

MID-TERM REVIEW

Project ID:	10093
Project Name:	Regional capacity building of COMESA member states in Eastern and Southern Africa for enhanced transparency in Climate Change Monitoring, Reporting and Verification as defined in the Paris Agreement.
Countr(ies):	Regional, Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles, Zambia, Botswana
Implementing Agency:	CI

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Regional capacity building of COMESA member states in Eastern and Southern Africa for enhanced transparency in Climate Change Monitoring, Reporting and Verification as defined in the Paris Agreement.

Country

Regional, Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles, Zambia, Botswana

GEF ID
10093

Implementing Agency
CI

Executing Entity

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
(COMESA) - Climate Change Unit

Trust Fund
GET

Project Type
FSP

Objective

Project Objective: To strengthen capacity of COMESA member States to comply with transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement through establishment of an Eastern and Southern Africa Regional CBIT transparency framework for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of climate actions, report on NDCs and knowledge dissemination.

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval
6/8/2021

Agency Approval
5/14/2019

Implementation Start
1/3/2023

First Disbursement
3/31/2023

Expected MTR
5/31/2025

MTR Submission
5/16/2025

Actual MTR
3/31/2025

Expected Completion
9/30/2027

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

Principal Findings

Relevance and coherence

The CBIT COMESA project is highly relevant in the global context as it aims at operationalizing the Paris Agreement commitment of the government of The Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles and Zambia. The project contributes to the GEF-7 Climate Change focal area strategy, is aligned with CI priorities and strategies, and with the priorities set by national strategies and policies in The Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles and Zambia. Most national interviewees also expressed their satisfaction regarding the timeliness of the support provided by this CBIT COMESA project to undertake BTR reporting and NDC updating processes.

Evidence collected through interviews suggests that experience sharing was effectively promoted with other COMESA countries that have implemented or are currently implementing CBIT projects and that project activities have been complementary with other transparency initiatives and MRV trainings at the national level.

Effectiveness

The evaluators provided ratings based on relative progress to end of project targets, considering that the project de facto only started implementing in February 2023. The MTR hence marks 18 months out of 57 months of implementation, or 31.6% of the total 'active' implementation time. At MTR, the achievement of objective level indicators is Highly Satisfactory for one indicator, Satisfactory for three indicators, and Moderately Unsatisfactory for the remaining one. At outcome level, the overall achievement is Satisfactory. The GEF Core Indicator was reported on in a separate Excel file submitted along the PIRs. The updated Core Indicator tracking tool for 2024 reports an achievement of 63 female and 115 male beneficiaries.

Trainings were overall timely and tailored to national needs, and training materials and trainers were/are highly accessible to the trainees, except in Eritrea where the internet access is very limited. However, trainees found the trainings covering too many topics. Most trainees also wish to see more practical exercises or analyses of pilot cases. The pool of trainees was assessed too small to date and more people should be trained by the project.

Enabling factors were CI-GEF's flexibility in terms of adding detailed needs assessments to the workplan, pre-existing good working relations between project partners and a regional coordinating meeting uniting COMESA, RCMRD, CI AfFD, and the national coordinators in April 2024. Hindering factors were the need for repeated implementation arrangement clarifications between the implementing agency (CI-GEF), the executing agency COMESA and the executing support unit from CI AfFD, unclear roles and responsibilities of the national coordinators in the early phases of implementation, leading to delays in activities and some initial frustration of trainees in Seychelles about the late start, for example. However, the project has successfully overcome most of these and between its official launch in February 2023 and the time of the MTR, considerable progress was made.

Efficiency

By end of Q4 2024, 44% of the project's budget had been disbursed. Evidence collected throughout the evaluation process suggests that the budget available so far has been sufficient to meet the project objectives between January 2023 and end of Q4 FY24. PMC spending was readjusted several times to reflect the longer start up phase and the extension of the project time.

The cofinancing leveraged for the CBIT COMESA project amounted to 9% of the total cofinancing committed at CEO endorsement stage, with most contributions still pending. Tracking of co-financing needs to be improved.

Sustainability

Most of the risk identified at design stage decreased. One has increased, namely with respect to knowledge retention. Several factors are at play here which can be mitigated considerably with targeted actions during the remainder of the project as suggested in the sustainability section of this report and in the recommendations.

Impact

Based on the available evidence there is no doubt that the project already has a noticeable positive impact in terms of improving knowledge around data required for GHG Inventory process and MRV especially in the LULUCF sector in the target countries. A very tangible impact so far has been the direct contribution of the

project's activities to enhancing BTR reporting processes in the target countries, as well as NDC updating processes.

For the remainder of the project, it would be good to also focus on institutional arrangements, in addition to technical skills. Institutional arrangements vary between the participating countries, but as the project goes on building capacity of both consultants, academia and government staff the evaluators recommend that the project has a heightened focus on dialogues and exchange of good practices between the participating countries on institutional arrangements. Activities also seem to be underway to establish a regional transparency strategy and action plan and conversations can be had in the context of this activity.

M&E design and implementation

Evidence suggests that the reporting system has been working appropriately and that most M&E activities have been conducted according to plan thus far. The PSC was constituted and met once in 2023 (Q1 FY24), and was scheduled to meet again in Q2/3 2025. It is unclear whether NCC were established, are operational and have an added value. Eritrea's involvement in reporting processes seems to have been limited so far, due to limited internet connection and this should be improved for example by increased and timely engagement over email to get their inputs and feedback.

Implementation and execution

The overall project's management structure is appropriate and seems to be working fine.

CI GEF has been delivering satisfactorily on its mandate as Implementing Agency Management has been adaptive, has lowered risks and has been conducive to delivery.

COMESA is an appropriate executing agency but there is room for improvement in internal communication processes between COMESA CU and the national coordinators.

The support of the CI AfFD unit to the COMESA PMU has been highly beneficial for execution.

The instrumental role of RCMRD in conducting and accompanying needs assessments and facilitating the delivery of tailored trainings by Aether deserves to be highlighted. RCMRD hence plays a pivotal role in truly bringing out the advantages of having a regional project, at the technical level.

COMESA's central coordinating role as a regional organisation can be leveraged more. Trainees pointed out that COMESA could play a stronger role in highlighting the project's activities and successes with national governments so that achievements do not remain in the technical realm, and so that national governments can leverage results at regional and international level.

Gender

The gender analysis in the ProDoc does not address the obstacles that women in The Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles and Zambia may be experiencing in working in/accessing jobs in government structures in general and more specifically in climate-related jobs. The gender action plan however convincingly identifies (i) the different groups involved in the CBIT COMESA project, (ii) their respective roles and responsibilities in ensuring gender mainstreaming, (iii) how the project could impact the groups in terms of gender mainstreaming, (iv) and how these groups could impact the gender mainstreaming within the project.

Data collected during the interviews as well as data from the PIR2024 suggest that the participation of women has differed greatly from country to country. Nonetheless, at MTR CBIT COMESA had already exceeded its overall target number of women who participated in project activities (minimum indicator 1) and is on track to achieve the target for the number of women receiving benefits from the project (minimum indicator 2). With respect to minimum indicator 3, it is still too early to tell. Efforts to uphold the gender inclusivity must be maintained as gender-balance has yet to be achieved, particularly in Zambia and Eritrea.

