Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Terminal evaluation of the first cluster of FAO's Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency projects

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Abstract

The Global Environment Facility's (GEF) Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) supports developing countries to build institutional and technical capacities to meet the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) requirements. This terminal evaluation assessed the first cluster of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) CBIT projects – national projects in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea, and the global "Agriculture, forestry and other land use" (AFOLU) project.

Based on the evaluation framework and matrix, the terminal evaluation utilized the following toolkit: i) desk review; ii) stakeholder consultations; iii) participation in online events related to the projects; and iv) country case studies.

The main audience for this evaluation are: i) national partners, including government ministries, departments and their subnational agencies, academic and research institutions; ii) the GEF; iii) the projects' Steering Committees; iv) global partners, including the UNFCC; and v) FAO (in relation to future CBIT projects).

Overall, the evaluation rated the performance of the national CBIT projects under this evaluation as "satisfactory" and that of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project as "highly satisfactory".

As such, the evaluation drew largely positive conclusions. The CBIT projects were well designed and have achieved the project outcomes as set out in the project documents. They have broadened FAO's partnership and provided FAO with the opportunity to work with non-traditional partners. The CBIT projects have also drawn extensively on FAO's experience and in-house resources, including tools and e-learning platforms.

However, despite the gains in improved ETF capacity from the CBIT projects and the national commitments to the ETF as a critical part of the Paris Agreement, not many project stakeholders outside the main ETF-responsible agencies see ETF as a priority, given the human resource and financial constraints. Additionally, major challenges to sustainability of ETF capacity include staff turnovers and insufficient staff, overdependence on external financing, and inadequate leadership and managerial capacity for ETF outside the national focal agencies for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

The evaluation made seven recommendations. Notably, future CBIT projects should i) consider mechanisms and strategies to institutionalize individual learnings and internalize knowledge and practices within and between the ETF-responsible institutions, and ii) devise knowledge management plans that go beyond communication and information sharing and encompass a detailed analysis of good practices, lessons and mechanisms for institutionalization of knowledge. CBIT projects should also address functional capacity for ETF at managerial and institutional leadership levels to foster the use of strengthened institutional arrangements and technical capacity of mid-level professionals and practitioners.

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The terminal evaluation was carried out with the invaluable assistance of the project personnel and partners of the four projects under evaluation. Their insight, knowledge, advice and comments made this evaluation possible.

The terminal evaluation benefited from the inputs of many other stakeholders, most importantly at the country level. Their contributions were critical to the evaluation team's work and are deeply appreciated. The terminal evaluation was conducted in parallel with, and received also inputs from the lead evaluator as well as the lead technical officer of that project.

The evaluation team was led by two principal consultants, each responsible for a portion of this clustered evaluation: Mr Ugen Norbu (lead evaluator for the Mongolia and Papua New Guinea projects) and Mr Harald Himsel (lead evaluator for the Cambodia and Global CBIT-AFOLU projects).

Abbreviations and acronyms

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
BUR	Biennial Update Report
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBIT	Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency
CCDA	Climate Change and Development Authority (Papua New Guinea)
CCMP	Climate Change Monitoring Plan
CCRCC	Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre (Mongolia)
COP	Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC)
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	focus group discussion
GIS	geographic information system
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	greenhouse gas
GLEAM	Global Livestock Environmental Assessment Model
IA	implementation arrangement
ICAT	Initiative for Climate Action Transparency
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LOA	letter of agreement
LTS4CN	Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality
LULUCF	Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
M&R	measurement and reporting
MPG	modalities, procedures and guidelines
MRV	measurement, reporting and verification
NC	National Communication
NDC	nationally determined contribution
PATPA	Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement
PIR	project implementation report
PMT/PMU	Project Management Team/Unit
PPR	project progress report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QA	quality assurance
QC	quality control
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSI	semi-structured interview
TOC	theory of change
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Executive summary

Background and purpose of the evaluation

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF)-led Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) supports developing countries to build institutional and technical capacities to meet the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) requirements. The CBIT has three aims: i) to strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities; ii) to provide relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement; and iii) to assist in the improvement of transparency over time.

2. The CBIT projects form a key portfolio of projects implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with funds from the GEF. At present, the FAO-CBIT portfolio consists of 17 projects – 15 national projects and two global projects, one for the agriculture, forestry and other land use (AFOLU) sector and the other exclusively for forestry – with a total GEF financing of USD 23 224 270,[1] inclusive of project financing, project preparation grants (PPGs), PPG fees and agency fees. The first cluster of FAO-CBIT projects were launched in January–February 2019. This included national projects in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea, and the Global CBIT-AFOLU project. These projects are scheduled to close within the next two to four months. As per GEF's policy for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policy, a terminal evaluation has to be conducted within six months before or after the completion of the project.

3. This terminal evaluation has been undertaken as an independent process to provide an objective assessment of the performance of the first cluster of CBIT projects mentioned above.[2] The terminal evaluation serves a dual purpose: i) to provide evidence on performance of the projects for accountability and transparency purposes; and ii) to promote learning and knowledge sharing within FAO and GEF, and among the global and national project partners related to strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of countries to meet the ETF requirements of the Paris Agreement, particularly in the AFOLU sector.

Overview of the CBIT projects under evaluation

4. The CBIT projects are anchored in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, which established the ETF for reporting and reviewing national actions to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change in keeping with the plans and targets set in the nationally determined contributions (NDCs). This involves transition from the current Biennial Update Report (BUR) to a Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) by the end of 2024, providing country-specific information on the national implementation of the Paris Agreement, including a national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory as per the prevailing Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines, and information necessary to track the progress of implementation and achievement of the NDCs.

5. This evaluation covers the first cluster of FAO-CBIT projects, launched in January–February 2019 and due to close in the next two to four months. The following table provides basic information on the CBIT projects covered by this evaluation:

[1] Progress report on the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency, 18 May 2022, prepared for the 62nd GEF Council Meeting, 21–23 June 2022.

[2] The project "Building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector" (CBIT-Forest) was evaluated separately.

GEF ID	Country	GEF budget (USD)	Implementing agency	Executing partner agencies	Start/End dates
9833	Papua New Guinea	1 000 000 (863 242)	FAO	Climate Change Development Authority, PNG Forest Authority, Department of Agriculture and Livestock	1 January 2019–30 August 2022
9834	Mongolia	1 000 000 (863 242)	FAO	Ministry of Environment and Tourism	21 January 2019–30 September 2022
9837	Cambodia	1 000 000 (863 242)	FAO	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, National Council for Sustainable Development	8 February 2019–31 December 2022
9864	Global-AFOLU (multiple countries)	2 000 000 (1 776 484)	FAO	Not applicable	1 January 2019–30 June 2022

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

6. The national CBIT projects in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea were conceived with the objective to fully capacitate the respective countries to prepare reports to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) under the Paris Agreement's ETF with strengthened agricultural and land-use components, including inventories of emission sources and sinks, and information to track progress against priority actions identified in the countries' NDCs for the AFOLU sector. Each of the projects were made up of the following three components:

   i. Component 1: Enhanced institutional arrangements to coordinate preparation of ETF reports for the AFOLU sector.

   ii. Component 2: Strengthened capacity to measure emissions, removals, and emission-reduction activities from the agriculture and land-use sectors.

   iii. Component 3: Strengthened capacity to measure climate-change impacts, vulnerabilities, and adaptation-related activities in the agriculture and land-use sectors.

7. The objective of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project was to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of a selected number of developing countries, through coordinated dissemination of knowledge, to meet ETF requirements when implementing priority actions for achieving their respective NDCs in the AFOLU sector. The project comprised the following components:

   i. Component 1: Supporting developing countries to strengthen their capacity to establish and sustain the institutional arrangements required to respond to ETF requirements and improve decision-making processes.

   ii. Component 2: Building developing countries' technical capacity to establish robust systems to measure, report and verify emissions, and monitor and evaluate adaptation actions in the agriculture sectors in accordance with ETF.

   iii. Component 3: Sharing knowledge and improving coordination among global transparency practitioners to sustain and scale up institutional and technical capacity improvements in the agriculture sectors.

Key evaluation findings

Relevance

Finding 1. Anchored in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the CBIT projects were highly relevant to the achievement of the global climate agenda as defined by UNFCCC's strategic objectives and priorities, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action, and FAO's global strategic priorities related to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and in alignment with GEF's climate change focal area results framework and CBIT programming directions.

Finding 2. The objectives and outcomes of the CBIT projects were highly relevant to the national circumstances of the participating countries and were aligned with ETF-related capacity development priorities and needs in the AFOLU sector that were articulated in various national legislations, policies and strategies pertaining to climate change, environment and sustainable development.

Finding 3. There were no major changes to the overall context and strategy of the projects although some project activities were modified and rescheduled in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This, in fact, led the Global CBIT-AFOLU project to enhance its scope and strategy, and exceed some of the intended project results.

Finding 4. The training and technical support delivered by the CBIT projects were found to be very relevant and responsive to the organizational and individual capacity development needs of the recipients, as revealed by questionnaire surveys conducted as a part of the evaluation.

Effectiveness

Finding 5. The CBIT projects have strengthened institutional capacity in terms of establishing lead coordinating agencies and stakeholder engagement mechanisms including technical working groups, data sharing protocols, and developing the knowledge and understanding of institutional arrangements (IA) for ETF through delivery of IA guidance tools and training to individuals in ETF-responsible institutions at the national and subnational levels. The IA mechanisms have been used to facilitate the preparation of ETF reports, but interagency issues persist on data quality and transparency in certain national settings.

Finding 6. The CBIT projects have contributed to significant improvement in the technical capacity for GHG inventory and the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of national mitigation actions; this has been largely accomplished through the development and dissemination of MRV tools, training and follow-up support and guidance.

Finding 7. Achievements in building technical capacity for adaptation-related ETF were modest and primarily included the development of M&E frameworks and indices for adaptation tracking and reporting, and training on tools and methodologies for information collection and analysis related to climate risks, impacts and adaptation actions.

Finding 8. With regards to the CBIT tracking tool targets, the national CBIT projects in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea have reportedly achieved the project-end targets that were stipulated in the CBIT tracking tools during the time of project formulation, while Mongolia has exceeded its target pertaining to the quality of MRV systems.

Efficiency

Finding 9. Taking into account that the project resources were not large, the projects were found to have been implemented with cost-effective building on FAO's in-house knowledge and resources for ETF-related activities.

Finding 10. The national CBIT projects faced implementation delays due to a protracted and slow inception process in getting the buy-in of project partners and setting up project management and implementation arrangements.

Finding 11. Despite slow project inception and subsequent delays induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the projects were able to achieve most of the intended project results by ramping up project implementation in the latter stages of the project. However, this left the projects with little time to consolidate project results and effectively plan for post-project sustainability.

Finding 12. The CBIT projects have created opportunities for a wider outreach and application of ETF knowledge by multilingualizing and localizing ETF capacity-building materials and tools, thus making good use of limited project resources.

Finding 13. The benefits of the CBIT projects were enhanced through direct coordination and linkage with other ETF-enabling activities such as the preparation of the National Communication (NC) or Biennial Update Report (BUR).

Sustainability

Finding 14. Challenges to the sustainability of project results were largely institutional and financial, despite expressed governmental support for the Paris Agreement and constituent ETF, and recognition of climate change as a major environmental and development issue by the governments.

Finding 15. Despite the existing institutional and financial challenges, the sustainability of project results can be rated "moderately likely" due to the governmental policies and strategies committed to ETF, improved stakeholder awareness, capacity built progressively through CBIT projects and ETF-enabling activities, and knowledge transfer from ETF-trained individuals to those without ETF training. Furthermore, ETF knowledge and resources, including tools and learning platforms, are entrenched within the FAO network and will continue to be available to the governments and national stakeholders to strengthen geospatial data and information for the sustainable management of the AFOLU sector.

Progress to impacts

Finding 16. The projects have contributed to enhanced understanding of ETF requirements and improved data, knowledge and tools to implement ETF. In particular, the projects have strengthened institutional arrangements for ETF activities and the quality of MRV systems to track results related to low GHG development and GHG emission mitigation.

Finding 17. Institutional and financial barriers persist and can likely prevent future progress towards long-term impacts.

Quality of project management and execution

Finding 18. The project management arrangement varied between projects, thus the quality of project management was mixed.

Finding 19. The projects were adequately monitored on the basis of their results matrices/frameworks and CBIT tracking tools.

Finding 20. All projects managed their finances well, although less so in the case of Papua New Guinea. Cofinancing was mobilized as planned by all projects, and even exceeded in the instance of the Cambodia project, contributing to the achievement of intended project results.

Finding 21. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement were strong for the most part, contributing to the achievement of intended project results. However, in certain national settings, key project stakeholders were not sufficiently aware of their roles in the project and had misconceptions of the project.

Finding 22. Linkages and complementarity between the national CBIT projects and the Global CBIT-AFOLU and Forest projects were pursued by the project management teams, leading to effective use of project resources for mutual benefits.

Finding 23. The projects developed knowledge management and communication plans/strategies and reported on their implementation. However, knowledge management largely constituted communication, information sharing and translation of international ETF guidelines/tools.

Cross-cutting considerations

Finding 24. The design of the projects took into account gender considerations within the scope of ETF capacity building, and accordingly, project progress reports and training reports have provided gender-disaggregated data and information where relevant. Contrast was noted in the involvement of women in ETF work and associated capacity building in the AFOLU sector between countries.

Finding 25. The CBIT projects, by design and in scope, have no direct bearing on Indigenous Peoples, rural employment, and environmental and social safeguards.

Conclusions

In the overall analysis, the performance of the national CBIT projects under this evaluation was found to be "satisfactory" and that of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project "highly satisfactory". Details of the performance rating are provided in section 3.8. The following main conclusions can be drawn from this evaluation:

Conclusion 1. The CBIT projects were well designed and have achieved the project outcomes as set out in the project documents. Going by the CBIT tracking tools, the projects have led to significant improvement in the institutional capacity for ETF and the quality of MRV systems for tracking low GHG development and emissions mitigation. These achievements, however, remain tentative depending on post-project continuity and consolidation of the project results.

Conclusion 2. There is variance in the quality of project management and execution; projects that have a dedicated project management team show better quality project management and coordination with project stakeholders.

Conclusion 3. The CBIT projects have broadened FAO's partnership and provided FAO with the opportunity to work with non-traditional partners, including national climate change agencies and non-state actors such as academia and youth groups, on ETF capacity building, combining FAO's forte on technical matters and that of its partners on institutional issues and advocacy among project stakeholders.

Conclusion 4. The projects have extensively drawn on FAO's experience and in-house resources, including tools and e-learning platforms, for data collection and field assessments and delivery of training and follow-up technical support, while also enhancing FAO's in-house capacity to manage and deliver capacity-building projects in partnership with multiple project partners.

Conclusion 5. Going by the responses to the questionnaire survey of the training recipients, the CBIT projects were the main sources of training and technical guidance on ETF. Sixty to seventy percent of the respondents indicated that the CBIT projects were their only source of ETF-related training.

Conclusion 6. Despite the gains in improved ETF capacity from the CBIT projects and the national commitments to the ETF as a critical part of the Paris Agreement, not many project stakeholders outside the main ETF-responsible agencies see ETF as a priority, given the human resource and financial constraints.

Conclusion 7. Major challenges to sustainability of ETF capacity include staff turnovers and insufficient staff, overdependence on external financing, and inadequate leadership and managerial capacity for ETF outside the national focal agencies for the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Future CBIT projects should consider mechanisms and strategies to institutionalize individual learnings and internalize knowledge and practices within and between the ETF-responsible institutions.

Recommendation 2. Future CBIT projects should devise knowledge management plans that go beyond communication and information sharing and encompass a detailed analysis of good practices, lessons and mechanisms for institutionalization of knowledge. It will also be useful to include knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) surveys in future CBIT knowledge management strategies/plans.

Recommendation 3. Develop a broader collection of country case studies on good ETF practices and lessons from different countries across regions, integrate them into training courses and materials, and share them in global, regional and national CBIT workshops.

Recommendation 4. CBIT projects need to address the functional capacity for ETF at managerial and institutional leadership levels to foster the use of strengthened institutional arrangements and the technical capacity of mid-level professionals and practitioners.

Recommendation 5. Develop and pursue a hybrid training approach, combining virtual and in-person modalities of training, depending on training needs, in future capacity-building projects.

Recommendation 6. All CBIT projects and GEF enabling activities for NC/BUR/BTR preparation should seek to synchronize in terms of time frame and process to bring about immediate hands-on benefits.

Recommendation 7. Assess the lessons and outcomes of collaboration with academic and research institutions and engagement with youth in ETF capacity building, and based on the findings, further strengthen engagements with them in future projects, building on the experience of the Mongolia CBIT and Global CBIT-AFOLU projects.

Lessons learned

Lesson 1. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided the projects with the experience and insights for a composite approach to future training, combining virtual and in-person training with due consideration of their comparative strengths and weaknesses.

Lesson 2. Country case studies can be effectively used as tools for training and knowledge sharing.

Lesson 3. The academic and research institutions have a very crucial role in ETF and related capacity building, given that knowledge development and training are an inherent part of their day-to-day functioning.

Lesson 4. Broad partnerships and effective stakeholder engagement are key to successful ETF capacity building and implementation, as ETF expertise and mandates cut across several sectors.

Lesson 5. Knowledge management can enhance the sustainability of project results, but it needs to go beyond communication, advocacy and information sharing.

Lesson 6. Good internet connectivity is crucial to ETF capacity building and successful implementation of ETF tools, as evident from the experience of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project which had greater success with virtual training and better access to internet connectivity, in comparison to national CBIT projects that could not apply virtual training as effectively due to poor internet connectivity, especially outside the capital cities.

Lesson 7. Technical assistance projects of the like of CBIT projects intrinsically experience challenges in eliciting national buy-in and establishing active partnerships during the implementation phase.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF)-led Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) supports developing countries to build institutional and technical capacities to meet the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) requirements. The CBIT has three aims: i) to strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities; ii) to provide relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement; and iii) to assist in the improvement of transparency over time.

2. The CBIT projects form a key portfolio of projects implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with funds from GEF. At present, the FAO-CBIT portfolio consists of 17 projects – 15 national projects and two global projects, one for the agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) sector and the other exclusively for forestry – with a total GEF financing of USD 23 224 270,[1] inclusive of project financing, project preparation grants (PPGs), PPG fees and agency fees. The first cluster of FAO-CBIT projects were launched in January–February 2019. This included national projects in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea, and the Global CBIT-AFOLU project. These projects are scheduled to close within the next two to four months. As per GEF's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) policy, a terminal evaluation has to be conducted within six months before or after the completion of the project.

3. This terminal evaluation has been undertaken as an independent process to provide an objective assessment of the performance of the first cluster of CBIT projects mentioned above.[2] The terminal evaluation serves a dual purpose: i) to provide evidence on the performance of the projects for accountability and transparency purposes; and ii) to promote learning and knowledge sharing within FAO and GEF, and among the global and national project partners related to strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of countries to meet the ETF requirements of the Paris Agreement, particularly in the AFOLU sector.

1.2 Intended users

4. The terminal evaluation is expected to contribute to organizational and development learning, informed decision-making, replication or adaptation of successful project results, and reinforcement of built capacity. In keeping with its purpose and objectives, the main audience and intended users are:

   i. national partners, including government ministries, departments and their subnational agencies, academic and research institutions, and other organizations with a role in the generation and use of data to improve transparency and the information base for decision-making, and monitoring and reporting of climate-change mitigation and adaptation actions in the AFOLU sector in keeping with the ETF requirements under the Paris Agreement;

   ii. the GEF, which can use the findings and recommendations to understand the performance of the projects, improve planning and strategic decisions in the future in relation to the

[1] Progress Report on the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency, 18 May 2022, prepared for the 62nd GEF Council Meeting, 21–23 June 2022.

[2] The project "Building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector" (CBIT-Forest) was evaluated separately.

CBIT portfolio and other related projects, and disseminate lessons learned and good practices;

iii. the Project Steering Committee (PSC) of the respective projects to share lessons and recommendations with their respective institutions and networks to consider them for the sustainability and reinforcement of project results, and improvement of future ETF-related projects and processes;

iv. global partners, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Environment Programme (UNDP/UNEP) Global Support Programme, the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) and Partnership in Transparency on the Paris Agreement (PATPA), which are interested in learning and sharing project results and lessons to strengthen the implementation of the ETF under the Paris Agreement;

v. other donors, organizations and institutions who are specifically involved with CBIT, and transparency work in general; and

vi. FAO, particularly the FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB), project management teams, and the FAO Country Representation Offices, for organizational learning and strategic decisions in the development of future CBIT/capacity-development projects at country and global levels.

1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

5. The projects covered by this terminal evaluation represent the first generation of CBIT projects implemented by FAO, which are approaching completion. Following GEF approval in October–November 2018, these projects were launched in January–February 2019 and were scheduled to conclude within the next three months (July–September 2022). This evaluation covers the performance of the projects from the period of their commencement until the end of June 2022.

6. The objectives of the evaluation were to: i) assess the extent to which the projects have achieved the stated objectives and outcomes, and made progress towards intended impacts; ii) provide an evidence-based, comprehensive and systematic analysis of the project performance, including the quality of implementation and achievements, while also addressing sustainability and gender issues; and iii) provide recommendations and synthesize lessons learned drawing upon evidence-based findings. Additionally, the terminal evaluation examines the linkages and complementarities between the national and global CBIT projects, and how such projects can be mutually reinforcing.

7. The evaluation was conducted based on the following key criteria, which were also rated in accordance with the FAO-GEF evaluation criteria rating scheme (shown in Appendix 4):

i. Relevance of the projects to the global objectives and priorities related to climate change as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals, GEF and FAO operational programmes and strategies, and to the national objectives and priorities related to climate change as defined in the national policies and strategies;

ii. Effectiveness of the projects in achieving the objectives and outcomes stated in the project strategies and results frameworks;

iii. Efficiency in project implementation including cost-efficiency and delivery of project activities, adaptation to unforeseen circumstances and changes, including the COVID-19

pandemic, use of pre-existing resources, and linkages and synergy with other relevant projects and initiatives;

iv. Sustainability of the project results beyond the project period, including assessment of institutional, social, financial and technical factors that may affect sustainability of the project results; and

v. Progress towards impact in terms of the contribution of the project to the overall capability of the participating countries to meet ETF requirements over the long term, and the barriers and risks to progress towards long-term impacts.

