

Terminal Evaluation Validation form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		9833	
GEF Agency project ID		GCP/PNG/007/CBT	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-6	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	
Project name		Strengthening capacity in the agriculture and land-use sectors for enhanced transparency in implementation and monitoring of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement in Papua New Guinea	
Country/Countries		Papua New Guinea	
Region		Asia, Middle East & Pacific	
Focal area		Climate Change	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		GEF-6 Climate Change Mitigation Focal Area Strategic Framework CC3: To foster enabling conditions for mainstreaming mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies. Outcome Indicator 3 – MRV systems for emissions reductions are in place and reporting verified data; Outcome Indicator 7 – number of countries meeting convention reporting requirements and including mitigation contributions.	
Stand alone or under a programmatic framework		Standalone	
If applicable, parent program name and GEF ID		Not applicable	
Executing agencies involved		Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA); Forest Authority (PNGFA); Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Wildlife Conservation Society and FORCERT as members of the Technical Working Committee.	
Private sector involvement (including micro, small and medium enterprises) ¹		New Britain Oil Palm as member of the Technical Working Committee.	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval (MSP) date		10/28/2018	
Effectiveness date / project start date		1/1/2019	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		9/30/2021	
Actual date of project completion		8/30/2022	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.05	UA
	Co-financing	-	-
GEF Project Grant		0.86	0.92
Co-financing	IA own	2.20	1.90
	Government	0.40	0.70
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	-	0.03
	Private sector	-	-
	NGOs/CBOs	-	-
	Other	-	-

¹ Defined as all micro, small, and medium-scale profit-oriented entities, including individuals and informal entities, that earn income through the sale of goods and services rather than a salary. ([GEF IEO 2022](#))

Total GEF funding	0.91	0.92
Total Co-financing	2.60	2.63
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)	3.51	3.55
Terminal evaluation validation information		
TE completion date	6/30/2022	
Author of TE	Seda Kojoyan (Evaluation manager FAO OED), Ugen Norbu (lead evaluator)	
TER completion date	10/10/2023	
TER prepared by	Mariana Calderon	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)	Mariana Vidal Merino	

UA= Unable to assess.

Access the form to summarize key project features here: <https://www.research.net/r/APR2023>.

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	S	S	S	S
Sustainability of Outcomes		ML	ML	ML
M&E Design		NA	NA	S
M&E Implementation		NA	NA	S
Quality of Implementation		NA	NA	S
Quality of Execution		MS	MS	MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report			NA	S

Note: HS = highly satisfactory, S = satisfactory, MS = moderately satisfactory, MU = moderately unsatisfactory, U = unsatisfactory, HU = highly unsatisfactory, UA = unable to assess, NA = not available.

3. Project Objectives and theory of change

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

Not available.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

Papua New Guinea “is fully capacitated to report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) under the Paris Agreement’s Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) with strengthened agricultural and land-use sector components including inventories of greenhouse gases by sources and sinks, and information necessary to track progress against priority actions identified in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for these sectors” (TE p.10).

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or project activities during implementation? What are the reasons given for the change(s)?

There were no changes to the overall context and strategy of the project, and there were rare instances where planned activities were not implemented. For instance, the project only implemented the regional training workshops in two of the four regions, as it ran out of resources (TE p.17).

3.4 Briefly summarize project’s theory of change – describe the inputs and causal relationships through which the project will achieve its long-term impacts, key links, and key assumptions.

The TE team formulated a common theory of change (TOC) for the CBIT projects in Mongolia and Papua New Guinea as both followed a standard approach and strategy in project design (TE p.10).

As part of this exercise, the following barriers were identified (TE p.10):

- Barrier 1. Inadequate institutional arrangement and capacity: commitments to international climate/environment agreements are not institutionalized beyond the nationally designated authority; limited resources, incentives and accountability for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) among non-NDA agencies; limited awareness of the availability and means of

access to information and data; and ad hoc coordination and sharing of information between agencies.

- Barrier 2. Inadequate technical capacity: insufficient capacity in terms of tools and training for country-specific ETF reporting and climate adaptation reporting; inadequate coordination of knowledge management and knowledge retention; and lack of technological hardware and information technology system to support data management, such as GHG inventory data.
- Barrier 3. Funding and human resources constraints: MRV activities are largely dependent on project-based funding; and staff turnover due to breaks between projects, insufficient funding and career movements.