Stakeholder engagement

The project made significant efforts to engage stakeholders right from the PPG phase. During the reviewed implementation period, stakeholders were consulted on multiple occasions and key stakeholders were integrated in the PSC and have oversight and control over project directions.

Although the overall participation of women is still insufficient, trainees in Seychelles and The Comoros reported a high level of engagement during the trainings on the part of female participants. In The Comoros, trainees also appreciated the inclusion of people with disabilities in the trainings. The involvement of academia is perceived very positively by all stakeholders interviewed. The potential for synergies between the government's climate reporting teams and universities was highlighted by several trainees.

There are however still some challenges with respect to the engagement of women (Zambia, Eritrea), youth (The Comoros, Eritrea, Zambia), and private sector actors (all countries) , and there is a need to engage stakeholders more broadly in Eritrea.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the project has been able to progress towards end-of-project stakeholder engagement targets as set in the SEP

Accountability and Grievance Mechanism

The accountability and grievance mechanism (AGM) was designed in an appropriate and sound way. According to the reports provided, the AGM was vulgarized with stakeholders on four different occasions. The AGM was also disseminated at the regional inception meeting, national inception meetings and other in country meetings. The AGM was further shared with all coordinators. Despite these efforts, none of the trainees interviewed by the evaluators had heard of the AGM. This goes for all four countries. In addition, the national coordinator in Seychelles had also not heard of the AGM before. Urgent action to correct this is needed.

Overall finding:

The CBIT COMESA project scored on average satisfactory. Even though the project saw a significant delay in the start of activities on the ground, there is no doubt that the project already has a positive impact in terms of GHG data collection, inventory building and reporting. The project was timely and useful for ongoing BTR reporting and NDC updating processes in several of the target countries. Additional action should be undertaken to increase the likelihood of sustainability (and specifically with respect to addressing challenges related to knowledge and capacity retention and distribution models at national levels), and to leverage the executing agency's position and outreach as a regional organisation. Finally, the project needs to ramp up efforts on the vulgarization of the AGM.

Rating Summary

OUTCOME	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Sustainability	Outcome Final Rating	Comment
Outcome 1.1	HS	HS	HS	ML	S	<p>The 4 countries have existing technical guidelines on MRV data collection, transmission and tracking that are tailored to each Member State as well as institutional arrangements through which data is shared between national-level stakeholders and GHG sectors. The existing modalities will be reviewed and enhanced under this project.</p> <p>By end of Q2 2025, an overall number of 176 people had been trained, 60 of which were women representing a share of 34%. 137 of the trainees received certificates.</p> <p>Qualifiers for the ML sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the trainees are not involved in GHG inventory process

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainees in Zambia explained that high level of turnover within ministries meant that some of the trainees were no longer part of the GHG inventory team • Some trainees are close to retirement which will likely lead to knowledge loss. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Comoros, many of the experts involved in the trainings and in GHG inventory activities are private consultants with former ties to the ministries. In this context, there is a risk that little knowledge will be retained within the ministries themselves <p>This above is to some extent mitigated by the availability of training materials on the RCMRD platform</p>
Outcome 1.2	HS	MU	S	L	MU	12 data sharing events were foreseen by TE, but at MTR the evaluators could not assess whether a data sharing event had taken place during the evaluation period.
Outcome 2.1	HS	MU	S	HL	MU	<p>The specific capacity building needs for academic institutions have been identified for Zambia. Similarly, in Seychelles a questionnaire was circulated within the University of Seychelles to identify their needs.</p> <p>From the available evidence it is not clear whether the specific training needs of academia were identified for Eritrea.</p> <p>Considering that after identification of needs, the course needs to be developed and still delivered before end of project, the overall rating is MU.</p> <p>If successful, the sustainability will be highly likely.</p>
Outcome 3.1	HS	S	S	L	S	<p>RCMRD has existing MoUs with Zambia and The Comoros. A concession letter exists for Seychelles. The project will strengthen the data-sharing partnership that exists while working on how to realize the same for Eritrea.</p> <p>It seems to the evaluators that at least one regional peer exchange workshop took place in Zambia, on 18 & 19.01.2024.</p> <p>It also seems to the evaluators that 2 delegates from each participating</p>

						<p>country participated in COP 28, in December 2023.</p> <p>From the Aether report it seems that most of workshops are to take place at national level, and that the number of trainings at regional level will be reduced.</p>
Overall project outcomes rating						<p>S</p> <p>The project saw delays in the start of implementation due to a staff changeover in the executing agency and subsequent onboarding and implementation arrangement negotiation activities. However, between its official launch in February 2023 and the time of the MTR, considerable progress was made.</p> <p>Evidence collected throughout the evaluation process suggests that the budget available so far has been sufficient to meet the project objectives between January 2023 and end of Q4 FY24. Although the project experienced delays at the start of implementation, at the time of the MTR, 44% of the total approved budget had been disbursed and evidence suggests that the CBIT COMESA project is on track to spend all budget by project closure.</p> <p>Ratings for most of the risk factors identified at ProDoc stage have decreased and most of the project's features that support longer term sustainability still holds. At MTR, there is a raised risk for the continuity of information and application of the acquired competencies within individual ministries or sectors, which can be mitigated considerable with targeted actions as suggested during the remainder of the project</p>

Dimension	Rating
Overall Outcome	Satisfactory
M&E Design and Implementation	Satisfactory
Performance Implementing Agency	Highly Satisfactory
Performance Executing Agency	Satisfactory
Gender	Satisfactory
Stakeholder Engagement	Moderately satisfactory
Accountability and Grievance Mechanism	Unsatisfactory

Recommendations

#	Recommendation	When	Entity responsible
1	<p>Increase the relevance of the national level trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Split up trainees depending on pre-existing skill and knowledge level and provide trainings tailored to that level; - focus trainings on fewer but more advanced topics for experts already more involved in climate report compilation; • strengthen the training modules with more hands-on practical exercises using in-country data. 	For the remainder of the project	RCMRD, Aether
2	In Seychelles and Zambia consider, if feasible withing budget and time, delivering trainings at devolved/sub-national levels of government (as national level skills and knowledge are already advanced)	For the remainder of the project	RCMRD, Aether
3	Conduct an assessment of existing data collection methods in the four intervention countries to see how they can be realigned with actual reporting needs	Within the next three months	RCMRD, Aether
4	Clarify what is happening with the foreseen with the ten regional peer exchange programs/workshops [8 participants in each regional workshop- 2 from each country (80 participants)] or what is replacing them. Interviewees have indicated they would welcome more regional sessions for experience sharing than what has been offered to date.	Within the next three months	COMESA, RCMRD, Aether
5	Further clarify PMC costs. Explain how PMC costs were covered by committed co-financing from project partners COMESA or CI AfFD for FY24 as well as how PMC will be covered for the remainder of the project.	For the remainder of the project	COMESA, RCMRD, AfFD
6	Improve tracking of actual co-finance spending and ideally collect co-financing reporting letters yearly from national governments.	For the remainder of the project	COMESA, RCMRD, AfFD
7	<p>Include more stakeholders in the trainings.</p> <p>Ensure participation of consultants, academics and private sector stakeholders next to that of government staff. Facilitate collaboration and group work between these different stakeholders during the trainings and ensure that differences in knowledge and skills are evened out as much as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase participation of academics, in Seychelles and The Comoros. - Include parastatal bodies in Eritrea. 	For the remainder of the project	National coordinators, RCMRD, Aether
8	In connection with the above, continue to provide motivational factors for government staff to participate in the trainings (e.g. by providing MRV and GHG inventory training certificates).	For the remainder of the project	National coordinators, RCMRD, Aether
9	Look into and facilitate knowledge exchange between the participating countries on institutional arrangements for data collection, inventory building and reporting, so that countries can learn from each other what kind of arrangements between government staff and consultants work best for efficient reporting and institutional capacity building and that know-how can be built and passed on at institutional level in the long term rather than ad hoc linked to a specific report or project.	For the remainder of the project	COMESA
10	Encourage participation of younger experts to foster expert retention. These experts may need a more basic training in the beginning (see recommendation 1). Brainstorm with the more seasoned experts in each country on how knowledge can best be transferred to the younger generation. This seems particularly relevant for Zambia and The Comoros.	For the remainder of the project	National coordinators, RCMRD, Aether

