
Umbrella Programme for Preparation of Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and National Communications (NCs) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

10781

Project Type

EA

Type of Trust Fund

GET

CBIT

CBIT No

Project Title

Umbrella Programme for Preparation of Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and National Communications (NCs) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Countries

Global, Antigua and Barbuda, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritania, Zambia

Agency(ies)

UNEP

Other Executing Partner(s)

Eight (8) National Governments

Executing Partner Type

Government

GEF Focal Area

Climate Change

Taxonomy

Climate Change, Focal Areas, Climate finance, Climate Change Adaptation, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Enabling Activities, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Information Dissemination, Gender results areas, Gender Equality, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Capacity Development, Awareness Raising, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Exchange, South-South

Rio Markers**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 2

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 1

Duration

46 In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

388,562.00

Type of Reports	Submission Date	Expected Implementation Start
UNFCCC Biennial Transparency Report (BTR)	12/31/2024	12/1/2021
UNFCCC Biennial Transparency Report/ National Communication (BTR/NC)	12/31/2024	12/1/2021

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
CCM-EA	GET	4,090,130.00	408,000.00
	Total Project Cost (\$)	4,090,130.00	408,000.00

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

To support Eight (8) developing countries prepare and submit Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and National Communications (NCs) that comply with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement reporting requirements; and respond to their national development goals.

Project Component	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
1.0 Preparation of Project Implementa tion Plans (PIPs) for BTRs and NCs	1.1 Increased human and institution al capacity for preparing BTR and/or NC	1.1.1 Project Implementation Plans for BTR and NC including stocktaking, institutional arrangements, stakeholders' plans, work plans and budget are completed	160,000.00	16,000.00
		1.1.2 Eight (8) countries receive enhanced execution support services from UNEP	119,130.00	11,000.00

2.0	2.1	2.1.1 Five (5) BTRs prepared and submitted to the UNFCCC by December 2024	3,370,000.00	337,000.00
Preparation of BTRs and NCs	Countries meet their BTR and/or NC reporting requirements under the UNFCCC.	2.1.2 Three (3) BTR/NCs prepared and submitted to the UNFCCC by December 2024		
3.0	3.1	3.1.1 Stocktaking assessment and institutional arrangements for preparation of subsequent BTRs and NCs developed.	80,000.00	8,000.00
National stakeholder involvement and institutional arrangements for preparation of subsequent BTR and NC	Human and institutional capacities for preparation, of subsequent BTRs and NCs sustained			
			Sub Total (\$)	3,729,130.00
				372,000.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)				
				361,000.00
			Sub Total(\$)	361,000.00
				36,000.00
			Total Project Cost(\$)	4,090,130.00
				408,000.00

Please provide justification

The PMC indicated reflects the aggregate PMC from each report per the costing table.

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Global	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	393,000.00
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	15,000.00
			Total Project Cost(\$)	408,000.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Not Applicable

D. GEF Resources Requested by Agency, Trust Fund, Country, Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNEP	GET	Antigua and Barbuda	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	484,000	45,980	529,980.00
UNEP	GET	Cambodia	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	484,000	45,980	529,980.00
UNEP	GET	Lao PDR	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	484,000	45,980	529,980.00
UNEP	GET	Maldives	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	484,000	45,980	529,980.00
UNEP	GET	Mauritania	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	484,000	45,980	529,980.00
UNEP	GET	Liberia	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	517,000	49,115	566,115.00
UNEP	GET	Malawi	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	517,000	49,115	566,115.00
UNEP	GET	Zambia	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	517,000	49,115	566,115.00
UNEP	GET	Global	Climate Change	CC Set-Aside	119,130	11,317	130,447.00
Total GEF Resources(\$)					4,090,130.00	388,562.00	4,478,692.00

Part II. Enabling Activity Justification

A. ENABLING ACTIVITY BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Provide brief information about projects implemented since a country became party to the convention and results achieved

The global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed;

The average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans has been rising over the past 150 years, and the pace of this change in our climate system appears to be accelerating. After decades of research and hundreds of studies, an overwhelming majority of scientists have come to believe that human activities are a major cause of this worrying trend. Some proposed climate change response strategies include (a) limiting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to slow the rate and limit the extent of climate change, (b) taking adaptation actions to reduce potential damages from climate change impacts, (c) expanding research and development to provide better low-carbon options for the national and global economy, and (d) improving scientific understanding about climate change and its impacts to enable better informed decision making. The international community and national governments have over the years committed to implementing these strategies to mitigate global greenhouse gas emissions, while simultaneously galvanizing innovative solutions to adapt to a changing world.

In 1992, countries joined an international treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to cooperatively consider what they could do to limit average global temperature increases and the resulting climate change, and to cope with whatever impacts were, by then, inevitable. Since 1994, governments have invested significant time and resources in the preparation, collection and validation of data on greenhouse gas emissions and the COP has made determined efforts to improve the quality and consistency of the data, by establishing improved guidelines for reporting. The reporting requirements under the UNFCCC have evolved over time, into a more comprehensive measurement, reporting and verification framework, starting with the adoption of the revised guidelines for preparation of national communications (NC) at COP 8. Additional measures seeking to significantly enhance transparency of action and support under the Convention were adopted as part of the Bali Action Plan at COP 13 and elaborated in decisions adopted at subsequent COPs. Parties at COP 16 decided to enhance the reporting in national communications, through preparation and submission of biennial update reports (BURs). The 17th session of the COP adopted the guidelines on the preparation of biennial reports by developed country Parties (the "UNFCCC biennial reporting guidelines for developed country Parties"); and those contained in annex III, for the preparation of biennial update reports (BURs) by developing countries.

Aiming to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, Parties adopted the Paris Agreement in 2015, and through it established an Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under Article 13. Countries are now actively engaged in establishing modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) to operationalize the ETF as contained in decision 18 of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement: -i.e. Decision18/CMA.1 The following section briefly describes the linkages & differences between the MPGs and current UNFCCC reporting processes.

The following elements will continue to be reported under the Convention and are not superseded by the MPGs:

- National Communications (NC) must continue to be submitted by developed and developing countries.
- Annual GHG inventory must continue to be submitted by developed countries. In the years in which a BTR is due, the GHG inventory can be submitted as a stand-alone report or as a section of the BTR (18/CMA.1, para. 3). If submitted as a stand-alone report, a summary of the Party's GHG emissions/removals must be included in the BTR (18/CMA.1, annex, para. 91).
- The proposed REDD+ forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level by developing country Parties which may be submitted on a voluntary basis in accordance with decision 12/CP.17 (para. 13) and will be subject to a technical assessment per decision 13/CP.19.
- The technical annex on REDD+ (to be reported in BURs per decision 14/CP.19 (para. 7) for those Parties seeking results-based payments) is to be reported as an annex to the BTR and is technically analyzed during the review of the BTR (paras. 45-46 of 1/CP.24).

The MPGs will, however, supersede reporting of biennial reports (BRs) and biennial update reports (BURs) and the international assessment and review (IAR) and international consultation and analysis (ICA) processes for PA Parties (see decision 1/CP.24, para. 39):

- Reporting of the BR/BUR under the Convention will be superseded by reporting of the biennial transparency report (BTR) for PA Parties.
- Review of the biennial reports and technical analysis (TA) of the BUR under the Convention will be superseded by technical expert review for PA Parties.
- Multilateral assessment (MA) and facilitative sharing of views (FSV) under the Convention will be superseded by the facilitative multilateral consideration of progress (FMCP) for PA Parties.
- Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to the PA will continue with the current annual GHG inventory, IAR and ICA processes, as appropriate (see decision 1/CP.24, para. 44).