To address institutional and technical barriers (barriers 1 and 2), the project consisted of three components that were related to the following outcomes (TE p. 8, 10 and 13):

- Component 1: Enhanced institutional arrangements to coordinate preparation of ETF reports for the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector.
 - Outcome 1.1: Institutional arrangements enhanced for coordinating information and data from the agriculture and land-use sectors into ETF processes and reports.
 - Outcome 1.2: Inter-sectoral, national, and international engagement strengthened regarding ETF-related processes.
- Component 2: Strengthened capacity to measure emissions, removals, and emission reduction activities from the agriculture and land-use sectors.
 - Outcome 2.1: Strengthened capacity to measure GHG emissions, removals, and emission reduction activities from agricultural and land-use sectors.
- Component 3: Strengthened capacity to measure climate change impacts, vulnerabilities, and adaptation-related activities in the agriculture and land-use sectors.
 - Outcome 3.1: Strengthened capacity to measure climate-change impacts, vulnerabilities, and adaptation related activities in the agricultural and land-use sectors.

These outcomes were targeted at reaching the project objective mentioned in section 3.2. Ultimately, the project would achieve the following impacts: improved global and national responses to the threat of climate change; and enhanced information, knowledge and transparency for climate change mitigation and adaptation (TE p.13).

According to the TE, the financial and human resources constraints (barrier 3) were beyond the project scope and were considered as assumptions and risks at project design (TE p.10). The following assumptions were made: sufficient political support to enact reporting guidance from the National Climate-change Monitoring Framework (NCCMF); capacities are maintained and attrition is kept to a minimum; stakeholders have sufficient intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to engage; global CBIT projects facilitate engagement with regional and global counterparts; stakeholders assured of sufficient, reliable support for their obligations under the protocols; staff turnover will not undercut capacity development; and post-project funding will support operation and maintenance (TE p.13).

4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

The outcome ratings (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and overall outcome rating) are on a six-point scale: Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory. The sustainability rating is on a four-point scale: Likely to Unlikely.

Please justify the ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	HS
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Considering that the project aligned with GEF’s focal areas, international instruments, FAO’s strategy, country priorities and beneficiaries needs, this validation concurs with the *Highly Satisfactory* rating that the TE provided to the project relevance (TE p.15 and 40).

The project was consistent with GEF’s Climate Change focal area, particularly to Objective 3: to foster enabling conditions for mainstreaming mitigation concerns into sustainable development strategies. It also contributed to GEF’s Climate Change Mitigation Results Framework Outcome Indicator 3: MRV systems for emissions reductions are in place and reporting verified data; and Outcome Indicator 7: number of countries meeting convention reporting requirements and including mitigation contributions (TE p.15).

The project was anchored in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, which established the ETF for reporting and reviewing national actions to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change in keeping with the plans and targets set in the NDC (TE p.8). Also, it aligned with SDG 13: take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, and specifically contributes to SDG 13 Target 13.3: improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning (TE p.15).

The project related to FAO’s Strategic Objective 2: increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner. Within this strategic objective, the project contributed to Outcome 2.3: stakeholders endorse/adopt international (including regional) instruments and support related governance mechanisms for sustainable agricultural production systems; and Output 2.3.1: capacities of institutions are strengthened to implement policies and international instruments that foster sustainable production and address climate change and environmental degradation. Also linked to the aforesaid Strategic Objective, the project contributed to Outcome 2.4: countries made decisions based on evidence for sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry while addressing climate change and environmental degradation; and Output 2.4.2: capacities of institutions are strengthened to collect, analyze and report data for decision-making on sustainable production, climate change and environmental degradation, including relevant SDGs (TE p.15).

