



Evaluation Office

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project “Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD” (GEF IDs: 9817, 9822, 9823, 9824, 9832) 2017-2021



- 6NR Technical Support Workshop for the Pacific**
Apia, Samoa - Sep. 2018
- 6NR Peer-review Workshop for CIS**
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina - March 2019
- 6NR Technical Support Workshop for Anglophone Africa**
Nairobi, Kenya - Nov. 2018

Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

Distributed: January 2022

Photos Credits:

Front cover: Group photos from: Samoa: Antony Kamau; Bosnia and Herzegovina: Michele Poletto; Kenya: Julian Blanc
©UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)

This report has been prepared by independent consultant evaluators and is a product of the Evaluation Office of UNEP. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Evaluation Office of UNEP

P. O. Box 30552-00100 GPO

Nairobi Kenya

Tel: (254-20) 762 3389

Email: unenvironment-evaluation-director@un.org

Website: <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation>

“Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD”

GEF IDs: 9817, 9822, 9823, 9824, 9832. Umoja WBS: SB-008720

12.2021

All rights reserved.

© 2021 UN Environment Programme

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Evaluation was prepared for UNEP by Ms. Téa García-Huidobro as an independent consultant.

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

The evaluator would also like to thank the UNEP project team and in particular Mr. Antony Kamau, Mr. Michele Poletto and Mr. Julian Blanc for their contribution and collaboration throughout the evaluation process. The evaluator(s) would also like to thank the representatives of the National Executing Agencies who provided key inputs to the evaluation.

The evaluation consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the continuous improvement of similar global CBD national reporting projects in the future.

BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Téa García-Huidobro, a biochemist, began her professional life as a researcher in molecular and cell biology. After obtaining a Masters in Environmental Management (Imperial College, London, 1999), she began working for the Government of Chile on sustainable natural resource management and has dedicated herself to environmental issues ever since. In her time with the Chilean Government, she focused on public policies, regulations and tools for biodiversity conservation and institutional capacity development. She widened her project management and oversight skills after joining the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Panama to manage a portfolio of Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded projects, mainly for Latin American and Caribbean countries. Téa was then Regional Programme Coordinator for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), where she continued to drive the conservation and sustainable development agenda from IUCN's Regional Office in Costa Rica. In 2017, she became an international consultant, specialising in project drafting, reporting, compilation analyses and independent evaluations. After a period at IUCN headquarters in Switzerland, in the temporary position of Special Advisor to the Acting Director General, she returned to consulting and is now undertaking external evaluations for UNEP's Evaluation Office.

Evaluation team:

Téa García-Huidobro – Principal Evaluator

Evaluation Office of UNEP:

Michael Spilsbury – Evaluation Manager

Mela Shah – Evaluation Programme Assistant

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English.

Evaluation Type: Terminal Evaluation

Brief Description: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of a UNEP/GEF project “Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD” implemented between 2017 and 2021. The project's overall goal (at evaluation) was to improve national and global knowledge on the status of biodiversity in order to strengthen CBD implementation. The Terminal Evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Convention on Biological Diversity; National Reports; Sixth National Reports; Aichi Biodiversity Targets; National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; Fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook; global policy; stakeholder consultations; gender mainstreaming; spatial data.

Primary data collection period: July – October 2021

Field mission dates: N/A (no travel, due to COVID-19 pandemic)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS	6
PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
I. INTRODUCTION	14
II. EVALUATION METHODS	16
III. THE PROJECT	20
A. Context.....	20
B. Results framework.....	20
C. Stakeholders.....	22
D. Project implementation structure and partners.....	23
E. Changes in design during implementation.....	24
F. Project financing.....	24
IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION	26
V. EVALUATION FINDINGS	29
A. Strategic Relevance.....	29
B. Quality of Project Design.....	30
C. Nature of the External Context.....	31
D. Effectiveness.....	32
E. Financial Management.....	39
F. Efficiency.....	42
G. Monitoring and Reporting.....	44
H. Sustainability.....	47
I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.....	49
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	52
A. Conclusions.....	52
B. Summary of project findings and ratings.....	57
C. Lessons learned.....	59
D. Recommendations.....	61
ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS	65
ANNEX II. RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE AND REVISED RESULTS FRAMEWORK	66
ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION	70
ANNEX IV. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES	73
ANNEX V. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	75
ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR	78
ANNEX VII. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ALL ANNEXES)	81
ANNEX VIII. PROPOSED TEMPLATE RESULTS FRAMEWORK	102
ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT	105

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABT	Aichi Biodiversity Target
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COP	Conference of the Parties
GB05	Fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook
GGC	Global Governance Committee
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRID-Geneva	Global Resource Information Database – Geneva
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSP	Medium-Size Project
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NEA	National Executing Agency
PIR	Project Implementation Report
Post-2020 GBF	Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
SCBD	Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
6NR	Sixth National Report to the CBD
TOC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-WCMC	UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1. Project Identification Table

GEF Project ID:	Africa-1 (GEF 9817); Europe, CIS and Mongolia (GEF 9822); Pacific (GEF 9823); Africa-2 (GEF 9824); Global (GEF 9832)		
Implementing Agency:	UNEP (GEF BD/LD Unit, BESB, Ecosystems Division)	Executing Agency:	UNEP (Wildlife Unit, BESB, Ecosystems Division)
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):			
Sub-programmes:	Environmental Governance; Ecosystem Management; Environment Under Review	Expected Accomplishment(s):	Env. Gov.: EA2 Eco. Man.: EA3 Env. Under Rev.: EA1 and EA3
UNEP approval date:	October 2017	Programme of Work Output(s):	
GEF approval date:	June 2017	Project type:	Five Medium Size Projects (MSP)
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-6 (BD-EA)	Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity Focal Area Set-aside
GEF Strategic Priority:	GEF 6 - BD-EA: Integrate CBD Obligations into National Planning Processes through Enabling Activities		
Expected start date:	2017	Actual start date:	October 2017
Planned completion date:	2019	Actual operational completion date:	December 2020
Planned project budget at approval:	USD 11,970,655	Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:	USD 12,698,103
GEF grant allocation:	USD 8,431,500	GEF grant expenditures reported as of [date]:	USD 8,219,086
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	n/a	Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:	n/a
Expected Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	USD 3,539,155	Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	USD 4,479,017
First disbursement:	April 2018	Planned date of financial closure:	Early 2022

No. of formal project revisions:	One no-cost extension	Date of last approved project revision:	No cost extension signed July 2019
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	One or two meetings per month	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: Oct 2020
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	n/a	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	n/a
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	Dec 2020	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	May - Dec 2021
Coverage – Region(s):	Global		
Coverage - Country(ies):	<p>“Africa-1” (GEF ID: 9817) - Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.</p> <p>“Africa-2” (GEF ID: 9824) - Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.</p> <p>“Europe, CIS and Mongolia” (GEF ID: 9822) - Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Serbia.</p> <p>“Pacific” (GEF ID: 9823) - Cook Islands, Fiji, Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu).</p> <p>“Global” (GEF ID: 9832) - Angola, Cameroon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe</p>		
Dates of previous project phases:	n/a	Status of future project phases:	n/a

Project background

1. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are required to periodically submit National Reports on measures taken to implement the Convention and their effectiveness. In order to prepare the Sixth National Reports (6NRs), eligible Parties would receive funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and technical assistance from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Through five medium-size projects, UNEP secured USD 8,431,500 in GEF funding to support a total of 73 eligible Parties in mostly African, Pacific and Eastern European regions. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) did similarly, and received GEF financing to assist a further 64 countries, primarily from Asia and Latin America.
2. The primary objective of these 'GEF Enabling Activity' projects was to provide financial and technical support to eligible CBD Parties in their work to develop high quality, data-driven and gender-responsive 6NRs that would improve national decision-making processes for the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as well as report on progress towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and inform both the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework¹.
3. UNEP initiated the 6NR projects at the end of 2017 as a single global effort, internally executed by two Units of its Ecosystems Division: the Wildlife Unit in the executing agency role, and the GEF Biodiversity /Land Degradation Unit in the implementing agency role. GEF funds were then channelled through sub-agreements to countries (up to USD 100,000 each) for national teams to carry out multi-stakeholder consultative processes to gather data for preparation of their 6NRs. Key global partners supported project implementation by providing close coordination, orientation, and specialised technical input. The project was completed in December 2020, after 73 6NRs had been submitted to the CBD Secretariat.

This evaluation

4. This Terminal Evaluation covers all five 6NR medium-size projects run by UNEP, hereafter jointly referred to as "the project". The evaluation was carried out between May and December 2021, and entailed desk-top analyses and remote interviews, without country visits due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic. Country-level execution was appraised only in relation to results and reporting, using a sample of countries.
5. The main target audiences for the evaluation are UNEP itself (both its executing and implementing Units), the project's beneficiaries (key government staff such as CBD focal points) and global partners with a role in project delivery (primarily the CBD Secretariat, UNDP and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre – UNEP-WCMC). These global partners are likely to continue supporting future CBD national reporting efforts and could therefore benefit from this project's lessons learnt and recommendations.

Key findings & Conclusions

¹ Though this is the term currently in use, the GEF-approved project documents refer to the Global Biodiversity Strategy of 2021-2030.

6. Based on the evaluation findings, the project overall demonstrated “Highly Satisfactory” performance. A summary table of all evaluation ratings is found at the end of chapter VI section A: Conclusions (p51-52).
7. The project scored well in its **strategic relevance** (Highly Satisfactory) and **design** (Satisfactory). It showed full alignment with UNEP policies and strategies, GEF priorities, global and national priorities, and complementarity with ongoing interventions, in particular UNDP’s 6NR projects. The synergies created with the UNDP projects increased the effectiveness and efficiency of UNEP’s project delivery and technical support, and led both UN Agencies to support CBD Parties as “One UN”. The project’s sound and well-founded design demonstrated clear logic with regards to the main elements needed to arrive at 73 stakeholder-owned, data-driven, and gender-responsive 6NRs that would inform national and global progress in CBD implementation.
8. The project exceeded expectations in terms of results achieved, in particular within countries, obtaining a Highly Satisfactory score for **effectiveness**. It delivered against all expected Outputs, Outcomes and Objectives, and in doing so, was very effective in raising the quality of 6NRs. Project results remain relevant and available today, and are widely applicable to the other national and global processes and outputs, not least to the implementation of NBSAPs. Countries and global partners were very satisfied with project achievements and recognised its Outputs as assets that will outlive the project itself, and the 6NR exercise as marking a “before-and-after” in CBD national reporting, having now raised the bar with respect to previous cycles.
9. These positive findings link with strong project performance in a number of areas. UNEP’s technical support is in good part responsible for the project’s high impact, while another part is attributable to the project’s emphasis on **stakeholder participation and cooperation** (Highly Satisfactory). Built into project design (together with the mainstreaming of gender into 6NRs), the promotion of a consultative multi-stakeholder approach to 6NR preparation was a crucial factor of success that generated momentum for change and an enriching collaborative experience, both at the country level and among global partners. Thanks to this, a high degree of **country ownership and driven-ness** (Highly Satisfactory) as well as **sustainability** of project results (Likely) was achieved with the 6NR process.
10. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it execution challenges that affected the project’s final phase, these were ably mitigated by the UNEP team through adaptive management. In fact, despite a number external and internal challenges, inherent in a project with so many countries, UNEP’s relatively small project team overcame the trials and tribulations of overseeing execution in 73 countries, while providing valuable technical support. Undoubtedly, global **project management and supervision** of national execution (Highly Satisfactory) was as strong as it was complex, with the UNEP Wildlife Unit team demonstrating leadership, professionalism and adaptive management capabilities throughout.
11. Areas that would have benefited from further attention - where performance scores were Moderately Unsatisfactory - relate to **monitoring and reporting** and **financial management** by UNEP. Indeed, UNEP’s “Achilles’ heel” is its financial management system. A degree of **efficiency** (Satisfactory) was lost to implementation delays at project start-up, caused by the need to adhere to new UNEP policies and procedures for financial management and compounded by the variety of national execution arrangements at play. These delays, which could have been mitigated to some extent by better **preparedness and readiness** on UNEP’s part (Moderately Unsatisfactory), reduced the time available to countries to carry out the 6NR process. Shortcomings in internal reporting (between UNEP’s executing and implementing Units) were also

found as well as missed opportunities with regards to monitoring, which derive in part from lower monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements linked to the project's status as a GEF Enabling Activity.

Evaluation 'Key Strategic Questions'

→ **Q1:** This project proposed to enhance CBD's efforts to build national reporting capacity by providing targeted and timely technical and financial support to a range of GEF eligible countries in an effective and cost-efficient manner. **Has the evaluation identified best practices in assisting the Parties in their national reporting?**

12. Best practice identified (summarised):

- A. Having the right national team and a committed National Executing Agency is crucial to build ownership, capacities and leadership, empowering the National Executing Agency to better coordinate the country's biodiversity agenda.
- B. Coordination through cross-sectoral National Steering Committees can be very effective; this structure can constitute a platform that links the demand and the offer for CBD national reporting, and ultimately, for biodiversity monitoring.
- C. Efforts should be made to promote a multi-stakeholder consultative approach, as this is an effective method for national reporting and stock-taking that can ultimately open new avenues for NBSAP implementation.
- D. Workshops and in-person meetings are a necessary capacity building element that should be complemented -rather than replaced- by virtual technical assistance.
- E. Providing targeted and timely support to effectively and efficiently assist CBD Parties with their national reporting, is best done by: (a) agreeing to appropriate national execution arrangements and seeking the corresponding requisite information as early as possible; and (b) pooling resources and adopting joint approaches between UNEP and UNDP when undertaking these global projects.
- F. A good practice was for UNEP, UNDP and UNEP-WCMC to prepare a common Technical Review Framework to review draft 6NRs prior to official submission; best practice would now be to optimise this Framework, based on lessons learnt from its use and considering means to globally collect data on the quality of National Reports during subsequent reporting cycles.

→ **Q2:** The project aimed to support Parties using a stakeholder consultative process in order to create ownership of the process of setting their own national strategies and targets. **What aspects are essential for promoting country ownership among the Parties?**

13. The project's consultative approach was extremely successful, opening avenues for participation, coordination and data collection. Having ample stakeholder participation was a critical driver of the project's success and was greatly valued by countries. The experience often served many purposes linked to international and policy commitments, not only the production of a CBD National Report. Best Practices A, B and C (above) were key factors for building country ownership. Other factors cited by countries include:

- ✓ the need for the 6NR to be sanctioned by a large number of Ministries or even by Parliament before being considered official;
- ✓ the involvement of media outlets (TV, newspapers) to raise interest levels and sensitise key sectors and society at large about the importance of biodiversity conservation;

- ✓ the integration of grassroots organizations (fisherfolk, farmers, etc.), women's groups, community leaders and local authorities, as a means to show that biodiversity is for everyone and that its conservation has to be addressed at all scales;
- ✓ the coverage of all environmental issues within the 6NR, thus giving space to all environmental concerns and to joint discussions on ways to address them;
- ✓ the organisation of several rounds of consultations and workshops to exchange information;
- ✓ the understanding that each stakeholder's actions fit into a bigger national picture, and that each country's actions fit into a wider global picture.

➔ **Q3:** The results framework for each of the five MSPs were identical (except for target numbers), notwithstanding the differences in the regional/national baselines at the onset of the 6NRs. **Has the evaluation identified any need for adaptation of the intervention logic in this regard?**

14. The evaluator proposes, as a recommendation, the use of a template Results Framework in the design of future endeavours. The proposed framework is very much based on the existing framework and contains only small adaptations, including making UNEP's technical support explicit as a measurable output. No changes to the logic hierarchy are necessary, as it proved to be robust and well-founded. The main results pathways should continue to rely on consultative multi-stakeholder and gender-sensitive processes at the country level, and on technical support at the global level to arrive at high quality National Reports for submission to the CBD Secretariat. The use of indicators for results monitoring and National Reporting quality monitoring is proposed for stronger M&E, despite the lack of GEF requirements in this regard.

➔ **Q4:** (Where relevant) **What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how did this affect the project's performance?**

15. During the pandemic, adaptive management measures were required (mostly workplan revisions and budgetary reallocations) as project activities were affected in those countries (13) that were still executing in 2020. National teams had to undertake consultations over the phone or via teleconferencing, and downplay 6NR validation to an approval e-mail rather than a political event. Some countries had to forgo the support of international consultants. These impacts were felt mostly by countries in the Pacific region. Importantly, the pandemic affected the project's efficiency (timeliness and expenditure capacity), but without jeopardising results.

Lessons Learned

16. Lesson 1: A consultative and multi-stakeholder approach is a factor of success in national reporting processes; it is conducive to building country ownership and driven-ness, and sustainability of project results.
17. Lesson 2: Gender mainstreaming is understood differently in different countries and is still incipient as a policy element; capacities and cultural contexts also vary widely. Considering the project's attention to gender, monitoring the participation of men and women in project activities could have been an elementary first step to take with project countries.
18. Lesson 3: Despite the offer of open-access state-of-the-art tools and guidance, countries did not gain equally from this technical support due to technological constraints in some regions. This reality would warrant a more tailored approach to future efforts, considering both regional and cultural aspects.

19. Lesson 4: Agreeing on execution arrangements and requesting institutional and financial information from designated executing partners could have taken place earlier, to reduce delays at project start-up.

Recommendations

20. Recommendation 1: UNEP (together with UNDP) to consider using a template Results Framework and TOC for the design of future CBD national reporting GEF Enabling Activity projects.
21. Recommendation 2: UNEP (together with UNDP) to propose a joint knowledge management strategy and simplified Technical Review Framework to better capitalise on the cooperation between UNEP and UNDP during post-2020 national reporting interventions, and thus increase the value-for-money of GEF Enabling Activities.
22. Recommendation 3: UNEP to explore efficient and effective ways to tailor the delivery of technical assistance entailed in CBD national reporting GEF Enabling Activity projects, to better match the capacities and geopolitical realities of countries.
23. Recommendation 4: UNEP to consider introducing project management and oversight improvements for the global execution of GEF Enabling Activities that entail: a) early engagement with national executing partners /CBD Focal Points; b) the use of a specific internal agreement template for GEF Enabling Activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

24. “Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity” is a global intervention made up of five United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) medium-size projects. These projects were simultaneously executed as a single global initiative and, for the purpose of this Terminal Evaluation, are hereafter jointly referred to as “the project”.
25. The project constitutes a GEF Enabling Activity that benefitted 73 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) from a total of 143 GEF-eligible Parties. Parties to the CBD are required to periodically provide information, through National Reports, on measures taken to implement the Convention and their effectiveness. The specific countries supported by this project for the preparation of their Sixth National Reports (6NRs) are listed in Table 2 below.
26. The project’s summed GEF financing was **USD 8,431,500** with an expected co-finance contribution from beneficiary governments of USD 3,539,155. Each medium-size project (MSP) comprised either 17 countries (GEF financing: USD 1,963,500) or 11 (GEF financing: USD 1,270,500) and included co-financing from USD 250,000 to USD 1,129,495. Beneficiary countries signed sub-agreements with UNEP in order to receive and execute up to USD 100,000 in GEF financing.

Table 2. Countries (73) serviced by the “Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity” UNEP-GEF global intervention, comprising five medium-size projects.

Africa-1 (GEF ID: 9817)	Africa-2 (GEF ID: 9824)	Global * (GEF ID: 9832)	Europe, CIS ** and Mongolia (GEF ID: 9822)	Pacific (GEF ID: 9823)
1. Botswana	1. Benin	1. Angola	1. Albania	1. Cook Islands
2. Burundi	2. Burkina Faso	2. Cameroon	2. Armenia	2. Fiji
3. Central African Republic	3. Cape Verde	3. Lesotho	3. Azerbaijan	3. Micronesia
4. Chad	4. Cote d'Ivoire	4. Madagascar	4. Belarus	4. Kiribati
5. Comoros	5. Equatorial Guinea	5. Malawi	5. Bosnia Herzegovina	5. Marshall Islands
6. Congo	6. Gambia	6. Maldives	6. Georgia	6. Nauru
7. Democratic Republic of Congo	7. Ghana	7. Mauritius	7. Macedonia	7. Niue
8. Djibouti	8. Guinea	8. Mozambique	8. Moldova	8. Palau
9. Eritrea	9. Guinea Bissau	9. Namibia	9. Mongolia	9. Tonga
10. Ethiopia	10. Guinea Conakry	10. Nicaragua	10. Montenegro	10. Tuvalu
11. Gabon	11. Liberia	11. Pakistan.	11. Serbia	11. Vanuatu
12. Kenya	12. Mali	12. Seychelles		
13. Rwanda	13. Niger	13. Solomon Islands		
14. South Sudan	14. Nigeria	14. South Africa		
15. Sudan	15. Sao Tome & Principe	15. Swaziland (or Eswatini)		
16. Tanzania	16. Senegal	16. Zambia		
17. Uganda	17. Sierra Leone	17. Zimbabwe		
	17. Togo			

* = 13 countries from Africa, one from Central America, one from the Pacific, and two from Asia

** = Commonwealth of Independent States (post-Soviet republics in Eurasia)

27. All five MSPs were approved by the GEF between 2 June and 5 July 2017, and by UNEP in October 2017, and were intended to run for 24-months. However, given the need for 73 sub-agreements with beneficiary countries, UNEP envisioned the project to run for 29 months (starting October 2017) with an additional 6 months for terminal reporting

and project closure. The original end date of 31 August 2020 was extended once, resulting in 28 February 2021 as the project's official end date.

28. The project was both "implemented" and "executed" by UNEP by means of a Divisional Internal Agreement signed on 3 October 2017. The GEF Biodiversity /Land Degradation Unit of the Ecosystems Division fulfilled the GEF implementing agency role (oversight), while the executing agency role (project management) was taken on by the Wildlife Unit of the same Division. This Unit operated in a complex environment, navigating in several languages through the varying capacities, policies and cultures of 73 countries.
29. The project is aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, adopted by UNEP's Governing Council to strengthen the capacity of governments to coherently address their needs, priorities and obligations in the environmental field. It responds to three Sub-programmes of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017: *Environmental Governance* (expected accomplishment 2 - Law); *Ecosystem Management* (expected accomplishment 3 - Enabling environment); and *Environment Under Review* (expected accomplishments 1 - Assessment, and 3 - Information).
30. Key global partners supported project implementation, providing close coordination, orientation, and specialised technical input. The CBD Secretariat (SCBD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were the main partners and, together with UNEP, formed the project's Global Governance Committee for overall coordination and knowledge management. The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and the Global Resource Information Database - Geneva (GRID-Geneva) were sub-contracted for specific technical and spatial data outputs and services. National-level partners were beneficiary governments, mostly Ministries of the Environment (or their equivalent) or third-party organizations that supported national execution in some cases.
31. UNDP ran a parallel GEF-funded global intervention for another 64 countries, which together with this UNEP-led project, created a delivery platform through which both agencies concurrently supported 96% of GEF-eligible countries in preparing their 6NR to the CBD, and built synergies to raise the quality of the 6NRs. Notably, both efforts were key to generating a critical mass of 6NRs as key sources of information for the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5), which was due in 2020. The project therefore enabled global reporting on the final progress made by CBD Parties towards meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.
32. The main target audiences for the Terminal Evaluation are UNEP itself (both as the GEF Implementing Agency and the executing entity), the project's beneficiaries (key government staff such as CBD focal points) and global partners with a role in project delivery (primarily representatives from the SCBD, UNDP and UNEP-WCMC). These global partners are likely to continue supporting future CBD national reporting efforts and could therefore benefit from this project's lessons learnt and recommendations.

II. EVALUATION METHODS

33. The evaluation combines quantitative and qualitative techniques, in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the project's accomplishments and learnings. Quantitative data is used to explain the *what* and *who* of the project's intervention, while qualitative data can explain the *why* and *how* behind the project's results and performance. The evaluation process is iterative, using rounds of data collection and analysis to distil findings from the more general down to the more specific, identify priorities for further inquiry and extract lessons learnt. Generally, evaluation methods comprised the following:
- ✓ Direct consultation with key persons involved in project execution, both within UNEP (global project team) and at the country level (beneficiaries).
 - ✓ Direct consultation with key global partners involved in technical support or overall project coordination.
 - ✓ Close examination and cross-referencing of project documentation to analyse project achievements, check for consistencies, fill gaps, and identify key issues.
 - ✓ Use of UNEP Evaluation Office guidelines, templates and samples.
 - ✓ Use of UNEP's exit survey completed online by 58 respondents from 55 countries.
 - ✓ Use of UNEP evaluation criteria, Key Strategic Evaluation Questions (see below) and an evaluation framework from which a questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions were derived.
34. The first stage of data collection entailed desk-top analyses of project documentation and telephonic /virtual interviews with the UNEP project team and key global partners (SCBD and UNDP representatives who took part in the project's Global Governance Committee). After this, an Inception Report was generated (June 2021) and further data collected through: written contacts and virtual interviews with national project stakeholders and other global partners; internet searches; exchanges to obtain additional information and seek clarifications; and the circulation of an evaluation questionnaire to selected beneficiary countries and global actors.
35. The full list of documents consulted is provided in **Annex V**. Few documentation gaps were found; certain periodic reports (half-yearly progress reports and expenditure reports) could not be identified. Most project documentation was available either on the UN's Sharepoint platform, Google Forms, or Trello (an on-line project management system used by the global project team), to which the evaluator was given access. A number of technical outputs are also publicly available on the internet; all 6NRs can be accessed via the [CBD website](#).
36. Data were verified by triangulation, corroborating inputs and responses through different sources (interviews, questionnaires and document reviews). For data analysis, a scoring system was used in the evaluation questionnaire; a significant volume of data was also obtained from results of the UNEP exit survey. The evaluation questionnaire was tailored to different respondent groups, and for national-level respondents excluded questions that were similar to those in UNEP's exit survey to avoid repetition.
37. The questionnaire enabled respondents to provide a rapid, personal appraisal of the project, in line with specific evaluation criteria, through "yes /no" answers or a rating (1 to 5, where 1 is "to a very low extent" and 5 "to a very high extent"). Questionnaire findings were useful to triangulate findings and determine the extent to which respondents concurred. A total of 11 completed questionnaires were received, from a total of 14 requests (79% response rate).