8. In addition to the above key evaluation criteria, the terminal evaluation assessed the project in terms of i) project implementation and execution; ii) monitoring and evaluation; and iii) cross-cutting issues such as gender consideration and knowledge management.

1.4 Methodology

Guiding evaluation framework

9. The evaluation approach and methodology were based on the Office of Evaluation (OED) Project Evaluation Manual for Decentralized Offices (FAO, 2019c) and the Guidelines for GEF agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluation for Full-sized Projects (GEF, 2017a). The terminal evaluation also adopted relevant elements of the minimum requirements for assessing capacity development in FAO evaluations listed in Appendix 1 of the OED Capacity Development Evaluation Framework (FAO, 2019a). This framework and the evaluation questions also took into account that this is a terminal evaluation of a cluster of projects.

10. At the outset of the process, an evaluation matrix, outlining the evaluation questions and methods for each key criterion (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and progress towards impacts) and each subsidiary criterion (implementation and execution, monitoring and evaluation, and cross-cutting issues), was prepared to guide the stakeholder consultations and data collection. This framework and the evaluation questions also took into account that this is a terminal evaluation of a cluster of projects. The evaluation matrix is presented in Appendix 3.

Desk reviews

11. A wide range of documents associated with project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation were reviewed to derive secondary information relevant to the terminal evaluation. These included:

i. Project-specific documents: i) project documents; ii) project inception reports; iii) project progress reports; iv) project implementation reports; v) project finance including cofinancing data and information; vi) project audit reports; vii) CBIT tracking tools, updated with reference to the CEO endorsement stage; viii) PSC meeting proceedings/reports; ix) training and workshop reports; x) communication and knowledge products; xi) ETF tools and products produced or used by the projects; xii) FAO-CBIT portfolio review report, 2021; and xiii) project stakeholder lists provided by the project management units.

ii. Relevant GEF and FAO policy and strategy documents: i) GEF-CBIT Programming Directions, June 2016; ii) GEF-8 Programming Directions; iii) GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Terminal Evaluation Guidelines; iv) FAO OED Project Evaluation Manual for Decentralized Offices, 2019; v) FAO's OED Capacity Development Evaluation

Framework, 2019; vi) the Strategic Objectives of FAO, (FAO, 2019b); vii) Reviewed Strategic Framework and Outline of the Medium Term Plan, 2018–2021, FAO; viii) FAO Country Program Framework Documents; ix) GEF's and FAO's policies and standards related to gender, gender mainstreaming, and environmental and social safeguards; and x) the FAO Guide to Project Cycle.

iii. Relevant national policies and strategies: i) National Communications (NCs); ii) Biennial Update Reports (BURs); iii) nationally determined contributions (NDCs); and iv) climate change and related sector policies, strategies and plans.

iv. Websites and online platforms: i) FAO and the ETF website; ii) the FAO Capacity Development website with links to materials, tools and learning courses; iii) FAO's elearning academy; iv) FAO country websites; v) the UNFCCC website; and vi) the GEF website.

12. Please see the References section for the complete list of reference documents, and Appendix 2 for the documents that were reviewed for the evaluation.

Stakeholder consultations

13. The evaluation approach was participatory and consultative, building on secondary information from the desk reviews and eliciting first-hand information and insights from project stakeholders through three main methods:

i. Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) of key informants in the project management unit (PMU), partner agencies within and outside the government, and FAO offices in the country, region and headquarters.

ii. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with specific interest groups such as the national AFOLU technical working group and subnational ETF focal points in Mongolia.[3]

iii. Questionnaire surveys of recipients of training and technical support from the national CBIT projects were conducted to appraise the relevance, application and dissemination of training knowledge and skills. Fifty-nine training recipients in Mongolia and thirty-nine in Cambodia responded to the questionnaire surveys.[4] The compiled data of the questionnaire surveys conducted in the above-mentioned countries are provided in Appendix 5.

14. The stakeholders for consultations were identified in consultation with the PMUs and through desk reviews. Particular attention was given to the triangulation of information collected from different sources and methods to verify the evaluation findings.

15. A debriefing was organized on 29 July 2022, where the evaluation team shared preliminary reflections and observations with the project management teams and relevant FAO personnel in the head office, regional and country offices, and elicited their initial feedback.

[3] Although planned, focus group discussions could not be conducted in Papua New Guinea for the reasons mentioned in paragraph 20 (section 1.5– Limitations).

[4] No data could be compiled for Papua New Guinea as the response to the questionnaire survey was very poor in that country. Despite repeated reminders, only three participants sent back completed questionnaires. This was too small a sample number to be used for the purpose of the evaluation.

16. All the people engaged in the SSIs and FGDs are listed in Appendix 1.

Country case studies

17. For the Global CBIT-AFOLU project, country case studies were undertaken to assess the extent to which the global project supported country-level ETF capacity development and how participating countries have utilized the support from the global project. The country case studies were done in Guinea and the Sudan (remotely) and in Zimbabwe (with the support of a national consultant).

Evaluation team

18. The terminal evaluation was conducted by a team of independent evaluation consultants. The team included two senior international consultants, three national consultants, one each in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea, and a consultant to conduct case studies in three of the countries supported by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project. The international consultants developed the evaluation approach, methodology and tools, guided and backstopped the national consultants on the methodology and process, analysed information and data, and prepared the evaluation report in close communication with the national consultants. The national consultants identified the project stakeholders for the consultations, conducted the stakeholder consultations and data collection, and supported the international consultants in the analysis of information and data, and formulation of the findings and recommendations.

1.5 Limitations

19. A major limitation emanated from the inability of the senior international evaluation consultants to travel to the project countries, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and directly elicit first-hand information and insights from the project stakeholders. To overcome this limitation, national consultants were engaged for extended periods to coordinate with the project management units, and conduct stakeholder consultations and data collection with virtual guidance and backstopping from the international consultants. There were, however, delays in the recruitment of the national consultants. Furthermore, virtual evaluation proved to be a time-consuming process because of the long series of back-and-forth communication that had to take place by email and on online platforms between the international consultants and their national counterparts based in different time zones. In addition, the occurrence of certain national events during the period of stakeholder consultations and data collection, such as the Naadam Festival in Mongolia, and the general elections and ensuing violence in Papua New Guinea, slowed down the process and exacerbated time constraints. Administrative protocol, as in the case of Papua New Guinea, for scheduling meetings with project stakeholders and seeking project information and data also extended the stakeholder consultation and data collection process beyond the anticipated time frame. The latest project progress data and information were not readily available,[5] and in a few instances, took a long time to materialize after repeated requests. All of these impinged on the time required for the review, triangulation and analysis of information and data, and formulation of the evaluation report.

20. It also needs to be pointed out that the national consultants could not interview some of the key people involved in the projects because they had either left their jobs or were not available at the time the stakeholder consultations for the evaluation were conducted. In Papua New Guinea, interviews and FGDs with subnational stakeholders based outside Port Moresby could not be

[5] The project implementation reports for the period from July 2021 to June 2022 were in draft form, with some pending and incomplete information.

conducted because of poor internet connectivity for virtual consultation, and disruptions from elections resulting in loss of time for field travel to conduct in-person interviews. In reviewing the draft evaluation report, the PMU of the Papua New Guinea CBIT project brought to the attention of the evaluation team that some of the individuals who were interviewed in the project's partner agencies at the central level in Papua New Guinea were not actually involved in the project, and therefore not familiar with the project activities to provide informed information and insights into the project.[6]

1.6 Structure of the report

21. Following the introduction to the evaluation, section 2 of the report presents the background and context of the projects, highlighting their objectives and components, and the theory of change. Section 3 presents the main findings and ratings with respect to the key evaluation criteria: i) relevance of the projects; ii) effectiveness of the projects in achieving the stated objectives and outcomes; iii) efficiency in project implementation and delivery of planned activities; iv) project sustainability; and v) progress towards impacts in terms of building long-term capacity to meet ETF requirements. It also includes findings on project implementation and execution, monitoring and evaluation, and cross-cutting issues. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in section 4, followed by lessons learned in section 5.

22. The report is accompanied by the following appendices: i) a list of consulted people and organizations; ii) a list of reviewed documents; iii) an evaluation matrix; iv) the FAO–GEF evaluation criteria rating scheme; vi) CBIT tracking tools; vii) results of the training recipients' questionnaire surveys; and viii) summaries of Global CBIT-AFOLU project country case studies.

[6] As was the case in other national CBIT project countries covered by this evaluation, the stakeholder list for SSIs in Papua New Guinea was drawn in consultation with the PMU, which also arranged the meetings for stakeholder interviews that were conducted by the national consultant.

2. Background and context of the projects

Table 1. Basic information on CBIT projects covered by the evaluation

GEF ID	Country	GEF budget (USD)	Implementing agency	Executing partner agencies	Start/End dates
9833	Papua New Guinea	1 000 000 (863 242)	FAO	Climate Change Development Authority, Papua New Guinea Forest Authority, Department of Agriculture and Livestock	1 January 2019–30 August 2022
9834	Mongolia	1 000 000 (863 242)	FAO	Ministry of Environment and Tourism	21 January 2019–30 September 2022
9837	Cambodia	1 000 000 (863 242)	FAO	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, National Council for Sustainable Development	8 February 2019–31 December 2022
9864	Global-AFOLU (multiple countries)	2 000 000 (1 776 484)	FAO	Not applicable	1 January 2019–30 June 2022

Source: All information is derived from the respective project documents, the project start/end dates from FAO's GEF Coordination Unit.

Note: The GEF budget shown here includes project financing, project preparation grants (PPGs), PPG fees and agency fees. GEF project financing figures are shown in parenthesis.

2.1 Context

23. The national CBIT projects covered by this terminal evaluation are located in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea while the Global CBIT-AFOLU project is based at the FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment in the FAO head office in Rome, Italy. The national CBIT projects were not site-specific; they focused on strengthening institutional and technical capacity for ETF implementation in the AFOLU sector at the national and subnational levels. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project supported 48 countries in various regions, i.e. 31 countries in Africa, 11 in Asia and the Pacific, and six in Latin America and the Caribbean, including nine national CBIT project countries (see Table 2). Therefore, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project succeeded in supporting four times the number of countries as originally planned.

Table 2. List of countries supported by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project

Region	Supported countries
Africa (31 countries)	Pilot countries: Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, the Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe National CBIT project countries: Benin and Democratic Republic of the Congo Other countries: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Congo, South Africa and Togo
Asia and the Pacific (11 countries)	Pilot country: Myanmar National CBIT project countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka Other countries: China, Philippines and Viet Nam
Latin America and the Caribbean (6 countries)	Pilot countries: Colombia and Uruguay Other countries: Argentina, Belize, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago

Source: Project documentation, project team.

24. The CBIT projects are anchored in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, which established the ETF for reporting and reviewing national actions to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change in keeping with the plans and targets set in the nationally determined contributions (NDCs). This involves transition from the current Biennial Update Report (BUR) to a Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) by the end of 2024, providing country-specific information on the national implementation of the Paris Agreement, including a national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory as per the prevailing IPCC guidelines, and information necessary to track the progress of the implementation and achievement of the NDCs. The CBIT, managed by GEF, was created in 2016 at the request of the Parties to help strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of non-Annex I countries to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

25. The national CBIT projects in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea were conceived with the project objective to fully capacitate the respective countries to prepare reports to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement's ETF with strengthened agriculture and land-use components, including inventories of emission sources and sinks, and information to track progress against priority actions identified in the countries' NDCs for the AFOLU sector. Each project was made up of the following three components:

    i. Component 1: Enhanced institutional arrangements to coordinate preparation of ETF reports for the AFOLU sector.

    ii. Component 2: Strengthened capacity to measure emissions, removals, and emission-reduction activities from the agriculture and land-use sectors.

    iii. Component 3: Strengthened capacity to measure climate change impacts, vulnerabilities, and adaptation-related activities in the agriculture and land-use sectors.

26. The objective of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project was to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of a selected number of developing countries, through coordinated dissemination of knowledge, to meet ETF requirements when implementing priority actions for achieving their respective NDCs in the AFOLU sector. The project comprised the following components:

    i. Component 1: Supporting developing countries to strengthen their capacity to establish and sustain the institutional arrangements required to respond to ETF requirements and improve decision-making processes.

    ii. Component 2: Building developing countries' technical capacity to establish robust systems to measure, report and verify emissions, and monitor and evaluate adaptation actions in the agriculture sectors in accordance with ETF.

    iii. Component 3: Sharing knowledge and improving coordination among global transparency practitioners to sustain and scale up institutional and technical capacity improvements in the agriculture sectors.

27. The target audience of the projects were institutions and individuals with the role and responsibility for collecting and managing information and data related to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and reporting on national climate-change mitigation, including GHG emissions and removals, and adaptation actions as defined in the NDCs in line with the ETF under the Paris Agreement. These primarily included government agencies at central and subnational levels, but also academic and research institutions, and relevant non-state actors that can contribute information and data to meet ETF requirements.

2.2 Theory of change

Cambodia CBIT project

28. Since the Cambodia CBIT project document does not provide a theory of change (TOC), the evaluation team elaborated, based on the review of the description of barriers, project objectives, a results matrix and a TOC diagram (see Figure 1) considering the main barriers summarized below:

    i. Barrier 1: Inadequate institutional arrangement and capacity:

        - lack of awareness regarding the Paris Agreement, the ETF, and the need for enhanced transparency;
        - lack of coordination among relevant ministries in the gathering of data and information;
        - reliance on outdated IPCC methodologies for measuring and monitoring emissions from the agriculture sectors; and
        - lack of information on activities, projects and other information related to climate-friendly technology development and transfer.

    ii. Barrier 2: Inadequate technical capacity:

        - lack of national experts for GHG inventory preparation;
        - limited experience with measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems for emissions from the agriculture and land-use sectors;
        - shortage of technical experts capable of conducting MRV in the agriculture and land-use sectors; and
        - absence of quality assurance or control mechanisms in the preparation and reporting of emissions inventories and emissions reduction activities.

    iii. Barrier 3: Funding and human resources constraints:

        - shortage of capable technical experts and financial resources for adaptation activities and accompanying monitoring exercises;
        - insufficient financial support for regular inventory preparation; and
        - lack of financial management mechanisms to effectively implement the adaptation and mitigation monitoring.

29. Considering the complexity of the institutional and technical barriers, both project components as well as outcomes were able to focus on the most pressing issues. This allowed the project to pursue the stated objective: "… to prepare reports to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement's ETF with strengthened agriculture and land use components, including inventories of emission sources and sinks, and information to track progress against priority actions identified in Cambodia's NDC for these sectors". Regarding barrier 3, the financial and human resources constraints were clearly defined during risk identification when elaborating the project's documents. This includes factors such as political support and motivation regarding ETF reporting among the main stakeholders.

Mongolia and Papua New Guinea CBIT projects

30. Based on the review of the gaps and barriers, description of objectives, components and outcomes, and the results matrices of the Mongolia and Papua New Guinea CBIT projects, the evaluation team formulated a common TOC (see Figure 2 for the diagram) for the two projects, as both followed a standard approach and strategy in project design.

31. The TOC encapsulates the gaps and barriers described in the project rationale. These gaps and barriers are clubbed into the following categories:

    i. Barrier 1: Inadequate institutional arrangement and capacity:

        - commitments to international climate/environment agreement are not institutionalized beyond the nationally designated authority;
        - limited resources, incentives and accountability for MRV among non-NDA agencies;
        - limited awareness of the availability and means of access to information and data; and
        - ad hoc coordination and sharing of information between agencies.

    ii. Barrier 2: Inadequate technical capacity:

        - insufficient capacity in terms of tools and training for country-specific ETF reporting and climate adaptation reporting;
        - inadequate coordination of knowledge management and knowledge retention; and
        - lack of technological hardware and information technology system to support data management, such as GHG inventory data.

    iii. Barrier 3: Funding and human resources constraints:

        - MRV activities are largely dependent on project-based funding; and
        - staff turnover due to breaks between projects, insufficient funding and career movements.

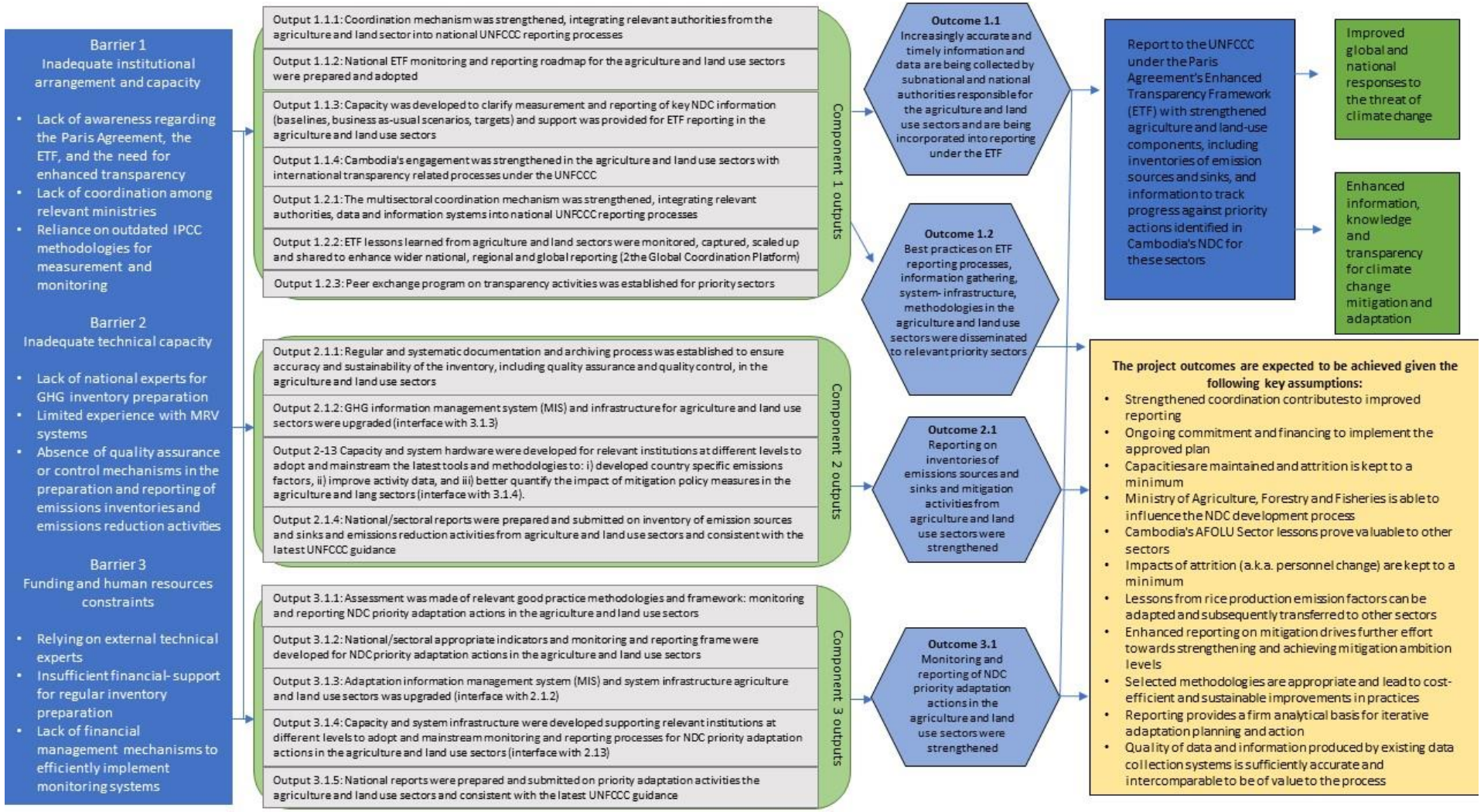
32. It was noted that the project components and outcomes were valid and logical insofar as addressing the institutional and technical barriers (barriers 1 and 2) to the pathways of achieving the stated objective: "The country is fully capacitated to report to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement's ETF with strengthened agricultural and land-use sector components including inventories of greenhouse gases by sources and sinks, and information necessary to track progress against priority actions identified in the NDC for these sectors." The financial and human resources constraints (barrier 3) were beyond the projects' scope and were manifested in the assumptions and risks identified in the project design, along with other factors such as political support for ETF reporting and motivation among stakeholders to remain engaged in ETF.

Global CBIT-AFOLU project

33. The objective is to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of participating developing countries, through coordinated dissemination of knowledge, to meet ETF requirements when implementing priority actions for achieving their respective nationally determined contributions in the AFOLU sector.