The project was consistent with Papua New Guinea’s circumstances and ETF-related capacity development priorities. It directly supported priorities and initiatives reflected in several national legislations, policies and strategies. These include: the National Reduced Emissions from Deforestation

and Forest Degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests (REDD+) Strategy (2017); the Paris Agreement Implementation Act (2016); the Climate Change Management Act (2015); the Development Strategic Plan (2010–2030); Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, which included a pillar for climate change and environmental sustainability; the National Climate-compatible Development Management Policy (2013), which articulated national-level carbon-neutrality goals; the Climate Compatible Development Policy (2014), which formed a core element of the National Strategy for Responsible and Sustainable Development; and Recommendations of the National Capacity Self-assessment (2010) (TE p. 17).

The target audience of the project were institutions and individuals with the role and responsibility for collecting and managing information and data related to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, and reporting on national climate-change mitigation, including GHG emissions and removals, and adaptation actions as defined in the NDC in line with the ETF under the Paris Agreement. These primarily included government agencies at central and subnational levels, but also academic and research institutions, and relevant non-state actors that could provide information and data to meet ETF requirements (TE p.8). Although TE questionnaire surveys in Papua New Guinea had a limited response, results for similar CBIT projects implemented in Mongolia and Cambodia suggest that it is likely that the training and technical support delivered by the project were very relevant and responsive to the organizational and individual capacity development needs of the recipients (TE p.17).

4.2 Coherence	S
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The TE does not provide a rating for overall coherence. Alternatively, it provides a *Satisfactory* rating for complementarity with existing interventions, as well as a *Satisfactory* rating for project design and readiness (TE p.40). This validation assesses that the project showed both internal and external coherence; therefore, it provides a *Satisfactory* rating for this criterion.

According to the TE, the project was well designed with clearly defined expected results (TE p.40). Its components reflected the existing delineation in institutional coordination between reporting, measurement, and verification: Component 1 covered activities related to reporting functions and stakeholder coordination. Component 2 covered activities related to measurement and verification for climate-change mitigation. Component 3 covered activities related to measurement for climate-change adaptation. Thus, Components 2 and 3 focused on what data are collected, how, and by whom, whereas Component 1 focused on how those data are shared, analyzed, and reported (ProDoc p.24).

The project was expected to coordinate closely with other projects in the AFOLU sector, as well as with climate-related projects in other sectors. Particularly, it would coordinate with the following GEF projects: 9536- Sustainable Financing of Papua New Guinea’s Protected Area Network; 6972- Preparation of Papua New Guinea's Initial Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC and the Third National Communication Report to the UNFCCC; and 5178-Strengthening Capacities to Measure, Report and Verify Indicators of Global Environment Benefits. Additionally, this CBIT project would coordinate with the 9675-CBIT Global Coordination Platform; 9864-FAO’s Global Capacity-building Towards Enhanced Transparency in the AFOLU Sector; and FAO’s other national CBIT projects—in Cambodia (GEF ID 9837)

and Mongolia (GEF ID 9834) (ProDoc p.49). The TE report corroborates that project management teams pursued linkages and complementarity between the national CBIT projects, the Global CBIT-AFOLU project and the CBIT-Forest project, leading to effective use of project resources for mutual benefits. Also, the Global team provided guidance and technical support to the project beneficiaries in Papua New Guinea (TE p.36).

4.3 Effectiveness	s
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The TE provides a *Satisfactory* rating to the overall assessment of project results (TE p.40). This validation concurs.

The project successfully built the capacity for climate change monitoring and reporting in Papua New Guinea through the preparation of the country's 1st and 2nd Biennial Update Reports (BURs) and the enhanced NDC (PIR 2022 p.17).

On Component 1, the project had a satisfactory performance in building institutional capacity to coordinate the preparation of ETF reports (TE p.40). The project supported the development of data provision and sharing protocols, and facilitated their application in the preparation of the country's BURs (TE p.19). The basic institutional arrangement for ETF is in place in the country. The CCDA undertook a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with key relevant agencies for data collection, sharing and use, and other support related to ETF to formalize and strengthen institutional coordination for ETF reporting. Despite the existence of legislation and MOAs for data sharing between key agencies, interinstitutional cooperation issues persist in actual practice over the access to raw data and lack of transparency in data processing and analysis, as noted from stakeholder interviews conducted for the evaluation. The development of a national GHG inventory data archiving system was initiated with the guidance and support of the Global CBIT-AFOLU project and was expected to become operational in 2022. Technical working groups (TWGs) were set up for the AFOLU and REDD+ sectors and were actively engaged in the preparation of BUR1 and Enhanced NDC. The structure and roles of these TWGs were incorporated in Papua New Guinea's Action Plan for ETF (TE p.19,20).