38. Due to the prevailing pandemic, country visits did not take place for in-person interviews. Instead, project stakeholders were interviewed by virtual means (email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype or WhatsApp). The full list of persons contacted and interviewed is provided in **Annex III**. All global partners and sub-contractors were interviewed, as was the main UNEP project team comprising the global Project Managers, their supervisor, finance staff, and the UNEP-GEF Task Manager. The Coordinators of UNEP’s ‘Healthy and Productive Ecosystems’ and ‘Environmental Governance’ Sub-Programmes were informed of the evaluation and received the Inception Report.
39. Interviewees from beneficiary countries were those responsible for, or closely involved in, national execution of the project - i.e., from the National Executing Agencies (NEAs). Interviews were conducted in English, French, Spanish or Portuguese and followed-up with the evaluation questionnaire also in the corresponding language. Adopting each country’s preferred language was a means to increase engagement in the evaluation process.
40. A total of 54 persons were contacted from 35 countries selected on the basis of the criteria listed below. From this group, 15 government officials and consultants were interviewed (28% response rate), comprising 8 men and 7 women from a total of 11 countries. Therefore, the country sample was 15% of the total number of countries (73) and covered 1-3 countries from each MSP.
 - ✓ Balanced spread across the five MSPs (contacting 35-40% of countries from each MSP).
 - ✓ Balanced spread across project regions.
 - ✓ Balanced spread between the two UNEP global Project Managers.
 - ✓ Countries where the CBD Focal Point was the main project contact.

As summarised in the Table 3 below, overall, the evaluator interviewed 31 people (42% women, 58% men) from UNEP, four global partner organisations and 11 countries, obtaining a 42% response rate amongst all those contacted (73 people).

	Stakeholders		Gender		Questionnaire	
	Contacted	Interviewed	Female	Male	Requested	Completed
UNEP	10	7	3	4	1	1
Global partners	9	9	3	6	2	2
Countries	54	15	7	8	11	8
Total	73	31	13	18	14	11

Table 3. Interviewee and questionnaire samples

41. Throughout the evaluation, and in line with the UN Standards of Conduct, anonymity and confidentiality were protected through data aggregation, and informing interviewees that any information collected would remain anonymous or that notes were being taken without audio recordings.
42. Given that 6NR preparation was a Party-driven process, stakeholder participation was different in each country. Ample stakeholder engagement was encouraged, and indeed evidenced, to the point that clearly marginalised or disadvantaged groups were not identified. Geographical and cultural/religious differences across countries, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, influenced the degree to which women and remote /rural communities were able to participate in the 6NR process, yet, in general, country teams made noteworthy efforts to be inclusive.

43. The evaluation faced a number of limitations regarding data collection:
- Those at UNEP involved in project execution or implementation were not involved in project design.
 - Due to the time elapsed between the Terminal Evaluation and the finalization of the 6NR and their associated country sub-agreements, some of the original national contacts were no longer working with the government and no longer felt in a position to be interviewed or take questions regarding their country's 6NR process.
 - The data collection period coincided with summer / mid-year vacations in some countries, and with important global meetings, potentially affecting people's availability and the response rate from countries.
 - The fact that UNEP liaised only with NEAs, as the entities responsible for the project in each country, contributed to a natural bias in data collection towards the views of these government stakeholders. Non-governmental sectors (civil society, academia, the private sector, etc.) are therefore under-represented in this evaluation.
 - The global-to-national separation of project management responsibilities, and lack of country visits in this evaluation, limited the extent to which the evaluator could seek and include the views and feedback of potentially marginalised or disadvantaged groups, or collect data with respect to ethics and human rights issues.
 - The strong synergies between the UNEP and UNDP 6NR projects limit the extent to which the quality and quantity of UNEP's outputs can be attributed exclusively to UNEP. Both GEF Implementing Agencies collaborated closely to develop several global outputs and activities jointly, raising the cost-effectiveness of their performance. The evaluator considers this limitation to be minor, however, in light of likely cost-savings and the benefits of providing technical support to CBD Parties as "One UN".
44. The evaluation was also guided by the following four Key Strategic Questions laid out in the Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToRs) – see **Annex VII**. These are questions of interest to UNEP to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included below are questions required for reporting to the GEF that must be addressed by this Terminal Evaluation.
45. **Key Strategic Questions:**
- Q1:** This project proposed to enhance CBD's efforts to build national reporting capacity by providing targeted and timely technical and financial support to a range of GEF eligible countries in an effective and cost-efficient manner. Has the evaluation identified best practices in assisting the Parties in their national reporting?
- Q2:** The project aimed to support Parties using a stakeholder consultative process in order to create ownership of the process of setting their own national strategies and targets. To what degree was this consultative approach successful, and what aspects of the initiative are essential for promoting country ownership among the Parties??
- Q3:** The results framework for each of the five MSPs were identical (except for target numbers), notwithstanding the differences in the regional/national baselines at the onset of the 6NRs. Has the evaluation identified any need for adaptation of the intervention logic in this regard?
- Q4:** (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how did this affect the project's performance?

46. **Questions for reporting to the GEF:** (to be based on the GEF-approved project documentation)
- (a) *Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:* What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?
- (b) *Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:* What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions?

III. THE PROJECT

A. **Context**

47. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 of the CBD acknowledges that achieving positive biodiversity outcomes requires actions across five strategic goals, for which it sets a series of 20 targets (to be achieved by 2015 or 2020), referred to as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABT).
48. Parties to the CBD are required by Article 26 of the Convention to periodically submit National Reports (NRs) on measures taken to implement the CBD and their effectiveness in meeting the Convention's objectives. The Sixth National Reports (6NRs), officially due by December 2018, were intended as key sources of information regarding final progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including on the effectiveness of national strategies and actions in achieving the ABT and related biodiversity outcomes.
49. Most Parties have in the past identified the lack of financial, human and technical resources as limiting their implementation of the Convention, including their reporting capacity. Indeed, insufficient scientific information for policy-making, decision-making, and reporting can be an obstacle for CBD implementation. Given the need for quality reporting from Parties, linked to the Strategic Plan coming to an end in 2020 and to preparations for the next 2021–2030 Global Biodiversity Strategy, the 13th CBD Conference of the Parties (COP-13) requested the GEF to “provide adequate funding for the preparation of the Sixth National Report in a timely and expeditious manner”.
50. The 6NR initiative was therefore launched in 2017 in a bid to build national reporting capacity by providing targeted, cost-effective and timely technical and financial support to a wide range of GEF-eligible countries. With GEF funding secured through five medium-size projects, UNEP supported a total of 73 eligible countries (see Table 2) in mostly African, Pacific and Eastern European regions, while UNDP received financing to assist a further 64 countries, primarily from Asia and Latin America.
51. Importantly, the CBD had launched, in March 2016 and in response to Decision VIII/14 of the 8th Conference of the Parties, a new Online Reporting Tool intended to support national reporting processes and for use by countries on a voluntary basis. This project therefore sought to encourage CBD Parties to use the Online Reporting Tool to submit their 6NR. The project was also intended to facilitate stakeholder engagement, allowing for broad consultations to take place at the national level to develop data-driven assessments of progress in achieving the ABT and the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as the principal national policy instrument derived from the CBD.

B. **Results framework**

52. The same results framework was presented in all five GEF-approved MSPs, which all share a common set of Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and General Objective, reproduced in Table 4 below, and include the same baseline and Outcome indicators with corresponding targets.

Table 4. Results Framework approved for all five Medium-Size Projects.

Component	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
<u>Component 1:</u> Project inception meeting &	<u>Outcome 1:</u> A functional, cross-sectoral	1.1. The SC is formed, roles for the preparation of the 6NR are assigned, and a	(a) deciding on the working arrangements and methods for preparing the 6NR, including issues related to the use of the online reporting tool

Component	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
identification of funding resources	steering committee (SC) in each participating country is formed to prepare the 6NR, project timelines and methods are developed, funding is mobilised and training and capacity building activities are complete.	production plan and timeline is developed.	(b) identifying the responsible actors and organizations for the different elements of the report (c) identifying the relevant stakeholders for each national target or target component and (d) holding the inception meeting.
		1.2. Funding and resource are acquired, including the submission of a funding request and the identification of other funding sources.	(a) identifying of other sources of funding and in-kind support (b) identifying partner organizations, agencies and centres of excellence to support the project.
		1.3. Participation in training and capacity building opportunities on the use of the CBD online reporting tool and the development of data that reports on progress in achieving the targets and activities in the post-2010 NBSAP.	(a) training in the use of the CBD online reporting tool (b) training in the development of data that reports on progress in achieving the targets and activities in the post-2010 NBSAP.
<u>Component 2:</u> Assessment of progress towards each national target	<u>Outcome 2:</u> Stakeholder owned reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent are produced and compiled	2.1. Scoping report/zero draft for each ABT and/or national equivalent is prepared and includes analysis on gender.	(a) preparing the initial draft elements of the national report, including data and progress assessments that are already available for each ABT and/or national equivalent (b) identifying information gaps for each ABT and/or national equivalent that is required to undertake the assessment of implementation measures and the assessment of progress towards national targets required in 6NR sections II and III.
		2.2. Consultations with stakeholders are undertaken.	(a) facilitating a process that convenes experts from a full range of disciplines, including women, indigenous groups and business sectors, to determine the status of NBSAP implementation, identify data gaps and validate spatial information (b) working with experts during stakeholder workshops to draw conclusions on national progress related to NBSAP implementation and achievement of ABT, in support of Decision VII/25.
		2.3. Gender-sensitive reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent are developed	(a) developing progress assessments for each ABT and/or national target equivalent (b) reviewing NBSAP implementation (c) reviewing actions to mainstream biodiversity (d) assessing of the effectiveness of the actions undertaken to implement the Strategic Plan and NBSAPS.
<u>Component 3:</u> Sixth National Report production and submission	<u>Outcome 3:</u> A stakeholder owned 6th National Report is produced and submitted to the CBD	3.1. The draft 6NR is compiled, undergoes a technical peer review, revised and finalized.	(a) compiling the target level assessments into a comprehensive draft 6NR, and following all formatting requirements to ensure consistency across targets (b) circulating the draft 6NR to the SC and UNDP/UNEP for a technical peer review (c) revising the assessment to incorporate additional data sources and technical expertise (d) facilitating additional stakeholder consultations, as needed

Component	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
			(e) developing a final 6NR report (f) obtain final approval from steering committee. Depending on the comments received during the review period, a country may wish to make the report available for a second round of peer review.
		3.2. The 6NR is validated and officially submitted to the CBD.	(a) official validation of the report by the government, which often requires approval from the Minister or Cabinet (b) submitting the 6NR as an official document to the CBD in accordance with Article 26.

C. Stakeholders

53. A full stakeholder analysis² is provided in this evaluation's Inception Report, describing expected stakeholder roles and the level of influence and interest of each group over the project, or over CBD /NBSAP implementation and biodiversity conservation issues. Stakeholders can generally be divided into beneficiaries and project partners, and distinguished based on their role in the project's global or national execution.
54. The main 'beneficiaries' were the project's 73 eligible Parties to the CBD, represented by National Executing Agencies (NEAs) in charge of the project's national execution and ultimately responsible for submitting the 6NRs to the SCBD. The stakeholders in this group were most often the CBD Focal Points in the Ministries of Environment (or equivalent) or Ministries of Foreign Affairs (or similar) and their teams.
55. 'Project partners' included UNDP and SCBD as the main global partners and as members of the Global Governance Committee (GGC), intended as the project's steering committee. UNEP-WCMC and GRID-Geneva acted as sub-contractors, helping to deliver the project's technical support, although UNEP-WCMC has a long history of collaborating with UNEP and SCBD. The 'project partners' group also comprised certain regional and international entities (e.g. the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme - SPREP) that were called upon to support specific events or national execution in different ways.
56. In a few cases, the NEAs entrusted national execution to a third party, while retaining their technical and financial responsibility over the project, thereby adding other entities to the 'project partners' group. While at the national level, potential contributors of biodiversity data and information for the 6NR could also be classed as 'project partners', for evaluation purposes and given their likely capacity gains through the project, these stakeholders were considered 'beneficiaries' together with the NEAs.
57. Stakeholder engagement in the 6NR exercise was a major component of the project. A stakeholder-driven reporting process was expected to build ownership over project outcomes and the 6NR, and help CBD Parties to further strengthen NBSAP implementation and mainstream biodiversity into national policies. For this reason, countries were expected to have a National Steering Committee oversee the project's execution and take part in 6NR preparation. Each country's list of participating stakeholders was expected to be different yet comprehensive, expanding beyond the CBD Focal Points as much as possible.
58. Even though all stakeholder groups played differential roles as agents of change under the project, by far the most strategic for achieving the project's expected outcomes

² There is no analysis on whether the young and old, or the able-bodied and those with disabilities or long-term illness, were involved in the project in the same way. The project's lack of specificity in this regard precludes assessing these aspects of stakeholder engagement.

were government entities, in particular the NEAs in their leadership role and Ministries or agencies linked to the use of natural resources. Overall, the project contemplated the involvement of (at least) seven of the nine major stakeholder groups recognized by UNEP, namely: Business & Industries; Farmers; Indigenous People & their Communities; Local Authorities; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); the Scientific & Technological Community; and Women.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

59. UNEP held the double role of GEF Implementing Agency (oversight) and global Executing Agency (project management), carried out by separate Units within the same Ecosystems Division. Global project management was in the hands of a single project manager during the project's inception period (Oct. 2017 – May 2018) and two global managers thereafter.
60. The two global Project Managers each managed 35 and 38 countries, divided across regions and languages (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish), not by MSP. In practice, not officially, the project's regions were: the Pacific (12 countries), West and Central Africa (23 countries, mostly francophone), Eastern and Southern Africa (24 countries, mostly anglophone), Central and Eastern Europe (10 countries), three countries in Asia and one in Central America (1) (Figure 1).
61. The global Project Managers were supervised by a Programme Officer of the Wildlife Unit and supported by a programme/finance assistant and finance staff that changed during the project lifetime. The UNEP-GEF Task Manager from the GEF Biodiversity /Land Degradation Unit played the oversight role, advising on GEF-related issues and reporting, aiding in overall coordination, clearing country reports and generally ensuring the project remained on track. Together, this group constitutes the UNEP project team (Figure 1).

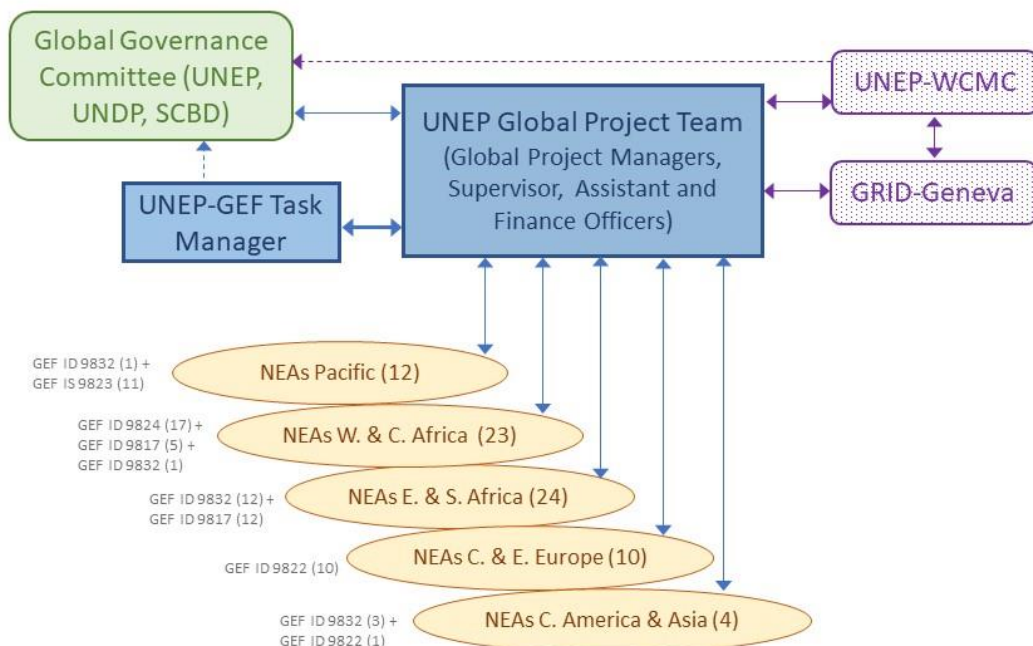


Figure 1: Project organigram with key execution partners. (Rectangle = global. Oval = national)

62. The main global partners, UNDP and SCBD, worked closely with UNEP as members of the GGC and played a key role in jointly delivering the technical support required by countries, developing guidelines, tools and timelines, and providing training. As the

implementer of a parallel GEF-funded project for 64 additional countries, UNDP was a crucial collaborator with whom important synergies were created and, in some cases, operational support was required (from UNDP Country Offices).

63. UNEP-WCMC was another key technical partner in providing training, reviewing outputs, developing tools and populating them with global datasets, especially spatial data. UNEP-WCMC, UNDP and UNEP also partnered with GRID-Geneva to develop the spatial data and tools to be made available through the UN Biodiversity Lab, and together, identified lessons and recommendations based on their experience in supporting CBD Parties with NBSAP reviews, implementation and national reporting.
64. At the country level, project execution was run by NEAs (generally government Ministries) as the signatories of sub-agreements with UNEP (Small-Scale Funding Agreements). In some cases, governments would then sub-contract execution to a third party, or request a UN agency or international organization to manage project funds on their behalf. Only in one case was it necessary for UNEP to sign the sub-agreement directly with a UNDP Country Office. National project management was most often carried out by a team of consultants, contracted specifically for the purpose of the 6NR, and sometimes coordinated by existing government officials who took on the task in addition to their regular workload. In all cases reviewed, the country's CBD Focal Point was closely involved.

E. Changes in design during implementation

65. The project's results framework remained unaltered during project implementation and was minimally revised as part of this evaluation (see below "Theory of Change at Evaluation"). The project was not subject to a Mid-Term Review given its Enabling Activity status, and underwent a single no-cost extension (for an additional 6 months) with budgetary re-allocations formalised at the end of the execution period. There are indications that overall, the global project budget underwent at least two internally-agreed revisions.
66. A set of global Outputs that were not named at the time of project design emerged during project implementation, as joint products developed with other global partners, yet these were not officially integrated into the project's results framework. Reconstruction of the "Theory of Change at Evaluation" offered an opportunity to make these products visible as global Outputs within the project's results framework.

F. Project financing

GEF financing for this project summed **USD 8,431,500** from five MSPs. Three MSPs (each comprising 17 countries) had a grant of USD 1,963,500 each, and two MSPs (11 countries each) had USD 1,270,500 in GEF funds each. Budgets were approved for three technical components and a fourth "project management costs" component, with the same distribution of GEF funds by component across the five MSPs (see Table 5).

Table 5. Approved GEF financing by project component for each Medium-Size Project.

Component	Africa-1, Africa-2, Global		Europe, Pacific		TOTAL (5 MSPs)
1. Enabling conditions	\$255 000	13,0%	\$165 000	13,0%	\$1 095 000
2. Assessing BD targets	\$1 190 000	60,6%	\$770 000	60,6%	\$5 110 000
3. 6NR submission	\$340 000	17,3%	\$220 000	17,3%	\$1 460 000
Proj. Management Costs	\$178 500	9,1%	\$115 500	9,1%	\$766 500
Total	\$1 963 500	100%	\$1 270 500	100%	\$8 431 500

67. The approved project budget was USD 11,970,655, which included **USD 3,539,155** in government co-financing (in-kind support). [GEF guidance](#) confirms that co-finance is not required for Enabling Activities so, in such projects, any level of co-financing is a plus. In this case, the co-financing commitments of beneficiary governments (without global partners) matched 42% of the GEF investment.
68. Approved co-financing per MSP varied widely, ranging from USD 250,000 for the Pacific MSP (GEF ID 9823) to USD 1,129,495 for the Global MSP (GEF ID 9832). Likewise with the distribution of co-financing across project components: for Comp. 1 (enabling conditions) it ranged from 13% to 28% of MSPs' co-financing total, for Comp. 2 (assessing biodiversity targets) from 44% to 61%, and for Comp. 3 (6NR submission) from 12% to 22%. Component 2 relied most heavily on country-driven processes.

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

Reconstructing the Theory of Change:

69. This GEF Enabling Activity project was not designed on the basis of a Theory of Change (TOC) but used instead a Logical Results Framework. The project's intervention logic is readily derived from this Results Framework, which is equivalent across the five MSPs. By means of this project, 73 countries would receive resources and training to arrive at a high quality (i.e., stakeholder-owned, gender-responsive and data-driven) and timely 6NR to the CBD. In turn, this exercise would, at the national level, not only shed light on the status of biodiversity and the effectiveness of certain conservation measures, but also improve national decision-making processes for NBSAP implementation. At the global level, it would serve to report on progress towards achieving the ABT and inform both the GBO5 and the formulation of the upcoming Global Biodiversity Strategy 2021-2030, which is now widely referred to as the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (post-2020 GBF).
70. In reconstructing the "TOC at Evaluation", minor adjustments were proposed to the approved Results Framework, intended to serve both evaluation purposes and as potential inputs to design future CBD national reporting projects (see **Annex II**). The approved Results Framework presented eight Outputs through to one general Objective. In order to better represent and distinguish respective result levels (through re-wording), while reaffirming the intervention logic and its main causal pathways, the project Objective was divided in two, and the Outcomes and certain Outputs were slightly rephrased. Only one new Output was added and another eliminated.
71. Through this reformulation exercise, the robust vertical logic of the results pathways was clarified and the hierarchy from Outputs to Impact completed. The Intended Impact and project Goal were proposed by the evaluator, together with the underlying assumptions and drivers. (The generic assumptions from the Results Framework were insufficient to visualize the forces at play along the causal pathways). Many of these assumptions and drivers were derived from project risks described in the project documents, which read more as fundamentals to project design than as factors that could affect project execution.

Causal pathways:

72. As shown in the TOC (**Annex II**), the project is structured in three components with highly interlinked causal pathways. Of these components, the first is foundational and provides the enabling conditions needed (direction, financing, training, and technical tools and support - Outcome 1) to arrive at 73 6NRs with the expected data quality, while the third leads to validated peer-reviewed 6NRs, officially submitted to the SCBD, as a final product (Outcome 3). The second component acts as a pass-through result, where the emphasis is on stakeholder consultations and the content of the 6NRs, namely, integration of the gender perspective and stakeholder ownership when reporting on progress toward the achievement of each ABT and/or national equivalent (Outcome 2).
73. The causal pathways lead to three Outcomes, which after reformulation, shifted from focusing on product delivery to reflecting 'changed situations' that are conducive to the national and global intermediate states captured in the project Objectives. The project's first Objective refers to improving the capacity of CBD Parties to use data for national reporting and NBSAP implementation, while the second Objective points to the global aggregation and review of this data to produce the GBO5 and inform the drafting of the post-2020 GBF, currently ongoing.

74. The first two causal pathways lead directly to Objective 1 and unfold primarily at the national level, with NEAs in the driver's seat and UNEP playing a key facilitative role. The NEAs had the responsibility of involving other Ministries as well as non-governmental stakeholders to create National Steering Committees (Output 1.1), ensure the flow of resources and in-kind support (Output 1.2), undertake consultations (Output 2.2), and generally obtain and refine the information needed to report on progress towards achievement of the ABTs and/or equivalent national targets (Outputs 2.1 and 2.3).
75. Both pathways place emphasis on the 6NR exercise being consultative and the content being "stakeholder owned". Pathway 1 also underscores the use of data and tools for a "data-driven" process, and pathway 2 homes in on the 6NRs being "gender-responsive". For these reasons, the assumptions that needed to hold along these causal pathways were mostly in the national arena, and referred to stakeholder roles and involvement, and data use:
- A1: Governments and key stakeholders are willing to commit staff time and financial resources to the 6NR exercise.
 - A2.1: There are few obstacles relating to data availability and quality (including biodiversity, spatial and gender data) and to the use of global datasets when countries prepare reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent.
 - A2.2: NEAs provide the necessary leadership and coordination to conduct the 6NR exercise in a way that is widely inclusive and participatory, and prompts cross-sectoral stakeholder ownership and 6NR validation.
76. UNEP and its global partners also played a key role in driving change along causal pathway 1. Under this component, NEAs had the opportunity to take part in training and capacity building activities, both in-person and virtually (Output 1.3), and to take advantage of online tools, global datasets, guidance materials and technical support (Output 1.4) provided by UNEP in partnership with the project's global partners. Here, Assumption 2.1 was central if Output 1.4 was to effectively contribute to the achievement of both Outcomes 1 and 2, and Objective 1.
77. **Output 1.4** is an evaluation-driven addition to the Results Framework, justified by the need to render visible, and thus give value to, the technical assistance and materials that the project made available to beneficiary countries to aid the preparation of their 6NRs. The intention is, firstly, to recognise the relevance of this support and its place in the causal pathways towards the project Objectives, and secondly, to do better justice to UNEP's technical role in the project. Introducing this new global Output is also a means to account for the significant GEF investment in technical assistance, tools and materials, many of which remain freely available online today.
78. The centre-piece of Output 1.4 is the [UN Biodiversity Lab](#), a spatial data platform built by UNEP, UNDP, UNEP-WCMC and SCBD, with the GEF as the key donor and GRID-Geneva as a key developer. In addition to this tool, and to direct advice and back-stopping from UNEP, Output 1.4 also encompasses webinars, SCBD-endorsed guidance documents, an analysis by UNEP-WCMC for nine African countries on their use of biodiversity indicators, and a Data Tracking Tool prepared by UNDP and UNEP to assist project countries to format their 6NR information³ in line with the CBD Online Reporting Tool.