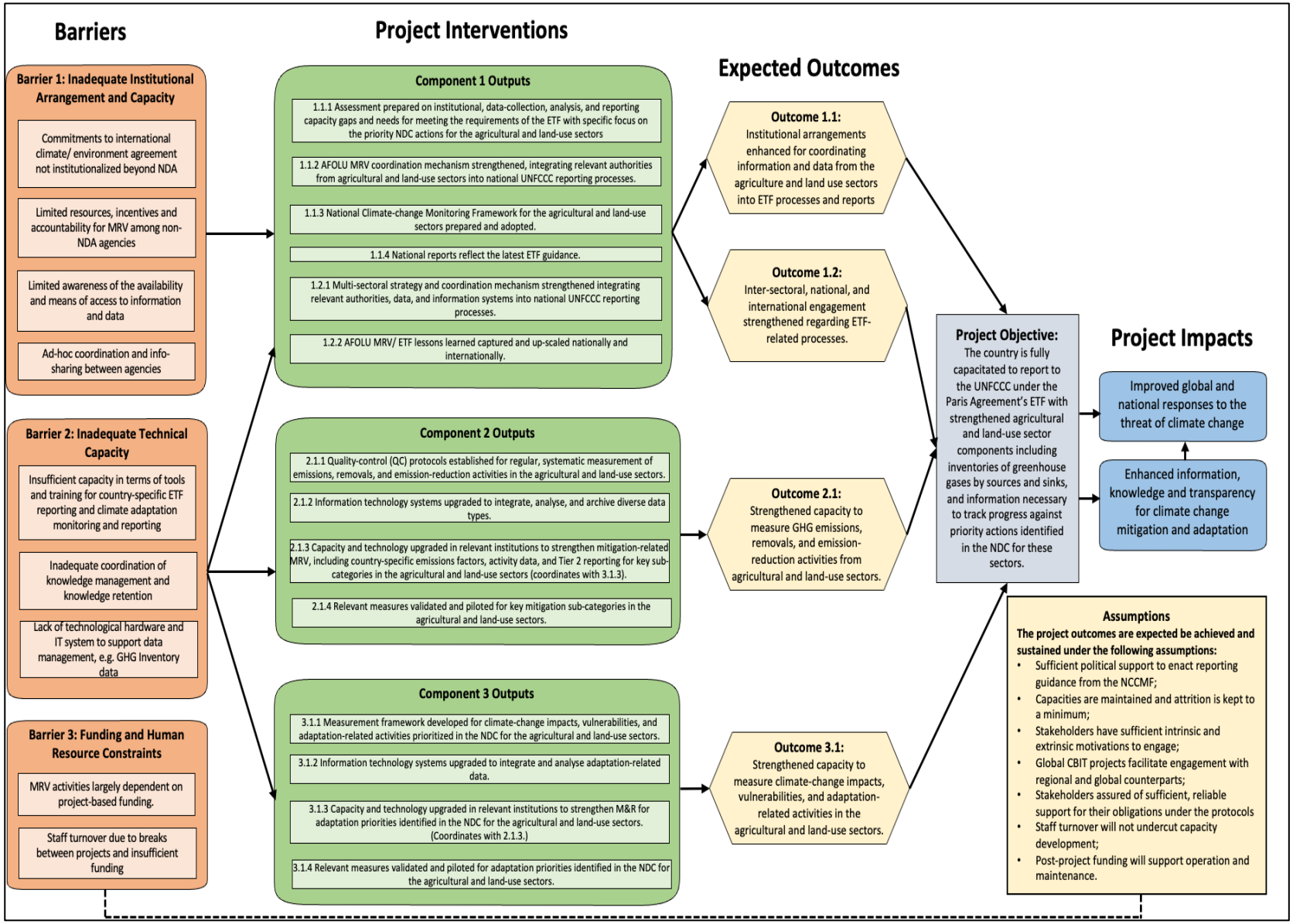
34. The project recognizes the barriers that are challenging the application of the ETF requirements. These are clearly spelled out and highlighted as: i) low technical capacities and weak institutional arrangements, and unavailable and outdated data; ii) low level of methodological sophistication; and iii) low level of information sharing among developing countries. The project interventions address institutional and technical barriers in a logical manner, while the linkages between the identified barriers and the project interventions are clearly defined. Some of the mentioned constraints are outside the project's framework, mainly lack of human resources and funds (see Figure 3 for the TOC diagram). Countries must acknowledge and address these issues as laid out in the assumptions.

Figure 1. Theory of change, Cambodia CBIT project



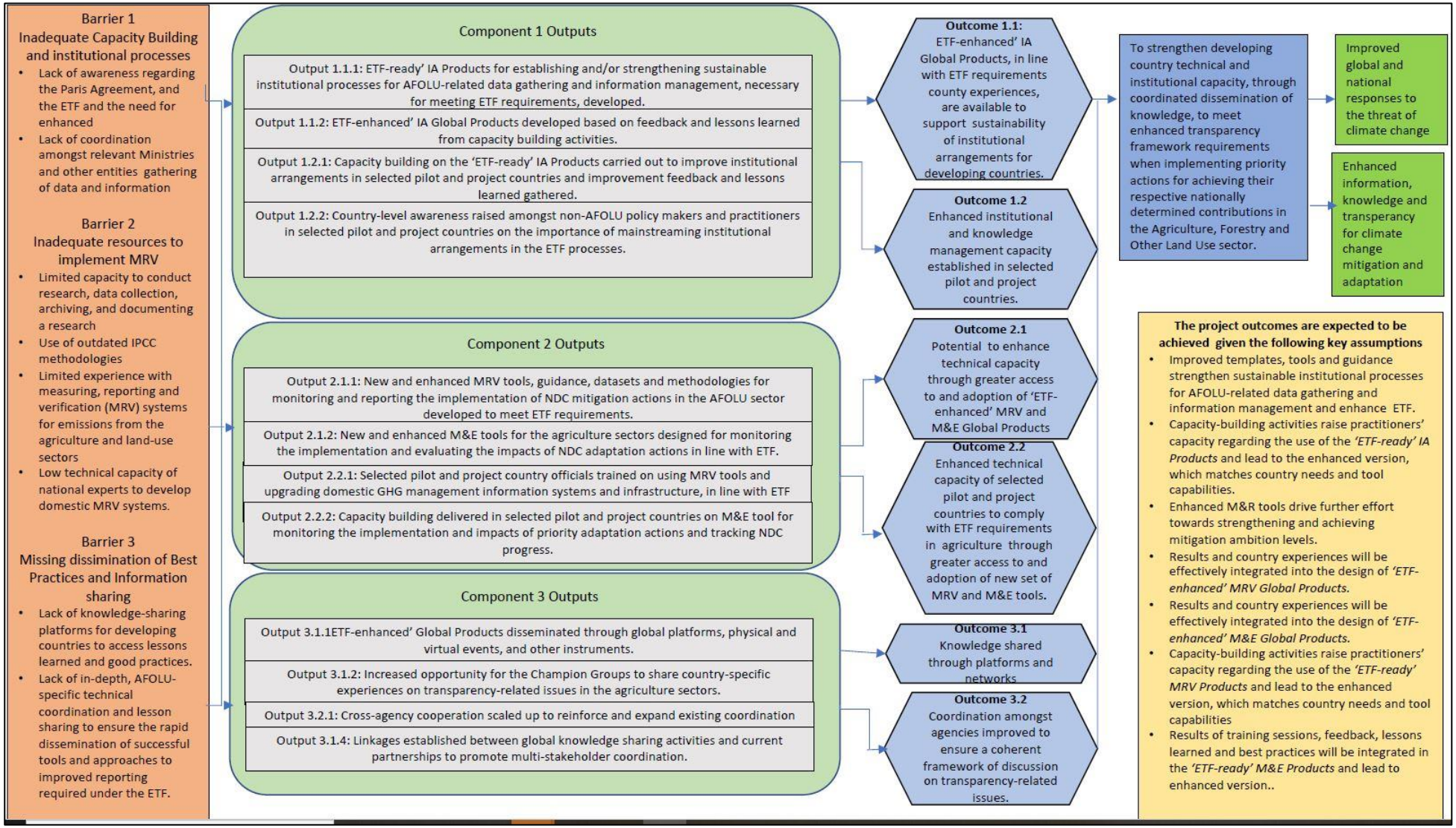
Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Figure 2. Theory of change, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea CBIT projects



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Figure 3. Theory of change, Global CBIT-AFOLU project



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

3. Findings

3.1 Relevance

Finding 1. Anchored in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the CBIT projects were highly relevant to the achievement of a global climate agenda – as defined by the UNFCCC's strategic objectives and priorities, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action, and FAO's global strategic priorities related to climate-change mitigation and adaptation – and in alignment with GEF's climate-change focal area results framework and CBIT programming directions.

35. The CBIT projects are intrinsically linked to the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and, by extension, to the UNFCCC. Table 3 shows that the national CBIT project countries covered by this evaluation were among the early movers in terms of participation in international climate treaties, implying that these countries accorded high priority to climate action since the beginning of the global climate movement.

Table 3. Ratification of international climate treaties by national CBIT project countries

Country	Date of ratification of the UNFCCC	Date of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol	Date of ratification of the Paris Agreement
Cambodia	18 December 1995 (accession)	22 August 2002	6 February 2017
Mongolia	30 September 1993	15 December 1999	22 April 2016
Papua New Guinea	16 March 1993	28 March 2002	21 September 2016

Source: UNFCCC. n.d. About. In: *UNFCC*. Cited on 20 December 2022. https://unfccc.int/

36. Sustainable Development Goals and Targets: the CBIT projects directly relate to SDG 13 – take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, and will contribute specifically to SDG 13 Target 13.3 – and improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate-change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

37. Global FAO Strategic Framework: At the global level, the CBIT projects correspond to FAO's Strategic Objective 2 – increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner. Within this strategic objective, the projects will contribute to Outcome 2.3 – stakeholders endorse/adopt international (including regional) instruments and support related governance mechanisms for sustainable agricultural production systems, and constituent Output 2.3.1 – capacities of institutions are strengthened to implement policies and international instruments that foster sustainable production and address climate change and environmental degradation. Also linked to the aforesaid Strategic Objective, the projects will contribute to Outcome 2.4 – countries made decisions based on evidence for sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry while addressing climate change and environmental degradation, and constituent Output 2.4.2 – capacities of institutions are strengthened to collect, analyse and report data for decision-making on sustainable production, climate change and environmental degradation, including relevant SDGs.

38. GEF Focal Areas: The CBIT projects correspond to GEF Climate Change Focal Area Objective 3 – foster enabling conditions for mainstreaming mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies. They particularly contribute to GEF Climate Change Mitigation Results Framework Outcome Indicator 3 – MRV systems for emissions reductions are in place and reporting verified data, and Outcome Indicator 7 – number of countries meeting convention reporting requirements and including mitigation contributions.

Finding 2. The objectives and outcomes of the CBIT projects were highly relevant to the national circumstances of the participating countries and aligned with ETF-related capacity development priorities and needs in the AFOLU sector that are articulated in various national legislations, policies and strategies pertaining to climate change, environment and sustainable development.

39. From desk reviews, it was evident that the AFOLU sector played a very critical role in GHG emission management in the countries where the CBIT projects under evaluation were located. For instance, Mongolia's Third National Communication, published in 2018, shows that the agriculture sector was the second largest contributor to GHG emissions, accounting for 48.5 percent of the country's total GHG emissions, and the emission increase from the sector was the highest. At the same time, land use, land-use change and forestry accounted for 100 percent of Mongolia's total reported GHG removals. The agriculture sector contributed about 13 percent to Mongolia's GDP and about 28 percent to employment. Moreover, the AFOLU sector features prominently in Mongolia's NDC and predominates the section on climate-change adaptation. Similarly, Papua New Guinea's Second Biennial Update Report (BUR2), published in 2022, shows that the agriculture sector accounted for 9 percent of the emissions, and land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector accounted for 100 percent of removals in 2017. It also points out that historically the LULUCF sector acted as a major sink. However, over time, the sector has diminished into a smaller sink due to a decrease in forest lands because of increased logging and agricultural activities in Papua New Guinea. Despite its importance to GHG emission management, the AFOLU sector continued to face some critical institutional and technical capacity gaps to monitor, verify and report emissions and removals, emission reduction, and adaptation actions in keeping with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UNFCCC/IPCC) requirements – the CBIT projects were designed and implemented to address some of these gaps and contribute to the improvement of ETF capacity in the participating countries. Activities under the Global Project were also based on country needs and developed in line with national policies to support countries with respect to their reporting obligations under the Convention.[7]

40. In Cambodia, the CBIT project responded to the priorities outlined in the country's NDC, which has drawn on several existing national policies and strategies relevant to climate change and the agriculture and land-use sectors. These include: the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP, 2014–2018) and the current NSDP (2019–2023); the Strategy for Agriculture and Water; the Agriculture Strategic Development Plan (2014–2018) and ongoing NSDP (2019–2023); the National Strategic Plan on Green Growth (2013–2030); the National Adaptation Program of Action to Climate Change (2006); and the National Environment Strategy and Action Plan (2016–2023).

41. In Mongolia, the project directly supported the implementation of the Green Development Policy 2014–2030, which is the primary basis for the country's NDC. In addition, the project aligns with the following national policies: Sustainable Development Vision 2030, the National Action Program on Climate Change (2011–2021), the National Agriculture Development Policy (2010–2021), the State Policy on Forestry (2016–2030), Recommendations of the Environmental

[7] The evaluation case study in Zimbabwe, as well as communication with the officials in Cambodia, confirmed that the support given by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project was designed in line with the respective country obligations in terms of reporting under the Convention as well as in the broader sense of complying with the respective NDCs. It also reviewed the documents at hand for the Sudan, Madagascar and Argentina as well as documents such as the PLACA (Plataforma de Acción Climática en Agricultura de Latinoamérica y el Caribe). Workshop protocol and project progress reports indicated that FAO's approach has been to align the Global projects' activities with the countries' obligations.

Performance Review (2017), and Recommendations of the National Report on the Rangeland Health of Mongolia (2015).

42. The CBIT project in Papua New Guinea directly supported priorities and initiatives reflected in a number of national legislations, policies and strategies. These include: the National Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests (REDD+) Strategy (2017); the Paris Agreement Implementation Act (2016); the Climate Change Management Act (2015); the Development Strategic Plan (2010–2030); Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, which includes a pillar for climate change and environmental sustainability; the National Climate-compatible Development Management Policy (2013), which articulates national-level carbon-neutrality goals; the Climate Compatible Development Policy (2014), which forms a core element of the National Strategy for Responsible and Sustainable Development; and Recommendations of the National Capacity Self-assessment (2010).

Finding 3. There were no major changes to the overall context and strategy of the projects although some project activities were modified and rescheduled in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This, in fact, led the Global CBIT-AFOLU project to enhance its scope and strategy, and exceed some of the intended project results.

43. The projects maintained their foci on addressing gaps associated with institutional arrangements and coordination, and technical capacities in terms of tools and training for monitoring, reporting and verification of mitigation actions and performance, and monitoring and reporting of adaptation actions in keeping with the ETF requirements under the Paris Agreement.

44. There were rare instances where planned activities were not implemented. For example, in Mongolia, the establishment of an MRV helpdesk was dropped based on a technical needs assessment of the relevant national and subnational agencies, which indicated that the MRV helpdesk would be expensive and complex. In Papua New Guinea, the project was able to implement the regional training workshops in only two of the four regions, as it ran out of resources.

45. Owing to savings from the inability to travel and conduct in-person workshops and training due to international travel restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global CBIT-AFOLU was able to support more countries than those targeted in the project document, and conduct additional workshops and training events to expand and reinforce the knowledge and application of ETF tools in interested countries.

Finding 4. The training and technical support delivered by the CBIT projects were found to be very relevant and responsive to the organizational and individual capacity development needs of the recipients, as revealed by questionnaire surveys conducted as a part of the evaluation.

46. The questionnaire survey of recipients of training and technical support in Mongolia[8] revealed that a large majority – more than 90 percent – of them found the training/technical support to be "relevant" or "highly relevant" to their organizational roles and individual capacity development needs (see Table 4). Only a small portion of the respondents reported the training/technical support as being "somewhat relevant", and none of the respondents to the questionnaire survey reported that the training/technical support provided by the projects was "not relevant".

47. In Cambodia, the questionnaire survey of recipients of training and technical support revealed that most of them found the training/technical support to be "relevant". Only a small portion of

[8] No data could be compiled for Papua New Guinea as the response to the questionnaire survey was very limited.

the respondents in Mongolia reported the training/technical support as being "somewhat relevant". In Cambodia, 7 percent of the recipients said that training and technical support was "less" or "not relevant"; the reason given for the rather high number of "less" or "not relevant" was the wrong selection of participants for the training sessions.

Table 4. Percentage of respondents reporting relevance of training/technical support

Relevance level	Cambodia (%)	Mongolia (%)
Highly relevant	5	48.48
Relevant	57.5	42.42
Somewhat relevant	27.5	9.09
Very little relevant	5	0
Not relevant	2.5	0

Source: Training recipients questionnaire surveys conducted as a part of the evaluation, see Appendix 5.

3.2 Effectiveness

Finding 5. The CBIT projects have strengthened institutional capacity in terms of establishing lead coordinating agencies and stakeholder engagement mechanisms, including technical working groups, data-sharing protocols, and developing the knowledge and understanding of institutional arrangements (IA) for ETF through the delivery of IA guidance tools and training to individuals in ETF-responsible institutions at national and subnational levels. The IA mechanisms have been used to facilitate the preparation of ETF reports, but interagency issues persist on data quality and transparency in certain national settings.

48. In Mongolia, the Climate Change Project Implementation Unit has been upgraded to the Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre (CCRCC) under the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and vested with the legal authority and mandate to implement and coordinate activities under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, including ETF processes and report preparation. Concurrently, the National Climate Change Committee, now redesignated as the National Committee for Climate Change and Combatting Desertification, has been reinvigorated as the highest intersectoral authority to provide decisions on matters concerning climate-change policies. The CBIT project has carried out a capacity gaps and needs assessment of the two institutions in relation to their roles in ETF, and based on this assessment, it has developed institutional capacity in terms of technical equipment, tools and methodological guidance.

49. To improve coordination between different institutions for data sharing and analysis in the AFOLU sector in Mongolia, data flow and data providers for Tier 1 reporting have been identified and assessed as a part of the stakeholder coordination mapping exercise. An agreed plan for stakeholder coordination and involvement on a regular basis, as per ETF reporting requirements, is also in place. Furthermore, the Climate Change Monitoring Plan (CCMP) for the AFOLU sector in Mongolia has been formulated based on a desk review of IPCC guidelines, ETF modalities, processes and guidelines (MPGs) and other relevant materials. Upon approval, the CCMP for the AFOLU sector will be integrated into the National Climate Change Monitoring Plan, National MRV system, and other regulatory documents as guided by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Based on the CCMP and assessments of institutional arrangements, regulations on data coordination and provision for GHG inventory in the AFOLU sector are being developed in close consultation with ETF-responsible agencies. Multistakeholder engagement for ETF has been strengthened through the institution of a technical working group at the central level, and an informal MRV working group comprising provincial NDC focal points at the subnational levels

(*aimags*[9] and Ulaanbaatar provincial municipality). The project facilitated the engagement of these groups in the development of the AFOLU MRV Framework and CCMP for the AFOLU sector that are consistent with ETF requirements, and in discussions on coordination and improvement of GHG emission estimations in keeping with the IPCC guidelines.

50. The project in Mongolia also delivered training on strengthening understanding for improved institutional arrangement and coordination at national and subnational levels. These included basic training on the improvement of institutional arrangements and coordination for data collection, sharing and reporting in the AFOLU sector as a part of the national GHG inventory and MPGs for ETF, and training to enhance climate-related decision-making within the context of NDC implementation and ETF reporting. As per the training recipients' questionnaire survey, 16 percent of the respondents in Mongolia regarded training in MPGs for ETF and MRV institutional arrangements and coordination as being among the significant training delivered by the CBIT project. The survey also revealed that 11.5 percent of the respondents were able to use knowledge and skills from CBIT training for improved institutional coordination, data sharing and reporting, and 65.4 percent for improved planning and decision-making for climate-change mitigation and adaptation.

51. The ETF readiness assessment done in Mongolia in 2015 was updated in 2022, and in-depth expert recommendations for further enhancement were given according to the main sections of the ETF assessment: i) institutional arrangements and capacity; ii) data collection and measurements; iii) analysis and reporting; and iv) verification. Furthermore, the assessment evaluated the ETF readiness in accordance with key priorities that are essential to ETF operationalization which included legal and policy framework, human capacity, technical capacity, finance, and data readiness.

52. In Papua New Guinea, the project supported the development of data provision and sharing protocols, and facilitated their application in the preparation of the country's first Biennial Update Report (BUR1), released in December 2018, and the second BUR (BUR2) in May 2022. The Climate Change and Development Authority (CCDA), which is the nationally designated authority for UNFCCC and key focal point and coordinator of the GHG inventory development and reporting, has undertaken a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with key relevant agencies for data collection, sharing and use, and other support related to ETF to formalize and strengthen institutional coordination for ETF reporting. These MOAs were used for institutional coordination in the collection of data and preparation of the BUR1 and BUR2, and provide the platform with continued and enhanced institutional coordination in the preparation of the BTR and Third National Communication.[10] The strengthening of institutional arrangements for ETF in Papua New Guinea is being taken down to the subnational levels. Activities have been initiated to establish regional focal points in all four of the administrative regions of the country, and build their capacity to coordinate with the data providers and stakeholders at the provincial and district levels for the collection of activity data for emission estimation. The development of a national GHG inventory data archiving system has been initiated with the guidance and support of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project and is expected to become operational in 2022 before the commencement of the preparation of the country's first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). Technical working groups (TWGs) have been set up for the AFOLU and REDD+ sectors and were actively engaged in

[9] An *aimag* is a province in Mongolia. There are 21 aimags in the country.

[10] The Climate Change Management Act 2015 of Papua New Guinea stipulates the promulgation of regulations for MRV and monitoring and reporting by different sectors. No such regulations have been promulgated so far and it is envisaged that the current MOAs are a first step that would lead to formulation of the requisite regulations in the future.

the preparation of BUR1 and Enhanced NDCs. The structure and roles of these TWGs have been incorporated in Papua New Guinea's Action Plan for ETF.

53. Basic institutional arrangement for ETF is in place in Papua New Guinea with the CCDA as the nationally designated authority. The Climate Change Management Act authorizes the CCDA to have access to GHG related data of the relevant sectors. However, despite the existence of legislation and MOAs for data sharing between key agencies, interinstitutional cooperation issues persist in actual practice over the access to raw data and lack of transparency in data processing and analysis, as noted from stakeholder interviews conducted for the evaluation.

54. In Cambodia, the project management team (PMT) coordinated with the Department of Climate Change to share the lessons learned on the reporting process and data gaps in the formulation of the 2020 NDC update in the second webinar "Knowledge exchange and awareness raising on forest-related data reporting in the context of the Paris Agreement and other international commitments" organized by FAO on 16 March 2021. In the same event, the PMT facilitated and supported the Forestry Administration to share the lessons learned on data use for forest resource assessments (FRA) reporting under the FRA reporting process, and building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector (CBIT-Forest).

