore, as one stakeholder stated, *during the elections, it was cautious to call meetings and engage stakeholders. Some activities had to be postponed avoiding political tensions.* To counteract these delays, several adaptive measures were implemented. The use of regional consultants from Liberia and Ghana proved to be a critical strategy, minimizing dependence on international experts who faced travel restrictions. Virtual platforms were widely adopted for meetings and stakeholder consultations, reducing time lost due to logistical constraints. Additionally, a bi-weekly coordination structure was introduced, allowing for quick adjustments to workplans and ensuring that implementation remained on track despite external disruptions. However, the cumulative effect of these delays meant that some activities were rushed in the final phases, limiting the time available for piloting and refining critical tools. The delayed delivery of key resources, such

[61] Excludes final TR costs
[62] The resource efficiency rate provides a snapshot of the project at a given point in time and does not account for delays and challenges faced during implement.
[63] EPA-SL 2021 CBIT Audit report Management letter for the eighteen months period July 01.2020-December 31.2021 – audit and management response

as the NDC online platform and sectoral guidelines meant that stakeholders had limited time to fully integrate and test these systems before project closure.

236. The CBIT project built on existing national frameworks, institutional structures, and regional initiatives to enhance efficiency and sustainability. Rather than creating parallel structures, it reinforced GHG data collection and transparency mechanisms, leveraging experiences from the 3rd National Communication and BUR processes. Collaboration with initiatives like the UNDP Climate Promise allowed cost savings that supported the NDC implementation plan and private sector engagement strategy. Ongoing engagements with the EU and GIZ aimed at updating the 2021 NDC further strengthened coordination. Additionally, the project benefited from GEF-supported global CBIT initiatives, with UNEP-CCC providing technical assistance and facilitating peer-to-peer learning with Zimbabwe, Malawi, and South Africa. At the national level, partnerships with regional entities, civil society, and sectoral ministries enhanced technical capacity, governance alignment, and data-sharing. The project also engaged academia, supporting climate education through initiatives like the animated climate change booklet for primary schools and integrating climate knowledge into university curricula. These efforts contributed to training a new generation of professionals to address Sierra Leone's climate data and governance challenges. While private sector engagement remained limited due to awareness and capacity constraints, the project made progress toward a multi-stakeholder approach to climate transparency.

237. Two no-cost extensions (February and October 2022[64]) were necessary mainly in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, administrative delays and legal challenges associated with UDP's transition to the new UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC)[65].While these allowed completion of key deliverables like the NDC online platform and GHG inventory guidelines, they also compressed the final implementation phase, limiting time for tool testing and stakeholder adaptation. Budget adjustments ensured key activities remained funded despite rising costs. Following UNEP's sustainability principles, the project reduced travel-related emissions by prioritizing virtual engagement, using regional consultants, and promoting shared transportation. Lodging participants near meeting venues also minimized daily commutes.

Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

G1. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

238. The Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) design of the CBIT Sierra Leone Project was structured to align with UNEP Evaluation Policy and the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy, integrating multiple layers of monitoring mechanisms, periodic evaluations, and structured reporting. The quality of this design is assessed based on its robustness, clarity of indicators, budgeting sufficiency, and alignment with SMART criteria.

Quality of the Monitoring Design

239. The project's monitoring design was comprehensive and well-structured, incorporating multiple levels of oversight, performance tracking, and learning mechanisms. The design included an Inception Workshop (IW), bi-annual progress and financial reports, annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), and a Terminal Review. Additionally, financial audits were scheduled annually to ensure financial accountability.

240. One of the strengths of the design was the inclusion of clear, periodic milestones for performance assessment. The PIR process, for example, was designed to systematically analyze project performance on a yearly basis, while the Final Project Report was structured to ensure consolidation of all activities and achievements. The structured sequencing of these monitoring events indicated a well-thought-out plan to capture data over time, ensuring that the project's progress could be monitored, evaluated, and course-corrected if needed.

241. The design also included final stage learning TR planned to take place no earlier than six months prior to project completion and no later than six months after. Key personnel, including the coordinator, were responsible for overseeing the M&E activities. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) also played a role in reviewing M&E outcomes, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the project's lifecycle.

[64] EPA September 2022 Request Letter for UNEP-CCC Technical Support and project extension request

[65] Amendment No.2 to the PCA between UNEP and EPA-SL – October 2022

242. While the sequencing of monitoring events was logical, one area of weakness was the lack of a dedicated MEL officer and lack of real-time or digital monitoring tools. The design did not integrate an interactive project dashboard, real-time data analytics, or automated performance tracking systems, which would have enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of MEL activities. Instead, the project relied on manual data collection and reporting mechanisms. At the time of the review, there was acknowledgement that the team lacked internal M&E capacity, particularly to monitor qualitative changes and to document learning emerging from the project.

Use of SMART Indicators

243. A critical element in assessing the quality of the monitoring design is whether it adheres to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) principles. An assessment of the results framework presented indicates that the CBIT Sierra Leone project partially met these criteria.

244. Specific: The project's objectives were clearly defined, particularly in relation to enhancing transparency in climate reporting and strengthening institutional capacity. The monitoring framework was well-structured around expected outcomes related to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), greenhouse gas (GHG) reporting, and institutional strengthening.

245. Measurable: While objective and outcome level indicators were mainly quantitative in nature (see analysis under the results framework section), the results framework lacked output level indicators. A direct result is that there is a confounding of output and outcome level achievements in the annual reports. There was no internal mechanisms and resources built in to assess changes in behaviour amongst those trained or the level of application of learning, tools and platform developed by the project.

246. Achievable: The target-setting approach was reasonable given the scope and budget of the project. However, some indicators on the level of use of the NDC platform at completion were quite ambitious considering the very low baseline situation in the country. The assumptions regarding the availability of data, poor coordination and weak availability of financial resources to ensure data collection and uploading on the NDC platform materialised, limiting stakeholders' ability to use the platform or apply learning to their various areas of work or agencies.

247. Relevant: The indicators were closely aligned with national priorities under Sierra Leone's climate action strategy. The GHG inventory framework, NDC alignment, and capacity-building efforts were highly relevant to the country's international obligations under the Paris Agreement. The objective and outcome indicators used CBIT MRV and institutional capacity strengthening metrics with baselines and targets set. However, the project's monitoring framework had just one gender-disaggregated indicator.

248. Time-bound: The project design established clear timelines for reporting, including half-yearly, annual, and final-stage evaluations.

Budget Allocation for Monitoring and Evaluation

249. The project allocated $48,500 for M&E activities, covering the Inception Workshop ($5,000), Terminal Evaluation ($30,000), and annual financial audits ($13,500). This budget was adequate for basic monitoring activities but insufficient for a comprehensive performance assessment strategy and learning. A more balanced allocation could have directed some funding toward a MEL officer and the development of digital tracking tools (e.g basic excel spreadsheet for monitoring).

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting: Satisfactory

G2. Monitoring of Project Implementation

Monitoring of project implementation

250. The CBIT Sierra Leone project had a well-structured monitoring system as presented above that effectively ensured regular tracking of implementation progress. Sierra Leone's CBIT Project inception workshop was held on Wednesday, 28th October 2020 at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Aberdeen, Freetown. The CBIT project was launched with the attendance of 56 stakeholders in the proportion of 66% male and 34% female. Representation also includes the Executive Chairman, Environment Protection Agency, the Director, Ministry of Environment, the Country Representative, UNIDO, the Deputy Director, Meteorological Agency, Representatives from UNEP and the UNEP-DTU Partnership (UDP) and a host of representation from Governments, CSOs, Private sector, Local Councils, Media and Parliamentarians. Monitoring reports—including PIRs, half-yearly financial reports, and PSC meeting records—were consistently produced and provided valuable insights into project performance. The project team also made use of consultations with executing agencies to ensure that implementation remained on track.

251. A major strength of the monitoring system was its structured financial oversight. The regular financial audits and budget tracking mechanisms ensured that funds were allocated efficiently and in alignment with planned activities. The monitoring of expenditures was particularly strong, with detailed quarterly financial reports submitted on time and reviewed by the PSC. This level of oversight ensured transparency and accountability in resource utilization and allowed for timely reallocations when necessary. The monitoring framework also incorporated stakeholder engagement tracking, which ensured that participation levels were reviewed and adjusted based on project needs. The use of structured reporting mechanisms allowed the project to identify gaps in engagement early on, particularly with local government actors, and led to subsequent outreach efforts to improve inclusivity.

252. However, while financial and operational tracking were strong, some challenges emerged in the monitoring of institutional adoption and technical capacity-building efforts. The project sought to strengthen climate transparency mechanisms in key government agencies, but monitoring tools were not fully optimized to track how effectively these new frameworks were being adopted. While reports documented the number of training sessions and participants, there was less emphasis on measuring the extent to which capacity-building efforts translated into institutional integration and sustained use of the transparency tools. As mentioned earlier, this was a consequence of the gaps in MEL resourcing highlighted above. Project monitoring was also provided through online and in country visits by UNEP task manager and team. For instance, the PMU had sessions with the UNEP task manager and his team during their visit in November 2022 to discuss lessons learnt from the implementation of the project.

Use of Monitoring Data for Adaptive Management

253. The effectiveness of a monitoring system is not just in its ability to track progress, but in how well the data is used to inform decision-making. The CBIT project successfully used monitoring data to drive financial adjustments, improve stakeholder engagement, and refine project implementation. A key example of adaptive management was budget reallocation in response to emerging needs. For instance, the need for increased stakeholder engagement, development of the private sector engagement plan and development of gender inclusive NDC implementation plan.

254. Similarly, risk monitoring was effective in flagging procurement and political disruptions. As mentioned under section C – Nature of external context, adaptive measures were implemented to mitigate the impact of the external shocks. Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were mitigated through adjustments to the work plan, allowing essential activities to proceed once better working conditions emerged. Gender-disaggregated data was collected during the implementation phase. For instance, during capacity-building workshops, participation was tracked by gender, and efforts were made to ensure that women were well-represented.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Satisfactory

G3. Project Reporting

255. The project consistently provided detailed progress reports during the implementation. The Implementation Reports included clear tracking of activities, outputs, outcomes, and milestones. The reports reflected the full project scope, including technical assistance, institutional arrangements, QA/QC system, NDC plan development, gender mainstreaming, capacity building, and peer-to-peer exchanges.

256. The progress reports, audit statements and management responses as well as the minutes of the project steering committee demonstrate comprehensive reporting and alignment with UNEP/GEF reporting requirements. The reviewer accessed all project deliverables from consultants and UNEP-CCC. These were very well archived and proactively provided to the reviewer when requested. An analysis of the reports demonstrated that they were of a very high quality, a testament of the quality of consultants and peer review processes introduced by the project. Interviews with UNEP, UNEP-CCC and members of the steering committee Interviews with UNEP, UNEP-CCC and members of the steering committee indicated a high level of satisfaction not only with the reporting, but also the regular and transparent communication of information to stakeholders. For PSC committee members this enhanced trust in the PMU and facilitated provision of feedback and strategic guidance for project implementation.

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory

H. Sustainability

H1. Socio-political Sustainability

257. The project demonstrated a high level of national ownership, aligning its objectives with Sierra Leone's existing governance frameworks. The establishment of the Climate Change Secretariat within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has ensured that climate transparency remains embedded in government structures. With the EPA tasked with coordinating all climate actions, including Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) revisions, National Communications, and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), there is a strong institutional base to sustain the project's outcomes.

258. One of the key elements contributing to sustainability is the interministerial coordination framework, particularly the Ministerial NDC Committee. The presence of focal points within core ministries ensures that expertise is distributed across multiple government entities. While the project focused on building sectoral capacities, stakeholders recognized that climate transparency processes require continuous engagement and adaptation. As one participant noted, "*GHG inventories are new, and there is a need for more continuous capacity-building*." This recognition highlights an important aspect of sustainability: the necessity of ongoing training to maintain and update technical skills within the workforce.

259. The project demonstrated excellent multistakeholder engagement working across national and local government agencies, NGO networks, community-based organisations and private sector to a lesser extent. Documentary review and data from primary sources demonstrated a high level of understanding of the NDC processes and the various roles and responsibilities of the various actors. For instance, interviews with regional NDC Committee members and environment and social officers at Port Loko council, highlighted how the project had enhanced their activities. For instance, the NDC committees carried out significant outreach to communities, sensitising them on climate change and actions they need to take to adapt and mitigate the impacts. These local engagement experience at local level and work with local village chiefs, was reported to have led to the institution of bylaws in villages regarding the production of charcoal and tree planting. The youth leaders from the Port Loko region, revealed how the project had strengthened their advocacy and project management skills, enhanced their visibility, credibility and trust amongst their communities.

Box 6: Testimonial from NDC Committees in Port Loko:

Before the training, we lacked the expertise to raise awareness and engage our communities about climate change. We realized there was little knowledge about the impacts of climate change, which motivated us as youth to take action, especially seeing the environmental disasters affecting our communities. Thanks to the support we received from the EPA, we developed an activity plan, prioritized key activities, and conducted community sensitization on climate change and conservation issues. This was our first time receiving such support, and it transformed how we work. We learned the importance of securing community consent, identifying entry points, and leveraging community radio programs to spread our message. People now call in during broadcasts and invite us to speak with local leaders about enacting laws to curb deforestation. The training also introduced us to relevant legislation, empowering us to inform communities about tree-planting bylaws and ways to enforce these rules, like encouraging charcoal producers to adopt alternative livelihoods. Our committees are now stronger in project management, with better documentation, financial management, and reporting skills. We've become a model for other youth groups, with many young people eager to join us and make a difference in their communities.

260. On the part of environmental and social officers, they testified to how the knowledge acquired had not only empowered them to collect and report on waste management data, it has also allowed them to replicate their knowledge through training on dumpsite supervisors and community leaders in their areas of intervention. A key achievement was the improvement in reporting from the dumpsite supervisors and in some communities, village chiefs allocated dumpsites to the councils to enhance its efforts at improving waste management and fighting climate change.

261. At the national level, government officials and members of the steering committees interviewed, highlighted the fact that working together under the CBIT had contributed to strengthen trust amongst the various administrations. Many mentioned that the strong cross sectoral working, participation in the PSC and implementation of joint activities on the ground had further nurtured a stronger sense of service and partnership. Most interviewees stated that there was more knowledge of the complementary roles of the different institutions in strengthening the national climate change transparency framework. By understand the areas of overlap, officials mentioned that this was likely to reduce conflict and enhance future collaborations required to deliver on the nation's climate ambitions. Two further aspects unpin the socio-political sustainability of this project.

262. In the first instance, the project set an ambitious target to achieve gender parity throughout the project. While highly ambitious in a context characterised by male dominance in the technical areas of the project,

officials interviewed argued that this had contributed to focus minds on the importance of gender in achieving the country's climate goals. Gender was a key aspect of project implementation as seen in the leadership of the PMU, participation of women in the PSC and in field activities. Testimonies from a civil society leader and state official, showcased how their participation in the project had positioned them as leaders on gender and climate change in the country. They affirmed how they were now regularly asked to represent their ministries and networks in high level national processes and projects on climate one. One stated that, *before this project, I knew nothing about the NDCs and how women could be involved. Now, I am a focal point on these subjects and now speak on these subjects with authority, due to the various trainings and opportunities I was afforded by the project*. Another stated how the project manager was now considered as a role model by other women, due to her excellent stewardship of the project.

263. A further aspect was the adoption and application of a training of trainers approach and strong linkages with academia. Significant evidence emerged from officials about how they had been able to replicate the trainings received within their different organisations. For instance, in the energy sector, respondents reported providing training to staff of the national electricity production company, which has now allowed them to be able to measure GHG emissions from their interventions. Academics mentioned how knowledge has been used to strengthen curriculum and teaching, contributing to national professional development. Trainees in these institutions go on to hold posts of responsibility in different areas and consequently the project played a role in strengthening the national capacities. This was similarly the case, with the production of the first ever edition of an animated booklet on climate change for school children. The evidence suggests that exposing kids to climate issues at the tender age, ensures that climate smart and friendly practices can be adopted early, leading to future climate positive behaviours[66].

264. Finally, while political commitment to climate action is currently strong, stakeholders acknowledged that shifts in government priorities could present a risk. One official commented, t*his government has been very supportive, but a new administration might not prioritize the same issues.* To mitigate this risk, the project encouraged ministries to integrate climate data collection into routine government functions, ensuring that reporting obligations are not dependent on the priorities of a single administration. The establishment of regional NDC committees also represents an effort to broaden engagement beyond central government, although some stakeholders noted that further outreach at the district level would be necessary to fully integrate climate governance at all levels. Despite these challenges, the strong institutional positioning of climate transparency mechanisms within the EPA and the interministerial engagement structures suggest that socio-political sustainability is likely.

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Likely

H2. Financial Sustainability

265. Financial sustainability remains one of the most significant challenges for maintaining the project's achievements. The long-term financial sustainability of the system will rely on a combination of national budget allocations and international co-financing. While substantial progress has been made in developing the institutional framework and securing essential technical infrastructure, maintaining these achievements will require sustained financial commitments from the Government, complemented by continued international support. The government has demonstrated its commitment to deliver on its commitments under the PCA. This commitment was further demonstrated in the provision of in-kind support amounting to $200,000, covering office space, staff time, and operational expenses for project implementation.