On Component 2, the project was successful in strengthening the capacity to measure emissions, removals, and emission reduction activities (TE p.40). Technical capacity building for MRV at the subnational level was built through regional training workshops on agricultural data collection for the GHG inventory in accordance with the 2006 IPCC Guidelines and ETF MPGs. While preparing the successive BURs, the project supported the GHG inventory processes through on-the-job training of relevant staff and improvement of methods for data collection and analysis. The metadata parameters and QC protocols for the AFOLU sector were developed, formalized and adopted in the formulation of BUR1, and updated and applied accordingly in the preparation of BUR2. Furthermore, the Climate Change and Forest Monitoring web portal was upgraded with new user-friendly functions and additional geospatial information (TE p.21-22).

On Component 3, the project performance was mostly satisfactory, as achievements in building technical capacity for adaptation-related ETF were modest (TE p.23 and 40). Regional training was

conducted to enhance the knowledge and skills of regional and provincial officers to assess and document climate risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change, including them as inputs to the preparation of the country’s Third National Communication and first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR). A gap analysis to improve the measurement framework for adaptation was completed and a draft report of the analysis is ready for discussion with the government. In addition, an adaptation tab with adaptation-related spatial information was integrated in the Climate Change and Forest Monitoring web portal. This is anticipated to facilitate adaptation tracking, although the extent of its actual application could not be assessed at this stage (TE p.23).

With regards of the CBIT tracking tool, the project achieved its end targets without exceeding them as in the case of the comparable project in Mongolia. The TE acknowledges that although ratings from this tool give a general indication of progress, they are subjective as they are based on the self-assessment of the project management team. Therefore, they should be complemented with additional information (TE p. 24).

4.4 Efficiency	MS
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The TE provides a *Satisfactory* rating to project efficiency as it was completed on time, and it was implemented using a cost-effective approach, building on FAO’s in-house knowledge and resources for ETF related activities (TE p.24 and 40). However, this validation considers that project efficiency was *Moderately Satisfactory* as the approach on hiring project management unit (PMU) staff was rather restrictive. Sufficient staffing may have enhanced project coordination and follow-up. This in turn could have prevented accumulating pending activities towards the final year, thus favoring results consolidation as well as planning for post-project continuity. Also, regional training workshops could have been completed as planned.

As the project budget was modest, management resources were shared with other projects/initiatives. For example, the PMU was made up of only one full-time staff supervised by an in-house FAO forestry advisor in the country office and supported by administrative staff that was co-financed by the National Forest Inventory project and Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. This was perceived to be insufficient in view of the immense amount of coordination and follow-up with the multiple-partner agencies required for capacity building in ETF (TE p. 24). The project only implemented the regional training workshops in two of the four regions, as it ran out of resources (TE p.17).

The project faced implementation delays due to a slow inception process in getting the buy-in of project partners and setting up project management and implementation arrangements. The project inception was slower in Papua New Guinea than in similar CBIT projects in other countries, with recruitment of the National Project Coordinator done in May 2019 and the project inception workshop taking place in October 2019 – around 10 months after the official project starting date. However, the FAO team in the country anticipated these institutional delays and began crucial activities early on to assist stakeholder consultations and the finalization process of the BUR1. Subsequently, the project assisted the

government in going through the UNFCCC’s Technical Assessment and revision of the BUR1 with the REDD+ Technical Annex (TE p.25-26).

Project implementation reports (PIRs) showed that the cumulative delivery of the project outputs as of June 2021 was 73.6 percent, and the nine project outputs that were to be achieved by the second project year remained unaccomplished by 10 to 60 percent. However, the draft PIR dated June 2022 showed that the project was on track to fully achieving most of the output targets and partially achieving the remaining targets by the end of the project period. Nevertheless, cramping up the final year with pending outputs left little time to consolidate results and to collaborate with stakeholders to plan adequately for post-project continuity and sustainability (TE p.26).