55. Seventy-five percent of the Cambodian recipients of training and technical support confirmed that they were able to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in their actual work. The main issues of applying knowledge and skills acquired were: i) improved planning and decision-making for climate-change mitigation and adaptation; ii) improved institutional coordination, data sharing and reporting; and iii) improved collection and analysis of data. Over 80 percent did impart the knowledge and skills acquired from the training/technical support to others by either sharing written training materials and tools or conducting training sessions or workshops.

56. Concerning the Global CBIT-AFOLU project, the feedback from countries that are a later stage of implementation and did work more consistently with the FAO Transparency team confirms that technical guidance on capacity-building activities, the provision of support during the initial stage of the project, the design and review of the project, and training on specific tools or topics are the main areas of support provided by the project. This emphasizes the importance of receiving specific technical support within the complex AFOLU sector. The support from a team of experts on issues on this particular sector was very well received by the countries.

Finding 6. The CBIT projects have contributed to significant improvement in the technical capacity for GHG inventory and MRV of national mitigation actions which has been largely accomplished through development and dissemination of MRV tools, training, and follow-up support and guidance.

57. In Mongolia, the capacity for land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) assessment has been strengthened at the subnational level through hands-on training of local specialists from all the provinces in the use of Collect Earth[11] and the subsequent application of the tool by the trained specialists in carrying out a nationwide LULUCF assessment.[12] The technical capacity of Mongolian professionals in the AFOLU sector at central and subnational levels has also been raised for the measurement of emissions and removals through training on IPCC guidelines for GHG inventory, ETF MPGs that are relevant to the AFOLU sector, improved livestock sample

[11] Collect Earth is a custom-built, open-source tool for the interpretation and monitoring of land use and land-use change using satellite imageries. It has been developed by FAO with the support of Google Earth Outreach.

[12] The Collect Earth tool was earlier used to assess forest area change under the UN-REDD program but the knowledge and skills for its application were then limited to a few national consultants.

surveys and estimation of GHG emission from the livestock sector using GLEAM-i tool,[13] and updated methodology for environmental statistics. The guideline for Mongolia's Unified Land Territory classification has been updated in accordance with the IPCC classification. The updated guideline has been approved, paving the way for improved coherence and consistency in land use and land-use change data to compute GHG emissions and removals in keeping with IPCC guidelines and standards.

58. There are now much improved data, knowledge, tools and systems for the measurement of climate-change mitigation in Mongolia as a result of a series of technical studies and exercises with the support of the CBIT project. These include: i) the assessment of saxaul forest change and validation of saxaul forest distribution using high-resolution Maxar Premium Imagery service in combination with existing forest inventory data; ii) the assessment of GHG emissions from permafrost regions based on permafrost distribution in Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 2.6 and RCP 8.5 scenarios; iii) field studies on wetlands emission factor using CATEX-3 and EGM equipment for GHG analysis; pilot studies on data improvement for the estimation of country-specific emission factors for the enteric fermentation of livestock using GLEAM-i methodology for comparative analysis; iv) the development of a biomass growth model and creation of a forest mask for the 2019/2020 year leading to an improved national forest inventory database; and v) an analysis of forest fire data from various sources for the period from 1990 to 2018 to improve the estimation of emissions from forest and grassland fires. Metadata parameters for climate-change mitigation have been defined and are under review by the relevant stakeholders. The quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) protocol for data collection, management and archiving was also developed and has been approved by the Director of the Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre (CCRCC) for internal practical usage.

59. Two-thirds of the training events conducted by the CBIT project in Mongolia were related to GHG inventory and MRV for GHG emission management and mitigation actions. The training recipients' questionnaire survey in Mongolia indicated that 46.15 percent of the respondents have applied learning from the CBIT training for improved data collection and analysis, and 19.23 percent have applied learning for QA of data collection, analysis and reporting.

60. Furthermore, in order to upgrade technology for MRV work and enable enhanced MRV, the project provided several new pieces of equipment to relevant institutions at the central and subnational levels in Mongolia. A total of 253 units of 44 different pieces of equipment were procured by the project and delivered to the CCRCC, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, the Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment, the Agency for Land Administration and Management, Geodesy and Cartography, Mongolian University of Life Sciences, the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Economy and Development, the National Statistical Office, and institutes and stakeholders in the provinces.

61. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), hands-on training on Collect Earth enabled a team of professionals in the Climate Change and Development Authority, Papua New Guinea Forest Authority and FAO to successfully apply the tool and conduct an LULUCF assessment (2016–2019). The results of the assessment have been used in the preparation of the second Biennial Update Report with the necessary quality assurance.[14] In addition, technical capacity building for MRV at the subnational

[13] GLEAM-i is an interactive version of the GLEAM developed by FAO to aid countries in the calculation of GHG emissions in the livestock sector using IPCC-Tier 2 methods.

[14] The Papua New Guinea Authority may also consider using it to update the National Forest Reference Level.

level has been built through regional training workshops on agricultural data collection for the GHG inventory in accordance with the 2006 IPCC Guidelines and ETF MPGs.

62. During the project period, Papua New Guinea produced two BURs – BUR1 in 2019 and BUR2 in 2022. In the preparation of these successive BURs, the CBIT project supported the GHG inventory processes through on-the-job training of relevant staff and improvement of methods for data collection and analysis. The metadata parameters and QC protocols for the AFOLU sector were developed, formalized and adopted in the formulation of BUR1, and updated and applied accordingly in the preparation of BUR2. Furthermore, the Climate Change and Forest Monitoring web portal was upgraded with new user-friendly functions and additional geospatial information.

63. In Cambodia, although survey respondents reported sporadic failure to select the appropriate person for the training sessions (a total of roughly 7 percent), 64 percent of the respondents confirmed that the training was "mostly relevant" to "highly relevant" to their work, while 28 percent reported that the training was at least "somewhat relevant".

64. Survey respondents reported having received different training and capacity-building support from the national FAO CBIT project. These training sessions included information on the IPCC Guidelines (53.8 percent), modalities and procedure guidelines for Enhanced Transparency under the Paris Agreement (46.2 percent), GHG inventory (43.6 percent), and GHG emission estimation (41 percent). Survey participants reported that the training has enabled them to efficiently use the acquired knowledge and skills. It helped them to improve the collection and analysis of data required for the climate change and reporting, and improve their planning and decision-making processes on climate-change mitigation and adaptation. Another positive result of the training and support indicated that 43 percent of the respondents had considerably improved their institutional coordination, data sharing between the departments, and reporting.

65. The AFOLU data and information were collected, analysed, produced, and consulted with the technical working groups on climate change (TWG-CC and CCAFF) and the relevant departments of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Fisheries Administration, the General Directorate of Agriculture, the General Directorate of Rubber, and the General Directorate of Animal Health and Production. All these data and information were consolidated for input into Cambodia's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution 2020 (2020 NDC Update) as well as analysed and produced for the Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality (LTS4CN).

66. Significant progress was made, especially on AFOLU data collection, compilation, analysis, and harmonization in contributing to the 2020 NDC Update and LTS4CN. The data gap assessment has been completed. During the Conference of the Parties (COP) 26 in Glasgow (United Kingdom), Cambodia shared key points on the "BTR Preparation: Cambodia presentation" in a side event on the Enhanced Transparency Framework in practice: "Planning for the Biennial Transparency Report" on 19 November 2021. In another side event of COP26, Cambodia presented its SDGs assessment in climate-change adaptation actions – "Transparency in Agriculture: Can we align country adaptation reporting efforts under the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030?" At the time of writing this report, the documentation and publication of the lessons learned were in the process of being developed, thus contributing to an overall rating of Output 1 as "Satisfactory" ("S").

67. Tools and actions to improve agriculture and other land-use data collection, quality control, and reporting have been provided to relevant national stakeholders from four agencies: the Ministry of Environment's General Directorate of Environmental Knowledge and Information; the United Nations Development Programme; FAO; the General Directorate of Agriculture and the Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management (GDEKI/Ministry of Environment, UNDP, FAO, GDA) with the support of partners such as SilvaCarbon and SERVIR-Mekong.

68. In a survey that included 17 countries (30 respondents), the participants of the Global FAO CBIT-AFOLU project confirmed that technical guidance on capacity-building activities is a main area of support provided by the Global CBIT-AFOLU (20 percent) along with support on the design and review of national CBIT-AFOLU projects, and training on specific tools or topics (12 percent and 11 percent respectively). The survey respondents emphasized that receiving specific technical support is particularly important in projects within the complex AFOLU sector, and therefore was very welcomed by the countries.

69. Countries that did not participate in activities promoted by the Global CBIT-AFOLU see the added value of a future collaboration with the transparency team. According to the survey, respondents mentioned that the provision of technical guidance on capacity building activities (26 percent), training on a specific topic/tool (26 percent), design/review of the initial stage of the project (19 percent), and support to identify gaps and needs (16 percent) are among their list of priorities for which they perceive the Global CBIT-AFOLU project as a possible provider of support.

Finding 7. Achievements in building technical capacity for adaptation-related ETF were modest and primarily included the development of M&E frameworks and indices for adaptation tracking and reporting, and training on tools and methodologies for information collection and analysis related to climate risks, impacts and adaptation actions.

70. In Mongolia, the CBIT project carried out a gap analysis of adaptation M&R systems, reviewed international good practices, and developed the M&E framework and BTR preparation plan for adaptation measures of the AFOLU sector. Seventy-one key indicators to track adaptation measures in the AFOLU sector have been formulated, and data sources that need improvement, and new indicators have been identified. The project has completed the establishment of metadata parameters and data provision guidelines for CCA. In addition, FAO's user manual Tracking adaptation in agricultural sectors – Climate change adaptation indicators and the UNFCCC's MPGs for the transparency framework under the Paris Agreement have been translated into the Mongolian language. National stakeholders have also been provided with equipment and software for adaptation data collection, analysis and archiving in line with established guidelines. Furthermore, a series of assessments were carried out to inform adaptation planning and monitoring. These included a study of peatland changes and the causes of peatland degradation, and assessments of livestock weight change, livestock productivity and pastureland conditions.

71. In Papua New Guinea, the CBIT project conducted regional training to enhance the knowledge and skills of the regional and provincial officers to assess and document the climate risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change, including them as inputs to the preparation of the country's Third National Communication and First BTR. A gap analysis to improve the measurement framework for adaptation has been completed and a draft report of the analysis is ready for discussion with the government. In addition, an adaptation tab with adaptation-related spatial information has been integrated in the Climate Change and Forest Monitoring web portal as a part of the upgrading of the portal. This is anticipated to facilitate adaptation tracking, but the extent of its actual application could not be assessed at this stage.

72. In Cambodia, the CBIT project conducted the data assessment and identified the data availability at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Interior. The CBIT project management team has assessed data availability and gaps in climate-relevant policies for developing the M&E framework and institutional arrangement for data collection and analysis, particularly on climate-change adaptation within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Significant progress was made on the assessment of data availability and gaps to support the M&E framework

development as well as facilitating data sharing between relevant institutions, including supporting the NDC update and identifying gaps in data needed for the AFOLU sector. The CBIT project also coordinated with the Department of Climate Change, sharing the lessons learned on the reporting process and data gaps in the formulation of the 2020 NDC Update during a second webinar on "Knowledge exchange and awareness raising on forest-related reporting in the context of the Paris Agreement and other international commitments". The project also facilitated and supported the Forestry Administration to share the lessons learned on data use for FRA reporting to increase transparency in the forest sector (CBIT-Forest).

73. The Global FAO CBIT-AFOLU project successfully carried out capacity-building training on M&E and MRV in 12 countries[15] in which 138 practitioners (35 percent women) participated. The technical training included ETF-related topics regarding the AFOLU sector: i) use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines to the estimation of emissions; ii) baseline and targets; iii) institutional arrangements and lack of data; iv) adaptation reporting of risks and vulnerability; and v) metrics and the M&E system.

74. Over 90 percent of the survey respondents claimed that the Global GBIT project team was able to guide their countries in the formulation and implementation of national projects and had helped them navigate with clear guidance for smooth implementation of the activities. This support was considered to be very important as it helped to make significant improvements on the countries' MRV systems.

Finding 8. With regards to the CBIT tracking tool targets, the national CBIT projects in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea have reportedly achieved the project-end targets stipulated in the CBIT tracking tools during project formulation, while Mongolia has exceeded its target pertaining to the quality of MRV systems.

75. This finding stems from analysing the baseline, target and achieved scores of the CBIT projects in Cambodia, Mongolia and Papua New Guinea as reported in the CBIT tracking tools by the respective PMUs. It must be noted, however, that the CBIT tracking tools give a general indication of the progress; however, the ratings are subjective and based on self-assessment by the respective project management teams, and thus would require a detailed assessment to draw information that can be used in combination with the scores.

3.3 Efficiency

Finding 9. Taking into account that the project resources were not large, the projects were found to have been implemented using cost-effective building on FAO's in-house knowledge and resources for ETF-related activities.

76. Barring very few activities, the projects achieved their planned activities, albeit with the extension of project periods that were primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite project extensions and modest project finances, no additional resources from other sources were sought ,and where possible, project management resources were shared with other projects/initiatives. For example, the Papua New Guinea project management unit was made up of only one full-time staff supervised by an in-house FAO forestry advisor in the country office and supported by administrative staff that was cofinanced by the National Forest Inventory project and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. This was perceived to be insufficient in view of the immense amount

[15] Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Guinea, Mexico, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, the Sudan and Togo.

of coordination and follow-up with the multiple-partner agencies required for capacity building in ETF.

77. While ETF is a new concept emanating out of the Paris Agreement, FAO has a long experience of developing and supporting countries to implement MRV as well as the development of tools/resources for data collection, analysis and reporting that have high relevance to ETF. The projects have effectively used FAO's in-house knowledge and customized FAO's resources for geospatial information analysis, and resource assessment and monitoring for ETF use. These have included tools such as Collect Earth, GLEAM, the National Forest Monitoring System and FAOSTAT, which have evolved from years of application by FAO and their partners.

78. The Cambodian project made substantial progress to achieve the outcomes and outputs, though being delayed when compared to the original work plan and revised work plan in 2020 due to the COVID-19 situation. A no-cost extension of approximately eight months was required anticipating another four-month extension which would bring the NTE to 30 September 2022 for the preparation of the operational closure of the project. It was not possible to identify an alternative project design and implementation approach that could have delivered more with the available resources within the changing project context of the pandemic situation.

79. Overall, the Cambodian project was implemented in a cost-effective and timely manner, making effective use of ongoing work and existing internal and external platforms and networks and adopting a capacity development approach based on virtual training, and it has efficiently disbursed the provided funds and accounted for the use of funds.

80. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project made very good use of the funds at its disposal and managed to acquire additional cofinancing beyond the set target. Actively looking for synergies with other projects as well as building on FAO's already existing materials and resources, the project was able to overachieve the given target of seven countries with non-FAO CBIT projects by 28 additional countries seeking information about the Global project's activities. Furthermore, the CBIT-AFOLU Project Management Team rescheduled financial resources for originally supporting in-person events to hold more events online to reach out to a larger audience. According to the PMT the project organized ten times more online events than in-person events, reaching out to over 50 countries with more than 400 participants during the last reporting year, from June/July 2021 to June 2022, alone. The combination of online and hybrid events led to the fact that the project maintained a high level of interest in its activities. This allowed the project to offer targeted support to many countries, efficiently disseminating the tools and products developed by the project on a much wider scale.

Finding 10. The national CBIT projects faced implementation delays due to a protracted and slow inception process in getting the buy-in of project partners and setting up project management and implementation arrangements.

81. The CBIT projects entailed a long and slow inception phase involving negotiations with intended project partners, recruitment of project personnel, and the operationalization of project implementation arrangements. For instance, the project inception workshop in Mongolia took place in July 2019, six months after the official project start date of January 2019. The recruitment of project management staff started with the recruitment of the National Project Management Officer in April 2019 and completed with the recruitment of the Technical Officer and Administrative and Finance Officer in August 2019, with the latter two positions having to be re-recruited in 2020 as the two staff left their jobs. This delayed the contractual process for letters of agreement (LOA) with project partners – by the time the first LOA became operational, the CBIT project in Mongolia was well into its second year. In Papua New Guinea, the project inception was even slower, with recruitment of the National Project Coordinator done in May 2019 and the

project inception workshop taking place in October 2019 – around 10 months after the official project starting date. However, the FAO team in Papua New Guinea anticipated these institutional delays and accordingly, early on in the project, began crucial activities to assist stakeholder consultations and the finalization process of the BUR1 that was submitted for review and published on the UNFCCC website in in April 2019. Subsequently the project assisted the government to go through the UNFCCC's Technical Assessment and revision of the BUR1 with the REDD+ Technical Annex, enabling submission in September 2019.

82. It is surmised that technical assistance projects of the like of CBIT projects, despite their global and national worth, but with no physical investments and modest funding, intrinsically experience challenges in eliciting national buy-in and establishing active partnerships during the implementation phase, even when there was willingness and support from the project stakeholders during the project design phase.

Finding 11. Despite slow project inception and subsequent delays induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the projects were able to achieve most of the intended project results by ramping up project implementation in the latter stages of the project. However, this left the projects with little time to consolidate project results and plan effectively for post-project sustainability.

83. A review of the project implementation reports shows that the cumulative delivery of project outputs as of June 2021 was 64.6 percent in Mongolia, and 73.6 percent in Papua New Guinea. As of June 2021, the six project outputs that were to be achieved by that date in Mongolia remained marginally 50 percent unaccomplished and were carried over to the final year. Similarly, in Papua New Guinea, the nine project outputs that were to be achieved by the second project year remained unaccomplished by 10 to 60 percent as of June 2021 and were carried over to the final project year. The draft project implementation reports (PIRs) dated June 2022 show that the CBIT projects in Mongolia and Papua New Guinea are on track to fully achieving most of the output targets and partially achieving the remaining targets by the end of the project period. Nevertheless, cramping up the final year with pending outputs leaves little time for the projects to consolidate the project results and collaborate with project stakeholders to plan adequately for post-project continuity and the sustainability of the project results.

84. In Cambodia, project implementation as of September 2022 has achieved up to 80 percent of its set project objective. The 2022 PIR of the FAO CBIT project in Cambodia shows that the project is well on its way to successfully completing its implementation. There are differences in achievements for the three outcomes: Outcome 2 (Capacity to assess and report emissions and removals from the agriculture and land-use sectors and to design and monitor-related emission reduction activities) will be achieved to 100 percent. Outcome 1 (Institutional arrangements to coordinate the preparation of ETF reports for agriculture, land-use and other relevant sectors were enhanced) will achieve its targets as set in the project document to roughly 80 percent since most of the implementation activities have been carried in compliance with the original planning. It is Outcome 3 (Capacity to monitor and report adaptation activities in agriculture and land-use sectors was strengthened) that is still only completed to roughly 50 percent. Crucial issues concern the assessment of the indicators of the climate-change adaptation actions. The existing relevant monitoring systems have been reviewed and identified. The improved indicators were developed and discussed with the technical officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment, however the basic management information system may not be operational before December 2022 since the PMT could not conduct consultations with various stakeholders as per plan due to the restrictions and competing priorities among the stakeholder for virtual events.

85. Although the COVID-19 pandemic represented a real threat to the implementation, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project continued with its activities at a steady rate of implementation. The project

exceeded the set targets in all outcomes, thus delivering a rating of "highly satisfactory" for all components. Therefore, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project will achieve 100 percent at all levels.

Finding 12. CBIT projects have created opportunities for a wider outreach and application of ETF knowledge through multilingual and localized ETF capacity-building materials and tools, thus making good use of limited project resources.

86. At the global level, a number of e-learning courses, webinars and online tools have been translated into multiple international languages, thereby enlarging access to and outreach of these resources. In some cases, this was possible due to reinvestment of savings from the cancellation of in-person training events and related travel. Even at the country level, certain international tools and guidelines have been localized so that local experts can apply them without relying on international experts. For example, the translation of the Collect Earth tool in the local language in Mongolia has enabled Mongolian experts to better understand the tool, and for the first time and without external expert assistance, directly use it for the assessment of land use and land-use changes at the national and subnational levels. Knowledge and understanding of the technical aspects of GHG inventory were also enhanced through the Mongolian translation of key international manuals, namely: Estimating GHG Emissions in Agriculture – A manual to address data requirements for developing countries; Tracking adaptation in agricultural sectors – Climate change adaptation indicators; Livestock activity data guidance – Methods and guidance on compilation of activity data for Tier 2 livestock GHG inventories. These now serve as the foremost set of tools for guidance on GHG inventory for the Mongolian experts.

87. In Cambodia, project events and articles have been shared using the FAO Cambodia telegram channel to engage the subscribers to participate and access relevant documents and materials produced under CBIT. The project has contributed to building institutional capacity, making contributions to the NDC update, and the Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality (LTS4CN). This contribution is of high impact at the national and political levels.

88. The Global CBIT-AFOLU provided many outreach events. These events included training webinars on adaptation reporting at: Asia Pacific Climate Week 2021; Africa Climate Week 2021; MENA Climate Week 2022; LAC Climate Week 2022; the Asia LEDS Partnership Forum; three side events at COP26 with PATPA, C4CA and Indonesia; global events on youth and academia at the ACE and All4Climate sessions; PATPA events for the Francophone cluster; the Asian regional group and PLACA group; events in Asia and the Pacific with IGES and the Global Soil Partnership, as well as other gatherings carried out with partners such as UNFCCC, IPCC, ICAT, UNEP and the MRV/ETF Group of friends.

89. Technical training exposed participants to ETF-related topics tackling the challenges of the AFOLU sector: from the use of the 2006 IPCC Guidelines to the estimation of emissions, baseline and targets; from institutional arrangements to the lack of data; from the adaptation reporting of risks and vulnerability to the metrics and M&E system.