266. Interviews with national stakeholders, surfaced significant concerns regarding the financial continuity of project gains. One of several recommendations proposed during the project implementation was for government departments to mainstream data collection and climate reporting as part of annual plans and consequently allocate adequate budgets to enable departments to deliver on their reporting obligations under the revised national NDC implementation plan. One stakeholder observed, *If you want my staff to input data, are they going to be paid? People did not understand that this project was of national importance and that all sectors must see this as part of their mandates.* This highlights a key challenge: while transparency processes have been established, the level of commitment from sectoral ministries in terms of financial resource allocation remains uncertain. Another official mentioned, that we have received all the training at national level, but how do I collect the data from the regions or districts? We do not have vehicles, staff or

[66] Nabi, Z., Kumar, D., & Manzoor, J. (2024). *Imparting Climate Knowledge With an Aim to Attain Sustainability* (pp. 150–163). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-6955-5.ch008

necessary resources do so. With limited government allocations, this is really challenging. We will continue to depend on projects and the EPA, because government funds are limited.

267. One of the most pressing financial risks relates to the maintenance of the online NDC platform. While the initial subscription of $8,000 was paid to the developers to host the platform, the costs are expected to increase as data gets upload over time. A technical expert noted, t*he IT hosting of the platform is expensive, and as data accumulates, costs will grow. Without dedicated funding, sustainability may be at risk.*" Ensuring financial sustainability will require either a government budgetary allocation for platform maintenance or exploring alternative funding sources such as international climate finance mechanisms or public-private partnerships, but this is for the future. Interviews with EPA officials highlighted efforts to secure additional funding to ensure the sustainability of the project achievements. For instance, the ICAT project[67], which could extend some aspects of CBIT's work. EPA staff also mentioned that funding had been secured to produce the 4th national communication[68] and BTR which will be utilised to pilot the trainings and tools developed by the CBIT project. Further engagements with the European Union, GIZ and UNDP were reported, which were expected to yield further funds to revise the 2021 NDCs and implementation plans. The leadership of the EPA mentioned that there were systematic efforts and commitment to include resources for the NDC platform, data collection and reporting in all future projects. They argued that this will provide the resources needed to maintain the online platform as well as continue to valorise the national expertise that has been identified and strengthened through the CBIT project. It was argued that this would in the long term reduce the country's dependence on external consultants as sectoral focal points grow in experience and expertise in their areas of intervention.

268. Majority of respondents interviewed and those participating in the online survey, suggested the need for a CBIT Phase two project to capitalise on the achievements of the current funding. As one respondent mentioned, t*here may be a need for complementary funding. Before funding a second phase, GEF needs to see the TR report and the recommendations that will surface from the evaluation.* This suggests that while external funding remains a possibility, long-term sustainability will require not only domestic but international resource mobilization. Interestingly, some respondents mentioned that there was limited capacity amongst officials trained on financial resource mobilisation, project design and proposal writing. Officials mentioned that this limits their ability to secure funds to complement the small allocations they receive from central government. At the level of the ministry of local government and local councils, there was recognition that the waste management sector offered significant opportunities for climate finance, but there was limited expertise to design such projects and secure required funding.

269. At the time of the TR, there was significant perceived dependence on the EPA to mobilise further internal or external funding for the project's sustainability. Sectoral heads interviewed remained committed to working with EPA and to explore joint opportunities for resource mobilisation. Given the uncertainty regarding ongoing financial support, financial sustainability remains an area of concern. If ministries and agencies incorporate climate transparency into their operational budgets, and if mandated in legislation such as the climate change act under review, this could significantly enhance long-term sustainability. However, without explicit financial commitments, there is a risk that some of the project's achievements, particularly related to the online platform, data collection and reporting, and continuous capacity-building, may face challenges in the future.

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately likely

H3. Institutional Sustainability

270. The institutional sustainability of the CBIT project appears promising, given the strong government ownership and the embedding of transparency mechanisms within key institutions. The EPA Act of 2022 formally assigns the agency the role of coordinating all climate-related actions, reinforcing the permanence of its role in transparency reporting. Additionally, the project supported the development of sectoral data teams, which now have the technical capacity to collect and transmit data to the NDC platform. Extensive training programs were conducted for EPA staff and other stakeholders on MRV systems, QA/QC processes, and GHG inventory management, which enhanced the institutional capacity to collect and analyse GHG data. Some outputs, such as the development of sectoral guidelines and QA/QC frameworks, are one-time

[67] Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) – UNEP-CCC - Providing policymakers around the world with tools and support to measure and assess the impacts of their climate actions

[68] Umbrella Programme for Preparation of National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Update Reports (BURs) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10167

deliverables. These do not require significant financial resources for their basic existence but require ongoing management and operationalization. Training programs also built capacity within government ministries and agencies, as well as CSOs, creating a skilled workforce to maintain and expand transparency systems. The EPA's involvement as the executing agency and ongoing collaborations between UNEP are crucial to securing future funding. EPA staff confirmed that their expertise in the management of GEF projects had been bolstered. The annual audits of the project also demonstrated that financial management was efficient as well. These ingredients contribute to increase the credibility of the EPA, increasing its chances to secure future international funding as a trusted partner.

271. A major factor contributing to institutional sustainability is the collaboration between the EPA and local academic institutions. By involving lecturers from national universities in training programs, the project ensured that technical expertise is retained within local institutions. One academic described this as *a knowledge transfer mechanism that allows future professionals to be trained using real-life experiences from the project.* This approach not only strengthens current institutional capacities but also ensures that expertise is continuously developed within the education system. Furthermore, the project has generated a significant number of knowledge products such as sectoral guides, ToT training tool kits, gender sensitive NDC plans which provide the foundation for replication and scaling up.

272. DC implementation plan, revised NDC 2021, quality control and quality assurance mechanisms, and many others which can be readily used by national actors. By integrating climate transparency commitments and obligations within these knowledge products and deliverables, will facilitate replication and uptake in the future. However, the key risk is the fact that many of these tools were delivered late, and stakeholders have yet to fully apply the training, toolkits and sectoral guidelines produced by the project.

273. Despite these positive developments, there are challenges related to institutional knowledge retention. Staff turnover in ministries and agencies could lead to gaps in technical expertise, as trained personnel may be transferred to other roles. While the project attempted to mitigate this by training multiple individuals within agencies, a stakeholder acknowledged, m*aybe those that have been trained might be moved to other ministries, in different functions. It could be important to focus on the technical persons within the project, as these tend to rotate less.* There was also a recognition of the need to increase the numbers and technical expertise of the EPA team into the new areas of GHG inventories and MRV to help drive national efforts and continue to reduce dependence on international expertise.

274. Another potential risk relates to data-sharing obligations among ministries. While four Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the EPA and sectoral actors, some institutions remained hesitant about fully committing to data-sharing responsibilities. One participant reflected on this by stating, t*he MoUs were a recommendation from the data gap analysis, but some institutions were sceptical… there is a need to ensure legal enforcement mechanisms for data-sharing.* This suggests that while institutional frameworks have been put in place, continued efforts will be needed to strengthen compliance and ensure that climate reporting is seen as a mandatory responsibility rather than an optional task. Officials from the EPA and key sectoral ministries highlighted that instituting climate data collection and reporting in the upcoming Climate Change Act, would help to address the institutional gaps identified and facilitate resource allocations within budgets for the same. Stakeholders argued that strengthening data-sharing obligations through legal mandates could further enhance long-term sustainability by ensuring that all relevant agencies remain actively engaged in climate transparency.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Likely

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

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

I1. Preparation and Readiness

275. The CEO endorsement letter was signed on the 08th of January 2020[69]. The project began with the formalization of the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) on the 05th of June 2020[70], a responsibility undertaken by the UNEP and EPA, followed by the disbursement of funds managed collaboratively by the IA

[69] Naoko Ishii CEO and Chairperson 2020. CEO Endorsement Letter

[70] UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME PROJECT COOPERATION AGREEMENT (PCA) FORA GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY Medium Size Project "Building and strengthening Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement"

and the Fund Management Officer (FMO). The first disbursement took place on July 13th, 2020, into the agreed bank account.

276. The Executing Agency (EA) led the hiring of the Project Manager, who subsequently worked alongside the Executing Agency to organize the Inception Workshop. The specific objectives or the workshop were to:

1. Formally launch the CBIT project
2. Present the project - its objectives, anticipated results and activities;
3. Introduce the main project partner institutions and discuss project timeline, project activities and clarify roles and responsibilities
4. Galvanise support for the implementation of the CBIT project
5. Popularize and raise awareness on the CBIT process

277. Sierra Leone's CBIT Project inception workshop was held on Wednesday, 28th October 2020 at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Aberdeen, Freetown, following initial stakeholder engagement and information following formalisation of the PCA. The CBIT project was launched with the attendance of 56 stakeholders in the proportion of 66% male and 34% female. Representation also includes the Executive Chairman, Environment Protection Agency, the Director, Ministry of Environment, the Country Representative, UNIDO, the Deputy Director, Meteorological Agency, Representatives from UNEP and the UNEP-DTU Partnership (UDP) and a host of representation from Governments, CSOs, Private sector, Local Councils, Media and Parliamentarians[71].

278. Prior to this meeting, the PMU worked with the finance and procurement teams to prepare the workplan, budget, stakeholder engagement plan, Procurement plan, risks and mitigation strategies, gender mainstreaming measures, and results framework which were reviewed and validated during the inception meeting. This paved the way for a smooth roll out of the project. The Project Manager (PM), under the Executing Agency, prepared and submitted the Inception Workshop Report, which was later reviewed by the Task Manager (TM) from the Implementing Agency.

279. The EA and PM facilitated the hiring of consultants and managed procurement processes, ensuring subcontracting arrangements were in place. Delays occurred in the procurement of consultants mainly due to national procurement policies and COVID-19 restrictions. For the initial phase of the project, UDP/UNEP-CCC engagement was mainly through online platforms, because of travel restrictions. This initiation phases were also marked by the creation of the project's steering committee of 14 members (8 male and six female). The first meeting took place on the 3rd of November 2022.

280. The project's strong focus on inclusive participation is evident in the extensive stakeholder consultations, workshops, and training sessions conducted during the preparation phase. This broad engagement across sectors helped ensure that the upcoming interventions were was tailored to national priorities while aligning with international climate reporting standards.

Rating for Preparation and Readiness: Satisfactory

I2. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

281. The CBIT Sierra Leone Project was implemented under a structured governance framework, ensuring transparent decision-making, accountability, and adaptive management. Leadership was exercised through the PSC, a dedicated PMU, and strong coordination with UNEP as the implementing agency. The PMU demonstrated strong leadership in day-to-day execution, praised for its transparency, proactive stakeholder engagement, and ability to navigate challenges. The project team, led by a highly regarded project manager, was praised for its professionalism and efficiency. One participant noted*, the project team was very communicative, ensuring participants were informed and engaged*. Collaboration with UNEP was effective, with timely feedback and supervision. UNEP's timely responses and constructive supervision contributed to the project's smooth execution. A project official reflected on this by stating: …. *(UNEP) was highly responsive… they always asked us to refer to national laws and provided feedback in a timely manner.* The PMU's adaptive management capacity was evident in addressing challenges like stakeholder engagement gaps and logistical issues, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

282. The PSC played a central role in oversight and decision-making, ensuring alignment with national priorities. Composed of representatives from government ministries, civil society, and technical experts, the PSC

[71] REPORT ON THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) PROJECT GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE 28th October 2020

fostered inclusivity and inter-agency collaboration. While logistical challenges, such as delayed meetings and inconsistent attendance, were noted, the PSC maintained strong decision-making authority. The establishment of the inter-ministerial NDC committee, further strengthened government ownership of climate reporting processes. However, local-level engagement remained limited, with no specific budget for sustaining NDC committees post-project. Inter-agency collaboration was a key strength, with the EPA coordinating efforts across ministries and agencies. The project emphasized cross-sector engagement, particularly through the NDC committee, which supported data collection across priority sectors. However, deeper involvement from sectoral agencies, such as the MET Office, could have further enhanced implementation. Despite staff turnover in government agencies, the training-of-trainers approach helped mitigate knowledge gaps, though consistent technical representation in the PSC could have further strengthened capacity.

283. The CBIT Sierra Leone Project benefited from strong leadership and supervision, with a highly committed PMU, an engaged PSC, and effective oversight from UNEP. The steering committee played a pivotal role in decision-making, ensuring that project activities aligned with national priorities. Despite some logistical challenges, such as meeting delays and occasional staff turnover, the overall management and coordination structures were well-executed. The PMU demonstrated a strong ability to communicate, engage stakeholders, and adapt to emerging challenges, ensuring that the project remained responsive to changing circumstances. UNEP's timely support and technical guidance contributed to effective supervision, reinforcing the credibility of project activities and results. Figure 12 shows stakeholder perspectives regarding project management effectiveness.

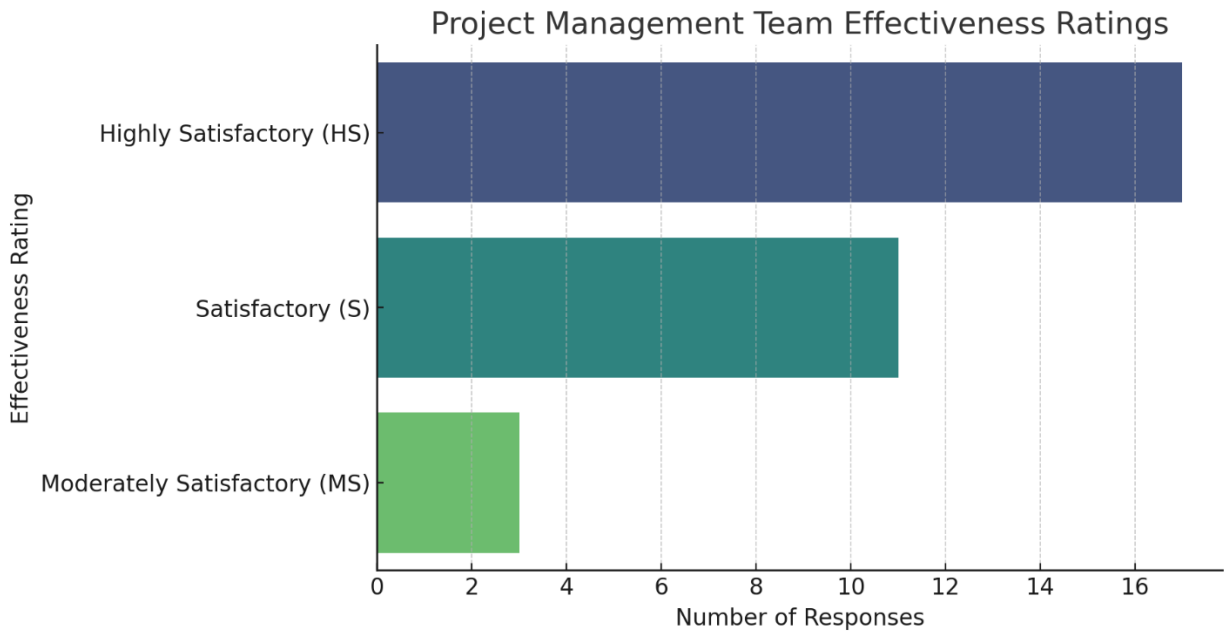

Figure 12: Perception of management effectiveness

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Highly satisfactory

I3. Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

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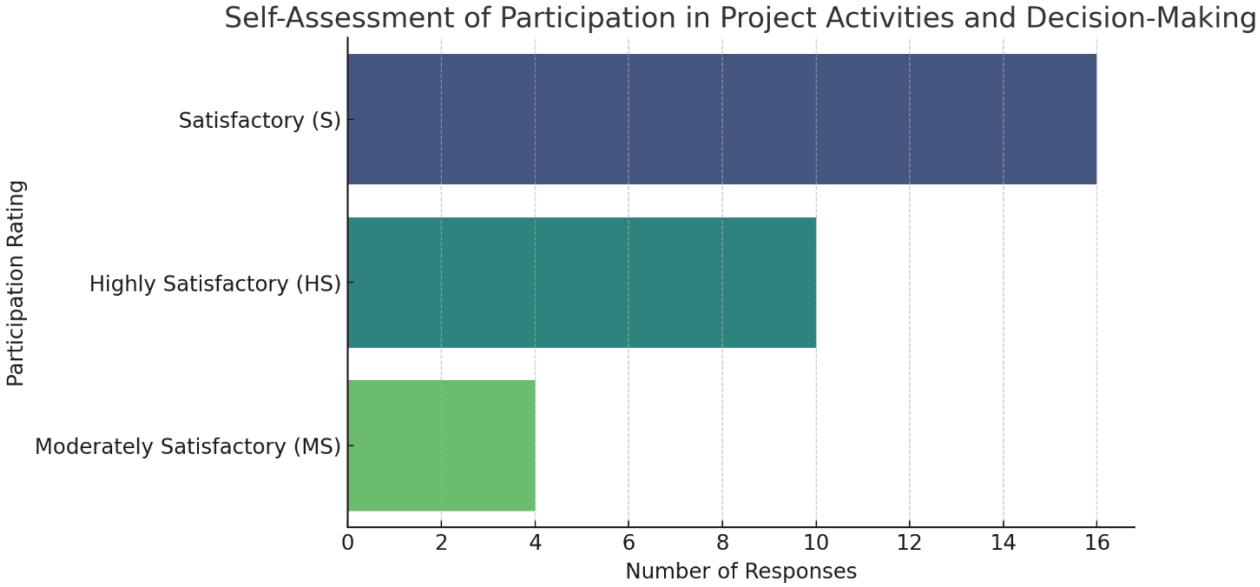


Figure 13: Perceived level of participation in the project

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Highly Satisfactory

I4. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

287. The gender gap in Sierra Leone's public service is characterized by significant disparities in employment aspirations, representation, and experiences within the workforce. Despite similar educational aspirations among genders, women are less likely to pursue public sector roles due to perceptions of unfavourable conditions, such as salary and career progression opportunities[72] The role of Sierra Leonean women in managing and preserving natural resources including water and land is fundamental, yet they are significantly absent from all conservation initiatives and interventions. They are almost absent in leadership positions and

[72] Jamelia, Harris. (2022). Opting out of public sector employment: Gender and occupational aspirations among university graduates in Sierra Leone. Journal of International Development, doi: 10.1002/jid.3712

are hardly considered when it comes to decision-making on the environment, and in city and town planning, which remain one of the perceived male professions[73]. Women's political engagement has, in recent times, centered around a campaign for a 30% constitutionally mandated gender quota system which, it is believed, will be the most effective way to get more female representation in legislatures as well as close the wide gap that exists numerically between both genders in the public sphere[74]. Examples of other CBIT projects in Africa have highlighted that the gender parity objective is unrealistic, arguing for more focus on equity and quality in participation rather than simply focusing on numbers given the low engagement of women in the technical subject areas concerned by the projects[75] or better to align with national gender objectives/Gender Strategic Plan.