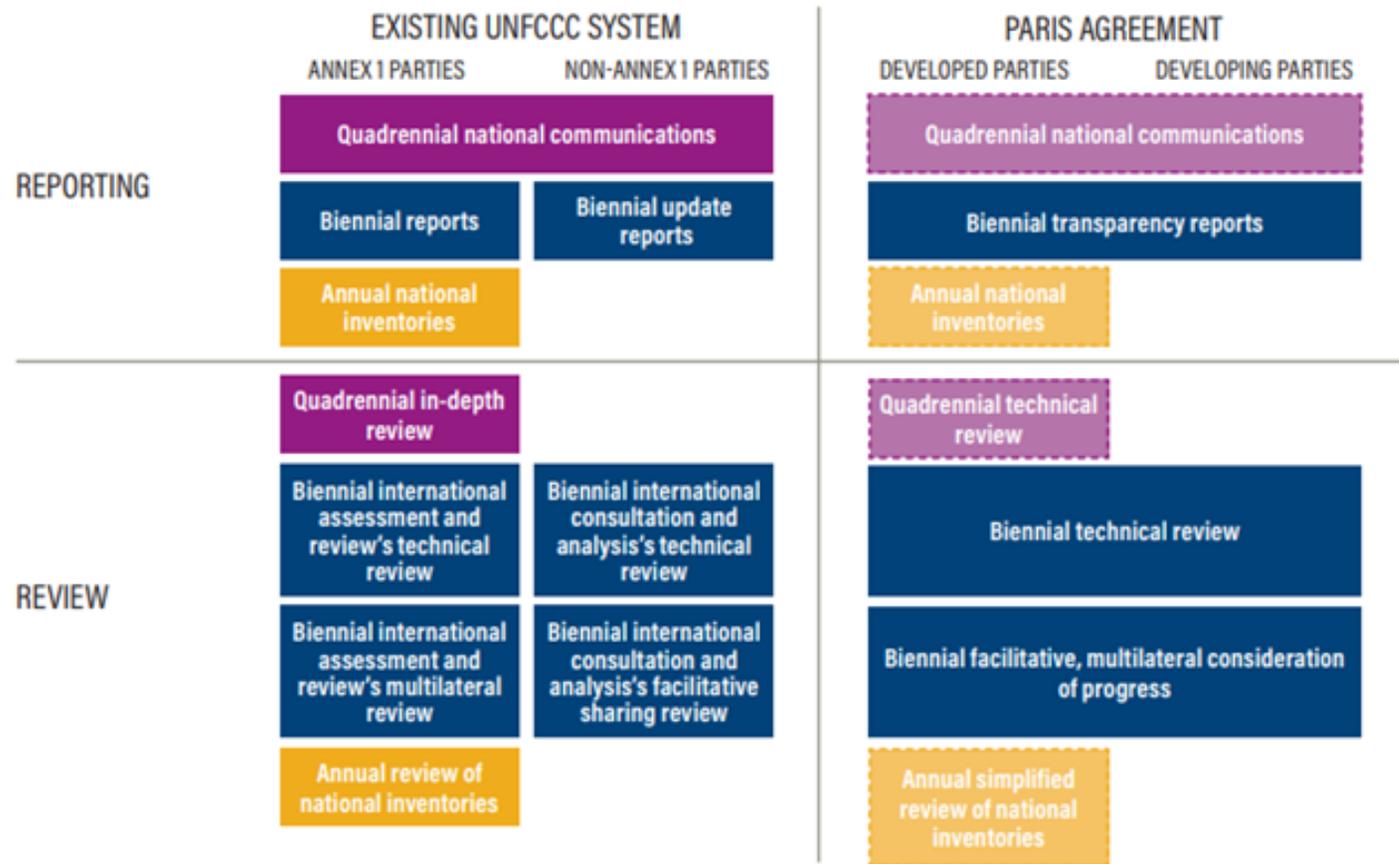


Figure 1: The existing UNFCCC MRV System and the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework

Source[1]: Working paper. Washington, DC: Project for Advancing Climate Transparency (PACT)

[1] Dagnet, Y., N. Cogswell, N. Bird, M. Bouyé, and M. Rocha. 2019. "Building Capacity for the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework: What Can We Learn from Countries' Experiences and UNFCCC Processes?" Working paper. Washington, DC: Project for Advancing Climate Transparency (PACT).

The ETF also ensures a link between the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement. An NDC under Article 4 is communicated by Parties every five years and is not subject to review under the ETF. Parties need to provide a description of their NDC in their BTR against which progress made will be tracked (18/CMA.1, para. 64). Although the adequacy and appropriateness of the Party's NDC (including the adequacy and appropriateness of the description of that NDC in the BTR) and the indicators chosen to track progress made in implementing the NDC are not subject to review under the ETF (18/CMA.1, para.149(b)), the Party's tracking of progress made in implementing its NDC, including the description of its NDC, and information provided for each selected indicator used for tracking progress is subject to review in accordance with the MPGs (18/CMA.1, paras. 146(a) and 150(b)). The progress a Party has made in implementing and / or achieving the NDC is summarized in the "structured summary" of the BTR and reviewed by a technical expert review team.

These reports are the main mechanism countries have in place to bring climate change related information to the attention of national policy makers, relevant institutions, the wider national audience as well as to multilateral and bilateral development partners. Report preparations present unique opportunities for countries to integrate climate change into national development priorities, through establishment of national institutional frameworks and coordination mechanisms. A robust national climate reporting and self-sustained MRV system can bring a number of benefits, at the national level, including but not limited to;

- supporting the tracking of sustainable development goals (SDGs)
- paving the way for accession to economic and political communities and organizations;
- contributing to national reporting on environmental, climate and policy questions and communicating these to different target audiences, including the general public,
- providing coherent data for informed national policy- and decision-making - on climate issues and other related matters, making it possible to analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation, which is an element of good governance;
- increasing the political buy-in for climate issues at the national level;
- enhancing national capacities by involving a large number of stakeholders from a variety of national institutions in the operationalization of the MRV system;
- increasing the involvement of the private sector in climate actions; and
- improving access to funding.

Presently, there are 154 non-Annex I Parties to the Convention, out of which 49 are classified as least developed countries (LDCs) and are given special consideration under the Convention because of their limited capacity to respond to climate change and adapt to its adverse effects. The latest information provided by the Global Environment Facility on its activities relating to the preparation of national communications and biennial update reports show that most non-Annex I Parties are finalizing the preparation of their Third National Communications (NC3) and Initial Biennial Reports (BUR1). The following presents the status of submission of NCs, BURs and NIRs to the UNFCCC by non-Annex I Parties as of 22nd April 2021.

Number of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports Submitted to the UNFCCC By Developing Country Parties (April 2021)

National Communications						Biennial Update Reports				National Inventory Reports
NC1	NC2	NC3	NC4	NC5	NC6	BUR1	BUR2	BUR3	BUR4	NIR
154	144	85	12	2	1	64	33	14	5	36

Key: -	
NC1 – Initial National Communication	NC6 – Sixth National Communication
NC2 – Second National Communication	BUR1 – Initial Biennial Update Report
NC3 – Third National Communication	BUR2 – Second Biennial Update Report
NC4 – Fourth National Communication	BUR3 – Third Biennial Update Report
NC5 – Fifth National Communication	BUR4 – Fourth Biennial Update Report
	NIR – National Inventory Report

Based on UN-OHRLLS^[2] December 2018 classification, there are 47 LDCs & 38 SIDS considered UN Members – with some overlaps on LDCs and SIDS. Even though the reporting requirements under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement provides for greater flexibility on reporting timelines for least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), most of these Countries have shown sustained interest in not only meeting the UNFCCC reporting requirement but also transition to the biennial transparency report sooner rather than later, to be able to track their NDC targets. The following presents a summary of submissions to the UNFCCC from LDCs and SIDS to date: -

- 49 Countries have submitted Initial National Communication
- 44 Countries have submitted Second National Communication
- 19 have submitted Third National Communication
- 1 has submitted Fourth National Communication
- 4 have submitted the Initial Biennial Update Report.

UNEP has continued to play an important role in supporting developing countries to meet their reporting obligations under the UNFCCC. The recent GEF report show that UNEP is currently supporting eighty-six (86) developing countries to prepare their NCs and BURs. Over this time, the UNEP has noted that these reports have not only assisted countries to meet their reporting requirements under the UNFCCC but have also helped countries to (i) establish subcommittees and sectoral working groups responsible for preparation of specific chapters of national reports as well as (ii) climate data generated to inform their national policies. The theory of change (Annex 1) for the umbrella project reflects a rationale that is consistent with the approaches of previous and ongoing UNEP-GEF climate change enabling activities. As national teams get better in applying the recommended NC and BUR guidelines, human and national institutional capacities become strengthened over time.