Finding 13. The benefits of the CBIT projects were enhanced through direct coordination and linkage with other ETF-enabling activities such as the preparation of the NC or BUR.

90. The implementation of CBIT projects in tandem with the NC/BUR preparation process made the capacity-building process more hands-on, and the benefits were more tangible in the form of their use in the preparation of enhanced NCs, BURs, etc. For instance, in Papua New Guinea, the data-provision and sharing protocols and the TWGs for AFOLU and REDD+ established with support from the CBIT project came in very useful in the preparation of BUR1 in the project's initial year, and were subsequently enhanced and used in the preparation of BUR2. With technical support from the CBIT project, Papua New Guinea updated the REDD+ Technical Annex and

incorporated it into the BUR1 to meet the eligibility requirements for the Green Climate Fund's Results-based Payment Pilot Programme.

91. In Cambodia, the CBIT project supported the data and information collection and consolidation for input into Cambodia's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution 2020 (Updated NDC 2020). AFOLU data and information were collected, analysed, and produced for the Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality (LTS4CN). The project also supported the Royal Government of Cambodia to prepare and submit the BUR in April 2020, the Cambodia Technical Annex for REDD+ results (BUR-TA) in October 2020, and the Second Forest Reference Level for Cambodia under UNFCCC Framework (2nd FRL).

92. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project strengthened the collaboration with most of the transparency capacity-building actors to lift the transparency international agenda and support countries to address the requirements. The provided support ranged from the application of Tier 1 and Tier 2 methodologies to GHG inventory, NDC enhancement, data archiving and file management, QA/QC and verification. The countries, to name a few, included Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Papua New Guinea; furthermore, based on requests from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project responded with country-tailored capacity-building support addressing specific technical including the Bahamas, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Guinea, Mexico, Panama and Togo.

3.4 Sustainability

Finding 14. Challenges to the sustainability of project results are largely institutional and financial, despite expressed governmental support for the Paris Agreement and constituent ETF, and recognition of climate change as a major environmental and development issue by the governments.

93. Countries have the basic policy and institutional framework in place for ETF but this does not necessarily translate to effective interagency coordination and cooperation for ETF processes at the operational level. At the upstream level, basically all countries have the necessary policy instruments and institutional set-up that correspond to their commitments to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. The policy and institutional framework have been further strengthened through support from CBIT projects and other GEF support for enabling activities to prepare the NCs and BURs. There are also laws and regulatory frameworks that spell out the authorities and mandates for climate- and emission-related data sharing. However, stakeholder interviews reveal that in certain national settings, as one goes down to the day-to-day operational level, there are interagency issues over data sharing and transparency in data processing and analysis. While the projects have accomplished a large part of the project activities through interagency working groups/committees and contractual agreements, such as the letters of agreements, these arrangements are fundamentally project driven.

94. Staff shortage and turnover are major sustainability issues. For instance, in Mongolia, where there was a strong focus on delivery of training to build the technical capacity of individuals, many of the trained staff left their jobs. In Papua New Guinea, the evaluation team could not interview a few key people, including the national ETF focal person and the main government official involved in the CBIT project, as they had changed jobs. Furthermore, key government agencies dealing with climate change and ETF are understaffed. Additional staff are recruited for ETF-specific activities depending on the availability of funds. In anticipation of staff turnover, CBIT projects have enlarged the technical working groups so that there is a large pool of people who are involved and trained in the process, which among other things enables its continuity, even in the event that some of them leave or move on to other jobs. However, technical working groups and committees are generally instituted with project financing and tend to become defunct or

tentative in the absence of external financing. Also, from the FGDs with key members of the AFOLU TWG and provincial ETF focal points, it was understood that many members in these groups are passive and have little interest in the ETF activities. In Cambodia, the project supported to a large extent the updates of the NCs, BUR and NDC. From the questionnaire survey, it became evident that not all of the stakeholders see ETF as a priority. As it is the case in the other countries, the high turnover of employees and stakeholders makes it very difficult to conserve knowledge within the organization.

95. There is an overdependence on project financing for ETF capacity. For instance, the procurement list of the CBIT project in Mongolia showed that even basic and inexpensive equipment such as a thermometer, handheld scale and an SD card were bought by the project. In Cambodia, basic and critical IT hardware and software systems could not be acquired in time for lack of funds. Along with overdependence on external project financing, dependence on foreign consultants is another major factor. For example, in Cambodia, the knowledge of the AFOLU-sector stakeholders on international transparency-related processes is still rather limited, and that requires longer-term and constant support.

96. Another factor affecting the sustainability of project results was the duration of the projects. While a duration of three years was adequate for the projects to deliver the planned capacity-building activities, consolidation of the capacity results and internalization of institutional arrangements require extended time. The slow and protracted inception by the national projects also constricted the time available for project implementation, which in turn affected the time required for the consolidation of project results and preparation for smooth transition to the post-project phase in close communication with the project stakeholders.

Finding 15. Despite existing institutional and financial challenges, the sustainability of project results can be rated "moderately likely" due to the governmental policies and strategies committed to ETF, improved stakeholder awareness, capacity built progressively through CBIT projects and ETF-enabling activities, and sharing of knowledge by the ETF-trained individuals with those without ETF training. Furthermore, ETF knowledge and resources including tools and learning platforms are entrenched within the FAO network and will continue to be available to the governments and national stakeholders to strengthen geospatial data and information for the sustainable management of the AFOLU sector.

97. There is an increased level of awareness and understanding among the project stakeholders about climate change as a key issue and the importance of ETF in combatting climate change and enhancing the national implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions in keeping with commitments to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. There is also now improved institutional arrangement and technical capacity for ETF, even if certain gaps still remain. These improvements are expected to keep the stakeholders motivated to continue to participate in ETF activities, building on the project results, but only to the extent that there is follow-up engagement and support from international partners. The projects also engaged post-project responsible agencies to promote ownership and sustainability of project activities. For instance, the members of the Project Steering Committee and technical working committees in Mongolia were largely drawn from institutions with post-project responsibility for ETF.

98. Many of the ETF tools and products developed and/or used by the CBIT projects were fundamentally built on what was already existing within FAO and its partners, and therefore, they remain anchored in FAO's in-house platforms and programs. Even the new tools and products developed by the CBIT projects are integrated in FAO's in-house resources as well as those of the key partners. The ETF webinars and tools developed by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project are available online and freely accessible. This implies that the project stakeholders would continue to have access to the ETF resources developed by FAO even after the conclusion of CBIT projects.

However, continued capacity-building support to individual countries through training and one-to-one guidance/mentoring for application of these resources as per their specific needs would depend on funding availability from donor agencies.

99. Furthermore, updated methodologies have been integrated into the national MRV systems. For instance, the approval of Mongolia's updated Unified Land Territory classification in accordance with IPCC guidelines suggests that the new classification will remain the basis for future land use and land-use change assessment in keeping with ETF requirements. Opportunities created by the CBIT projects for a wider outreach and application of ETF knowledge through multilingual and localized ETF capacity-building materials and tools will also contribute to sustainability.

100. Questionnaire surveys of training recipients were conducted as a part of stakeholder consultations for the evaluation to, *inter alia,* assess how the training recipients have shared and transferred the learning.[16] In Mongolia, the questionnaire survey revealed that 71 percent of the respondents[17] shared their training learning with colleagues while working together, but also through training workshops and by sharing training materials and tools. In Cambodia, the finding was even more encouraging – 90 percent of the respondents reported passing on their training learnings to colleagues. The high level of knowledge transfer from ETF-trained individuals to colleagues without ETF training is expected to contribute to the sustainability of capacity development results.

101. During the implementation of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project, many countries recognized the importance of improving their MRV systems for this sector, thus leading to raising their ambitions, particularly concerning collecting data, estimating emissions, baseline and targets, and formulating mitigation and adaptation policies and relevant indicators to be able to track their progress on the BTR.

102. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project maintained and strengthened synergies with other projects which helped to institutionalize ETF-related processes in the various countries: the project collaborated with the International Climate Initiative (IKI)[18] funded project "Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture through Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans (SCALA)", in Senegal, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Colombia and Mongolia. The SCALA project – jointly implemented by FAO and UNDP – has a component on capacity building for improving/developing MRV and M&E systems at the national and/or sectoral level for monitoring and reporting under the UNFCCC, CBD, SFDRR and SDGs regarding mitigation and/or adaptation in land use and agriculture. Therefore, the SCALA approach complements the activities of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project.

103. Through the Global CBIT-AFOLU project, FAO has established an "academia and youth" workstream to unlock the potential of academia and youth and support their engagement in strengthening ETF-related activities in developing countries. In Mongolia, the CBIT project actively collaborated with several academic and research institutes on technical assessments to strengthen ETF capacity in the AFOLU sector. These engagements with academia and youth are expected to

[16] The questionnaire survey was conducted for all three national CBIT projects but the response to the survey in Papua New Guinea was too small (only three respondents, despite repeated requests) to be considered for the evaluation.

[17] The questionnaire was sent out to 100 training recipients in Mongolia, 59 of whom completed and returned it.

[18] Internationale Klimaschutz Initiative (IKI) is financed by the German government through its Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).

contribute to the mitigation of risks associated with the concentration of ETF activities and related capacity only in government institutions.

3.5 Progress to impacts

Finding 16. The projects have contributed to enhanced understanding of ETF requirements and improved data, knowledge and tools to implement ETF. In particular, the projects have strengthened institutional arrangements for ETF activities and the quality of MRV systems to track results related to low GHG development and GHG emission mitigation.

104. As reflected by the CBIT tracking tools, the results of which have been tabulated in Table 4, institutional capacity for ETF has increased in all the national CBIT project countries.

105. Similarly, improvements in the quality of MRV systems for low GHG development and GHG emission mitigation were reported in all three countries.

106. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project has developed and published several new MRV products, including a large number of e-learning courses and some on estimating enteric fermentation at Tier 2, as well as tools such as the LoGIc Tool (a land representation tool), the Transparency Assessment Navigator, the NDC-Ag Navigator and NDC tracking tool, the Archiving Guidance and Check list, and the BTR guidance and Roadmap tool. These tools are also made available in Spanish and French, in some case in Portuguese and Russian, in response to the external regional groups' interests.

107. However, the above-mentioned progress is tentative at this stage, especially in the absence of sustainability plans to continue and build on the project results, and the existence of key barriers to future progress towards long-term impacts (see below and the foregoing sustainability section).

Finding 17. Institutional and financial barriers persist and can likely prevent future progress towards long-term impacts.

108. As explained in the sustainability section, ETF activities remain largely dependent on external financing, and human resources for ETF are a major challenge due to staff turnover as well as staff shortage within ETF-responsible agencies. Furthermore, at the day-to-day operational level, there are still institutional issues over data sharing and transparency in data processing and analysis, as in the case of Papua New Guinea. A few stakeholders suggested that institutional cooperation can be tentative as it depends on the people at the helm of the organizations who change when there is a change in the government as a result of elections. In Cambodia, the staff fluctuation caused a break in the continuation of ETF activities, since with the person gone the knowledge went as well. There are still obvious gaps in the knowledge of key officials in the relevant ministries as the ETF background and term concerns. Furthermore, there is a certain lack of peer exchange at all levels, which needs to be addressed for future progress.

109. The Global CBIT-AFOLU initiated bilateral discussions with country stakeholders to build the trust and ensure the engagement of the major stakeholders in the participating countries. This led to an enhanced level of awareness among major decision-makers ensuring continuity in case of government change. In addition, the risks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic were properly mitigated through close communication and follow-ups with the countries' focal points, involving all countries in the formulation of workplans and the planning of activities.

3.6 Quality of project management and execution

Finding 18. The project management arrangement varied between projects; that notwithstanding, in general, the quality of project management was good.

110. The CBIT project in Mongolia had a larger project management team with three full-time positions (national project manager, technical officer and administration and finance officer) whereas the project management team in Papua New Guinea was made up of one full-time staff (national project coordinator) who functioned under the supervision of an in-house FAO forestry advisor and was supported by administration and finance personnel cofinanced by other FAO forestry projects. While it is difficult to directly relate project management arrangement and the quality of project execution, it was discerned that a well-staffed PMU in Mongolia was a contributing factor for effective project management. This was also evident from the quality and availability of project documentation as well as views conveyed by the project partners during the stakeholder interviews. In Cambodia, the PMT consisted of three full-time positions. The commitment on behalf of the CBIT project team was very well received and contributed to FAO's reputation, and the work that was accomplished received the respect from development partners and governmental agencies.

111. The project stakeholders who were interviewed for the evaluation in Mongolia expressed satisfaction with the management of the project and coordination with project stakeholders. In Papua New Guinea, interviews of project partners drew inconsistent responses about the project's management, with some expressing good coordination and communication from the project while others suggested ignorance about the project due to lack of communication and engagement.[19] In Cambodia, communication was not always up to date and left out key personnel. Some of the trainers, consultants and ministries' personnel were not up to the task. Although the stakeholders who were interviewed were satisfied with the management of the project, transparency and clear communication were mentioned as a shortcoming.

112. The coordination with several transparency actors was enhanced, allowing the Global CBIT-AFOLU project to support additional countries and develop supplementary products. Project implementation continued to suffer from the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak which slowed down the organization of several capacity-building activities. On the other hand, the critical situation stimulated the project to continue with the implementation of the identified successful modalities to foster networks and knowledge exchange among peers that allowed for also increasing the number of stakeholders who were outreached.

113. With time, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project built a solid modality to scale up and support many countries, not only by disseminating the global products through the transparency website but also by offering targeted support, which may incentivize the exchange of expertise across countries and mutual learning while ensuring the dissemination of resources developed by the project.

114. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings took place as planned and were well coordinated according to the project stakeholders in Mongolia. The PSC meetings were held annually in Papua New Guinea. Although the meeting minutes indicate that effort and care was taken to adequately involve PSC members, the SSIs with key project partners revealed that some of the PSC members were in any case not clear about their role and functions in the PSC. In Cambodia, under the

[19] There were significant challenges in getting adequate and objective information and insights from stakeholder consultations in Papua New Guinea. These are highlighted in section 1.5 – Limitations.

coordination support of the National Project Director, the Project Steering Committee was established with the nomination of the focal points from different ministries that had been received in June 2020. The Project Steering Committee members had been actively involved in guiding the implementation of the CBIT project and PSC meetings were held on a regular basis.

Finding 19. The projects were adequately monitored based on the results matrices/frameworks and CBIT tracking tools.

115. The results matrices/frameworks provided the main tool for monitoring and reporting project progress. Reporting was done on a half-yearly and annual basis through periodic project progress reports and project implementation reports. The PIRs were completed by the project managers/coordinators, endorsed by the budget holder, and reviewed by the lead technical officer and the GEF liaison officer at FAO. Supervisory missions were not undertaken due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions as well as budgetary limitations. However, the lead technical officer and the GEF liaison officer at FAO held virtual meetings with the PMU at least twice a year to keep track of the project progress, and when needed, provided guidance/backstopping, including for linkage and complementarity between the national and global CBIT projects.

116. The other monitoring tool used by the projects was the GEF-CBIT tracking tool. Each of the national CBIT projects provided data in the tracking tool for the following: Indicator 1 – Total Lifetime Direct and Indirect GHG Emissions Avoided (tonnes CO_2eq); Indicator 2 – Volume of investment mobilized and leveraged by GEF for low GHG development (cofinancing and additional financing); Indicator 3 – Quality of MRV Systems; Indicator 4 – Number of countries meeting Convention reporting requirements, and including mitigation contributions; and Indicator 5 – Qualitative assessment of institutional capacity for transparency-related activities. Indicators 3 and 5 involved rating as per the GEF rating on a scale of one to ten for Indicator 3 and on a scale of one to four for Indicator 5. The CBIT tracking tools were updated at mid-term and project end to reflect progress against the CBIT indicators.

Finding 20. All projects managed their finances well, although less so in the case of Papua New Guinea and cofinancing was mobilized as planned by all projects, even exceeding in the instance of the Cambodia project, contributing to the achievement of intended project results.

117. A review of the project's financial information, including cofinancing, of the CBIT projects shows that the projects were financially well managed. The cumulative financial delivery of the CBIT project in Mongolia stood at 93.9 percent as of June 2022, despite modest financial delivery of 62 percent in 2020 and 69.4 percent in 2021, when the project activities were slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic, after a very good first year with a financial delivery of 90.4 percent (see Table 5). The PIR 2022 of the CBIT Project in Papua New Guinea shows that the cumulative project expenditure exceeded the total project budget, implying lack of financial oversight on the part of the PMU. The reported project expenditure as of June 2022 was USD 918 141 against the total project budget of USD 863 242, an excess of 6.3 percent. Year-wise project financial information from Papua New Guinea was unavailable, rendering it difficult to make an assessment of the trend of the project's financial delivery.

118. Although having had a slow disbursement at the beginning of the project, the Cambodian CBIT project took up speed during the implementation process. The reported expenditure as of June 2022 stood at USD 571 983 with USD 610 000 of the total budget of USD 863 241 being disbursed.

119. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project has efficiently mastered the administration of funds. Although 2021 saw a rather low disbursement of funds due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project managed to use all the funds at its disposal.

Table 5. Yearly budget, disbursement and expenditure (USD)

Year	Budget	Funds disbursed	Expenditure reported	Balance of funds
Mongolia CBIT project				
2019	164 500	148 633	148 633	15 867
2020	393 807	244 103	244 103	149 704
2021	360 327	250 063	250 063	110 264
2022	220 444	167 786	167 786	52 658
Total (Mongolia)	**863 243**	**810 585**	**810 585**	**52 658**
Cambodia CBIT project				
2019	6726	150 000	6 726	143 274
2020	111 057	-	111 057	-111 057
2021	315 245	460 000	315 245	176 972
2022	430 213	-	138 955	-138 955
Total (Cambodia)	**863 241**	**610 000**	**571 983**	**38 017**
Global CBIT-AFOLU project				
2019	581 294	645 000	429 616	215 384
2020	575 295	510 000	341 312	168 688
2021	619 895	280 000	620 658	-340 658
2022	-	341 484	384 898	-43 414
Total (Global)	**1 776 484**	**1 776 484**	**1 776 484**	**0**

Source: Project management units of the respective projects.

120. The projects were highly successful in mobilizing cofinancing as stipulated in the project documents, and even exceeded in the instance of the Cambodia CBIT project (as shown in Table 5). New partners joined the project in Cambodia during the implementation phase, leading to additional cofinancing. Consequently, to date, the project has mobilized USD 2 629 714, which is 23 percent more than the stipulated amount of USD 2 131 331 at the time of CEO endorsement. The cofinancing agencies included the Ministry of Environment (which exceeded their cofinancing target by USD 9 600); the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in kind for staff time, office space, meeting services and supplies, and vehicle and office overheads; the UNDP for a sum of USD 125 000 in kind; and FAO for a sum of USD 2 147 834. This additional resource was mobilized through FAO's regional coordination. The Governments of New Zealand and the United States of America contributed in kind to the tune of a total of USD 245 000, which was not envisaged at the time of CEO endorsement.

121. The CBIT project in Mongolia has mobilized USD 446 036 (97 percent) of the total cofinancing of USD 460 000. The remaining cofinancing of USD 13 964 is expected to be realized in the remaining project period. The cofinancing agencies included the Ministry of Environment and Tourism for a sum of USD 100 000 in kind for staff time, office space, meeting services and supplies, and vehicle and office overheads; the REDD+ program for a sum of USD 300 000 in kind; and FAO for a sum of USD 60 000 in kind for office space and project support not covered by GEF fees.

122. The CBIT project in Papua New Guinea stipulated a total cofinancing of USD 2 600 000. In June 2021, it had already achieved 100 percent of the cofinancing, and was expected to exceed the stipulated cofinancing by the end of the project period in August 2022. Project cofinancing of USD 600 000 (exceeding the stipulated USD 400 000) came from the Climate Change and Development Authority and USD 1 900 000 from FAO. More cofinancing in kind is expected to be realized from FAO by the end of the project. In addition, USD 130 000 – which includes USD 100 000 from the Papua New Guinea Forest Authority and USD 30 000 from the Global Green

Growth Institute through NDC partnership – came in as cofinancing not envisaged during CEO endorsement.

123. According to the CEO endorsement document, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project was to mobilize a total cofinancing of USD 3 000 000. It achieved 100 percent of the cofinancing as stipulated, with a UNDP contribution of USD 1 000 000 in kind and the contribution of the German Government of USD 2 000 000 through various bilateral projects.

Table 6. Cofinancing status

CBIT project and cofinancing agency	Stipulated cofinancing (CEO endorsement)	Mobilzed cofinancing
Cambodia CBIT project		
Ministry of Environment	59 800	68 400
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	78 600	43 480
UNEP-DTU Partnership	125 000	125 000
FAO	1 867 931	2 147 834
New Zealand's Ministry of Primary Industries	0	20 000
US Government through SilvaCarbon	0	225 000
Total (Cambodia CBIT project)	**2 131 331**	**2 629 714**
Mongolia CBIT project		
Ministry of Environment and Tourism	100 000	86 036
REDD+ program	300 000	300 000
FAO	60 000	60 000
Total (Mongolia CBIT project)	**460 000**	**446 036**
Papua New Guinea CBIT project		
Climate Change and Development Authority	400 000	600 000
FAO (various sources such as NDC Partnership, UN-REDD, and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility)	2 200 000	1 900 000
Global Green Growth Institute-NDC Partnership	-	30 000
PNG Forest Authority	-	100 000
Total (PNG CBIT project)	**2 600 000**	**2 600 000**
Global CBIT-AFOLU project		
UNDP UNFA/GLO/616/UND	1 000 000	1 000 000
Bilateral Partner/Donor GCP/GLO/802/GER/Germany	500 000	500 000
Bilateral Partner/Donor GCP/GLO/890/GER/Germany	500 000	500 000
Bilateral Partner/Donor GCP/GLO/966/GER/Germany	1 000 000	1 000 000
Total (Global CBIT-AFOLU project)	**3 000 000**	**3 000 000**

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

Finding 21. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement were strong for the most part, contributing to the achievement of intended project results. However, in certain national settings, key project stakeholders were not sufficiently aware of their role in the project and had misconceptions of the project.