288. With this background, the project demonstrated high levels of commitment and engagement towards gender. The evidence collected and analysed during the review demonstrated that efforts were made consistently during meetings, consultations and training events. The project committee was composed of 43% female and 57% male. Figure 14 below highlights the gender participation during PSC meetings.

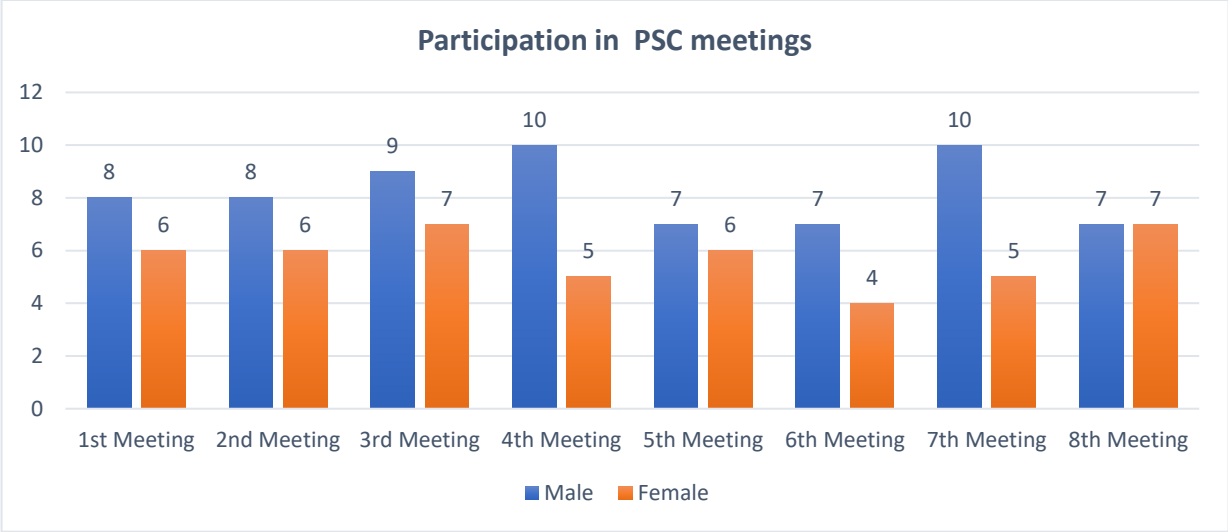


Figure 14: Level of gender participation in PSC meetings

289. The project manager and the administrative assistant are both women, demonstrating that women were included in leadership roles within the project management team. For every meeting or engagement organized, there is a session dedicated to having discussions on a gender-balanced project implementation[76]. Key gendered deliverables included a gender sensitive NDC implementation plan, production of the animated guide on climate change for young people amongst others. At the end of the project, one thousand three hundred and twelve (1,312) stakeholders (including Ministry Departments and Agencies staff, Civil Society Organizations, Youth, and non-governmental Organizations) had direct benefits from the project in the period under review. This included nine hundred and seventy-nine (979) male (74%) and three hundred and thirty-three (333) female participants (26%). While this was well above the target of 140 (50% men/50% women), the level of attainment of women is much closer to the prescribed national target of 30%. Gender mainstreaming remains a key challenge in the country.[77]

290. These results are very well aligned with Sierra Leone's National Gender Strategic Plan (2019-2023) and international agreements such as the Maputo Protocol and ECOWAS Gender Policy. By integrating gender-sensitive data collection and analysis, the project ensured that women's roles in climate adaptation and mitigation are recognized. Capacity-building initiatives further empowered women by involving them in GHG

[73] Government of Sierra Leone (2023) Gender Equality and Women's empowerment Policy, GEWE MAGe

[74] Aisha, Fofana, Ibrahim. (2015). Whose Seat will become Reserved?: The 30% Quota Campaign in Sierra Leone. African and Asian Studies, 14:61-84. doi: 10.1163/15692108-12341330

[75] UNDP 2024. Capacity-Building Program to Comply with the Paris Agreement and Implement its Transparency Requirements at the National Level GEF Medium-Sized Project PIMS+ ID: 6208 – GEF ID: 9967, Terminal Evaluation Report; Conservation International 2022. CBIT project Terminal evaluation Liberia, GEF ID:9923

[76] Project Implementation Report, 2024.

[77] CBIT-National Focal Point, Challenges and Constraints in the implementation of the CBIT national project PowerPoint Presentation

data management, decision-making, and leadership roles, contributing to their broader participation in governance. Young people and youth associations were organised into NDC committees, reaching all 21 districts of the country. Additionally, the NDC online platform presents an opportunity to track the gender responsiveness of climate finance and policies, NDC plan, helping to bridge gender disparities in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Addressing gender-specific vulnerabilities, remains a key priority to ensure that climate policies enhance resilience for all communities, especially women who are the most affected by climate change impacts.

291. In terms of human rights, and beyond the numbers, the CBIT project was aligned with the country's constitutional and international commitments to human rights, transparency, and inclusivity. By enhancing public access to climate-related data, the project upholds the right to information and participation, as guaranteed under Section 25 of the Sierra Leone Constitution[78]. Engaging non-state actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs), youth organisations as part of NDC committees and academia, further reinforced this right, ensuring that diverse voices contributed to climate governance. While the Constitution does not explicitly guarantee the right to a healthy environment, Sierra Leone's ratification of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) provides a legal basis for environmental protection. The CBIT project's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve environmental data management contribute to fulfilling these obligations. Additionally, the project's focus on climate justice and inclusion aligns with Sierra Leone's commitments under CEDAW and national non-discrimination laws, ensuring that climate actions are equitable and benefit all sectors of society, particularly vulnerable and marginalized communities.

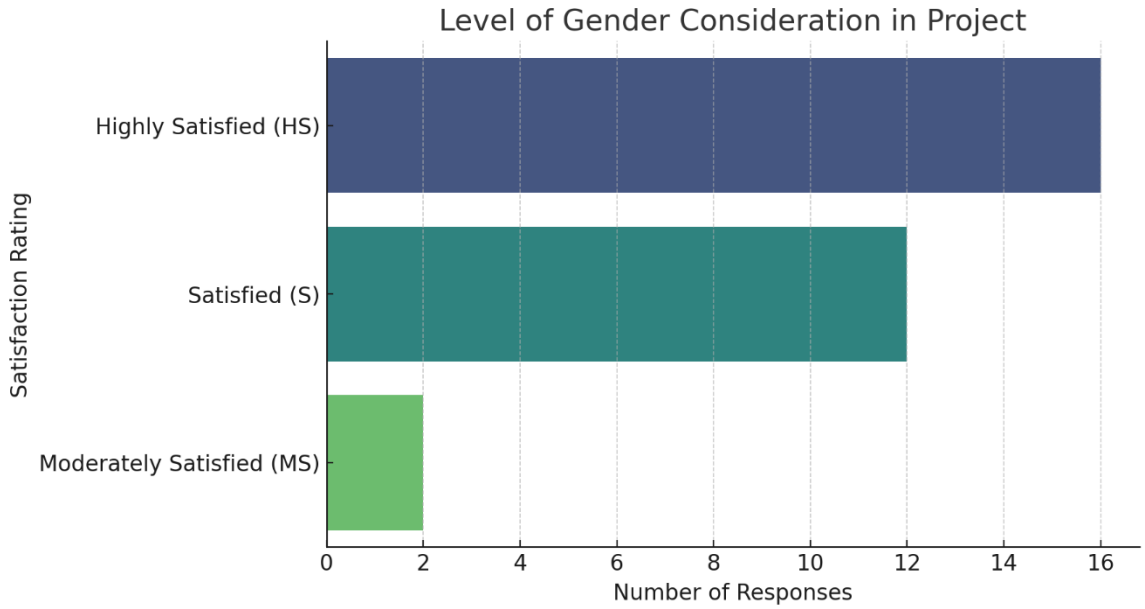


Figure 15: Perceived level of gender consideration in the project

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Satisfactory

I5. Environmental and Social Safeguards

292. The project was categorized as Low Environmental and Social Safeguard Risk at design since its focus is on institutional capacity building. The project maintained a Medium Risk Rating for most of its implementation period due to administrative delays and external challenges, such as the procurement delays and the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, following the pandemic, the project risk levels were degraded to low. No significant environmental or social safeguarding issues arose during implementation, as the project primarily involved stakeholder consultations, capacity-building, and data management. The project reports consistently provided updates on the project risk situation as well as mitigation measures taken. These were discussed and validated during PSC meetings. Where significant adaptive measures needed to be taken, these were signed off by the PSC. This was the case for the two requests for project extension secured by the project during implementation.

[78] THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE, 1991

293. In other areas, interviews with EPA teams showed that free prior and informed consent principles were applied. This included providing information to different stakeholders and securing their consent before their engagement in the project. This also included various needs assessments which culminated in capacity strengthening interventions. By engaging with women and youth, the project was also aligned with UNEP's leave no one behind/do no harm principles[79]. The PMU did not develop a project specific grievance and complaints mechanism. However, project staff informed participants about EPA grievance mechanisms and provided information on how to raise any safeguarding issues. Even though no safeguarding concerns were received by the EPA during implementation, the application of best practices would have required a project specific mechanism considering the history of conflict and gender-based violence in the country[80]. On the environmental front, no new environmental risks were identified during implementation. The project adopted measures to reduce its environmental footprint whenever possible. This included transport sharing during regional events, and the use of online tools and platforms to share information as opposed to printing amongst others. Though imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic, the use of regional experts instead of international expertise in the delivery of the project, contributed to mitigating the project's environmental footprint. The terminal reviewer used public transport and transport sharing whenever possible during the assignment.

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

I6. Country Ownership and Drive-ness

294. The CBIT project in Sierra Leone effectively integrated ownership and drivenness by addressing key dimensions such as strategic guidance, advocacy for change, endorsement of results, initiation of complementary activities, and provision of co-financing, while also emphasizing strong gender engagement and the role of youth in NDC committees. The EPA played a central role in driving delivery of the project. Climate action is a pillar in the Agency's transformation Strategy (2024-2030)[81]. The PMU and technical teams demonstrated exceptional leadership, ownership and drive-ness in steering the project to completion. Strategic guidance was provided through the Project Steering Committee (PSC), which included representatives from key ministries, civil society, and the private sector. The PSC played a critical role in overseeing project implementation, reviewing progress, and providing strategic direction, ensuring that the project remained aligned with national priorities. This high-level engagement fostered a sense of ownership and accountability among stakeholders, driving the project's delivery and ensuring that its outcomes were widely endorsed (see section on project management and supervision).

295. The project demonstrated strong advocacy for change by addressing systemic barriers to climate transparency, such as fragmented data management and weak institutional capacity. Through the development of sectoral guidelines, QA/QC systems, and the NDC online platform, the project advocated for a shift from project-based approaches to institutionalized frameworks for climate reporting. This advocacy was supported by the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with key sectoral ministries, formalizing data-sharing arrangements and ensuring institutional buy-in. These MoUs, along with the establishment of data teams within priority sectors, ensured that the project's tools and frameworks were integrated into national systems, driving long-term change (see section on outcomes and likelihood of impact).

296. Endorsement and acceptance of project results were evident in the high-level engagement of government officials and the active participation of sectoral ministries, local councils, and civil society organizations. The project's outputs, such as the NDC online platform and sectoral guidelines, were developed through a participatory process, ensuring that they were tailored to national needs and widely accepted by stakeholders. The government's provision of in-kind and cash co-financing, including office space, administrative support, and staff salaries, further demonstrated its endorsement of the project and commitment to its success. This co-financing not only reinforced national ownership but also ensured that the project could leverage existing resources to maximize its impact (see section on institutional sustainability)

297. The project also initiated complementary activities, such as the development of a private sector engagement strategy and the production of an animated climate change booklet for primary schools. These activities, funded through reallocated resources, addressed emerging needs and expanded the project's reach beyond its original scope. Additionally, the project's alignment with ongoing initiatives, such as the

[79] https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/why-does-un-environment-matter/environmental-social-and-economic
[80] VOA 2022 VOA Interview: First Lady of Sierra Leone Talks Gender-based Violence- https://youtu.be/yDayEANcpXg
[81] Eight and last SCM

UNDP Climate Promise, ensured that its outcomes were integrated into broader national and regional climate efforts. This integration was further supported by the government's forward-looking budgetary plans, which included provisions for climate action and the mobilization of additional external resources, such as funding from the European Union and GIZ (see section on financial sustainability).

298. A notable strength of the project was its strong gender engagement and the active involvement of youth in NDC committees. Women were actively included in training sessions, steering committees, and decision-making processes, ensuring that gender perspectives were integrated into the project's design and implementation. Youth representatives, particularly through regional NDC committees, played a vital role in community sensitization and advocacy, driving grassroots climate action and enhancing the project's reach. These committees empowered young people to take ownership of climate initiatives, fostering a new generation of climate leaders and ensuring that the project's outcomes were inclusive and representative of all stakeholders (see section on gender and human rights, environmental and social safeguards).

Rating for Country Ownership and Drive-ness: Highly satisfactory

I7. Communication and Public Awareness

299. The project implemented a significant number of communication and public awareness interventions. This started with the organization of the project inception workshop during which national stakeholders were informed about the project (section preparation and readiness for details). Following this, various consultations and training need assessments conducted by the project enhanced understanding of the project, facilitated buy-in and ownership as shown in section on ownership and sustainability above). The creation of the project steering committee further enhanced the communication capacity of the project, through the participation of members during regional awareness raising and engagements events throughout the country, which could not have been delivered by the PMU alone. Furthermore, the establishment of NDC committees representing all 21 districts in the country further enhanced outreach as demonstrated by interviews conducted with youth leaders during the review in Port Loko. However, respondents mentioned that more still needs to be done at the local levels to enhance climate awareness and knowledge about community roles in promoting climate transparency.

300. The project also used community radio, television, online platforms, project events and exchange visits to inform the national and international public about the project. For instance, during the revision of the NDCs and development of the country's gender sensitive NDC implementation plan, strong visibility was established. This was similarly the case, during the launching of the animated climate change book for school kids which drew stakeholders beyond the project such as the ministries of education and UNICEF. As already illustrated under output 2.2, significant peer-to-peer learning events were organized and project teams took part in international climate conferences, during which the project experiences were publicized (see section output 2.2 and communications above for details). Project information was also uploaded on the Global Climate transparency framework portal, even though at the time of the review, current information on project achievements was either missing or not updated[82]. Project information is also disseminated to external stakeholders through EPA's annual reports to Parliament, as evidenced in the draft 2024 report which showcases the launching of the "Environment and I" children's book and exchange visits to Zimbabwe.

301. Internal communication was also critical for the project's success. As already mentioned under project management and supervision, the project team kept UNEP-CCC, UNEP teams and steering committee members regularly informed about project meetings through internal emails and regular online calls. The need for fluid communication also saw the creation of a project WhatsApp group through which members of the steering committee were kept informed of project activities and regularly reminded of their roles and responsibilities. Figure 16 shows that participants in the online survey were moderately to highly satisfied (96%), while 3% were moderately unsatisfied.

302. The main challenges faced included the availability of PSC members to take part in some field activities, but also confidence to take part in radio and television programmes. Furthermore, access to internet, the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic and restricted communication budget further limited the outreach interventions.