11	Sustain efforts to involve women at all levels. Train women, especially in Zambia and Eritrea. These experts may need a more basic training in the beginning (see recommendation 1). Brainstorm with the more seasoned (female) experts in each country on how knowledge can best be transferred to women and look into women participating in the ToT. Also consider fostering female representation at all project levels, for example in the PSC or as national coordinators	For the remainder of the project	National coordinators, RCMRD, Aether
12	To further boost the two previous recommendations, raise more awareness on the availability of training materials on the RCMRD platform in different government departments and university courses.	For the remainder of the project	National coordinators, RCMRD, Aether
13	Increase efforts to engage the private sector in project activities, for example by inviting them to trainings and by looking into signing MoUs for data sharing	For the remainder of the project	National coordinators, RCMRD, Aether
14	Further foster and facilitate Eritrea's involvement in reporting processes	As soon as possible	National coordinators, AfFD, COMESA
15	Strengthen the description of the roles and responsibilities of CI Africa Field Division vis-a-vis the executing partner's PMU in future project design documents as well as those of the CI Africa technical oversight team. Being more explicit on implementing and executing arrangements in key project documents may reduce the starting phase of projects.	At PPG stage	COMESA, CI-GEF
16	Improve internal communication processes between COMESA CU and the national coordinators. Consider a repeat of the regional coordination meeting to ensure smooth communication and delivery processes for the remainder of the project. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of national coordinators and national government focal points in particular. This is relevant for Seychelles, Eritrea, and The Comoros.	As soon as possible	COMESA
17	Improve communication between RCMRD and Aether as training providers/facilitators on the one end and national coordinators and trainees on the receiving end in Eritrea.	For the remainder of the project	National coordinators, RCMRD, Aether
18	Make sure to effectively include gender considerations in the four National Transparency strategies and Action plans and consider making them gender-responsive or even gender transformative as opposed to gender-sensitive.	In the next six months	COMESA
19	Focus on securing engagement from stakeholders from Eritrea during experience sharing events and during PSC meetings	For the remainder of the project	COMESA, national coordinators
20	Significantly improve awareness of the AGM with all project stakeholders and trainees, and encourage the Eritrea department for environment to set contacts for the AGM	As soon as possible	COMESA
21	Update project information on COMESA's website and on RCMRD's website.	As soon as possible	COMESA, RCMRD
22	Further encourage CBIT focal points from respective governments to feed information about this project on the CBIT portal.	As soon as possible	COMESA, National coordinators
23	Strengthen the flow and matching of financial reporting between COMESA and RCMRD on the one hand and CI AfFD on the other hand, so that quarterly reports from each executing partner (COMESA and RCMRD) add up to the joint report shared by AfFD to CI-GEF	As soon as possible	COMESA, RCMRD, AfFD
24	Monitor for compliance with practices relating to anti-discrimination and the prevention of harassment. The project can use the monitoring indicator- Percentage of measures implemented to address the gaps identified during the ESS screening on working and labor conditions minimum requirements.	For the remainder of the project	COMESA, AfFD

B. Stakeholder Engagement

1.1.1 Relevance

The CBIT COMESA project is highly relevant in the global context as it aims at operationalizing the commitment of the government of The Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles and Zambia as signatories to the Paris Agreement.

This project contributes to the GEF-7 Climate Change focal area strategy, and more specifically to Objective 3 related to fostering enabling conditions for mainstreaming mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies. Indeed, in line with paragraph 85 of the COP decision adopting the Paris Agreement which is highlighted in the GEF-7 programming directions, CBIT projects aim to (i) strengthen national institutions for transparency-related activities in line with national priorities; (ii) provide relevant tools, training and assistance for meeting the provisions stipulated in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement (ETF); and (iii) assist in the improvement of transparency over time. By seeking to strengthen national and regional transparency frameworks for monitoring and tracking NDCs and climate action (Component 1), strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in the participating countries to measure, report and verify emissions in IPCC sectors (Component 2) and establish a regional CBIT integrated platform for learning and knowledge management of transparency related activities (Component 3), the CBIT COMESA project is fully aligned with the objectives of the GEF-7 programming directions.

The CBIT COMESA project is aligned with CI priorities and strategies. Climate stabilization is one of CI's core priorities, under which CI supports initiatives that both help cut GHG emissions and support climate vulnerable communities adapt to the impacts of climate change, two endeavors that can greatly benefit from functional MRV systems. This project is consistent with CI's priority area "Nature for Climate" under its Southern Cross for MRV systems can help measure how ecosystems contribute to GHG emissions reductions especially in the AFOLU sector. The project was also consistent with the CI-GEF agency's effort to develop inclusive and country-driven projects which have been demonstrated in this project by the Agency's willingness to support the carrying out four distinct capacity needs assessments so that trainings could be tailored to the specific needs of each intervention country.

This CBIT COMESA project is aligned with the priorities set by national strategies and policies in The Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles and Zambia. The ProDoc details for each target country the national priorities the project is aligned with and identifies how it intends to strengthen or contributes towards their achievement.

The project's design is appropriate and consistent with the needs of the countries. The barriers identified in the ProDoc as preventing the target countries from fully complying with the ETF were drawn from a detailed gap analysis conducted during PPG stage, the result of which was detailed in the ProDoc. Interviews with project beneficiaries reveal they deem the project's design appropriate. Consistency with the specific needs of each intervention country was ensured by the capacity needs assessments conducted early on in the project.

Most national interviewees also expressed their satisfaction regarding the timeliness of the support provided by this CBIT COMESA project to undertake BTR reporting exercises, due by December 31st 2024^[1]. Beneficiaries in The Comoros explicitly stated that, thanks to the CBIT COMESA project, those tasked with drafting the BTR has acquired the skills and appropriate tools to make this process much easier. In Seychelles, however, some interviewees found that related project activities came too late to meaningfully increase skills and support with BTR preparation.

Trainees in Eritrea and Seychelles highlighted that the trainings had proven useful also in the context of the NDC updating processes and it gave them ideas about what could be useful mitigation activities (e.g. in the agriculture and waste sectors) and increased their capacity to set useful indicators and targets.