4.5 Outcome	s
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The TE rates the overall performance of this CBIT project as *Satisfactory* (TE p.39-40). This validation concurs as the project was relevant, coherent and effective, with some weaknesses in terms of efficiency.

The project enhanced the understanding of ETF requirements and improved data, knowledge and tools to implement ETF. As reflected by the CBIT tracking tool, institutional capacity for ETF increased in the country. Similarly, improvements in the quality of MRV systems for low GHG development and GHG emission mitigation were reported (TE p. 31).

Direct coordination and linkage with other ETF-enabling activities enhanced the benefits of the project. For instance, data-provision, sharing protocols and the TWGs for AFOLU and REDD+ established with support from the project were useful for the preparation of BUR1 and BUR2. Also, the country updated the REDD+ Technical Annex with technical support from this project and incorporated it into the BUR1 to meet the eligibility requirements for the Green Climate Fund’s Results-based Payment Pilot Programme (TE p. 27-28).

The project design recognized the need to consider gender as a key issue associated with differential climate-related impacts or vulnerabilities, and how such issues might be reflected in adaptation-related measuring and reporting. It also incorporated the need for gender-disaggregated reporting of capacity-development activities. Accordingly, training reports provided gender-disaggregated data. Basic gender analysis was conducted at the formulation stage. It covered possible gender mainstreaming activities and the development of gender-responsive publications and training materials. The analysis also covered the risks of the hindrance of gender mainstreaming during implementation, with the proposed corrective measure to address the issue through clear communication on gender equality as one of the key elements in tracking the progress of adaption actions. In general, the participation of women was encouraged in the capacity development activities and working groups (TE p.38). The TE noted that the participation of women in training activities was low in Papua New Guinea at roughly 21 percent, which could be explained by a small representation in the ETF-responsible agencies within the AFOLU sector and a relatively low adult female literacy rate (62.81 percent against the adult male literacy rate of 65.63 percent) (TE p.39).

The project, by design and in scope, did not have direct bearing on indigenous peoples, rural employment, and environmental and social safeguards. These cross-cutting considerations did not apply because the project was essentially a technical assistance with no physical investments or direct interactions with local communities in any specific location. However, the possibility of indirect effects was recognized in project documents, considering that ETF would influence the management of the AFOLU sector, which plays a key role in the economic development and supports the traditional livelihoods of many local communities. For instance, most people are indigenous in Papua New Guinea and 97 percent of the land is under customary tenure with customary rights recognized by the Constitution. As such, engagement with civil society organizations, including through their inclusion in Project Steering Committees (PSCs), was considered during project implementation (TE p.39).

4.6 Sustainability	ML
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Despite persisting institutional and financial challenges, the TE rates the sustainability of project results as *Moderately Likely* because it found that government policies and strategies were committed to ETF, institutional arrangements had been strengthened, stakeholder awareness had improved, capacities had been built, and ETF knowledge and resources were entrenched within FAO’s network and would continue to be available to the governments and national stakeholders (TE p.29). This validation concurs.

Institutional and governance sustainability

There is an increased level of awareness and understanding among project stakeholders about climate change and the importance of ETF in enhancing the national implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions. Institutional arrangements and technical capacities for ETF have been strengthened, even if certain gaps remain (TE p.29). The strengthening of institutional arrangements for ETF in the country is being taken down to the subnational levels. Activities have been initiated to establish regional focal points in all four of the administrative regions of the country, and to build their capacity to coordinate with the data providers and stakeholders at the provincial and district levels for the collection of activity data for emission estimation (TE p.19).

In addition, many of the ETF tools and products developed and/or used by the project were fundamentally built on what was already existing within FAO and its partners, and therefore, they remain anchored in FAO’s in-house platforms and programs (TE p.29).

Although countries have the basic policy and institutional framework in place for ETF, this does not necessarily translate into effective interagency coordination and cooperation for ETF processes at the operational level. At the upstream level, the country has the necessary policy instruments and institutional set-up that corresponds to its commitments to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. This has been further strengthened through support from CBIT projects and other GEF support for enabling activities to prepare the NCs and BURs. There are also laws and regulatory frameworks that establish the authorities and mandates for climate and emission-related data sharing. However, stakeholder interviews revealed that at the operational level, interagency issues over data sharing and transparency in data processing and analysis persist. While the project has accomplished a large part of its activities

through interagency working groups/committees and contractual agreements, such as the letters of agreements, these arrangements are fundamentally project driven (TE p.28). A few stakeholders suggested that institutional cooperation is not solid as it mainly depends on political appointees who may change with elections (TE p.31).

