

Central project evaluation – executive summary

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Assist

Title	Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Assist		
Country/region/global	global project - International cooperation with regions for sustainable development (ICR)		
Sector and CRS code	41010 - Environmental Policy and Administration		
Project number	2017.6254.1		
Commissioning party	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-founded by British Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand (MFAT)		
Implementing partner organisations	Burkina Faso: Ministry of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change, Caribbean: Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Honduras: Presidential Office for Climate Change (Clima+), Kenya: Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), Mali: Agency for Environment and Sustainable Development (AEDD) of the Ministry of Environment and Sanitation, Namibia: Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MoEFT), Pacific: Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Pakistan: Ministry of Climate Change (MCC), Peru: EUR 7,475,627.77 (including EUR 1,214,663 from the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office, EUR 316,894 from DFAT and EUR 862,069 from MFAT)		
Project value	EUR 7,475,627.77 (including EUR 1,214,663 from the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office, EUR 316,894 from DFAT and EUR 862,069 from MFAT)		
Project term	December 2017 - December 2020		
Reporting year CPE	2021	Sample year CPE	2019

Context of the project

BMZ commissioned GIZ to implement the global NDC Assist project to promote effective NDC implementation under the umbrella of the NDC Partnership (NDCP) and in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Next to BMZ and the NDCP, the main stakeholders of the NDC Assist project were high-level public institutions, regional organisations, and key stakeholders from the private sector and civil society in selected NDCP member countries who are involved in NDC planning and implementation. The project received co-financing support from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), with DFAT and MFAT both focusing on activities in the Pacific. To date, the project has been operating in two regions (Pacific region and Caribbean region) and seven countries in Africa, Asia and Central America.

Photo 1: St. Vincent and the Grenadines – Richmond Hydro, damaged wooden pipeline, Thomas Scheutzlich



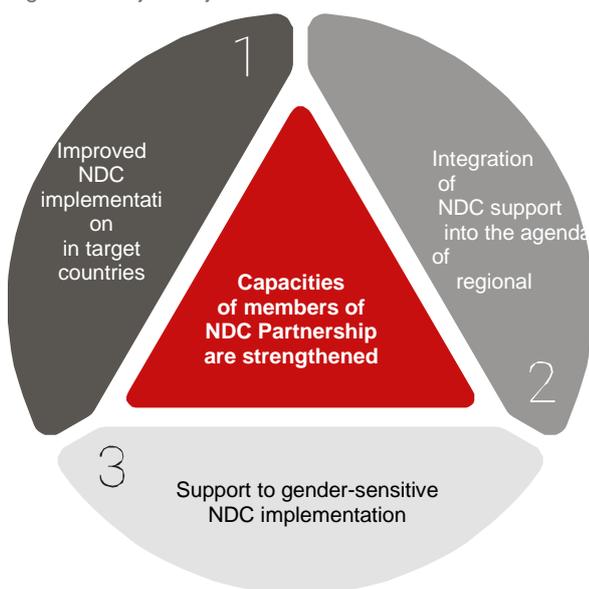
Brief description of the project

The project focused on providing effective, gender-sensitive inputs to NDC processes to enhance climate policy actions in NDCP member countries and regional organisations.

The project aimed to achieve its objective by facilitating and supporting strategy development, cross-sectoral stakeholder interaction, and reporting relevant to the NDC process. It provided advisory services to key stakeholders in selected NDC partner countries on gender-sensitive NDC implementation and NDC ambition raising.

The project module objective at the outcome level states that 'the capacity of members of NDC Partnership is strengthened'. Hypotheses at the impact level referred to contributions to the strengthening of the NDC Partnership and the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 13 on climate action. Hypotheses at the outcome level related to support provided to national ministries and key national stakeholders in targeted countries, support provided by the project to regional organisations, and support provided to gender-sensitive implementation aspects and the dissemination of good practices at international level.

Figure 2: Project objective/areas of intervention



Assessment according to DAC criteria

Predecessor project

The predecessor project of NDC Assist (PN: 2014.6258.9) was not causally related to the current project at first. However, after the NDC Partnership was initiated in 2016 at the UNFCCC Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh, the orientation of the predecessor project was changed at the request of BMZ through a comprehensive change offer in November 2016. The change of orientation reflected new political priorities. However, the process was not exactly smooth.

