Preparation of Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and Combined BTR/National Communications (BTR/NCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID
12358
Countries
Global (Dominica, Eritrea, Lao PDR, Mongolia)
Project Name
Preparation of Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and Combined BTR/National Communications (BTR/NCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
Agencies
UNEP
Date received by PM
5/26/2026
Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Saba Kalam
Focal Area
Climate Change
Project Type

EA

Expedited Enabling Activity req (CEO)

Section I - Enabling Activity Summary

Funding elements.

Is the enabling activity aligned with the relevant GEF funding elements as indicated in Table A and as defined by the GEF-8 Programming Directions? Is the General Enabling Activity Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

Cleared. The final report (BTR/NC) is scheduled for submission by December 2030, which corresponds to the 51st month after the project start date. The project duration is for 56 months, the remaining 5 months is to accommodate continuity of national teams and institutional structures established to support reporting, dissemination and uptake of report findings, including participation in the Facilitative, Multilateral Consideration of Progress (FMCP) and the Technical Expert Review (TER) process in the period before follow on funding for subsequent BTRs is obtained.

Agency's Comments
Cost Ranges.

If there was a deviation in the cost range, was this explained?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

Cleared, no deviation. The budget of the project is $4,932,000. EA-set aside is $1,233,000 ($633,000 for combined NC/BTR and $600,000 for standalone BTR) per country. For 4 countries it will be $4,932,000, which is within the threshold.

Agency's Comments
Enabling activity summary.

Is the enabling activity summary clear? Are the components in Table B and as described in the enabling activity request sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objectives?

Secretariat's Comments

5/26/2026

Please capture lessons learned and good practices in integrating gender considerations in the project (e.g. in KM products or in monitoring and reporting).

Agency's Comments
6/15/2026

The comment is noted. The gender analysis in Annex D of the Agency project document explains how good practices informed project preparation and the design of activities. The proposal has been informed by country reporting on gender, including recommendations on strengthening gender and social inclusion (Dominica), an assessment of how key climate policies relate to gender (Lao PDR), and a discussion on gender integration in climate and agriculture (Mongolia). The analysis also describes how gender was considered in the design process, which allowed countries to identify and select activities to promote gender mainstreaming and women?s meaningful participating in their enabling activity projects.

During project implementation, lessons learned and good practices integrating gender considerations in the project will be captured in the annual learning report, the mid-term lessons learned workshop, and the stocktaking report and operational completion report. This is now noted on page 16 in the project document. The M&E table also currently explains that gender lessons learned will be reported under the Annual Survey to the GEF.

Section 2 - Enabling Activity Supporting Information

Eligibility Criteria.

Is this enabling activity eligible for GEF funding?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

Cleared. The project is eligible for CCM EA Set Aside funds

Agency's Comments

Institutional framework.

Are the institutional arrangements for implementation adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

Cleared. The project will be executed by the Government Agencies in 3 countries (Eriteria, Lao PDR, Mongolia) and CSO in one country (Dominica)

•Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management, Dominica
•Ministry of Land, Water and Environment, Eritrea
•Department of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Lao PDR
•Climate Change Research and Cooperation Centre, Mongolia

Agency's Comments
Monitoring and Evaluation.

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

The M&E budget is very small ? noting that this is an EA and a small M&E is not uncommon, please check to ensure there is sufficient budget to carry out essential M&E tasks.

Agency's Comments
6/15/2026

The comment is noted. The M&E budget stated in Output 1.1.3, is a consolidated budget for the four countries and will cover project inception workshops and mid-term lessons learned workshops as indicated in individual country budgets. Other monitoring activities such as the Annual Survey to the GEF will be covered by project management staff time, while continuous monitoring by UNEP will be supported by the Implementing Agency fee. The source of funding for M&E activities is identified in Table E.1 for all these activities.

Section 3. Information Tables

GEF resource availability.

Is the proposed GEF financing in Table F (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion
5/26/2026

Cleared. The proposed GEF financing, inclusive of the Agency fee, is fully in line with applicable GEF policies, guidelines, and established financial parameters. The total project financing requested from the GEF Trust Fund will be funded through CCM EA Set-Aside resources. The Agency fee, calculated in accordance with the GEF's standardized fee structure, falls within the permissible range as stipulated in GEF policy.

Agency Response
Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):
STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments Cleared. The project is funded through the GEF 8 CC EA-Set Aside

Agency's Comments
Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

Cleared. The project is funded through the GEF 8 CC EA-Set Aside

Agency's Comments
LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
SCCF (Adaptation or Tech Transfer)?

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

Cleared. The project is funded through the GEF 8 CC EA-Set Aside

Agency's Comments
Rio Markers.
Are the Rio Markers for CCM ,CCA, BD and LD presented?

Secretariat's Comments
5/26/2026

Cleared

Agency's Comments
Country endorsement.

Has the project been endorsed by the country's GEF Operational Focal Point at the time of the EA submission and has the name and position been checked against the GEF database? Are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in Portal

Secretariat's Comments
Cleared. The project has been endorsed by the current OFPs.

Mongolia: The project has been endorsed by Ms. Ariuntuya Dorjsuren, OFP since March 2026

Lao PDR: The project has been endorsed by Dr. Southavilay Boundeth, OFP since November 2025

Eretria: The project has been endorsed by Mr. Kibrom Asmerom Weldegebriel, OFP since February 2021

Dominica: The project has been endorsed by Mr. Edgar Hunter OFP since March 2024

Agency's Comments
Response to Comments

Are all the comments adequately responded to? (only as applicable)
Gef Secretariat comments

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
Other Agencies comments

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
Council comments

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
STAP comments

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
CSOs comments

Secretariat's CommentsNA

Agency's Comments
Project Budget Table.