Staff shortage and turnover are major sustainability issues. For instance, the evaluation team could not interview a few key people in Papua New Guinea, including the national ETF focal person and the main government official involved in the project, as they had changed jobs. Furthermore, key government agencies dealing with climate change and ETF are understaffed. Additional staff are recruited for ETF-specific activities depending on the availability of funds (TE p. 28).

Financial sustainability

There is an overdependence on project financing for ETF capacity. Technical working groups and committees were generally instituted with project financing and tend to become defunct or tentative in the absence of external financing (TE p. 28-29).

Environmental sustainability

Not a relevant issue in the project context (TE p.40).

Other

Short duration is another factor affecting the sustainability of project results. While three years were adequate for the project to deliver the planned capacity-building activities, consolidation of the capacity results and internalization of institutional arrangements require extended time. Inception delays constrained the time available for project implementation, which in turn affected the time required for the consolidation of project results and preparation for a smooth transition to the post-project phase in close communication with project stakeholders (TE p. 29).

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

Before describing the factors, you may choose to summarize reported outcomes and sustainability here: <https://www.research.net/r/APR2023>.

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

According to the TE, the project was successful in mobilizing co-financing. At CEO endorsement, the project expected a total co-financing of USD 2.6 million. By June 2021, it had already achieved 100 percent of that amount, and was expected to exceed it by the end of the project period in August 2022. Project co-financing of USD 0.6 million (exceeding the stipulated USD 0.4 million) came from the Climate Change and Development Authority and USD 1.9 million from FAO. More co-financing in kind was expected to be realized from FAO by the end of the project. In addition, USD 0.13 million – which

included USD 0.1 from PNGFA and USD 0.03 million from the Global Green Growth Institute through NDC partnership – came in as co-financing not envisaged during CEO endorsement (TE p. 34-35).

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project was extended for almost one year from September 2021 to August 2022 (PIR 2022 p.2). As this project was one of the first CBIT projects to be implemented, it was likely that the PMU and national partners encountered challenges in the early stage (PIR 2021 p.22). In fact, the project faced a slow inception process in getting the buy-in of project partners and setting up project management and implementation arrangements. This was even slower in Papua New Guinea than in similar CBIT projects in other countries (TE p.25-26). Inception delays constrained the time available for project implementation, which in turn affected the time required for the consolidation of project results and preparation for a smooth transition to the post-project phase (TE p.29).

COVID-19 caused extra challenges during implementation, such as delays in the TWGs meetings, stakeholder consultation workshops, and GHG assessment (PIR 2020 p.19). However, the project managed to overcome them by using online meeting tools (PIR 2021 p.20).

5.3 Stakeholder ownership. Assess the extent to which stakeholder ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability. Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links.

Papua New Guinea was among the early participants in international climate treaties, suggesting this country gave high priority to climate action since the beginning of the global climate movement (TE p.15). According to the last PIR, the government established strong ownership of the project: the BUR1 and 2, Enhanced NDC and other ETF documents and policies were prepared under strong leadership and coordination (PIR 2022 p.32).

However, interviews with key project partners revealed that some of the PSC members were not clear about their role and functions, although annual PSC meeting minutes indicate that efforts were made to involve them (TE p.32). Similarly, interviews with officials from key government agencies indicated that they were not aware of their role either and that they had some misconceptions about the project. The PMU clarified that this perhaps arose from the project's focus on the forestry subsector, which represented the most important subsector in terms of emission reduction and the need to monitor deforestation and land-use change threats in Papua New Guinea. To address this situation, an officer from the PNGFA was assigned to the project to support work related to GIS and carbon measurements based on land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) (TE p.35-36).