Having said that, UNEP also recognizes that there are prevailing capacity challenges associated with the preparation of these reports in many developing countries, especially in the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS). Many countries report persisting capacity gaps of government staff and insufficient institutional capacities, including gaps related to inter-agency and cross-sectorial coordination. Furthermore, countries report capacity needs related to mainstreaming climate considerations into their national planning and budgeting. These challenges have also been reported in the UNFCCC synthesis reports and area currently being addressed through different donors and initiatives at national, regional and global levels. In addition to supporting the Convention reporting obligations, UNEP is actively involved in the Transparency Framework on “Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency” framework which aims to strengthen institutional and technical capacities of non-Annex I countries to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

Proposal scope: - UNEP has to date received expression of interests from LDCs and SIDS wishing to initiate the Biennial Transparency Report and/or National Communication as guided by the existing UNFCCC framework and the Paris Agreement; and the GEF information note^[3] on financing of biennial transparency reports. The umbrella programme is designed to support Eight (8) LDCs and SIDS prepare and submit Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and National Communications (NCs). The countries are: - Antigua and Barbuda, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritania and Zambia. All these countries have completed and submitted their last GEF – supported National Communication. Malawi is requesting for support for first BTR combined with the fourth National Communication. While its initial biennial update report is still under preparation, the country has assured UNEP that this report will be submitted to the UNFCCC by July 2021. Besides, following existing practices, the GEF will provide support for the first BTR upon submission of a country’s last GEF-supported BUR to the UNFCCC. Support for the first BTR combined with a NC will be made available upon submission of a country’s last GEF-supported National Communication

The following presents a summary of the participating countries in meeting their reporting obligation under the UNFCCC.

Table 1: Status of National Communications and Biennial Update Reports Preparation in Countries

PARTY	NCs & BUR Status					BTR	Proposed Project	
	NC1	NC2	NC3	NC4	BUR	BTR1	Project	Amount
1. Antigua & Barbuda	√	√	√	Under preparation	√		BTR1	484,000
2. Cambodia	√	√	Under preparation		√		BTR1	484,000
3. Lao PDR	√	√	Under preparation		√		BTR1	484,000
4. Liberia	√	√			√		NC3/BTR1	517,000
5. Malawi	√	√	√		BUR 1		NC4/BTR1	517,000
6. Maldives	√	√	Under preparation		√		BTR1	484,000
7. Mauritania	√	√	√	Under preparation	√		BTR1	484,000
8. Zambia	√	√	√		√		NC4/BTR1	517,000
NCs & BTRs			1	2	0	8	5BTRs; 3BTR/NCs	

Key:

√	Reports completed and available on the UNFCCC website
	Technical reports undergoing final reviews, national validation processes before submission to the UNFCCC, and this will be completed before the request for CEO endorsement
	GEF-7 funds requested to support preparation of these reports

In addition to assessing status of the UNFCCC reporting, an assessment was conducted on status of ratification of Countries to the Paris Agreement and NDC submission. All countries have ratified the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement; submitted their initial NDCs, and Cambodia, Maldives and Zambia have submitted revised versions on the NDCs in December 2020 as shown below.

Table 2: Countries Status on Transitioning towards the Paris Agreement

COUNTRY	PARIS AGREEMENT RATIFICATION	DATE OF NDC SUBMISSION	REVISED NDC	DATE OF SUBMISSION
1. Antigua and Barbuda	21 Sep 2016	21/09/2016	-	
2. Cambodia	6 Feb 2017	06/02/2017	√	31/12/2020
3. Lao PDR	7 Sep 2016	07/09/2016	-	
4. Liberia	27 Aug 2018	27/08/2018	-	
5. Malawi	29 Jun 2017	29/06/2017	-	
6. Maldives	22 April 2016	22/04/2016	√	28/12/2020
7. Mauritania	27 Feb 2017	27/02/2017	-	
8. Zambia	9 Dec 2016	09/12/2016	√	30/12/2020

Each of the countries included in this proposal had the opportunity to identify the GEF funding modality options that will suit their national planning towards transitioning to the PA reports. Therefore, the requested GEF funds will support a total of 3 NCs and 8BTRs as follows: -

- Three (3) countries requesting GEF funds of US\$ 517,000 for a combined BTR and NC. Liberia, Malawi and Zambia. These countries have submitted their NC; and Malawi is soon expected to submit its BUR to the UNFCCC.
- Five (5) countries each requesting US\$ 484,000 for Biennial Transparency Reports preparation; i.e., Antigua and Barbuda, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives and Mauritania. These countries have completed and submitted their BURs to the UNFCCC.

The costing for the different reports is guided by the COP guidance on Convection reporting; and GEF information note ^[4] on the financing of BTRs. The GEF information note on BTRs presents the different components of the reports, indicative costing as shown in Table 3.

This project will be implemented on an agreed full cost basis requiring only in-kind contribution by GEF-eligible countries. The Eight national governments under this program will make in-kind contributions totaling up to US\$ 393,000 and UNEP will provide co-financing of US\$ 15,000 as an in-kind contribution for project management in form of travel, staff and personnel time of the Chief of the Branch (D-1), as well as support from UNEP's regional offices in West Asia, Africa and the Asia and Pacific.

Table 3: Comparison of BTR and combined BTR/NC project components and indicative costing.

BTR+NC Components	Cost (US \$)
i. National inventory report of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases	160,000
ii. Information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving nationally determined contributions under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement	120,000
iii. Information related to climate change impacts and adaptation under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement	100,000
iv. Information on financial, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support needed and received under Articles 9–11 of the Paris Agreement	20,000
v. Other relevant information (including supplemental NC chapters (research and systemic observation; and education, training and public awareness))	40,000
vi. Publication and submission of report, and project execution support	30,000
Subtotal	470,000
Project management cost	47,000
Total	517,000

BTR Components	Cost (US\$)
i. National inventory report of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases	160,000
ii. Information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving nationally determined contributions under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement	120,000
iii. Information related to climate change impacts and adaptation under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement	100,000
iv. Information on financial, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support needed and received under Articles 9–11 of the Paris Agreement	20,000
v. Other relevant information (e.g. gender awareness)	10,000
vi. Publication and submission of report, and other project execution support	30,000
Subtotal	440,000
Project management cost	44,000
Total	484,000

Consistency with National Priorities:

BTR and NC reports will be prepared in close coordination with ongoing projects on Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of climate action, funded by the GEF and/or other donors. Information on measures to be undertaken to enhance coordination with other projects will be provided by each country during the CEO endorsement request and preparation of Project Implementation Plans (PIP) component 1.

The project is consistent with national strategies, plans, reports and assessments under the UNFCCC and other Conventions. National teams will therefore be guided to link their reporting to these processes, and where appropriate, strengthen linkages with other equally relevant initiatives, such as:

- *The Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT)*: Projects designed to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of Non-Annex I countries to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. For the countries in the project that are developing CBIT concepts or implementing CBIT projects, this project will ensure that the Project Implementation Plans (PIPs) produced under Component 1 works closely with the planned CBIT projects, once approved by the GEF.
- *Nationally Determined Contributions (I)NDCs*: These reports outline the post-2020 voluntary national climate targets, including mitigation and adaptation, which countries committed to and which become a binding Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) when a country ratifies the Paris Agreement. NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of these long-term goals. The Agreement sets a 'formal' starting date of the NDC Cycle (2020); and requests Parties to submit their NDC for each cycle at least 9 to 12 months in advance; Most of the participating countries have completed updating their 1st NDCs. Information generated from the studies and assessments carried out under the BTR/NC processes will be used by the participating countries to track the implementation of their 1st INDC targets, as well as refine targets to be included in their subsequent NDC, as guided by the Global Stock take process.
- *Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs)*, which outline a set of policies and actions to be undertaken by a country as part of a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The following countries have submitted NAMAs and are seeking further support for NAMA preparation i.e. Lao PDR and Zambia. The proposed NAMAs, which are at the conceptual phase describe the activities, estimates cost, identifies support needs, assesses potential GHG emission reductions, and provides a time frame for the actions. Parties will be requested to make use of information obtained through the NAMA process, if funded, to complement and enrich data & information presented in the BTR and NC and vice versa.
- UNFCCC Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) project assists developing country Parties to the UNFCCC determine their technology priorities for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change.
- National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA): Teams will be encouraged to address the identified capacity gaps in the NCSA to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders at all levels
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)
- National Implementation Plans under the Stockholm Convention (NIPs)
- Regional and national programmes strategies aimed at addressing climate change

- Stockholm National Implementation Plan (NIP)
- Stockholm National Implementation Plan Update
- National Adaptation programmes of Action (NAPAs)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Table 4: Summary of reports prepared (√) by the countries that are relevant to the BTR and BTR/NC process.