124. The CBIT projects have engaged with a wide number of stakeholders in keeping with the spread of ETF-related responsibilities, functions and expertise across multiple agencies, within and outside the government system. For instance, in Mongolia, the CBIT project collaborated with 15 different agencies in the government, academia and civil society through contractual agreements (letters of agreement) to carry out technical studies, assess and improve data collection and analysis methods, establish data coordination mechanisms and processes, and strengthen MRV

framework. These partnerships were highly instrumental in enabling the project to accomplish planned project activities. Similarly, the CBIT project in Papua New Guinea partnered with key government agencies such as the CCDA, Papua New Guinea Forest Authority, and the Department of Agriculture and Livestock to implement the project, although SSIs with officials from these agencies revealed some misconception among them about the project and its activities. The PMU clarified that this perhaps arose from the project's focus on the forestry subsector, which represented the most important subsector in terms of emission reduction and the need to monitor deforestation and land-use change threats in Papua New Guinea. An officer from the PNG Forest Authority was seconded to the CBIT project to assist in work related to GIS and LULUCF-based carbon measurements.

125. The Cambodia CBIT project worked closely with the relevant key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Environment General Dictorate of Natural Protected Areas (GDNPA) and GDEKI, the Department of Climate Change, the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The cooperation and stakeholder consultation meetings served to review the project workplan, technical support in the development of the updated NDC and the development of LTS4CN (12 consultation meetings during LTS4CN development). The PMT engaged in cross-sectoral stakeholders in the training and workshop that were organized under the project, including all sectors from AFOLU, energy, industrial process and product use, and waste, and academic institutions. These activities contributed to institutionalizing the ETF approach across sectoral stakeholders.

126. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project engaged with national stakeholders, thus strengthening linkages between knowledge generation, policy decisions and changes on the ground. The project also reached out to stakeholders using participatory methodologies and tools such as those implemented under the Transparency Network (D-group, Community of Practice). This led to initiating and deepening the much-needed internal discussions on knowledge gaps, research needs, findings, and implications for implementation of mitigation actions. These activities, to name a few, focused on identifying in the various countries a dialogue team composed of a national focal point (high level decision-maker in the ministry in charge of UNFCCC responsibility) and technical advisors; applying a process of national-level consultations aiming at the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in discussing information needs, tools and progress made; and implementing a series of bilateral exchanges to further stimulate cross-country dialogue and the sharing of experiences and lessons learned.

Finding 22. Linkages and complementarity between the national CBIT projects and the Global CBIT-AFOLU project and the CBIT-Forest project were pursued by the project management teams, leading to effective use of project resources for mutual benefits.

127. The cooperation between the national CBIT projects and the global CBIT projects has been a two-way affair. For instance, representatives from Cambodia and Mongolia participated in the ETF event at COP26 and from Papua New Guinea at the UNFCCC Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2021, both events co-organized by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project. Through such international events, national ETF practitioners have contributed to global dialogue and knowledge based on country experience while also receiving knowledge and insights from ETF practitioners in other countries. National CBIT projects have benefitted from the support and guidance from the Global CBIT projects (the "Global team") while also contributing local knowledge and inputs to the refinement of ETF tools and products developed by the two Global CBIT projects.

128. The Global team provided guidance and technical support to beneficiaries of five national CBIT projects (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Papua New Guinea) as well as

reviewed the formulation of four new national CBIT projects (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) and continued to assist a wide range of other countries.

129. Country-tailored capacity-building support in addressing specific technical gaps was provided to additional pilot countries: Guinea, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, the Bahamas, Mexico, Togo and Panama. Seventeen countries that are a part of the Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean for Climate Action on Agriculture (PLACA) were trained on the ETF requirements and identified challenges and solutions towards the preparation of the BTR.

130. Country case studies from Mongolia and Papua New Guinea have been used to highlight good practices and lessons learned in the training events and workshops that were designed and delivered by the Global CBIT projects. Furthermore, the Mongolia project team, together with national partners, reviewed the BTR roadmap tool developed by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project and provided feedback on the practicality of the tool. The BTR roadmap tool is being considered by the experts at the Climate Change Research and Cooperation Center in Mongolia for the planning of the BTR formulation. The Mongolia CBIT project received technical support and guidance from the Global CBIT-AFOLU project in the areas of estimation of enteric fermentation emission factor and adaptation monitoring, where in-country expertise was lacking. In the case of Papua New Guinea, the work on the REDD+ Technical Annex as a part of the BUR and the advanced National Forest Monitoring System have been showcased by the Global CBIT projects as valuable references and good practices in the ETF capacity-building events and workshops.

131. Concerning the Global CBIT-AFOLU and the Global CBIT-Forest project it showed that the Global CBIT-AFOLU project had a more integrated approach with a focus on ETF-related reporting, including related awareness raising and guidelines, GHG monitoring and reporting and broader ETF knowledge sharing, while the CBIT-Forest project looked at transparency of forest data and ETF requirements which would be out of scope for the Global CBIT-AFOLU project.

132. Since the Global CBIT-AFOLU project was already ongoing and the CBIT-Forest project was to focus on forest components, it was neither feasible nor efficient to combine the two projects into one, also considering the very limited financial resources of the project.

Finding 23. The projects developed knowledge management and communication plans and strategies, and reported on their implementation. However, knowledge management largely constituted communication, information sharing and the translation of international ETF guidelines and tools.

133. Each of the national CBIT projects under this evaluation had a knowledge management strategy as a part of its design and developed a knowledge management and communication plan for each of the project years. However, knowledge management work done by the national CBIT projects were predominantly production and dissemination of information and communication materials on the project, training events, ETF tools and products, etc. Knowledge management needs to move beyond just "communication and information sharing" and look into other forms of knowledge management, for instance creating platforms for interactions between ETF practitioners on the use of various ETF tools and products, or an institutional repository of ETF knowledge and practices building on individual learning and experiences. In this respect, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project has done a very good job of creating and maintaining an online repository of ETF products and resources and establishing a global transparency network of ETF practitioners.

134. Documentation of best practices and lessons learned was thin and the country case studies provided only basic and brief information. That being said, the national CBIT projects informed that the lessons learned and best practices of MRV and M&E in the AFOLU sector will be put together in the final months of the projects based on the cumulative experience of the projects.

135. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project elaborated a knowledge management strategy designed to share knowledge, best practices and lessons learned with member countries, investors, partners and development practitioners to improve the agriculture and land-use sectors. The project envisaged to promote innovative exchange of knowledge and experiences between and among countries through existing networks and dedicated practitioners' discussion groups.

136. The Global CBIT-AFOLU tools included: the ETF website in English, French and Spanish that consolidated FAO efforts on transparency including the global and national CBIT-AFOLU projects; a dedicated page on youth and academia; a dedicated page under the CBIT Coordination Platform; the preparation of publications, including four guides to using key tools in the context of the ETF; the maintenance of the Transparency network; the participation in global transparency campaigns such as the Data4betterclimateaction; and activities related to pre-COP26 (All4Climate) and COP26 (C4CA Transparency Group).

3.7 Cross-cutting considerations

Finding 24. The design of the projects took into account gender considerations within the scope of ETF capacity building, and accordingly, the project progress reports and training reports have provided gender-disaggregated data and information where relevant. Contrast was noted in the involvement of women in ETF work and associated capacity building in the AFOLU sector between countries.

137. The design of the projects recognized the need to consider gender as a key issue associated with differential climate-related impacts or vulnerabilities, and how such issues might be reflected in adaptation-related M&R. Additionally, the design of the projects incorporated the need for gender-disaggregated reporting of capacity-development activities. Accordingly, training reports provide gender-disaggregated data on training participation. Training reports from Mongolia reveal that 57 percent of the training recipients were female, in keeping with the high presence of women in ETF-responsible institutions in the AFOLU sector. In contrast, the proportion of female participants in training events in Papua New Guinea lingered at a low 21 percent, reflecting the relatively smaller role women have in ETF work in that country.

138. Basic gender analysis was conducted at the formulation stage of all the CBIT projects under evaluation. The analysis covered possible gender mainstreaming activities such as improving the participation of women (marginal group) in different project activities (meetings, training, coordination processes, etc.) and the development of gender-responsive publications and training materials. The analysis also covered the risks of the hindrance of gender mainstreaming during implementation, with the proposed corrective measure to address the issue through clear communication on gender equality as one of the key elements in tracking the progress of adaption actions. In general, the participation of women has been encouraged in the capacity development activities and working groups such as the GHG-I task force.

139. Contrast was noted between the countries with regards to the involvement of women in ETF work and associated capacity building in the AFOLU sector. The participation of women in the training activities was high in Mongolia at 57 percent but relatively low in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea, both at roughly 21 percent. This cohered with the difference in gender role in ETF work in the respective countries as well as literacy levels; it was evident from desk reviews and stakeholder interviews that women in Mongolia played a very important role, with a larger representation in the ETF-responsible agencies within the AFOLU sector and a higher adult female literacy rate (98.58 percent compared to the adult male literacy rate of 98.18 percent). Whereas women in Cambodia and Papua New Guinea had a much smaller representation in the ETF-responsible agencies and lower adult female literacy rates (70.53 percent against the adult male

literacy rate of 84.47 percent in Cambodia, and 62.81 percent against the adult male literacy rate of 65.63 percent in Papua New Guinea).[20]

140. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project revealed that flexibility in training arrangements influenced gender representation in training events. During the 2019 training events, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, female participation was around 42 to 45 percent depending on the geographical region. In 2020, during the COVID-19 outbreak, female participation in training events improved to more than 50 percent, highlighting how flexible timing and virtual outreach approaches can encourage the engagement of women. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project therefore contributed to gender equality by stimulating women's participation and decision-making, since most of the project ETF champions were female.

141. The CBIT projects under evaluation have ensured that there is a proportionate female representation in the PSCs, and other groups or committees established for the oversight and implementation of the projects. In the case of Mongolia, female representation in these committees/groups exceeded that of male representation, in keeping with the high level of women present in ETF-responsible agencies in the country. Women made up 36 percent of the targeted users of the transparency network[21] established by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project to disseminate updates and facilitate discussions and exchange of expertise between ETF practitioners in the AFOLU sector from different countries.

Finding 25. The CBIT projects, by design and in scope, have no direct bearing on Indigenous Peoples, rural employment, and environmental and social safeguards.

142. Aside from gender, cross-cutting considerations with regards to Indigenous Peoples, rural employment, and environmental and social safeguards did not apply, as the projects were essentially technical assistance projects with no physical investments or direct interactions with local communities in any specific location. However, the possibility of indirect effects was recognized in the project documents, given that ETF would influence the management of the AFOLU sector, which plays a key role in the economic development and supports the traditional livelihoods of many local communities. Engagement with civil society organizations, including through inclusion in PSCs, were taken into account during project implementation, as in the case of Papua New Guinea, where the vast majority of people are indigenous and 97 percent of the land is under customary tenure with customary rights recognized by the Constitution. All said and done, CBIT projects are intended to lead to improved environmental conditions for climate change-mitigation and adaptation, and are expected to have net social, economic and environmental benefits for local communities in the long term as a result of better management of GHG emissions and climate-change impacts.

3.8 Project performance ratings

143. The overall performance of the CBIT projects under this evaluation is rated "satisfactory" for the national CBIT projects and "highly satisfactory" for the global CBIT-AFOLU project. Table 7 shows ratings against individual criterion/subcriterion for each project under this evaluation.

[20] Literacy rates are cited from the country data given in CountryEconomy (n.d.).

[21] The transparency network has more than 715 targeted users from around 90 countries across the world.

Table 7. Project ratings by evaluation criteria and subcriteria

GEF criteria/subcriteria[1]	Rating				Summary comment
	CAM	MON	PNG	GLO	
A. Relevance					
A1. Overall strategic relevance	H/S	H/S	H/S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.1, paragraphs 35 to 45
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	H/S	H/S	H/S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.1, paragraphs 37 and 38
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities, and beneficiary needs	H/S	H/S	H/S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.1, paragraphs 35, 36, 39, 40, 41 and 42
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.1, paragraphs 40, 41 and 42
B. Effectiveness					
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.2, paragraphs 48 to 76
B1.1 Institutional capacity	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.2, paragraphs 48 to 56
B1.2 Capacity for MRV of emissions, removals and mitigation reduction	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.2, paragraphs 57 to 69
B.1.3 Capacity for M&R of adaptation actions	M/S	S	M/S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.2, paragraphs 70 to 74
C. Efficiency					
C1. Efficiency	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.3, paragraphs 77 to 93
D. Sustainability					
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	M/L	M/L	M/L	M/L	Details available in subsection 3.4, paragraphs 94 to 102
D1.1. Financial sustainability	M/U	M/U	M/U	M	Details available in subsection 3.4, paragraph 96
D1.2. Sociopolitical sustainability	M/L	M/L	M/L	M	Details available in subsection 3.4, paragraphs 94 and 97
D1.3. Institutional and governance sustainability	M/U	M/U	M/U	M	Details available in subsection 3.4, paragraphs 94, 95, and 98 to102
D1.4. Environmental sustainability	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	Not a relevant issue in the context of the project
D2. Catalysis and replication	L	L	L	L	Details available in subsection 3.4, paragraphs 98 to 102
E. Factors affecting project performance					
E1. Project design and readiness[2]	S	S	S	S	Projects were well designed with clearly defined expected project results, and there was a high level of readiness among project stakeholders
E2. Quality of project implementation	M/S	S	M/S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.6, paragraphs 109 to 115
E3 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	S	S	M/S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.6, paragraphs 110 to 113
E4. Financial management and cofinancing	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.6, paragraphs 116 to 122
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	S	S	S	Details available in subsection 3.6, paragraphs 123 to 125
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.6, paragraphs 130 to 133
E7. Quality of monitoring and evaluation	M/S	S	S	S	Details available in subsection 3.6, paragraphs 114 and 115

GEF criteria/subcriteria[1]	Rating				Summary comment
	CAM	MON	PNG	GLO	
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	S	S	S	H/S	Details available in subsection 3.6, paragraphs 109 to 133.
F. Cross-cutting considerations					
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	S	S	S	S	Details available in subsection 3.7, paragraphs 134 to 138
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	S	S	S	S	Details available in subsection 3.7, paragraph 139
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	U/A	U/A	U/A	U/A	Not applicable to the project
Overall project rating	S	S	S	H/S	

Notes:

[1] The rating scheme is explained in Appendix 4.

[2] This refers to factors affecting the project's ability to start as expected, such as the presence of sufficient capacity among executing partners at project launch.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The CBIT projects were well designed and have achieved the project outcomes as set out in the project documents. Going by the CBIT tracking tools, the projects have led to significant improvement in the institutional capacity for ETF and the quality of MRV systems for tracking low GHG development and emissions mitigation. These achievements, however, remain tentative depending on post-project continuity and consolidation of the project results.

Conclusion 2. There is a variance in the quality of project management and execution, with projects that have a dedicated project management team showing better quality of project management and coordination with project stakeholders.

Conclusion 3. The CBIT projects have broadened FAO's partnership and provided FAO with the opportunity to work with non-traditional partners, including national climate-change agencies and non-state actors such as academia and youth groups, on ETF capacity building combining FAO's forte on technical matters and that of its partners on institutional issues and advocacy among project stakeholders.

Conclusion 4. The projects have extensively drawn on FAO's experience and in-house resources, including tools and e-learning platforms for data collection, field assessments, delivery of training and follow-up technical support, while also enhancing FAO's in-house capacity to manage and deliver capacity-building projects in partnership with multiple project partners.

Conclusion 5. Going by the responses to the questionnaire survey of the training recipients, the CBIT projects were the main sources of training and technical guidance on ETF for a majority of the trained individuals. Nearly 69 percent of the respondents in Mongolia and 73 percent in Cambodia indicated that the CBIT projects were their only source of ETF-related training.

Conclusion 6. Despite the gains in improved ETF capacity from the CBIT projects and the national commitments to the ETF as a critical part of the Paris Agreement, not many project stakeholders outside the main ETF-responsible agencies see ETF as a priority, given the human resources and financial constraints.

Conclusion 7. Major challenges to sustainability of ETF capacity include staff turnovers and insufficient staff, overdependence on external financing, and inadequate leadership and managerial capacity for ETF outside the national focal agencies for the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Future CBIT projects should consider mechanisms and strategies to institutionalize individual learnings and internalize knowledge and practices within and between the ETF-responsible institutions. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, FAO Country Office, GEF.*

144. While some knowledge transfer is happening informally as a result of shared learning by ETF-trained individuals with their colleagues (see paragraph 100), there are no mechanisms for the systematic knowledge transfer and retention at the institutional level. In order to conserve individual learnings within the institutions and curb the loss of knowledge and skills due to staff turnover, it is vital that future CBIT projects include mechanisms and strategies to institutionalize individual learnings and internalize ETF knowledge within and between the ETF-responsible institutions. For example, knowledge transfer from trained staff to other staff without ETF training

through echo seminars,[22] on-the-job teamwork and communities of practice[23] could be useful. Another mechanism could be to integrate ETF modules in climate-change training courses, building on the collaboration with academia, as in the case of the Mongolia CBIT and Global CBIT-AFOLU projects. Knowledge management is also a vital tool for institutionalization of individual learning (more in the next recommendation).

Recommendation 2. Future CBIT projects should devise knowledge management plans that go beyond communication and information sharing and encompass a detailed analysis of good practices, lessons and mechanisms for institutionalization of knowledge. It will also be useful to include knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) surveys in future CBIT knowledge management strategies/plans. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, GEF*.

145. While it is acknowledged that good communication is important to highlight the progress and achievements of the projects, generate positive perception of the projects, and leverage support to reinforce and sustain results of the projects, it is also important to analyse and document in detail good practices and lessons learned to help improve the design and implementation of future CBIT projects. While country case studies in brief are useful to stimulate interest and create awareness, more detailed versions elaborating the good practices and lessons learned are needed for the more discerning audience with a deeper interest than basic information. It is important to establish knowledge repositories and networking to curb knowledge loss as a result of trained and experienced individuals leaving or changing their jobs, which was a key challenge faced by the CBIT projects. The online repository of ETF knowledge and products, and the global transparency network established by the Global CBIT-AFOLU project could be replicated at the country level.

146. Another key aspect to be considered in the CBIT projects is the examination of change in knowledge, attitudes and practices of the project stakeholders towards ETF as a result of the projects. Conducting KAP surveys during project design will help sharpen the project interventions and, towards the end of the project, help identify remaining gaps which can then be taken into account in the formulation of project sustainability plans/exit strategies.

Recommendation 3. Develop a broader collection of country case studies on good ETF practices and lessons learned from different countries across regions, integrate them into training courses and materials, and share them in global, regional and national CBIT workshops. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, FAO Country Office*.

147. Building on the experience from the first cluster of CBIT projects, develop a broader collection of country case studies on good practices and lessons with adherence to internationally accepted criteria. The good practices of CBIT projects will need to be examined, refined and elaborated with respect to the various factors that make a good practice. As emphasized earlier, the country case studies need to provide a detailed analysis of the good practices and lessons learned. An extensive and diverse collection of country case studies from ETF/CBIT implementation would be very valuable resources for promoting good ETF practices and sharing lessons between CBIT projects

[22] An echo seminar is generally an event for trained participants to present and discuss their learning with colleagues who have not received the same training. Additionally, it could help trained participants and colleagues with no training to discuss and chart out ways to jointly apply the learning and catalyse teamwork.

[23] A community of practice is a group of people who share an interest or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better through regular interactions and the exchange of ideas and insights.

and ETF practitioners through learning programs and CBIT workshops/ meetings at the global, regional and national levels.

Recommendation 4. CBIT projects need to address the functional capacity for ETF at managerial and institutional leadership levels to foster the use of strengthened institutional arrangements and technical capacity of mid-level professionals and practitioners. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, GEF*.

148. As mentioned earlier, interagency issues over data sharing and ETF tasks persisted, despite strengthened institutional arrangement and technical capacity at the operational level. The foci of the CBIT projects have been largely on developing technical capacity and strengthening collaboration between mid-level professionals and practitioners in the central agencies and at subnational levels. From the SSIs of project stakeholders, it was discerned that it was equally important to focus on building the functional capacity of policy makers and people higher up in the chain of ETF process to strengthen leadership, advocacy and the managerial capacity for ETF within all key agencies that have a role in the ETF process at the national and subnational levels. Currently, in the countries with national CBIT projects under this evaluation, this kind of capacity tends to be found only among a few senior government officials who are designated as national focal points to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Functional capacity development for ETF has been largely limited to basic awareness-raising workshops and sessions. Generally speaking, functional capacity underpins or supports technical capacity; where functional capacity is limited, there are difficulties in operating technical capacity. For instance, operational challenges such as hesitancy in data collection and sharing among certain agencies or sectors persist in certain national settings as people in charge of relevant institutions have little aptitude for ETF leadership and management. On the other hand, individuals trained in the technical aspects of ETF will be in a better situation to collect and share data where there is strong leadership and managerial capacity for ETF. Furthermore, functional capacity development is important, as people at the helm of institutions change when new governments are formed due to election results.

Recommendation 5. Develop and pursue a hybrid training approach, combining virtual and in-person modalities of training, depending on training needs, in future capacity building projects. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office*.

149. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project has particularly amassed considerable capacity-building experience using virtual approaches and tools in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the post-COVID-19 situation, a composite training approach combining virtual and in-person modalities of training in mutually reinforcing ways would be the way to go, building on the lessons and insights from the experience of conducting virtual training in response to the pandemic situation. This would also be useful for countries where the security situation is not conducive for in-person training. Furthermore, this is expected to reduce the carbon footprint associated with classic training activities that involve travel and hotel stays.

Recommendation 6. All CBIT projects and GEF enabling activities for NC/BUR/BTR preparation should seek to synchronize in terms of time frame and process to bring about immediate hands-on benefits. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, GEF*.