³ The original intent was apparently for the Data Tracking Tool to facilitate the *automated* uploading of information onto the CBD Online Reporting Tool but this did not seem to occur in practice.

79. The third causal pathway leads directly to Objective 2, and is critically supported by the first two pathways. In fact, the only Output in this pathway is the draft 6NRs, finalized after a technical review by UNEP (offered to countries as a voluntary step), and leading to high-quality 6NRs, officially validated and submitted to the SCBD, as Outcome 3. Therefore, this pathway is entirely reliant on Outcomes 1 and 2, is time-sensitive given its links to ongoing global processes and is built around two key assumptions:
- A3.1: Countries view positively the option of submitting their draft 6NR to a technical review, prior to final submission, and have sufficient time to benefit from this option.
 - A3.2: There are no significant delays so that 6NR submissions to the SCBD are timely enough to inform the preparation of both the fifth GBO5 and the post-2020 GBF.
80. Four drivers were identified for the project's causal pathways, relating to inter-institutional dynamics that would be advantageous for project delivery, and for increased robustness and sustainability of project results:
- D1: Countries can create a multi-stakeholder platform for biodiversity if needed, or strengthen existing biodiversity structures, and create a lasting work dynamic that opens avenues for stakeholder participation in NBSAP implementation.
 - D2: Global project partners understand country capacity gaps for CBD reporting and, as UN Agencies, are mandated and well poised to create synergies with other projects and fora and provide timely training /capacity building and technical support, to help raise the quality of the 6NRs.
 - D3: Bringing together multi-sectoral stakeholders enriches the 6NR exercise, and serves not only to generate biodiversity data and create ownership of the 6NR, but also to take stock of progress and gaps in NBSAP implementation and strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration for biodiversity.
 - D4: The imminent adoption of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and a sense of urgency surrounding the climate and biodiversity crises and Sustainable Development Goals are bringing biodiversity and its indicators to the forefront of the global political arena.
81. At a higher level in the TOC, achieving both project Objectives contributes significantly to the Project Goal. Having had 73 CBD Parties benefit from financial and technical support to develop high quality 6NRs (consisting in data-driven, stakeholder-owned and gender-responsive NRs) and obtained timely inputs into global efforts (namely, preparation of the GBO5 and the post-2020 GBF), national and global knowledge on the status of biodiversity will undoubtedly have improved and CBD implementation have been strengthened (Project Goal).
82. In order for CBD Parties to then be in a better position to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through concerted and timely mainstreaming of biodiversity and gender into sectoral policies (Intended Impact), Parties would need to sustain or further increase the capacities and stakeholder ownership that were enhanced by the project (Assumption 4). This could be aided by high expectations around the formulation of the post-2020 GBF and a sense of urgency surrounding the SDGs, both of which are helping to bring biodiversity to the forefront of the global political arena (Driver 4).

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

83. The project responds to three Sub-programmes of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017: Environmental Governance, Ecosystem Management, and Environment Under Review, for which the relevant expected accomplishments are:
- *Environmental Governance - EA2 Law*: The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations is enhanced;
 - *Ecosystem Management - EA3 Enabling environment*: Services and benefits derived from ecosystems are integrated with development planning and accounting, particularly in relation to wider landscapes and seascapes and the implementation of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements.
 - *Environment Under Review - EA1 Assessment*: Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by making environmental information available on open platforms; *EA3 Information*: The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced.
84. It is also aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, adopted by UNEP's Governing Council to strengthen the capacity of governments to coherently address their needs, priorities and obligations in the environmental field. Supporting CBD Parties is very much in line with UNEP's mandate and historical role as host of the SCBD.

Alignment to UNEP/Donor Strategic Priorities

85. This project responds to GEF priorities under the 6th replenishment cycle (GEF-6), specifically for "set-aside" funding under the Biodiversity Focal Area. It comes under the GEF Strategic Priority: *Integrate CBD Obligations into National Planning Processes through Enabling Activities*. It therefore constitutes an Enabling Activity, which the GEF⁴ defines as: "Activities that prepare the foundation to design and implement effective response measures to achieve Convention objectives" and more recently⁵ as "projects to fulfil essential communication requirements to a Convention". Enabling Activities will normally "assist a recipient country to gain a better understanding of the nature and scope of its biodiversity assets and issues as well as a clearer sense of the options for the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity". This project is therefore fully concordant with the definition of Enabling Activities and with GEF-6 strategic priorities for biodiversity.

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

86. Parties to the CBD have an obligation, under Article 26 of the Convention, to periodically submit NRs on measures taken to implement the CBD and their effectiveness in meeting the Convention's objectives. This project allows CBD Parties to meet their obligation to prepare the 6NR (due in December 2018) and to provide key

⁴ GEF Operational Strategy, 1996, Chapter 2. https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF.C.7.Inf..11_5.pdf

⁵ Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (2020 Update). <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/guidelines-project-and-program-cycle-policy-2020-update>

information regarding final progress made in the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including on the effectiveness of NBSAPs in achieving the ABT and related biodiversity outcomes. Indirectly, it also serves to inform the implementation of other biodiversity-related Conventions.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

87. Complementarity with other interventions was evidenced both globally and nationally. The most significant was at the global level, through the GEF-funded intervention for 6NR preparation that UNDP would run in parallel for 64 GEF-eligible countries. Both projects were designed together, each as a cohort of MSPs, drafted using the same template and submitted to the GEF at similar times. Through these 'sister projects', both UN Agencies were able to concurrently support 96% of GEF-eligible countries in preparing their 6NR, and build synergies during implementation to jointly raise the quality of the 6NRs. In fact, both efforts were necessary to produce a critical mass of 6NRs as key sources of information for preparing the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5). Importantly, the project envisaged the collaboration between the two GEF Agencies.
88. Informed by the experience of jointly implementing the GEF project "Global Support to NBSAPs", UNEP and UNDP project documents mention the importance of spatial data for biodiversity monitoring and the general lack of it in developing countries. Inter-agency collaboration in implementing the 6NR projects is anticipated, though without a specific scope of action. There is clear evidence that, during the project's inception period, both UN agencies converged around the need to strengthen countries' use of spatial data in the 6NRs.
89. Through a study in 2017, UNDP had identified that Parties were not utilizing geospatial data to its full potential to support national decision-making on biodiversity and accelerate actions and commitments under the CBD. Intent on bridging the gap between the actual and potential use of spatial data, both UN agencies collaborated and channelled 6NR project resources, from the onset of both projects, with the aim of raising the geospatial literacy of CBD Parties and enhance their capacity to use spatial data for biodiversity planning, management and monitoring, including CBD national reporting.

Rating for Strategic Relevance:	6	Highly Satisfactory
--	----------	----------------------------

B. Quality of Project Design⁶

90. The project presented a sound and well-founded design. In light of its GEF Enabling Activity status, it lacked a TOC, but its design still demonstrated clear logic with regards to the main elements needed to arrive at 73 stakeholder-owned, data-driven, and gender-responsive 6NRs that would inform national and global progress in CBD implementation.
91. GEF Enabling Activities are not expected to undertake ample stakeholder consultations as part of project design. The preparation of CBD NRs, with GEF funding and using a specific format, is mandated by the CBD Conference of the Parties through decisions that involve beneficiary countries. The project spells out beneficiary needs clearly and based its design on UNEP's prior knowledge of the capacity gaps and support required by Parties to deliver stakeholder-owned, data-driven, and gender-responsive 6NRs.

⁶ A complete assessment of project design quality is presented as an Annex to the Terminal Evaluation's Inception Report.

92. The gender perspective was clearly weaved into the intervention, with the project seen as a vehicle for implementing CBD Conference of the Parties decisions concerning gender. The inclusion of gender in project Outputs (and one gender-related indicator) is a positive design feature. Sex-disaggregated indicators, however, are absent from the Results Framework and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan.
93. Given the nature of the project, the intervention was not expected to raise human rights issues, though these could potentially arise in countries during the 6NR process. At the global level, each MSP presented an Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note to signal whether the project triggered any safeguard standards; these concluded that all five interventions were low risk, with negligible negative impacts.
94. Design strengths included the project's problem analysis, situation analysis, stakeholder mapping, strategic relevance, and the conciseness of its Results Framework, in which expected results and the project Objective, overall, were found to be 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Attributable/Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-bound). Another strength was the emphasis on stakeholder participation.
95. The main design weakness relates to the project's M&E framework, which does not specify the use of project Indicators or Targets to periodically review achievements. Minor inconsistencies were also found in Output wording and in certain annexes across individual MSPs that were inconsequential to project execution. Other small design weaknesses in the Results Framework (wording of Output/Outcome or poor distinction between national- and global-level results) were redressed through the TOC re-construction exercise.

Rating for Project Design: 4.84 Satisfactory

C. Nature of the External Context

96. The project's external context was favourable. UNEP has a long history supporting countries with CBD processes, and holds close ties with the SCBD and the group of global partners. UNEP is therefore no stranger to GEF Enabling Activities, and to delivering tools, assistance and financing to CBD Parties. With this project, some external constraints were faced with sub-agreement signature and initial fund transfer to certain countries, attributed to the political situation, or political particularity, of those countries. This is not surprising given the number of countries. Such constraints would range from changes in a Ministry's name delaying sub-agreement signature, to the need for a Congressional Resolution to approve the reception of GEF funds prior to sub-agreement signature. These external factors led to delays in project start-up in certain countries.
97. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic also posed challenges for project execution, affecting those countries that were most delayed in their 6NR submission. Plans for country visits in 2020 by the UNEP Project Managers had to be cancelled (e.g. Pacific region). Some countries were unable to carry out all planned stakeholder workshops (for final consultations and data gathering, or for 6NR validation), or had to forgo support from international consultants. However, through the revision of budget allocations and workplans with UNEP, countries were granted flexibility to adjust their implementation strategies. Hence, the global sanitary situation (here equated with "security situation") did have some effects on project operations and country-level delivery, which were ably mitigated through adaptive management.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Favourable

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

98. The project was extremely successful in delivering its Outputs and making them available to project countries and stakeholders - and indeed beyond. Outputs were high quality and all were achieved as expected, together with additional results. A new Output (1.4) that refers specifically to the technical assistance provided by UNEP (in collaboration with UNDP, SCBD and UNEP-WCMC) was added to the reconstructed TOC to reflect this (see **Annex II**). This Output makes explicit UNEP's value addition to the project as a facilitator of technical knowledge and a global coordinator.
99. The usefulness and wide applicability of all project Outputs is indisputable; be these the suite of technical tools and guidance materials offered to countries (most still available online) or the 6NRs themselves. Countries reported that the biodiversity data collected in the 6NR exercise were relevant not only to CBD processes, but also informed the implementation of other multilateral Conventions and agendas, acted as a national baseline for policies and fundraising efforts, and had increased awareness on the value and status of biodiversity.
100. Interviewees were generally very satisfied with project achievements, recognising its Outputs as assets that would outlive the project itself. Many felt the project marked a "before-and-after" in CBD national reporting, having now raised the bar with respect to previous cycles. UNEP's technical assistance and partnerships were key contributors to this success. UNEP also "gained muscle" through coordination and synergies with the complementary UNDP-GEF 6NR project. By pooling technical knowhow and human resources, teams were able to reach more countries (137 overall) and generate better and more Outputs to the benefit of countries, their 6NRs and the GBO5. This was valuable to UNEP's smaller team, that - unlike the UNDP team - only had two global managers, an assistant and a supervisor handling project management (with oversight of 75 sub-agreements) as well as global liaisons and technical support to countries.

First causal pathway: Enabling conditions

101. **Outputs 1.1 to 1.4** have a foundational importance in the project's TOC, as they create "enabling conditions for an effective, data-driven and consultative 6NR process" (Outcome 1) and feed directly into other Outputs and Outcomes. The capacity building as well as tools, guidelines and training materials in three languages provided through both GEF-funded 6NR projects were very well received by countries. In many cases, they were considered essential inputs for guiding the 6NR process, encourage its "stakeholder ownership and gender mainstreaming" (Outcome 2), and ensure the use of relevant and better quality data.
102. Of all respondents to the UNEP exit survey, 98.3% agreed or strongly agreed that the tools and guidelines provided by the UNEP support team and partners had been helpful and guided project execution. More specifically (and linked to Outputs 1.3 and 1.4), 96.7% agreed or strongly agreed that in-person capacity building activities were useful to better understand 6NR requirements and compile the reports. A lower but still high portion (81.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that the online resources or remote support offered were useful in the same way, while 10.2% responded neutrally to this question (neither agreed nor disagreed). Internet connectivity and digital literacy seem to underlie the different responses, as these factors also affected countries' use of the CBD Online Reporting Tool. These findings were corroborated through country interviews: in-person encounters were more enriching, and were valued above virtual capacity building efforts.

103. The achievement of Outputs 1.2 to 1.4 was entirely driven by UNEP, while Output 1.1 (cross-sectoral National Steering Committees) was guided by UNEP but dependent on countries. There is evidence that these Committees were indeed cross-sectoral and involved several Ministries as well as one or more NGOs and academic organisations, and in some cases, the private sector, indigenous peoples’ representatives, women’s groups and/or regional organisations.
104. With Output 1.2, arriving at signed contractual agreements with beneficiary countries, for GEF funding and national co-financing, was a lengthy process strewn with challenges and delays. The global project team demonstrated professionalism and a high level of commitment and responsiveness during this process, as confirmed through country interviews. The evaluator considers it good practice to include this “enabling phase” as an early project Output, in recognition of the amount of effort and time entailed. Such an Output can be monitored through readily available indicators (e.g. # of signed agreements; # of first disbursements).
105. For Outputs 1.3 and 1.4, UNEP’s combination of in-person and online capacity building activities was effective and highly valued by countries. This approach differed from UNDP’s, whose team relied more on virtual activities and back-stopping. In contrast, UNEP budgeted for six regional workshops, in addition to country visits by the global Project Managers. Three global workshops and help-desks also took place, on the side-lines of CBD meetings, involving UNEP, UNDP and SCBD (see Table 6).

Table 6. Global, regional, and national 6NR technical assistance activities under UNEP-GEF project

Global workshops and helpdesks	Regional workshops	Individual country visits/meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBSTTA22/SBI2 (Jul 2018, Montreal, Canada) • COP14 (Nov 2018, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt) • Post-2020 OEWG 1 (Aug 2019, Nairobi, Kenya) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific (Sep 2018, Samoa) • Western and Central Africa (Sep 2018, Cote d'Ivoire) • Eastern Africa and the Middle East (Oct 2018, Seychelles) • Eastern and Southern Africa (Nov 2018, Kenya) • Portuguese-speaking African countries (Jan 2019, Angola) • Central and Eastern Europe (Mar 2019, Bosnia & Herzegovina) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudan (Aug 2018) • Azerbaijan (Aug 2018) • Mozambique (Oct 2018) • Kenya (Nov 2018, Jan, 2019) • Eswatini (Mar 2019) • Madagascar (Jun 2019) • Zimbabwe (Jun 2019) • Nicaragua (Oct 2019) • South Africa (Oct 2019) • Uganda (Feb 2020)

Second causal pathway: Assessing biodiversity targets

106. **Outputs 2.1 to 2.3** refer to the process of biodiversity data collection in countries and to the content of the 6NR. These Outputs needed to ensure that stakeholder ownership and gender mainstreaming could be evidenced in the reporting. They also emphasised collecting data and drafting reports “for each ABT and/or national equivalent”. Generally, countries welcomed the opportunity to report on progress towards both the ABT and the national targets in their NBSAPs. The majority of evaluation questionnaire respondents (7 of 8) signalled that the project had improved understanding of the country's progress towards achieving the ABT to a high or very high extent.
107. After TOC reconstruction, Output 2.2 refers explicitly to obtaining data and inputs, and to consulting stakeholders. This Output pivoted on cogent stakeholder participation and was amply achieved by countries and hugely valued. In the UNEP exit survey, 93.3% of country respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the country's project

team was able to conduct an effective stakeholder engagement process. Consultation processes were truly multi-sectorial, and in some countries, even brought on-board sectors previously on the margins of biodiversity issues, such as the education sector or the media. In many countries, consultations also involved sub-national or rural workshops and field visits, so that community leaders, women's groups, farmers' associations and local governments could input directly into the 6NR from their own territories.

108. In addition to consultation workshops, an important platform for stakeholder participation and data collection was the National Steering Committees set up in each country, either as *ad hoc* structures or based on existing biodiversity governance mechanisms. These multi-stakeholder structures not only guided project execution, as expected in Output 1.1, but also functioned as a central 'sounding board' for all biodiversity issues covered in the 6NR, for obtaining data from various sectors, and as a quality assurance or validation mechanism for the 6NR.
109. National processes for collecting biodiversity data and consulting on the 6NR were varied but showed two common threads, as promoted by the project:
 - Encouraging a multi-stakeholder approach was conducive to building and expanding ownership over the 6NR, and also NBSAPs, beyond the Ministries of Environment; and
 - Encouraging a consultative approach was an effective means to access biodiversity data and diversify its sources, and to sensitise actors (from communities to universities) regarding their role in biodiversity information sharing and conservation.
110. Gender mainstreaming was a novel ingredient in this CBD national reporting exercise. Arriving at "gender-sensitive" or "gender-responsive" 6NRs was weaved into the design of both UNEP- and UNDP-led projects, prompting both Agencies to seek ways to guide countries on integrating gender considerations into 6NR preparation (both the process and the product). UNEP's exit survey noted that 88.2% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that country project teams had made an effort to ensure that the 6NR was gender-responsive, while 11.9% remained neutral. Interviews confirmed these findings.
111. Several interviewed countries stressed that gender in environmental policy was still at elementary stages and not yet fully understood, while others pointed to religious and cultural factors influencing how gender is addressed or mainstreamed. When consulted on the challenges faced when trying to develop a "gender-responsive" 6NR, respondents to the UNEP exit survey signalled as much the absence of gender specificity in their NBSAPs as the lack of knowledge, expertise or access to women's groups for conducting a gender-responsive 6NR process.

Third causal pathway: 6NR submission

112. **Output 3.1** (draft 6NR compiled, technically reviewed, revised and finalized) is the only deliverable in this pathway and the culmination of all processes and products under Outcomes 1 and 2. This pathway, high in the TOC hierarchy, was time-sensitive and subject to a lot of pressure, as expressed by interviewees. It leads directly to Outcome 3, in which the 6NRs were validated and officially submitted to the SCBD.
113. 79.7% of UNEP exit survey respondents stated that their country had submitted the draft 6NR for technical review by UNEP, prior to official submission to the SCBD, while 20.3% had not. A variety of reasons was given for not taking advantage of the review step, the most prominent being lack of time. This optional step was time-consuming for UNEP but did serve to raise the quality of the 6NRs. Indeed, of those countries that

did have their draft 6NR reviewed by UNEP, 97.9% agreed or strongly agreed that this review step was helpful in improving the quality of the 6NR.

114. 87.7% of draft 6NRs were actually reviewed by UNEP's global Project Managers (64 out of 73), in some cases with inputs from UNEP-WCMC on the use of biodiversity indicators (especially when data in the 6NR was scarce). To this end, a [Technical Review Framework](#) was adopted at the onset of the project, which was intended to be used equally by UNEP and UNDP teams. In practice, however, UNEP reverted to a simplified version of the Framework, less centred on the 6NR's evidence base and quicker to apply, as an adaptive management measure.

Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues:

115. Factors that positively influenced the project's performance in Output delivery, raising its Effectiveness, were: Stakeholder participation and cooperation, Country ownership and driven-ness, and Communication and public awareness. These factors (some built into project design) were mutually supportive, and successfully capitalized or achieved by the project.
116. As described above, stakeholder participation and cooperation at the national level was very high, which in turn enhanced country ownership and driven-ness. It facilitated a common understanding of each country's biodiversity issues, and the appropriation of NBSAPs by non-environmental sectors and non-governmental actors, including local communities in some cases. Thanks to its consultative approach, the project achieved a strong momentum to drive project results forward, ensure Output uptake, and reach the first Objective of "improving the capacity of CBD Parties to use biodiversity, spatial and gender data for CBD reporting and NBSAP implementation". Building stakeholder participation into project design was therefore effective.
117. Stakeholder participation and cooperation at the global level was also essential for Objective 2. Without the close collaboration between UNEP, UNDP and SCBD, and the technical knowhow of UNEP-WCMC and GRID-Geneva, it could have been possible to deliver the Outputs and achieve the majority of Outcomes, but this would have been at the expense of the quantity and quality of national inputs needed for global outputs. Certainly in the case of UNEP-WCMC, its cooperation with numerous biodiversity data-providers from around the world (well over 30) was central to its role in the construction of the UN Biodiversity Lab and in identifying relevant national indicators from the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership.
118. With communication and public awareness, there are various success stories. Not all countries carried out communication and public awareness activities, but those that did, considered these vital for promoting better understanding of biodiversity conservation issues and enhancing stakeholder engagement in the project. This in turn contributed to increasing country ownership and driven-ness. Some interviewed countries stated that the involvement of media outlets (TV and newspapers) had served to influence attitudes and raise political interest in biodiversity. Indeed, countries that still had remnant GEF funds upon completing their 6NR were encouraged by UNEP to reallocate those funds to outreach and dissemination activities in order for 6NR results to be shared more widely and used for public awareness-raising.
119. Globally, the [NBSAP Forum](#) was used - as intended in the project - to mobilise knowledge and tools across the full spectrum of 6NR countries (UNDP and UNEP projects). Written and audio-visual materials were uploaded onto the Forum's [6NR 'community of practice'](#). Although knowledge exchange on this platform was largely reliant on UNDP as content manager, and was not as dynamic and country-driven as hoped (the Forum has many members, but most are silent), the NBSAP Forum

nevertheless served as a single source of relevant information and materials for countries to access online. YouTube was also used to present 32 videos as a 6NR [technical webinar series](#), produced either by the UNDP project, or jointly with the UNEP project.

120. In addition, the close ties between the global project partners were conducive to learning and experience sharing and, once the 6NR projects finalised, led to the joint formulation of an [Information Document](#) (CBD/SBI/3/INF/30), presented at the 3rd Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the CBD in May 2021. This paper summarised [lessons learnt](#) by UNEP, UNDP and UNEP-WCMC from supporting the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (more specifically, from working with countries on the revision of their NBSAPs and NR preparation), and also made suggestions looking ahead to the Post-2020 GBF.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

121. All expected Outcomes were reached, to the satisfaction of those concerned. Outcome 1 achieved the “enabling conditions for an effective, data-driven and consultative 6NR process”, while Outcome 2 evidenced that “stakeholder ownership and gender mainstreaming” had occurred as part of “reporting on progress towards each ABT and/or national equivalent”. Outcome 3 was the ultimate result of having 73 “high-quality 6NRs [...] produced, validated and officially submitted to the CBD”. All these achievements occurred by December 2020 rather than by the official deadline of December 2018 (see Figure 2).

