Review of the BCFs MEL systems: Standard Indicators and reporting

Biodiversity Challenge Funds: Building and Applying Evidence

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

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Contents

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Introduction

The Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs) comprise of three competitive grant schemes, the Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus, led by the UK Government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The funds aim to protect biodiversity and the natural environment through locally based projects worldwide.

Defra and NIRAS, as fund managers, are committed to the continuous improvement of BCFs portfolio-level monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems. As challenge funds, the BCFs are inherently focused on the use of evidence and innovation in addressing barriers to biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction. As such, the BCFs portfolio-level MEL systems need to fulfil the joint objectives of ensuring accountability whilst encouraging learning and adaptive management in implementation. The evolution of the MEL systems supporting the BCFs has been and should continue to be guided by the following principles.

- Recognition of the need for consistent, regular and quality reporting.
- Prioritising efficient processes that serve to reduce additional burden to the project and fund management teams as much as possible.
- Cognisance of differing capabilities and capacities of project delivery partners.

In April 2023, Standard Indicators were rolled out across the BCFs, with new applicants asked to select relevant Standard Indicators in their applications and existing projects voluntarily mapping their existing indicators against Standard Indicators and reporting against them as part of a pilot phase. The Standard Indicators have been developed based on the recently articulated fund-level results frameworks. In communications with prospective and funded grantees, the Fund Administration team is in the process of soliciting feedback through various forums to ensure that lessons can be drawn from the pilot phase and to aid in the ongoing refinement of the Standard Indicators. There is a clear understanding throughout the teams at Defra and NIRAS that the Standard Indicators should be optimised to ensure that they are useful as a tool to assist projects in identifying meaningful and relevant ways to track progress towards their outputs and outcomes, while simultaneously maximising opportunities for aggregated reporting at the portfolio level.

In parallel with the development of Standard Indicators, Defra and NIRAS are working to refine their application and reporting ecosystem. Part of this entails updating the application, reporting and review templates. These templates ultimately need to reflect a careful balancing of priorities, whereby meaningful monitoring, evaluation and learning can be extracted from project teams and reviewers in a way that keeps the reporting and reviewing burden to a minimum. The use of classification schemes is being considered as a means to ensure consistent reporting and review across the fund portfolios. There is scope and inclination to edit these templates significantly through an intentional, structured process.

1. Aim and information sources

The following section provides a brief overview of the aim of this deep dive review as well as the information sources which have informed it.

1.1 Aim

The aim of this review was to examine selected components of the BCFs MEL systems to identify opportunities where reporting processes can be optimised to enable enhanced accountability, learning and adaptive management at the project-level, as well as portfolio-level aggregated reporting and an assessment of fund performance.

The review focused on the recent roll out of BCFs Standard Indicators and on reporting processes including the application, reporting and review templates.

1.2 Information sources

Findings and recommendations presented in this review have been drawn from the following sources.

1. **Standard indicator and reporting document review** including all guidance documents, templates, and forms.

2. **Review of fund-level M&E** to better understand M&E practice across grant funding bodies in the sector. Three grant-making institutions were selected for review in discussion with NIRAS. These were the Climate Investment Funds (CIF); Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF). Reviews drew on MEL documentation available on fund websites.

3. **Key informant interviews** were carried with the following groups.

   - Current BCFs grantees (4)
   - New applicants in 2023 (2)
   - Project reviewers (4)
   - Defra Head of BCFs (1)
   - NIRAS team members (4) were consulted in an ongoing manner throughout the review.

   Grantee and applicant interviewees were purposively sampled to include representation from across the three funds, a range of different size organisations as determined by number of employees and area of focus (global, regional, single country). and from organisations with differing experience with BCFs project funding (new applicants to those that have managed a number of projects).

4. **Online survey**
   A short survey (see annex B for questions) was shared with 359 current grantees and 592 applicants from across the three funds. A total 330 individuals responded to the survey, 51% (170) reported that they currently had BCFs funding and 48% (158) were waiting for feedback on their recent application and 1% (2) did not respond to the question.

2.   Key findings

2.1   Standard indicator review

The BCFs standard indicator frameworks include over 100 indicators at Output and Outcome level, designed to capture results from the broad range of projects supported by the funds. Indicator menus have been produced for each of the three funds, with indicators grouped into topic areas, as shown in Table 1. Core indicators are linked to the fund-level theories of change for the Darwin Initiative and Darwin Plus and to the project pillars for IWT Challenge Fund.

Table 1: Standard indicator groupings

Darwin Initiative (DI) and Darwin Plus (D+)	IWT Challenge Fund
A: Capability and Capacity	A: Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Development Measures
B: Policies, Practices and Management	B: Law Enforcement and Legal Frameworks Measures
C: Evidence and Best Practices	C: Behaviour Change for Demand Reduction Measures
D: Sustainable livelihoods (DI)/Benefits to People (D+), Biodiversity and Climate Resilience	D: Cross Cutting Measures
E: Impact on Biodiversity and Poverty (DI)/People (D+)	

Primarily, reporting against the Standard Indicators serves an accountability function, enabling Defra and NIRAS to aggregate data from across a wide range of projects to describe results at the fund level. Secondary to this, implementation of the Standard Indicators, alongside organisational capacity development efforts, also aimed to support improved MEL practice at the project / grantee level.

The section outlines observations and findings from a technical review of the standard indicator frameworks. The review was not intended to consider each indicator individually but rather to focus on the appropriateness of the overarching framework and approach.

At this early stage of implementation, the standard indicator frameworks could benefit from some review and refinement. Drawing from grantee / applicant comments and initial experiences in the synthesis and aggregation of standard indicator data, the following suggestions would improve the utility and quality of standard indicator data.

- Consider using **summary or basket indicators** to bring together similar Output indicators into one summary indicator, where a detailed nuance is not required at a fund-level. This will decrease the number of indicators, making the menus less overwhelming and increase the number of projects reporting against a specific indicator. See example below.

Summary indicator	Contributing indicators
Number of knowledge products produced	DI-C17 Number of unique papers submitted to peer reviewed journals
	DI-C18 Number of papers published in peer reviewed journals
	DI-C19 Number of other publications produced.

- Ensuring all indicators are clearly **phrased as indicators** (for example DI-C12 Social media presence) and **clarify wording** for indicators where this is confusing (for example DI-D10 Area of improved sustainable agriculture practices benefitting people to be more resilient to weather shocks and climate trends).

- Providing **additional guidance and definition** for complex indicators (see also page 8). For example;
  - o DI-B09 Number of individuals/ households reporting a decrease in unsustainable practices as a result of project activities
  - o DI-D16 Number of households reporting improved livelihoods
  - o DI-D18 Drivers of biodiversity loss assessed to have been reduced or removed

- It is important to note that the BCFs also **aim to support innovative projects** that may not 'fit' the standard indicator frameworks. The donor-applicant power dynamic may result in projects trying to 'force' use of Standard Indicators because they feel their application might be at a disadvantage without using the indicators. Clear and consistent communication; providing a route for consultation on MEL issues at the application stage for innovative, out of the box projects; or changing MEL requirements for schemes involving the development of innovative approaches or interventions (Darwin Initiative Innovation and IWT Challenge Fund Evidence schemes) may help mitigate these issues. This dynamic may be felt in different ways by different types of organisations and hence should be monitored over time to identify any patterns or themes emerging.

Ultimately, refinement and review of the Standard Indicators and associated guidance should ideally be guided by the following strategic considerations.