COUNTRIES	CBIT	NCSAS	PRSPS	NIPS	NAPAS	NAMA	TNAS
1. Antigua and Barbuda	√	-	-	√	-	-	-
2. Cambodia	√	-	√	√	√	-	Round 1
3. Lao PDR	√	√	√	√	√	√	-
4. Liberia	√	√	√	√	√	-	-
5. Malawi	√	-	√	√	√	-	-
6. Maldives	√	√	√	√	√	-	-
7. Mauritania	√	-	√	√	√	-	Round 2
8. Zambia	-	√	√	√	√	√	Round 1

Coordination at Regional and Global Level; At the global level, the project will seek closer collaboration with initiatives such as Low Emissions Development Strategies (LEDS) and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) that seek to help countries build on and strengthen the transformational potential of BTRs, NCs and BURs.

The Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT), which is supporting in-country capacity development programmes through training modules on Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of policies and actions, and knowledge sharing of good practice and lessons learned. Countries that have joined or will join the initiative will be encouraged to coordinate MRV related activities in the BTR/NC projects with the capacity building activities in ICAT.

NDC Partnership: Launched at COP22 in Marrakesh, the NDC Partnership aims to enhance cooperation so that countries have access to the technical knowledge and financial support they need to achieve large-scale climate and sustainable development targets as quickly and effectively as possible. Countries in the NDC Partnership will be encouraged to map out areas of NDP partnership support and identify complementary areas with the BTR/NC project during the PIP preparation (component 1).

Developing GHG inventories is an essential first step towards managing emissions. LEDS Global Partnership (LEDS GP) is hosting two complementary tools to help design, plan, assess, and operationalize more sustainable national greenhouse gas inventory systems: Developing a National Greenhouse Gas Inventory System Template Workbook; and the Greenhouse Gas Inventory Toolkit. This series of templates provides a comprehensive base for preparing a National Inventory System Report used for national greenhouse gas inventory development processes. A major component of the LEDS GP approach to building sustainable national greenhouse gas inventory management systems is starting with the pre-defined National Greenhouse Gas Inventory System Templates developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and USAID. These tools are consistent with IPCC and UNFCCC guidelines for national greenhouse gas inventory development.

In the context of the Information Matters project, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH provides capacity-building and technical support to partner countries on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) under its International Climate Initiative (IKI)/ Zukunft – Umwelt – Gesellschaft (ZUG) gGmbH. The Information Matters project aims at strengthening the partner countries' in-country capacities for enhanced reporting under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Information Matters project has a special focus on the preparation of Biennial Update Reports (BURs), Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) and the development and implementation of sustainable systems for Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV). There are templates and guidance documents that countries will be encouraged to make use of.

Through the one UN process, the programme will encourage participating countries to link the project results to priorities set in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Frameworks. The table below lists the relevant programming documents for each participating country.

Table 5: UN Programming Strategies/Directions by Participating Country

Country	Programming Document
1. Antigua and Barbuda	United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF) 2017-2021
2. Cambodia	UNDAF 2019-2023
3. Lao PDR	United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (2017-2021)
4. Liberia	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020-2024)
5. Malawi	UNDAF 2019-2023
6. Maldives	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025
7. Mauritania	Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (CPDD) 2018-2022,
8. Zambia	Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (2016-2021)

These priority ranges from climate change and disaster risk management; pollution, biodiversity & nature conservation, improving performance and responsiveness of targeted national and sub-national institutions; gender equality and addressing acute vulnerability and participation gaps. UNEP staff will be involved in the review of the various components of the BTRs & NCs to enable them to contribute effectively to the process of including the outputs of the BTRs and NCs into the UNDAF process and SDG Target 13; of Strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries; Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning and Improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

[1] Dagnet, Y., N. Cogswell, N. Bird, M. Bouyé, and M. Rocha. 2019. "Building Capacity for the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework: What Can We Learn from Countries' Experiences and UNFCCC Processes?" Working paper. Washington, DC: Project for Advancing Climate Transparency (PACT).

[2] UN-OHRLLS - The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

[3] GEF/C.59/Inf.19 November 23, 2020

[4] GEF/C.59/Inf.19 November 23, 2020

B. ENABLING ACTIVITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES

The proposal should briefly justify and describe the project framework. Identify also key stakeholders involved in the project including the private sector, civil society organizations, local and indigenous communities, and their respective roles, as applicable. Describe also how the gender equality and women's empowerment are considered in project design and implementation

This project aims to support national governments fulfill essential communication requirements to the Convention and is in conformity with Objective 3 of the GEF-7 Climate Change Focal Area, which focuses on fostering enabling conditions for mainstreaming mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies.

The project has the following three components:

1. Preparation of Project Implementation Plans (PIPs) for BTRs and NCs
2. Preparation of BTRs and NCs
3. National stakeholder involvement and institutional arrangement for subsequent BTRs and NCs

In an attempt to address some of these challenges reported by countries and make use of the lessons learnt over the period that UNEP has been supporting countries to prepare NCs and BURs, the project has proposed a variety of strategies/measures that will expedite implementation of the project in each of its three components.

§ Component 1 recognizes the diversity and different national circumstances within participating countries, and allows each country to outline the approach it will adopt in preparing the report

§ In recognition of prevailing capacity challenges associated with the preparation of these reports in LDCs and SIDS, UNEP will implement several strategies/measures to expedite report preparation under component 2

§ Component 3 seeks to reduce the funding gap between current and future reports by ensuring continuous engagement of EA's climate change teams to initiate GEF funding proposal as project activities under component 2 are finalized.

The following section provides a detailed description of the three of the components and UNEP's enhanced execution support services: -

Component 1: Preparation of Project Implementation Plans (PIPs) for BTRs and NCs: -

The signing of Project Cooperation Agreements (PCA) between UNEP and each the 8 Executing Agencies will signify the commencement of project activities. The EAs will support establishment of the project management team within the EA to provide strategic, technical and programmatic support to the project. The project team will support and provide relevant guidance to expert(s) and/or institution(s) to prepare a project implementation plan which aims to

establish linkages between the outcomes of previous climate reports and priority areas to be considered for the preparation of the current report. The implementation plan will therefore outline appropriate institutional arrangements and stakeholder engagement mechanisms over the period of BTRs and NCs drafting. The PIP will contain proposed deliverables, budget and workplan to serve as a baseline for monitoring the performance of the projects in terms of its scope, budget and schedule. Capacity building workshops and consultative meetings will be held among the national experts & service providers to: -

- Map out involvement of stakeholder, private sector, indigenous people and ensure equitable participation of gender in project activities
- Agree on tools and methodologies/procedures to be used in generating different sectoral reports.
- Generate/identify reporting formats and templates
- Establish/strengthen climate data management and archival system
- Qualitatively assess the state of institutional capacity for the preparation of Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and National Communications (NCs) based on a rating scale of 1-4 as described in CBIT projects

Strategies for Avoiding Delays under Component 1: UNEP will provide the following execution support services to expedite this preparatory phase of the project work; -

§ Support EA teams to draft terms of references for consultants to be engaged in preparing the project implementation plans;

§ Assist national governments to identify qualified experts to undertake stocktaking exercise, stakeholder consultations and PIP preparation;

§ Review the document prepared by the consultant to ensure compliance with GEF and UNEP financial guidelines and alignment with UN country programming and other ongoing initiatives;

§ “Fast-track” the preparation of the Project Implementation Plans. In addition to the strategies outlined above, UNEP will encourage countries who are willing to start preparing the project implementation plans immediately after GEF Council approval to avoid the additional time required for PIP preparation. A simplified PIP templates and draft project agreements will be prepared and shared with EAs well in advance, to enable the EAs commence the PIP preparation as well review and clear the draft project agreements. For those countries that would have completed their NC and/ or BTR PIPs by the time of signing of the project agreements, the initial cash advance will not only include funds for the project inception phase but will also include a re-imbusement of the funds used for BTR and/or NC PIPs.