150. Where CBIT project support was provided in tandem with the NC/BUR preparation process, as in the case of Papua New Guinea, it was able to bring synergy and generate more immediate and hands-on benefits in the form of concurrent capacity for the preparation of enhanced NCs and BURs. The result was two BURs – BUR1 in 2019 and BUR2 in 2022 – within the project period with enhanced information and data, including the REDD+ Technical Annex. FAO will have to flag the need and rationale for harmonization of the time frame and process of CBIT projects and NC/BUR/BTR projects with the donor agency(ies).

Recommendation 7. Assess the lessons and outcomes of collaboration with academic and research institutions and engagement with youth in ETF capacity building, and based on the findings, further strengthen engagements with them in future projects, building on the experience of the Mongolia CBIT and Global CBIT-AFOLU projects. *Tor the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, FAO Country Office*.

151. The CBIT project in Mongolia effectively linked with universities and research institutes, entering into partnerships with them to strengthen information, knowledge and methods for ETF. It will be useful to assess the lessons from, and effectiveness of the engagement of the CBIT projects with the academic and research institutes, not only in terms of delivery of project results but also with respect to the prospects of sustaining the ETF processes and capacity over the long term. Similarly, engagement with youth in ETF initiated through the Global CBIT-AFOLU project is an interesting aspect that merits more emphasis in the future, given the potential role of youth as innovators, drivers of change, generators of awareness, and their participation in academia and research. Based on the findings of the assessment, collaboration with academia and youth in the area of ETF capacity building could be further strengthened.

Recommendation 8. Explore and develop sustainable financing mechanisms for ETF, including financial incentives that reward national emission reductions informed by data derived in accordance with ETF standards. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, GEF*.

152. Institutional arrangements and technical capacity for ETF strengthened through the CBIT projects remain tentative as the current capacity and level of engagement in ETF is hugely dependent on external financing. There is a need to look at bringing in innovative and sustainable ways of financing ETF implementation, including the potential of engaging with the private sector and accessing international financial incentives through ETF work. It is noted that the Cambodia and Papua New Guinea CBIT projects have contributed to the development of REDD+ Technical Annexes as a part of the BUR process, making the two countries eligible for a GCF Results-based Payment Pilot Program. While it is learned that the GCF Results-based Payment Pilot Program's USD 500 million envelope has been swiftly exhausted, there are new initiatives including the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) and Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART) that open up financing opportunities dependent on the quality of ETF work. Furthermore, at COP26, the UNFCCC strengthened the key elements of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, establishing terms under which public and private entities could more easily trade carbon credits. While ETF financing is beyond the scope of the CBIT projects, it would be useful for future CBIT projects to sensitize project stakeholders on the fact that increased ETF capacity and higher standards of ETF work would strengthen the ability of governments to secure international financial incentives. This could be a matter of conducting a session on ETF-related international financial incentives in ETF training workshops. If ETF can lead to increased financing, governments will be more enthused to invest in ETF capacity building.

Recommendation 9. Promote cost-effective tools and methods of data collection, sharing, analysis and reporting. To *the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, FAO Country Office*.

153. As evident from the subsection on sustainability, funding and human resources constraints are major issues. It is, therefore, recommended that CBIT projects continue to build on existing ETF resources and integrate cost-effective measures, such as proxy data or indicators that sufficiently meet ETF standards and requirements. Institutional arrangements also need to increasingly look into institutional mechanisms that are inexpensive to sustain. In this regard, there is a need to assess the functioning of the technical working groups and other institutional mechanisms set up for ETF purposes after the conclusion of the projects. Such an assessment would indicate the directions for consolidating the institutional arrangements.

Recommendation 10. Consider a programmatic approach for future CBIT projects under the GEF-8 cycle. *To the attention of: FAO OCB, FAO Regional Office, GEF*.

154. FAO could pursue with GEF for a global CBIT programme comprising several country-level child CBIT projects or two to three regional CBIT programmes with a relatively smaller number of country-level child CBIT projects. This would facilitate a cohesive and holistic approach to ETF capacity building, linking global ETF resources and expertise with country-level capacity development needs while also enlarging opportunities for inter-country linkages and synergy, including exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise.

5. Lessons learned

Lesson 1. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided the projects with the experience and insights for a composite approach to future training, combining virtual and in-person training with due consideration of their comparative strengths and weaknesses.

155. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the way capacity-building services are delivered. Virtual training and webinars, which were earlier seen as optional or supplementary training methods, have become major modalities for capacity building in the wake of the pandemic. In particular, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project has provided FAO with a very good practical understanding of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of virtual training vis á vis in-person training. For instance, virtual training is seen as having the advantage of being low cost, the ability to reach out to more people and countries, and the flexibility in scheduling sessions/modules, whereas in-person training allows for creating a better rapport and teamwork among the participants, direct exchange of knowledge and experience, and hands-on delivery of technical concepts and methods. Experience and lessons from the CBIT projects suggest that future technical capacity building would benefit from a composite approach that combines virtual and in-person training, depending on the objectives of the capacity-building. Virtual training would work for awareness building, sensitization and knowledge dissemination, but where the objective is to impart hands-on skills, such as navigation of tools and use of maps and data, and where internet connectivity is still not well-developed, in-person training is deemed more effective. Given the carbon footprint associated with classical in-person training, a composite approach would be congruous with the image and mission of both the GEF and FAO as leading global organizations endeavouring to improve the environment and mitigate climate change.

Lesson 2. Country case studies can be effectively used as tools for training and knowledge sharing.

156. Country case studies on successful transparency-related activities from Mongolia and Papua New Guinea were used by the national as well as global CBIT projects as tools to demonstrate good ETF practices and highlight experiences from the field. The country case studies took stock of the ETF processes and highlighted their results, success factors, challenges, replicability and scaling up potential. They also showed linkages between the national reporting, for instance the National Forest Monitoring System in Papua New Guinea and ETF, which is apparent among the foresters but less obvious to climate change experts.

Lesson 3. The academic and research institutions have a very crucial role in ETF and related capacity-building.

157. Experience from the Mongolia CBIT and Global CBIT-AFOLU projects accentuate the important role of the academic and research institutions in ETF and related capacity development. Academia had a significant role in the Mongolia CBIT project. Seven of the fifteen LOAs were with academic institutes. It is postulated that engagement with academic and research institutions may be a more effective and sustainable way of building capacity in ETF work, as academicians and researchers generally have a different outlook than their government counterparts. For them, training and research are an intrinsic part of their job, and building their research outreach and capacity is important for career advancement. The Global CBIT-AFOLU project has an "Academia for Transparency" initiative comprising a complete programme of capacity building with a group of seven universities in Zimbabwe led and supported by the Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology. The application of ETF tools and resources also provide academia with opportunities to update their knowledge and skills for data collection and analysis in keeping with international standards and norms.

Lesson 4. Broad partnerships and effective stakeholder engagement are key to successful ETF capacity building and implementation as ETF expertise and mandates cut across several sectors.

158. The expertise and mandate for data collection, transfer, analysis and reporting, and ETF capacity-building are spread over several agencies, both horizontally (between sector agencies and statistical authorities), and vertically (between national and subnational agencies). This, therefore, calls for continued engagement and coordination with multiple agencies.

Lesson 5. Knowledge management can enhance the sustainability of project results, but it needs to go beyond communication, advocacy and information sharing.

159. Knowledge management is a crucial feature of any project, and more so in projects where capacity building to improve knowledge is a central objective. As explained earlier, the national CBIT projects have undertaken knowledge management primarily as a "communication, advocacy and information-sharing" exercise and there is a need to recognize the value of knowledge management in the sustainability of project results at a deeper level.

Lesson 6. Good internet connectivity is crucial to ETF capacity building and successful implementation of ETF tools.

160. With a large amount of ETF knowledge and tools now being available on various online platforms, it is clear that good internet connectivity is a prerequisite. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has also shown the importance of internet connectivity. While the Global CBIT-AFOLU project, with access to good internet connectivity and in-house information and communication technology expertise, could show major gains through virtual modes of ETF capacity building, the national CBIT projects had limited success with the virtual approach, and in certain instances even had to abandon a few subnational-level training events due to poor internet connectivity and ineptitude for virtual training among training providers as well as training recipients.

Lesson 7. Technical assistance projects of the like of CBIT projects intrinsically experience challenges in eliciting national buy-in and establishing active partnership during the implementation phase.

161. Despite their global and national worth, and commitment by governments to implement the Paris Agreement, technical assistance projects of the like of CBIT projects with no physical investments and modest funding intrinsically experienced challenges in eliciting national buy-in and establishing active partnership during the implementation phase, even when there was willingness and support from the project stakeholders during the project design phase.

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United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). 2020. *Reference Manual for the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement,* New York.

Online Materials

Website on FAO's capacity development work with links to materials, tools and learning courses www.fao.org/capacity-development/en/?page=2&ipp=10

Website of FAO's elearning academy https://elearning.fao.org/

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Role	Organization
Mongolia[24]			
Battur	Dashnyam	Technical Specialist	CBIT Project
Munkhnasan		Specialist	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry
Ankhbayar		Senior Specialist	Agency for Land Administration and Management, Geodesy and Cartography
Dagvadorj		Director	Climate Change and Development Authority
Saruulzaya		Researcher	Mongolia Academy of Sciences
Munkhjargal		Senior Specialist	Ministry of Economic Development
Urankhaich		Researcher	Mongolian University of Life Sciences
Gerelmaa		Researcher	Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre
Bazarkhand		Consultant	CBIT Project
Gombo	Nyamjargal	Assistant FAO Representative	
Gankhuyag		Researcher	Mongolia National Federation of Pasture User Groups (member of the AFOLU technical committee)
Dul		Member of the AFOLU technical committee	Agency for Land Administration and Management, Geodesy and Cartography
Batjargal		UNFCCC Focal Point in Mongolia	
Narangarvuu		UNFCCC Focal Point in Mongolia	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Sanjjav	Dolgorsuren	Project Coordinator	CBIT Project
Myagmar		Consultant (member of the AFOLU technical committee)	Plant Protection Research Institute
Batkhising		Director (member of the AFOLU technical committee)	Environmental Database Department, Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment
Udval		Director (member of AFOLU technical committee)	Animal Husbandry Research Institute
Ariuntsetseg		NDC focal point of Bayan-Ulgii aimag	
Tserenkhand		NDC focal point of Zavkhan aimag	

[24] Apart from the above persons, 59 training recipients in Mongolia responded to the questionnaire survey on relevance, application and dissemination of the learning from the CBIT training.

Last name	First name	Role	Organization
Solongo		NDC focal point of Arkhangai aimag	
Bat-Ulzii		NDC focal point of Uvurkhangai aimag	
Papua New Guinea[25]			
Abe	Hitofumi	Chief Technical Advisor	FAO
Hasagama	Paul	Project Coordinator	CBIT Project
Luda	Oala		CBIT Project (on deputation from the PNG Forest Authority)
Cambodia			
Somany	Mam	Chief of Office	General Directorate of Animal Health and Production (GDAHP)
Chanthy	Pol	Deputy Director	Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI)
Wilkes	Andreas	GHG Inventory Programme (international)	New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre (NZAGRC)
Sokhim	Pich	Deputy of Office	Department of Climate Change (Ministry of Environment)
Chanthoeun	Heng	Deputy Director	General Directorate of Policy and Strategy, Ministry of Environment
Sophal	Leang	National Project Coordinator (Overall and F-C1)	CBIT project team
Than	So	AFOLU Technical Expert (Climate Change Mitigation) (F-C2)	CBIT project team
ISiveun	Nhak	National M&E Climate Change Adaptation Specialist (F-C3)	CBIT project team
Global CBIT-AFOLU			
Salvatore	Mirella		FAO Office of Climate, Biodiversity and Environment
Galbiati	Giulia Maria		FAO Office of Climate, Biodiversity and Environment
Naito	Yurie		FAO Office of Climate, Biodiversity and Environment
Zhak	Iryna		FAO Office of Climate, Biodiversity and Environment
Martin	Beau	Lead Technical Officer	FAO Southeast Asia Region

[25] According to the external stakeholders' preference, their respective organizations are listed, rather than the names of individuals.

People interviewed in organizations in Papua New Guinea

1. Climate Change and Development Authority (two stakeholders)
2. PNG Forest Authority (REDD+ and Climate Change Branch), PSC Co-chair
3. PNG Forest Authority (REDD+ and Climate Change Branch)
4. Department of Agriculture and Livestock, PSC member
5. Department of Lands and Physical Planning, PSC member
6. Conservation and Environment Protection Authority, PSC member
7. New Britain Palm Oil (private sector), PSC member
8. Wildlife Conservation Society (NGO), PSC member
9. National Statistics Office, PSC member
10. National Statistics Office
11. UPNG, member of the AFOLU TWC & NDC Consultant

Appendix 2. Reviewed documents

Mongolia

Detailed plans on trainings and workshops, 2020 and 2021

GEF-CBIT Tracking Tool, updated 2022

Knowledge Management Plan 2021

List of LOAs with project partners

List of trainings and workshops, June 2021

Minutes of the Extended Technical Working Group Meeting on Key Measures' Progress and Outcomes, 2 October 2020

Minutes of Project Steering Committee meetings

PowerPoint slides on Project Achievements, Follow-up Plan and Work Plan for the Joint Supervision Meeting of the Mongolia CBIT Project, 19 May 2021

Project Case Study (4-page brief), 2019

Project Document, 2018

Project Inception Report 2019

Project Implementation Reports, July 2019–June 2020, July 2020–June 2021, and July 2021–June 2021

Project Progress Reports, April–December 2019 and June–December 2020

Training Report on Land Use and Land Use Change Assessment (undated)

Training Report on the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework in the AFOLU sector of Mongolia, 20–22 May 2020

Papua New Guinea

Baseline AFOLU sector ETF Readiness Assessment (undated)

Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry Assessment 2020, Concept Note and Work Plan

List of Trainings and Workshops, June 2021

Minutes of Project Steering Committee meetings

National Forest Monitoring System Case Study (2-page brief), 2021

Progress Report on Collect Earth Working Session for Forest Disturbance and Canopy Cover of Papua New Guinea, February–March 2021.

Project Document, 2018

Project Inception Report 2019

Project Implementation Reports, July 2019–June 2020, July 2020–June 2021, and July 2021–June 2021

Project Progress Reports, April–December 2019, January–December 2020, and June–December 2020

Cambodia

Concept Note: Training Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework in Cambodia – 2022

Cofinancing Letters – Cambodia

FAO-GEF-CBIT Project Survey Report – Cambodia 2022

FAO-GEF-CBIT Senior Stakeholders Interview – Cambodia 2022

FAO-GEF-CBIT 6-Months Report July–December 2020 – Cambodia

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Cambodia – Cluster Evaluation GEF-FAO CBIT Project – 2022

GEF CEO Endorsement Document NTE Extension – 2021

GEF 6 CBIT Tracking Tool for Cambodia – 2022

List of Stakeholders CMB –2022

Project Identification Form (PIF) Cambodia

Project Document ProDoc CMB 041.CBT

Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2020

Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2021

Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2022

Global CBIT-AFOLU Project

Annual Project Implementation Report 2020 – FAO

Annual Project Implementation Report 2021 – FAO

Annual Project Implementation Report 2022 – FAO

2nd Project Steering Committee meeting of the "Global capacity-building towards enhanced transparency in the AFOLU sector" (CBIT-AFOLU) project – Summary Report 26 May 2021

Concept Note and Agenda – Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA) – FAO Workshop 5–7 April 2022

Progress Report_6 months_2020 GLO.880.CBT.DOCX

ProDoc GLO.880.CBT.DOCX

AFOLU project progress brochure_2019-2022.pdf – FAO Presentation

Learning from National CBIT-AFOLU countries – FAO Presentation

PLACA Workshop 22 June 2022

Survey National FAO CBIT Projects

Appendix 3. Evaluation matrix

Evaluative criteria/areas	Questions	Methodology
Main criteria (with rating)		
Relevance	**Q1.** Were the projects' design and expected outcomes congruent with: i) the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies (including CBIT programming directions[26]); ii) the FAO Strategic Framework; iii) the ETF under the Paris Agreement; and iv) country priorities and FAO Country Programming Frameworks? **Q2.** Were the project interventions appropriate to deliver the project outcomes and were they adapted to remain relevant to possible changes in the project's context and operating environment? **Q3.** To what extent did the project interventions respond to the identified ETF institutional and technical capacity gaps and capacity development needs of the participating countries?	• Desk reviews of the project document, project inception report, project implementation reports, GEF and FAO strategic and programming documents, national climate change and relevant sector policies, and strategies and plans; • SSIs of key informants in FAO, PMUs, PSCs and national project executing agencies.
Effectiveness	**Q4.** To what extent have the projects achieved the project objective and outcomes? **Q5.** Which factors explain the performance (achievements and/or delays related to delivery of outcomes)? **Q6.** Were there any unintended/unplanned positive results or adverse impacts? **Q7.** In which way have the institutional and technical capacities to generate share and report data increased with respect to ETF? **Q8.** How have the target beneficiaries applied developed tools, knowledge, skills and information for ETF, and what were the results of their application? **Q9.** Have the target beneficiaries disseminated/shared the acquired tools, knowledge, skills and information with other potential users, and if so, in what ways did they do that? **Q10.** Were the hardware and equipment provided by the project appropriate, and how have they been used? **Q11.** What best practices and lessons have been generated by the project interventions, and how have they been shared?	• Desk review of PIRs, PPRs, PSC meeting reports, CBIT tracking tools (updated) and other relevant reports informing project progress/achievements and related issues including the FAO-CBIT portfolio review 2021; • Desk review of training and workshop reports and materials; • Desk review of tools and resources developed/used by the projects; • Desk review of knowledge products and communication materials; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs and national executing partner agencies; • FGDs with specific groups such as technical working groups established for ETF or group of subnational land administration officers (will vary from project to project); • Questionnaire surveys of training/technical support recipients.

[26] https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.50.06_CBIT_Programming_Directions_0.pdf

Evaluative criteria/areas	Questions	Methodology
Efficiency	**Q12.** Were the project's work plans and budgets implemented on time as per plan? **Q13.** Were there instances where the project required more than the planned budget, and how was the additional budget met? **Q14.** Were there cost savings, and how were they used? **Q15.** Did the project make use of pre-existing related projects and other initiatives, internal FAO work, partnerships, networks, tools and other synergies/complementarities to increase project efficiency? **Q16.** Was the project able to link and coordinate with the ETF reporting process (NC/BUR) of the participating countries, and how was that achieved? **Q17.** How did the national and global CBIT projects link, coordinate and develop complementarities? **Q18.** How efficiently have the funds been disbursed and the use of funds been accounted for? **Q19.** How efficiently were the cofinancing mobilized and used in project implementation?	• Desk review of project documents, project inception report, PIRs, PPRs, PSC meeting reports, and other relevant reports informing project implementation and related issues; • Desk review of project budget, fund flow, expenditure reports and cofinancing information; • Desk review of project audit reports; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs and national executing partner agencies.
Sustainability	**Q20.** What is the extent and likelihood that the capacity development outcomes will continue after the end of the project? **Q21.** What factors (institutional, financial, social and environmental) will influence the sustainability of the project outcomes? **Q22.** What mechanisms are in place to manage the above sustainability factors and ensure that the project outcomes sustain beyond the conclusion of the project?	• Desk review of project documents, PIRs, PPRs, PSC meeting reports and other relevant documents that inform project sustainability including a FAO-CBIT portfolio review; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs and national executing partner agencies; • FGDs with specific groups such as established technical working groups; • Questionnaire survey of project beneficiaries.
Progress to impact	**Q23.** To what extent have the projects enhanced the understanding and capacity of countries to implement the ETF? **Q24.** To what extent can likely long-term impacts be attributed to the project? **Q25.** Are there impacts and beneficiaries that extend beyond the project's scope? **Q26.** Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards achieving long-term impact?	• Construction of TOCs based on a desk review of project documents, PIRs and PPRs; • Desk review of ETF reporting (NCs/BURs) done by the participating countries during the course of project implementation; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs and national executing partner agencies; • Questionnaire survey of project beneficiaries.

Evaluative criteria/areas	Questions	Methodology
Other evaluation areas (without rating)		
Project implementation and execution	**Q27.** To what extent did FAO deliver on project preparation (quality of design), oversight and supervision? **Q28.** How well were the project implementation risks identified and managed? **Q29.** To what extent did the PMUs effectively discharge their role and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project? **Q30.** Was the project governance and supervision model comprehensive, clear and appropriate? **Q31.** To what extent did the expected cofinancing materialize, and what was the impact on project implementation and the delivery of results? **Q32.** To what extent did the project coordinate and collaborate with other relevant actors, and what were the benefits of the cooperation?	• Desk review of project documents, PIRs, PPRs, PSC meeting reports, project knowledge management and communication plans, and other relevant documents that inform project implementation including LOAs/MOAs with project partners; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs, national executing partner agencies, and collaborating agencies such as UNDP, UNEP, US-EPA, PATPA and bilateral agencies.
Monitoring and evaluation	**Q33.** Were the results matrices/frameworks adequate to address the project's M&E needs? **Q34.** Were the results indicators and targets SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound)? **Q35.** Was the M&E implemented as planned, and how were the M&E findings and recommendations addressed by the project? **Q36.** How did the project benefit from M&E findings and recommendations?	• Desk review of the project's documents against FAO-GEF requirements and good practices; • Review of the results framework and the reporting done against the results indicators and targets; • Review of M&E reports; • SSIs of PMU staff and project executing partners.
Stakeholder engagement	**Q37.** Did the project succeed in stakeholder engagement, paying attention to gender, civil society organizations, private sector, academia and Indigenous Peoples?	• Desk review of project documents, PIRs, PPRs, and PSC meeting reports; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs and national executing partner agencies.
Environmental and social safeguards	**Q38.** To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the projects?	• Desk review of project documents, PIRs, and PPRs; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs, and national executing partner agencies.
Gender	**Q39.** To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in the design and implementation, including reporting of the project? **Q40.** Did the project contribute to enhancing the role of women in the context of ETF?	• Desk review of project documents, PIRs and PPRs; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs and national executing partner agencies.
Knowledge management	**Q41.** Have the projects developed a knowledge management and communication plan?	• Desk review of project documents, PIRs, PPRs, and knowledge

Evaluative criteria/areas	Questions	Methodology
	Q42. How did the projects assess, document and share their results, lessons learned and experiences? **Q43.** To what extent are the knowledge and communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling-up of project results?	management and communication plans; • Desk review of knowledge products such as case studies on good practices and lessons learned; • Review of online knowledge resources produced by the project; • SSIs of key informants in PMUs, PSCs and national executing partner agencies.