In contrast, GEF's operational focal point commended the coordination amongst stakeholders involved in the formulation of the enhanced NDC, BUR2 and the ETF during the times of COVID-19 outbreak. The AFOLU Technical Working Committee was formed, and the approach was effective in sharing relevant information and getting approval within challenging times (PIR 2022 p.20).

5.4 Other factors: In case the terminal evaluation discusses other key factors that affected project outcomes, discuss those factors and outline how they affected outcomes, whether positively or negatively. Include factors that may have led to unintended outcomes.

None reported.

6. Assessment of project’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	S
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The TE does not mention a separate rating for M&E design at entry; it only provides a *Satisfactory* rating for overall quality of M&E (TE p.40). Based on evidence found in project documentation and considering that the TE does not mention any salient weaknesses in the M&E plan or results matrix, this validation provides a *Satisfactory* rating to this criterion.

According to the ProDoc, effective M&E would be accomplished through (i) regular monitoring and reporting and (ii) a terminal evaluation. FAO’s GEF Coordination Unit would provide annual PIRs to the GEF Secretariat. Project performance would be assessed based on the delivery of outputs and achievement of the project’s outcomes and objective as defined in the results matrix. The following reports would be prepared: project inception report, annual work-plans and budgets, biannual project progress reports for FAO, PIRs for GEF, technical reports, co-financing reports and terminal report (ProDoc p. 61-62).

Although no independent Mid-Term Review was planned, a similar exercise was expected to be conducted during the annual supervision mission of the second year of implementation. FAO Office of Evaluation, in consultation with project stakeholders, would be responsible for launching, organizing and backstopping the Final Evaluation, including finalizing the ToR, selecting and backstopping the team and Quality Assurance of the final report (ProDoc p.64).

6.2 M&E Implementation	S
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The TE reports evidence that allows this validation to give a *Satisfactory* rating to M&E Implementation.

The project was adequately monitored using the results matrix/framework and CBIT tracking tool. The results matrix/framework was the main tool for monitoring and reporting project progress. Reporting was done on a half-yearly and annual basis through periodic project progress reports and PIRs. PIRs were completed by the project manager/coordinator, endorsed by the budget holder, and reviewed by the lead technical officer and the GEF liaison officer at FAO. Supervisory missions were not undertaken due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions as well as budgetary limitations. However, the lead technical officer and the GEF liaison officer at FAO held virtual meetings with the PMU at least twice a year to keep track of the project progress, and when needed, provided guidance/backstopping. The other monitoring tool used by the projects was the GEF-CBIT tracking tool, which was updated at mid-term

and project completion to reflect progress against the CBIT indicators (TE p.33). In this regard, the TE noted that although the CBIT tracking tool gave a general indication of project progress, ratings were subjective and based on self-assessment by the project management team, and thus required a detailed assessment to draw information that could be used in combination with the scores (TE p.24).

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation rating is based on the assessment of the performance of GEF Agency(s). Quality of Execution rating is based on performance of the executing agency(s). In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six-point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	S
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The TE did not explicitly assessed quality of project implementation. However, this validation considers it was *Satisfactory* as available evidence suggests that FAO’s team identified and addressed emerging concerns in a timely manner to ensure that project implementation was on track.

The FAO team in the country anticipated delays during the inception phase, so it began crucial activities early on to assist stakeholder consultations and the finalization process of the BUR1 that was submitted for review and published on the UNFCCC website in April 2019. Subsequently, the project assisted the government in going through the UNFCCC’s Technical Assessment and revision of the BUR1 with the REDD+ Technical Annex, enabling submission in September 2019 (TE p. 25-26). Although supervisory missions could not be undertaken because of COVID-19 and budgetary limitations, the lead technical officer and the GEF liaison officer at FAO held virtual meetings with the PMU at least twice a year to keep track of the project progress, and when needed, provided guidance/backstopping (TE p.33).

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	MS
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The TE rated the quality of project management and execution as *Moderately Satisfactory* (TE p.40). This validation concurs considering that although the executing entities performance showed weaknesses that are described in the following paragraphs, it met expectations and project activities were completed at the original closure date.

The project management team consisted of only one full-time staff (national project coordinator) who functioned under the supervision of an in-house FAO forestry advisor and was supported by administration and finance personnel co-financed by other FAO forestry projects (TE p.32).