Is the project budget table attached? Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

Secretariat's Comments
6/22/2026

Cleared. The PM agrees with the agency, higher allocation of the project budget to personnel costs may initially appear to be a deviation from the typical cost structure of enabling activity projects. However, this distinction appears to be largely a modality to carry out activities related to preparation of the BTRs/NCs. In several comparable enabling activity projects, a lower share of personnel costs is offset by higher allocations to contractual services (companies or firms). In practice, these firms ultimately engage individual experts to deliver the same technical outputs for GHG inventory, mapping of NDC progress and preparation of other technical chapters of the BTRs and the National Communication. It is important to note that the final output of this project is a Report developed by experts to be submitted to UNFCCC.

6/18/2026

Regarding our comment on the budget table, the budget for personnel (including contractual services to individuals and international consultants) not only was not reduced, but now stands at 66% of the total project budget. UNEP does reduce the positions and associated budget for the Project Managers and Project Technical Coordinators, but they reallocate the savings to other consultant positions.

This is not what we reasonably requested, but the opposite - as mentioned in our previous message, given the planned expenditures for national consultants and firms, it is not clear the PTCs are essential for this project, and we believe it could be removed. Please also ask the Agency to indicate to which activity (not personnel) the resources will be reallocated.

5/26/2026

PMC:

- Please write the country name in the positions of Project Manager, Finance admin Assistant, procurement specialist and Project technical Coordinator

- The agency is requested to clarify why all the travel expenses have been charged to components and none to PMC.

- The proposed budget for project personnel (Contractual Services ? Individual) is very high ? over 64% of the total GEF project financing. Please review the personnel budget for cost efficiencies. For example, the budget proposes the hiring of both Project Managers and Project Technical Coordinators (total cost: $626,576) for some countries, which is not considered best practice, especially for an EA. Given the planned expenditures for national consultants and firms, it is not clear the PTCs are essential for this project and should be removed. While we understand that the cost of personnel for EAs is high, please ask the Agency to streamline the personnel budget as much as possible by --for instance-- merging the positions above. When reallocating funds to non-personnel budget lines, please indicate to which expenditures the cost savings have been applied.

Agency's Comments

6/22/2026

We kindly request the GEF to reconsider this comment, as the complexity and resource intensity of ETF reporting necessitate a diverse pool of experts to ensure quality, coordination, and sustainability of this process. Project personnel are essential to manage and validate data, apply UNFCCC methodologies, draft and integrate BTR components, coordinate across institutions, and ensure quality assurance. These functions ensure effective, country-driven reporting and submission while building lasting national expertise. Evidence from the UNFCCC SBI report highlights that hands-on participation in BTR preparation significantly enhances technical capacity, with experts gaining practical experience through ?learning by doing,? complemented by targeted trainings.

6/15/2026

? The country names have been added to all the project positions in the budget.

? Local travel budget has been included in the PMC. The travel budget distribution reflects minimal expected project management travel, as for these enabling activities- the project management units are located within the capital city where most of the stakeholder engagement and related events are expected to be held, and it is also not necessary for the project staff to visit multiple sites to perform their management duties. Savings of US$ 3,500 from other operation costs *(Banking fees, communication costs, and software licenses)* and US$ 7,000 from Office supplies have been reallocated to the PMC travel budget.

? The Contractual Services ? Individual budget line covers costs for all national consultants and staff engaged in providing both technical and programmatic support. For Eritrea and Mongolia, the Project Technical Coordinator will assume dual responsibilities, encompassing both technical support and project management. He/she will ensure day-to-day management of the project while simultaneously providing technical guidance to national consultants and experts across all chapters. By overseeing both management and technical aspects, the Project Technical Coordinator guarantees that the final report reads as a coherent and unified document as this level of integration cannot be achieved through separate contributions by national consultants or companies working independently on individual chapters. Additionally, the sustained involvement of the Project Technical Coordinator throughout the multi-year project is critical for mitigating risks associated with turnover in key stakeholder organizations. This arrangement strengthens efficiency, safeguards quality, and ensures optimal use of resources.

- In Dominica, the positions of Project Technical Coordinator and Project Manager have been streamlined to ensure clarity of responsibilities and efficiency in project delivery. The Project Manager now holds full responsibility for day-to-day oversight of program activities. This includes ensuring the delivery of outputs and outcomes, as well as coordinating the preparation and submission of final financial, technical, and audit reports in compliance with UNEP-GEF reporting requirements. The former Project Technical Coordinator role has been retitled ?Lead Expert?, with functions solely focused on technical aspects of the project. The Lead Expert will provide overall technical guidance to all experts and consultants engaged in data collection and analysis and will be responsible for reviewing and compiling the final chapters of the report.

Budgetary adjustments have been made accordingly: US$ 626,576 previously allocated to the Project Technical Coordinator (PTC) have been reallocated as follows: - US$ 351,576 to PTC, US$ 206,000 to Lead Expert and the remaining cost savings of US$ 69,000 have been redirected to support National Consultants responsible for data collection and analysis in the report chapters. The organizational chart, Terms of Reference (ToRs) in Annex E of the Agency project document, and budget have been updated to reflect these changes.

Environmental and Social Safeguards.

If there are screening documents or other ESS documents available, have these been attached? (only as applicable)

Secretariat's Comments

Agency's Comments

GEFSEC DECISION RECOMMENDATION.
Is CEO endorsement/ approval recommended?

Secretariat's Comments

REVIEW DATE(S)

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	**5/27/2026**	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		