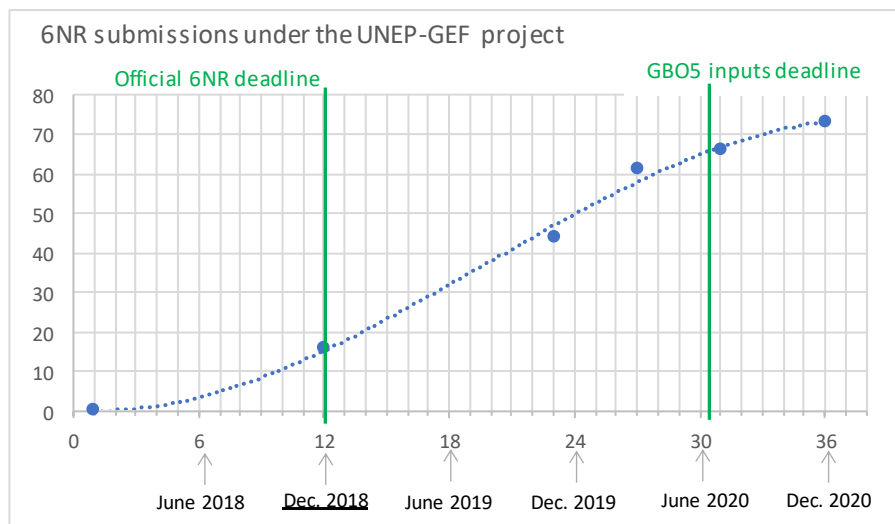


Figure 2. Trend in 6NR submissions (Jan. 2018 to Dec. 2020) for 73 project countries

122. A number of countries made concerted efforts to submit their 6NRs (Outcome 3) as close as possible to the official CBD deadline, yet only 16 (22% of project countries) succeeded in doing so. By November 2019, this portion had risen to 44 countries (60%) and by March 2020 to 61 (84%), reaching 100% only in December 2020. These trends, shown in Figure 2, demonstrate the compressed timeframe within which countries, and the project’s sub-contractors, had to deliver. Many interviewees expressed that more time would have been preferable.
123. Among respondents to UNEP’s exit survey, 98.3% agreed or strongly agreed that this CBD national reporting process had yielded meaningful results. Interviews strongly corroborated this finding. Persons consulted indicated that, compared to the 5th NR, the 6NRs had shown improvements in relation to data quality and quantity, particularly

in the use of maps, biodiversity indicators and the inclusion of gender. Indeed, for many, arriving at a “high quality” NR (as per Outcome 3) was a first.

124. When considering whether country project teams had had sufficient capacity to mainstream gender into the reporting process, 74.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 25.4% were either neutral or disagreed. Several interviewed countries reported that the exercise had been a key learning experience on gender. The project built the ‘gender literacy’ of countries and demonstrated successes in this realm (some significant, some incremental), even if it lacked gender indicators.
125. According to UNDP⁷, ideally, a gender-responsive 6NR is “one that identifies both the contributions and gaps of women and men to the achievement of national targets and NBSAP implementation in a given country.” When this ideal was unattainable, however, because NBSAPs do not adequately differentiate gender roles, the “gender-sensitivity” of the 6NRs was raised through the drafting process. Thus, proactively involving and consulting women’s groups, or seeking gender-balanced representation in National Steering Committees and workshops during 6NR preparation, were steps in the right direction for some countries.

TOC drivers and assumptions:

126. **The assumptions needed to achieve project Outcomes held** in all causal pathways, although two with less strength. Results in the first and second causal pathways confirmed that governments and key stakeholders were indeed willing to commit staff time and financial resources to the 6NR exercise (A1), and that NEAs were able to provide the necessary leadership and coordination for the 6NR exercise to be widely inclusive and participatory, thus promoting cross-sectoral stakeholder ownership and facilitating 6NR validation (A2.2).
127. It was assumed that few obstacles would exist relating to data availability and quality (including biodiversity, spatial and gender data) or to the use of global datasets in the preparation of reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent (A2.1). Yet, in reality, such obstacles remained in some countries, despite project efforts to mitigate them. These obstacles were often linked to poor internet connectivity, nascent digital literacy, and/or low data management capacity, particularly in West African and Pacific countries. In some cases, NEAs and Ministries were limited in their use of global biodiversity datasets (even in the absence of national data), as the data could not be considered official if it had not been validated by the government.
128. Lastly, the assumption underlying the third causal pathway (A3.1) materialised unequally, because not all countries benefitted from the optional review by UNEP of their draft 6NR. Of those that did not submit their draft 6NR for technical review, some indicated they were unaware this option existed, while the majority stated they had had insufficient time to take advantage of this step, prior to final 6NR submission.

Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues:

129. Two factors that boosted performance in Outcome achievement were: Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity and Quality of project management and supervision. These factors show minor weaknesses in relation to *Monitoring and Reporting*, as explained in chapter V section G, but here contributed significantly to the desired Outcomes.

⁷ Analysis of the gender responsiveness of Sixth National Reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNDP-GEF global project), C. Supples, M. Marigo and P. Raine. April 2020 - Updated May 2021

130. While there were variations in stakeholder participation, in many countries, women's groups and often marginalised groups, such as remote or rural communities and indigenous peoples, were proactively included in the 6NR exercise. In this regard, it can be said that efforts were made to apply a human rights-based approach, as expected by the UN's Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach and in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Likewise, the decision to mainstream gender into the 6NR (product and process) also shows adherence to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment.
131. Among respondents to UNEP's exit survey, 98.3% agreed or strongly agreed that the UNEP support team had provided effective and timely support. This was corroborated in interviews; countries signalled their satisfaction at the responsiveness and dedication of the Global Project Managers, who were evidently over-worked yet remained available. UNEP was also able to maintain productive partner relationships, in particular through the GGC but also beyond, and deliver results with a small team that applied adaptive management, especially after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. These are all signs of strong project management. Even with the delays incurred decreasing the project's Efficiency as well as dampening TOC assumptions, UNEP's team was able to keep the project on track and demonstrate high quality project management.
132. UNEP senior leadership was also involved in adaptive management decisions, in overseeing execution and managing team structures, and in facilitating communications and collaboration with other Units, Regional Offices and UN Agencies. Senior UNEP experts were also behind the UN Biodiversity Lab. Overall, high quality project management -that was client-orientated and included effective risk management and result-based management- was evidenced from UNEP.

Likelihood of Impact

133. The project was able to fully meet its Objectives, here presented as two intermediate states of national and global scope. Globally, the project was instrumental in attaining a critical mass of "high quality" 6NRs that would inform on global progress towards achieving the ABTs, contribute to the GBO5, and guide elements of the post-2020 GBF. Although not all 6NR were submitted on time to feed into the GBO5, considerable effort went into maximising the number of submissions prior to the cut-off date of June/July 2020 (see Figure 2).
134. All countries interviewed confirmed that the project had improved capacities for CBD national reporting and NBSAP implementation, not only within the Ministry of Environment but across other sectors. On UNEP's exit survey, 89.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that, as a result of the project, the country's capability to collect biodiversity-related data had improved. Ultimately, the project served as a national 'stocktaking' exercise, shedding light on the status of the environment and on the conservation gaps and challenges faced by countries. This shows the project had good value-for-money for countries. The change processes driven by the project reached all the way to the Project Goal: "to improve national and global knowledge on the status of biodiversity in order to strengthen CBD implementation".
135. Catalytic or unplanned positive effects can be attributed to the project and are linked to drivers of the TOC. Both the 6NR experience and the data obtained have served to inform a number of other institutional outputs and processes, as much within countries as among the global partners. In addition to the objective of inputting into the development of the post-2020 GBF, the most noteworthy for the SCBD refer to insights gained and decisions taken, informed by the project, on improvements to the

CBD Online Reporting Tool, the drafting of CBD guidelines, and preparing for the next national reporting exercise.

136. The close collaboration between UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, UNDP and SCBD had unplanned positive effects, in the sense that these were not *intended* results. Not only was the UN Biodiversity Lab born as a publicly-available global 'information asset', but the joint work entailed helped to build trust, amplify technical knowhow, and consolidate the relationship between these Agencies, to the point where version 2.0 of the UN Biodiversity Lab is now co-branded and co-managed with pooled resources (GEF remains the main donor). This state-of-the-art tool and the three UN Agencies will continue to be important in supporting national implementation of the post -2020 GBF, of NBSAPs beyond 2020, and of other related intergovernmental agendas such as the SDGs. In addition, the UN Agencies made an effort to be present together at all regional workshops and global events, and were observed by countries as working on a united front, providing technical support to CBD Parties as "One UN" - a good practice to be encouraged wherever possible.

TOC drivers and assumptions:

137. The above spin-off effect is contextual, as it is driven directly by ongoing international processes around the post-2020 GBF and SDGs, in which all the global partners are instrumental. This indicates that the TOC's second (D2) and fourth (D4) drivers combined to constructively contribute to the project's change processes, and their wake, help to consolidate the role of the three UN Agencies in the realm of biodiversity targets and indicators, spatial data and CBD monitoring and reporting.
138. The assumptions (A2.1 and A3.2) underlying the pathways to the Objectives held true - only Assumption 2.1 concerning obstacles to data availability and quality was weaker, as sufficient obstacles were faced to undermine the causal pathway. This means that there are still numerous capacity gaps that need to be closed in order for biodiversity, spatial and gender data to be used to its full potential. In order to reach the project Impact, CBD Parties will need to sustain or further increase the capacities and stakeholder ownership that were enhanced by the project.

Rating for Effectiveness:	6	Highly Satisfactory
----------------------------------	----------	----------------------------

E. Financial Management

139. In appraising Financial Management, the evaluator considered both internal (intra-Divisional) and external financial management (oversight of sub-contractor and country efforts), affording the latter more weight given its "specific weight" within the project.

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

140. As an internally executed project, financial policies and procedures were followed by UNEP's Ecosystems Division. Fund management was carried out by finance staff from this Division's Wildlife Unit (executing entity), with close coordination between the Global Project Managers and the Fund Management Officer. Clearances were provided by the Wildlife Unit supervisor, and financial reports (both UNEP's and those presented by countries) were submitted to the UNEP-GEF Task Manager from the GEF Biodiversity/ Land Degradation Unit for clearance.
141. UNEP's financial management system, Umoja, was used to unify the budgets from all five MSPs into one single global budget. In the context of GEF projects, this system is not considered user-friendly. Using Umoja's Work Breakdown Structure, standard

project activities were established as a hierarchical structure that accommodated budgets for individual country sub-agreements (grouped by MSP), sub-contractors, and for technical support and project management as cross-cutting items. The system precluded traceability back to individual MSPs.

142. GEF funding (up to USD 100,000) was administered to countries on the basis of signed sub-agreements that included national co-financing. Signature of these sub-agreements was, in some cases, subject to external constraints (see chapter V section C: *Nature of External Context*) but was in all cases, slow-moving due to the amount of information required from countries (including a prior due diligence of the NEA as an executing partner) and the roll-out of a new implementing partners' module in the UNEP financial management system, handled through a centralised Unit. Many countries either did not have the banking details required by this new module, or did not meet the necessary requirements. As a result, there were significant delays in processing the first cash advance to countries, once sub-agreements had been signed. The global project team recognised that UNEP's financial procedures carried high transaction costs and lowered UNEP's Efficiency in project execution.
143. For all countries, the first cash advance (expected upon sub-agreement signature) was 70% of the GEF allocation. The second was either 25% (upon approval of progress and expenditure reports and, for some countries, following a budget revision) and then a final 5% retainer (reimbursement against submission of final reports); or 30% as a single combined advance. A large number of countries required extensions to their sub-agreements, together with workplan revisions and/or budgetary reallocations, especially those further delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
144. UNEP also sub-contracted two global partners: GRID-Geneva (for USD 112,550) and UNEP-WCMC (for USD 184,737, later revised to USD 191,486). These partners received a first cash advance of 75% and 54%, respectively, and submitted progress and expenditure reports, as required, together with their technical outputs, as outlined in ToRs.
145. Internally, the global project team carried out regular analyses of expenditures against budget, ensuring that expenditures remained within approved amounts. It is not apparent whether annual budgets or activity-based budgets were used. Formal budget revisions were seemingly not carried out. Despite some gaps, evidence points to UNEP team efforts focusing on the close oversight of 75 sub-agreements (73 + 2), in line with its global Executing Agency role and following UNEP financial policies and procedures as closely as possible.

Completeness of Financial Information

Global sub-contractors and NEA financial information

146. The UNEP project team maintained a full set of GEF-approved project documentation, sub-agreement documentation, GGC minutes (May 2018 – Dec. 2020), reporting documents and other technical outputs on the UN's SharePoint platform, as well as Trello. Information on the financial reporting of countries and sub-contractors was comprehensive, even if the periodicity of reporting varied. Information referring to cash advance requests, bank details, equipment inventories, and sub-agreement extensions was also available. E-mail trails existed for the revision and approval of reports, including financial reports, and usually involved UNEP's finance staff. Gaps in information (e.g. fund transfer documents) were not considered significant; sub-contractor and country files were in general well deposited.

UNEP (Global Executing Agency) financial information

147. Umoja’s budget structure differs from the UNEP budget presented in the GEF-approved project documents and used for intra-Divisional reporting and country reporting. In addition, Umoja has limited agility for monitoring and reporting on the financial status of donor-funded projects. Therefore, the project’s global financial information takes various forms, depending on whether it is a GEF report or is intended for internal tracking.
148. Expenditures began in 2018, together with sub-agreement signatures. By mid-2018, 41 country sub-agreements had been signed and 28 first cash advances processed. The first financial report covers the second semester of 2018. For 2019, expenditures were informed directly into the GEF Portal, as cumulative GEF disbursements per MSP up to June 2019. The 2020 financial report covers the full year, yet figures are inconsistent with those from previous reports. Hence, the way financial reports were put together varied; in all cases, aggregate values were used. It is unclear how expenditures per MSP were informed annually to the GEF, as required.
149. During 2020, six countries agreed to forgo their last tranche of GEF funding due to constraints and delays in implementation. The balance this generated (US\$ 185,773) was reallocated to global project implementation. In total, seven countries were unable or did not need to spend more than 70% of their GEF allocation; the rest (66 countries) all spent 90-100% of the allocation. The UNEP team made efforts to encourage countries to spend as much of their GEF funding as possible, allowing additional related activities to be introduced into workplans.
150. As part of the project’s closure process, and to the benefit of this evaluation, the UNEP team undertook a full review of actual financial expenditures over the life of the project. The result is presented in **Annex IV**, and shows expenditures per MSP across four years (2018 to 2021) against the original GEF approved budget of each MSP. In this exercise, all non-country expenditures (i.e., global personnel, sub-contractor costs, technical support and project management costs) were prorated across the five MSPs, according to MSP size. Expenditures in 2021 are unexpectedly high.
151. Table 7 below shows a different summary of total expenditures calculated for each MSP, with corresponding expenditure rates. These values are somewhat distorted by differences in country expenditures and the way non-country costs were apportioned. Nevertheless, the exercise shows that the project utilized 97% of all GEF funding, with the Pacific MSP (GEF ID 9823) showing the lowest expenditure ratio.

Table 7. Expenditures by MSP – using prorated calculations

MSP – by GEF ID	Estimated cost at design (USD)	Actual Cost/ Expenditure (USD)	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
9817 (Africa-I)	1,963,500	2,001,478	1.02
9822 (Europe, CIS, Mongolia)	1,270,500	1,249,300	0.98
9823 (Pacific)	1,270,500	1,135,074	0.89
9824 (Africa II)	1,963,500	1,960,662	1.00
9832 (Global)	1,963,500	1,872,572	0.95
Total	8,431,500	8,219,086	0.97

CO-FINANCE (in USD)	
---------------------	--

MSP	GEF ID	GEF-approved Co-finance (PLANNED)	Sub-agreement Co-finance	Reported Co-finance - Countries - (ACTUAL)	Reported Co-finance - UNEP - (ACTUAL)	TOTAL Reported Co-finance (ACTUAL)
AFR-1	9817	\$1 116 060	\$1 285 000	\$1 272 182	\$59 960	\$1 332 142
AFR-2	9824	\$453 600	\$764 400	\$738 085	\$59 960	\$798 045
ECM	9822	\$250 000	\$321 600	\$319 600	\$38 800	\$358 400
GLOBAL	9832	\$1 129 495	\$1 408 618	\$1 392 473	\$59 960	\$1 452 433
PACIFIC	9823	\$590 000	\$592 500	\$499 197	\$38 800	\$537 997
TOTAL		\$3 539 155	\$4 372 118	\$4 221 537	\$257 480	\$4 479 017

Table 8. Planned and actual co-financing (in-kind support)

152. At the time of project approval, not all country endorsements were accompanied by co-finance pledges. In contrast, all NEA sub-agreements signed with UNEP included co-finance, so summed, these surpassed the GEF-approved total by 24% (see Table 8). In this case, the evaluator reviewed *actual* co-finance against the GEF-approved amounts, rather than that expected from the sub-agreements. Actual co-finance reached a total of **USD 4,479,017** which exceeded the approved amount by 26.56% (see Table 8); this, without quantifying *de facto* contributions from SCBD as a global partner. Higher co-finance was achieved in four of the five MSPs, the exception being the Pacific MSP. Country co-finance (94.25%) was the result of government in-kind support or cross-fertilization with other initiatives, and could be evidenced in country reports and from interviews; UNEP’s co-finance (5.75%) was a retrospective exercise (i.e. not part of GEF-approved amounts) based on highly conservative estimates of time put in by professional staff, not remunerated by the project. There is clear evidence that UNEP did indeed leverage this additional co-finance and more, as UNEP’s Law Division and the UNEP Regional Office for the Pacific also provided in-kind support in the organization and delivery of two 6NR capacity building workshops.

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

153. The project was seamlessly executed and implemented by two separate UNEP Units within the same Division, maintaining the necessary firewall. Communications between finance and project management staff and the UNEP-GEF Task Manager were fluid and timely. Finance staff were involved in project management, took part in sub-agreement extensions and expenditure report approvals, and used the online tool Trello for tracking and informing on tasks. Regular (weekly) team meetings facilitated good communications for adaptive management decisions.

Rating for Financial Management: 5 Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

154. The global project team supported countries cost-effectively. Managing the five MSPs as a single global effort was a means to lower transaction costs, minimise the internal reporting burden and achieve cost-savings on, for example, personnel and evaluation costs. The project also made excellent use of pre-existing partnerships and data sources, and created productive synergies with the concurrent UNDP project. Joining forces with this ‘sister project’ was central to UNEP’s ability to offer sound technical assistance, including timely and useful materials in three languages. UNEP’s environmental footprint was also reduced by deploying online technical support and taking advantage of global events for in-person meetings with countries. Overall, it can be said that the project delivered maximum results from given resources.

155. Efficiency gains were also noted at the country-level. NEAs report having capitalised on existing data sets and sources, made good use of pre-existing partnerships and used co-financing to save on GEF funds. Indeed, additional country co-finance, beyond that committed at project approval, was leveraged by the project, from both governmental and non-governmental sources. The most notable came from two NGOs that provided USD 27,000 to support the data collection, launch and dissemination of one country's 6NR.
156. Implementation delays, both at the onset and project end, led to efficiency losses. Delays at start-up arose from a combination of UNEP's inherently slow financial system and new obligations for implementing partners, and the special political, legal and administrative requirements of countries. As shown in Figure 3, the project needed 15 months from its official start date (Oct. 2017) to be close to 73 signed country sub-agreements and first disbursements. Additionally, some countries faced limitations in mobilising human resources (i.e., lack of available or interested experts) during their start-up phase. Overall, this reduced the time available for

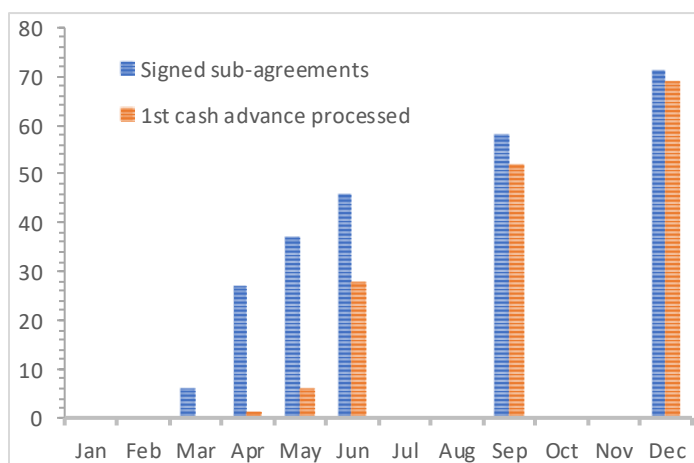


Figure 3. Trends in sub-agreement signatures and first disbursements to countries during 2018.

of the project were caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries (16) that were most delayed in their 6NR submission and still needed to undertake activities in 2020 were the only ones affected.

157. Implementation delays affected the project's timeliness, hindered the scheduling of regional capacity building activities, and reduced the time available for countries to submit their 6NRs. These delays were unavoidable and led to one global no-cost extension totalling 6 months, as well as a number of sub-agreement extensions for individual countries. The project continued implementation into 2020 and part of 2021 ; the GBO5 was being finalised in the first semester of 2020. Despite delays in the final submission of many 6NRs, and thanks to close coordination between UNEP and the SCBD, the greater majority of project-driven 6NRs did indeed contribute to the GBO5. In this respect, the project met its Objectives despite its inefficiencies.

Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues:

158. A factor affecting efficiency was UNEP's Preparedness and Readiness. The project's 7-month inception phase is less documented, had a single project manager and progressed slowly until May/June 2018 when the two global managers came on board. In addition, initial fund disbursement to countries was delayed, with the introduction of new UN procedures, around the time of sub-agreement signature. Many sub-agreements had to be re-drafted and/or signature put on hold. These challenges were further compounded by the variety of national execution arrangements at play (an administrative burden not felt by UNDP's execution model that operates through its network of National Offices). The project's inception phase was therefore not efficient, due to some degree to insufficient preparedness and readiness on the part of UNEP.

G. Monitoring and Reporting

159. It should be noted that Terminal Evaluation criteria and rating scales for “Monitoring & Reporting” are not well suited to Enabling Activity projects that involve a large number of countries, lower M&E requirements, and three-tiered reporting responsibilities (in this case, UNEP implementing Unit, UNEP executing Unit, and NEAs). Consequently, any weaknesses tend to be magnified.

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

160. UNEP’s application of an exit survey, upon completion of the project (as an additional activity not in the original project design), was an excellent means to capture information on project results and performance. This post-action review counters to a great extent the project’s only design weakness relating to M&E. To date, 58 respondents from 55 countries (75% of project countries) have completed the survey, the results of which were used to triangulate many evaluation findings. An equivalent survey was also administered by UNDP to its cohort of 64 countries.
161. The project’s M&E framework refers mainly to reporting tasks and meetings, rather than to results monitoring. This said, the GEF provides an important caveat regarding results monitoring, whereby [GEF guidelines](#) state that “it is not mandatory for Enabling Activities to report on Core Indicators or to provide a full project results framework” and that “M&E budgets are not required as these costs do not apply to Enabling Activities”.
162. Nevertheless, each approved MSP presented a series of indicators and corresponding mid-term and end-of-project targets, and budgeted USD 35,000 for project evaluation (USD 175,000 globally) considering inception activities, National Steering Committee meetings and a Terminal Evaluation. The project’s Outcome indicators can be improved but are still relevant and appropriate for tracking progress, even if too few to account for the breadth of project results. Monitoring methods used, however, make little reference to these result indicators, and adopt instead a series of milestones, shown in Table 9 below.

Outcome 1: Enabling conditions			
Milestones used for monitoring:	- Sub-agreement signed - 1 st instalment provided	Project launched [in country]	Training received
Outcome indicators:		% of countries with functional Steering Committees.	
Outcome 2: Assessing biodiversity targets			
Milestones used for monitoring:	Data collected	Stakeholders consulted	6NR Draft completed
Outcome indicators:	% of countries that have produced [scoping report/zero draft] for each ABT and/or national equivalent.	% of all identified stakeholders registered in a comprehensive stakeholder inventory, involved in producing and compiling of [reports for] ABTs and/or national equivalent.	# of countries with reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent [that] include a gender section.
Outcome 3: 6NR submission			
Milestones used for monitoring:	6NR Draft reviewed	6NR validated and submitted	
Outcome indicators:		% of the number of countries submitting 6NRs to the CBD	
Country sub-agreements			
Milestones used for monitoring:	Progress reports and 2 nd instalment provided	Final reports and 3 rd instalment provided (→ ready to close)	Expected date for final reports/ instalment

Table 9. Progress monitoring using milestones, compared to approved Outcome indicators

163. At the country level, NEAs reported on progress made towards project Outputs (labelled as “Activities”) and on corresponding expenditures. Given GEF caveats on M&E, and that specific monitoring requirements were not passed onto countries, national results were not monitored at a level disaggregated by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation. To facilitate overall monitoring, all countries reported against the same set of Outputs, following their workplan structure.

Monitoring of Project Implementation & Project Reporting

164. Progress monitoring focused on the above milestones (Table 9). The UNEP team monitored global implementation closely, cognizant that 6NR submissions were time-sensitive, but also that countries and partners needed to account for their use of GEF funds by complying with the necessary reporting. For this, NEAs and sub-contractors were all provided with the required reporting formats. It is clear that ensuring appropriate sub-agreement reporting took up a significant amount of time, and effort, on the part of UNEP’s global team.
165. By December 2020, 67 project countries had received (and most had reported against) their full GEF allocation. Country files show progress and expenditure reporting taking place during 2018 and 2019, and final reporting in 2020 and 2021. Small variances were found in the quality and completeness of country reports, linked to variations in the use of templates and the range of execution arrangements chosen by countries, and amplified by the large number of countries involved. Project sub-contractors also submitted technical progress and expenditure reports, in line with their respective sub-agreements. In general, partner sub-contracts were well backed with the requisite

documentation, with clear deliverables to account for GEF expenditures. Overall, the UNEP team's diligence in seeking compliance with sub-agreement reporting is evident.