Conclusion on relevance

BIT COMESA project contributes to The Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles and Zambia's capacity to be compliant with the Enhanced Transparency Framework, in line with their commitment as signatories to the Paris Agreement, and that in a timely manner. The project is aligned with the four countries' respective priorities and needs, as well as with GEF-7 programming directions and CI's strategy.

on the above assessment, the evaluators rate the project's relevance as **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**.

1.1.2 Coherence

The ProDoc identifies a plethora of GEF projects at the global, regional and national levels that the CBIT COMESA project could build on (Table 14 in the ProDoc). However, the evaluators found that most of these were implemented several years ago. Considering the high staff turnover in government departments and agencies in several of the participating countries (see elsewhere in this report), the likelihood that the CBIT COMESA project could strengthen existing skills would be limited.

Most promising are the potential synergies and knowledge sharing with other national CBIT projects implemented in COMESA members states. Evidence collected through interviews suggests that experience sharing was effectively promoted with other COMESA countries that have implemented or are currently implementing CBIT projects. Beneficiaries in Zambia recalled having had the opportunity to exchange with counterparts in Kenya and Uganda and the COMESA national coordinator in Seychelles mentioned the presentation of the results from the CBIT Madagascar project.

In addition, interviewed stakeholders also highlighted the project's complementarity with other transparency initiatives and MRV trainings at the national level. For example, stakeholders interviewed in Seychelles mentioned how the CBIT COMESA project is aligned and coordinates with the NAP and ETF support initiatives, while in The Comoros, beneficiaries have pointed at the complementary with the *Umbrella Programme for Preparation of National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (GEF ID: 10973) implemented by UNEP. Similarly, trainees in Zambia pointed out synergies and complementarities between the CBIT MRV trainings and those provided by other donors.

1.1.3 Effectiveness

1.1.3.1 Project progress towards outcomes

The Results Framework (RF) identifies six indicators at project objective level and eleven indicators at outcome level^[1]. Baselines per country were determined for all outcome indicators but not for the objective level indicators. End of project Targets were defined in the RF for both objective and outcome indicators, mid-term targets were not defined. To assess progress towards objective level targets, baseline values were retrieved from the Project Results Monitoring Plan (Appendix III in the ProDoc).

The evaluators note that some indicators overlap:

- Objective indicators d and f de facto duplicate each other and overlap with Outcome Indicator 3.1.1.
- Objective indicator c overlaps with Outcome indicator 3.1.2.
- Outcome indicator 3.1.2. de facto also includes outcome indicator 1.2.2.

The evaluators also note that the target for Outcome indicator 1.1.2 is not aligned with the formulation of the indicator. The indicator is about establishing templates or guidelines, whereas the target is about training people and issuing certificates. The evaluators also note that the target for this indicator shows significant overlap with the target for Objective level indicator b.

The progress towards results is shown in Table 4 below. Taking the above into account, five (5) indicators were assessed at objective level (leaving out indicator d) and six (6) indicators at outcome level (leaving out outcome indicators 1.2.2, 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). Indicator 2.1.2 was not assessed as the certificate courses first need to be established at academic institutions (and hence the targets for indicator 2.1 1 would need to have been reached for the participating countries). Indicator 3.1.5 was not assessed as it is only due at the end of the project.

Given the absence of mid-term targets, the evaluators provided ratings based on relative progress to end of project targets, taking into account that the project de facto only started implementing in February 2023. The MTR hence marks 18 months out of 57 months of implementation, or 31.6% of the total activities implementation time.

At MTR, the achievement of objective level indicators is Highly Satisfactory for one indicator, Satisfactory for three indicators, and Moderately Unsatisfactory for the remaining one.

At outcome level, the overall achievement is Satisfactory. The achievement of targets is Highly Satisfactory for both indicators under Component 1. Under Component 2, progress towards achievement was Moderately Unsatisfactory for the one indicator assessed. As for Component 3, progress towards achievement of targets was Satisfactory for the two indicators that apply for the evaluation period. Component 4 relates to M&E, and therefore progress towards achievement of targets will be discussed in section 3.4.2.

In terms of quality of the outputs and outcomes achieved so far:

- Trainings were overall timely and tailored to national needs: Despite being a regional project, CBIT COMESA has made significant efforts to ensure that the project responds to national needs. Overall, evidence collected through interviews with trainees suggest that trainings have enabled country stakeholders to build their capacity for reporting on climate action in the context of the ETF. In particular, and as mentioned before, the project activities have so far been timely for building stakeholders' capacity in time for preparing high quality BTRs, more so in The Comoros, Eritrea and Zambia than in Seychelles where the project activities came in only towards the end of the BTR reporting process. In The Comoros, stakeholders mentioned that the climate reporting skills acquired by government staff enabled autonomous reporting instead of having to rely on external consultants. In Eritrea, interviewees found that the training could help the country further down the line to develop high quality data driven reports as part of the ETF.
- Training materials and trainers were/are highly accessible to the trainees: Training material were made available online on the RCMRD platform (in both French and English) and trainees confirmed they can access the material at any given time to engage in autonomous refresher courses. Hard copies of the material were provided in Eritrea to mitigate limited internet access. Interviewees also appreciate user guides for different tools such as the IPCC tools being available on the RCMRD platform. Beneficiaries in The Comoros appreciated they could keep in contact with trainers through WhatsApp in-between training sessions to ask questions.
- Almost without exception, trainees found the trainings covering too many topics at once and too short for them to be able to properly absorb the information on each aspect covered. It should be noted that the training topics were selected by the governments, limiting the PMU's room for manoeuvre. Most trainees also wish to see more practical exercises or analyses of pilot cases to be integrated in the trainings.
- Several trainees found the training materials too short and wish for more details and step-by-step explanations.
- All of the interviewed trainees highlighted that they found the pool of trainees too small and that more people should be trained by the project. Trainees in Eritrea complained that those invited to the training were too few. That being said the selection of trainees was made by the governments, limiting the PMU's room for manoeuvre. Those attending were told they would have to train others. However no additional training events were earmarked for them to do so. This may lie outside the scope of the project and be down to the national government.

Table 1: Summary of the progress made towards achieving project objective and outcomes

Indicator	Baseline	End of project target	Status at MTR (based on PIR)	Rating	Rating justification
Objective indicators					
a. Number of countries with a national GHG inventory system that is compliant with IPCC requirements	No baseline provided in ProDoc	4 Countries	The 4 countries have national GHG inventories in place but these are not fully compliant with IPCC requirements. Capacity needs assessment was conducted to identify the entry points for strengthening existing systems.	S	The evaluators observe that the fact that the four countries have existing national GHG in place is not an achievement of the project but rather a baseline condition. However, the project made good progress in identifying entry points for aligning these existing GHG inventory systems with IPCC requirements and understand from the interviews that activities for strengthening the systems are planned to take place in FY 2025.
b. Number of stakeholders (men and women) from each country skilled to collect, process and feed GHG data into the GHG inventory system	No baseline provided in ProDoc	688 direct beneficiaries with 30% female	<p>The PIR 2024 reported a total of 95 beneficiaries, of which 37% were females: Zambia: 43 (29 male, 14 female) Seychelles: 20 (10 male, 10 female) The Comoros: 32 (20 male, 12 female) Eritrea: 0 x</p> <p>Based on the available evidence the evaluators assess that 6 trainings had taken place by the end of Q2 2025 (or by the end of calendar year 2024). - 18-19.01.24 in Zambia. Training</p>	MU	<p>The evaluators found evidence that by end of Q4 2024 only one training had taken place, on 18&19.01.2024, in Zambia with 16 participants, of which 5 women. The overall number attained by end of Q4 2024 would have been 16 and the % women 31%. This would represent achieving a target of 2,3% at MTR.</p> <p>By end of Q2 2025, an overall number of 176 people had been trained, 60 of which were women representing a share of 34%. By end of Q2 2025, 25,6% of the overall target was met.</p> <p>It is not clear to the evaluators where else these trainings are reported (under indicator 1.1.2 or indicator 2.1.2)? Nor is it clear to what extent double counting occurred for the trainees in Zambia.</p>