2.1.1 Clarifying the role of standard indicator data as a complement to the BCFs MEL / evidence strategy

Using Standard Indicators to assess fund-level results has both strengths and weaknesses. Standard Indicators should be considered as one component of the MEL / evidence strategy alongside other complementary approaches. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of standard indicator data is important in understanding what can and cannot be achieved through the implementation of the frameworks and the limitations of the data produced. As an assessment of Outcome level change at a fund-level, Standard Indicators can provide a broad understanding of what has changed over time, however they cannot provide an assessment of the contribution of BCF project activities to realising this change. Collecting data against Standard Indicators is potentially less resource intensive than evaluative activities and therefore may be implemented across a wider selection of projects (if not all), providing an excellent overview of portfolio activity. BCFs projects are operating in diverse, fast-changing contexts and many aim to deliver complex, systems-level change. Evaluative approaches that bring together multiple sources of evidence will be required to effectively document the results themselves, as well as the ways in which the results have materialised and for whom. These could involve project-level evaluations, synthesis of project-level evaluations, participatory or community led evaluation, strategic portfolio or fund-level evaluation, and legacy evaluations.

Standard Indicators may not be the most effective approach to capture BCFs projects' contribution to change for complex phenomena such as poverty, resilience, or biodiversity. Changes in indicators such as 'DI-E02 change in multi-dimensional poverty scorecard' are likely to take time to emerge and may not be seen on an annual basis. Capturing changes in these areas in a robust, transparent manner requires the application of evaluative approaches that require additional resource and capacity which may be overly demanding for many grantees. Careful consideration should be given to the expected use of the data that would be collected using these indicators. Following such consideration, the indicators and their related methodological approaches can be more specifically tailored to optimise the utility of the data collected while ensuring pragmatic use of resource.

2.1.2 Prioritisation of Outcome-level indicators / increase focus on measuring and understanding change

Leveraging the standard indicator frameworks to promote a focus on measurement of Outcome-level change would improve MEL and increase rigour and transparency of results reporting at both project and fund-level. The standard indicator frameworks include both Output[1] and Outcome[2] indicators which align to the output and outcome level of the Funds theory of change. Whilst Output indicators can provide evidence of the scope and scale of BCFs activity, they cannot answer the 'so what?' question, providing evidence for the results of funding activity. Measurement of Outcome-level change is more complicated than counting of Outputs. Using the standard indicator framework as a mechanism to improve the quality of Outcome-level measurement would not only lead to improvements in project level MEL but also in the rigour and transparency of fund-level impact assessments – contributing to both objectives of the standard indicator framework. Increasing focus on Outcome indicators could be achieved in several ways.

- Separating Outcome, or those indicators related to short or medium-term change, and Output, or those indicators relating to counting the direct results of project activities, indicators more clearly in the guidance.
- Reducing the number of Output indicators, through prioritisation or aggregation/summarisation of similar indicators
- Instead of mandating reporting against five core indicators, requiring projects to report against standard Outcome indicators would ensure a stronger fund-level data set. This might also be challenging for smaller, less well-resourced organisations and hence approaches to support MEL capacity development might be required.
- Facilitating communities of practice to co-develop Outcome-level measurement approaches.

Guidance on indicator definitions and terms is varied with some indicators including quite specific definitions and other, more complex indicators included with little definition or guidance on what should be measured. Aggregation or summarisation of Outcome indicator data (especially those measuring complex, multi-faceted concepts) is most likely to be complicated by differences in definitions, conceptual understanding, and contextual variation. Methodologically, gathering data against these indicators is also likely to be most challenging, potentially leading to data quality issues. Bringing together this data transparently is therefore complex. Providing clarification on definitions and potentially methodological guidance would support a more standardised approach an enable Defra/NIRAS to better understand the quality limitations to the data. Providing additional information would also support applicants understand what is expected by the BCFs and help build capacity in measuring more complex indicators.

However, given the broad range of projects and implementation contexts for BCFs projects, some degree of flexibility is required to ensure indicators remain relevant to projects. Additionally, imposing strict methodological approaches may undermine the quality and utility of project-level MEL. There would be potential for the BCFs to draw on their vast network of projects and partner organisation expertise to co-create indicator guidance, helping mitigate the risk outlined above, whilst also contributing to sector-wide expertise in MEL.

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[1] An output is defined by the OECD as 'the products, capital goods and services which result from development interventions.'
[2] An Outcome is defined by the OECD as 'the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term change and effects of intervention outputs.'

2.2   Template and guidance review

The follow section (Table 2) outlines observations and suggestions identified following a technical review of BCFs progress reporting documentation across all funds and schemes.

Table 2. Observations and suggestions identified during technical review

Document type	Observation	Suggestions
Application forms	**Limited space to capture M&E approach:** Recognising the need for concise applications, the word limit for the M&E section seems limiting, especially when evaluation is also required. If participatory, community-led monitoring approaches are to be used alongside logframe / top-down monitoring, additional space may be required to adequately capture the M&E approach being implemented. The limits are currently 500 words for larger grants (such as Extra or Main schemes) and 250 words for schemes such as the Darwin Initiative Capability and Capacity Scheme.	Review guidance and word limit for M&E questions. Potential options would be to consider an additional 250 word 'evaluation approaches' section for Extra or Main projects; specify that 500-word sections should include content on participatory monitoring systems. Given that this review only included application templates, it would be useful to carry out a short review of the content of MEL sections in more recent applications to help inform development of these templates and guidance.
	Lack of focus on use of data: The focus appears to be more on who will be doing M&E and how much time they will spend rather than how data will be used to inform adaptation and learning, what systems are in place to review data, and how it will contribute to learning.	Adjust section guidance to focus more on use of data.
	Evaluation in Extra projects: MEL section should include space to outline proposed evaluation methods / approaches and questions for the independent evaluation. The quality of evaluation needs to be assessed at some stage in the process, either through application forms or through review of inception reports. Without this review, there is a risk that poor quality, tick box evaluations are carried out which do not inform programming or provide evidence of the effectiveness of the project.	Add additional question on evaluation approach where independent evaluation is required. See also MEL guidance

Document type	Observation	Suggestions
MEL guidance	**Guidance on evaluation:** Guidance on evaluation approach when independent evaluation is required is quite limited which may lead to poor quality, tick box evaluations. Evaluations carried out by projects could be a useful source of evidence and learning for the BCFs but if quality and approach is extremely varied then the utility of this information will be compromised.	Guidance provided on evaluation approaches should be more detailed, especially given the size of Extra projects. This could include expected % budget spend on evaluation, quality criteria for evaluations, and evaluation approach.
	Evaluation contracting and independence: Contracting of evaluators by project teams rather than through fund managers reduces the degree of independence. For high value grants, there could be a case for evaluators to be contracted and managed alongside project grants. This might also be important where grantees have limited experience in managing evaluations.	Consider applying more rigorous evaluation approaches for larger grants including independent contracting of evaluators.
Logframe template	**Providing separate sections for different components of the logframe:** Including separate rows for each indicator and separate cells for baseline and target values might help improve M&E quality by providing a more step-by-step template to support teams. This could also facilitate extraction of this data for fund-level reporting purposes – especially if combined with online form templates and automated extraction to a database.	Use separate lines for each indicator. Separate baseline and target values from the indicator statements and including them as separate columns.
Annual and final reporting forms	**Progress reporting vs logframe reporting:** There appears to be replication between the progress reporting sections (progress on activities, Outputs and Outcomes) and sections in the logframe.	Merge these sections to include reporting against each specific indicator alongside narrative. Could potentially be achieved by including a narrative column in logframe reporting or splitting the logframe template so that indicator reporting tables are included at the start of each progress narrative section.
	Clarify logframe indicator reporting requirements: Wording in the current template is ambiguous. 'Report on progress towards achieving the project purpose', 'Report general progress and appropriateness of indicators' and 'Report on general progress towards indicators' for example doesn't specifically refer to reporting against each individual indicator. Projects may not provide specific reporting against each indicator.	Ensure separate rows in the logframe for each indicator and clarify that projects are expected to report progress against the indicator. Potentially include a progress narrative column.
	Clearly linking annexed means of verification data: Could help reviewers when validating progress.	Include a means of verification column and request links to annexed information.
	Standard sections: Several sections of the reports are unlikely to change substantially during the course of the project. These include project summary, project stakeholders, project support to Conventions, Treaties or Agreements, gender and social inclusion approach, M&E and thematic focus (IWTCF). Including this information in each report is quite repetitive and may not push projects to really consider what has changed.	A project summary document could be prepared in a standard template at the start of the project to capture this information and updated during each annual review process. This would not only reduce repetition but also capture change over time in an accessible manner.