[82] https://climate-transparency-platform.org/cbit-projects/building-and-strengthening-sierra-leones-national-capacity-implement-transparency

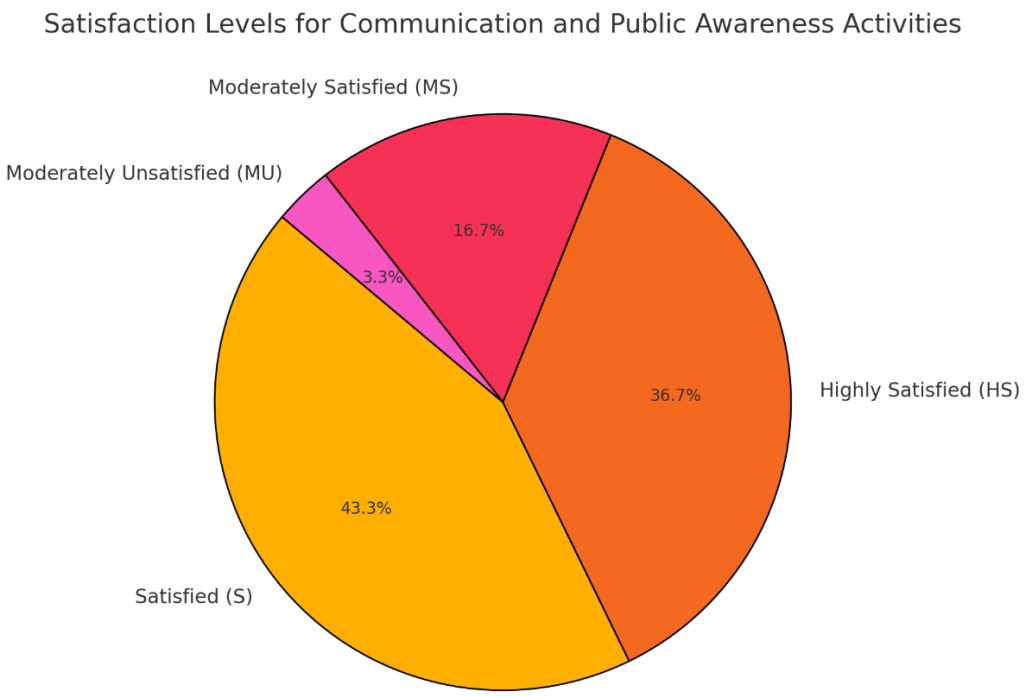


Figure 16: Levels of satisfaction for communication and awareness activities

303. Sierra Leone's CBIT proposal also had knowledge management at its core, with a strong focus on knowledge dissemination. As already demonstrated above under communications, the project ensured that the project experiences were widely disseminated at national and international levels. Significant numbers of project training events were organized as shown under outcomes 1 and 2, which enhanced national capacity on climate transparency mechanisms. Project teams also took part in various online training and webinars organized by the Global CBIT Programme. For instance, the project manager attended the Global Transparency forum in Tokyo, where she presented on the project's implementation in Sierra Leone, lessons learned, and recommendations for the development of the country's BTRs under the ETF. Under output 2.2, the project took part in regional and international COP Conferences as well as peer-to-peer exchanges. The Project manager and the CBIT national focal point, who doubles as the Director of the Climate Change Secretariat, attended the UNFCCC's COP 28 in Dubai, where they held meetings with colleague CBIT Project managers/coordinators. They also attended side events and plenaries on the ETF. Further knowledge sharing could have been achieved through the use of video and online platforms such as YouTube to disseminate project achievements.

304. A significant number of guidelines, methodologies and toolkits have been developed by the project providing the framework for sustainability and replicability. For instance, the training of trainer's toolkit, the children's Environment and I book, GHG sectoral guides amongst many others. The reviewer was readily provided with all the deliverables of the project, demonstrating that they have been adequately archived and can be accessed. A key challenge remains to continue to remind stakeholders of the existence and use of these tools and guidelines. Future projects can build on the project's achievements and outputs. The creation of the EPA's new Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics provides a unique opportunity for a one stop shop where stakeholders can readily access information and resources on education, climate and environmental policies in the country[83].

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Highly satisfactory

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance: Highly satisfactory

[83] EPA 2024. Operationalisation strategy document for the EPA's Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics (CEDAS).

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

305. The CBIT Project in Sierra Leone responded to national development and climate priorities. It has strengthened the country's climate transparency framework, aligning with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Climate Agreement. The project established institutional structures, built technical capacity, and introduced digital transparency tools, guidelines and toolkits laying the foundation for better coordination, reporting, and accountability in climate action. Capacity development for transparency and reporting was another major achievement. The project trained over 1,312 stakeholders from government agencies, municipal councils, and non-state actors, equipping them with GHG inventory, MRV, data management, TOT skills and broader awareness on climate change, NDCs, climate transparency and the role of gender and private sector. Regional peer-learning exchanges and participation in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform enabled knowledge-sharing beyond national borders.

306. The development of a gender inclusive NDC implementation plan and private sector engagement strategy were key milestones. The NDC Transparency Platform, which is hosted by EPA serves as a centralized system for climate data collection, reporting, and tracking NDC implementation in accordance with the UNFCCC modalities, procedures and guidelines. This tool should enhance data accessibility, reporting accuracy, and coordination between national and international climate actors. By delivering on these achievements, the project aligned with UNEP, GEF and regional development and climate objectives.

307. A strong and effective PMU ensured efficient financial management, execution and adaptive management, with the supervision of UNEP. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) provided high-level oversight, ensuring strategic alignment. The project successfully mainstreamed gender throughout implementation, while youth engagement through NDC committees enhanced inclusiveness and outreach to wider communities in the country.

308. Stakeholder engagement was a major success factor, with participation from government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and academia. The high level of country ownership, particularly by EPA and sectoral ministries, provision of cofinancing, and mobilisation of post project financial resources for the 4NC, BTR, GEF funded Guinean forest and ICAT projects significantly increased the likelihood of sustainability.

309. With these achievements, the project has paved the way for long-term impact, as governments and other stakeholders start to apply knowledge and learning acquired and use the data available for evidence-based decision and policy making. Government remains committed to reducing its GHG emissions and building national resilience to climate change. This is seen in the country engagement to revise its 2021 NDCs, positing it to set even more ambitious NDC targets. The gender inclusive NDC plan and private sector engagement strategy provided the needed ingredients to achieve this, while also enhancing its ability to mobilise climate finance and advance national adaptation plans and transition to green economic development model.

Challenges and Weaknesses

310. While MoUs and other sectoral tools and guidelines have been developed, there is significant evidence that the lack of legal mandates and funding for data collection and reporting remains a risk for the future. There is limited capacity for climate finance mobilisation within various sectorial ministries and local councils in the regions and districts. Respondents mentioned that strengthening these capacities would enhance their abilities to sustain the achievements of the project and mobilise resources for climate adaptation and resilience within their various jurisdicstions.

311. While the project delivered results, some challenges remain. With the delayed delivery of some project outputs, the time for application of learning was limited. Some of the trainings were one off, and limited opportunities for further ongoing support following the trainings and delivery of tools has limited mastery and use of learning acquired. Limited MEL capacity also constrained the project's ability to track application of learning.

312. At the level of the technical team, there are increasing demands on their expertise and time, and new areas of work such as GHG inventories and MRV require expertise, which is currently lacking internally, which means that dependence on international consultants will continue beyond the CBIT project. Support through the NC4 and BTR processes will provide additional/refresher trainings. This will ensure that dependence will decline over time as EPA staff and national experts enhance their learning and apply knowledge through practice.

313. Delays due to external factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 elections, and administrative transitions, required two non-cost extensions. The project adapted effectively through virtual engagement and flexible scheduling, but some field activities and data collection efforts were postponed.

314. Limited engagement from the private sector also posed a challenge as this was not included in the project design. However, the project took steps to address this gap through the development of a specific private sector engagement strategy. The development of the private sector strategy is a first step but requires significant engagement for private sector to play its role effectively in addressing the country's climate challenges and its efforts to transition towards and green climate resilient economy. The development of the country's NDC 3.0, provides an opportunity to leverage the strategy and further strengthen private sector's role.

315. While the project incorporated gender and inclusivity measures, the participation of persons with disabilities remained limited. Additionally, there is a noticeable gap between national/regional interventions and the needs of local communities, particularly at the village and chiefdom levels, in enhancing transparency.

Answers to Key Strategic Review Questions

- The project successfully supported the adoption of enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement. Institutional reforms, training programs, and digital transparency tools contributed to significant progress in Sierra Leone's climate reporting. However, full ETF compliance will require continued investment in capacity-building.
- The project also strengthened transparency mechanisms for national and international climate reporting. Improvements in data coordination, GHG inventory processes, and climate reporting capacity—particularly through the NDC Transparency Platform and sectoral reporting frameworks—were major outcomes.
- In terms of the adoption of new climate transparency tools, the project introduced the NDC Transparency Platform and various tools and sectoral guidelines, which have been partially adopted. Full institutionalization is still ongoing, requiring sustained training, government commitment and funding.
- To address the challenges posed by COVID-19, the project shifted to virtual engagements, extended timelines, and adapted training methodologies. These strategies mitigated major disruptions but resulted in some delayed field activities.

Overall Assessment of Project Performance and Long-Term Impact

316. With its strong project management, stakeholder engagement, and institutional capacity-building, the CBIT project has laid a solid foundation for long-term sustainability and impact. By improving climate data accuracy and transparency, the project enhances Sierra Leone's chances of securing additional climate finance for adaptation and mitigation. EPA has already leveraged CBIT's success to attract further funding, including from the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT).

317. Institutionalized reporting mechanisms and the NDC platform will ensure that Sierra Leone sustains and scales its climate monitoring efforts. The improved tracking of GHG emissions will help target reductions in key sectors such as energy, waste, and AFOLU, supporting Sierra Leone's transition to a low-carbon economy.

318. The project aligns with the Vision 2030 strategy for a climate-resilient economy, ensuring Sierra Leone's continued engagement in global climate action.

319. The review concludes that the performance of this **project is Satisfactory**.

B. Summary of project findings and ratings

320. Table 13 below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of **Satisfactory**.

UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

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

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

– That what is being assessed is the contents of the report and the extent to which it makes a consistent and justifiable case for the performance ratings it records.

- That the consultant has, within the report, presented all the evidence that was made available to them.

- That the Review has been based on a robust Theory of Change, reconstructed where necessary, which reflects UNEP's definitions at all levels of results.

- That the project team and key stakeholders have already reviewed a draft version of the report and provided substantive comments and made factual corrections to the Review Consultant, who has responded to them. The Evaluation Office assumes, therefore, that it has received the Final (revised) version of the report.

In this instance the Evaluation Office validates the overall project performance rating at the **'Satisfactory'** level.

Table 13: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Strategic Relevance	The project aligns with Sierra Leone's national climate commitments under the Paris Agreement by prioritizing transparency and strengthening data collection systems. Its emphasis on capacity building enhances institutional readiness, playing a key role in improving the country's environmental governance.	**HS**	**The rating is validated**	**HS**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	The CBIT initiative aligns with UNEP's strategic goals, particularly its climate action sub-programme. By improving transparency mechanisms, the project supports UNEP's objective of strengthening the involvement of state and non-state actors in climate governance and ensuring compliance with UNFCCC obligations.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	The project aligns with GEF's CBIT framework by supporting SL in implementing the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). It equips stakeholders with the necessary tools and capacity to meet transparency obligations, reinforcing donor priorities for climate action and reporting.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	As part of its obligations under the Paris Agreement, Sierra Leone benefits from the project's alignment with global and regional climate goals. It enhances national transparency efforts and promotes regional collaboration, particularly within ECOWAS. Project also aligns with SDG 13	HS	The rating is validated	HS
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	The CBIT project in Sierra Leone effectively aligned with national and regional initiatives, leveraging data from key projects to enhance climate transparency, adaptation, and mitigation efforts. It also benefited from UNEP's Global CBIT Coordination platform for peer learning and built on CBIT experience to mobilize further resources, ensuring sustainability and complementing existing efforts.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
Quality of Project Design	Design was assessed as satisfactory with a score of 4.96/10, with weaknesses in the efficiency design and results framework	**S**	**The rating is validated**	**S**
Nature of External Context	The CBIT project in Sierra Leone faced significant external challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 presidential elections, administrative and procurement delays, and structural constraints, requiring adaptive measures such as project extensions, virtual engagement, and local expertise to ensure continuity and successful implementation.	MF	The rating is validated	MF
Effectiveness	SL climate transparency framework has been strengthened in line with plans. However, there remains the need for more significant capacity strengthening to achieve strong MRV structures and efficient reporting	**S**	**The rating is validated.** The change in the validated rating for 'Achievement of project outcomes' doesn't affect the overall rating.	**S**
1. Availability of outputs	The CBIT project in Sierra Leone successfully established institutional arrangements, developed sectoral transparency guidelines, implemented a QA/QC system, trained data teams, facilitated peer-to-peer learning, and launched an NDC online platform, strengthening national capacity for climate transparency and reporting.	S	The rating is validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The CBIT project in Sierra Leone successfully strengthened institutional arrangements, improved MRV systems, enhanced capacity-building efforts, and developed an NDC online platform, achieving key outcomes despite challenges related to delayed tool delivery, sector-specific expertise gaps, and limited stakeholder engagement in some areas.	S	Evidence presented in the report (Table 9) indicates that the MRV system was not in use despite the system having been completed. The rating is validated as 'Moderately Satisfactory' owing to the non-achievement of a key outcome (MRV system isn't in use).	MS
3. Likelihood of impact	The CBIT project in Sierra Leone has strengthened institutional capacity, improved transparency mechanisms, and fostered stakeholder ownership, laying a strong foundation for long-term climate reporting. While challenges remain, high-level government commitment and continued capacity-building make the project's impact likely	L	The rating is validated	L
Financial Management	Financial resources were managed efficiently with timely reporting and compliance with UNEP policies. Strong oversight and clear financial procedures ensured the optimal use of funds.	**HS**	**The rating is validated**	**HS**
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The project adhered to UNEP's financial policies, maintaining clear documentation and financial controls. This ensured accountability and transparency in fund utilization.	S	The rating is validated	S
2. Completeness of project financial information	Financial reporting was comprehensive, timely, and transparent, with complete records maintained to ensure clarity and consistency throughout implementation.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Communication between financial and project teams was effective, with trust and responsiveness from EPA and UNEP. Online meetings and field visits facilitated smooth coordination.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
Efficiency	The CBIT project efficiently utilized of its budget, ensuring key deliverables were met through cost-effective procurement, regional engagement, and financial oversight as shown in efficiency use rate of 1. Despite delays from COVID-19, elections, and procurement processes, adaptive measures such as virtual engagement and regional consultants maintained efficiency.	**S**	**The rating is validated**	**S**
Monitoring and Reporting	The CBIT project maintained a structured monitoring and reporting system, ensuring compliance with UNEP and GEF policies through regular progress tracking, financial oversight, and stakeholder engagement. While monitoring data guided adaptive management, gaps in MEL capacity and real-time tracking tools limited the assessment of long-term institutional adoption, though overall reporting and accountability were strong.	S	The rating is validated	S
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The project had a well-structured monitoring design aligned with UNEP and GEF policies, incorporating periodic evaluations, structured reporting, and financial audits. The budget of $48,500 covered essential M&E activities.	S	The rating is validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Monitoring of project implementation	The project maintained a structured monitoring system, ensuring regular progress tracking through stakeholder engagement, financial audits, and periodic reports. While the framework effectively tracked project performance, the absence of a dedicated MEL officer and digital monitoring tools limited real-time assessment and qualitative impact tracking.	S	The rating is validated	S
3. Project reporting	The project showed high-quality reporting, ensuring detailed tracking of activities, and results in alignment with UNEP/GEF requirements. Reports were well-documented, regularly shared with stakeholders, and supported by strong peer review processes, fostering transparency, trust, and effective project oversight.	S	The rating is validated	S
Sustainability		**L**	When the ratings of the individual elements of sustainability are applied to the 'Weighted ratings table' the overall rating is 'Moderately Likely'. **The rating is thus validated as 'Moderately Likely'.**	**ML**
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project demonstrated strong socio-political sustainability through high national ownership, alignment with Sierra Leone's governance frameworks, and the establishment of the Climate Change Secretariat within the EPA. Key factors contributing to sustainability include interministerial coordination, multistakeholder engagement, gender inclusivity, and a training-of-trainers approach, though risks remain from potential shifts in government priorities.	L	The rating is validated	L
2. Financial sustainability	Financial sustainability is a significant challenge for maintaining the project's achievements, as it relies on national budget allocations and international co-financing. While the government has shown commitment through in-kind support, long-term sustainability depends on integrating climate reporting into sectoral budgets, securing funding for the NDC platform, and building capacity for resource mobilization.	ML	The rating is validated	ML
3. Institutional sustainability	Institutional sustainability is promising due to strong government ownership, the EPA's formal role in climate coordination, and capacity-building efforts across ministries and academic institutions. However, risks such as staff turnover, data-sharing hesitancy, and delayed uptake of tools highlight the need for legal mandates and continued support to ensure long-term sustainability.	L	The rating is validated	L
Factors Affecting Performance		**HS**	**The rating is validated**	**HS**
1. Preparation and readiness	The project demonstrated satisfactory preparation and readiness, with the CEO endorsement signed in January 2020 and the PCA formalized in June 2020. Key steps included the inception workshop in October 2020, stakeholder engagement, and the establishment of a gender-balanced steering committee. However, delays in consultant procurement due to national policies and COVID-19 restrictions impacted the initial phase.	S	The rating is validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The project was characterized by strong leadership from the PMU, effective coordination with UNEP, and inclusive decision-making through the PSC. Despite logistical challenges like delayed meetings and staff turnover, the project maintained transparency, adaptability, and alignment with national priorities, supported by UNEP's timely guidance and supervision.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UNEP effectively played its supervisory role starting from the design through to implementation and evaluation and was highly commended by the executing agency	HS	The rating is validated	HS
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	EPA and national executing agency delivered on its mandate through effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	The project was implemented in an inclusive manner with stakeholders ranking their participation by highly. Through multistakeholder engagement at national and local levels, the project instituted a sense of trust amongst various actors, laying the foundation for future data sharing.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	The CBIT Project demonstrated highly satisfactory responsiveness to human rights and gender equality, with strong efforts to mainstream gender and inclusivity. Women held leadership roles in the project, and gender-sensitive deliverables like the NDC implementation plan were produced. While female participation (26%) was below the 50% target, it aligned with Sierra Leone's 30% national goal. The project also upheld human rights by enhancing transparency, inclusivity, and aligning with national and international commitments.	S	The rating is validated	S
5. Environmental and social safeguards	The Project maintained a low risk rating for environmental and social safeguards, with no significant issues arising during implementation. The project adhered to principles like free prior and informed consent, reduced its environmental footprint through measures like transport sharing and online tools, and aligned with UNEP's "leave no one behind" principles. However, the absence of a project-specific grievance mechanism was a gap, despite no reported safeguarding concerns.	S	The rating is validated	S
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	This initiative demonstrated highly satisfactory country ownership and drivenness, with strong leadership from the EPA and active engagement from national stakeholders. Strategic guidance from the PSC, advocacy for systemic change, and endorsement of project results by government and sectoral ministries reinforced national ownership. Complementary activities, co-financing, and inclusive gender and youth engagement further highlighted the project's alignment with national priorities and commitment to long-term sustainability.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
7. Communication and public awareness	The intervention led many communication and public awareness activities, utilizing diverse strategies such as community radio, television, online platforms, and regional NDC committees to engage stakeholders. The project effectively disseminated knowledge through international conferences, peer-to-peer exchanges, and the development of educational materials like the "Environment and I" book. The project maintained strong internal and external communication, ensuring widespread awareness and engagement.	HS	The rating is validated	HS
Overall Project Performance Rating	In view of the above, the reviewer concluded that the project's overall rating is satisfactory.	**S**	**The rating is validated.**	**S**

C. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	Strong institutional anchoring and government ownership are critical for sustainability.
Context/comment:	One of the key success factors of the CBIT project was its deep integration within Sierra Leone's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which ensured that the project was not seen as externally driven but rather as a national priority. The involvement of sectoral ministries, Statistics Sierra Leone, and the Meteorological Agency and others helped institutionalize climate transparency efforts. This experience highlights the importance of embedding climate governance initiatives within national structures rather than relying on temporary project-based arrangements. By prioritising clear institutional mandates, this could enable national institutions to take full ownership of transparency and reporting efforts.