			<p>workshop for GHG data providers and compilers in the LULUCF sector. 16 participants of which 5 women</p> <p>- 27-29.08.2024 in Seychelles. GHG inventory and MRV training. 23 participants or which 10 women</p> <p>16-19.09.2024 Seychelles. GHG inventory compilation and MRV systems. Certificate training. 21 participants, of which 10 women</p> <p>- 'September 2024' in The Comoros. GHG inventory compilation and MRV systems. Certificate training. 52 participants of which 25 women</p> <p>- 24-26.09.2024 in Eritrea. GHG inventory compilation and MRV systems. Certificate training. 35 participants of which 8 women</p> <p>- 9-11.10.2024 in Zambia. GHG inventory</p>	
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			compilation and MRV systems. Certificate training. 29 participants of which 2 women.		
c. Number of National Transparency strategies and Action plans as well as one Regional Transparency Strategy and Action plan developed to facilitate enhanced transparency	No baseline provided in ProDoc	4 National Transparency strategies and Action plans; 1 Regional Transparency strategy and Action plan	0	S	Preparation of one Regional Transparency Strategy and Action plan is under development. No national Transparency strategies and Action plans were developed yet as these need input from trainees after they have been trained. Trainings have started.
e. Number of national academic institutions with gender mainstreamed systems strengthened to train stakeholders to transparently measure, report and verify emissions on agriculture, forestry and land-use sector NDC targets	No baseline provided in ProDoc	At least 2	0	S	3 universities have been identified in Zambia, 1 in Seychelles and 1 in The Comoros. The workshop report for Eritrea testifies that representatives from academia participated. The interviews conducted during MTR indicate that the identification of an appropriate academic institution is underway in Eritrea.
f. Number of regional platforms developed for gender inclusive learning, sharing and knowledge management	No baseline provided in ProDoc	At least 1	1	HS	RCMRD has already developed an e-learning platform. Uploading of the training modules into the platform by Aether, the GHG/MRV Consultant, is ongoing and will be completed in FY25 Q1. The platform is accessible at http://elearning.rcmr.org/ The evaluators note that the existence of the platform at RCMRD is rather a baseline condition than an achievement by the project.
Outcome 1.1. Technical capacities and institutional frameworks of participating countries to transparently plan, monitor and report on their NDC targets and climate actions improved.					
1.1.1. Number of national climate change co-ordination frameworks established to guide GHG data sharing, tracking and reporting of climate actions	All four countries had already established a GHG inventory coordination body	4 functioning national institutional Frameworks -one for each project country; each with technical guidelines/templates on MRV data collection, transmission and tracking tailored to each participating country; and with partnership MoUs signed	4 National climate change institutional frameworks for the 4 Member States are in place and are being used under	HS	The 4 countries have existing technical guidelines on MRV data collection, transmission and tracking that are tailored to each Member State as well as institutional arrangements through which data moves between national-level stakeholders and GHG sectors.

		between Governments of participating countries and national level stakeholders; to guide GHG data sharing, tracking and reporting of climate actions	this Regional CBIT project		The existing modalities will be reviewed and enhanced under this project.
1.1.2. Number of gender inclusive technical guidelines/templates on MRV data collection, transmission, tracking and communication amongst participating countries established	x	100 people trained and issued certificates per country (Total 400 people with at least 30% women) – In the case of Seychelles, the specific requirement is at least 40% of the 100 people trained and issued certificates are men.	0	HS	<p>The 4 countries have existing technical guidelines on MRV data collection, transmission and tracking that are tailored to each Member State as well as institutional arrangements through which data is shared between national-level stakeholders and GHG sectors. The existing modalities will be reviewed and enhanced under this project.</p> <p>The evaluators note that this is not an achievement of the project itself since the existing technical guidelines predate the beginning of project implementation and should hence have been included in the baseline.</p> <p>In terms of training, by end of Q2 2025, an overall number of 176 people had been trained, 60 of which were women representing a share of 34%. 137 of the above-mentioned trainees received certificates.</p> <p>It is not clear to the evaluators where else these trainings are reported (under indicator b and indicator 2.1.2)?, nor is it clear to what extent double counting occurred for the trainees in Zambia.</p>
Outcome 1.2. A Regional institutional framework for COMESA Member Countries to transparently plan, monitor and report on their NDC targets and climate actions improved					
1.2.1. Number of data sharing events among COMESA Member States that are participating in the CBIT project.	no regional institutional framework or guidelines for COMESA member countries to transparently monitor and report on their	12 data sharing events among COMESA member states involving national focal points of the four project participating countries and COMESA staff.	0	MU	The evaluators could not assess whether a data sharing event had taken place during the evaluation period.

	NDC targets and climate actions.				
Outcome 2.1. Capacity of selected national academic institutions strengthened to train relevant Government officials to transparently measure, report and verify emissions on agriculture, forestry and land-use sector NDC targets.					
2.1.1. Number of long-term sustainable academic certificate programs in Terrestrial Carbon Accounting (TCA) and Agriculture Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (AMRV) established at-least 2 African institutions	National academic institutions in the participating countries have inadequate capacity to train sector staff (men and women) to undertake MRV. Most national academic institutions (such as the lone university in the case of Seychelles), lack equipment to train sector staff (both men and women) on some components of GHG MRV in the AFOLU sector.	One TCA-AMRV certificate program established, and institutionalized training being undertaken at each of two African institutions.	0	MU	The specific capacity building needs for academic institutions have been identified for Zambia. Similarly, in Seychelles a questionnaire was circulated within the University of Seychelles to identify their needs. From the available evidence it is not clear whether the specific training needs of academia were identified for Eritrea..
2.1.2. Number of people trained on TCA and AMRV		48 persons (12 per country – at least 30% women) trained in TCA and MRV.	0	NA	Four certificate courses were delivered in Q1 and Q2 2025. It is not clear to the evaluators whether this would be a similar certificate course as the one that would be established at national academic institutions and whether these training counts towards this indicator.
Outcome 3.1. Enhanced transparency through establishment of a regional platform for learning, sharing and knowledge management					
3.1.3. Linkages and partnerships established between governments and stakeholders (e.g. academic institutions, CSOs, Private sector institutions etc.) to implement the National and Regional Transparency Strategy and Action Plans	There is no regional CBIT platform for learning and knowledge sharing among the COMESA Member States	Four partnership MoUs at national level between Governments and stakeholders; as well as one regional partnership MOU signed between COMESA and project participating countries.	Zambia: 1 The Comoros: 1 Seychelles: 0 Eritrea: 0 No partnership at regional level.	S	RCMRD has existing MoUs with Zambia and The Comoros. A concession letter exists for Seychelles. The project will strengthen the data-sharing partnership that exists while working on how to realize the same for Eritrea. The evaluators note that the existence of the MoUs between RCMRD and Zambia and The Comoros is rather a baseline condition than an achievement by the project.
3.1.4. Number of regional peer exchange programs/workshops held and Number of		a) Sixteen national peer exchange programs/workshops (4 in each project country) [10	0 1	S	It seems to the evaluators that at least one regional peer