The following will be realized under this component: -

- Three (3) project implementation plans and execution strategies for a combined BTR + NC by Liberia, Malawi and Zambia.
- Five (5) project implementation plans and execution strategies for BTR by Antigua & Barbuda, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives and Mauritania
- Enhanced execution support provided to the 8 countries in preparation of project implementation plans and review of ToRs for recruitment of experts to support the BTR and NC preparation process

Component 2: Preparation of National Communications and Biennial Transparency Reports

The Executing Agency will engage services of qualified national experts from relevant line Ministries, academia, private sectors to draft various reports and offer relevant training on the UNFCCC and PA reporting processes. In addition to engaging individual experts/consultants, the project presents an opportunity for the Executing Agency to sub-contract other institutions to prepare chapters/sections of reports aligned to their mandate. This arrangement requires signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) or legal Agreements between the Executing Agency and the selected lead institutions. The process of engaging national/regional/international experts and/or sub-contracting other institutions in the BTR/NC work will be guided by the procurement rules and regulations of participating countries.

The scope of work and timelines of the selected experts and institutions will be guided by the documents and discussions under component 1, to ensure that the BTRs & NCs are responsive to national circumstances and capacity needs. This umbrella programme comprises the 1st group of LDCs and SIDS transitioning to the Biennial Transparency Reporting process. It seeks to provide sufficient lead time to these countries to explore this new reporting modality and submit their initial BTRs on time (December 2024), while recognizing that LDCs/ SIDS are offered discretion in reporting and can choose to submit the information in their BTR at their discretion (*i.e. it may be less frequently than biennial*) (1/CP.21, para. 90 and 18/CMA.1 para. 4). Drafting of these reports will be guided by the UNFCCC guidelines for National Communications for Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (Decision 17/CP.8) and guidance provided pursuant to Article 13, paragraph 7(b), of the Paris Agreement (Decision 4/CMA.1,17) respectively. EAs will also refer to the detailed MPGs for each of the BTR sections, for further description in chapters II to VI in the annex to Decision 18/CMA.1.

At the regional level, participating countries will be guided to join regional Measurement Reporting and Verification (MRV) networks currently being created under the Global Support Programme (GSP) for experience sharing; continuous capacity building and technical backstopping which will enhance quality, efficiency and transparency of national climate change reports to UNFCCC. The operations of this network will be continued under the new global cooperation with CBIT 2 to maintain and continue the operation of the platform. The established sub-regional networks will be supported in collaboration with UNFCCC-Regional Collaboration Centers (RCCs) as part of the collaboration Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNEP and the UNFCCC. Parties will also be encouraged to exchange data and information, tools and methodologies, lessons learnt and good practices to enhance the quality and utility of their reports. This support will be linked to regional centers and international experts who will provide guidance to countries as and when needs arise.

At the global level, and in recognition of the continuing intergovernmental climate change negotiations and the Paris Agreement, UNEP will communicate any new BTR or NC reporting requirement that may be agreed upon by the COP to countries. It will also advise participating countries on potential adjustments to the project design and implementation as appropriate.

Strategies for Avoiding Delays under Component 2: Over time, UNEP has observed that some countries experience challenges during the preparation of reports, which include, but are not limited to, limited technical expertise at national level to prepare these reports and unreliable or missing sectoral data for the compilation of the report. UNEP has therefore put in place the following measures to address these concerns:

§ Participating countries will be informed of and encouraged to participate in hands-on training workshops related to BTR/NC preparation processes and the latest IPCC guidelines that are organized by the UNFCCC or other donors. UNEP will favorably review requests from EAs asking for additional participants to benefit from these training. Experts will not only be trained at the national level but will also be supported through project funds to participate in relevant regional training workshops and peer review meetings to improve the quality of their reports.

§ Peer to peer exchange and matchmaking of countries through regional MRV networks/hubs created under the Global Support Programme for continuous capacity building.

§ Provide closer support to projects that experience delays and have limited capacity. The umbrella programme will engage the services of consultants/experts to support projects in different regions.

§ Awareness creation and involvement of experts from different sectors, including the private sector, for improved ownership of the process, through Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs,) annual performance targets for different sectors, etc.

§ Support in establishing collaboration with regional research centers and institutes for data provision in cases where data are unavailable at the country level

§ A long-term strategy to support countries in establishing a centralized data management system and institutional coordination through accessing funds through GEF's CBIT initiative.

The following reports will be prepared (by December 2024) under this component: -

- Three (3) combined BTR + NC by Liberia, Malawi and Zambia.
- Five (5) BTR1 by Antigua & Barbuda, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Maldives and Mauritania

Component 3: National stakeholder involvement and institutional arrangement for subsequent BTRs and NCs

To address the funding gap challenges highlighted by countries as a challenge in sustainable reporting, the UNEP has introduced the 3rd component to ensure continuous engagement of climate change structures/units in EAs and support the EAs to initiate GEF funding proposal development for subsequent BTRs and NCs preparation, in parallel to the stocktaking exercise. This assessment will be initiated just before completion of the BTR/NC reports and will include information on:

- Work carried out under previous climate change enabling activities, to ensure that Parties build upon their achievements as they prepare the PIPs and GEF proposals for the subsequent BTRs and NCs
- Identify synergies with related programmes and institutions, where applicable, e.g. relevant regional projects, and national activities under other relevant international conventions (e.g. biodiversity, land degradation).
- Lessons learned during previous NC & BUR processes: This may include technical issues but also experiences of process management /institutional arrangements adopted that could provide lessons or best practices for the preparation of the BTR.
- Identify major challenges especially as they range from cross sectoral assessments to mainstreaming climate change into National Development Planning frameworks and processes.
- Develop a preliminary list of stakeholders and their potential roles in the BTR & NC process and propose a strategy to involve all relevant stakeholders.
- A final rating of qualitative assessment of institutional capacity for preparation of Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and National Communications (NCs)

The expected output under this component will support Executing Partners to initiate the request for GEF funding for subsequent BTRs and NCs to ensure a seamless transition without extended funding-gaps in the enabling activities (EAs) projects. This continuity will safeguard continued interest and institutional mechanisms necessary for preparation of BTR and NCs, and/or any other reports under the enhanced framework for transparency under the Paris Agreement.

Stakeholders' Involvement:

Stakeholders' involvement in the BTR/NC processes is critical in ensuring successful project outcome and also enhances countries' ownership and uptake of BTRs and NCs findings. In previous projects, this process has seen the involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders ranging from Government Ministries, Research Institutions, Academia, civil society organizations and the indigenous people. Other groups/stakeholders that maybe included in the consultative meetings are Community Based Organizations, women groups, special groups, farmers, business and industry; trade unions, local authorities; indigenous peoples, ethics specialists, professional associations, media, etc.

The civil society organizations and indigenous people will actively contribute to the project outputs during all the three phases of the project. They will be amongst the stakeholders invited to participate and provide comments on preparation of PIPs (Component 1). They will be invited to participate in the BTR or NC project inception workshop, where they will have an opportunity to define their roles/responsibility and representation in various thematic working groups as illustrated in the project implementation structure (Figure 2). They will also provide their feedback and assessment on BTR and NC processes, moving forward under component 3.