Document type	Observation	Suggestions
	Reporting long-term change: Reporting templates include several questions that relate to the potential long-term impacts of the projects. These include questions around poverty reduction, biodiversity conservation and transformational change. Impacts such as these are likely to be realised over time and potentially will occur after the project is completed. Projects may only take small steps towards these impacts in the course of their work. These issues are complex and may be difficult for applicants / grantees to conceptualise. Understanding and definition of these concepts may vary significantly. Without in-depth evaluative work, contribution towards these impacts is hard to measure and evidence effectively. There is a risk that these issues will lead to generic responses that are not well evidenced, resulting in poor quality aggregate results reporting at fund-level. As Standard Indicators develop, there is also a risk of overlap in reporting these changes.	Consider providing assessment tools / methodological guidance to improve consistency and quality of assessments made by projects, reducing frequency of reporting to reflect the likely rate of change, and reviewing how this information can be effectively aggregated to provide a robust fund-level articulation of impact in these areas.
	Reporting on evaluation activities in Final Reports: There appears to be limited requirements to report on evaluation activities for projects where independent evaluation is required. However, this is anticipated to be included in updated final reporting templates for Extra projects.	Evaluation reports should be included in final reporting documentations and could potentially be subjected to quality assurance processes. A short 'management response' template would help determine how findings will be used to inform future work or adapt programmes. BCFs could be bringing these evaluations together as useful sources of evidence.

2.3   Review of fund-level M&E

To better understand M&E practice across grant funding bodies in the sector, a review of MEL documentation (available online) for three external, multilateral funding institutions was carried out. The institutions reviewed were selected in consultation with NIRAS and included Climate Investment Funds (CIF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Global Environment Facility (GEF). Indicators used by each institution can be found in Annex C. while these institutions are thematically well aligned with the BCFs, their remit and approach differs. Annex C shows that the funding disbursed through these institutions is more focused on delivering outputs that have direct implications for climate change, biodiversity conservation, and environmental initiatives. Challenge funds, by contrast, are typically more focused on testing innovative approaches to social and environmental challenges[3]. Key outputs for the BCFs are therefore more knowledge and evidence-focused, with more tangible outcomes occurring further along the BCFs Theory of Change in comparison to the funds described below. Table 3 summarises the approaches taken by each organisation to measure results at the fund-level.

Key observations or areas of interest for the BCFs:

- **Evaluating contribution to long-term impacts:** GCF uses a standardised scorecard approach to evaluate contribution to change in complex areas such as paradigm shift and enabling environment. Recognising the long-term nature of change in these areas, assessments are not made annually but are carried out by evaluators at interim and final evaluation stages.
- **Reducing number of indicators to include only those that specifically align with results frameworks.** The BCFs standard indicator framework is currently a lot broader than those implemented by other funds, with GEF noting a process of reducing the number of indicators between GEF-7 and GEF-8 frameworks. Whilst CIF brings together a wide range of indicators at the programme outcome level, at impact level, four strategic indicators have been identified.

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[3] Pompa, C. 2013. Understanding Challenge Funds. Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Table 3. Monitoring and evaluation approaches taken by Climate Investment Funds; Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility.

Component	Climate Investment Funds (CIF)	Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Global Environment Facility (GEF)
Summary	The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) is an enabler of pioneering climate-smart planning and climate action in low and middle-income economies, many of which are the least prepared yet the most prone to the challenges of climate change. CIF responds to the worldwide climate crisis with large-scale, low-cost, and long-term financial solutions to support countries achieve their climate objectives. Results are assessed through the integrated results frameworks for each programme area.	GCF is the world's largest climate fund, mandated to support developing countries raise and realise their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions towards low-emissions, climate resilient pathways. Results are assessed through the Integrated Results Management Framework (IRMF) which was updated in July 2021.	The GEF manages a family of funds dedicated to confronting biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and strains on land and ocean health. It's grants, blended financing, and policy support help developing countries address their biggest environmental priorities and adhere to international environmental conventions. Results are assessed through the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework (RMF) which was last updated in June 2022.
Aims of results framework	To define, guide, and strengthen the coherence of CIF's approach to results management, accountability and learning across all programmes. It aims to deliver a more integrated approach by clarifying common principles, roles, functions etc. Programme-specific results frameworks establish a basis for monitoring and evaluation of impact, outcomes and outputs.	1) To assess the extent to which GCF has promoted the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate resilient development pathways. 2) To assess contribution to global goals set by the international community to combat climate change 3) To support the distillation of lessons learned to be applied and used in other projects / programmes	Aims to ensure reporting consistency, data quality and transparency in projects and programmes as well as through corporate reporting across the portfolio to demonstrate how projects and programs contribute to the GEF's programming directions and partnership priorities in measurable terms.
Strategic alignment	The CIF monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) policy and guidance aims to unify the existing approaches of the Clean Technology Fund and Strategic Climate Fund and ensure integrated MEL across new and existing CIF programmes.	IRMF is designed to be aligned with two investment criteria (paradigm shift and impact potential)	Tier 1 indicators reflect the GEF-8 strategic priorities

Component	Climate Investment Funds (CIF)	Green Climate Fund (GCF)	Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Description of measurement framework	Programmes measure their results through a set of mandatory core indicators at transformative impact and outcome level. Some programmes require reporting against all outcome indicators, others allow some flexibility.
	
	Four CIF impact-level indicators are also tracked across programmes to support CIF to better estimate high-level achievements.
	
	1. Mitigation: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced, avoided, or enhancement of carbon stocks (tCO2 eq)
	2. Adaptation: Strengthened climate resilience of people (#), land (ha), and physical assets ($)
	3. Beneficiaries reached (direct and indirect, disaggregated by sex)
	4. Co-finance leveraged (by source and by mitigation/adaptation)
		Measurements used at three levels
		
		1) GCF impact level - paradigm shift. Assessed by three-point scorecard twice during a project/programme (generally during external interim eval and final eval)
		2) GCF outcome level
		  - reduced emissions and increased resilience (impact potential) and enabling environment
		  - **Impact potential:** four thematic core indicators – projects required to report against thematic Outcomes and propose how these will contribute to core indicator reporting. 16 supplementary indicators
		  - **Enabling environment:** four core indicators assessed using three-point scorecard (low, medium and high ratings) along with narratives. At least two indicators must be measured. This is completed during interim and final evaluation stages
		3) Project / programme level results
		  Project / programme results are linked to one of eight results areas (four mitigation and four adaptation).
			Two-tiered approach
			
			Tier 1: Project and programme results captured in 11 core output and outcome indicators in five indicator groups:
			
			- Conserving and sustainably using biodiversity;
			- Sustainably managing and restoring land;
			- Reducing GHG emissions;
			- Strengthening transboundary water management; and
			- Reducing chemicals and waste
			
			41 sub-indicators. Two types of sub-indicators – component sub-indicators which sum up to the core indicator and contextual sub-indicators which provide additional context.
			
			Data are reported at mid-term and final evaluation.
			
			Tier 2: Operational performance captured through a portfolio scorecard.