166. In 2018, the GEF Secretariat transitioned to online reporting on the GEF Portal, with GEF Implementing Agency reports needing to be distinct for each approved project ID. Reports per MSP, however, were generally unavailable, with the exception of a single report on cumulative disbursements up until June 2019, as well as co-financing and expenditure reports produced after project completion. The GEF requires that Enabling Activities provide yearly updates on project status and financing disbursed, using the Project Implementation Report (PIR) module of the GEF Portal, and covering each GEF fiscal year (from July to June). PIR documentation, however, was not found in project files.
167. In accordance with the Divisional Internal Agreement, the Wildlife Unit had half-yearly and terminal reporting obligations. Gaps were found in periodic reporting (both progress and expenditure reports), though these did not seem to have affected project execution or fund disbursements by the GEF. The Final Report produced was of good quality and succinct. Monitoring and reporting of substantive issues during implementation, including risk management needs, seems to have taken place mostly through the GGC. This Committee kept track of project implementation issues faced by UNEP and UNDP, and allowed all members to stay informed of each Agency's progress and to jointly ponder on obstacles and opportunities. The UNEP team made good use of web-based tools for tracking implementation, which facilitated the sharing of information amongst GGC members, and internally within UNEP.

Factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues:

168. The same two factors that boosted Outcome achievement (Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity and Quality of project management and supervision) here put a spotlight on monitoring and reporting, as both these factors combine in the project's M&E dynamics. While it is understood that Enabling Activities have lower M&E requirements than other GEF projects, it is still possible to signal potential areas for improvement in M&E and knowledge management.
169. Rather than attribute gaps in intra-Divisional reporting to *weaknesses* in project management and supervision, the evidence points to external oversight tasks taking precedence over internal reporting. The number of countries, the compressed timelines, and the high reporting burden for a relatively small team provide for mitigating circumstances. Regular GGC meetings (monthly or bimonthly) were also an effective and *de facto* means to record project progress. Even if the GGC did not carry out *formal* M&E tasks⁸, as expected from a traditional project steering committee, it played a role in reporting by closely tracking progress and focusing on technical coordination, logistics and alliances. Likewise, the UNEP-GEF Task Manager would be consulted or acted on a needs-basis, and was generally kept informed. As primarily a coordination /collaboration platform, however, the GGC did not deal with operational reporting.
170. The project's design - and consequently, project teams - were responsive to gender issues and fomented stakeholder participation, yet did not seek to collect disaggregated data on the participation of differentiated groups, including gender or marginalised groups, or even key sectors involved in consultations. (Only in very few countries did workshop participant lists distinguish between men and women). This points to a missed opportunity in data collection and monitoring through country

⁸ Namely, the approval of workplans, reports, budget revisions, results framework revisions, tracking of project indicators and targets, etc.

reporting, given that the project had intended⁹ to collect “gender disaggregated (information) data where possible”. This may also point to capacity issues; even if disaggregated data had been collected, UNEP’s project team may not have had the capacity to process and analyse it, to obtain a global picture, given their heavy workload.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	3	Moderately Unsatisfactory
---	----------	----------------------------------

H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

171. Government support for the project was found to be high, spurred by the recognition that biodiversity data and enhanced inter-sectorial relations are useful to a number of causes and policy areas. Even countries that face more pressing social concerns, such as combating AIDS or malaria, demonstrated political interest in the project. When consultants were disengaged from the 6NR drafting process or acted in a secondary role, and instead staff were drawn from several government entities, there was a sense of empowerment and ownership from those individuals, and to some degree, their institutions. NEAs valued the 6NR exercise as a formative experience for local experts, whose capacity gains will last into the future.
172. The most recurrent sustainability factor cited by countries was the project’s multi-stakeholder consultative approach, which not only enriched the 6NR as a product, but strengthened inter-institutional relations in a way that has transcended the project itself and will continue to benefit NBSAP implementation post-2020. Evidence of this came from interviews and country reports, where examples such as exceeding initial co-finance commitments (e.g. countries self-financing additional activities), high-level political engagement during the project, involving young trainees in 6NR drafting, and formalising collaborations with non-governmental actors, were also cited as sustainability factors or as proof of political support. Additionally, when asked the question “How much government commitment or interest is there, to continue producing high quality CBD National Reports, even in the absence of support from UNEP or GEF?”, NEA respondents to the evaluation questionnaire perceived interest levels to be between high and very high.

Financial Sustainability

173. The GEF has long supported CBD national reporting cycles as part of its Enabling Activities. Countries have become reliant on this funding in order to carry out meaningful - and now high quality - reporting processes. Indeed, the question: “To what extent is the continuity of project results dependent on continued financing?” elicited responses that referred more to the need for GEF financing, than to securing national co-financing. Respondents indicated financial dependency (on the GEF) to be high to very high, yet seemed to be signalling, not the continuity of *already achieved* results, but the continuity of national reporting exercises as *highly consultative and data-rich processes*. GEF funding for the next national reporting cycle is likely to materialise following a CBD Conference of the Parties decision.
174. There are notable examples of countries drawing lessons about accessing national /sectorial sources of funding, or assigning NBSAP responsibilities within sectoral plans (including relevant budgets), as options for the sustainability of project results. So, some indications of government co-financing potentially increasing over time do

⁹ Quoted from the Socio-Economic Benefits section of the GEF-approved project document.

exist. Interestingly, such co-financing would involve not just the NEAs but a growing group of Ministries.

Institutional Sustainability

175. After six cycles, it is safe to say that national reporting has been mainstreamed by CBD Parties and is well ingrained into government structures and policy cycles. The same is true for the global partners that constitute the CBD's support architecture. Further to this, the 6NR has now set a standard with regards to NR quality that GEF-eligible countries are expected to continue pursuing in future reporting cycles, or improve on as national reporting evolves beyond 2020.
176. Interviewees considered that there were good prospects of institutional structures, capacities or collaborations, strengthened by the project, remaining in place over time to sustain either biodiversity monitoring efforts or high quality CBD national reporting processes. This is especially the case for the global partners, who are well poised to continue collaborating in order to exchange knowledge, learn from each reporting cycle and improve the offer of technical support. Their institutional capacity development efforts are very likely to be sustained.
177. At the national level, pre-existing governance structures that were consolidated or strengthened by the project, are likely to persist over in time, unless political priorities shift radically. There are examples of countries deciding, as a result of the project, to maintain *ad hoc* structures as permanent ones, or set-up and formalise biodiversity committees from scratch. Having 6NR data permeate into other policies, plans and strategies, as observed in several countries, is a mark of sustainability, in that there are now a growing number of institutional agendas that refer to or rely on biodiversity data.
178. A factor to consider, if project results are to be truly institutionalised, is technological capacity. Virtual technical assistance and certainly the handling and analysis of biodiversity and spatial data, all require a reasonable level of digital literacy. Regional differences in this regard were evident in the project, with some regions additionally handicapped by poor internet connectivity. This is relevant for the future use of the first roll-out of CBD Online Reporting Tool, as well as the uptake or usability of project results for a wider range of stakeholders. Many of the technical issues that countries experienced when using the CBD Online Reporting Tool point to necessary improvements that have been relayed back to the SCBD, but others are cultural and geopolitical. This aspect could be further looked into, to understand how the NR technical support model can be better tailored to the needs and capacities of countries. If it is to be sustainable, it cannot be overly reliant on online tools and materials and participation in virtual workshops.
179. Below are some of the reasons expressed by project countries that did not use the CBD Online Reporting Tool. The finding that 71% of UNEP supported countries (52 out of 73) opted to submit their reports using the Microsoft Word template included in the CBD Resource Manual can be an indication of technological capacity.

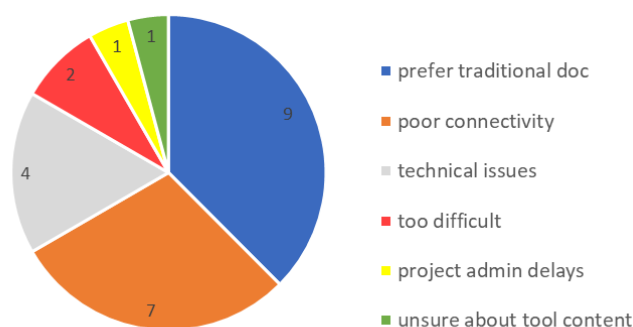


Figure 4. Reasons given by countries for not using the Online Reporting Tool.

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

180. The factors that boosted or dampened project performance are described throughout chapter V sections D to H. Those presented here are only in response to the “Questions for Reporting to the GEF” from the evaluation ToRs (see **Annex VII**). The overall rating, below, considers following individual ratings for all the factors affecting performance and other cross-cutting issues:

○ Preparation and readiness	Moderately
○ Unsatisfactory	
○ Quality of project management and supervision	Highly Satisfactory
○ Stakeholder participation and cooperation	Highly
○ Satisfactory	
○ Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Satisfactory
○ Environmental, social and economic safeguards	Satisfactory
○ Country ownership and driven-ness	Highly Satisfactory
○ Communication and public awareness	Satisfactory

(A) Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?

181. Project design sought to mainstream gender into the CBD 6NRs, and UNEP to guide countries with this task, so it can be said that, by design, the intervention responded to UNEP’s Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment. Guidance documents and webinars were made available to countries on how to mainstream gender into CBD national reporting and NBSAP implementation, which countries applied to the best of their abilities. As sex-disaggregated data were not collected from project activities at the country level, NEAs were instead consulted on gender issues through UNEP’s exit survey once the project finalised:

(i) Had country project teams made an effort to ensure that the 6NR was gender-responsive? **88.2%** of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed; and

(ii) Had country project teams had sufficient capacity to mainstream gender into the reporting process? **74.6%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 25.4% were either neutral or disagreed, and

(iii) What challenges were faced when trying to develop a “gender-responsive” 6NR? Responses ranged from the absence of gender specificity in NBSAPs, to a lack of knowledge, expertise or access to women’s groups for conducting a gender-responsive 6NR drafting process. Some pointed out that religious and cultural factors also influenced how gender is addressed or the extent to which it is mainstreamed.

182. These findings account for the project’s gender-responsiveness. NEA feedback obtained from the Terminal Evaluation process often noted that the project had been a valuable learning experience with regards to gender (alongside other issues).

(B) Communication and Public Awareness: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project’s completed Knowledge Management Approach¹⁰?

183. The project’s knowledge management approach comprised several building blocks that came together to increase the quality and quantity of inputs available for

¹⁰ This includes: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g., website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions.

generating national and global outputs. These building blocks all contributed to enhancing knowledge of biodiversity issues:

- ✓ *Global technical support*: Countries were offered state-of-the-art spatial data tools, advice on biodiversity indicators, webinars and guidance materials, and technical back-stopping. There were challenges to knowledge management in this arena due to technological limitations in several countries.
 - ✓ *Project-driven consultations*: These enabled countries to collect up-to-date information from various stakeholders and foment data exchange, access and analysis. It also served to validate 6NR content, including the use of maps and global data sets promoted by the project.
 - ✓ *Project-driven communications*: Outreach elements were used by countries to raise awareness of biodiversity issues and increase buy-in to the 6NR process. These elements were either planned early, or took place for final 6NR dissemination.
 - ✓ *Inputs to global outputs*: Summed with the UNDP project, the 6NRs contributed directly to GBO5 findings, to informing the SCBD on potential improvement to its guidelines and Online Reporting Tool, and to a global analysis (by UNEP-WCMC, UNDP and UNEP) on lessons learnt from supporting countries under the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and on considerations for the Post-2020 GBF.
 - ✓ *Feedback loops*: The project created two main 'feedback loops', one to improve 6NR quality and another to learn from project delivery. Providing feedback on the 6NRs was a means to mobilise existing knowledge (open-access global datasets) for the benefit of countries.
 - By performing a simplified technical review of draft 6NRs, UNEP provided feedback to countries on how to improve the report. UNEP would refer teams to global datasets from the [Biodiversity Indicators Partnership](#) from which country-specific data could be downloaded, and would also offer country-specific maps produced through the UN Biodiversity Lab. The Technical Review Framework was sent to countries for their own benchmarking. UNEP-WCMC also carried out an analysis on the use of biodiversity indicators by nine African countries and made recommendations for improved reporting.
 - UNEP's exit survey captured feedback from NEAs on: project delivery (including lessons learnt and suggestions for tailored technical support); the use of the CBD Online Reporting Tool; and future areas for technical assistance. Countries were also requested to reflect on "Lessons learnt and Best practice" in their closing reports to UNEP.
184. Feedback from NEAs, through final reports and the UNEP exit survey, has helped to shed light on challenges faced during the project, particularly those that prevented countries from taking full advantage of the technical support on offer. This feedback is a rich source of information to fundament the design of future national reporting projects. Lessons learnt shared by countries signal how knowledge and information management capacities came into the spotlight through the project. NEAs and other stakeholders reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of their biodiversity indicators and information systems, and found that technology deficits were often a cause of institutional weaknesses.
185. To better tailor future interventions, lessons can also be learnt from UNDP's knowledge management efforts. The UNDP team made good use of the NBSAP Forum to make relevant material available to countries. The team also prepared post-action analyses on the gender-responsiveness of the 6NRs, and on the [use of spatial data](#) in

comparison with the 5th NRs. The Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP project found such analyses a good practice to be replicated in future efforts. The UNDP project also included gender indicators, as part of its Gender Action Plan; although in practice, these were found to be overly ambitious, lessons can be drawn regarding the use of gender indicators in future endeavours.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Satisfactory	5
--	----------

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

186. This section highlights the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, answers the evaluation's Key Strategic Questions, and provides ratings for each evaluation criteria. For cross-referencing purposes, paragraph numbers shown in parentheses point to the findings that support each conclusion. While the Terminal Evaluation ToRs required separate performance ratings (by evaluation criteria) for each MSP, the lack of information per MSP (excepting final expenditure estimates and final co-financing) precluded any individualised ratings.

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE + PROJECT DESIGN: (83-95)

187. **The project was highly strategic and showed strength in its design.** UNEP's technical role and value addition in supporting CBD Parties through GEF Enabling Activities was well articulated. The project ensured the strategic use of pre-existing partnerships (such as with SCBD and UNEP-WCMC) and of UNEP's and UNDP's prior knowledge of country needs regarding CBD national reporting. Complementarity with existing interventions was strong and was achieved by aligning the UNEP and UNDP interventions from the project design stage. The project was also designed to mainstream gender into the 6NR exercise and be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders (including often marginalised groups) as part of its outcomes.
188. The project demonstrated clear alignment with UNEP and UN policies and strategies (including the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017 and Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment). Likewise with donor priorities, specifically GEF-6 priorities under the Biodiversity Focal Area; and with national priorities, given the obligation of CBD Parties to periodically submit NRs, but also in consideration of other Conventions, environmental policies and fundraising efforts to which the 6NR contributed useful data.
189. Project design was well-founded and judicious. The intervention logic confirmed its validity by demonstrating how practically all project Outputs were essential for success and could become the basis of future CBD national reporting interventions. Technical support from UNEP (tools, guidance, capacity building and 6NR reviews) mixed with multi-stakeholder participation and ample consultations in countries were the bottom-line for high quality CBD national reporting.

EFFECTIVENESS: (98-138)

190. The project boasts, as its major achievement, a **highly effective delivery of expected results.** This, despite facing external and internal constraints to project execution, the onset of a pandemic, and depending on a relatively small project team to oversee execution in 73 countries while providing technical support and organising regional trainings. All results were fully achieved and, today, are still useful to countries and global CBD processes. Project Objectives were reached, as was the Project Goal, leading to significant progress toward the Intended Impact. **Catalytic effects** can also be attributed to the project, as much at the national level - where the data and institutional ties generated show uptake and sustainability as they are useful for a number of other purposes - as at the global level - where partnerships formed provide motive for continued collaboration beyond the project.
191. Several factors that **boosted the project's Effectiveness and performance** were identified, some stemming from the project's design. These had a positive influence by:

(a) acting as drivers of change to secure better results (*Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation; Country Ownership and Driven-ness; Communication and Public Awareness*);

(b) integrating gender issues and marginalised groups into project processes (*Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity*); and

(c) applying effective project management and adaptive management to support 73 countries with the preparation of their 6NRs (*Quality of Project Management and Supervision*).

192. Of the above, the most significant was *Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation*, which had been built into project design. The emphasis on a consultative multi-stakeholder approach to 6NR preparation laid the foundations for success, including building country ownership and driven-ness and ensuring sustainability of project results. Another key contributor to the project's success was its *Complementarity with Existing Interventions (Strategic Relevance)*, together with UNEP's ability to create and maintain productive partner relations. Important implementation synergies were created with the UNDP-led 6NR project, allowing UNEP's project delivery and technical support to be more effective and efficient, and for the two UN Agencies to support CBD Parties as "One UN".

EFFICIENCY: (154-158)

193. **The project demonstrated more efficiency gains than losses**, as the losses did not prevent the project from achieving its Objectives. A degree of efficiency was lost to implementation delays, caused by the need to adhere to new UNEP policies and procedures for *Financial Management*, by start-up difficulties in some countries, and by workplans being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The variety of national execution arrangements at play also contributed to a slow start. Overall, implementation delays at the onset and tail-end of the project reduced its timeliness and, importantly, the time available to countries to prepare their 6NRs. Compressed timelines and systemic inefficiencies in financial management (see below) were the most taxing aspects of project execution.
194. Conversely, there were gains in efficiency that improved the project's performance. Cost-savings were achieved by taking advantage of pre-existing partnerships and data sources (both at the national and global levels), and creating productive synergies with the concurrent UNDP project to develop comprehensive tools and guidance for 6NR preparation and jointly carry out trainings. Deploying virtual means to deliver technical assistance to countries also contributed to reducing UNEP's environmental footprint.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT and MONITORING & REPORTING: (139-153 and 159-170)

195. The only factors that dampened the project's overall performance relate to *Financial Management and Monitoring and Reporting*. With financial management, the roll-out of a new module for implementing partners caused significant delays in first disbursements to countries and could have been countered through better *Preparedness and Readiness* on UNEP's part. With monitoring and reporting, small gaps and missed opportunities were noted that lead to the conclusion that internal project reporting was minimised for the sake of efficiency, and that some improvements are possible to UNEP's already strong *Quality of Project Management and Supervision*.
196. Improvements for UNEP to consider include financial management issues, but also global M&E for a more strategic approach to knowledge management within GEF Enabling Activities. Global CBD national reporting cycles offer an opportunity to collect sex- and sector-disaggregated data as basic *process indicators*, and NR quality data

based on technical reviews, in a way that provides a minimum basis on which to monitor improvements in the quality of national reporting over time.

KEY STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

→ **Q1:** This project proposed to enhance CBD's efforts to build national reporting capacity by providing targeted and timely technical and financial support to a range of GEF eligible countries in an effective and cost-efficient manner. **Has the evaluation identified best practices in assisting the Parties in their national reporting?**

197. Best practices were indeed identified through the evaluation process, all of which are relevant to country driven-ness and the sustainability of project results:

A. *Having the right national team and a committed NEA is crucial to build ownership, capacities and leadership, empowering the NEA to better coordinate the country's biodiversity agenda.* (58, 126, 171)

The degree of leadership from the NEA can determine the extent to which stakeholders consider the NR process successful or meaningful, and stay engaged thereafter in other policy processes. The NR exercise can be managed through local experts instead of international consultants, or by empowering existing government staff rather than exclusively externalising to consultants. Either option is conducive to building ownership over the process and the product, to building national capacities and to better positioning the NEA. Either option must, however, consider existing government staff workloads. A team approach is preferable, whereby a group of external and local experts play a supporting role and the team leader is local, to bring greater sustainability to the results. This was in fact UNEP's recommended approach to countries, for the 6NR.

B. *Coordination through cross-sectoral National Steering Committees can be very effective; this structure can constitute a platform that links the demand and the offer for CBD national reporting, and ultimately, for biodiversity monitoring.* (57, 85, 103, 108)

Countries can channel national reporting efforts through existing structures and, in doing so, contribute to their expansion or consolidation, or create *ad hoc* structures that can set a precedent for inter-sectoral coordination. By focusing on the stock-taking exercise and on NBSAP implementation, members of these cross-sectoral structures gain understanding of the status of the environment, of the interrelationship between sectors, of the priorities and concerns of other actors, of gaps that need to be filled, and of the country's contribution to global targets.

C. *Efforts should be made to promote a multi-stakeholder consultative approach, as this is an effective method for national reporting and stock-taking that can ultimately open new avenues for NBSAP implementation.* (57, 107-109, 116, 134, 172)

Ensuring that as many relevant stakeholders as possible have the opportunity to participate in the NR exercise has many recompenses. It creates a sense of ownership and recognition of the exercise as a concerted effort for a common good. It builds understanding of the status of biodiversity, and highlights the role that different sectors and actors play in NBSAP implementation, or in biodiversity conservation in general. Inter-sectoral ties can be created and strengthened, responsibilities clarified, and marginalised groups (women, indigenous peoples, rural communities, etc.) given the chance to contribute and have a voice.

D. *Workshops and in-person meetings are a necessary capacity building element that should be complemented -rather than replaced- by virtual technical assistance.* (102, 105)

The offer of regional workshops, help-desks at CBD events and in-person meetings, is always welcomed by countries and widely taken advantage of. In addition to their technical purpose, in-person encounters also serve to strengthen ties between national

and global project managers and foment exchanges among countries. The timing or sequencing of such meetings is important: regional workshops are best held at the onset of the project (to help countries follow the same track and better understand NR details and process milestones), while country visits can be timely to generate momentum or find solutions when national efforts are waning.

E. Providing targeted and timely support to effectively and efficiently assist CBD Parties with their national reporting, is best done by:

(a) agreeing to appropriate national execution arrangements and seeking the corresponding requisite information as early as possible (96, 142, 156, 158). In recognition of UNEP's fund management handicap, and lack of country offices around the world, UNEP would do well to better prepare for the inception phase of its GEF Enabling Activity projects by liaising with NEAs or CBD Focal Points as early as possible to agree on the preferred execution modality and obtain the necessary financial and institutional information. This would reduce the lag-time between GEF approval and first disbursements to countries. Alternative execution modalities can also be considered, through UNEP Regional Offices or the United Nations Office for Project Services.

(b) pooling resources and adopting joint approaches between UNEP and UNDP when undertaking these global projects (30, 31, 43, 55, 62, 87-89, 98, 100, 136, 154). Assuming that both UN Agencies will continue to support CBD reporting and NBSAP implementation post-2020, powerful synergies can be had by joining forces and using each Agency's comparative advantage and the pooling of resources to deliver on global results. Capacity building efforts are more effective for countries when both Agencies contribute, and efficiencies can be had through joint planning, a common technical support agenda, and a joint knowledge management strategy. The opportunity is for both Agencies to deliver as "One UN" and increase the value-for-money of GEF Enabling Activities. A stronger knowledge management approach could warrant additional GEF funding.

F. A good practice was for UNEP, UNDP and UNEP-WCMC to prepare a common Technical Review Framework for the review of countries' draft 6NRs prior to their official submission; best practice would now be to optimise this Framework, based on lessons learnt from its use and considering means to collect global data on the quality of NRs during subsequent reporting cycles. (113, 114, 183)

A Technical Review Framework is most useful if it facilitates a *rapid* assessment of NR quality, measured against criteria such as completeness and readability, as well as qualified definitions of "gender-responsive", "stakeholder-owned" and "data-driven". For the latter, the emphasis would be on spatial data, data usability, and the evidence-base for reporting on implemented measures, national targets and global targets. For the former, information derived from NR contents (linked to how countries describe the roles of stakeholders and gender in NBSAP implementation) would be complemented with data on the NR drafting process itself, collected through country sub-agreement reports. Ultimately, best practice would be for UNEP and UNDP to use the same Framework not only as a tool for NRs to increasingly meet a desired standard, but also to monitor NR quality improvements over time.

G. The application of an exit survey, once the project finalises, is an excellent means to measure project achievements and gauge the level of satisfaction of beneficiary countries. (36, 160, 183, 184)

Undertaking a survey amongst countries as a post-action review of project performance is recommended, whether planned in project design or not. Project result areas can be assessed quantitatively and qualitatively, aiming for at least a 70% response rate from project countries. As was done by UNEP's exit survey, feedback

can also be obtained on future technical assistance needs and on suggested improvements to project delivery.

→ **Q2:** The project aimed to support Parties using a stakeholder consultative process in order to create ownership of the process of setting their own national strategies and targets. **What aspects are essential for promoting country ownership among the Parties?** (57, 109, 126, 115-118, 172, 191)

198. The project's consultative approach was extremely successful, opening avenues for participation, coordination and data collection. Having ample stakeholder participation was a critical driver of the project's success and was greatly valued by countries. The experience often served many purposes linked to international and policy commitments, not only the production of a CBD NR.
199. Best Practices A, B and C (above) were key factors for building country ownership. As different stakeholders and sectors contributed data and information, they were able to "see themselves" in the 6NR, learn more about national and global biodiversity targets, and understand the role they play in reaching them. Bringing stakeholders together to coordinate and collaborate through a National Steering Committee was also a contributing factor, as was the leadership role of the NEA and composition of the 6NR drafting teams. Understanding and ownership of NBSAPs was thus amplified through the consultative process, and ties across sectors strengthened.
200. Other factors that contributed to a sense of ownership, as cited by countries, were:
- ✓ the need for the 6NR to be sanctioned by a large number of Ministries or even by Parliament before being considered official;
 - ✓ the involvement of media outlets (TV, newspapers) to raise interest levels and sensitise key sectors and society at large about the importance of biodiversity conservation;
 - ✓ the integration of grassroots organizations (fisherfolk, farmers, etc.), women's groups, community leaders and local authorities, as a means to show that biodiversity is for everyone and that its conservation has to be addressed at all scales;
 - ✓ the coverage of all environmental issues within the 6NR, thus giving space to all environmental concerns and to joint discussions on ways to address them;
 - ✓ the organisation of several rounds of consultations and workshops to exchange information;
 - ✓ the understanding that each stakeholder's actions fit into a bigger national picture, and that each country's actions fit into a wider global picture.
201. In conclusion, the project has left countries well poised to continue using a multi-stakeholder consultative approach as a 'driver of change' to raise the quality of their NRs under the post-2020 GBF, as well as increase ownership of the NBSAPs and raise awareness about biodiversity.