Participating countries will be requested to provide additional information on stakeholders' involvement and the expected roles of civil society during the request for CEO endorsement. This information will be further elaborated and included in each of the Project Implementation Plans to be submitted to UNEP for approval, under the 1st component of the project.

Private Sector Engagement

Engaging the private sector in mobilizing resources, knowledge and innovation for addressing climate change and promoting green growth is crucial in tackling climate change. There have been several significant donor-supported climate funds, as well as a steady increase in policy and financial support for climate-friendly technologies over the recent years. Furthermore, the private sector may be an important source of activity data in the IPPU sector. This project is expected to create awareness on climate reporting among critical stakeholders, including the private sector. Representatives of the private sector will be invited to project inception workshops to provide their comments on the design of the project and their potential role in the relevant priority sectors of the project.

Gender

This project has been designed to conform to 2018 guidance from the GEF on gender equality^[1] and UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment. It will aim to support the Gender Action Plan of the UNFCCC^[2] in the following ways:

Capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, and communication: During the Project Implementation Plan preparation, countries will be guided to include a section on gender analysis that outlines different roles, needs, and priorities of women and men in the reporting process. The PIP templates provided to the EAs (Component 1) will include a budget line to support capacity-building for all working groups on linkages between gender and climate change priorities. A gender sensitive workshop/training for the Project Management Team, Thematic Working Groups, sector ministries, and selected environment and gender-based NGOs will be organized to support gender-equity measures in BTR and NC processes. National teams will be encouraged to refer to the *Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit*, which was developed through the GEF-funded Global Support Programme (GSP). This toolkit is accessible at the GSP website[3]. Countries will also receive information on updated guidance on the integration of gender into national reporting as this guidance becomes available under the CBIT Phase IIA project.

Gender balance, participation, and women's leadership: Efforts will be made to have acceptable gender representation in project management structures as well as in capacity building activities, and women's participation in the project will be documented.

Monitoring and Reporting: The executing agencies, in consultation with relevant entities, will identify a gender focal point in their working groups to track and itemize issues linked to their respective reporting sections - adaptation, mitigation and greenhouse gases, gender financing, capacity, technology needs, public awareness, education, constraints and gaps. A short summary or section under the itemized issues will be prepared and linked to the BTRs and NCs. Institutions to be consulted on gender issues at national level will include, but not limited to: Ministries in charge of gender, the gender focal point for the convention on climate change, civil society organizations working in the fields of gender and climate change as well as research institutions and development partners working on gender issues. Participating countries will also be encouraged to actively participate in the development of a synthesis report on the implementation of the gender action plan as adopted by COP 23.

Participating countries will be requested to outline any existing national/sectoral gender-related information/efforts/policies and indicate activities that the project will implement to meet this policy, at CEO endorsement request.

RISKS: -

Considering that majority of countries participating in the project have either completed their Third NC or have advanced in preparation of the Third NC and Initial BURs, the risk of countries not delivering the project outputs can be considered minimal. This is because most countries have already established a reasonable technical and institutional basis to prepare their subsequent reports. The main project risk, however, is related to (i) the existence of weak institutional arrangements, and (ii) poor stakeholder consultation processes; (iii) possibility of most countries producing reports that lack adequate depth and quality, (iv) delays in report completion by countries. UNEP will assist country teams to work towards mitigating the anticipated risks, as follows

Table 6: Proposed Measures to Mitigate Anticipated Risks

Risk	Level of Ris	Commentary and Mitigating Strategies and Actions
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	k	
1. Limited consultations and weak participation process amongst stakeholders due to institutional rivalries or rigidities which hamper responsiveness of project outputs to national development needs as well as effective work delivery and quality of the outputs.	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Component I - i.e. the project implementation plan (PIPs) will outline roles and responsibilities of different institutions and stakeholders during BTR & NC/BTR implementation - Teams will also refer to the various toolkits for assisting non-Annex I Parties in establishing and maintaining the most suitable national institutional arrangements to meet the enhanced reporting requirements for BTRs and NCs. e.g. a toolkit developed by the UNFCCC Secretariat - UNEP will encourage peer support by linking-up country teams to exchange data and information, tools and methodologies, lessons learnt and good practices to enhance the quality and utility of national reports.
2. Weak institutional arrangement structures and inexperienced staff: Inadequate incentives and difficulties in retaining staff involved in the preparation of previous or current national communications. This has resulted in high staff turnover in many countries and tend to affect not only the quality of the studies but also the timeliness of delivery of project outputs.	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to recent increased interest in climate change issues by national governments, countries will be encouraged to set up permanent and adequately staffed climate change offices to ensure sustainability of BTRs and NCs processes including easy access to information, data and tools used for climate change studies. - Executing Agencies will be encouraged to actively involve other institutions in national reporting, through various channels – e.g. establishing robust institutional arrangements and constituting technical working groups with agreed terms of reference, contracts and memorandum of understanding - Continuous training of climate change project staff on both administrative and technical aspects of the project, to ensure that the unit retains a good institutional memory in case of staff movement
3. Superficial and/or delayed reporting/no cost extension	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNEP will provide enhanced execution support to countries experiencing difficulties in drafting terms of references and identifying regional/international experts to facilitate training of local experts to understand the UNFCCC reporting guidelines and ensure effective and timely work delivery - In cases where there are challenges in project, the UNEP team will undertake country missions (after COVID-19 restriction measures are lifted) to discuss financial and technical matters, and any other factors that may be hindering project delivery.
4. The possibility of most countries producing reports that lack	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNEP will advise on access to methodologies and guidance notes for BTR and NC preparation, and recommend participative

<p>ies producing reports that lack adequate depth and quality</p>		<p>otes for DTR and NC preparation, and recommend participation in capacity building initiative workshops, webinars organized by the CGE, IPCC, UNFCCC, CBIT and other organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNEP will raise the level of project supervision and work closely with the new global cooperation with CBIT 2 to help countries identify regional centers of excellence in both Annex I and non-Annex I countries to help countries access climate relevant data, information and appropriate analytical tools particularly in the areas of vulnerability and adaptation. These centers of excellence will provide technical assistance to country teams to enhance overall quality of the National Communication reports - UNEP will also encourage south-south cooperation and peer support by linking up country teams to exchange data and information, tools and methodologies, lessons learnt and good practices
<p>5. Political risks: It is expected that political unrest/ instability in any of the Countries, will impede implementation of project activities and completion of the project within the stipulated time frame.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNEP will make use of its Regional Offices and/or other UN Offices to liaise with the national government to assess the situation and put measures in place to ensure that the project incurs minimum losses and that project activities resume once the national situation is favorable
<p>6. Environmental risks/hazards: Occurrences of extreme weather events – floods, hurricane, droughts etc. will slow/stop implementation of project activities and completion of the project within the stipulated time frame.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National teams will be encouraged to create more awareness on climate change related hazards/disasters; enhance coordination of efforts between institutions for risk assessment, improve early warning systems to mitigate impacts and increase resilience to extreme events - National teams will be encouraged to prioritize data storage and archiving processes, to prevent loss of data /information which would impact the timely completion of the project

Covid-related issues; -

- National teams will be encouraged to consider virtual/alternative means of consultation, training, reviews and allocate budgets to support this functionality accordingly
- Teams will also be requested to conduct training that address gender differentiated impacts of COVID 19 during report preparation

Knowledge Management

At national level, BTR/NC preparation process is designed to enhance public participation and create awareness on climate change issues. The reporting process presents an opportunity to promote information sharing and networking amongst all relevant institutions and stakeholders at national and local levels. Parties will indicate, where applicable, national climate change communication strategies that have been put in place, or that are proposed, to enhance the general understanding of climate change issues and integration of the same in national development planning processes. Preferred channels for information sharing and dissemination will be identified and set up during the project implementation phase; this may include websites, e-libraries and climate change offices. Participating countries shall be required to identify and have elaborate plan of activities for raising awareness and education for different groups of people. This may include the use of publications, training workshops, and public meetings to disseminate project findings at different stages. Funds to support these activities will be specified in the Project Implementation Plan (Component 1).