Relevance

The project was highly relevant as it aligned with global agreements and the policies and development priorities of German and NDC Assist partner countries at different levels. The Paris Agreement, which is built on intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) submitted by UNFCCC Parties, and the ongoing NDC process together provide the framework required to mount a comprehensive global response to climate change. The project was part of the NDC Partnership initiative, a global partnership to support countries in achieving their national climate commitments through the provision of financial and technical assistance. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action, is the third powerful reference framework to which the project aims to make contributions. The project was highly responsive to the global agenda on climate action.

The extent to which climate action receives political attention varies across countries and regions. There is strong political momentum for climate action in the countries/regions (Namibia, the Caribbean) where the evaluation phase was conducted. Namibia and the Caribbean are small states/regions in terms of population and GDP and are not densely populated. They contribute little to carbon dioxide emissions. Namibia may even qualify as a carbon sink because of growing bush encroachment in recent years. Namibia and the Caribbean islands are significantly exposed to

climate change. However, it is challenging for them to take part in and comply with the requirements of the UNFCCC's NDC process. The project – in cooperation with UN institutions and other donors – provided valuable support in terms of promoting the inclusiveness of global climate action and addressing the issue of 'leave no one behind', however small the contribution of Namibia and the Caribbean to global emissions may be. Evidently, both countries/regions prioritise adaptation measures. However, they seek to address them in conjunction with mitigation measures to increase their credibility in international climate diplomacy.

Coherence

The project's internal coherence relates first and foremost to the hosting arrangements at country and regional levels and to the project's exchanges and cooperation with other initiatives of German development cooperation. Its external coherence dimension refers to the project's interactions with international institutions, other donors, and multiple stakeholders at country and regional level. In addition to the review of reports, the assessment of coherence required interviews with a wide range of stakeholders as mentioned in the Evaluation Matrix. In the course of the evaluation mission, evidence was sought from national and regional stakeholders as well as international organisations on whether NDC Assist lived up to its own expectations and the expectations of key partners to complement and add value to other climate action initiatives.

NDC Assist aimed to sharpen the climate action profile of ongoing German development cooperation initiatives in the countries and regions. It was chiefly concerned with achieving good coherence and proved highly successful in doing so. The project was well embedded in both country/regional contexts in the Eastern Caribbean and Namibia and managed to create synergies with many other projects and initiatives.

In the Eastern Caribbean region, the Government of Saint Lucia and OECS representatives generally agreed that there was a combined effort of local, regional and international actors to achieve mutually desired objectives. In Namibia, the project was well integrated into the Biodiversity

Management and Climate Change (BMCC) II project and interacted with a large number of stakeholders, including UNDP. The creation of synergies between bilateral German development cooperation projects (BMU-IKI and BMZ cooperation) and other international donor organisations is an important success factor of the project.

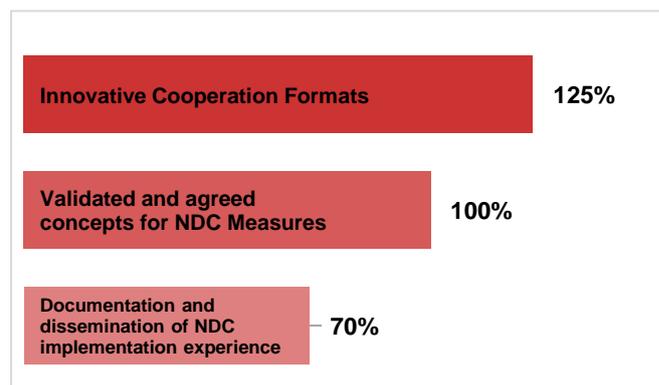
Effectiveness

The project aimed to improve the conditions of selected members of the international NDC Partnership for the gender-sensitive implementation of NDCs.

Project objective indicator 1 was overachieved. In six out of the seven partner countries, innovative cooperation formats took place. This represents a slight overachievement. Module objective indicator 2 was fully achieved, except that only two submitted concepts were gender-sensitive. Module objective indicator 3 was largely achieved (89%). Only in Honduras were NDC implementation experiences not adequately documented and disseminated.

All output indicators, with the exception of C.1, were fully achieved. The indicator for the gender-sensitive design of activities was fulfilled by 50% because it was not possible to implement all measures in a gender-appropriate manner or with an explicit reference to gender. In the Caribbean region, OECS was already relatively advanced in terms of gender policies and attached relatively low priority to the project's new gender focus, which was introduced with a change offer in November 2018.