Lesson Learned #2:	Digital platforms improve data coordination, but adoption requires ongoing support.
Context/comment:	The development of the NDC Transparency Platform was a major milestone, providing a centralized system for managing climate data. However, full adoption by government agencies and other stakeholders remained a challenge, as many institutions were still adjusting to new workflows and technical requirements. This highlights that introducing a digital tool is only part of the solution—ongoing user engagement, tailored training, and phased implementation are essential to ensuring that such platforms become fully integrated into institutional processes.

Lesson Learned #3:	Capacity-building efforts must be paired with sustainability measures
Context/comment:	The project successfully trained over 140 individuals in climate data management and transparency reporting, while reaching over 1000 others through awareness raising. Staff turnover is a key challenge as newly acquired knowledge is often lost when personnel move to other roles. This underscores the importance of implementing strategies to ensure that capacity-building efforts have lasting benefits. The engagement with academia provides an opportunity for national capacity building and continuous professional development of government agencies. The availability of ToT toolkits and guidelines, provide the foundation for recycling of learning within government agencies, but there is need for a structured approach to capacity building to be institutionalised, knowing that capacity building takes time for learning to be effectively embedded. It must therefore be seen as a continuous process.

Lesson Learned #4:	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) should capture both quantitative and qualitative data to assess real impact.
Context/comment:	The project successfully promoted a "training of trainers" (ToT) approach, to enable participants to transfer their knowledge to a wider audience. However, there were no formal mechanisms to track whether the training led to meaningful application of skills in practice. This highlights the need for MEL systems to go beyond tracking the number of people trained and to assess how effectively knowledge is being applied. Integrating mechanisms for post-training follow-ups, observation-based assessments, and structured feedback loops could ensure that learning translates into actual behavioural and institutional change.

Lesson Learned #5:	Flexibility and adaptive management are essential for project resilience.
Context/comment:	The CBIT project faced significant external challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and election-related disruptions, which required adjustments in implementation. The ability of the project team to pivot—through virtual engagements, timeline extensions, and alternative training formats—was key to ensuring that core objectives were still met. This experience reinforces the importance of designing projects with built-in flexibility, allowing them to adapt to unexpected changes.

Lesson Learned #6:	Multi-stakeholder engagement enhances buy-in and likelihood of impact.
Context/comment:	Bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders—including government, civil society, and academia—was a key factor in strengthening transparency efforts. The Project Steering Committee played an important role in aligning efforts across different institutions and sectors. However, engaging the private sector proved more challenging, as businesses often lacked clear incentives to participate in climate transparency initiatives. This highlights the need for stronger policy frameworks, financial incentives, and capacity-building efforts targeted at private sector actors to ensure their meaningful contribution to national climate transparency goals.

Lesson Learned #7:	Climate transparency is a key enabler for climate finance mobilization.
Context/comment:	By strengthening Sierra Leone's climate data systems and reporting mechanisms, the CBIT project positioned the country to better access international climate finance. Transparent, credible reporting is increasingly important in securing funding for mitigation and adaptation initiatives. This experience highlights that climate transparency should not be seen as merely a compliance requirement but also as a strategic tool for unlocking financial resources that support national climate goals. Future projects should focus on linking transparency efforts with investment planning, ensuring that strong data systems contribute directly to resource mobilization.

Lesson Learned #8:	Engagement with children and academia is crucial for sustainable behavioural change and addressing the national capacity cap
Context/comment:	The project was highly innovative in producing the "Environment and I" climate change booklet and working with academia to support delivery. Targeting kids at a young age with climate change information has been shown to contribute to enhanced environmental awareness and sustainable behavioural change amongst children. At another level, engaging academics in this project enabled lecturers and researchers to relay and integrate their learning in to teaching and research. This ensures that students have state of the art knowledge and education and that that teaching is adapted to real world issues. As students and graduates go on to work in the public, private and tertiary sectors, providing the knowledge and tools during training, is central to addressing SL's technical capacity shortages in the areas of climate change.

D. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	**Ensure that climate data transparency and reporting are mandated under the Climate Change Act.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While the CBIT project successfully strengthened climate transparency efforts, data collection and reporting remain largely voluntary even with the signature of MoUs. Without a legal mandate, climate reporting may remain inconsistent, and ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) may struggle to allocate resources for data collection and management. Embedding transparency requirements in the Climate Change Act would formalize these efforts and allow MDAs to budget for climate data collection, reporting, and verification.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Policy and regulatory reform
Responsibility:	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, EPA
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within the next 12 months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
Section V.D – Effectiveness, (achievement of outcomes, Likelihood of impact)
Section V.H – Sustainability (particularly Institutional Sustainability)
Section V.I – Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Recommendation #2:	**Strengthen resource mobilization efforts and link climate transparency with funding opportunities.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The EPA has demonstrated significant experience in climate reporting and finance mobilization. However, local councils, sectoral ministries, and even community-level actors often lack the technical capacity to secure funding for climate mitigation and adaptation projects. Strengthening their capacity in resource mobilization would enable MDAs, local councils, and civil society organizations to access international climate finance, reducing dependence on EPA while expanding the scope of climate action in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, while national-level institutions have made progress in climate transparency, local councils and traditional governance structures (chiefdoms and village councils) remain largely disconnected from national climate reporting systems. This limits local ownership of climate actions and reduces opportunities for resource mobilization at the community level. By integrating climate transparency discussions into local governance structures and providing resource mobilization training to local authorities, climate awareness and action can be strengthened from the grassroots level.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Capacity-building and financial sustainability
Responsibility:	EPA, Ministry of the Environment and Climate, other sectoral ministries
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within the next 18 months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
Section V.D – Effectiveness (availability of outputs)
Section V.I – Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-cutting Issues
Section V.H – Sustainability (Financial)

Recommendation #3:	**Advocate for CBIT phase 2 to further consolidate transparency gains, learning and best practices.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The CBIT project successfully moved Sierra Leone towards level 4 (on a scale of 10) in the quality of MRV of NDC implementation[84]. This shows there is a long way to go to achieve level 10 *(Strong MRV systems that provide quality GHG related information in a transparent, accurate and accessible to a wide audience, with feedback of information from MRV flowing into policy design and implementation).* As EPA implements other initiatives, such as the ICAT project, Fourth National Communication (4NC), revision of the NDCs, and Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), an assessment of outstanding gaps should be conducted as the NDC platform, tools and guidelines from the CBIT project are applied. This will help identify priority areas that require further strengthening from a follow-up CBIT Phase 2 project. Securing further consistent funding, would ensure that Sierra Leone builds on its progress, consolidates the gains achieved and continue to address significant national capacity gaps. As the technical team within EPA gets further committed due to increasing demands on the current team and expertise, strengthening the number of experts in key areas of GHG inventories and MRV will be crucial to continue to mitigate the country's dependence on international expertise. Including mainstreaming emerging lessons and best practices into academic curriculum from higher to lower educational levels would secure sustainable gains in the future.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Long-term sustainability and project design
Responsibility:	EPA, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, UNEP, Relevant educational ministries and institutions
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within the next 6 months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
Section V.H – Sustainability (socio political, financial, institutional)
Section V.D – Effectiveness (achievement of outcomes)

Recommendation #4:	**Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems to assess qualitative changes in climate transparency practices.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The CBIT project successfully implemented a Training of Trainers (ToT) model, but there were no formal mechanisms to assess whether trained individuals were applying and cascading their knowledge. Current MEL systems focus largely on quantitative indicators (e.g., number of people trained) rather than qualitative outcomes such as behaviour change, institutional improvements, or long-term impact. A stronger MEL system should include a tracking system (excel spreadsheet as minimum), structured follow-ups, peer review mechanisms, and performance assessments to ensure that knowledge gained is applied effectively.
Priority Level:	Medium
Type of Recommendation	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning enhancement
Responsibility:	EPA
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within the next 12 months

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:
Section V.D – Effectiveness (achievement of outcomes)
Section V.G – Monitoring and reporting

[84] Improvement in the quality of MRV of NDC Implementation based on GEF score 1 to 10 as per Annex III of CBIT programming directions

Recommendation #5:	**Strengthen gender and social inclusion mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation in climate transparency efforts.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While the project incorporated gender and inclusion measures, there is still a need to go beyond participation numbers and ensure meaningful involvement of women, youth, and marginalized groups in decision-making. Addressing structural barriers, providing mentorship and leadership opportunities, and embedding gender considerations into transparency frameworks would enhance inclusion.
Priority Level:	Medium
Type of Recommendation	Social inclusion and capacity-building
Responsibility:	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, EPA
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within the next 18 months

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

Section V.D – Effectiveness (availability of outputs)
Section V.I – Cross-cutting Issues

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 5: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response
	N/A	

ANNEX II. REVIEW FRAMEWORK / MATRIX

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
A. Strategic Relevance			
Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities			
To what extent was the project aligned to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities	Was the project design consistent UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities?	Project documents, Inception reports National policy documents and development plans GEF strategic goals and objectives *UNEP Medium Term Strategy[85] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities*	Documentary review EIDENC
Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities			
To what extent was the project aligned to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities	Was the project design consistent with the GEF focal area objective and priorities?	Project documents, Inception reports National policy documents and development plans GEF strategic goals and objectives	Documentary review
Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities			
To what extent was the project relevant to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities	The extent of evidence of alignment with global, regional, sub regional and national environmental priorities	National development policies and plans Relevant national environmental and development policies CBIT global and regional initiatives	Documentary review
Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence			

[85] UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes.

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
Does the project add value to ongoing efforts at the country level, and to what extent?	To what extent were ongoing initiatives and lessons from past initiatives integrated into design? Were there synergies between the project and other initiatives in the same country and/or region? If so, to what extent and how did the project take advantage of them (e.g., by establishing partnerships)?	Prodoc Stakeholder engagement plan PIRs, progress reports Project stakeholders Other in country climate project teams	Documentary review Interviews: FGDs
B. Quality of Project Design			
To what extent was the project design adequate to address the barriers to achieving government's objectives and aims under the PCA?	How does the project score against the key design features set out by GEF/UNEP?	Prodoc Design quality assessment template Project result framework	Qualitative assessment against criteria Quantitative ranking based on provided project design quality assessment template
C. Nature of External Context			
To what extent was the project implementation context facilitating/constraining to project delivery	What external contextual factors beyond the control of the affected the delivery of the project including the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, presidential election and other changes	PIRs Steering Committee Meeting report/minutes PMU Other Kis, UNEP	Documentary review Interviews Thematic analysis of emerging factors and adaptive measures taken
	Evidence of adaptive measures adopted by the project team and to what effect?	PIRs SCM reports/minutes PMU Other Kis, UNEP	
D. Effectiveness: To what extent has the intervention met or is expected to meet its objectives and outcomes			
Availability of outputs			
How successful was the project in delivering its outputs?	Evidence of outputs delivered against the results framework	PIRs PMU	Documentary review: comparison of project targets (indicators) and level of realization

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
Was the quality and quantity of outputs adequate	To what extent do beneficiaries consider the outputs to be of quality and adequate	SCM members and minutes of meetings KIs and beneficiaries UNEP	Interviews and FGDs Online survey
How useful were the outputs for different stakeholders	Level of assessment of usefulness from TR participants Evidence of use of deliverables and outputs		
To what extent were outputs delivered on time?	Level of satisfaction with timeliness in delivery of project outputs Evidence of delays	PIRs PMU SCM members and minutes of meetings KIs and beneficiaries UNEP	
Achievement of project outcomes			
To what extent did the stated project outcomes achieved?	Evidence of the level of progress against outcome targets in the results framework regarding adoption and use of transparency framework and instruments by state and non-state actors	PIRs Prodoc SCM minutes PMU UNEP KIs	Online survey of KIIs and beneficiaries Interviews and FGDs Quantitative analysis comparing set targets and levels of achievement at the end of the project
Likelihood of Impact			
What is the likelihood of project results and outcomes contributing to long lasting effects	To what extent has the project played a catalytic role and exuded potential for scalability/replication?	PIRs Prodoc SCM minutes PMU UNEP KIs	Online survey of KIIs and beneficiaries Interviews and FGDs Quantitative analysis comparing set targets and levels of achievement at the end of the project
	What evidence exists considering the likelihood that long lasting effects will be achieved because of the intervention		
	Did the project produce any positive or negative unintended/unexpected results? (applicable to each outcome)?		

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
E. Financial Management:			
To what extent did the project team adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Level of perceived adherence to policies and procedures by project teams	Financial reports Audit reports Project management team UNEP team FMO SCM minutes	Documentary review Interviews with project management unit and finance staff
To what extent have financial reports been kept and complete	Level of completeness of required financial information in line with UNEP guidelines		
To what extent was communication between the project manager and fund manager fluid and facilitated adaptive management	Level of overall awareness of overall financial situation and proactiveness in addressing concerns		
F. Efficiency: To what extent was the project delivered in an efficient manner in terms of outcomes, outputs and goals			
To what extent was the project delivered in a timely manner and within budget	Level of resource use efficiency Annual budget variations	Financial reports Audit report PIRS	Compute rate of achievement of output targets versus levels of spend. If value above 1, highly efficient project, exceeding targets; 0.8-1, efficient project with achievement of outputs, 06-08 moderately efficient, gaps in achievement of outputs, <0.6 inefficient project with gaps in implementation.
	What measures were taken to ensure value for money – cost savings, leveraging existing structures etc and timely delivery of this intervention?	Key informants Project management unit UNEP SCM minutes Extension requests and approvals Procurement office FMO	Qualitative analysis of interviews and FGDs Online survey to assess perception of project efficiency

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
G. Monitoring and Reporting			
i. Monitoring design and budgeting			
How relevant and appropriate were the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress?	Evidence of SMART indicators Sufficiency of indicators to fully capture change pursued including disaggregated effects	Prodoc M&E plan Project budget Results framework PIRs Field monitoring activities Activity reports, training reports Steering committee members UNEP	Interviews and thematic analysis of responses
To what extent was the M&E plan and budget sufficient to track progress towards targets	Evidence of how the M&E plan and budget was comprehensive Level of spending on M&E budget		
ii. Monitoring of project implementation			
To what extent did the M&E plan operate as planned?	Evidence of progress monitoring and adjustments Level of satisfaction with project M&E	PIRs Monitoring reports UNEP PMU Steering committee meeting reports	Qualitative analysis of interviews and FGDs Online survey to assess perception of project M&E
	Evidence of efforts to collect data beyond quantitative - harvesting changes and outcomes		
	Evidence of how M&E data was used for decision making		
To what extent did the project deliver on GEF Core indicators **(GEF Portal question 1)**	% achievement of targets	Core indicator tracker	Compared planned targets versus achieved
iii. Project reporting			
To what extent were UNEP and donor reporting commitments and guidelines fulfilled?	Evidence of any gaps in reporting	UNEP Project progress reports	Documentary review Interview with PMU and UNEP
H. Sustainability:			
i. Socio-political		Government agencies	Documentary review –