Once drafting and compiling of BTR and/or NC information is complete (Component 2), participating countries will be encouraged to produce a single document that includes an executive summary. The document may be presented as a hard copy and in electronic format. The executive summary, which should be no more than 10 pages long, will be used for the purpose of making the national communication and its key findings accessible to policymakers, the media, and the public.

At the regional level, participating countries will be encouraged to join regional MRV networks created under the GSP to share their experiences and lessons learnt in national reporting. This support will be linked to regional network coordinators and international experts, who will provide guidance to countries as needs arise while enhancing south-south networking.

Participating countries will also be requested to exchange data and information, tools and methodologies, lessons learnt, and good practices to enhance the quality and utility of their reports through the streamlined website that will replace the GSP website. The merged GSP/CBIT website will provide information and materials, tools, relevant links, and country pages; and online learning modules and webinars. This support platform aims to provide streamlined support and capacity building at the country, regional, and global level to enable Non-Annex I countries under the UNFCCC and developing countries under the Paris Agreements to better respond to reporting requirements and to catalyze increased ambition within country NDCs.

[1] GEF (2018). *GEF Policy on Gender Equality*.

[2] Decision 3/CP.23 <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/cop23/eng/11a01.pdf#page=13> Accessed October 30, 2019.

[3] <http://www.un-gsp.org/news/gender-responsive-national-communications-toolkit> Accessed October 30, 2019.

C. DESCRIBE THE ENABLING ACTIVITY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Discuss the work intended to be undertaken and the output expected from each activity as outlined in Table A

The project will be implemented by the Economy Division of the United Nations Environment Programme and executed by the following 8 national governments.

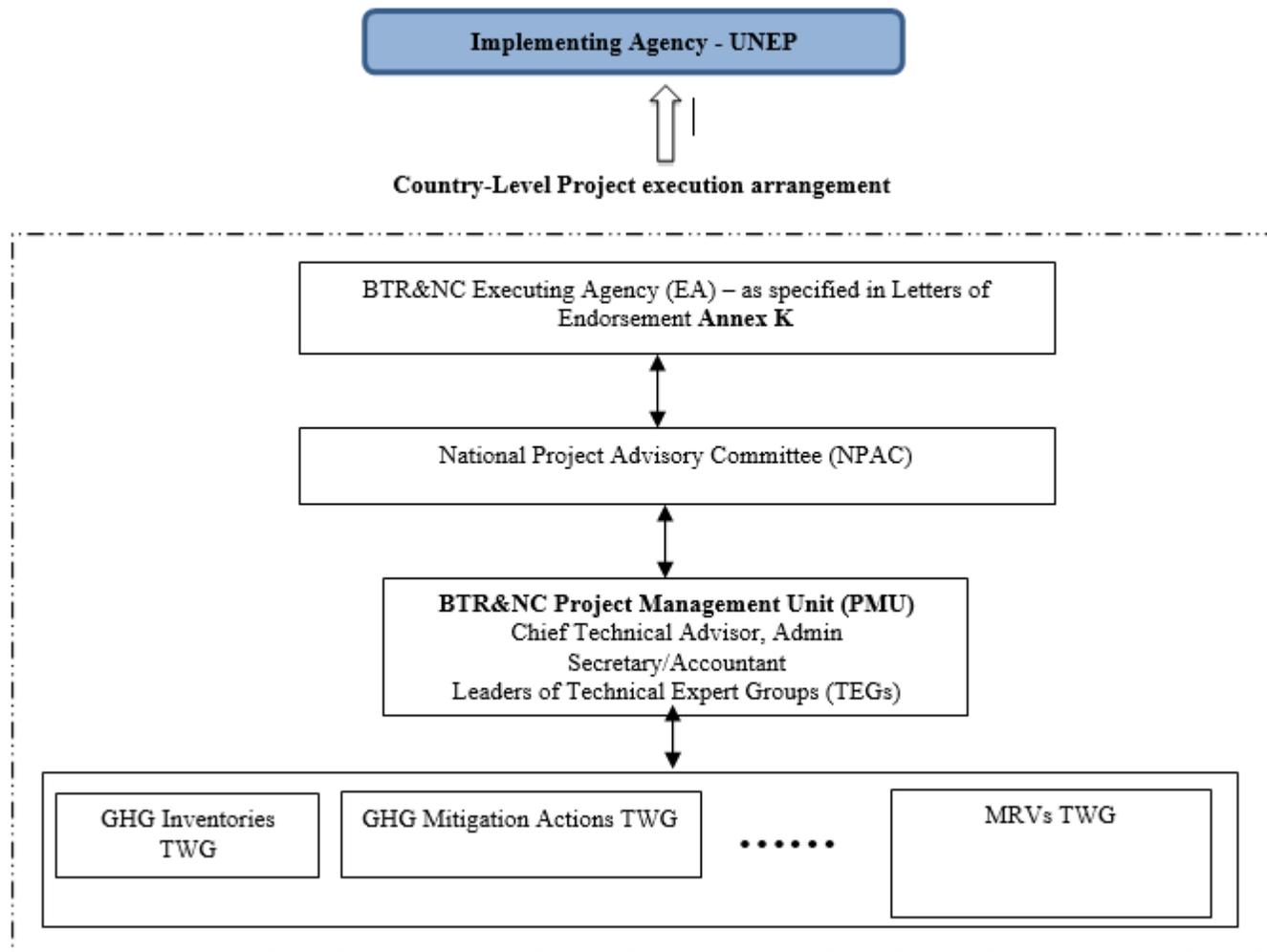
1. Ministry of Health, Wellness and the environment (Antigua and Barbuda)
2. Ministry of Environment, National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) (Cambodia)
3. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Lao PDR)
4. Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA) (Liberia)
5. Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources (Malawi)
6. Ministry of Environment (Maldives)
7. Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. (Mauritania)
8. Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection (Zambia)

UNEP has previous experience working with above EAs during the preparation of previous NCs and or BURs and will therefore continue to play a pivotal role in assisting these teams to strengthen their capacities in reporting. The proposed enhanced execution support to these Partners will seek to expedite report preparation and submission of high-quality reports. It is notable that seven (7) out of the total 8 countries have requested for CBIT funding to further strengthen their institutional and technical capacities to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. UNEP will therefore continue supporting these countries to ensure that the systems and capacities built under CBIT makes reporting processes more sustainable

National project Execution arrangement; -

The National Project Management Units (PMU), will be established within the EAs for the overall management of all aspects of the project implementation. The PMU, constituting of a Chief Technical Advisor or Technical Advisor, Project Administrative Secretary/Accountant will provide technical support the national Technical Expert Groups (TEGs). The TEGs will be constituted along different Thematic Working Groups (TWG) (e.g. GHG Inventories, GHG mitigation, domestic measurement reporting and verification arrangements BTR/NC support needs) depending on project type (BTR and/or NCs). EAs will be encouraged to identify gender focal point in all working group to track and itemize issues linked to their respective reporting sections - adaptation, mitigation and greenhouse gases, gender financing, capacity, technology needs, public awareness, education, constraints and gaps. Any other relevant group will be established, based on a unanimous decision of the National Project Advisory Committee (NPAC) members. **Figure 2** outlines a general description of groups that might be formed and approved during the 1st component of this project.

Figure 2: **PROJECT EXECUTION ARRANGEMENT**



UNEP will support countries in two ways, in view of their national circumstances and capacity needs. UNEP will act as the GEF Implementing Agency as well as provide enhanced execution support to these countries.