Guidance provided	M&E toolkits describe indicator definitions, methodologies, measurement guidance and reporting protocols.	For core and sub-indicators, detailed monitoring requirements including definitions, methods, disaggregation etc are outlined in indicator reference sheets. Guidance provided for scorecard assessments.	Definition and description of what each indicator entails, how it is calculated, together with the source, unit of measure and extent of disaggregation.

2.4   Online survey

A short survey (see annex B for questions) was shared with 359 current grantees and 592 new applicants from across the three funds. A total of 330 individuals responded to the survey, 51% (170) reported that they currently had BCFs funding; 15% (50) did not have currently have funding; 38% (124) were awaiting feedback on an application and 1% (4) did not respond to the question. Table 4 shows the breakdown of respondents by Fund and Scheme.

Table 4. Respondents by Fund and Scheme

Scheme	Fund						Total
	Darwin Initiative	**Darwin Plus**	**IWT Challenge Fund**	**Multiple**	**Not currently funded**	**No response**	
Capability and Capacity	13						13
Evidence			10				10
Extra	3		3				6
Fellowships		2					2
Innovation	4						4
Local		12					12
Main	40	14	23				77
Multiple	6	3	2				11
No response	2	1	0	29	153	10	195
Total	68	32	38	29	153	10	330

44% (145) of respondents reported using Standard Indicators in a recent application and 22% (72) had mapped Standard Indicators to their current project indicators. 2% (7) of respondents have both used the indicators in a new application and mapped against a current project logframe. Finally, 31% (101) of respondents had not used Standard Indicators at all. 1% (5) did not respond to this question. The following sections present the results of the survey for both Standard Indicators and reporting processes. It is important to note the potential positive bias created when surveying respondents who are still awaiting feedback on their funding applications. Where appropriate, responses have been disaggregated by respondents' status (currently funded, awaiting feedback on funding application and no current funding).

2.4.1   Standard Indicators

Over half of the respondents (54%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the Standard Indicators were relevant to their projects, with only 5% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Responses were similar across all funds (Darwin Initiative, IWT Challenge Fund and Darwin Plus) with Darwin Plus projects finding the indicators least relevant to their work. Only respondents who had a) used the Standard Indicators in a new application; b) mapped Standard Indicators to their existing project indicators; or c) used them in both new applications and existing projects were asked to respond to this question. Of the subset of respondents who reported having used the Standard Indicators, those who had used indicators in both applications and mapping to current project indicators were less likely to agree the that indicators were relevant for their projects (Figure 1). Depending on the category of respondents considered, between 15–30% of respondents disagreed with the statement that Standard Indicators are relevant to their projects. Respondents who were waiting on the results of a funding application or are currently not funded by the BCFs were slightly more likely to respond positively (see Figure 2).
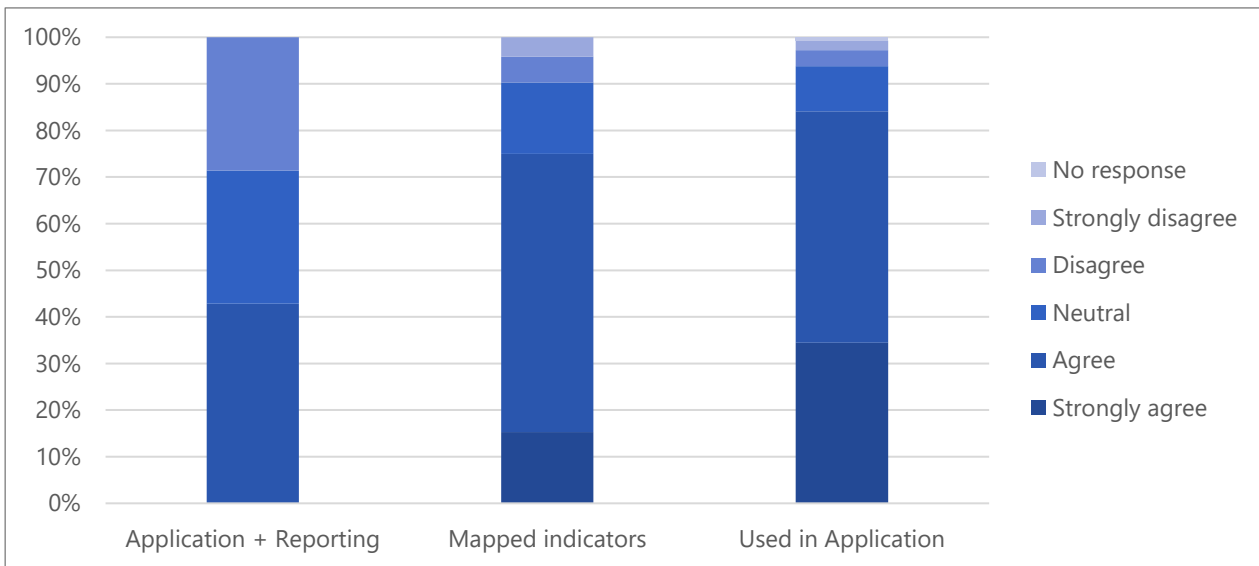
Figure 1. Respondents' perception of the relevance of Standard Indicators to their projects grouped by the ways in which they had currently used Standard Indicators.
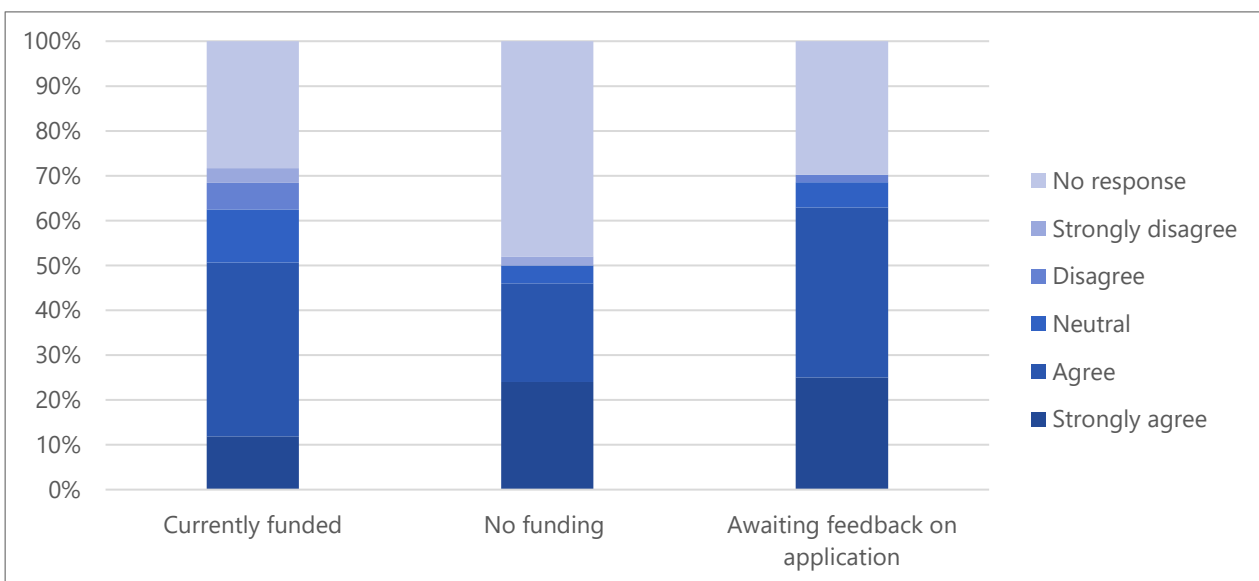

Figure 2. Agreement on relevance of standard indicators to projects by respondents who were currently funded, awaiting the results of a funding application or not funded. Note: where no response was provided regarding current funding status,