Figure 3: Achievement of the project's module objective indicators



The project objective indicators were largely achieved: 100% or almost 90%.

Impact

The impact criterion refers to the extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. Impact addresses the project's ultimate significance and its potentially transformative effects. The evaluation of the impact dimension refers to the project's contribution to meeting the target countries' obligations to the UNFCCC Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the development of the NDC Partnership, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 13 on climate action.

Together with other actors, the project made significant contributions to the target countries' obligations under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and the strengthening of the NDC Partnership in terms of the inclusiveness of membership and effective country-level support. The project's contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 13 on climate action, were more indirect as project partners are not directly in charge of implementing and monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda. In Namibia, the National Planning Commission is in charge of the 2030 Agenda, not the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism.

Efficiency

The project's costs in relation to its contributions to the NDC process and potential emission reduction could be an overarching question of interest to the general public.

The OECS is comprised of member states with small populations and economies. Namibia is also a country with a small population and economy. Both produce very few emissions. Namibia may even be a carbon sink because of growing bush encroachment in recent years. From a comparative mitigation efficiency perspective, the costs of implementation are high in most of the target countries and regions. However, the inclusiveness aspect of international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, obliges the donor community to support global climate policy processes and engage with smaller economies that have low emissions. 'Leave no one behind' is a key commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Such considerations tend to justify the relatively high costs of international assistance in support of climate mitigation plans and strategies in low-emission economies.

Sustainability

The beneficiaries and stakeholders, including ministries and (sub-)regional institutions in charge of climate policies, acquired additional resources and expertise to sustain the positive results of the intervention. NDC Assist did not focus on capacity building through training activities, but rather provided the partners with targeted support for a series of NDC-related activities that helped the beneficiaries to meet their obligations under the Paris Agreement. Other donors provided training activities.

In the Caribbean region, training activities were financed by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) independently of the project, and OECS had already developed skills and expertise in the gender mainstreaming of climate action on which the project and other donors could build (Caribbean Development Bank, OECS). In Namibia, it was stated that the project did not sufficiently focus on capacity building at the local level. However, this was not a focus of the NDC Assist project. Managing stakeholder expectations was a little bit better in the Caribbean region than in Namibia.

Overall, climate action has gained traction in the Caribbean region and Namibia, national and regional committees have been established, and human resource capacities have been increased. The follow-on project focuses on NDC finance to ensure continued access to funding support and investment.

Overall rating

The NDC Assist project was designed as a quick support mechanism to enable national and regional authorities to meet their obligations under the NDC Partnership and the Paris Agreement and to advance climate action in their respective countries and regions. The global project was successful in its endeavours to deepen and broaden the engagement of partners and stakeholders in climate policies by providing targeted support to a series of NDC-related policy documents and action plans. The project operated amid growing interest in climate action in most partner countries and regions, thereby enhancing its relevance. The project paid a great deal of attention to aspects of coherence. It was well integrated into German development cooperation and created synergies in cooperation with international organisations and other donors.

Table 1: Rating of OECD/DAC evaluation criteria

Criteria	Score (max. 100)	Rating 1 (highly successful) to 6 (highly unsuccessful)
Relevance	92	Level 1, highly successful
Effectivity	83	Level 2, successful
Impact	88	Level 2, successful
Efficiency	80	Level 3, moderately successful
Coherence	92	Level 1, highly successful
Sustainability	92	Level 1, highly successful
Overall	88	Level 2, successful

Conclusions and factors of success and failure

The project aligned with global agreements and the policies and development priorities of Germany and NDC Assist partner countries at different levels, although the extent to which climate action received political attention varied across the target countries/regions.

The project was well embedded in both country/regional contexts in the Eastern Caribbean and Namibia and managed to create synergies with many other projects and initiatives. Partners generally agreed that there was a combined effort of local, regional and international actors to achieve mutually desired objectives.

While it was largely relevant, coherent and effective, the NDC Assist project did exhibit a few weaknesses that are typical of global projects designed in response to emerging needs and constraints in the context of the universal implementation of global agreements. Scoping missions were carried out in some countries, but there was not enough time to analyse specific climate policy dynamics in the countries considered for implementation nor was there enough time to review sector-specific opportunities and potentials or the limitations of various instruments in support of NDC ambition raising.

The project's module objective indicators and its output indicators were not sufficiently ambitious.