Appendix 4. Rating scheme

PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes:

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	The level of achieved outcomes clearly exceeded expectations and/or there were no shortcomings.
Satisfactory (S)	The level of achieved outcomes was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	The level of achieved outcomes was more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	The level of achieved outcomes was somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	The level of achieved outcomes was substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	Only a negligible level of outcomes was achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow for an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.

During project implementation, the results framework of some projects may have been modified. In cases where modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the evaluator should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is taken into account and despite achievement of results as per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

The quality of implementation and execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation pertains to the role and responsibilities discharged by the GEF agencies that have direct access to GEF resources. Quality of execution pertains to the roles and responsibilities discharged by the country or regional counterparts that received GEF funds from the GEF agencies and executed the funded activities on ground. The performance will be rated on a six-point scale:

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** met expectations.
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** more or less met expectations.
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** was somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** was substantially lower than expected.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in the quality of **implementation** or **execution**.
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow for an assessment of the quality of **implementation** or **execution**.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The quality of the project's M&E will be assessed in terms of design and implementation.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability will be assessed taking into account the risks related to the financial, sociopolitical, institutional and environmental sustainability of project outcomes. The evaluator may also take other risks into account that may affect sustainability. The overall sustainability will be assessed using a four-point rating scale:

Rating	**Description**
Likely (L)	There is little or no risk to sustainability.
Moderately likely (ML)	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Moderately unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks to sustainability.
Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks to sustainability.
Unable to assess (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.

Appendix 5. Questionnaire survey results

Questionnaire survey results of recipients of training and technical support from the CBIT Project (Mongolia)

1. Name of the Respondent: _____

(The respondent may stay anonymous if so desired)

Total number of respondents: 59

2. Gender of the respondent

Answer choices	Responses	
Male	45.45%	27
Female	54.55%	32
Total		59

3. Occupation of the respondent (Tick the one that applies)

Answer choices	Responses	
Central government employee	15.15%	9
Subnational government (province [aimag], district)	78.79%	46
Researcher/Academician	3.03%	2
Civil Society/NGO worker	0%	0
Consultant (working for international organizations, domestic NGOs or government institutions)	3.03%	2
Other	0%	0
Total		59

4. In what area/subject did you receive training and technical support from the CBIT project? (Tick all those areas or subjects in which you have received training and technical support)

Answer choices	Responses	
Use of the Open-Foris Collect Earth tool for Land Use and Land-Use Change Assessment	21.21%	13
National Greenhouse Gas Inventory on Climate Change	51.52%	30
2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventory	9.09%	5
Updated Livestock Sample Survey and GLEAM-I model for the Estimation of GHG Emission in Livestock Sector	12.12%	7
Use of Updated Environmental Statistical Sheets	21.21%	13
Application of the QGIS program	15.15%	9
Development of Forest Mask	6.06%	4
Modalities, Procedures and Guidelines for Enhanced Transparency under the Paris Agreement	18.18%	10
MRV Institutional Arrangement and Coordination	6.06%	4
Climate Change Adaptation Measurement (including assessment of climate impacts and vulnerabilities)	51.52%	30
Any other area/topic (please specify)	6.06%	4

5. How relevant was the training and technical support provided by the project to your work? (Choose only one)

Answer choices	Responses	
Highly relevant	48.48%	29
Relevant	42.42%	25
Somewhat relevant	9.09%	5
Not relevant	0%	0
Total		59

6. Were you able to use the knowledge and skills acquired from the training and technical support provided by the project in your actual work situation?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	81.82%	48
No	18.18%	11
Total		59

7. In what ways were you able to use the knowledge and skills acquired from the project in your actual work situation? (Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Improved collection and analysis of data	46.15%	27
Improved institutional coordination, datasharing and reporting	11.54%	7
Improved planning and decision-making for climate change mitigation and adaptation	65.38%	39
Quality assurance of data collection, analysis and reporting	19.23%	11
Training of other potential users	11.54%	7
Any other ways	0%	0

8. What were the reasons for your inability to use the acquired knowledge and skills in your actual work situation? (Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Change in job responsibilities	46.88%	28
Lack of opportunity	18.75%	11
Lack of support and cooperation from the supervisor	6.25%	4
The acquired knowledge and skills were inadequate	6.25%	4
Equipment, materials and technology necessary for application of the knowledge and tools were not available	18.75%	11
Any other reason	12.50%	7

9. Did you impart (use) the knowledge and skills acquired from the training and technical support provided by the project to others?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	75%	44
No	25%	15
Total		59

10. To whom did you impart the knowledge and skills acquired from the project?
(Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Colleagues in the same office/ organization	62.50%	37
Potential users in other offices/ organizations	33.33%	20
Any other (please specify)	8.33%	5

11. How did you impart the knowledge and skills acquired from the project?
(Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Conducted a training session or workshop	29.17%	17
On-the-job knowledge transfer while working together	75%	44
Shared written training materials and tools	29.17%	17
Any other ways	0%	0

12. What were the reasons for not imparting the knowledge and skills acquired from the project? (Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Lack of interest among colleagues	18.75%	11
Lack of support from the supervisor	18.75%	11
Lack of self-awareness about the need or importance of imparting the acquired knowledge and skills to others	15.63%	9
Lack of self-confidence to impart the acquired knowledge and skills to others	9.38%	6
Other	37.50%	22
Total		59

13. Have you received training and technical support related to enhanced transparency in climate change management from other agencies or projects since 2019?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	31.25%	18
No	68.75%	41
Total		59

Questionnaire Survey Results of Recipients of Training and Technical Support from CBIT Project (Cambodia)

1. Name of the Respondent: _____

(The respondent may stay anonymous if so desired)

Total number of respondents: 39

2. Gender of the Respondent

Answer choices	Responses	
Male	**74.4%**	**28**
Female	**20.5%**	**9**
Non-binary	**5.1%**	**2**
Total		39

3. Occupation of the Respondent (Tick the one that applies)

Answer choices	Responses	
Central government employee	65.2%	27
Subnational government (province (aimag), district)	0%	0
Researcher/Academician	15.1%	6
Civil society/NGO worker	0%	0
Consultant (working for international organizations, domestic NGOs or government institutions)	2.5%	1
Other	12.6%	5
Total		39

4. In what area/subject did you receive training and technical support from the CBIT project? (Tick all those areas or subjects in which you have received training and technical support)

Answer choices	Responses	
IPCC inventory software	7.5%	3
GHG inventory	42.5%	17
2006 IPCC Guidelines	52.5%	21
GHG emission estimation	40%	16
Climate change adaptation monitoring and evaluation and reporting under the ETF requirement in Cambodia	22.5%	9
Institutional Strengthening on Climate Change Adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation	30%	12
Institutional arrangements for GHG inventory	10%	4
Modalities, procedures and guidelines for enhanced transparency under the Paris Agreement	45.0%	18
Development of climate actions of AFOLU for Cambodia's NDC Update 2020	17.5%	7
Reporting under the ETF framework	15%	6
Reporting of AFOLU climate actions under the Cambodia's NDC Update	37.5%	15
FOLU scenario development for the Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality	25%	10
Crop mapping using machine learning	17.5%	7
Facilitating the improvement of Activity Data (AD) and Emission Factor (EF) on the livestock sector and moving emission estimation to a higher tier through technical support	30%	12
Other training or technical support received (besides the above-mentioned)	20%	8
BTR roadmap tools	12.5%	5
AFOLU data collection and archiving	20%	8
Inventory Management	12.5%	5
Use of Collect Earth tool for Land Use and Land Use Change Assessment	12.5%	5

5. How relevant was the training and technical support provided by the project to your work? (Choose only one)

Answer choices	Responses	
Highly relevant	5%	2
Mostly relevant	57.5%%	23
Somewhat relevant	27.5%	11
Very little relevant	5%	2
Not relevant	2.5%	1
Total		39

6. Were you able to use the knowledge and skills acquired from the training and technical support provided by the project in your actual work situation?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	75%	30
No	25%	9
Total		39

7. In what ways were you able to use the knowledge and skills acquired from the project in your actual work situation? (Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Improved planning and decision-making for climate change mitigation and adaptation	37.5%	15
Improved institutional coordination, data sharing and reporting	32.5%	13
Improved collection and analysis of data	37.5%	15
Quality assurance of data collection, analysis and reporting	22.5%	9
Training of other potential users	25.0%	10
Other ways of using knowledge and skills	17.5%	7

8. What were the reasons for your inability to use the acquired knowledge and skills in your actual work situation? (Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Equipment, materials and technology necessary for application of the knowledge and tools were not available	5%	2
Other reasons	5%	2
Change in job responsibilities	10%	4
Lack of opportunity	7.5%	3
Lack of support and cooperation from the supervisor	15%	6
The acquired knowledge and skills were inadequate	5%	2

9. Did you impart (use) the knowledge and skills acquired from the training and technical support provided by the project to others?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	85%	33
No	15%	15
Total		39

10. To whom did you impart the knowledge and skills acquired from the project?
(Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Colleagues in the same office/organization	75%	30
Potential users in other offices/organizations	30%	12
Other individuals or institutions	7.5%	3

11. How did you impart the knowledge and skills acquired from the project?
(Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
On-the-job knowledge transfer while working together	25%	10
Shared written training materials and tools	42.5%	17
Conducted a training session or workshop	42.5%	17
Other ways of imparting that acquired knowledge and skills to others	10%	4

12. What were the reasons for not imparting the knowledge and skills acquired from the project?
(Choose all that apply)

Answer choices	Responses	
Th necessary equipment, materials and technology for applying the knowledge and tools were not available	5%	2
Other reasons	5%	2
Change in job responsibilities	10%	4
Lack of opportunity	75%	3
Lack of support and cooperation from the supervisor	15%	6
The acquired knowledge and skills were inadequate	5%	2
Total		

13. Have you received training and technical support related to enhanced transparency in climate change management from other agencies or projects since 2019?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	27%	11
No	73%	28
Total		39

Appendix 6. Key CBIT project country findings

Mongolia

Project strengthening capacity in the agriculture and land-use sectors for enhanced transparency in the implementation and monitoring of Mongolia's Nationally Determined Contribution
FAO ID GCP/MON/016/CBT
GEF ID 9834
FAO was the implementing agency of this project, which has a budget of USD 1 million. The executing partner agency was the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
The project ran from January 2019 to September 2022.

Evaluation findings

The project directly supported the implementation of the Green Development Policy 2014–2030, which is the primary basis for the country's NDC. In addition, the project aligns with the following national policies: Sustainable Development Vision 2030, the National Action Program on Climate Change (2011–2021), the National Agriculture Development Policy (2010–2021), the State Policy on Forestry 2016–2030, Recommendations of the Environmental Performance Review (2017), and Recommendations of the National Report on the Rangeland Health of Mongolia (2015).

The evaluation questionnaire survey of recipients of training and technical support provided by the project revealed that a large majority – more than 90 percent – of them found the training/technical support to be "relevant" or "highly relevant" to their organizational roles and individual capacity development needs (see Table 4). Only a small portion of the respondents reported the training/technical support as being "somewhat relevant" and none of the respondents to the questionnaire survey reported that the training/technical support provided by the projects was "not relevant".

The evaluation found the project to have been effective overall.

The CBIT project has carried out capacity gaps and needs assessment of two key institutions for ETF in the country – Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre and the National Committee for Climate Change and Combatting Desertification. Based on this assessment, it has developed institutional capacity in terms of technical equipment, tools and methodological guidance.

To improve coordination between different institutions for data sharing and analysis in the AFOLU sector in Mongolia, data flow and data providers for Tier 1 reporting have been identified and assessed as a part of the stakeholder coordination mapping exercise. An agreed plan for stakeholder coordination and involvement on a regular basis as per ETF reporting requirements is also in place. Furthermore, the Climate Change Monitoring Plan (CCMP) for the AFOLU sector in Mongolia has been formulated based on a desk review of IPCC guidelines, ETF modalities, processes and guidelines (MPGs) and other relevant materials. Upon approval, the CCMP for the AFOLU sector will be integrated into the National Climate Change Monitoring Plan, National MRV system, and other regulatory documents as guided by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Based on the CCMP and assessments of institutional arrangements, regulations on data coordination and provision for GHG inventory in the AFOLU sector are being developed in close consultation with ETF-responsible agencies. Multistakeholder engagement for ETF has been strengthened through the institution of a technical working group at the central level and an informal MRV working group, comprising provincial NDC focal points, at the subnational levels (aimags[27] and Ulaanbaatar

[27] An aimag is a province in Mongolia. There are 21 aimags in the country.

provincial municipality). The project facilitated the engagement of these groups in the development of the AFOLU MRV Framework and the CCMP for the AFOLU sector that are consistent with ETF requirements, and in discussions on the coordination and improvement of GHG emission estimations in keeping with the IPCC guidelines.

The project in Mongolia also delivered training on strengthening understanding for improved institutional arrangement and coordination at the national and subnational levels. This included basic training on the improvement of institutional arrangements and coordination for data collection, sharing and reporting in the AFOLU sector as a part of the national GHG inventory and MPGs for ETF, and training to enhance climate-related decision-making within the context of NDC implementation and ETF reporting. As per the training recipients' questionnaire survey, 16 percent of the respondents in Mongolia regarded training in MPGs for ETF and MRV institutional arrangements and coordination as being among the areas of significant training delivered by the CBIT project. The survey also revealed that 11.5 percent of the respondents were able to use knowledge and skills from CBIT training for improved institutional coordination, data sharing and reporting, and 65.4 percent for improved planning and decision-making for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The ETF readiness assessment done in Mongolia in 2015 was updated in 2022, and in-depth expert recommendations for further enhancement were given according to the main sections of the ETF assessment: i) institutional arrangements and capacity; ii) data collection and measurements; iii) analysis and reporting; and iv) verification. Furthermore, the assessment evaluated the ETF readiness in accordance with key priorities that are essential to ETF operationalization, which included legal and policy framework, human capacity, technical capacity, finance, and data readiness.

Building technical capacity for adaptation-related ETF primarily included the development of M&E frameworks and indices for adaptation tracking and reporting, as well as user manuals. The project also provided national stakeholders with equipment and software for adaptation data collection, analysis and archiving.

The short duration of the project, staff shortage and turnover, as well as over-reliance on project funding are major sustainability issues for the project. In Mongolia there was a strong focus on the delivery of training to build the technical capacity of individuals, but many of the trained staff left their jobs. Generally, the CBIT projects have enlarged the technical working groups so that there is a large pool of people involved and trained in the process, which, among other things, enables its continuity even in the event that some of them leave or move on to other jobs. However, technical working groups and committees are generally instituted with project financing and tend to become defunct or tentative in the absence of external financing.

Cambodia

Project strengthening capacity in the agriculture and land-use sectors for enhanced transparency in the implementation and monitoring of Cambodia's Nationally Determined Contribution
FAO ID GCP/CMB041/CBT
GEF ID 9837
FAO was the implementing agency of this project, which has a budget of USD 1 million. The executing partner agencies were the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the National Council for Sustainable Development. The project ran from February 2019 to December 2022.

Evaluation findings

The project responded to the priorities outlined in the country's NDC, which has drawn on several existing national policies and strategies that are relevant to climate change and the agriculture and land-use sectors. These include: the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP, 2014–2018) and the current NSDP (2019–2023); the Strategy for Agriculture and Water; the Agriculture Strategic Development Plan (2014–2018) and ongoing NSDP (2019–2023); the National Strategic Plan on Green Growth (2013–2030); the National Adaptation Program of Action to Climate Change (2006); and the National Environment Strategy and Action Plan (2016–2023).

The evaluation questionnaire survey of recipients of training and technical support provided by the project revealed that most of them found the training/technical support to be "relevant". Only a small portion of the respondents in Mongolia reported the training/technical support as being "somewhat relevant". In Cambodia, 7 percent of the recipients said that training and technical support was "less" or "not relevant"; the reason given for the rather high number of "less" or "not relevant" was the wrong selection of participants for the training sessions. The evaluation found the project to have been effective overall.

The project management team (PMT) coordinated with the Department of Climate Change to share the lessons learned on reporting process and data gaps in the NDC update 2020 formulation in the second webinar "Knowledge exchange and awareness raising on forest related reporting in the context of the Paris Agreement and other international commitments" organized by FAO on 16 March 2021. In the same event, the PMT facilitated and supported the Forestry Administration to share the lessons learned on data use for FRA reporting under the FRA reporting process and building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector (CBIT-Forest).

Seventy-five percent of the Cambodian recipients of training and technical support confirmed that they were able to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in their actual work. The main issues of applying acquired knowledge and skills were: i) improved planning and decision-making for climate change mitigation and adaptation; ii) improved institutional coordination, data sharing and reporting; and iii) improved collection and analysis of data. Over 80 percent did impart the knowledge and skills acquired from the training/technical support to others by either sharing written training materials and tools or conducting a training sessions or workshops.

Building technical capacity for adaptation-related ETF primarily included a data needs assessment, the development of M&E frameworks and indices for adaptation tracking and reporting, and sharing the lessons learned on the reporting process and data gaps in the formulation of the 2020 NDC Update.

The short duration of the project, staff shortage and turnover, as well as over-reliance on project funding and foreign consultants, are major sustainability issues for the project. In Cambodia, the knowledge of the AFOLU-sector stakeholders on international transparency-related processes is still rather limited and that requires longer-term and constant support. Generally, the CBIT projects have enlarged the technical working groups so that there is a large pool of people involved and trained in the process, which, among other things, enables its continuity, even in the event that some of them leave or

move on to other jobs. However, technical working groups and committees are generally instituted with project financing and tend to become defunct or tentative in the absence of external financing.

Papua New Guinea

Project strengthening capacity in the agriculture and land-use sectors for enhanced transparency in the implementation and monitoring of Papua New Guinea's Nationally Determined Contribution
FAO ID GCP/PNG/007/CBT
GEF ID 9833
FAO was the implementing agency of this project, which has a budget of USD 1 million. The executing partner agencies were the Climate Change Development Authority and the Papua New Guinea Forest Authority and Department of Agriculture and Livestock. The project ran from January 2019 to August 2022.

Evaluation findings

The project directly supported priorities and initiatives reflected in a number of national legislations, policies and strategies. These include: the National REDD+ Strategy (2017); the Paris Agreement Implementation Act (2016); the Climate Change Management Act (2015); the Development Strategic Plan 2010–2030; Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, which includes a pillar for climate change and environmental sustainability; the National Climate-compatible Development Management Policy (2013), which articulates national level carbon-neutrality goals; the Climate Compatible Development Policy (2014), which forms a core element of the National Strategy for Responsible and Sustainable Development; and Recommendations of the National Capacity Self-assessment (2010).

The project supported the development of data provision and sharing protocols and facilitated their application in the preparation of the country's first Biennial Update Report (BUR1), released in December 2018, and the second BUR (BUR2) in May 2022. The Climate Change and Development Authority (CCDA), which is the nationally designated authority for UNFCCC and the key focal point and coordinator of the GHG inventory development and reporting, has undertaken a MOA with key relevant agencies for data collection, sharing and use, and other support related to ETF to formalize and strengthen institutional coordination for ETF reporting. These MOAs were used for institutional coordination in the collection of data and preparation of BUR1 and BUR2 and provide the platform with continued and enhanced institutional coordination in the preparation of BTR and the Third National Communication.[28] The strengthening of institutional arrangements for ETF in Papua New Guinea is being taken down to subnational levels. Activities have been initiated to establish regional focal points in all four of the administrative regions of the country and build their capacity to coordinate with the data providers and stakeholders at the provincial and district levels for the collection of activity data for emission estimation. The development of a national GHG inventory data archiving system has been initiated with the guidance and support of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project and is expected to become operational in 2022 before the commencement of the preparation of the country's first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). Technical working groups (TWGs) have been set up for the AFOLU and REDD+ sectors and were actively engaged in the preparation of BUR1 and Enhanced NDCs. The structure and roles of these TWGs have been incorporated in Papua New Guinea's Action Plan for ETF.

Basic institutional arrangement for ETF is in place in Papua New Guinea with the CCDA as the nationally designated authority. The Climate Change Management Act authorizes the CCDA to have access to GHG-related data of the relevant sectors. However, despite the existence of legislation and MOAs for data sharing between key agencies, interinstitutional cooperation issues persist in actual practice over the

[28] The Climate Change Management Act 2015 of Papua New Guinea stipulates the promulgation of regulations for MRV and monitoring and reporting by different sectors. No such regulations have been promulgated so far, and it is envisaged that the current MOAs are a first step that would lead to the formulation of the requisite regulations in the future.

access to raw data and lack of transparency in data processing and analysis, as noted from stakeholder interviews conducted for the evaluation.

The project conducted regional training to enhance the knowledge and skills of the regional and provincial officers to assess and document climate risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change and including them as inputs in the preparation of the country's Third National Communication and First BTR. A gap analysis to improve the measurement framework for adaptation has been completed and a draft report is ready.

The short duration of the project, staff shortage and turnover, as well as over-reliance on project funding, are major sustainability issues for the project; one example being the national ETF focal person and the main government official involved in the CBIT project, as they had changed jobs.

Generally, the CBIT projects have enlarged the technical working groups so that there is a large pool of people involved and trained in the process, which, among other things, enables its continuity, even in the event that some of them leave or move on to other jobs. However, technical working groups and committees are generally instituted with project financing and tend to become defunct or tentative in the absence of external financing.

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