Use of Standard Indicators was not considered to increase reporting burden by 54% of the 224 respondents who had used the indicators in applications or existing projects; 23% were neutral, and 23% of respondents felt that reporting burden would be increased. Perceptions of reporting burden showed some variation between respondents who had used Standard Indicators in different ways (Figure 3). Respondents who had used the indicators in both applications and existing projects were more likely to consider reporting burden to increase, although this analysis is based on small numbers of respondents (n = 7 for respondents using indicators in both reporting and applications). As previously, results were similar across the three funds, however Darwin Plus

respondents were more likely to consider reporting burden to be increased by the inclusion of Standard Indicators.
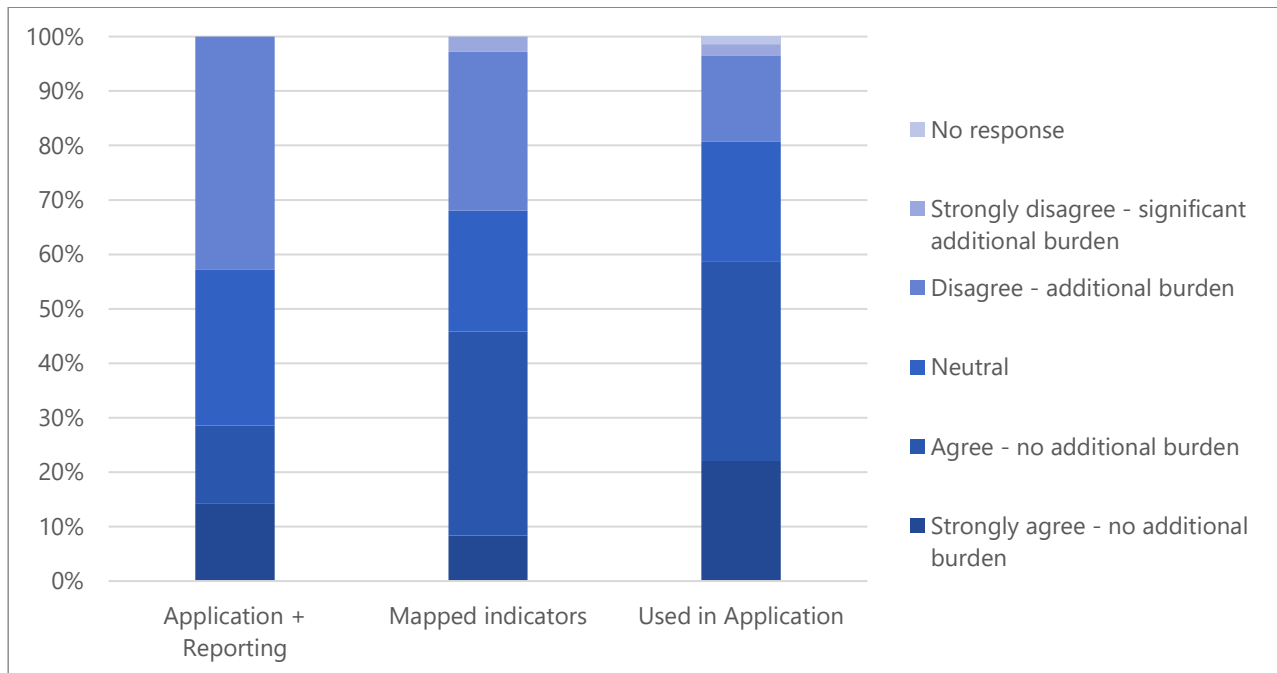

Figure 3. Respondents' perception on the impact of the Standard Indicators on project reporting burden grouped by current experience in using Standard indicators.

For the 224 respondents reporting that they had used Standard Indicators, perceptions of the guidance were generally positive. 78% respondents reported feeling that guidance was clear and understandable. 13% were neutral and only 8.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 0.5% did not respond to this question.

When asked what support might help implementation of Standard Indicators in the future, the majority (40%) of the 220 people responding requested training resources with active participation such as webinars, training sessions, or workshops. Training resources for self-study and was requested by 26% and 25% of respondents requested detailed methodological guidance.

2.4.2   Reporting Processes

34% (112) respondents reported having used either half-year, annual or final reporting templates in the last twelve months and hence were asked further questions about their experiences with the process and templates.

The vast majority (95%) of respondents felt that BCFs reporting processes were clear and understandable. Results were very similar across all three funds. 78% of respondents stated that reporting systems supported effective project management and enabled them to adapt or update their project when needed, with 81% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that feedback from project reviewers supported learning within their projects.

2.5 Key informant interviews

2.5.1 Standard Indicators

Providing a menu of Standard Indicators was generally considered useful by interviewees both in terms of fund-level reporting and in supporting better quality MEL at the project level. Interviewees understood the need for these indicators although it was highlighted that top down, fund-level frameworks should be balanced by the need for participatory or community-led monitoring. Space should be created for this within projects and the BCFs MEL systems.

The Standard Indicators were considered relevant by the majority of grantee/applicant interviewees, with most agreeing that they were able to identify / map appropriate indicators from the indicator menus. One informant reported experiencing difficulties in identifying five core indicator indicators that were relevant to their project. They highlighted that, due to the nature of their project, Standard Indicators related to training were the only appropriate options but did not properly represent the work they were doing. They felt they needed to include other Standard Indicators that were not so relevant to meet the quota.

However, the number of Standard Indicators was considered overwhelming by most key informants. Clustering indicators was thought to be useful to help guide users in identifying their indicators, but interviewees felt that it was difficult to process and that users might 'get lost' in scrolling the lists of indicators. Reviewers also highlighted that it was very likely that many of indicators would not be reported against or would only be used by a small number of projects which reduced their utility at the aggregate, fund level.

The BCFs should be using Standard Indicators to increase focus on assessment of Outcome level change, however, the current indicators were considered to concentrate on counting of Outputs such as number of people trained. Key informants expressed interest and motivation to better understand the Outcomes of their work but recognised the complex nature of the areas of change to be measured. Many felt that the BCFs should use Standard Indicators as leverage to improve Outcome reporting but would also need to provide support to projects to do this effectively. Convening working groups or learning communities around the measurement of key Outcome areas could not only improve project reporting but generate sector leading insights. Particular areas of interest included behaviour change (especially when measuring demand reduction rather than observation or demonstration of new behaviours), measuring change in illegal behaviours and evaluating change as a result of training.

Reporting against Standard Indicators was not expected to increase reporting burden significantly. Informants were not concerned about additional reporting requirements as they felt the Standard Indicators approach was well aligned with their usual project management approaches. One interviewee mentioned that there would be some additional burden when gathering data on behaviour change indicators but noted that this was a welcome 'push' for the organisation to focus more on understanding change. There was also some confusion around the rationale for data disaggregation, which was noted as time consuming. This might require further communication as it was not clear to some interviewees.

Feedback on the standard indicator guidance documentation and application/reporting support was positive with key informants noting that the guidance was clear and understandable and expressing appreciation for the range of support provided by NIRAS including webinars and responsiveness to questions or issues raised. Despite this, a number of key informants also noted that the guidance was long and complicated, especially during the application process when applicants are under pressure and trying to design their projects and bring together applications. Some applicants had not fully read the guidance before writing their application.

There was a lack of clarity around the need to adapt and reword Standard Indicators to create SMART[4] indicators at a project-level. Grantee / applicant interviewees noted that they felt they couldn't change the wording of indicators and project reviewers highlighted a need for extra feedback in application reviews.

Standard Indicators do not include indicators on incorporation of traditional knowledge or customary sustainable use. This was considered a significant gap and an area where the BCFs should be recognising and promoting the importance of these issues. Incorporating Standard Indicators on these topics would help increase visibility of the issues.