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

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

Review Questions	Sub-Questions/Indicators	Sources	Methods/Informants
	To what extent were environmental safeguard concerns effectively identified and addressed during project implementation? Were UNEP SES adhered to#? **GEF Portal question 4:** What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be 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)	UNEP SES policy Prodoc Monitoring reports PIRs Audit repors	Documentary review Interviews
	vii. Country ownership and driven-ness Perceived level of quality of engagement of government and public sector agencies in the project and role in scaling up and ensuring sustainability/ Are stakeholders utilizing the benefits and products from this project	Allied ministries – agriculture, energy, waste, gender, transport, finance, climate change secretariat, education/research Parastatals Project team UNEP team	Interviews Documentary review Online survey
	viii. Knowledge management, communication and public awareness How does the project evaluate, document and share its results, lessons learned and experiences? What actions were undertaken to ensure public awareness and ownership and to what effect?	PIR reports, training reports, publications, studies, project website (if exist)	Documentary report: Interviews:
	GEF Portal question 5: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g., website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? (This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)	PIR reports, training reports, publications, studies, project website (if exist) Monitoring reports Kis UNEP	Documentary review Online survey

ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

#	Name	Position/Title	Organization	Approach	Date	Gender
1	Julien Lheureux	Task Manager	UNEP	Online interview	17.02.2025	M
2	Lovetta Juanah	Project Manager	EPA	FGD	10.02.2025	F
3	Emmanuel During	Manager, Climate Change Secretariat	EPA		10.02.2025	M
4	Sheku Mark Kanneh	National Project Director	EPA	Face to face interview	10.02.2025	M
5	Alusine C.A Kagbo	Director of Finance	EPA	FGD	10.02.2025	M
6	Mariama Kamara	Administrative Assistant	EPA		10.02.2025	F
7	Tamba Emmnuel Nyaka	Director of Climate Change Secretariat	EPA	FGD	10.02.2025	M
8	Arouna Rashid Williams	Principal environmental officer	EPA		11.02.2025	M
9	Francess Aminata Smith	Environment Officer	EPA		11.02.2025	F
10	Idrissa Bangwa	Senior ICT Officer	EPA		11.02.2025	M
11	Georgiana Jigba	Environment Officer	EPA		11.02.2025	F
12	Joyti Painuly	Technical advisor	UNEP-CCC	Online interview	07.02.2025	M
13	Lahai Samba Keita	Deputy Director	Ministry of the environment and Climate Change	Face to face interview	11.02.2025	M
14	Gabriel Kpaka	Deputy Director	General, Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency	Telephone interview	11.02.2025	M
15	Ing Benjamin Kamara	Chief Director	Ministry of Energy and climate change	FGD	11.02.2025	M
16	Sheborah Omikeh Kamara	Director of Policy, Research, Planning Monitoring and Evaluation	Ministry of Energy		11.02.2025	M
17	Beran Forster	Environmental Specialist	Ministry of Transport and Aviation	Face to face Interview	11.02.2025	M
18	Sarah Kosseh	Development Secretary	Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs	Face to face Interview	12.02.2025	F
19	Anita Esther Momoh	Assistant Director	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs	Telephone interview	12.02.2025	F
20	Juana Vandi Saawah	Statistician	Statistics Sierra Leone	Face to face Interview	14.02.2025	M
21	Haja Kaday Sesay	Executive Director	Climate Change, Environment and Forest Conservation Consortium	Face to face Interview	13.02.2025	F

#	Name	Position/Title	Organization	Approach	Date	Gender
22	Magdalene Koroma	Park Manager	National Protected Area Authority	Face to face Interview	13.02.2025	F
23	Kate Garnett	Director of Forestry	Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change	Face to face Interview	11.02.2025	M
24	Margaret Kamara	Research Officer, Disaster Management	Department National Disaster Management Agency	Online	12.02.2025	F
25	Prof Ronnie A.D Frazer -Williams	Consultant	Professor of Environmental & Analytical Chemistry, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone	Telephone	12.02.2025	M
26	Philip Acquah	Consultant,	Industry Energy Efficiency (IE) and Renewable Energy (RE) Climate change mitigation tech transfer Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production (RECP)	Online	07.02.2025	M
27	Dr. Obai Kargbo	Consultant	Ocean Engineer Lecturer, Institute of Marine Biology & Oceanography, Fourah Bay College - University of Sierra Leone	Telephone	13.02.2025	M
28	Dr. Alhaji Sankoh	Consultant	Milton Margai Teachers University - Director of Research	Telephone	13.02.2025	M
29	Salfu Conteh	Environment and social officer Port Loko	Port Loko Local Council	FGD	13.02.2025	M
30	Cecilia F Sesay	Environment and social officer Port Loko	Port Loko Local Council		13.02.2025	F
31	Kadiatu Mangai Conteh	Chairlady	NDC Committee Port Loko	FGD	13.02.2025	F
32	Victoria F.C Songoikanu	Treasurer	NDC Committee Port Loko		13.02.2025	F
33	Chairman Saccoh	Head of Port Loko Regional Council	Port Loko Local Council	Telephone	14.02.2025	M
34	Morlu Sylvester	Researcher	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute	Telephone	20.02.2025	M
35	Ivana Audia	Senior Advisor	UNEP-CCC	Online	26.02.2025	F

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

1. Aisha, Fofana, Ibrahim. (2015). Whose Seat will become Reserved?: The 30% Quota Campaign in Sierra Leone. African and Asian Studies, 14:61-84. doi: 10.1163/15692108-12341330
2. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone.2020. Appendix 5: Project Supervision Plan
3. EPA-SL 2021 CBIT Audit report Management letter for the eighteen months period July 01.2020-December 31.2021 – audit and management response
4. EPA Appendix 16 Budget
5. EPA Appendix 17 Workplan
6. EPA 2020 REPORT ON THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) PROJECT GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE 28th October 2020
7. EPA-SL 2022 CBIT Audit report Management letter for the eighteen months period Jan 01.2022-December 31.2022 – audit and management response
8. EPA Annual cofinance report CBIT Project – Partner Report 2021
9. EPA-SL 2021 CBIT Audit report Management letter for the eighteen months period Jan 01.2023-December 31.2023 – audit and management response
10. EPA-SL 2022 Report on GHG Inventory Data Sources in Sierra Leone
11. EPA Annual cofinance report CBIT Project – Partner Report 2022
12. EPA 2022. ECONOMY DIVISION -ROUTING SLIP CORRESPONDENCE TO DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR – REQUEST FOR EXTENSION 1
13. EPA 2022. ECONOMY DIVISION -ROUTING SLIP CORRESPONDENCE TO DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR – REQUEST FOR EXTENSION 2
14. EPA -SL 2020 CBIT Project Procurement plan
15. EPA SL Deliverable 2a MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR GHG DATA EXCHANGE
16. EPA-SL REPORT ON THE REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER'S CONSULTATION ON THE INSTITUTIONAL MAPPING FOR GHG DATA COLLECTION, Date 22nd August, 2022 Venue: Loge Valley Makeni
17. EPA SL Creation of the Ministerial NDC Implementation Committee, Sierra Leone Terms of Engagement
18. EPA Annual cofinance report CBIT Project – Partner Report 2023
19. EPA Annual cofinance report CBIT Project – Partner Report 2024
20. EPA -SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline AFOLU Sector
21. EPA-SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU) Sector
22. EPA -SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline Energy Sector
23. EPA -SL 2024 Sectoral GHG Inventory Guideline Energy Sector
24. Government of Sierra Leone (2023) Gender Equality and Women's empowerment Policy, GEWE MAGe
25. Jamelia, Harris. (2022). Opting out of public sector employment: Gender and occupational aspirations among university graduates in Sierra Leone. Journal of International Development, doi: 10.1002/jid.3712
26. Medium-Term Strategy 2022—2025 The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for tackling climate change, biodiversity and nature loss, and pollution and waste from 2022—2025.
27. MINUTES OF THE FIRST PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY BOARD ROOM ON THE 3RD NOVEMBER, 2020
28. MINUTES OF THE SECOND PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY BOARD ROOM On the 8th April 2021
29. MINUTES OF THE SECOND PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR 2022 FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) PROJECT HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY BOARD ROOM On the 26th of May 2022
30. MINUTES OF THE FIFTH PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY BOARD ROOM, 3rd of November 2022
31. MINUTES OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY BOARDROOM, 23.03.2023

32. MINUTES OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY BOARDROOM On the 23rd November, 2023
33. MINUTES OF THE FINAL PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY (CBIT) HELD AT THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY BOARDROOM On the 25th June, 2024
34. Mr. Tamba E. Nyaka 2020. INCEPTION WORKSHOP OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR TRANSPARENCY(CBIT) PROJECT -SIERRA LEONE - Project roles responsibilities and implementation - VENUE: Golden Tulip Hotel, Aberdeen, Freetown. DATE: 28th October, 2020
35. Naoko Ishii CEO and Chairperson 2020. CEO Endorsement Letter
36. National Democratic Institute (2023) SIERRA LEONE: A GROUNDBREAKING GENDER EQUALITY BILL PASSES, Sierra Leone: A groundbreaking gender equality bill passes | National Democratic Institute
37. PIR 2021
38. PIR 2022
39. PIR 2023
40. PIR 2024
41. Progress report 2020
42. Project report 2021
43. Progress report 2022
44. Progress report 2023
45. UNDP 2024. Capacity-Building Program to Comply with the Paris Agreement and Implement its Transparency Requirements at the National Level GEF Medium-Sized Project PIMS+ ID: 6208 – GEF ID: 9967
46. UNEP prodoc - Building and strengthening Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement
47. Terminal Evaluation Report; Conservation International 2022. CBIT project Terminal evaluation Liberia, GEF ID:9923

ANNEX V. REVIEW ITINERARY

#	Name	Organization	Location	Date
1	Julien Lheureux	UNEP	Online	17.02.2025
2	Lovetta Juanah	EPA	Freetown	10.02.2025
3	Emmanuel During	EPA		10.02.2025
4	Sheku Mark Kanneh	EPA		10.02.2025
5	Alusine C.A Kagbo	EPA		10.02.2025
6	Mariama Kamara	EPA		10.02.2025
7	Tamba Emmnuel Nyaka	EPA		10.02.2025
8	Arouna Rashid Williams	EPA		11.02.2025
9	Francess Aminata Smith	EPA		11.02.2025
10	Idrissa Bangwa	EPA		11.02.2025
11	Georgiana Jigba	EPA		11.02.2025
12	Joyti Painuly	UNEP-CCC		07.02.2025
13	Lahai Samba Keita	Ministry of the environment and Climate Change		11.02.2025
14	Gabriel Kpaka	General, Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency		11.02.2025
15	Ing Benjamin Kamara	Ministry of Energy and climate change		11.02.2025
16	Sheborah Omikeh Kamara	Ministry of Energy		11.02.2025
17	Beran Forster	Ministry of Transport and Aviation		11.02.2025
18	Sarah Kosseh	Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs		12.02.2025
19	Anita Esther Momoh	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs		12.02.2025
20	Juana Vandi Saawah	Statistics Sierra Leone		14.02.2025
21	Haja Kaday Sesay	Climate Change, Environment and Forest Conservation Consortium		13.02.2025
22	Magdalene Koroma	National Protected Area Authority		13.02.2025
23	Kate Garnett	Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change		11.02.2025
24	Margaret Kamara	Department National Disaster Management Agency		12.02.2025
25	Prof Ronnie A.D Frazer - Williams	Professor of Environmental & Analytical Chemistry, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone	Online	12.02.2025

#	Name	Organization	Location	Date
26	Philip Acquah	Industry Energy Efficiency (IE) and Renewable Energy (RE) Climate change mitigation tech transfer Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production (RECP)	Online	07.02.2025
27	Dr. Obai Kargbo	Ocean Engineer Lecturer, Institute of Marine Biology & Oceanography, Fourah Bay College - University of Sierra Leone	Online	13.02.2025
28	Dr. Alhaji Sankoh	Milton Margai Teachers University - Director of Research	Online	13.02.2025
29	Salfu Conteh	Port Loko Local Council	Port Loko	13.02.2025
30	Cecilia F Sesay	Port Loko Local Council		13.02.2025
31	Kadiatu Mangai Conteh	NDC Committee Port Loko	Port Loko	13.02.2025
32	Victoria F.C Songoikanu	NDC Committee Port Loko		13.02.2025
33	Chairman Saccoh	Port Loko Local Council	Online	14.02.2025
34	Morlu Sylvester	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute	Online	20.02.2025
35	Ivana Audia	UNEP-CCC	Online	26.02.2025

ANNEX VI. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Funding source All figures as USD	Planned funding	% of planned funding	Secured funding	% of secured funding
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund				
Funds from the Regular Budget				
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):				
• GEF:	1,344,495		1,344,495	
Sub-total: Cash contributions	**1,344,495**		**1,344,495**	
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs				
Regular Budget staff-post costs				
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)				
Sub-total: In-kind contributions				
Co-financing*				
Co-financing in-kind contribution	200,000		200,000	
Sub-total: Co-financing contributions	**200,000**		**200,000**	
Total	**1,330,000**		**1,320,000**	

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

Project Funding Sources

Component/sub-component/output All figures as USD	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost / expenditure
Project Outcome 1	328,500	305,610
Project Outcome 2	913,000	803,643
M&E	0	1,367
PMC	102,995	102,122
Total	1,344,495	1,212,742

Expenditure by Outcome/Output (GEF grant only)

ANNEX VII. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial Management Table

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS			
Financial management components:		**Rating**	**Evidence/ Comments**
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		**HS:HU**	**HS**
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[86] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes/No	NO
2. Completeness of project financial information[87]:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		**HS:HU**	**HS**
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes – at design, both the GEF budget and co-finance cost costs tables arranged by budget line for each component an
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes/No or N/A	Yes Requests for revision 1 and 2 provided. Addressed delays due to Cov-19, procurement and contracting challenges with UNEP - CCC
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes –all legal agreements provided
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/No or N/A	Yes Cash advance confirmations provided
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes annual co-finance reports were provided
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes quarterly expenditure reports provided by budget line for all relevant reporting periods; final project financial account statements provided as well
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes/No or N/A	Yes All audit reports and management responses provided.
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	No
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		**HS:HU**	**HS**
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS:HU	HS There was s a clear line of communication between the Project Manager and financial staff, such as the Finance Manager within EPA, and the UNEP Budget Holder. Regularly, there are meetings were conducted between the Project Manager and technical support teams (e.g., UNEP-CCC)
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS:HU	HS

[86] If the Review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

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

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS		
Financial management components:	**Rating**	**Evidence/ Comments**
		The UNEP Budget Holder was actively involved in the project implementation, ensuring proper financial management standards were adhered
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.	HS:HU	HS Financial management issues have been addressed following the recommendations of the audit
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.	HS:HU	HS The progress and implementation reports and interviews with project team and task manager demonstrate that there has been contact between the project manager and the fund manager.
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process	HS:HU	HS
Overall rating	**HS**	

ANNEX VIII. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

Not applicable

ANNEX IX. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name: Prof Aurelian Mbzibain

Profession	Director ACE D&H Consultants Ltd, Senior Evaluation Specialist
Nationality	United Kingdom
Country experience	• Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Tunisia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa • Europe: Belgium, France, Germany, Slovakia, United Kingdom (UK) • Middle East: Afghanistan, Iraq • Americas: United States of America • Caribbean Region: Guyana, Haiti, Turks and Caicos, Saint Vincent and Grenadine • Asia/south East Asia: Bhutan, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam
Education	

University – City - Country	Period	Diploma	Major
University Of Wolverhampton, UK	2021	Professor	International Development
University of Wolverhampton, UK	2019	Associate Professor	International Development
University Of Wolverhampton, UK	2009-2013	PhD	Business and Strategic Management
Ghent University, Humboldt University Berlin, Slovak University of Agriculture, Agro-Campus Rennes, France	2007-2009	MSc	International Msc Rural Development (With the Greatest Distinction)
University of Dschang	1997-2002	Diplome d'Ingenieur Agronome	Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

Short biography

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

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

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

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

- Drafting of narrative reports, policy and advocacy briefs.