→ **Q3:** The results framework for each of the five MSPs were identical (except for target numbers), notwithstanding the differences in the regional/national baselines at the onset of the 6NRs. **Has the evaluation identified any need for adaptation of the intervention logic in this regard?** (69-71, 90, 126-128, 137, 138, 189)

202. The evaluator proposes, as a recommendation, the use of a template Results Framework and TOC in the design of future endeavours. The proposed framework is very much based on the existing framework, and contains only small adaptations that arose from the TOC re-construction exercise (more precise wording and a clearer distinction between global and national results). UNEP's technical support should be

made explicit and become a measurable output. No changes are needed to the logic hierarchy, which proved to be robust and well-founded. The main results pathways should continue to rely on consultative multi-stakeholder and gender-sensitive processes at the country level, and on technical support at the global level (including tools, capacity building, and draft NR reviews) to arrive at high quality NRs for submission to the SCBD.

203. The use of indicators for Outcome monitoring and NR quality monitoring is proposed for stronger M&E, despite the lack of GEF requirements in this regard. Indicator targets could vary across regions, taking into account the 6NR experience (e.g., with the Pacific region or with cultural differences), to adjust ambition levels to the reality of beneficiary countries. Please refer to chapter VI section D (Recommendations) for further details.

➔ **Q4:** (Where relevant) **What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how did this affect the project's performance?** (42, 97, 131, 143, 156)

204. During the pandemic, various adaptive measures were required, resulting from project risk management. Workplan revisions and budgetary reallocations were necessary with several countries, as project activities were affected and workshops had to be cancelled or re-programmed. In the few countries still executing in 2020, national teams had to undertake consultations over the phone or via teleconferencing, and downplay 6NR validation to an approval e-mail rather than a political event. Some countries had to forgo the support of international consultants. Meanwhile, UNEP's global project team adopted a work-from-modality and continued to support country teams remotely.
205. The majority of countries (>60%) had finalised their 6NR by the end of 2019, and by mid-2020, this group had grown to 90%. Nevertheless, 6NR efforts in the Pacific region were the most affected, explaining the lower financial performance of this particular MSP. Therefore, the pandemic affected the project's timeliness and expenditure capacity, but without jeopardising results. In effect, efficiency losses were compensated through adaptive management and other substantive efficiency gains.

B. Summary of project findings and ratings

206. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in chapter V. Overall, the project achieves a 'Highly Satisfactory' rating due to strong performance in a number of areas. The same ratings (by criteria and overall) rating apply to each MSP.

Table 10: *Summary of project findings and ratings*

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance	Proven strategic relevance	HS
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	Strongly aligned to UN and UNEP strategic priorities and to three subprogrammes of UNEP's Mid-Term Strategy 2014-2017.	HS
2. Alignment to UN Environment /Donor strategic priorities	Strongly aligned to GEF-6 programming priorities as an Enabling Activity under the Biodiversity Focal Area.	HS
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Strongly responsive to national priorities for meeting international obligations and for implementing the CBD	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	High complementarity with concurrent UNDP-GEF project to support the preparation of 6NR in a further 64 countries. Important synergies were created that brought efficiency gains and raised effectiveness.	HS
Quality of Project Design	Project design was sound and well-founded. Through Theory of Change re-construction, minor adjustments were made to the results framework.	S
Nature of External Context	The external context was complex due to the political particularities of 73 countries and the onset of a pandemic. Constraints were countered through adaptive management.	F
Effectiveness	High effectivity in achieving results	HS
1. Availability of outputs	Outputs, ranging from steering committees to collected biodiversity data, were high quality and useful for a number of purposes; many remain available, in place, or in use today.	HS
2. Achievement of project outcomes	All Outcomes were achieved, leading to data-driven, stakeholder-owned and gender-responsive 6NRs being submitted to the CBD. UNEP provided effective and timely support, according to countries.	HS
3. Likelihood of impact	Objectives were fully met, improving the capacities of CBD Parties to use data in preparing the 6NR and for NBSAP implementation, informing on global progress towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and inputting into both the 5th Global Biodiversity Outlook and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.	HL
Financial Management	Financial management is UNEP's "Achilles' heel"	S
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	UNEP policies and procedures were followed to administer GEF funding to countries through sub-agreements. Significant delays were incurred in this process due to the concurrent roll-out of new financial requirements for implementing partners.	MS
2. Completeness of project financial information	Financial information linked to country sub-agreements and sub-contractors was comprehensive, yet gaps existed intra-Divisionally.	MS
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Communications were good (frequent exchanges between Global Project Managers and finance staff).	S
Efficiency	There were more efficiency gains than losses. Efficiency was lost to implementation delays, including some induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Efficiency gains came from the close collaboration with the UNDP 6NR project; cost-savings also occurred in some countries.	S
Monitoring and Reporting	M&E is weak by design but GEF Enabling Activities have lower M&E requirements¹¹.	MU
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The project set Outcome indicators but monitored global milestones instead. M&E gaps were countered by applying an exit survey among 75% of project countries.	U
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Countries reported on Output /Activity completion and expenditures without collecting disaggregated data. Sub-contractors produced the required reports. Regular Global Governance Committee meetings played a key role in progress monitoring and reporting.	MU
3. Project reporting		MS
Sustainability	Substantive sustainability factors exist	L

¹¹ This is not considered by Terminal Evaluation criteria and ratings scales, which are not well suited to GEF Enabling Activities.

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project's multi-stakeholder consultative approach strengthened inter-institutional relations in a way that has transcended the project and will continue to benefit NBSAP implementation post-2020. The 6NR exercise was valued as a formative experience for local experts.	HL
2. Financial sustainability	Current achievements are likely to be maintained through institutional budgets (co-finance) yet dependency on GEF financing is high for future national reporting cycles.	L
3. Institutional sustainability	Inter-institutional structures and collaborations will likely endure, even in the face of technological limitations.	L
Factors Affecting Performance	Lessons learnt can be drawn from these performance factors	S
1. Preparation and readiness	Better preparedness on UNEP's part could have reduced start-up delays for better efficiency.	MU
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Project management (including adaptive management and technical back-stopping) was strong and key to keeping the project on track.	HS
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	The project's multi-stakeholder consultative approach was a driver of change and a critical factor of success. It built country ownership and allowed for an enriching collaborative experience.	HS
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Important strides were made in mainstreaming gender into 6NR content and consultations; many countries included often marginalised groups in the process.	S
5. Environmental, social and economic safeguards	No environmental, social or economic safeguard standards were triggered by the project; the intervention was deemed to be low risk, with negligible negative impacts.	S
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	High country ownership was observed, often as a direct result of the project's multi-stakeholder approach and the participation of non-governmental and non-environmental sectors.	HS
7. Communication and public awareness	Outreach activities in some countries served to raise awareness of biodiversity issues and increase buy-in to the 6NR process. In those countries, this factor was mutually reinforcing with stakeholder engagement and country ownership. Overall, knowledge management was a key feature of the project that facilitated the flow of data from national to global and vice versa.	S
Overall Project Performance Rating		HS

C. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	A consultative and multi-stakeholder approach is a factor of success in national reporting processes; it is conducive to building country ownership and driven-ness, and sustainability of project results. Other 'best practice' can also contribute to an impactful national reporting experience.
Context/comment:	This was amply demonstrated during the project and provides a key lesson for the design of future CBD national reporting interventions.

Lesson Learned #2:	Gender mainstreaming is understood differently in different countries and is still incipient as a policy element; capacities and cultural contexts also vary widely. Considering the project's
---------------------------	---

	attention to gender, monitoring the participation of men and women in project activities could have been an elementary first step to take with project countries.
Context/comment:	For countries - and UNEP - to begin to monitor possible gender inequalities, or the effects of the intervention on disaggregated groups, a first and basic step would have been to request that country teams register (in workshop/meeting participants lists) the men and women that took part in project-funded activities. In addition, if country teams also identified the organizations taking part that are a voice for women (be these grassroots or Ministerial entities), then further progress could be made in gender monitoring. This would have demonstrated stronger compliance with UNEP's gender policy.

Lesson Learned #3:	Despite the offer of open-access state-of-the-art tools and guidance, countries did not gain equally from this technical support due to technological constraints in some regions. This reality would warrant a more tailored approach to future efforts, considering both regional and cultural aspects.
Context/comment:	How to assist countries to take better advantage of the technical and financial assistance on offer is a key question. The answer will influence the uptake and sustainability of project results.

Lesson Learned #4:	Agreeing on execution arrangements and requesting institutional and financial information from designated executing partners could have taken place earlier, to reduce delays at project start-up.
Context/comment:	<p>Recognising the nature of UNEP's financial system and its repercussions on efficiency, informing NEAs and implementing partners early about the full list of documents and financial requirements they have to provide, and meet, in order to receive GEF funds, would have lowered the transaction costs of getting country execution off-the-ground.</p> <p>Having to handle a large variety of execution arrangements was an additional handicap for UNEP, in contrast to UNDP's execution model. Pre-emptive measures could have been taken to avoid or reduce delays at project start-up, by obtaining information from NEAs and implementing partners from an earlier stage. For example, while the due diligence is being carried out or even before UNEP's project internalisation step is complete, rather than once sub-agreements have been signed. In this way, UNEP could demonstrate better preparedness and readiness, save time and avoid frustrations.</p>

D. Recommendations¹²

Recommendation #1:	UNEP (together with UNDP) to consider using a template Results Framework and TOC for the design of future CBD national reporting GEF Enabling Activity projects. (see Annex VIII)
Context/comment:	This recommendation recognises the strengths of the current project design and aims for continuity in this approach in subsequent CBD national reporting cycles. Adjustments to the proposed Framework (attached here as Annex VIII) can be made, as drivers, assumptions and reporting requirements evolve post-2020 and the relevance of NR to global outputs varies. Indicators proposed at the Outcome and Objective levels, including a variant of GEF Core Indicator 11 (sector- and sex-disaggregated data) can act as both project indicators and ones that can measure the quality of NR processes in countries (either directly or as a proxy).
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Responsibility:	UNEP (GEF Biodiversity & Land Degradation Unit) – to achieve with UNDP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	January to June 2022.
Cross-reference(s) to rationale + supporting discussions:	Paragraphs 69-71, 90, 126-128, 137, 138, 189, 202, 203.

Recommendation #2:	UNEP (together with UNDP) to propose a joint knowledge management strategy and simplified Technical Review Framework to better capitalise on the cooperation between UNEP and UNDP during post-2020 national reporting interventions, and thus increase the value-for-money of these GEF Enabling Activities.
Context/comment:	This recommendation considers the following factors: (i) evolving GEF policies that integrate knowledge management requirements and across-the-board use of Core Indicators, even if not for GEF-6 Enabling Activities; (ii) continued involvement of both Agencies in GEF Enabling Activities for CBD and other Conventions and Protocols; (iii) efficiency gains to be had from collaboration and

¹² Priority level selected from these categories:

***Critical recommendation:** address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of programme objectives.*

***Important recommendation:** address reportable deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance might be at risk regarding the achievement of programme objectives. Important recommendations are followed up on an annual basis.*

***Opportunity for improvement:** comprise suggestions that do not meet the criteria of either critical or important recommendations, and are only followed up as appropriate during subsequent oversight activities.*

	<p>pooling of resources; and (iv) UN Secretary General's Data Strategy that seeks to build a data-driven organization.</p> <p>GEF Enabling Activities provide UN Agencies a distinctive niche where supporting NR preparation through joint action (as "One UN") can achieve high impact on a low-budget. Taking knowledge management to the next level would add considerable value-for-money to GEF Enabling Activities. UNEP and UNDP (as well as UNEP-WCMC) are uniquely positioned to collate data from the projects of all GEF-funded CBD Parties and, with each reporting cycle, produce 'umbrella analyses' on the quality of NRs that can be of service to SCBD and governments. Each Agency would contribute from their comparative advantage.</p> <p>Such an approach would fit the Secretary-General's Data Strategy and reinforce the role of three global partners in the realm of biodiversity targets, indicators and spatial data, and basic gender monitoring. The imminent launch of a post-GBF with a new set of global indicators sets an opportune stage on which to use the 7th national reporting cycle as a reporting baseline and UN GEF Agencies, through a concerted knowledge management approach, measure improvements over time.</p>
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Responsibility:	UNEP (GEF Biodiversity & Land Degradation Unit + Wildlife Unit) – to achieve with UNDP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	As part of designing the GEF Enabling Activity project for the next CBD national reporting exercise, or as early as the opportunity arises.
Cross-reference(s) to rationale + supporting discussions:	Paragraphs 113, 114, 154, 170, 183-185, 196, 197 E+F

Recommendation #3:	UNEP to explore efficient and effective ways to tailor the delivery of technical assistance entailed in CBD national reporting GEF Enabling Activity projects, to better match the capacities and geopolitical realities of countries.
Context/comment:	<p>The design of future CBD national reporting interventions can be optimised by learning from prior experiences. Those lessons can point to ways to tailor the project's technical assistance for more effective and efficient uptake by countries, and integrate more elements of technology transfer. The following are considerations to this end, based on project findings:</p> <p>a. In addition to language and geographical location, technological capacity is another criterium for grouping or sub-grouping countries in capacity building activities.</p>

	<p>b. Global meetings at the side-lines of CBD meetings could have a longer duration, and follow-up provided after all tool-intensive encounters.</p> <p>c. Planning for in-person rather than virtual inception workshops makes the project front-heavy but responsive to demands from countries for early in-person inductions. These allow country project managers to familiarise themselves from the onset with the tools on offer, and all technical and reporting aspects of the project, including the UNEP project manager with whom they will relate.</p> <p>d. If workshops and webinars are to function as “seed capital” for more of a trainer-of-trainers approach, then the onward-relay of information on how to use those tools will need special attention; the idea is to help those trained to better transmit their utility and relevance to NBSAPs to national teams.</p> <p>e. Promoting the use of expert rosters, with regional and thematic distinctions, can facilitate the tailoring of technical support.</p> <p>f. Consideration can be given to providing countries with the opportunity to use project budgets to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carry out communication and outreach activities, especially if useful to build political support or national awareness of biodiversity issues. • mobilize regional support and services, which can be especially useful to small island developing states. • attend to specific information technology needs for improved data collection and management. • receive in-country targeted courses or trainings, drawing from UNEP partnerships or the roster of experts, on the use of open-access biodiversity data sources.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for Improvement
Responsibility:	UNEP (GEF Biodiversity & Land Degradation Unit + Wildlife Unit)
Proposed implementation time-frame:	As part of designing the GEF Enabling Activity project for the next CBD national reporting exercise, or as early as the opportunity arises.
Cross-reference(s) to rationale + supporting discussions:	Paragraphs 102, 105, 115, 118, 119, 178, 183-185, Lesson Learnt #3

Recommendation #4:	<p>UNEP to consider project management and oversight improvements for the global execution of GEF Enabling Activities that entail:</p> <p>a) early engagement with national executing partners /CBD Focal Points;</p>
---------------------------	---

	b) the use of a specific internal agreement template for GEF Enabling Activities
Context/comment:	<p>a) early engagement¹³ with national executing partners /CBD Focal Points in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agree on an appropriate execution arrangement, considering direct (with a designated NEA) and indirect options (through a UNEP Regional Office, UNOPS, or a UNDP Country Office - at costs to be negotiated early). - obtain the necessary institutional and financial information from the designated NEA, as per UNEP policies. <p>b) the use of a specific internal agreement template for GEF Enabling Activities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - simplifies internal reporting requirements to align them with GEF requirements and the information obtainable from UNEP's financial management system - places more emphasis on national execution oversight responsibilities. - introduces M&E elements, such as GEF Core indicator 11 and the revision of Internal Agreement annexes to include country reporting templates for use in sub-agreements, that facilitate monitoring for knowledge management (e.g., obtaining sex- and sector-disaggregated data from participatory activities; including a rapid-response questionnaire in countries' Final Report template). - includes under the "Terms and Responsibilities of the Implementing Party" (clause 7) the provision of the above reporting templates, to facilitate global monitoring.
Priority Level:	Important recommendation
Responsibility:	<p>a) UNEP (Wildlife Unit – or the Unit that will execute future CBD national reporting interventions)</p> <p>b) UNEP (GEF Biodiversity & Land Degradation Unit).</p>
Proposed implementation time-frame:	January to October 2022.
Cross-reference(s) to rationale + supporting discussions:	Paragraphs 96, 148, 156-158, 164-170, 195, Lessons Learnt #2 and #4

¹³ Early engagement refers to the period prior to sub-agreement signature with participating countries; this can be once the GEF funding for the Enabling Activity has been secured and is being internalised into UNEP's systems, or after internalisation is complete, while the internal execution agreement is being signed within UNEP. (In either case, the project's pre-inception period).

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 11: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	NO COMMENTS RECEIVED		

ANNEX II. RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE AND REVISED RESULTS FRAMEWORK

REVISED RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Comparative table

The ‘Intended Impact’ and ‘Project Goal’ are proposed by the evaluator as part of re-constructing the TOC. **Columns in white** show the original Results Framework. **Blue-shaded columns** show revisions or additions to the results framework, proposed for evaluation purposes and for consideration in the design of future CBD national reporting projects. **Grey columns** show the justifications for the changes made.

Intended Impact:	CBD Parties are better able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through concerted and timely mainstreaming of biodiversity and gender into sectoral policies.
Project Goal:	Improve national and global knowledge on the status of biodiversity in order to strengthen CBD implementation.

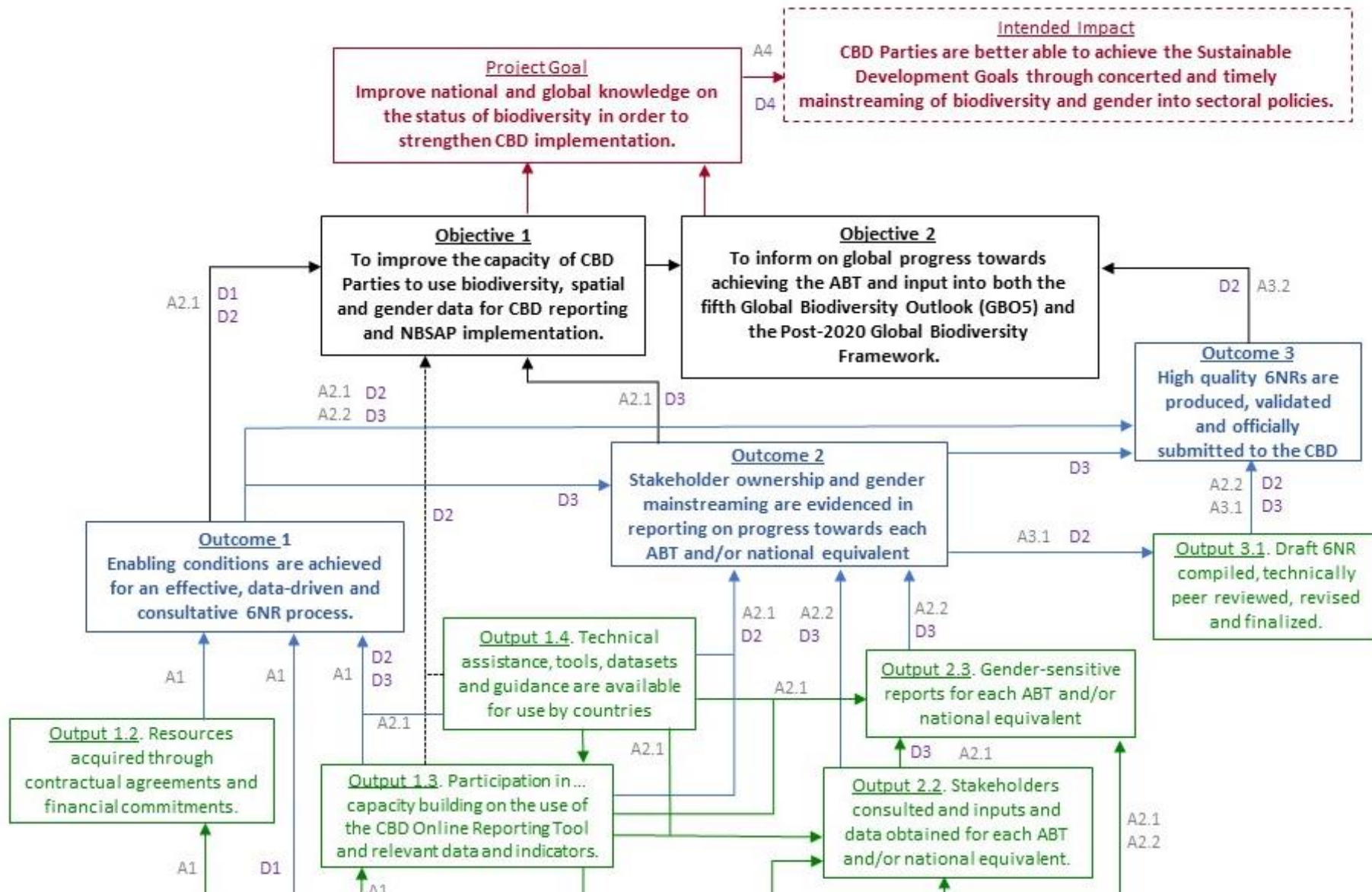
Objective		Revised Objective		Justification
To provide financial and technical support to GEF eligible parties to the CBD in their work to develop high quality, data-driven 6NR that (i) will improve national decision-making processes for the implementation of NBSAPs, (ii) that report on progress towards achieving the ABT and (iii) inform both the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5) and the Global Biodiversity Strategy of 2021-2030”.		1. To improve the capacity of CBD Parties to use biodiversity, spatial and gender data for preparing the 6NR to the CBD and for NBSAP implementation.		Separating the project Objective in two better represents the project’s national and global dimensions, and clarifies the flow of the main results pathways. The reference to the Global Biodiversity Strategy of 2021-2030 is also updated to the current terminology: Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
		2. To inform on global progress towards achieving the ABT and input into both the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5) and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.		
Outcomes	Outputs	Revised Outcomes	Revised Outputs	Justification
Outcome 1: A functional, cross-sectoral	<u>Output 1.1.</u> The SC is formed, roles for the preparation of the 6NR are assigned, and a production	Outcome 1: Enabling conditions are achieved for an	<u>Output 1.1.</u> A functional cross-sectoral Steering Committee is formed in each country, roles for the	The Outcome is rephrased to better express the desired change of state. The term “enabling conditions” also portrays the

steering committee (SC) in each participating country is formed to prepare the 6NR, project timelines and methods are developed, funding is mobilised and training and capacity building activities are complete.	plan and timeline is developed.	effective, data-driven and consultative 6NR process.	preparation of the 6NR are assigned, and a production plan and timeline are developed.	foundational importance of this Outcome in the TOC. The edits to Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 introduce greater specificity, while Output 1.4 is added as a new Output to reflect UNEP's role and value addition in the project, as well as GEF's investments in technical support and tools.
	<u>Output 1.2.</u> Funding and resource are acquired, including the submission of a funding request and the identification of other funding sources.		<u>Output 1.2.</u> Resources are acquired for 6NR preparation through contractual agreements and financial commitments.	
	<u>Output 1.3.</u> Participation in training and capacity building opportunities on the use of the CBD online reporting tool and the development of data that reports on progress in achieving the targets and activities in the post-2010 NBSAP.		<u>Output 1.3.</u> Participation in training and capacity building opportunities on the use of the CBD Online Reporting Tool and relevant data and indicators.	
			<u>Output 1.4. (NEW)</u> Technical assistance, online tools, global datasets, and guidance materials are available for use by countries in CBD reporting and NBSAP implementation.	
<u>Outcome 2:</u> Stakeholder owned reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent are	<u>Output 2.1.</u> Scoping report/zero draft for each ABT and/or national equivalent is prepared and includes analysis on gender.	<u>Outcome 2:</u> Stakeholder ownership and gender mainstreaming are evidenced in reporting on progress towards	<u>Output 2.1.</u> Unchanged	The Outcome is rephrased to integrate the gender dimension that comes from Output 2.3, and to focus on the qualities to be evidenced in the reporting

produced and compiled.	<u>Output 2.2.</u> Consultations with stakeholders are undertaken.	each ABT and/or national equivalent.	<u>Output 2.2.</u> Stakeholders consulted and inputs and data obtained for each ABT and/or national equivalent.	(stakeholder ownership and gender mainstreaming). Output 2.2 is rephrased to read as a result instead of an activity and to introduce the element of data collection, not picked up in other Outputs.
	<u>Output 2.3.</u> Gender-sensitive reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent are developed.		<u>Output 2.3.</u> Unchanged	
<u>Outcome 3:</u> A stakeholder owned 6th National Report is produced and submitted to the CBD	<u>Output 3.1.</u> The draft 6NR is compiled, undergoes a technical peer review, revised and finalized.	<u>Outcome 3:</u> High quality 6NRs are produced, validated and officially submitted to the CBD	<u>Output 3.1.</u> Unchanged	The Outcome is rephrased to better reflect the desired result (“high quality” 6NRs) and the route up the causal pathway (production, validation and official submission). Output 3.2 is eliminated given it is a repetition of the Outcome.
	<u>Output 3.2.</u> The 6NR is validated and officially submitted to the CBD.		Eliminated	

RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

Below is the project's re-constructed Theory of Change that adopts the revised Results Framework presented above. Assumptions (A) and drivers (D) have been added and numbered according to the main causal pathway to which they relate. Please refer to the main text (p23-25) for descriptions of these assumptions and drivers.