participants (Male and Female)		<p>participants in each national workshop (160 participants).]</p> <p>b) Ten regional peer exchange programs/workshops [8 participants in each regional workshop- 2 from each country (80 participants)].</p>			<p>exchange workshop took place in Zambia, on 18 & 19.01.2024.</p> <p>It also seems to the evaluators that 2 delegates from each participating country participated in COP 28, in December 2023.</p> <p>From the Aether report it seems that most of workshops are to take place at national level, and that the number of trainings at regional level will be reduced.</p>
3.1.5. Number of published comprehensive consolidated CBIT project reports and policy briefs covering all the four countries		A comprehensive consolidated final CBIT project report and a policy brief covering all the four countries will be published at the end of the project	0	N/A	Planned for FY26

1.1.1 Progress towards impact

The main objective of the project was to strengthen capacity of COMESA member States to comply with transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement through establishment of an Eastern and Southern Africa Regional CBIT transparency framework for Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of climate actions, report on NDCs and knowledge dissemination. The ToC identifies two main (medium term) impacts:

- 1) Countries have improved institutional arrangements to meet the ETF reporting requirements
- 2) Improved technical capacity for meeting ETF requirements and better reporting capacity

So far, the project has been mainly focusing on the second impact and there is, as stated in the previous section, no doubt that the project already has had a very tangible positive impact by having facilitated improved BTR reporting and NDC updating processes in the target countries.

For the remainder of the project, it would be good to also ensure that the first identified impact also manifests itself. Institutional arrangements vary between the participating countries, but as the project goes building capacity of both consultants, academia and government staff the evaluators recommend that the project has a heightened focus on dialogues and exchange of good practices between the participating countries on institutional arrangements. Activities also seem to be underway to establish a regional transparency strategy and action plan and conversations can be had in the context of this activity.

The evaluators also found that COMESA's central coordinating role as a regional organisation can be leveraged more. Trainees pointed out that COMESA could play a stronger role in highlighting the project's activities and successes with national governments so that achievements do not remain in the technical realm, and so that national governments can leverage results at regional and international level. Trainees also testified that they found the exchange with peers from other member countries in the context of the training workshop for GHG data providers and compilers in LULUCF sector in Zambia (January 2024) very helpful, and COMESA should build on this success to organise more joint events with the CBIT GSP.

Due to the varying levels of capacity and needs between the four participating countries, it was decided to organise trainings more at national level and rather than at regional level. While this may be very helpful to bring individual countries up to speed, it would be good not to lose sight of the advantages

that peer-to-peer learning with colleagues from neighbouring countries bring especially for younger professionals and women.

Conclusion Impact

Project has made an important contribution towards immediate improvement in the capacity of the four countries to report on GHG emissions and update NDCs. It has also increased awareness around reporting requirements and available tools.

In the long term can be improved by also looking at and organizing knowledge exchange on institutional arrangements especially at national level. In addition, the role of COMESA as a regional organization can be leveraged more, both to motivate national governments to appropriate, elevate and build on the achievements of the project, as well as directly at international level to widely share successful regional approaches to improving UNFCCC reporting processes.

1.1.1 Stakeholder engagement

The project made significant efforts to engage stakeholders right from the PPG phase. Overall, 86 people were involved in the project design and preparation process, including 16 in The Comoros, 16 in Eritrea, 39 in Seychelles, 15 in Zambia. 54 engagements with stakeholders were held in total during PPG. These consultations informed the design of the project's stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) for implementation, as described in the ProDoc. It details for each stakeholder the name, appropriate method of engagement, location and the technical and financial resources to meaningfully engage them.

During the reviewed implementation period, stakeholders were consulted on multiple occasions including during the project's project launch, the regional inception workshop, the national inception workshops and through national workplan reviews. **In addition, key stakeholders were integrated in the PSC and have oversight and control over project directions.** In total, according to the PIR2024, 16 engagements with stakeholders have been conducted through workshops, meetings and consultations since the beginning of project implementation. Stakeholders were also engaged through the repeated trainings. In order to maintain the respective government's engagement, RCMRD has leveraged the existing MoUs it has established with Zambia and The Comoros and a concession letter with Seychelles to ease data-sharing.

The three specific indicators to be monitored annually as part of the stakeholder engagement plan were duly reported on in both of the PIRs produced thus far.

Interviewees reported several positive aspects of stakeholder engagement so far:

- Although the overall participation of women is still insufficient, trainees in Seychelles and The Comoros reported a **high level of engagement during the trainings on the part of female participants**.
- In The Comoros, trainees also appreciated the **inclusion of people with disabilities** in the trainings.
- The **involvement of academia** is perceived very positively by all stakeholders interviewed. The potential for synergies between the government's climate reporting teams and universities was highlighted by several trainees.

Despite these positive elements, some limitations have hindered deeper stakeholder engagement:

- So far, it has been **very difficult to engage the private sector**, according to the PIR2024 10 private sector representatives have been engaged to date: 5 in the Seychelles and 6 in Zambia. Stakeholders report that private actors are largely absent from project activities despite being invited. Some stakeholders hypothesized that the private sector, despite its role in GHG emissions and its potential added value to updating the national GHG inventory, has limited awareness and sensibility towards climate change issues. In contrast, Aether consulting reports being successful at engaging private stakeholders.
- As already discussed in the section on gender, **engaging women** has proven to be a challenge in Zambia and Eritrea.
- Similarly, **engaging younger participants/trainees** has proven difficult in The Comoros, Eritrea, and Zambia.
- **Limited Internet access in Eritrea** almost entirely excludes trainees here from on-line training and access to training materials over the RCMRD platform.
- The government of **Eritrea** was reluctant to let the project team (RCMRD) conduct a broader in-country scoping mission and opted to only have the needs assessment by a national consultant. This means that

de facto less stakeholders could be reached, informed and provide input into the design of the training activities at the start of the project here, something which was highlighted by the interviewed trainees. The national coordinator is aware, and efforts are being made to include more participants in next training.

- Several interviewees in Zambia and Seychelles highlighted that **sub-national actors** also provide data that is fed at the national level and recommended that these actors also **should be included in the trainings**.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the project has been able to progress towards end-of-project stakeholder engagement targets as set in the SEP:

- Indicator 1 – number of stakeholder groups involved in project implementation phase: 75 groups were targeted and 80 have been engaged as of June 2024 (above end-of-project target for The Comoros, Seychelles and Zambia).
- Indicator 2 – number of people (sex disaggregated) who have been involved in the project implementation phase: 200 people were targeted but 242 have been engaged as of June 2024 (above end-of-project target in The Comoros and Zambia).