Standard indicator frameworks should not be a substitute for community-based monitoring systems. The BCFs should be promoting and supporting these systems alongside more top-down frameworks. To do this, top-down reporting burden should be kept to a minimum and the BCFs should be recognising and encouraging community-based monitoring in their application and reporting processes.

2.5.2   Reporting

Guidance on reporting templates and processes are very clear, understandable and grantees appreciate pre-application or reporting webinars and training provided. However, applicants would appreciate additional 1:1 guidance during the application process. It was noted that national partners and some team members struggle more with reporting templates and could perhaps benefit from more in-depth support or training. Additionally, applicants suggested that 1:1 conversations on complex issues such as methodological choices for measuring of Standard Indicators would be beneficial. There was concern that each measurement option has different strengths and weaknesses which would benefit from discussion with the fund management team.

Repetition and overlap between sections in reporting templates increases reporting burden for grantees and complicates the reviewing process for project reviewers. Repetition in reporting templates was an issue highlighted by the majority of key informants. Overlap between narrative progress updates and logframe reporting was considered the greatest issue within the templates. Interviewees also noted that generic sections such as the project overview were often just copied and pasted from the proposal which was inefficient. Project reviewers noted challenges in having progress update information in two different locations in the reporting template, requiring them to skip between sections to effectively complete their report.

The approach to reporting contribution to long-term, complex impacts such as biodiversity, poverty reduction and transformational change is difficult for grantees/applicants, with interviewees expressing concern that they had to create tenuous narratives that they couldn't evidence to complete the sections.

Current reporting formats don't support reviewers in piecing together and validating the progress story. Providing supporting information is key to project reviewers' assessment of progress, however, approaches to this are mixed. Referencing or linking directly to relevant information in the report text is varied. Including direct links to supporting information (for example in the logframe template) would help ensure that, not only is the required evidence provided but that reviewers are clearly directed to it during their review. Bringing together supporting information is time consuming for projects. More guidance on what is required and how to present progress in the Annual and Final Reports could help projects provide the most relevant information.

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[4] SMART indicators are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

The project report review and feedback process were appreciated by grantees and thought to provide useful feedback on project progress. Grantees generally considered reviewer feedback useful and are positive about the process. Receiving feedback on reports was particularly appreciated in a context where many donor reports are submitted with little or no acknowledgement. However, some inconsistencies in reviewing approach were noted *'I found the reviewer feedback is very much like a lottery. The first one wasn't very positive and the second one we scored the maximum but our work hasn't changed that much'.*

One grantee noted that it would be useful to allow grantees an option to provide feedback on final report reviews as this is currently not possible [although it is noted that the NIRAS team do retain "for the record" responses but have opted not to change the final score based on feedback at this stage]. This would enable projects to clarify any areas of miscommunication or respond to issues that they disagreed with in a formal manner.

Reviewers highlighted significant variance in report quality which had an impact on their ability to carry out an effective review and provide useful feedback. Where a report was poorly completed or the project theory of change / logframe was not of a good standard, carrying out their review effectively was considerably more challenging and required more time than is allocated for reviews. Reviewers highlight that whilst some projects clearly detailed rationale for delays / challenges etc, other simply reported their status with no further explanation which made completing reviews consistently challenging. They felt that during the review process there was not sufficient time to request further information from projects so it was necessary to make a judgement call based on available information.

Reviewers suggested providing scores for individual sections of the report which would give a better overview of report quality and highlight areas of concern. This approach might also support projects in improving their reports. Another option would be to provide an overall report quality score alongside the progress score.

Reviewers suggested additional training or workshops / opportunities to share experiences between reviewers would be helpful in supporting more effective, consistent reviews, shared approaches to the challenges highlighted above, and on drawing out or supporting project learning.

3.   Recommendations

The following section sets out recommendations for development and improvement of the BCFs standard indicator frameworks and reporting processes. These recommendations are synthesised from findings across all information sources and organised into priority recommendations and additional suggestions. Priority recommendations respond to findings emerging strongly from one or more information sources whereas additional suggestions may relate to just one source or finding.

3.1 Standard Indicators

	Priority recommendations
A1	**Reduce the number of Standard Indicators to be more manageable and less overwhelming for grantees.** • Re-prioritisation of indicators with careful consideration of how data from each indicator will be used. For example, prioritisation of core indicators that directly evidence the fund-level logframe. • Consider including basket indicators which summarise a number of indicators. • Provide separate indicator libraries to support projects with limited MEL capacity but keep this resource separate to the standard indicator framework. Keep indicator groups in place as this structure was considered useful. • Carry out a wide evidence review that examines evidence requirements and sources of evidence across the BCFs MEL framework to streamline evidence generation processes and ensure there is no replication. See also recommendation C4.
A2	**Increase focus on monitoring Outcome-level change within the BCFs** to better understand the results of BCFs funding. Many of the Standard Indicators focus on counting number of Outputs – participants trained, publications written etc with a more limited number of indicators answering the 'so what?' question. Improving Outcome reporting has the potential to provide more robust data critical to communicating the impact of the funds. There is also motivation from applicants / grantees to improve approaches to Outcome monitoring as this is integral to understanding the effectiveness of their projects. Separating indicators into Output and Outcome and rebalancing the number of Outcome vs Output indicators, mandating reporting against Outcome level Standard Indicators and improving guidance on measurement of Outcome level indicators
A3	**Prioritise development of more detailed guidance and definition around core Outcome indicators (those indicators related to short, medium or long-term change).** Currently there is limited guidance around Standard Indicators, especially the more complicated, Outcome level indicators. Striking a pragmatic balance between precision, inclusivity and flexibility in definitions and methodological guidance is important given the breadth of projects supported by the funds. There would be potential to do this in collaboration with grantees which would help ensure approaches are practical, see recommendation A4.
A4	**Facilitate working groups / learning communities on measurement approaches for Outcome level change** building knowledge and capacity within BCFs grantees, sharing learning from across a wide range of different organisations, and generating sector leading evidence and MEL approaches as a result of BCFs support.
	Additional suggestions
B1	**Consider the inclusion of indicators related to incorporation of traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use.** These areas represent a significant gap in the current standard indicator frameworks. Inclusion of indicators would increase visibility of these issues and help promote good practice in participatory M&E. To note, indicators on traditional knowledge are currently being developed by CBD working group on Article 8J.

B2	**Support lower capacity organisations through a two-tier system that reduces reporting requirements for these organisations whilst providing MEL capacity building support and incentivises progression into the second tier over time.**
	Given the capacity and resources required at a project level to implement effective Outcome indicator monitoring, smaller organisations with limited MEL capacity might be at a disadvantage compared to those with a specialist MEL team, particularly if recommendation A2 is implemented.
	Through their grants, the BCFs encourage applications from smaller organisations with limited resources and MEL capacity. However, these organisations may find complex Outcome level reporting challenging potentially resulting in poor quality applications or data reported. Implementing an 'opt-in' two tier MEL reporting track would allow organisations some flexibility in what type of data they report and give opportunities to build MEL capacity during project implementation.
	In such a system, larger organisations with greater capacity would be expected to report against more complex Outcome indicators and to participate in working groups etc focusing on developing and improving methods to assess change. In recognition of this, larger more long-term funding would be available. Smaller organisations with lower capacity levels, applying for lower risk funding, could select to report only against Output indicators and engage in capacity development support provided by the BCFs. As they progressed they would be expected to join the upper reporting tier.
	An approach such as this would potentially:
	• Ensure BCFs funding is available and accessible to range of organisations;
	• Ensure data collected during project reporting is of good quality; and
	• Provide a framework for building MEL capacity in organisations where it is limited whilst building strong evidence of the BCFs contribution to organisational development.