Selected assignments and experiences

Period	Assignments
10/2024-01/2025	**FAO Global – Team Leader** to develop GEF Global Diversity Framework Fund proposal for Community-based conservation for biodiversity and livelihoods in the context of climate change in DRC, $6,656,000 GEF Funding, co-financing $12,000,000
10/2024-06/2025	**UNEP – Team Leader** for Terminal of 02 GEF projects - CBIT Sierra Leone (10027) and CBIT Malawi (10149) - Building and strengthening Sierra Leone and Malawi's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement" projects
01/2025-03/2025	**World Resource Institute – Team Leader** to develop WRI Country Strategy for DRC
10/2024-02/2025	**ClientEarth UK** – Team Leader to facilitate and develop Africa Strategy
03-07/2024	**FAO Global – Team Leader to d**evelop overarching evaluation methodological framework for 4 Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded projects in DRC, Kenya, Sao Tome and Principe and DRC. **Team Leader** terminal evaluation of the GCP/DRC/054/GFF (August 2024) "The Restoration Initiative, DRC child project: Improved Management and Restoration of Agro-sylvo-pastoral Resources in the Pilot Province of South-Kivu - Democratic Republic of Congo" using the methodology developed
04-07/2024	**UNDP Independent Office of Evaluation** – UNDP County Programme Evaluation, Ethiopia – Nature, Climate and Environment Evaluation Specialist
03-06/2024	**World Resources Institute –** Midterm Evaluation of the Open Timber Portal – Independent Forest Monitoring Project Cameroon
02-06/2024	**UNDP Independent Office of Evaluation** – UNDP County Programme Evaluation, South Africa – Nature, Climate and Environment Evaluation Specialist
01-04/2024	**Mid-term review** of the Landscape management through deforestation-free jurisdiction project in Lam Dong and Dak Nong Viet project, with funding from the European Union (EU).
02/2024 – 30/2029	**MEL Hub Lead (0.20FTE)** for DEFRA Biodiverse Landscapes Fund Cameroon, Congo and Gabon. Facilitates M&E and Learning, conducted political economy analysis and project baseline for the Independent Evaluator
11/2022-date	**FHI 360 United States:** Long Term Master Consultancy Services – Call down Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Research Consultant Francophone Africa – Chad, DRC, Congo on USAID funded programmes
10/2023 – 01/2024	**FAO** Sri Lanka - Evaluation of The FAO Emergency Response to the Economic and Food Crisis in Sri Lanka - USD 55 million
09/2023 – 01/2024	**ClientEarth UK –** Mid-term review of the "Building legal foundations for sustainable forests and livelihoods project" – Liberia, Gabon and the European Union funded by NORAD – € 7 million
09/2023 – 12/2023	**European Forestry Institute** – Forest Governance Assessment, Democratic Republic of Congo
07/2023 – 10/2023	**FAO** Country Programme Evaluation Rwanda – Portfolio USD 25 million
10/2023 – 12/2023	**FAO** Rwanda – Mid Term Review of Capacity development for innovation in Rwanda: strengthening innovation partnerships in six districts: Burera, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, and Ruhango" – EU funded – €2 million
07/2023-11/2023	**UNDP Independent Office of Evaluation - UNDP** Independent Country Programme Evaluation, Democratic Republic of Congo - Environment and Climate Evaluation Specialist - > USD 60 million
03/2023-11/2023	**Milieudefensie Netherlands:** Mid-term review for Green Livelihoods Alliance, Forests for a 46 million euros Just Future Programme operating in 11 countries in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia (Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia). Evaluation also focuses on global programmes implemented at EU level by the Alliance. The programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ANNEX X. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Review of the UNEP project "Building and strengthening Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement" (10027)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA[88] ID:	38697	Grant ID[89] (if applicable):	S1-32CBL-000001
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division / Mitigation Branch / GEF Climate Mitigation Unit		
Implementing Partners:	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone		
Sources of Funding:	*Country[90](ies)*: Sierra Leone	*Institution[91] Name/Type:* Government	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG-13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts SDG Target 13.3. Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. SDG indicator 13.3.2: Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions		
MTS (all that apply):	MTS 2018-2021	UNEP approval date:	4 June 2020
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022)*: **OR** POW Output(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)*	*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* *POW Output:*	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)*:	*MTS 2025 Outcome: 1C - State and non-state actors adopt the enhanced transparency framework arrangements under the Paris Agreement* *POW Expected Accomplishment: (b) Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies*

[88] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

[89] For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.

[90] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.

[91] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

Sub-programme:	Sub-programme 1 Climate Change	Programme Coordination Project:	Transparency PCP
Expected start date:	1 October 2020	Actual start date:	1 October 2020
Planned completion date:	30 September 2023	Actual operational completion date:	30 June 2024
Planned total project budget at approval:	US$ 1,544,495	Actual total expenditures[92] reported as of 30 June 2024:	US$ 1,372,312
GEF grant allocation:	US$ 1,344,495	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024:	US$ 1,172,312
Planned co-financing:	In-kind: US$ 200,000	Secured co-financing as of 30 June 2024:	In-kind: US$ 200,000
First disbursement:	13 July 2020	Planned date of financial closure:	30 June 2025
No. of formal project revisions:	2	Date of last approved project revision:	28/10/2022
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	8	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	25/06/2024
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	N/A	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	31 December 2024	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	tbd
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Sierra Leone	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

2. Project Rationale

The Paris Agreement (PA) introduced the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) regime for climate action and support under Article 13. According to the UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2019, countries are far from reaching the global goal of 2°C if only the current levels of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are considered. Hence, the ETF under the PA is critical to enable all countries to track the progress of climate action and raise ambition. The Parties to the PA established the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of developing countries to effectively participate in the ETF.

Following this, the UNFCCC requested the Global Environment Fund (GEF) to support the implementation of CBIT through voluntary contributions during GEF-6 and future replenishment cycles; hence during COP 21, the GEF established CBIT. Globally, the CBIT program aims to strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities; provide relevant tools, training, and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Agreement and assist in the progressive improvement of transparency efforts.

The scope of implementation of Sierra Leone intended contributions on mitigation and adaptation is contingent upon the provision of adequate resources by the international community (financial resources, capacity building and the transfer of technologies). In view of this, there is a need to strengthen Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the different components of the Paris Climate Agreement. As indicated in Sierra Leone's NDC, additional support is required to develop a transparency system for tracking the performance and the implementation progress of the NDC.

[92] Includes both the GEF grant and the co-financing.

The objective of the CBIT Sierra Leone project was to build and strengthen Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Climate Agreement. The project presented an important opportunity to support the Government of Sierra Leone in building its institutional and technological capacity, designing methodological tools and indicators, and engaging all relevant stakeholders.

Sierra Leone is part of the African countries that received funding from the GEF. Sierra Leone's CBIT project is a medium-sized GEF project whose implementation was approved by the GEF CEO on 8 January 2020. The Project Cooperation Agreement was signed in June 2020 and the implementation period spanned from October 2020 to June 2024.

3. Project Results Framework

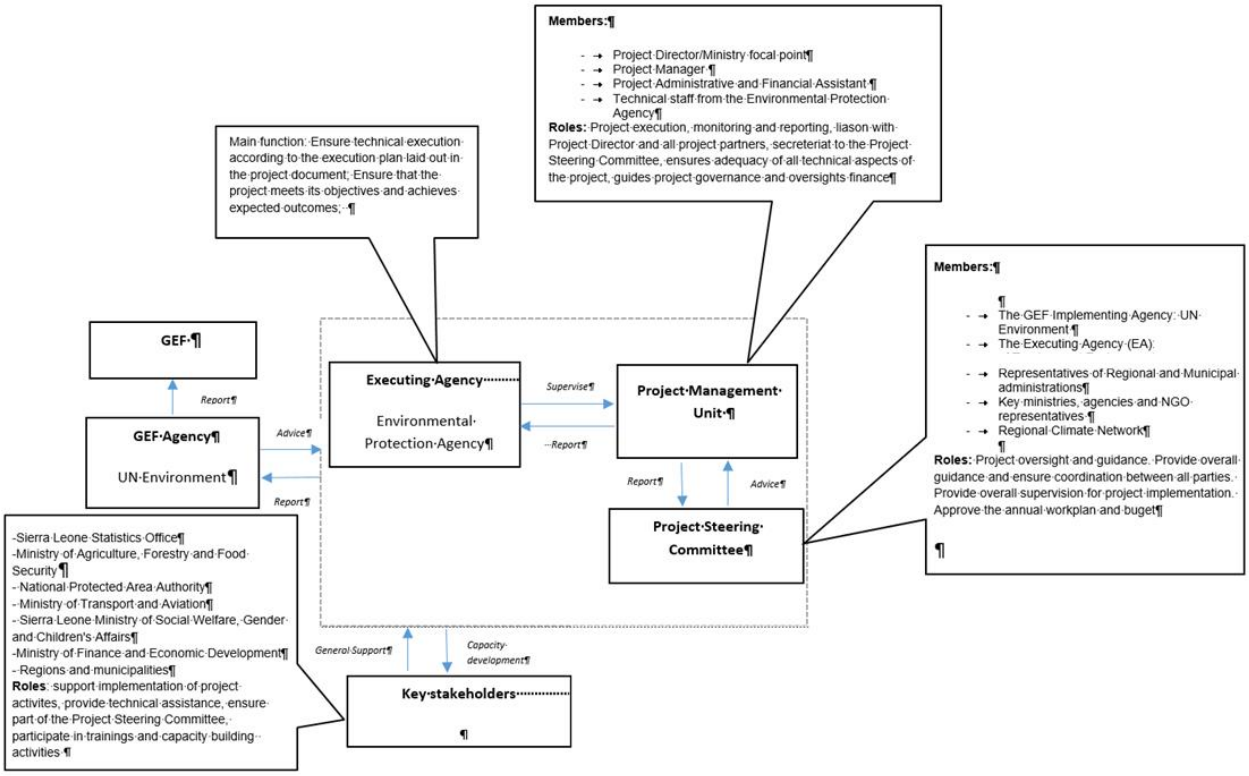
The project's results framework (i.e. indicators and targets) as per the Project Document is provided below:

Indicators:		**Baseline**	**Target**	**Means of verification**
Objective level Indicator:	Improvement in the quality of Institutional capacity for transparency based on GEF score 1 to 4 as per Annex IV of CBIT programming	1	+1 (=2)	• CBIT Global Coordination Platform self-assessment tool • NDC online platform • Official documents and project reports
Component	**National Capacity to track NDC implementation and sustain transparency efforts over time**			
Outcome 1	**Sierra Leone adopts upgraded institutional arrangements and tools to track NDC implementation in accordance with the UNFCCC modalities, procedures and guidelines**			
Outputs	*Output 1.1 Institutional arrangements for data collection and management established under EPA's coordination and operationalized in key ministries, agencies, departments and other stakeholders* *Output 1.2 Sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies and indicators for mitigation and adaptation developed and distributed.* *Output 1.3 Continuous quality control and assurance program for Sierra Leone's transparency instruments designed and operationalized (e.g. National Communications, Biennial Update Reports)*			
Indicator 1.1	Improvement in the quality of MRV of NDC Implementation based on GEF score 1 to 10 as per Annex III of CBIT programming directions	1	+3 (=4)	• CBIT Global Coordination Platform self-assessment tool • NDC online platform • Survey of the platform's use by the targeted organizations with institutional arrangement and by the public Official documents and project reports
Outcome 2	**Key Ministries, Agencies, Departments and other stakeholders use the NDC transparency system**			
Outputs	*Output 2.1. Data teams from the three prioritized sectors trained in collection, processing and management of data;* *Output 2.2. Peer-to-peer learning activities in the region for key stakeholders undertaken and through participation in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform;* *Output 2.3. NDC online platform for collecting and managing all NDC information, including data about climate finance, developed and hosted by EPA.*			
Indicator 2.1	% of specialized trained staff who declares to be in a better position to implement MRV systems (gender-disaggregated)	N/A	70%	Attendees lists for all trainings and surveys
Indicator 2.2	Number of government staff using the platform in their day-to-day work	0	30	Online counting mechanism and interviews with government staff

4. Executing Arrangements

The Project was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) acting as the GEF Implementing Agency. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone was the Executing Agency.

The structure is illustrated in the diagram below.



5. Project Cost and Financing

The table below provides the budget breakdown at CEO approval

Project Components/ Programs	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	(in $)	
				GEF Project Financing	Confirmed Co-financing
Component: National Capacity to track NDC[93] implementation and sustain transparency efforts over time	TA	Outcome 1 Sierra Leone adopts upgraded institutional arrangements and tools to track NDC implementation in accordance with the UNFCCC[94] modalities, procedures and guidelines	Output 1.1 Institutional arrangements for data collection and management established under EPA's coordination and operationalized in key ministries, agencies, departments and other stakeholders Output 1.2 Sectoral transparency guidelines, methodologies and indicators for mitigation and adaptation developed and distributed. Output 1.3 Continuous quality control and assurance program for Sierra Leone's transparency instruments designed and operationalized (e.g. National Communications, Biennial Update Reports)	328,500	50,000
	TA	Outcome 2 Key Ministries, Agencies, Departments and other stakeholders use the NDC transparency system	Output 2.1 Data teams from the three prioritized sectors trained in collection, processing and management of data Output 2.2 Peer-to-peer learning activities in the region for key stakeholders undertaken and through participation in the CBIT Global Coordination Platform Output 2.3 NDC online platform for collecting and managing all NDC information, including data about climate finance, developed and hosted by EPA	913,000	100,000
			Subtotal	1,241,500	150,000
			Project Management Cost (PMC)	102,995	50,000
			Total project costs	**1,344,495**	**200,000**

6. Implementation Issues

The project faced some issues that impacted implementation including lengthy procurement processes from the EPA (Executing Agency) that affected timely recruitment of experts / consultants, restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the administrative transition of UDP to UNEP-CCC (which was responsible for providing targeted technical support to the Project).

The project has undergone two (2) revisions. Revision 1 was approved by UNEP on 2 February 2022, extending the completion date to 31 March 2024 to accommodate the Country's lengthy procurement processes. Revision 2 was approved on 28 October 2022 for an extension until 30 June 2024 to complete all remaining project activities, due to the delays related to the administrative transition from UDP to UNEP-CCC.

[93] Nationally Determined Contribution

[94] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

7. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[95] and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual[96], the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Sierra Leone. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project, where applicable.

8. Key Review principles

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

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

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

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

9. Key Strategic Questions

[95] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114

[96] https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions**[97] listed below (no more than 5 questions are recommended). These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

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

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

Q3: Did the State and non-State actors participating in the project adopt the new tools developed by the project? If so, what are the key project elements that contributed to allowing them to do so? If not, what prevented them from doing so?

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

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

10. Review Criteria

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

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

A. Strategic Relevance

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

i. Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy[98] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[99] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

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

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

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

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

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

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

iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence[100]

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[101], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within Cooperation Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

B. Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[102] should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

C. Nature of External Context

At review inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval[103]). This rating is entered in the final review ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an *Unfavourable* or *Highly Unfavourable* external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and UNEP Task Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs[104]

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

[101] 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.

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

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

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

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc[105]). Any *formal* modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes[106]

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[107] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

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

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

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[108] or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component

[105] Also called CEO Endorsement Document for GEF projects

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

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

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

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

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

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

E. Financial Management

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

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

F. Efficiency

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

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

The Review will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[109] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[110] results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Review will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed, where applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

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

iii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised project information management system[111] in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the UNEP Task Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

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

H. Sustainability

Sustainability[112] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

ii. Financial Sustainability

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

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

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

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

iii. Institutional Sustainability

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

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

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

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

Global Environment Facility	For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review whether the segregation of responsibilities met the GEF requirements[113] (the GEF Agency must separate its project implementation and execution duties and establish each of the following: (a) A satisfactory institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation and executing functions in different departments of the GEF Agency; and (b) Clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the GEF Agency between the project implementation and execution functions.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise

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

collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[114].

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

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

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, or mitigation of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements[115] were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned, are reviewed above under Quality of Project Design).

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

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

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

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

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

project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

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

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

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

(a) A **desk review** of:
Relevant background documentation, inter alia:
Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and any other monitoring materials etc.;
Project deliverables (e.g. publications, assessments etc):
Reviews of similar projects.

(b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
UNEP Task Manager and Programme Assistant:
Executing Agency Project Manager and project management team;
UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
Project partners, including UNEP-CCC;
Relevant resource persons.
Representatives from civil society and specialist groups.

Surveys to be determined at inception phase
Field visits to Freetown, Sierra Leone
Other data collection tools to be determined at inception phase

11. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

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

Inception Report: (see Annex 3 of these TOR) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.
Preliminary Findings presentation: typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.
Draft and Final Review Report: (See Annex 4 of these TOR) containing an Executive Summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

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

The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process and provides a formal assessment of the quality of the final Terminal Review report, which is provided within this report's annexed material.

In addition, the Evaluation Office formally validates the report by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations. As such the project performance ratings presented in the Review report may be adjusted by the Evaluation Office.