ANNEX III. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Table 11: Persons contacted and interviewed during evaluation process

#	Name	Country /Location	Institution	Position / Role	Male/ Female
PROJECT TEAM (GLOBAL)					
1	Antony Kamau	Kenya	UNEP	Global Project Manager (consultant)	M
2	Michele Poletto	Kenya	UNEP	Global Project Manager (consultant)	M
3	Julián Blanc	Kenya	UNEP	Biodiversity Management Officer, Project supervisor	M
4	Alex Owusu-Biney	Kenya	UNEP	GEF Task Manager (Biodiversity portfolio)	M
5	Bianca Notarbartolo	Kenya	UNEP	ex-Global Project Manager	F
6	Rachel Kagiri	Kenya	UNEP	Fund Management Officer	F
7	Serah Shaiya	Kenya	UNEP	Finance Assistant	F
GLOBAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE & PROJECT PARTNERS (GLOBAL)					
8	Lijie Cai	Canada	CBD Secretariat	Programme Officer for National Reports	M
9	Jamison Ervin	USA	UNDP	Manager, Nature for Development	F
10	Christina Supples	USA	UNDP	Senior Policy Advisor on Biodiversity	F
11	Marion Marigo	USA	UNDP	Capacity Building & Biodiversity Specialist	F
12	Martin Cadena	USA	UNDP	Community of Practice Facilitator	M
13	Pierre Lacroix	Switzerland	GRID-Geneva	Senior Lecturer, University of Geneva / MapX Manager	M
14	John Tayleur	UK	UNEP-WCMC	Head of Programme (Conserving Land and Seascapes)	M

1 5	Abisha Mapendembe	UK	UNEP-WCMC	Programme Officer	M
1 6	Neil Burgess	UK	UNEP-WCMC	Chief Scientist	M
COUNTRIES - NATIONAL EXECUTING AGENCIES (GOVERNMENT)					
1 7	Ahmat Abaya	Chad	Ministry	National Biodiversity Focal Point (new)	M
1 8	Khitma Mohammed	Sudan	Ministry	Biodiversity Desk Officer	F
1 9	Mohamed Abderemane Abdouchakour	Comoros	Ministry	Responsible for Applied Research	M
2 0	Hachim Abderemane	Comoros	Consultant	Project Coordinator	M
2 1	Santiago Francisco Engonga	Equatorial Guinea	Ministry	Director General of Environment	M
2 2	Jonas Komi Anthe	Togo	Ministry	Environmental Lawyer, Forest Resources Directorate	M
2 3	Arnold Okoni-Williams	Sierra Leone	Consultant	Chief consultant for 6NR process	M
2 4	Joseph S. Turay	Sierra Leone	EPA	Assistant to the Director	M
2 5	Guilhermina Amurane	Mozambique	Ministry	CBD Focal Point (previous)	F
2 6	Ana Paula Francisco	Mozambique	Ministry	CBD Focal Point (new), National Environment Directorate	F
2 7	Thabani Mazibuko	Eswatini	Ministry	Environment Officer	M
2 8	Veronica Josu	Moldova	Ministry	Head of Natural Resources and Biodiversity Dept.	F
2 9	Angela Lozan	Moldova	Ministry	Project Manager	F
3 0	Jelena Ducic	Serbia	Ministry	Head of Department	F

3 1	Elizabeth Munro	Cook Islands	NES	Senior Biodiversity Officer	F
--------	-----------------	--------------	-----	-----------------------------	---

ANNEX IV. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Table 2: Consolidated global GEF budget (in UNEP format) and total expenditures for all five MSPs

			GEF BUDGET (5 MSPs)	TOTAL GEF EXPENDITURES
	UNEP BUDGET LINE/OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE		USD	USD
10	PROJECT PERSONNEL COMPONENT			
	1100	Project Personnel w/m		
	1180	Project Officer	515 294,00	515 294,00
	1181	Administrative Staff	251 206,00	251 206,00
	1199	Sub-total	766 500,00	766 500,00
	1200	Consultants w/m	-	-
	1201	International Consultants	147 000,00	147 000,00
	1299	Sub-total	147 000,00	147 000,00
	1999	Component total	913 500,00	913 500,00
20	SUB-CONTRACT COMPONENT			
	2200	Sub-contracts for Supp. Org. (MOUs/ICA)	-	-
	2201	Sub contract to governmental agencies	6 523 000,00	6 918 444,82
	2202	Sub contract to UNEP-WCMC	365 000,00	291 881,82
	2999	Component total	6 888 000,00	7 210 326,64
30	TRAINING COMPONENT			
	3300	Meetings/Conferences		
	3301	Consultations	455 000,00	89 199,79
	3299	Component total	455 000,00	89 199,79
50	MISCELLANEOUS COMPONENT			
	5500	Evaluation		
	5581	Terminal Evaluation	175 000,00	6 060,00
	5999	Component total	175 000,00	6 060,00
	9999	GRAND TOTAL	8 431 500,00	8 219 086,43

Table 13: Expenditures per annum for each MSP, against approved GEF budget (all figures in USD)

GEF ID	GEF Budget	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total GEF Expenditure	Variance
	A					B	C = A - B
9817 (AFR-1)	1 963 500	63 087	950 824	765 786	221 781	2 001 478	-37 978
9822 (EUR)	1 270 500	40 821	474 365	678 622	55 492	1 249 300	21 200
9823 (PAC)	1 270 500	40 821	28 044	683 967	382 242	1 135 074	135 426
9824 (AFR-2)	1 963 500	63 087	1 222 671	529 763	145 141	1 960 662	2 838

9832 (GLOB)	1 963 500	63 087	739 902	907 762	161 821	1 872 572	90 928
	8 431 500	270 903	3 415 806	3 565 900	966 478	8 219 086	212 414

ANNEX V. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project at approval:

- Five approved Medium-sized GEF project proposals:
 - Africa-1 (GEF ID: 9817)
 - Africa-2 (GEF ID: 9824)
 - Global (GEF ID: 9832)
 - Europe, CIS and Mongolia (GEF ID: 9822)
 - Pacific (GEF ID: 9823)
- Annexes of each project proposal, specifically:
 - Annex 1: Project Logical Framework
 - Annex 2: Detailed GEF and Co-Finance Budgets
 - Annex 3: Workplan and Timetable
 - Annex 4: Key Deliverables and Benchmarks
 - Annex 5: Structure and Format of the 6th National Report and its Submission
 - Annex 6: Terms of Reference of Key Personnel
 - Annex 7: Project Implementation Arrangements
 - Annex 8: Reporting Requirements and Responsibilities
 - Annex 9: UNEP Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN)
 - Annex 10: M&E Plan
- GEF approval letters and review sheets for each project

Project in implementation: Contractual, planning and reporting documents

- UNEP Divisional Internal Agreement – signed between by Wildlife Unit and GEF Biodiversity /Land Degradation Unit
- Amendment to the Divisional Internal Agreement (no-cost extension) – signed, as above
- UNEP budget overview files
- UNEP progress reports (2018-2020)
- UNEP expenditure reports (2018-2020)
- Umoja Status of Allotment reports (2018-2021)
- Country sub-agreement documentation: signed sub-agreements plus annexes, supporting documents, amendments to the sub-agreements (no-cost extensions)
- Sample of 14 country progress and expenditure reports
- Sample of 23 country Final Reports
- Sample of 6 country final co-financing reports
- Sub-contractor (UNEP-WCMC) sub-agreement documentation: signed sub-agreement plus annexes, supporting documents, amendments (3) to the sub-agreement (two no-cost extensions, one cost extension)
- UNEP-WCMC progress and expenditure reports
- Sub-contractor (GRID-Geneva) sub-agreement documentation: signed sub-agreement plus annexes, supporting documents, amendment to the sub-agreements (one no-cost extension)

- GRID-Geneva progress and expenditure reports
- UNEP Global Project Managers mission reports (2018-2019)
- Reports and supporting documentation (2018-2019) for regional inception workshops (virtual); regional workshops (in-person); national workshops; and global workshops held at CBD meetings.
- Minutes of Global Governance Committee meetings (2018-2020)
- 6NR Milestone Monitoring Matrix (versions: 10 May and 01 Sept 2018) – internal tool
- Correspondence tracking spreadsheet – internal tool
- E-mail exchanges between country counterparts and UNEP Global Project Managers
- E-mail exchanges involving UNEP Fund Management Officer
- UNEP Final Report (part of terminal reporting)
- UNEP final co-finance (breakdown and summary tables)
- UNEP’s [exit survey](#): Results of project closure survey (58 respondents from 55 beneficiary countries)
- Wildlife Unit report (PowerPoint): “Final assessment of 35 submitted 6th National Reports (6NRs) in the framework of UNEP Project “Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the 6th National Reports to the CBD” (Dec. 2020)

Technical support + Project outputs

- Technical Review Framework ([full version](#)) for reviewing 6NRs
- UNEP’s simplified Technical Review Framework (set-up as a Google Docs)
- [UN Biodiversity Lab](#)
- [6NR technical webinars series](#) (YouTube)
- [NBASP Forum](#) - specifically the Sixth National Reports (6NR) to the CBD ‘community of practice’
- UNEP-WCMC report: “Analysis of the use of indicators in sixth national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) from nine African countries and recommendations for future reporting”
- **CBD/SBI/3/INF/30** - [Information Document](#) - Third meeting (on-line) of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (3 May 2021): *Lessons from the UNDP, UNEP and UNEP-WCMC in supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and suggestions for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.*

Related evaluations

- **UNDP-GEF project** “Technical support to eligible Parties to produce the sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity” - [Terminal Evaluation](#) (June 2020) and Management Response (May 2021).
- **UNDP-UNEP-GEF project** “Support to GEF Eligible Countries for Achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 17 Through a Globally Guided NBSAPs Update Process” (referred to as “Global Support NBSAPs” project) - [Terminal Evaluation](#) (March 20219)

Reference documents

- **CBD** Clearing-House Mechanism - [User Manual](#): Online reporting tool for the Sixth National Report.
- **CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/27** – [COP-13 Decision on National Reporting](#) (December 2016)

- **CBD/SBI/3/INF/3** – [Information Document](#) - Third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (24 April 2020): *Results of the survey to evaluate the use by Parties of the Online Reporting Tool for the Sixth National Report.*
- **CBD** Global Biodiversity Outlook ([GBO5](#)) (August 2020)
- **GEF-6** [Programming Directions](#)
- **GEF** [Guidelines](#) on Project & Program Cycle Policy (2020 Update)
- **UNEP** [Medium-Term Strategy](#) 2014–2017
- **UNEP** Gender Equality and the Environment [Policy and Strategy](#) (2015)
- **UNEP** Governing Council – [Bali Strategic Plan](#) for Technology Support and Capacity-Building (2005)
- **UN** Disability Inclusion [Strategy](#) (2019)
- **UN** Secretary General’s [Data Strategy](#) (2020-22)
- **UNDP-GEF project** report: “Analysis of the gender responsiveness of sixth National Reports to the convention on Biological Diversity” (April 2020).
- **UNDP-GEF project** report: “[Nature is counting on us](#): Mapping Progress to Achieve the Convention on Biological Diversity” (November 2019)

ANNEX VI. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name: Téa García-Huidobro C.

Profession	Biochemist
Nationality	Chilean / British
Country experience (professional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Europe</u>: Switzerland • <u>Americas</u>: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Sep 1998 – Aug 1999) Master of Science (MSc) in Environmental Technology • (Sep 1992 – Aug 1995) Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Biochemistry

Short biography

Ms. Téa García-Huidobro, a biochemist, began her professional life as a researcher in molecular and cell biology. After obtaining a Masters in Environmental Management (Imperial College, London, 1999), she began working for the Government of Chile on sustainable natural resource management and has dedicated herself to environmental issues ever since. In her time with the Chilean Government, she focused on public policies, regulations and tools for biodiversity conservation and institutional capacity development. She widened her project management and oversight skills after joining the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Panama to manage a portfolio of Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded projects, mainly for Latin American and Caribbean countries. Téa was then Regional Programme Coordinator for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), where she continued to drive the conservation and sustainable development agenda from IUCN's Regional Office in Costa Rica. In 2017, she became an international consultant, specialising in project drafting, reporting, compilation analyses and independent evaluations. After a period at IUCN headquarters in Switzerland, in the temporary position of Special Advisor to the Acting Director General, she returned to consulting and is now undertaking external evaluations for UNEP's Evaluation Office.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Policy-making in biodiversity-related issues and under international conventions
- Multi-stakeholder governance, coordination and consultations
- Strategic and operational planning
- Portfolio management, oversight, and fundraising
- Analytical skills, quality control, capacity for synthesis

Selected assignments and experiences

Only independent international consultancies:

Dates	Location	Contractor	Position - Role	Description

Jul. 2021 – Mar. 2022	home-based	UNEP Evaluation Office	International consultant- <i>External Evaluator</i>	Terminal Evaluation of UNEP-GEF project in Brazil, Chile and Madagascar (“Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE): Conserving Earth’s Most Irreplaceable Sites for Endangered Biodiversity”), executed by BirdLife International.
May – Dec. 2021	home-based	UNEP Evaluation Office	International consultant- <i>External Evaluator</i>	Terminal Evaluation of UNEP-GEF project in 73 countries (“Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD”), executed by UNEP.
May – Aug. 2019	home-based	IUCN	International consultant- <i>Compilation analysis</i>	Preparation of project closure documents that met donor requirements and provided an impact narrative for Ecosystem-based Adaptation interventions in six Mesoamerican countries.
Feb. – May 2019	Cuba & home-based	IUCN	International consultant- <i>Project formulation</i>	Formulation of a GEF-funded project concept under GEF-7 for Cuba (“Strengthening synergies between conservation and livelihoods on the north-eastern coast”) in Spanish and English.
Dec. 2018 – Apr. 2019	Guatemala & home-based	IUCN	International consultant- <i>Project formulation</i>	Strategic advice, technical inputs and facilitation of consultations for the preparation of a GEF-7 project concept for Guatemala (“Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration”).
Sep. 2018 – May 2019	El Salvador & home-based	UNEP Evaluation Office	International consultant- <i>External Evaluator</i>	Terminal Evaluation of UNEP-GEF project in El Salvador (“Contributing to the Safe Use of Biotechnology”), executed by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.
Jun. - Oct. 2018	home-based	IUCN	International consultant- <i>Compilation analysis</i>	Preparation of 12 case studies on Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Governance for Adaptation, covering 7 transboundary pilot sites across 6 Mesoamerican countries (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico and Panama).
Feb. – Jul. 2018	Guatemala & home-based	IUCN	International consultant- <i>Project formulation</i>	Strategic advice and technical review and revision of a project proposal to the Green Climate Fund (“Adaptation in the Guatemalan Highlands”) with budgetary adjustments to raise cost-efficiency.
Aug. – Oct. 2017	home-based	IUCN	International consultant- <i>Project formulation</i>	Preparation of a project concept for 6 countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) to present to the BMUB-IKI 2018 call.
Apr. – Jun. 2017	home-based	IUCN	International consultant- <i>Compilation analysis</i>	Preparation of the final Technical Overview and Completion Report for a project (“Governance, Forests and Markets”) funded by DFID, spanning 5 Mesoamerican countries: Guatemala, Honduras Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

Oct. 2005	Costa Rica + home- based*	Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock, Govt. of Costa Rica	International consultant - <i>External Reviewer</i>	Strategic review of the draft National Biosafety Framework of Costa Rica (regulatory policy and analysis), requested by the State Phytosanitary Service's Biotechnology Programme and facilitated through UNEP.
--------------	---------------------------------	--	---	--

* home-based Chile. All other references to home-based are in Costa Rica

ANNEX VII. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ALL ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project

“Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD”

Covering: Pacific (GEF ID 9823), Africa-1 (GEF ID 9817), Africa-2 (GEF ID 9824), Europe, CIS and Mongolia (GEF ID 9822), and Global (GEF ID 9832)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

GEF Project ID's (Five MSPs):	Africa-1 (GEF 9817); Europe, CIS and Mongolia (GEF 9822); Pacific (GEF 9823); Africa-2 (GEF 9824); Global (GEF 9832)		Umoja WBS: SB-008720
Implementing Agency:	UNEP	Executing Agency:	UNEP, Wildlife Unit, Biodiversity and Land Branch
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	N/A		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7)	N/A		
Sub-programme:	Healthy and Productive Ecosystems; and Environmental Governance	Expected Accomplishment(s):	4(b) Institutional capacities and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals
UNEP approval date:	October 2017	Programme of Work Output(s):	Advisory services to Governments to promote synergies in the implementation of MEAs and other multilateral institutional arrangements
GEF approval date:	June 2017	Project type:	Five (5) regional Medium Size Projects (MSP)
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF 6 Biodiversity Focal Area Set-aside	Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity
GEF Strategic Priority:	GEF 6 – BD -EA: Integrate CBD Obligations into National Planning Processes through <u>Enabling Activities</u>		
Expected start date:	2017	Actual start date:	October 2017
Planned completion date:	2019	Actual operational completion date:	September 2020

Planned project budget at approval:	USD 12,090,853	Actual total expenditures reported as of June 2020:	USD 12,653,036 (as certified by final financial reports)
GEF grant allocation:	USD 8,551,698 (for 5 Medium Size Projects)	GEF grant expenditures reported as of June 2020:	USD 7,092,321
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	N/A	Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:	N/A
Expected Medium-Size Project co-financing:	USD 3,539,155 (from participating Parties)	Secured Medium-Size Project co-financing:	USD 4,221,536 (as certified by final expenditure reports)
Date of first disbursement:	April 2018	Planned date of financial closure:	TBD
No. of formal project revisions:		Date of last approved project revision:	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	1 monthly meeting (CBD Secretariat/UNEP/UNDP)	Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	Last: October 2020
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	N/A	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	N/A
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	December 2020	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	March 2021
Coverage - Country(ies):	"Africa-1" (GEF ID: 9817) - Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda. "Africa-2" (GEF ID: 9824) - Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo. "Europe, CIS and Mongolia" (GEF ID: 9822) - Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Serbia. "Pacific" (GEF ID: 9823) - Cook Islands, Fiji, Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu). "Global" (GEF ID: 9832) - Angola, Cameroon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe		
Coverage - Region(s):	Global		
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

2. Project Rationale

1. Biodiversity is currently being lost at unprecedented rates due to human activities around the globe. To address this problem, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of Parties (COP) adopted a Strategic Plan in 2002 (Decision VI/26). In its mission statement, CBD Parties committed themselves to more effective and coherent implementation of the CBD objectives with the purpose of achieving a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level by the year 2010, as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth. These agreements became known as the 2010 Biodiversity Commitments, for which a set of targets and indicators were later established.

2. Although the 2010 Biodiversity Commitments resulted in an understanding of the linkages between biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being, biodiversity issues were insufficiently integrated and generally not reflected into broader policies, strategies, programmes, actions and incentive structures. As a result, the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss were not significantly reduced at the global level. This loss has profound impacts on human wellbeing and compromises the ability to adapt to future stressors.

3. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (CBD COP decision XI/2) acknowledges that achieving positive outcomes for biodiversity requires actions at multiple entry points. The strategy

includes 20 targets for 2015 or 2020, which are referred to as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABT) and are organized under five strategic goals. Parties are required by Article 26 of the Convention to submit National Reports to the COP on measures taken to implement it, and the effectiveness of those actions in meeting the Convention's objectives. The sixth national reports (6NR) to CBD are intended to provide key sources of information from which final progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 can be reviewed, including effectiveness of national strategies and actions in achieving ABT and related biodiversity outcomes.

4. Most Parties have in the past identified the lack of financial, human and technical resources as limiting their implementation of the Convention. Furthermore, technology transfer under the Convention has previously been very limited, consequently, insufficient scientific information for policy and decision-making had become an obstacle for the implementation of the Convention. Although the CBD Secretariat prepared a reference manual to assist Parties in preparing their 6NR in accordance with decision XIII/X and Article 26 of the Convention, without the benefit of external assistance, reports would have been delivered but there would likely be: minimal technical input; minimal use of data, information and knowledge; low levels of stakeholder engagement; no external expert review; lack of full alignment with implementation approaches; and lack of full alignment with reporting processes to other conventions and processes.

5. As the global biodiversity strategic plan was ending in 2020, and because there was need to have quality reporting from Parties on progress in implementing the plan, COP 13 requested that the GEF "provide adequate funding for the preparation of the Sixth National Report in a timely and expeditious manner". The GEF initiative titled "Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity" (hereinafter referred to as "the project") was launched in a bid to enhance the CBD's efforts to build national reporting capacity by providing targeted and timely technical and financial support to a wide range of GEF-eligible countries in an effective and cost-efficient manner.

6. In particular, the project aimed to address the need to engage broad groups of stakeholders (including both men and women) at the national level in developing a data-driven assessment of progress in achieving ABT and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs). It was expected that, through the project, national biodiversity planning processes would also continue to contribute to the national policy agenda and be considered in decision-making processes both at global level and in participating countries.

7. There are 143 Parties to the CBD that are GEF eligible to receive support for 6NR production. This project covered 73 GEF-eligible Parties through five (5) regional Medium Size Projects which were implemented simultaneously. All participating countries were to be provided with support to produce their sixth national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The individual countries supported by the project are listed in Table 1 above.

3. Project Results Framework

8. There are two primary global environmental benefits targeted by this project. First, it aimed to contribute to the global assessment of progress in achieving the ABTs, and to an understanding of the national contributions made to the Strategic Plan by doing so. Secondly, the information developed during this project was intended to be used not only to understand current biodiversity status and trends, but also to understand how well a country's actions are contributing to national and global conservation targets.

9. The project's specific objective was to "provide financial and technical support to GEF eligible parties to the CBD in their work to develop high quality, data-driven sixth national reports (6NR) that will improve national decision-making processes for the implementation of NBSAPs, that report on progress towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABTs) and inform both the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5) and the Global Biodiversity Strategy of 2021 – 2030".

10. This objective was to be achieved through three main components, and their respective activities, planned outputs and expected outcomes, as summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of the Project's Results Framework

Component	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
Component 1: Project inception meeting & identification of funding resources	Outcome 1: A functional, cross-sectoral steering committee (SC) in each participating country is formed to prepare the 6NR, project timelines and methods are developed, funding is mobilised and training and capacity building activities are complete.	1.1. The SC is formed, roles for the preparation of the 6NR are assigned, and a production plan and timeline is developed.	(a) deciding on the working arrangements and methods for preparing the 6NR, including issues related to the use of the online reporting tool (b) identifying the responsible actors and organizations for the different elements of the report (c) identifying the relevant stakeholders for each national target or target component and (d) holding the inception meeting.
		1.2. Funding and resource are acquired, including the submission of a funding request and the identification of other funding sources.	(a) identifying of other sources of funding and in-kind support (b) identifying partner organizations, agencies and centres of excellence to support the project.
		1.3. Participation in training and capacity building opportunities on the use of the CBD online reporting tool and the development of data that reports on progress in achieving the targets and activities in the post-2010 NBSAP.	(a) training in the use of the CBD online reporting tool (b) training in the development of data that reports on progress in achieving the targets and activities in the post-2010 NBSAP.
Component 2: Assessment of progress towards each national target	Outcome 2: Stakeholder owned reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent are produced and compiled	2.1. Scoping report/zero draft for each ABT and/or national equivalent is prepared and includes analysis on gender.	(a) preparing the initial draft elements of the national report, including data and progress assessments that are already available for each ABT and/or national equivalent (b) identifying information gaps for each ABT and/or national equivalent that is required to undertake the assessment of implementation measures and the assessment of progress towards national targets required in 6NR sections II and III.
		2.2. Consultations with stakeholders are undertaken.	(a) facilitating a process that convenes experts from a full range of disciplines, including women, indigenous groups and business sectors, to determine the status of NBSAP implementation, identify data gaps and validate spatial information (b) working with experts during stakeholder workshops to draw conclusions on national progress related to NBSAP implementation and achievement of ABT, in support of Decision VII/25.
		2.3. Gender-sensitive reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent are developed	(a) developing progress assessments for each ABT and/or national target equivalent (b) reviewing NBSAP implementation (c) reviewing actions to mainstream biodiversity (d) assessing of the effectiveness of the actions undertaken to implement the Strategic Plan and NBSAPS.