For Indicator 3 – number of engagements with stakeholders during the project's implementation phase - the target reached was 16 by end of Q4 2024. There is still considerable progress to be made to reach the end-of-project target of 110. The number of engagements should pick up with trainings sessions to be rolled out in FY2025.

Conclusion and Rating Stakeholder Engagement

Despite the efforts of the project implementation and executing agencies in engaging stakeholders across the board since PPG phase, there are some important shortcomings with respect to the engagement of women, youth, and private sector actors were noted, as well as the need to engage more broadly in Eritrea. Deepening stakeholder engagement in that respect should be a priority for the remaining time of project implementation.

Based on the above, the evaluators assess stakeholder engagement in the CBIT COMESA project as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

C. Gender Equality

1.1.1 Gender mainstreaming

The ProDoc Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP) contains a thorough description of the differentiated impact of climate change on women as well as of the inequalities between men and women at a global level but also at country level in each of the CBIT COMESA intervention countries. The description is based on a mix of official statistics and reports. Although the quality of the data used is generally good, some of the material used is outdated. **The evaluators however note that the description of the gender problem does not address the obstacles that women in The Comoros, Eritrea, Seychelles and Zambia may be experiencing in working in/accessing jobs in government structures in general and more specifically in climate-related jobs.** This is even more apparent as the GMP then proceeds to highlight the lessons learnt during the development of the GMP, lessons which relate to how to best ensure a gender balance in project activities and more generally in climate change-related activities. The gender analysis convincingly identifies (i) the different groups involved in the CBIT COMESA project, (ii) their respective roles and responsibilities in ensuring gender mainstreaming, (iii) how the project could impact the groups in terms of gender mainstreaming, (iv) and how these groups could impact the gender mainstreaming within the project.

The GMP influenced the revision of the result framework between PIF and ProDoc by making some of the indicators gender sensitive. Four out of the five of the objective level indicators contain the word “*gender*”. At the outcome and output level, all indicators are disaggregated to account for gender characteristics and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) provided targets and action points for the participation of women in project activities.

According to the GMP, the project was to report on a quarterly basis on progress made towards the achievement of gender mainstreaming activities. In addition, on an annual basis as part of the PIR exercise, the project was also to report on the CI-GEF's minimum indicators : (1) number of men and women who participated in project activities, (2) number of men and women who received benefits, and (3) number of strategies, plans and policies derived from the project that include gender considerations. Targets were set at ProDoc stage for the CI-GEF minimum indicators,

which were relatively low but realistic considering the reality of female presence in climate-related units within the ministries.

Data collected during the interviews as well as data from the PIR2024 suggest that the participation of women has differed greatly from country to country. In Seychelles and The Comoros, stakeholders interviewed have expressed their satisfaction with the share of women participating in the trainings delivered by the project. Interviewees from Zambia deplored the low level of participation of women, which was attributed to the male dominated structure of the GHG inventory teams within the ministries rather than to the project's efforts. In Eritrea, stakeholders described female attendance as below target. National coordinators and COMESA PMU are aware of the challenge and have pledged to continue efforts to nudge national governments to identify and nominate female trainees.

Nonetheless, at MTR CBIT COMESA had already exceeded its overall target number of women who participated in project activities (minimum indicator 1) and is on track to achieve the target for the number of women receiving benefits from the project (minimum indicator 2). With respect to minimum indicator 3, it is still too early to tell whether the development of the four National Transparency strategies and Action plans will effectively include gender considerations. This will be a key element to monitor in the Terminal Evaluation as it will help understand to what extent the CBIT COMESA project was gender-responsive as opposed to gender-sensitive.

Conclusion and Rating Gender

The mainstreaming of the gender in project design is satisfactory as the GMP informed the revision of the result framework to make it more gender-sensitive. Targets set are realistic.

The project has already exceeded one of its targets and is on track to at least reach a second one. Efforts to uphold the gender inclusivity must be maintained as gender-balance has yet to be achieved, particularly in Zambia.

Based on the above, the evaluators assess the gender dimension of the project as **Satisfactory (S)**.

D. Knowledge Management

The ProDoc outlines several activities under the Communications and Knowledge Management section with a matching budget. The following deliverables were (partially) due in the first half of the project:

Deliverable	Status at MTR
An interactive website for the project, aiding in visibility	The project is mentioned on COMESA's website and on RCMRD's website. Neither is interactive nor updated.
Interactive website and platform for data sharing and learning	The existing knowledge platform at RCMRD will serve this purpose and from all available evidence this platform is performing well. It is being kept up to date, it is easily accessible for trainees and all interviewees have expressed their appreciation of the accessibility and the quality of the materials placed on there by the project.
Periodic sharing and updating CBIT related information on the CBIT Global Coordination Platform	The ProDoc states that the CBIT focal points from respective governments are to be the country's representatives in various meetings and forums organized by the CBIT Global Coordination Platform ^[1] and are to continually liaise with CI-GEF project Agency, PMU and UNDP-DTU contact persons to feed information about this project on the CBIT portal. To date however, it seems that apart from the very basic information, no information about the project was added on the platform.
Project reports and policy briefs	The project has not produced any specific Regional and policy briefs capturing lessons learnt, best case practices, challenges and opportunities from project countries.

^[1] <https://climate-transparency-platform.org/cbit-projects/regional-capacity-building-comesa-member-states-eastern-and-southern-africa-enhanced>

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	530	206	63	
Male	1,080	482	115	
Total	1,610	688	178	0

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)
Other	The Regional Center for Mapping Resources for Development (RCMRD)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	400,000.00	106,541.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Territory Planning and Urban (The Comoros)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Water, Land and Environment (Eritrea)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (Seychelles)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	400,000.00	
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (Zambia)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	400,000.00	
GEF Agency	Conservation International	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	50,000.00	
Other	The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	96,000.00	36,000.00

Total Co-financing		1,546,000.00	36,000.00
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Comments

Based on the financial reports submitted by CI AfFD the cofinancing leveraged for the CBIT COMESA project amounted to 9% of the total cofinancing committed at CEO endorsement stage, with most contributions still pending. COMESA materialized 38% of the amount pledged and RCMRD 27%. There is little reason to believe that the project would not receive 100% of cofinancing by the end of implementation, but it would be good if co-financing reporting letters were collected yearly from national governments. The evaluators could only assess the RCMRD and COMESA amounts for 2024 (USD 70.191,05 and USD 24.000,00 respectively). Conclusion Efficiency Although the project experienced delays at the start of implementation, at the time of the MTR, 44% of the total approved budget had been disbursed and evidence suggests that the CBIT COMESA project is on track to spend all budget by project closure. Only 9% of committed cofinancing had manifested by end of Q4 2024. There is no reason to believe that the total co-financing amount would not materialize, but the evaluators encourage the project to keep track more regularly. Based on the evidence, the project's overall efficiency is deemed Satisfactory (S).

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Low	Low	
	Low		

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

1.1.1 Risk factors affecting the sustainability of project results

At the design stage, ten risks were identified, seven of these have decreased, two have remained at the same level and one has increased, which is captured in the 'stakeholder' category in table 7 below.