The lack of human resources of the project executing partners (CCDA and PNGFA) was a challenge for project implementation. When there was a significant event, most officers were involved in it and other commitments were put on hold, which delayed the implementation of other project activities. Although

the first PIR mentioned that the project would address the understaffing issues by implementing the activities more efficiently, evidence shown in later PIRs suggests that understaffing was a constant challenge during project implementation (PIR 2020 p.19 and PIR 2021 p.21).

Interviews drew inconsistent responses about project management, with some expressing good coordination and communication while others suggested ignorance about the project due to lack of communication and engagement (TE p.32).

In addition, the last PIR showed that the cumulative project expenditure exceeded the total project budget, implying lack of financial oversight on the part of the PMU. The reported project expenditure as of June 2022 was USD 918,141 against the total project budget of USD 863,242, an excess of 6.3 percent (TE p.33). Year-wise project financial information from Papua New Guinea was unavailable, which made it difficult to assess the trend of the project's financial delivery (TE p.33).

Despite expected inception challenges, the second PIR mentions that the PMU and national partners deserved recognition for their commitment and hard work throughout the project cycle (PIR 2021 p.22).

8. Lessons and recommendations

8.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report, including how they could have application for other GEF projects. Lessons must be based on project experience.

Lessons learned (TE p.49-50):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

Recommendations (TE p.43-47):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

Before rating the quality of the terminal evaluation, click here to summarize your observations on the sub-criteria: <https://www.research.net/r/APR2023>.

A six-point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria/indicators of terminal evaluation quality	GEF IEO COMMENTS	Rating
1. Timeliness: terminal evaluation report was carried out and submitted on time?	The terminal evaluation was conducted and submitted on time.	HS
2. General information: Provides general information on the project and evaluation as per the requirement?	The report provided most general information required on the project and evaluation. It missed some key project milestones and does not mention GEF global environmental objective.	MS
3. Stakeholder involvement: the report was prepared in consultation with – and with feedback from - key stakeholders?	The TE sought participation of key stakeholders, although some of them could not be reached out because had either left their jobs or were not available at the time. The response to the questionnaire survey was poor.	MS
4. Theory of change: provides solid account of the project’s theory of change?	The report includes a solid account of the theory of change.	HS
5. Methodology: Provides an informative and transparent account of the methodology?	The report presents an informative and transparent account of the methodology.	HS
6. Outcome: Provides a clear and candid account of the achievement of project outcomes?	The TE assesses project relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Factors affecting outcome achievement or efficiency in the use of resources could have been discussed more in depth.	S
7. Sustainability: Presents realistic assessment of sustainability?	The report identifies some risks that may affect sustainability and indicates its overall likelihood. However, it does not mention the likelihood of risks	MS

	materializing nor the likely effects if key risks materialize.	
8. M&E: Presents sound assessment of the quality of the M&E system?	The TE does not assess quality of M&E design at entry. It does not discuss the use of information from the M&E system either.	MU
9. Finance: Reports on utilization of GEF funding and materialization of co-financing?	The report does not provide data on types of co-financing. It does not discuss contributions of co-financing to project results either.	MS
10. Implementation: Presents a candid account of project implementation and Agency performance?	The report does not provide account of GEF Agency performance. It does not discuss challenges on implementation and execution with sufficient depth.	MU
11. Safeguards: Provides information on application of environmental and social safeguards, and conduct and use of gender analysis?	The TE reports on conduct of gender analysis and on the implementation of some of the actions specified in it. It also explains why social and environmental safeguards did not apply to this project.	HS
12. Lessons and recommendations are supported by the project experience and are relevant to future programming?	The TE presents lessons based on project experience. It mentions recommendations and specifies what needs to be done and who should be the action taker of each recommendation.	HS
13. Ratings: Ratings are well-substantiated by evidence, realistic and convincing?	Where available, ratings are well supported by evidence. However, the TE does not assess all the required criteria.	MS
14. Report presentation: The report was well-written, logically organized, and consistent?	The report is well written in English, easy to read and well-organized. Summary table on project ratings is not always consistent with what is described in the document.	S
Overall quality of the report		S

10. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).