Component	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities
Component 3: Sixth National Report production and submission	Outcome 3: A stakeholder owned 6th National Report is produced and submitted to the CBD	3.1. The draft 6NR is compiled, undergoes a technical peer review, revised and finalized.	(a) compiling the target level assessments into a comprehensive draft 6NR, and following all formatting requirements to ensure consistency across targets (b) circulating the draft 6NR to the SC and UNDP/UN Environment for a technical peer review (c) revising the assessment to incorporate additional data sources and technical expertise (d) facilitating additional stakeholder consultations, as needed (e) developing a final 6NR report (f) obtain final approval from steering committee. Depending on the comments received during the review period, a country may wish to make the report available for a second round of peer review.
		3.2. The 6NR is validated and officially submitted to the CBD.	(a) official validation of the report by the government, which often requires approval from the Minister or Cabinet (b) submitting the 6NR as an official document to the CBD in accordance with Article 26.

4. Executing Arrangements

11. UNDP and UNEP are the GEF implementing agencies for this project; they are also the executing agencies, doing so directly (through distinct Implementing and Executing Entities) and being thereby accountable to the GEF for the use of funds.

12. This evaluation covers the areas of the project executed by UNEP. This was undertaken by the Ecosystem Division through a Divisional Internal Agreement (DIA) between the Wildlife Unit and the GEF Biodiversity/Land Degradation Unit of the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services Branch (BESB).

13. UNEP Ecosystem Division managed the project through a designated Task Manager (TM). The TM worked towards fulfilling the project's objectives and was responsible for receiving country proposals and the subsequent disbursement of funds. The TM was also responsible for monitoring project implementation for the countries supported. Due to the project's global character, senior technical staff within UNEP monitored the key activities and helped to facilitate the work of the TM. A technical group provided support for the development and implementation of the National Reports.

14. Executing partners included Environmental Ministries in the participating countries. The government national ministry(s) that was responsible for managing the environment portfolio in each participating country, or otherwise appointed by the Ministry, was referred to as the National Executing Agency (NEA). The NEAs hosted the Project Management Unit (PMU). For each participating country, a National Project Manager was responsible for all aspects of project management and coordination in collaboration with the project stakeholders to ensure adequate project implementation. The National Project Manager was also directly responsible for reporting to the NEA and the Project Steering Committee (PSC).

15. At the global level, a Global Coordination Committee (GCC) composed of representatives from UNDP, UNEP through the Wild Life Unit, World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), were expected to guide the project.

16. At national level, the NEA would chair a National Steering Committee (NSC) to provide operational and technical oversight of the project. The NSC was responsible for adopting the project's strategic decisions, reports, annual work plans, budgets and financial procurement, as well as the use of financial resources.

17. From an administrative point of view, staff members within Ecosystem Division/WCMC were assigned with the part-time responsibility of providing support to the project in terms of procurement, recruitment, financial control and legal matters on a needs-basis.

18. Collaboration with other partners was as follows:

- **CBD Secretariat:** Recipient of the project main output (6NRs). Partner in developing guidelines, tools and timelines, as well as in providing training activities.
- **UNDP:** Implementer of a parallel GEF-funded project targeting 64 additional eligible parties. Partner in developing guidelines, tools and timelines, as well as in providing training activities.
- **UNEP-WCMC:** Partner in providing training, reviewing outputs, preparing an information document on lessons learnt from the Project and developing tools and populating them with global datasets (UN Biodiversity Lab).
- **GRID-Geneva:** Partner in developing tools (UN Biodiversity Lab).

5. Project Cost and Financing

19. The project falls under the medium-size project (MSP) category, with an overall project budget of US\$12,090,853 made up of a GEF allocation of US\$8,551,698 (GEF financing for 5 Medium Size Projects), and an expected co-financing support of \$3,539,155 both in cash and in-kind, from the Environmental Ministries in the participating countries.

20. Table 3 below shows the estimated project budget and sources of funding as per the project design documentation (actual budget at project closure is likely to vary)

Table 3. Planned budget at project design

Project title	GEF ID	GEF financing (USD)	Co-financing (USD)	Total project cost (USD)
Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the CBD (Pacific)	9823	1,391,198	590,000	1,981,198
Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the CBD (Africa-1)	9817	1,963,500	1,116,060	3,079,560
Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the CBD (Africa-2)	9824	1,963,500	453,600	2,417,100
Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the CBD (Europe, CIS and Mongolia)	9822	1,270,000	250,000	1,520,000
Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the CBD – (Global: Africa-3, Maldives, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Solomon Islands)	9832	1,963,500	1,129,495	3,092,995
Totals (USD)		8,551,698	3,539,155	12,090,853

21. The project also received additional funding from leveraged resources (financial and in-kind) beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval, as follows:

- The India High Commission in Eswatini provided US\$500 as additional co-financing support for the preparation of communication materials-pamphlets of Eswatini's 6NR.
- The Nature Conservancy and Nature Kenya provided US\$12,000 and US\$15,000 respectively as additional co-financing support to Kenya during the data collection process, launch of Kenya's 6NR and to prepare abridged version of the 6NR among other communication materials.
- UNEP's regional office for the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nature Conservancy and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) provided in-kind support in the organization and delivery of 6NR Capacity Building Workshop for the Pacific Islands held in Apia, Samoa.

- UNEP Law Division provided in-kind support in the delivery of 6NR Capacity Building Workshop for Anglophone African Countries held in Nairobi, Kenya and in the preparation of a review framework for the Sixth National Reports.

6. Implementation Issues

22. The evaluation covers five (5) regional Medium Size Projects all aiming to provide support to eligible Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to produce the sixth national report to the Convention. Although they were implemented simultaneously as a single project, the evaluation shall produce a single evaluation report but the annexes shall present independent performance ratings for each MSP.

23. Parties were required by Article 26 of the Convention to submit their national reports to the COP on measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the Convention, due by 31 December 2018. However, Parties demonstrated serious difficulties in meeting the 31 December 2018 deadline to submit their 6NRs to the CBD. Although UNEP did the utmost to release the project funds as soon as possible after signing the SSFAs signature in late 2017-early 2018, the project workplan was too compressed for most countries to achieve this deadline. As a result, only 22% of UNEP-supported parties were able to submit their 6NR by the end of 2018.

24. According to the Terminal Report, most of the Activities and Outputs listed in the project documents are completed; the Terminal Report indicated that all seventy-three (73) Parties would have submitted their Final 6NRs by December 2020.

25. Other obstacles in preparing their 6NRs, as reported by Parties, were delays with administrative and financial arrangements, data availability/fragmentation, inter-institutional coordination at the national level, and lack of local capacity. These issues have been noted by UNEP as the object of further analysis to inform future support activities.

26. Most Parties expressed high appreciation for the assistance provided through web-based tools and resources, in particular the CBD Online Reporting Tool, the UN Biodiversity Lab, the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) website and dashboard, and the technical webinars. However, a significant number of Parties, especially in Africa and the Pacific, still experienced major connectivity issues and could not fully benefit from these resources. In this regard, opportunities for in-person training and assistance (such as global and regional training and helpdesks and individual country visits) were deemed more effective. Based on 6NRs submitted so far, 71% (52 out of 73) countries opted to submit their reports using the Microsoft Word template included in the CBD Resource Manual instead of the online reporting tool.

27. Technical difficulties and the limited finance staff capacity at UNEP Ecosystems Division significantly delayed the process of transferring the project funds to the Parties in a number of cases. In particular, new measures established by the UN Secretariat for the processing of financial transactions and information (e.g. approving bank details) produced significant delays at the Project inception.

28. The Covid-19 pandemic presented significant challenges in the execution of the project for several participating countries. However, the flexibility granted by UNEP, through the revision of budget allocations and workplans, enabled member states to adjust implementation strategies and deliver the required outputs despite the circumstances.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

29. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy¹⁴ and the UNEP Programme Manual¹⁵, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential)

¹⁴ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

¹⁵ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, UNDP, UNEP-WCMC, and the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) and the participating Parties. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

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

31. **The “Why?” Question.** As this is a terminal evaluation and similar interventions are envisaged for the future, particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “Why?” question should be at the front of the consultant’s minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant needs to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was. This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

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

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

9. Key Strategic Questions

34. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must also be addressed in the TE

Q1: This project proposed to enhance CBD’s efforts to build national reporting capacity by providing targeted and timely technical and financial support to a range of GEF eligible countries in an effective and cost-efficient manner. Has the evaluation identified best practices in assisting the Parties in their national reporting?

Q2: The project aimed to support Parties using a stakeholder consultative process in order to create ownership of the process of setting their own national strategies and targets. To what degree was this consultative approach successful, and what aspects of the initiative are essential for promoting country ownership among the Parties??

Q3: The results framework for each of the five MSPs were identical (except for target numbers), notwithstanding the differences in the regional/national baselines at the onset of the 6NRs. Has the evaluation identified any need for adaptation of the intervention logic in this regard?

Q4: (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how did this affect the project's performance?

35. Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a **summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report:**

(a) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:

What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

(b) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:

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

10. Evaluation Criteria

36. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria and a link to a table for recording the ratings is provided in Annex 1). A weightings table will be provided in excel format (link provided in Annex 1) to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The evaluation consultant can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

A. Strategic Relevance

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

i. **Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy¹⁶ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities**

38. The evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic

¹⁶ UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building¹⁷ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

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

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

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

iv. Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence¹⁸

41. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization¹⁹, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UN Development Assistance Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Country ownership and driven-ness

B. Quality of Project Design

42. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established (www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/our-evaluation-approach/templates-and-tools). This overall Project Design Quality rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item B. In the Main Evaluation Report a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage is included, while the complete Project Design Quality template is annexed in the Inception Report.

Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity

¹⁷ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

¹⁸ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

¹⁹ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

C. Nature of External Context

43. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval²⁰). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the evaluation consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs²¹

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision²²

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes²³

45. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed²⁴ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary. The evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Communication and public awareness

²⁰ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team.

²¹ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

²² In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.

²³ Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

²⁴ All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

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

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

48. The evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic²⁵ role or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change and as factors that are likely to contribute to longer term impact.

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

Regarding Enabling Activities, where project results are primarily set at the level of Outputs, it is more difficult to predicate the likelihood that long-lasting results arising directly [or indirectly] from the project will be achieved. In this case, likelihood of Impact achievement may be considered in the shorter-term, and assessed in terms of the quality of data informing the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO5), the Global Biodiversity Strategy of 2021 – 2030, COP guidance on reporting and the Monitoring and Assessment reports **as a result of improved national reporting, decision-making, and implementation of NBSAPs by Parties to the CBD.**

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Country ownership and driven-ness
- Communication and public awareness

E. Financial Management

50. Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output level and will be compared with the approved budget. The evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any

²⁵ A catalytic effect is one in which desired changes take place beyond the initial scope of a project (*i.e. the take up of change is faster than initially expected or change is taken up in areas/sectors or by groups, outside the project's initial design*). Scaling up refers to an initiative, or one of its components, being adopted on a much larger scale, but in a very similar context (*e.g. a small scale, localized, pilot being adopted at a larger, perhaps national, scale*). Replication refers more to approaches being repeated or lessons being explicitly applied in new/different contexts *e.g. other geographic areas, different target groups etc.* Effective replication typically requires some form of revision or adaptation to the new context. It is possible to replicate at either the same or a different scale.

financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project/Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

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

52. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities²⁶ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)
- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

55. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART²⁷ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities.. In particular, the evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for mid-term and terminal evaluation/review should be discussed if applicable.

²⁶ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

²⁷ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

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

57. The performance at project completion against Core Indicator Targets should be reviewed. For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided.

iii. Project Reporting

58. UNEP has a centralised project information management system (Anubis) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. disaggregated indicators and data)

H. Sustainability

59. Sustainability²⁸ is understood as the probability of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (ie. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

As previously mentioned, the results framework for Enabling Activities are primarily set at the level of Outputs and to a lesser degree at the level of longer-term Outcomes (e.g. in this case, the project objective focusses on preparation and submission of National Reports by Parties to the CBD) per COP decisions/guidance. The question of sustainability may therefore be considered in terms of the likelihood that the capacity developed amongst Parties supported through this project can be sustained **without** the benefit of external assistance/guidance from UNEP.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

²⁸ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

ii. Financial Sustainability

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

iii. Institutional Sustainability

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)
- Communication and public awareness
- Country ownership and driven-ness

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. Where the issues have not been addressed under other evaluation criteria, the consultant will provide summary sections under the following headings.)

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

64. In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP.

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

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

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

67. The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program occurring since the MTR should be reviewed. *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval).*

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

68. The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment²⁹.

69. In particular the evaluation will consider to what extent project-implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

70. The completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas should be reviewed. *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent).*

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

71. UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements³⁰ were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

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

73. Implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval should be reviewed, the risk classifications verified and the findings of the effectiveness of

²⁹The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

³⁰For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant should be shared with the Task Manager.

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

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

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

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

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

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

78. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A desk review of:

- Relevant background documentation (e.g. relevant CBD COP decisions);
- Project design documents (including GEF Review Sheets, UNEP Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note (ESERN), Requests for MSP Approval documents); Work plans or equivalent, GEF and Co-finance Budgets, revisions to the project (Amendments), the logical frameworks;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews, etc.;
- Project outputs: (e.g. Workshop/training material, meeting minutes, country-specific final reports, ABT reports, 6NR reports, etc.)
- Terminal report, Final assessment survey report.

- (b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
- UNEP Task Manager (TM);
 - Project management team within the Executing Agency (Ecosystem Division);
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
 - Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
 - Project partners, including World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), UNDP, and a selection of members of the National Steering Committees and the Global Coordination Committee;
 - Other relevant resource persons;
 - Representatives from the National Executing Agencies (NEA).
- (c) **Surveys** [as deemed appropriate]
- (d) **Missions** [due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, face-face meetings have not been included in this assignment; the consultant is encouraged to rely on virtual meetings through electronic media].

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

79. The evaluation consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for links to all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** (see links in Annex 1) containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.
- The Evaluation Report must contain separate Annexes presenting the performance ratings (by evaluation criteria) for each of the five (5) MSPs

80. An **Evaluation Brief**, (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and key evaluation findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

81. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The evaluation consultant will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Task Manager and Project Manager, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward revised draft report (corrected by the evaluation consultant where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the evaluation consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

82. Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultant and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

83. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a **quality assessment** of the first draft of the main evaluation report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultant.

The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

84. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis for a maximum of 18 months.

12. The Evaluation Consultant

85. For this evaluation, the evaluation team will consist of an Evaluation Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager (Pauline Marima), in consultation with the project team in UNEP Ecosystem Division (Bianca Notarbartolo, Anthony Kamau, Julian Blanc, Michele Poletto) and the UNEP-GEF Task Manager, the Fund Management Officer (Rachel Kagiri) and the Coordinators of 'Healthy and Productive Ecosystems' and 'Environmental Governance' Sub-programmes (Marieta Sakalian and Yassin Ahmed respectively). The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, each consultant's individual responsibility to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultant to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

86. The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of **9 months (04/2021 to 12/2021)** and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences or other relevant sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 5 years of technical or evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and/or biodiversity and/or biosafety management is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with no field visits.

87. The Evaluation Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Office of UNEP for overall management of the evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Evaluation Deliverables, above. The Evaluation Consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

88. In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the evaluation consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the evaluation consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluand and the key evaluation findings and lessons)

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

13. Schedule of the evaluation

89. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	April 2021
Inception Report	May 2021
Evaluation Mission	N/A
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	May – June 2021
Powerpoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	July 2021
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	August 2021
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	September 2021
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	October 2021
Final Report produced	November 2021
Final Report shared with all respondents	December 2021

14. Contractual Arrangements

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

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

Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (as per annex document 7)	20%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (as per annex document 13) with separate annexes presenting the performance ratings for each of the five (5) MSPs	50%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report with separate annexes presenting the performance ratings for each of the five (5) MSPs	30%

92. The consultant will be provided with access to the relevant shared folder (access to be granted by UNEP), and if such access is granted, the consultant agree not to disclose information to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

93. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultant have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

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

Annex 1: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes for use in the Evaluation

95. The tools, templates and guidance notes listed in the table below, and available from the Evaluation Manager, are intended to help Evaluation Managers and Evaluation Consultant to produce evaluation products that are consistent with each other and which can be compiled into a biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report. The biennial summary is used to provide an overview of progress to UN Environment and the UN Environmental Assembly.

96. This suite of documents is also intended to make the evaluation process as transparent as possible so that all those involved in the process can participate on an informed basis. It is recognised that the evaluation needs of projects and portfolio vary and adjustments may be necessary so that the purpose of the evaluation process (broadly, accountability and lesson learning), can be met. Such adjustments should be decided between the Evaluation Manager and the Evaluation Consultant in order to produce evaluation reports that are both useful to project implementers and that produce credible findings.

97. **ADVICE TO CONSULTANT:** As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link shared by the Evaluation Manager during the Inception Phase and use those versions throughout the evaluation. **List of tools, templates and guidance notes available:**

Document	Name
1	Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultant
2	Evaluation Consultant Team Roles (Principal Evaluator and Evaluation Specialist)
3	List of documents required in the evaluation process
4	Evaluation Criteria (summary of descriptions, as in these terms of reference)
5	Evaluation Ratings Table (only)
6	Matrix Describing Ratings by Criteria
7	Weighting of Ratings (excel)
8	Project Identification Tables
9	Structure and Contents of the Inception Report
10a	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (Word template)
10b	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (Excel tool)
11	Guidance on Stakeholder Analysis
12	Gender Note for Evaluation Consultant
13	Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations
14	Assessment of the Likelihood of Impact Decision Tree (Excel)
15	Possible Evaluation Questions
16	Structure and Contents of the Main Evaluation Report
17	Cover Page, Prelims and Style Sheet for Main Evaluation Report
18	Financial Tables
19	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of the Evaluation Report

ANNEX VIII. PROPOSED TEMPLATE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Intended Impact: CBD Parties are better able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through concerted and timely mainstreaming of biodiversity and gender into sectoral policies.

Project Goal: Improve national and global knowledge on the status of biodiversity in order to strengthen post-2020 CBD implementation.

Objectives		Objective Indicators
1. To improve the capacity of CBD Parties to use biodiversity, spatial and gender data for preparing their National Report (NR) to the CBD and for NBSAP implementation.		<p>% of surveyed countries that consider that the NR support provided helped to improve CBD reporting and NBSAP implementation. (<i>>80% by project end</i>)</p> <p># of direct beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender and sector) that benefitted from the project.³¹</p>
2. To inform on progress towards achieving the global targets set out in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.		% of officially submitted NRs used for measuring progress towards meeting the global targets set out in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. (<i>>90% by project end</i>)
Outcomes	Outcome Indicators	Outputs
<p><u>Outcome 1:</u></p> <p>Enabling conditions are achieved for an effective, data-driven and consultative NR process.</p>	<p>% of countries with functional Steering Committees (SC) set up. (<i>80% by mid-term. 100% by project end</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 1.1.</u> A functional cross-sectoral SC formed in each country, roles for the preparation of the NR assigned, and a workplan developed.</p>
	<p>% of SC that include >1 non-governmental and >1 non-environmental sector representative. (<i>>90% by project end</i>)</p>	
	<p># of contractual agreements signed with UNEP that commit technical and financial resources to support the NR process. (<i>all project countries by month 10</i>).</p> <p>% of countries that meet or exceed their co-financing commitment. (<i>100% by project end</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 1.2.</u> Resources acquired through contractual agreements and financial commitments for NR preparation.</p>

³¹ Based on GEF-7 Core Indicator 11. Can be derived from country reports on participatory activities, making sure to avoid double counting.

	<p># of training and capacity building activities completed by global project team. (<i>>10 by project end</i>)</p> <p>% of <u>surveyed</u> countries that take advantage of >1 in-person and online training events. (<i>>90% by project end</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 1.3.</u> Participation in training and capacity building opportunities on the use of the CBD Online Reporting Tool, and relevant data and indicators.</p>
	<p>% of <u>surveyed</u> countries that use the guidance material, tools and datasets promoted by the project. (<i>70-90% by project end, depending on type of support offered</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 1.4.</u> Technical assistance, online tools, global datasets, and guidance materials are available for use by countries in CBD reporting and NBSAP implementation.</p>
<p><u>Outcome 2:</u> Stakeholder ownership and gender mainstreaming are evidenced in reporting on progress towards each global target and/or national equivalent.</p>	<p># of zero drafts produced for each global target and/or national equivalent (<i>>90% of project countries by project end</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 2.1.</u> Zero drafts produced for each global target and/or national equivalent, for sharing in consultation process.</p>
	<p>% of zero drafts for each global target and/or national equivalent that integrate data from non-govt stakeholders (<i>70% by mid-term. 100% by project end</i>)</p> <p>% of <u>surveyed</u> countries that consider that NR preparation included an effective stakeholder engagement process. (<i>>90% by project end</i>)</p> <p>% of countries that involve the SC in reviewing progress towards each global target and/or national equivalent. (<i>>90% by project end</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 2.2.</u> Stakeholders consulted and inputs and data obtained for each global target and/or national equivalent.</p>
	<p>% of zero drafts produced for each global target and/or national equivalent that integrate gender issues. (<i>% of project countries by project end to be set per region or groups</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 2.3.</u> Gender-sensitive reports for each ABT and/or national equivalent are developed</p>
<p><u>Outcome 3:</u> High quality NRs are produced, validated and officially submitted to the CBD</p>	<p>% of reviewed draft NRs that show improved data quality or quantity, with respect to the previous NR. (<i>>50% by project end</i>)</p> <p>% of <u>surveyed</u> countries that undergo a technical review that consider this step to be useful in raising the quality of their NR. (<i>>90% by project end</i>)</p>	<p><u>Output 3.1.</u> The draft NR is compiled, undergoes a technical peer review, is revised and finalized.</p>

--	--	--

ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project

“Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD”

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant’s efforts and skills. Nevertheless, the quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to evaluation consultants, especially at draft report stage. This guidance is provided to support consistency in assessment across different Evaluation Managers and to make the assessment process as transparent as possible.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<p>Quality of the Executive Summary:</p> <p>The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	<p>Final report: Excellent Executive Summary</p>	6
<p>I. Introduction</p> <p>A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.)</p> <p>Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?</p>	<p>Final report: Well done explains how five GEF MSPs are covered in this evaluation</p>	2
<p>II. Evaluation Methods</p> <p>A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.).</p> <p>Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.</p>	<p>Final report: This section is quite thorough There is a statement about anonymity and confidentiality.</p>	5

<p>The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described.</p> <p>It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome.</p> <p>Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. Is there an ethics statement?</p>		
<p>III. The Project</p> <p>This section should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Context:</i> Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). • <i>Results framework:</i> Summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • <i>Stakeholders:</i> Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • <i>Project implementation structure and partners:</i> A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • <i>Changes in design during implementation:</i> Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • <i>Project financing:</i> Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The section is very comprehensive and informative.</p>	6
<p>IV. Theory of Change</p> <p>The <i>TOC at Evaluation</i> should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors.</p> <p>This section should include a description of how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>³² was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow UNEP's definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>. <i>The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.</i></p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The causal pathways are well-detailed and the narrative description is excellent. Just needs who developed and level of project ownership of the reconstructed ToC</p>	5
<p>V. Key Findings</p> <p>A. Strategic relevance:</p> <p>This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Thorough treatment.</p>	6

³² During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

<p>during inception/mobilisation³³), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW) 2. Alignment to Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities 3. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities 4. Complementarity with Existing Interventions 		
<p>B. Quality of Project Design To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively <u>summarized</u>?</p>	<p>Final report: Good discussion of Enabling Activity design</p>	5
<p>C. Nature of the External Context For projects where this is appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval³⁴), and how they affected performance, should be described.</p>	<p>Final report: Thoroughly prepared</p>	5
<p>D. Effectiveness (i) Outputs and Project Outcomes: How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention. The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.</p>	<p>Final report: Output section is comprehensive analysis by each TOC pathway. Outcome section also comprehensive.</p>	5
<p>(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact? How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed? Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>Final report: The section addressed relevant assumptions and drivers.</p>	5
<p>E. Financial Management This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table. Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff 	<p>Final report: The section is comprehensive distinguishing between internal and external financial management with the latter being important for effectiveness.</p>	5
<p>F. Efficiency To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of delays and no cost extensions 	<p>Final report: A good discussion</p>	5

³³ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

³⁴ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint. 		
<p>G. Monitoring and Reporting How well does the report assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) • Monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) • Project reporting (<i>e.g. PIMS and donor reports</i>) 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>This section is balanced in its judgements and the evidence supports these</p>	5
<p>H. Sustainability How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-political Sustainability • Financial Sustainability • Institutional Sustainability 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The financial, Socio-political and institutional sustainability sections are well documented.</p>	5
<p>I. Factors Affecting Performance These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and readiness • Quality of project management and supervision³⁵ • Stakeholder participation and co-operation • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity • Environmental and social safeguards • Country ownership and driven-ness • Communication and public awareness 	<p>These factors were discussed integrated throughout the report.</p>	6
<p>VI. Conclusions and Recommendations</p> <p>i. Quality of the conclusions: The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section. It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Strong section clear and concise</p>	5
<p>ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Relevant lessons learned are presented. Their context is well detailed.</p> <p>One lesson learned focuses on gender.</p>	5

³⁵ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.

<p>iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations: To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when. At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given. Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.</p>	<p>Final report: Recommendations.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality</p>		
<p>i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?</p>	<p>Final report: All the required sections are present and follow the Evaluation Office Guidelines</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>ii) Quality of writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?</p>	<p>Final report: The report is clear and well written.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</p>		<p>5</p>

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