Some reasons for this are:

- Typically, governments in the four intervention countries do not rely on fixed teams for GHG inventory and report preparation. Often data collection and report writing are done by (national) consultants, often from academia. This may make it more challenging to identify exactly who should be included in the trainings. This problem manifests itself mostly in Zambia, and to a lesser extent in Seychelles and The Comoros. As mentioned in section 3.1.3.1. in each target country those trained so far highlighted that many more need to be trained and that thus far the project has cast its net too narrow.
- In connection with the above, there is a concern with the above, government staff in some of the participating countries does not feel so motivated to participate in the trainings, as it will not be them doing the data collection and reporting. Providing MRV and GHG inventory training certificates partially mitigates this issue. However, this also points towards the need for the project to look into and facilitate knowledge exchange between the participating

countries on institutional arrangements for data collection, inventory building and reporting. So far the project has focused almost solely on technical capacity building.

- In Zambia and The Comoros, climate reporting to date has been primarily done by experts from an older generation that are due to retire soon and this will inexorably lead to a loss of knowledge if skills are not transferred.
- In Seychelles, beneficiaries reported that expert retention was also jeopardized by frequent turnover within different government institutions. For example, a trainee originally selected from Sector A may be transferred to Sector B, leaving Sector A with no one to pass on the knowledge acquired through the project activities.

Several interviewees expressed concerns that international standards, guidelines and tools are being developed and updated at a faster pace than the upskilling of capacities through the project. Indeed some of the trainings provided through the project might become outdated relatively soon. The example was given on the use of IPCC guidelines, whereby governments would like to use the most recent ones, i.e. the 2019 ones, but the IPCC is already working on reviewing these guidelines.

1.1.2 Opportunities to increase sustainability

The ProDoc did not identify a specific exit strategy for the project, but the following factors were mentioned as contributing towards the project's sustainability:

Table 1: Factors contributing to project sustainability

#	Sustainability contributing factors identified in the ProDoc	Sustainability aspect
1	Developing a certificate course on Terrestrial Carbon Accounting and Agriculture MRV with a viable business model in national academic institutions	Capacity building/financial
2	Training of trainers (ToT)	Capacity building
3	Build the technical capacities of relevant national stakeholders	Capacity building
4	Support the elaboration of Regional and National Transparency Strategy and Action Plans	Institutional
5	Pre-existing GHG inventory governance frameworks in all four countries to build on	Institutional
6	Develop intergovernmental partnerships at national level to ensure data sharing and implementation of the Transparency Strategy and Action Plan	Institutional
7	RCMRD knowledge platform allows beneficiaries to revisit training material and onboarding of new GHG inventory team members	Capacity building
8	coordination with CBIT GSP	Knowledge sharing

These sustainability factors still hold at MTR, if the project can achieve all or most of its targeted results.

Based on the available evidence there is no doubt that the project already has a noticeable positive impact in terms of improving knowledge around data required for GHG Inventory process and MRV especially in the LULUCF sector in the target countries. A very tangible impact so far has been the direct contribution of the project's activities to enhancing BTR reporting processes in the target countries, as well as NDC updating processes. In summary, awareness and training is well covered

under the project and practical implementation and appropriation in the short term has been proven. The MTR findings however imply that there is unfortunately no guarantee for the continuity of information and application of the acquired competencies within individual ministries or sectors and the project should remain vigilant to this high level of risk (risk 6).

Several opportunities to increase sustainability can be identified at this stage:

- Both the MRV and GHG inventory certificate course as well as the certificate course to be established at and to be delivered by national academic institutions will need to be leveraged in order to create a sustainable pool of in-country experts that can easily be operational to contribute to climate reporting activities long after the project ends.
- A heightened focus on dialogues and exchange of good practices between the participating countries on institutional arrangements for data collection, inventory building and reporting may expand ideas on how these activities can be either done by government staff themselves (as opposed to outsource them to consultants) or at least followed closely by government staff so that know-how can be built and passed on at institutional level in the long term rather than ad hoc linked to a specific report or project.
- Further to the previous point it is useful to highlight that strengthening ties between academia and government staff can indeed be instrumental and should further be fostered by the project, especially in Seychelles and The Comoros where they so far seem less involved. Academia was present at the training events in Eritrea and Zambia, and interviewees emphasised the crucial need for academic teachers and consultants to collaborate on a structural basis with government staff from the ministry responsible for UNFCCC reporting.
- The project already has several activities that focus on facilitating knowledge sharing at national levels (e.g. ToT activities and certificate course at academic institutions). The availability of training materials on the RCMRD platform (also guaranteed after the project's ending) increases the likelihood of sustainability. However, this should be matched with support (and financial commitment) from national governments for continued refresher trainings for staff involved in data collection, inventory updating and reporting processes. These training can be given by the people trained under the ToT activity of the project, but adequate funds for the logistics of trainings (venue rental etc) should be available in the future. As internal training and sharing of knowledge within sectoral ministries is managed by each respective sector and hence not the responsibility of the UNFCCC reporting coordinating ministry, commitment needs to be secured at individual ministries.
- Trainees from Seychelles and Zambia highlighted that trainings at devolved/sub-national levels of government would be most useful for project sustainability in their contexts. Along similar lines, trainees in Eritrea highlighted that parastatal bodies need to be included in trainings here. Whether this is feasible (especially the trainings at devolved levels) will depend on available budget and time.

Conclusion Sustainability

Ratings for most of the risk factors identified at ProDoc stage have decreased and most of the project's features that support longer term sustainability still hold. At MTR, there is a raised risk for the continuity of information and application of the acquired competencies within individual ministries or sectors, which can be mitigated considerable with targeted actions as suggested during the remainder of the project.

Based on the above, the evaluators assess overall sustainability as **Moderately Likely**

1.1.3 Risk and adaptive management by implementing agency

As highlighted in section 3.2.1, most of the risks to implementation were lowered during the review period. CI-GEFs adaptive management in terms of providing repeat onboarding of COMESA new staff

members and rearranging the budget to accommodate the needs assessments were conducive to project implementation and lowered risks.

Faced with the very limited internet connectivity in Eritrea face-to-face trainings were organised as well as physical training materials.

The needs assessment had the added benefit of involving trainees directly in assessing their needs and expectations from the project thereby increasing ownership of the CBIT COMESA project at national levels. As a result, the project is geared to complement and elevate existing knowledge rather than replicate efforts.

Summary and Rating of Implementation and Execution

Execution

ESA is an appropriate organization to execute a regional CBIT project in Eastern and Southern Africa and has delivered on its duties in a satisfactory level but there is room for improvement in internal communication processes here.

RD plays a pivotal role in truly bringing out the advantages of having a regional project, at the technical level.

ESA should further leverage its role at regional level for the second half of the project.

Based on this the evaluators rate the execution as **Satisfactory**

Implementation

GEF's management has been adaptive, has lowered risks and has been conducive to delivery. The central role of the CI AfFD team needs to be highlighted as instrumental for ensuring smooth integration of implementing and execution duties across the board,

Based on this the evaluators rate the implementation as **Highly Satisfactory**

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category M and E Document	Title GEF7_CBIT Tracking Tool_CBIT COMESA- MTR
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250514 GEF Core Indicators_CBIT COMESA
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250512_CBIT COMESA MTR cover sheet
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250331 CBIT_COMESA_10093_MTR Report