3.2   Reporting

	Priority recommendations
C1	**Revise reporting templates to reduce replication and promote effective reporting against logframe indicators.** Consider restructuring reporting forms to merge progress update and logframe sections (see detailed suggestions in section 2.2).
C2	**Revise logframe template to provide a more structured guide for applicants / grantees to help improve logframe quality.** This could include separate lines for each indicator, separate columns for baseline and targets, specific cells where supporting evidence should be linked (see section 2.2).
C3	**Develop a project summary that is updated annually to reduce repetition between applications and annual reports.** The project summary document should capture reporting topics where limited change is expected throughout the course of the project for example project summary, stakeholders, project support to Conventions, Treaties or Agreements etc. This document could be updated if required during the annual reporting process. Given the limited scope of this review, it would be beneficial to investigate these options in a little more depth, potentially piloting solutions with a small group of grantees before rolling out.
C4	**Review approach to capturing and reporting long-term change, potentially developing a scorecard type assessment to be carried out during evaluation processes.** Reporting templates include several questions that relate to the potential long-term impacts of the projects. These include questions around poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and transformational change. Impacts such as these are likely to be realised over time and potentially will occur after the project is completed. Projects may only take small steps towards these impacts in the course of their work. These issues are complex and may be difficult for applicants / grantees to conceptualise. Understanding and definition of these concepts may vary significantly. Without in-depth evaluative work, contribution towards these impacts is hard to measure and evidence effectively. There is a risk that these issues will lead to generic responses that are not well evidenced, resulting in poor quality aggregate results reporting at fund-level. Developing a standard approach to assessing a project's contribution to these impacts would not only reduce burden on projects but also provide BCFs with more robust, standardised data that would better evidence the results of the funds and build a stronger case for continued funding.
	Additional suggestions
D1	**Include scoring for each section of the report or assessment of report quality** for report reviewers to help projects understand where they can improve their reporting and identify projects that might benefit from additional capacity support in reporting, development of their theories of change and logframes. This could include a basic rubric assessing the quality (incl. completeness; clarity; inclusion of appropriate references to supporting material etc) of the report as a whole or for specific sections. Scoring of specific sections would allow for more nuanced rubrics. Section scores could be combined to provide an overarching score (although this might become complicated if different importance weightings are applied to the sections) or a threshold (for example if two out of ten sections are scored poorly for quality) then further action or review is required.
D2	Provide additional **report reviewer training sessions or learning events** to support a more consistent approach to reviews and shared understanding of how to manage challenges.

D3	**Ensure reporting on evaluation process, findings and management response is incorporated into final reporting requirements for Extra projects.** Current reporting requirements for mandated evaluation activities is limited, potentially missing an opportunity to ensure that evaluation findings are used by projects, evidence of project impact and effectiveness is captured, and that learning from evaluations can be shared more widely.
D4	**Review approaches to evaluation to improve quality and utilisation of evaluation at project and fund-level.** This could include more in-depth guidance on evaluation approach and quality criteria, guidance on expected % budget spend, and consideration of independent contracting of evaluators for larger grants.

4.   Limitations

This deep dive review has the following limitations, which should be considered when reviewing and implementing recommendations.

- This deep dive case study focused on Standard Indicators and reporting components of the BCFs MEL framework without significant review consideration or review of other components. It is clear, however, that approaches such as the use of Standard Indicators each have their own strengths and limitations and should therefore be considered as one component within the MEL framework.
- The number of key informant interviews was limited due to time constraints and hence, does not fully represent the significant variation in organisation size, experience, project topic, experience with BCFs, and specific fund experience.
- The deep dive review was carried out to inform continuous development and improvement of the BCFs MEL system with a focus on Standard Indicators and reporting tools. The review was intended to feed into ongoing strategy and planning processes. The observations and recommendations outlined were intended to present a range of ideas and options for consideration in these processes and hence require further discussion and review to determine what is practical and useful in the wider BCFs context.
- Given the limited scope of this review, it would potentially be useful for any changes in reporting templates etc to be discussed in more depth with grantees, including piloting of solutions with a small group before rolling out across the portfolio.

Annex A: Key informant interviews

Name	Role
Douglas Gibbs	Head of the BCFs, Defra
Ruth Musgrave	Elephant Protection Initiative Foundation, existing project grantee
Krystyna Swiderska	International Institute for Environment and Development, existing project grantee
Nicholas Coelho	Bermuda Zoological Society, existing project grantee
Hoang Van Lam	Fauna & Flora International, Vietnam, existing project grantee
Alice Muchugi	International Livestock Research Institute, new applicant
Chenyue Ma	International Fund for Animal Welfare China, new applicant
Peter McCarter	Project reviewer, external
David Wright	Project reviewer, external
Dui Jasinghe	NIRAS Analyst, Project reviewer, internal
Billy Curryer	NIRAS International Development Project & Funds Manager, Project reviewer, internal
Ongoing conversation and consultation	
James Kinghorn	BCFs MEL Lead
Victoria Pinion	BCFs Programme Manager
Rachel Beatie	BCFs Analyst and IWT Challenge Fund administrator
Nichola Plowman	MEL Consultant

Annex B: Survey questions

Titles	Question	Response
Standard Indicators	What is the size of your organisation?	Less than 10 employees 10 - 50 employees 51 - 100 employees 101 - 500 employees 500 + employees
	How would you describe your organisation?	International non-governmental organisation (INGO) Non-governmental organisation Community-based organisation Academic organisation / research institute Other_____ (please state)
	What is geographical reach of your organisation?	Single country focus Regional focus Global focus
	How many BCFs (consider all funds, Darwin Initiative, Darwin + and IWT Challenge Fund) projects does your organisation currently lead?	0 0, but we are awaiting feedback on an Application 1–3 3 - 5 5 +
	Which fund is your project(s) funded by?	*Where your organisation has multiple projects, please select all statements that apply* Darwin Initiative Darwin + IWT Challenge Fund
	Which scheme is your project(s) funded under?	*Where your organisation has multiple projects, please select all statements that apply* Extra Main Innovation Capability and Capacity
	How have you used Standard Indicators to date?	*Please tick all that apply* Not used Used in proposal Used in pre-existing project Mapped to indicators in pre-existing project Other _____
	The Standard Indicators are relevant to my project	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
	Incorporating Standard Indicators has made identifying indicators for my project easier.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not yet used Standard Indicators
	Reporting on Standard Indicators is not a significant additional reporting burden	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not yet used Standard Indicators

	Please add any comments or suggestions for improving Standard Indicators here	Free text
	Standard Indicator guidance notes are clear and understandable	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
	I understand when and how I should be using Standard Indicators and core indicators	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
	In the future, what would help you to better use Standard Indicators in your project MEL?	*Please select all statements that apply* Detailed methodological guidance for indicators Training resources with active participation (webinars, training sessions, workshops) Training resources for self-study (guidance notes, videos) None of the above Other
	Please add any suggestions for improvements in standard indicator guidance	Free text
	When reporting against the Standard Indicators in Annex 3 of the AR/FR, in the "Total planned during the project" column, did you report:	Planned targets as reflected in the logframe More recently updated targets - logframe not yet updated More recently updated targets - logframe updated through a Change Request Did not report Other
Project reporting	Have you completed a project half year, annual or final reporting template in the last 12 months?	Yes No
	Reporting processes for my project are clear and understandable	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
	Project reporting systems are managed in a way that supports me to adapt and update my project when needed	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
	Project reporting and feedback from BCF reviewers supports learning within my project	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
	Please add any comments or suggestions for improvements in project reporting processes	Free text
Grant application	During the application process, we were allowed a sufficient amount of text to describe our approach to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Annex C: External Fund Indicators