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

12. The Review Consultant

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

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

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of 06 months (tentatively from October 2024 to March 2025) and should have the following: Advanced university degree (i.e. master's degree or higher) in management, business administration, economics, engineering, energy or other relevant area is required. A first level degree with additional two years of qualifying experience maybe accepted in lieu of an advanced university degree. A minimum of 2 years of experience in the evaluation and monitoring of development Projects in developing countries is required. Within the 2 years, experience working on technical aspects of development Projects in the environmental / climate change sector in Africa is desirable. Experience in working with national governments in Africa or developing countries is required. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency (both oral and written) in English is required. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

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

13. Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	Indicative dates
Inception Phase	
TR Inception Meeting	31 October 2024
Desk Review of project documentation	1 to 29 November 2024
Draft TR Inception Report	29 November 2024
Final TR Inception Report	13 December 2024
Data Collection Phase	
Stakeholder survey / e-based interviews	1 November to 13 December 2024
Review mission	January 2025 (exact dates tbd)
Individual interviews	January 2025 (exact dates tbd)
Presentation of preliminary findings (ppt)	24 January 2025
Reporting Phase	
Draft Main Review Report shared with UNEP Task Manager	21 February 2025
Draft Main Review Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	24 February 2025
Consolidated comments on Draft Main Review Report returned to Reviewer by UNEP	3 March 2025

Milestone	Indicative dates
Updated Final Main Review Report with Comments table prepared and shared with UNEP Task Manager	7 March 2025
Final Main Review Report submitted to the UNEP Evaluation Office for validation and quality assessment	10 March 2025
Final Main Review Report validated by UNEP Evaluation Office with quality assessment	7 April 2025
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	11 April 2025

14. Contractual Arrangements

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

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

Schedule of Payment:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table X: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[116], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[117]).
Response: *(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)* Key gender-responsive deliverables included a gender-sensitive NDC implementation plan and the development of an animated climate change guide for young people. By the end of the project, a total of 1,312 stakeholders—including staff from government ministries, civil society organizations, youth groups, and NGOs—directly benefited from the initiative. This comprised 979 men (74%) and 333 women (26%), exceeding the initial target GEF core indicator target of 140 participants (50% men and 50% women) but aligning more closely with the national gender equality and women's empowerment policy targets30%[118]. Despite these achievements, gender mainstreaming remains a significant challenge in the country.
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 effectively engaged government agencies, civil society, private sector, and academia, fostering strong country ownership and institutional collaboration. Stakeholder engagement was hindered by COVID-19, the 2023 elections, and administrative delays, affecting meetings and field activities. The project enhanced transparency mechanisms established an inter-ministerial NDC committee, and developed gender-inclusive and private sector engagement strategies. Strong engagement with women and young people through the NDC committees proved successful and enhanced outreach to local districts.
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)* The project implemented key gender-responsive measures, including a gender-sensitive NDC implementation plan and the development of an animated climate change guide for young people. A total of 1,312 stakeholders, including government staff, civil society, and youth organizations, directly benefited, with 26% of participants being women, aligning with national gender targets. Additionally, the project strengthened women's participation in governance by involving them in GHG data management, decision-making, training, media outreach, project steering committee and PMU leadership roles. The NDC online platform also allows the country to track the

[116] 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)

[117] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

[118] https://youngafricanpolicyresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Sierra-Leone-GEWE-Policy-Final.pdf

gender responsiveness of climate finance and policies, contributing to reducing gender disparities in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Question: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

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

This was a low risk project. No negative impacts were identified during the TR or during project implementation. The project carried out regular risk monitoring and implemented relevant adaptive measures to address risks. The TR confirms that the risk level at design and endorsement was adequate considering that this was an institutional capacity strengthening project.

Question: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

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

The CBIT project prioritized knowledge management and dissemination, ensuring national and international visibility through training events, peer-to-peer exchanges, and participation in regional and global forums such as COP 28 and the Global Transparency Forum in Tokyo. Numerous guidelines, methodologies, and toolkits were developed to enhance sustainability and replicability, including training toolkits and sectoral GHG guides. While project deliverables have been well-archived, ongoing efforts are needed to promote their use, with the EPA's new Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics offers a key opportunity for long-term knowledge sharing and accessibility.

Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?

Response:

Key Findings of the Terminal Review

Achievements:
The CBIT project significantly advanced Sierra Leone's climate transparency framework, aligning with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement. It established institutional structures, built technical capacity, and introduced digital transparency tools, guidelines, and toolkits to enhance coordination, reporting, and accountability. Over 1,312 stakeholders from government agencies, municipal councils, and non-state actors were trained in GHG inventory management, MRV, data collection, and climate transparency processes. The project also developed a gender-inclusive NDC implementation plan and a private sector engagement strategy, helping to mainstream gender considerations and foster private sector participation in climate action. The NDC Transparency Platform, hosted by the EPA, was a key milestone, providing a centralized system for climate data collection, reporting, and tracking NDC implementation. Strong project management,

financial oversight, and a high level of stakeholder engagement, particularly from the EPA and sectoral ministries, increased national ownership and the likelihood of sustainability.

Challenges:
While the project delivered important results, several challenges persisted. Delays due to external factors—including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 elections, and administrative transitions—necessitated two non-cost extensions. The lack of legal mandates and dedicated funding for data collection and reporting remains a critical risk, potentially affecting the long-term sustainability of transparency mechanisms. Capacity constraints within sectoral ministries and local councils, particularly in climate finance mobilization, also limited the ability to sustain and scale project interventions. Although training sessions strengthened national capacity, many were one-off, with limited opportunities for ongoing support, affecting the mastery and application of learning. Furthermore, private sector engagement was limited despite the development of an engagement strategy, requiring further efforts to integrate businesses into climate reporting frameworks. The project also struggled to fully include persons with disabilities, and a noticeable gap remains between national and regional-level climate interventions and the needs of local communities.

Impact and Sustainability:
The project has laid a solid foundation for long-term impact by improving climate data accuracy, transparency, and coordination. The institutionalization of reporting mechanisms and the NDC platform will ensure that Sierra Leone sustains and scales its climate monitoring efforts, helping track GHG emissions reductions in key sectors such as energy, waste, and AFOLU. By enhancing transparency, the project positions Sierra Leone for better access to climate finance, with the EPA already leveraging CBIT's success to secure further funding, including from the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT). The alignment of the project with Vision 2030 supports Sierra Leone's transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy. The review concluded that the project's overall performance was satisfactory.

ANNEX XII. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Title and Reference No.: Building and strengthening Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement (GEF ID 10027)
Contact Person (TM/PM): Julien Lheureux

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	**ACCEPTED (YES / NO / PARTIALLY)**	**WHAT WILL BE DONE?**	**EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE**	**REPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY**
Ensure that climate data transparency and reporting are mandated under the Climate Change Act.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the EPA-SL and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EPA-SL once the Terminal Review report is completed. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EPA-SL by end of year 2025 and by mid-2026 to assess the progress on implementing this recommendation.	By July 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By December 2025 and by June 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EPA-SL
Strengthen resource mobilization efforts and link climate transparency with funding opportunities.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and EPA-SL. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EPA-SL once the Terminal Review report is completed. This is a rather long-term recommendation (18 months), so the UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EPA-SL by mid-2026 to assess the progress on implementing it.	By July 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By June 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EPA-SL
Advocate for CBIT phase 2 to further consolidate transparency gains, learning and best practices.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the EPA-SL and UNEP. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EPA-SL once the Terminal Review report is completed. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EPA-SL by end of year 2025 to assess the progress on implementing this recommendation.	By July 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By December 2025	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EPA-SL

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	**ACCEPTED (YES / NO / PARTIALLY)**	**WHAT WILL BE DONE?**	**EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE**	**REPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY**
Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems to assess qualitative changes in climate transparency practices.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the EPA-SL. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EPA-SL once the Terminal Review report is completed. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EPA-SL by end of year 2025 and by mid-2026 to assess the progress on implementing this recommendation.	By July 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By December 2025 and by June 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EPA-SL
Strengthen gender and social inclusion mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation in climate transparency efforts.	Yes	This recommendation is addressed to the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and EPA-SL. The UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will convey it to the EPA-SL once the Terminal Review report is completed. This is a rather long-term recommendation (18 months), so the UNEP GEF Climate Mitigation Unit will follow up with the EPA-SL by mid-2026 to assess the progress on implementing it.	By July 2025 (after validation of the TR report) By June 2026	GEF Climate Mitigation Unit (UNEP) / EPA-SL

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

Lesson Learned #1:	Strong institutional anchoring and government ownership are critical for sustainability.
Context/comment:	One of the key success factors of the CBIT project was its deep integration within Sierra Leone's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which ensured that the project was not seen as externally driven but rather as a national priority. The involvement of sectoral ministries, Statistics Sierra Leone, and the Meteorological Agency and others helped institutionalize climate transparency efforts. This experience highlights the importance of embedding climate governance initiatives within national structures rather than relying on temporary project-based arrangements. By prioritising clear institutional mandates, this could enable national institutions to take full ownership of transparency and reporting efforts.

Lesson Learned #2:	Digital platforms improve data coordination, but adoption requires ongoing support.
Context/comment:	The development of the NDC Transparency Platform was a major milestone, providing a centralized system for managing climate data. However, full adoption by government agencies and other stakeholders remained a challenge, as many institutions were still adjusting to new workflows and technical requirements. This highlights that introducing a digital tool is only part of the solution—ongoing user engagement, tailored training, and phased implementation are essential to ensuring that such platforms become fully integrated into institutional processes.

Lesson Learned #3:	Capacity-building efforts must be paired with sustainability measures
Context/comment:	The project successfully trained over 140 individuals in climate data management and transparency reporting, while reaching over 1000 others through awareness raising. Staff turnover is a key challenge as newly acquired knowledge is often lost when personnel move to other roles. This underscores the importance of implementing strategies to ensure that capacity-building efforts have lasting benefits. The engagement with academia provides an opportunity for national capacity building and continuous professional development of government agencies. The availability of ToT toolkits and guidelines, provide the foundation for recycling of learning within government agencies, but there is need for a structured approach to capacity building to be institutionalised, knowing that capacity building takes time for learning to be effectively embedded. It must therefore be seen as a continuous process.

Lesson Learned #4:	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) should capture both quantitative and qualitative data to assess real impact.
Context/comment:	The project successfully promoted a "training of trainers" (ToT) approach, to enable participants to transfer their knowledge to a wider audience. However, there were no formal mechanisms to track whether the training led to meaningful application of skills in practice. This highlights the need for MEL systems to go beyond tracking the number of people trained and to assess how effectively knowledge is being applied. Integrating mechanisms for post-training follow-ups, observation-based assessments, and structured feedback loops could ensure that learning translates into actual behavioural and institutional change.

Lesson Learned #5:	Flexibility and adaptive management are essential for project resilience.
Context/comment:	The CBIT project faced significant external challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and election-related disruptions, which required adjustments in implementation. The ability of the project team to pivot—through virtual engagements, timeline extensions, and alternative training formats—was key to ensuring that core objectives were still met. This experience reinforces the importance of designing projects with built-in flexibility, allowing them to adapt to unexpected changes.

Lesson Learned #6:	Multi-stakeholder engagement enhances buy-in and likelihood of impact.
Context/comment:	Bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders—including government, civil society, and academia—was a key factor in strengthening transparency efforts. The Project Steering Committee played an important role in aligning efforts across different institutions and sectors. However, engaging the private sector proved more challenging, as businesses often lacked clear incentives to participate in climate transparency initiatives. This highlights the need for stronger policy frameworks, financial incentives, and capacity-building efforts targeted at private sector actors to ensure their meaningful contribution to national climate transparency goals.

Lesson Learned #7:	Climate transparency is a key enabler for climate finance mobilization.
Context/comment:	By strengthening Sierra Leone's climate data systems and reporting mechanisms, the CBIT project positioned the country to better access international climate finance. Transparent, credible reporting is increasingly important in securing funding for mitigation and adaptation initiatives. This experience highlights that climate transparency should not be seen as merely a compliance requirement but also as a strategic tool for unlocking financial resources that support national climate goals. Future projects should focus on linking transparency efforts with investment planning, ensuring that strong data systems contribute directly to resource mobilization.

Lesson Learned #8:	Engagement with children and academia is crucial for sustainable behavioural change and addressing the national capacity cap
Context/comment:	The project was highly innovative in producing the "Environment and I" climate change booklet and working with academia to support delivery. Targeting kids at a young age with climate change information has been shown to contribute to enhanced environmental awareness and sustainable behavioural change amongst children. At another level, engaging academics in this project enabled lecturers and researchers to relay and integrate their learning in to teaching and research. This ensures that students have state of the art knowledge and education and that that teaching is adapted to real world issues. As students and graduates go on to work in the public, private and tertiary sectors, providing the knowledge and tools during training, is central to addressing SL's technical capacity shortages in the areas of climate change.

ANNEX XIII. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: "Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP-GEF Project 'Building and strengthening Sierra Leone's national capacity to implement the transparency elements of the Paris Agreement' (GEF ID 10027)

Consultant: Aurelian Mbzibain

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

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary Purpose: acts as a stand-alone and accurate summary of the main review product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the review object • clear summary of the review objectives and scope • overall review rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic review questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report *(coverage/omissions)*: The executive summary covers all required elements. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: The executive summary is well, written and acts as a stand-alone and accurate summary of the review. A summary of the main findings and responses to key strategic review questions are also included.	6
Quality of the 'Introduction' Section Purpose: introduces/situates the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the review itself. To include: • institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates • number of project phases (where appropriate) • results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome) • coverage of the review (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been reviewed/evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.) • concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings.	Final report *(coverage/omissions)*: The introduction section includes most of the required elements save for the description of the institutional context, and the PRC approval date. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: The report presents a concise introduction and description of the evaluand. The report would have benefited from a description of the institutional context, and the PRC approval date.	4
Quality of the 'Review Methods' Section Purpose: provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of review methods, demonstrates the credibility of the findings and performance ratings. To include: • description of review data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face) • number and type of respondents *(see table template)* • selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation	Final report *(coverage/omissions)*: Most of the expected elements are included and adequately addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: The section presents a comprehensive description of the review methods. Ethical considerations, limitations and mitigations strategies are also adequately explained. On the other hand, the report would have benefited from a description of the selection criteria for the respondents and field visit sites.	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) • details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.) • methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc) • review limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc) • ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. *'Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.*		
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 • *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	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements are included and well addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the key dimensions of the evaluand i.e. the implementation context, results framework, stakeholders, project implementation structure changes in project design and project financing.	6
Quality of the Theory of Change Purpose: to set out the TOC at Review in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance. To include: • description of how the *TOC at Review*[119] 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*	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The reviewer used the project's original ToC as it was deemed comprehensive and as such there was also no change to the results statements. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The ToC at review included articulation of the causal pathways that were not included in the ProDoc. The ToC diagram could have been improved to make it less linear considering the interrelationships that exist between the results.	5

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

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
not been 'moved'. This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.		
Quality of Key Findings within the Report Presentation of evidence: nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. Consistency within the report: all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. Findings Statements (where applicable): The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual review criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. **A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand.** In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The presentation of the findings in the report is evidence based and consistent across the report while ratings largely follow UNEP guidance. However, the report could have benefited from clear finding statements specific for each of the review criteria.	5
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section Purpose: to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[120]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report adequately covers all the dimensions of relevance. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a well-reasoned analysis of the relevance of the evaluand to UNEP and donor priorities. The report also includes analysis of the relevance of the intervention to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities and complementary of the evaluand with existing Interventions.	6
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):* This section of the report is complete and includes an analysis of all the dimensions of quality of project design. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a balanced analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in project design.	6
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[121]), and how they affected performance. While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes a section on the Nature of the External Context. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report identifies and analyses the key externalities that affected project implementation, how they affected project performance, and the	5

[120] 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.

[121] 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.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.	mitigation measures put in place by the project team.	
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section **(i) Availability of Outputs:** Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes a section on the availability of outputs that covers all project outputs. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a detailed analysis of delivery of all planned outputs as compared to targets. The report also includes analysis of timeliness of delivery and utility of the outputs.	6
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):* The report includes a section on the achievement of outcomes as compared to targets. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a detailed analysis of uptake of project outputs by target recipients. The report also links these outcomes to the work of the project.	6
(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 disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes an analysis of the likelihood of impact as expected. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The likelihood of impact section presents a detailed analysis of causal pathways in the ToC while testing the assumptions and drivers and also includes the roles played by key actors and change agents.	6
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes a section that analyses the financial management of the evaluand. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a detailed analysis of the financial management	6

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• *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	of the project by highlighting measures put in place to ensure proper financial management. The analysis covers the project team's adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information provided and communication between financial and project management staff.	
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include: • time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* A section on efficiency is included in the review report. Both dimensions of efficiency (time and cost) are covered. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a detailed analysis of the two dimensions of efficiency (cost and time). The analysis also includes cost and time saving measures implemented by the project such a building on existing structures and networks. However, an opportunity to analyse measures, or the lack of, aimed at reducing UNEP's environmental footprint was missed.	5
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section Purpose: to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • quality of the monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)* • quality of monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • quality of project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor reports)*	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes a section on monitoring and reporting. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The review report presents an excellent analysis of project monitoring and reporting arrangements both at design and implementation including reporting.	6
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All the three elements of sustainability are covered in the review report. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The sustainability section presents a detailed and well-reasoned analysis of the three elements of sustainability (socio-political, financial and institutional sustainability).	6
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section Purpose: These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the review report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes: • preparation and readiness	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report covers all the factors affecting project performance as required. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a detailed analysis of the factors affecting project performance i.e. preparation and readiness; quality of project management and supervision; stakeholder participation and co-operation; responsiveness to human rights and gender equality; environmental and social safeguards; country ownership and driven-ness;	6

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• quality of project management and supervision[122] • 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	communication and public awareness.	
Quality of the Conclusions Section **(i) Conclusions Narrative:** Purpose: to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the performance of the evaluand as a whole, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process. To include: • compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project • clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes a conclusions section. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The conclusions section provides a very good summary of the strengths and weaknesses in project performance. Also included are the responses to the key strategic questions.	6
ii) Utility of the Lessons: Purpose: to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit review findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) • briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful • do not duplicate recommendations	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes a section on lesson learnt. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents lessons learnt that are rooted in real project experiences and do not duplicate recommendations. The lessons also have broader application beyond the evaluand.	6
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: Purpose: to present proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the UNEP Unit/Branch can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: **(i)** In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The report includes a recommendations section. The recommendations are also presented in the prescribed format. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The recommendations presented in the report are based on problems experienced during project implementation. The recommendations are actionable, measurable and also include a recommendation for strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions.	6

[122] 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.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
(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.		
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation **(i) Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the UNEP Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report follows the UNEP structure, guidance and formatting guidelines. The report also includes all relevant annexes.	6
(ii) Writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The review report in written in clear English language and grammar uses visual aids appropriately. The tone used is appropriate for an official document.	6
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING	**Highly Satisfactory**	**5.6**

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