The focus of the follow-on project was discussed during the evaluation. The approach was found to be relevant and responsive to the needs and constraints of partner countries, especially in the Caribbean region where both the continuation of the project and the enhanced focus on climate finance are much appreciated by OECS and other stakeholders.

Factors of success:

- ☑ highly relevant to the implementation of the Paris Agreement
- ☑ good coordination and cooperation with international organisations
- ☑ well integrated into GIZ portfolios in partner countries

- ☑ flexible and effective implementation in close cooperation with partners and key stakeholders
- ☑ significant contributions to the target countries' obligations under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and to the strengthening of the NDC Partnership
- ☑ key partners and stakeholders acquired additional resources and expertise to sustain the positive results of the intervention.

Factors of failure:

- ☒ no comprehensive scoping missions/baseline assessment of country-level/local/sectoral needs/priorities were conducted
- ☒ the project indicators were not country-specific; some were vague and not very ambitious
- ☒ interaction with stakeholders at subnational level remained limited.

Recommendations

Support the collection of sector-specific data as well as information on the specific mitigation and adaptation priorities of partner countries in the context of more comprehensive appraisal or scoping missions in target countries and regions (recommendation directed at GIZ and partners).

Engage strongly in multi-stakeholder dialogue and analysis and produce country and regional stakeholder maps prior to the launch of project activities in all target countries and regions (recommendation directed at GIZ, partners and stakeholders).

Focus more on qualitative indicators and explore options (in agreement with BMZ and partners) to adopt a more flexible approach to setting indicators (attention GIZ, BMZ and partners).

Consider identifying country and/or region-specific indicators with key national/regional stakeholders (recommendation directed at GIZ, BMZ and partners).

Pay more attention to peer exchanges and knowledge sharing between implementation partners in countries and between countries (directed at GIZ, partners and stakeholders).

Use more digital solutions to share project information with other institutions and donors (recommendation directed at GIZ and partners).

Make use of the NDCP 2019 gender strategy to disseminate good practices in target countries and regions (recommendation directed at GIZ, partners and stakeholders).

Consider enhancing capacity building (in countries where there is demand for it) by offering certification-based training and information sessions on climate action and the NDC process. Also consider conducting short, remote training sessions (to save resources), given the busy schedule of many partners and stakeholders (recommendations directed at GIZ and partners).

Approach and methods of the evaluation

This final evaluation of the global NDC Assist project has been selected as part of GIZ's random sample to undergo a central project evaluation (CPE). The evaluation objectives were outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The evaluation was based on internationally recognised criteria agreed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The report followed the formats of GIZ's Central Project Evaluation Unit.

The inception phase and the evaluation phase were fully remote because of health risks and travel restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Two countries/regions (Namibia and the Caribbean region) were selected for case studies. The project was able to conduct online interviews with the most important stakeholders, although the remote mode imposed some restrictions on the length and depth of discussions. The evaluation team (an international evaluator and two national evaluators) analysed key policy and project documents and took notes of all interviews conducted during the evaluation phase. The findings were discussed among themselves. Data and information were cross-checked and triangulated wherever possible. A contribution analysis was conducted. In some cases, it was difficult to attribute the project's specific contributions to processes of change, given the complex setting and the multiple actions of national and international stakeholders working in the field

of climate action in the target countries and regions.

Rating system

Projects are rated based on the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency. Each of the six criteria is rated on a scale of 1 to 100 (percentage system).

The project's overall score is derived from the average points awarded for the individual DAC criteria. The average value for the overall score is rounded according to mathematical convention. All DAC criteria are equally weighted in the overall score. Compared with the predecessor systems (6-point scale, 16-point scale), a 100-point scale has a number of advantages in that it allows for differentiation, is in common use internationally, is easy to understand, and can readily be converted into other assessment systems.

Table 2: Rating and score scales

Both the assessment dimensions within the OECD/DAC criteria and the determination of the

100-point scale (score)	6-level scale (rating)
92–100	Level 1: highly successful
81–91	Level 2: successful
67–80	Level 3: moderately successful
50–66	Level 4: moderately unsuccessful
30–49	Level 5: unsuccessful
0–29	Level 6: highly unsuccessful
Overall rating: The criteria of effectiveness, impact and sustainability are knock-out criteria. If one of them is rated at level 4 or lower, the overall rating cannot go beyond level 4 even though the mean score may be higher.	

overall score using a points system serve to increase the transparency of ratings while enabling better comparability between individual projects.

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