(i) UNEP's role as the Implementing Agency-

- Lead in full internalization, UNEP Project Agreement signing and first disbursement/sub-allotment to executing agency
- Technically assess and oversee quality of project outputs, products and deliverables
- Review of reporting, checking for consistency between execution activities and expenditures, ensuring that it respects GEF incrementality rules.
- Clearance of cash requests, and authorization of disbursements once reporting is found to be complete and accurate
- Approve budget revision, certify fund availability and transfer funds

- Create consensus to resolve inter-institutional and multi-country issues
- Manage relations with the GEF
- Umbrella programme oversight and feedback on demand to GEF Operational Focal Points
- Manage relations with the GEF Evaluation Office and UNEP's Evaluation and Oversight Unit
- Provide consistent and regular oversight on project execution through an annual plan
- Follow-up with Executing agency for progress, equipment, financial and audit reports
- Provide no-objection to main TORs and subcontracts of the project, including selection of project manager or equivalent
- Attend inception workshops, field visits where relevant,
- Assess project risks, and monitor and enforce a risk management plan
- Ensure that GEF quality standards are applied consistently to all projects
- Ensure that independent evaluations are carried out according to GEF and UNEP requirements (dedicated budget, TOR, mission planning), and review evaluation reports.

(ii) UNEP's role in providing enhanced execution support to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) - *(through global set aside funds allocated under output 1.1.2).*

The following range of support services will be provided to the participating countries, in addition to the IA services:

- Support EA teams to draft terms of references for consultants to be engaged in preparing the project implementation plans (Component 1) by: -
 - i. Assisting national governments to identify qualified experts to undertake stocktaking exercise, stakeholder consultations and PIP preparation.
 - ii. Reviewing the project implementation plan prepared by the consultant to ensure compliance with the GEF and UNEP financial guidelines.
- Provide advisory services during recruitment of project personnel and/or consultants to support the BTR and NC reporting process to ensure that the qualified candidates are selected to support project work.
- Closely monitor, in consultation with the EA, the technical quality of products, outputs and deliverables from local, regional and international consultants and national experts in line with the scope of their work.
- Provide training to country level project management teams on compliance with technical and financial reporting guidelines through the development of and dissemination of guidance notes to enable countries meet their reporting obligations to GEF and UNFCCC.

- Support national governments in identifying suitable national and sub-regional/ international climate change experts (by means of advertisements, website, and roster of experts) capable of carrying out the necessary thematic assessments in the areas of GHG Inventories, Mitigation Analysis and Vulnerability and Adaptation strategies
- Assist country teams to organize national workshops for different BTR/NC components, this will entail:
 - i. the identification of trainers for different BTR/NC components
 - ii. designing the course/workshop agenda
 - iii. reviewing course/workshop training materials.
 - iv. Appraising the technical skill and expertise of the trainers to ensure delivery of high quality and targeted training support.
- Support project partners in the identification of regional centers of excellence to support countries access climate relevant data, information and appropriate analytical tools particularly in the areas of GHG Inventories, mitigation actions.

D. DESCRIBE, IF POSSIBLE, THE EXPECTED COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT

The umbrella programme approach presents multiple benefits compared to preparation of Eight (8) single country enabling activity requests submitted to the GEF. This approach streamlines project development, approval and funds disbursement processes, which means that start-up of project activities is accelerated, and project cycle expedited saving significant time to countries and minimizing delay known during submission of NCs and BURs/BTRs to the UNFCCC in the past. Having stated that, UNEP also recognizes that there is no such thing as "one size fits all" in enabling activities and has introduced the first component of the proposal to capture diversity within each participating country. The third project component has also been included to support continuous engagement of climate change structures/units in EAs, as well as stakeholders interested in climate change enabling activities, after completion and submission of reports to the UNFCCC.

The GEF developed financing guidelines on BTRs were availed in November 2020, with the indication that Parties could start accessing BTR funding in January 2021. In recognition of their national circumstances, LDCs/ SIDS are offered discretion in reporting and can choose to submit the information in their BTR at their discretion (*i.e. it may be less frequently than biennial*) (1/CP.21, para. 90 and 18/CMA.1 para. 4). This proposal comprises the 1st group of LDCs and SIDS transitioning to the Biennial Transparency Reporting process. This umbrella programme seeks to provide sufficient lead time to these countries to explore this new reporting modality and submit their initial BTRs on time and UNEP will provide the needed execution support services to these countries throughout project phase.

On the BTR review process: - MPGs provide a choice to LDCs and SIDS, to participate in the same centralized review as a group (decision 18/CMA.1, para. 157). LDCs and SIDS may also choose to participate as a group during the subsequent working group phase of the facilitative multilateral consideration of progress (decision 18/CMA.1, para. 194). This is an idea that the UNFCCC secretariat may explore for this group of countries. The structure of the umbrella programme therefore allows for country-flexibility as well as options for countries to jointly share lessons learnt and undergo the review process jointly.

E. DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE THE BUDGETED M & E PLAN

The project will be monitored through the following M&E activities:

§ A Project Inception Workshop at the national level will be held within 2 months of start of project, after the establishment of the Project Management Unit. This will involve all key stakeholders identified during the national consultation process. An Inception Workshop report will be prepared and shared with participants to formalize various agreements and plans decided during the meeting.

§ Monitoring BTR and NC technical progress against expenditures: The Project Coordinator will be responsible for preparation of quarterly progress reports and expenditure statements. Technical progress and financial reports shall be reviewed by the UNEP Task Manager and Fund Management Officer.

§ Project Annual and final financial audit will be undertaken to assess probity (i.e. correctness, integrity etc.) of expenditure and transactions.

§ Periodic Monitoring through discussions with key partners: the UNEP Task Manager will conduct periodic monitoring of activities based on the agreed schedule in the Project Implementation Plan to assess status of implementation of project. The monitoring of project activities will identify areas of improvements and will make recommendations on how to address gaps in project implementation.

§ At the end of the project, an Operational Completion Report will be prepared, using the most recent UNEP operational completion report template to be obtained from the UNEP Evaluation Office. This is based on the recent GEF Evaluation Office confirmation that the non-expedited Enabling Activities projects do not warrant a terminal evaluation, as they are not considered FSP or MSPs. A Terminal Operational Completion Report for a single GEF ID will be prepared and will provide a comprehensive analysis on work carried out in each country.

M&E Workplan

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
Project Inception Workshop (PIW)	National Project Management Unit, Technical Expert Groups and UNEP Task Manager to raise awareness, build stakeholder engagement and detailed work planning	Within 2 months of project start-up and establishment of the project management unit
Project Inception Report	Project Coordinator & UNEP Task Manager	Not more than 1 month after the Project Inception Workshop
Technical progress reports & expenditure statements	National Project Management Unit, Task Manager, Funds Management Officer	Four (4) quarterly expenditure and technical progress reports for any given year, submitted by January 31, April 30, July 31 and October 31 (latest) and at the end of the project implementation
Terminal Operational Closure	National Project Management Unit, Task Manager, FMO, Consultant(s)	Initiated no earlier than six months prior to the operational completion of project activities

F. EXPLAIN THE DEVIATIONS FROM TYPICAL COST RANGES (WHERE APPLICABLE)

Not Applicable

Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And GEF Agency(ies)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Her Excellency Diann Black Layne Layne	GEF OFP	Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment	3/8/2021
Mr. Virana Sonnasinh	GEF OFP	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	3/23/2021
Mr. Randall Dobayou	GEF OFP	Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA)	3/5/2021
Ms. Shamiso Najira	GEF OFP	Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources	3/10/2021
Ms. Miruza Mohamed	GEF OFP	Ministry of Environment	3/8/2021
Dr. Mohamed-Yahya LAFDAL CHAH	GEF OFP	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	3/22/2021
Mr. Godwin Fishani Gondwe	GEF OFP	Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection	3/9/2021
Mr. Tin Ponlok	GEF OFP	Ministry of Environment	3/22/2021

B. Convention Participation

Convention	Date of Ratification/Accession	National Focal Point
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	2/2/1993	Her Excellency Diann Black Layne
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	12/18/1995	Mr. Tin Ponlok
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	1/4/1995	Mr. Virana Sonnasinh
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	11/5/2002	Mr. Randall Dobayou
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	4/21/1994	Ms. Shamiso Najira
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	11/9/1992	Ms. Miruza Mohamed
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	1/20/1994	Dr. Mohamed-Yahya LAFDAL CHAH
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	5/28/1993	Mr. Godwin Fishani Gondwe