Climate Investment Funds
Four transformative impact indicators

1. Mitigation: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced, avoided, or enhancement of carbon stocks (tCO2 eq)
2. Adaptation: Strengthened climate resilience of people (#), land (ha), and physical assets ($)
3. Beneficiaries reached (direct and indirect, disaggregated by sex)
4. Co-finance leveraged (by source and by mitigation/adaptation)

Four core outcome indicators

1. Tonnes of GHG emissions reduced or avoided
2. Volume of direct finance leveraged through CTF funding – disaggregated by public and private finance
3. Installed capacity (MW) as a result of CTF interventions
4. Number of additional passengers (disaggregated by men and women if feasible) using low carbon public transport as a result of CIF interventions
5. Annual energy savings as a result of CTF interventions (GWh)

Green Climate Fund[5]
Impact level: Paradigm Shift potential

The initial integrated results framework describes paradigm shift potential as the "degree to which the proposed activity can catalyse impact beyond a one-off project or programme investment" and presents the coverage areas that support the assessment of this investment criterion. These coverage areas comprise: (i) potential for scaling up and replication, and its overall contribution to global low-carbon development pathways being consistent with a temperature increase of less than 2 degrees Celsius; (ii) potential for knowledge and learning; (iii) contribution to the creation of an enabling environment; (iv) contribution to regulatory frameworks and policies; and (v) overall contribution to climate-resilient development pathways consistent with a country's climate change adaptation strategies and plans.9 GCF has been promoting paradigm shift in the context of sustainable development through all its investments.

At the impact results level, the IRMF aims to assess to what extent GCF has promoted the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways in the context of sustainable development through its interventions to reduce their GHG emissions and/or to adapt to the impacts of climate change.10 Additionally, it aims to assess whether and to what extent GCF makes a significant and ambitious contribution to the global efforts towards attaining the goals set by the international community to combat climate change through the GCF resources channelled to projects/programmes at the portfolio level. The framework aims to support the distillation of lessons learned which can then be used and applied in other projects/programmes as relevant.

Projects/programmes are expected to assess their contributions to paradigm shift twice during their lifespan by applying the three assessment dimensions (scale, replicability, and sustainability) in line with the activity-specific sub-criteria of paradigm shift potential of the initial IF. The definitions of the three assessment dimensions are provided in the diagram below.

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[5] GCF Integrated Results Management Framework https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/irmf-policy.pdf

SCALE

Degree to which there has been a significant increase in quantifiable results within and beyond the scope of the intervention

REPLICABILITY

Degree to which the GCF investments exported key structural elements of the proposed programme or project elsewhere within the same sector as well as to other sectors, regions or countries

SUSTAINABILITY

Degree to which the outcomes and results of GCF investments are sustained beyond completion through the creation of a structural and financial base as well as climate resilient practices

Outcome level

Eight core indicators, four assessing impact potential and four assessing enabling environment. Impact potential indicators are complimented by 16 supplementary indicators.

Impact potential

Core Indicator 1: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced, avoided or removed/sequestered
        Supplementary indicator 1.1: Annual energy savings (megawatt-hours)
        Supplementary indicator 1.2: Installed energy storage capacity (megawatt-hours)
        Supplementary indicator 1.3: Installed renewable energy capacity (megawatts)
        Supplementary indicator 1.4: Improved low-emission vehicle fuel economy (volume of fuel per km travelled)

Core Indicator 2: Direct and indirect beneficiaries reached (number of individuals)

    Supplementary indicator 2.1: Beneficiaries (female/male) adopting improved and / or new climate-resilient livelihood options (number of individuals)
    Supplementary indicator 2.2: Beneficiaries (female/male) with improved food security (number of individuals)
    Supplementary indicator 2.3: Beneficiaries (female/male) with more climate-resilient water security (number of individuals)
    Supplementary indicator 2.4: Beneficiaries (female/male) covered by new of or improved early warning systems (number of individuals)
    Supplementary indicator 2.5: Beneficiaries (female/male) adopting innovations that strengthen climate change resilience (number of individuals)
    Supplementary indicator 2.6: Beneficiaries (female/male) living in buildings that have increased resilience against climate hazards (number of individuals)
    Supplementary indicator 2.7: Changes in expected losses of lives due to the impact of extreme climate-related disasters in the geographic area of the GCF intervention (number of individuals)

Core Indicator 3: Value of physical assets made more resilient to the effects of climate change and / or more able to reduce GHG emissions (value of physical assets)

Supplementary Indicator 3.1: Change in the expected losses of economic assets due to the impact of extreme climate-related disasters in the geographic area of the GCF intervention (value in USD)

Core Indicator 4: Hectares of natural resources areas brought under improved low-emission and / or climate resilient management practices (hectares)

Supplementary Indicator 4.1: Hectares of terrestrial forest, terrestrial non-forest, freshwater and coastal marine areas brought under restoration and / or improved ecosystems
Supplementary Indicator 4.2: Number of livestock brought under sustainable management practices (number of livestock)
Supplementary Indicator 4.3: Tonnes of fish stock brought under sustainable management practices (tonnes)

Enabling Environment

The four core indicators used to track progress at this level are as follows:

Core indicator 5: Degree to which GCF investments contribute to strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks for low-emission climate-resilient development pathways in a country-driven manner;

Core indicator 6: Degree to which GCF investments contribute to technology deployment, dissemination, development or transfer and innovation;

Core indicator 7: Degree to which GCF investments contribute to market development/transformation at the sectoral, local or national level;

Core indicator 8: Degree to which GCF investments contribute to effective knowledge generation and learning processes, and use of good practices, methodologies and standards.

Global Environment Facility[6]

Project and programme results are captured in 11 core output and outcome indicators across five thematic groups.

Conserving and Sustainably Using Biodiversity	
Terrestrial protected areas created and under improved management	Terrestrial protected areas newly created
	Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness
Marine protected areas created or under improved management	Marine protected areas newly created
	Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness
Areas of landscapes under improved practices	Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity
	Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations
	Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided
	Terrestrial OECMs supported
Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity	Fisheries under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations
	Marine OECMs supported
Sustainably Managing and Restoring Land	
Area of land and ecosystems under restoration	Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration
	Area of forest and forest land under restoration
	Area of natural grass and woodlands under restoration
	Area of wetlands (including estuaries and mangroves) restored
	Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems
People benefiting from sustainable land management and restoration investments	
Reducing GHG Emissions	
Greenhouse Gas emissions mitigated	Carbon sequestered or emissions avoided in the sector of Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use
	Emissions avoided
	Energy saved
	Increase in installed renewable energy capacity per technology
People benefiting from climate change mitigation support	

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[6] GEF (2022) Guidelines on the implementation of the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework (https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/gef-c-62-inf-12-rev-01)

Strengthening Transboundary Water Management	
Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management	Level of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program formulation and implementation
	Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional Management Institution(s) to support its implementation
Level of national/local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees	
Level of engagement in IW: Learn through participation and delivery of key products	
Globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels	
Large Marine Ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia	
People benefiting from transboundary water management	
Reducing Chemicals and Waste	
Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced	Solid and liquid persistent organic pollutants (POPs) removed or disposed (POPs type)
	Quantity of mercury reduced
	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons reduced/phased out
	Highly hazardous pesticides eliminated
	Countries with legislation and policy implemented to control chemicals and waste
	Low-chemical/non-chemical systems implemented, particularly in food production, manufacturing, and cities
	POPs/Mercury containing materials and products directly avoided
Persistent organic pollutants to air reduced	Countries with legislation and policy implemented to control emissions of POPs to air
	Emission control technologies/practices implemented
Avoided residual plastic waste	
People benefiting from reduced exposure to hazardous chemicals	
Cross-Cutting Strategic Areas	
People benefiting from GEF-financed investments	