## Annual Review 4

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| **Title: International Climate Finance (ICF) Research and Development (R&D) Programme Annual Review 4** | | |
| **Programme Value £ (full life):** £51.6m | | **Review date:** August 2023 to July 2024 |
| **Programme Code:** [ICF-PO011 R&D] | **Start date:** April 2020 | **End date:** December 2027 |

**Summary of Programme Performance**

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| Year | **AR1** | **AR2** | **AR3** | **AR4** |  |  |  |  |
| Overall Output Score | **B** | **B** | **A** | **A** |  |  |  |  |
| Risk Rating | **Moderate** | **Moderate** | **Low** | **Low** |  |  |  |  |

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| DevTracker Link to Business Case: | **The Business Case is on DevTracker** [**here**](https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-7-ICF-P0011-RD/documents)**.** |
| DevTracker Link to results framework: | LogFrames for projects can be found on [DevTracker](https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-7-ICF-P0011-RD/documents) |

This Annual Review was completed by the GCBC Core Team with inputs from GCBC Projects and Cadmus on Section C, and Defra’s Evidence Team on Section E. The full Terms of Reference can be found [here](https://defra.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/teams/Team4115/Programme%20Baseline/05_Annual%20Review/Terms%20of%20Reference/Defra_ICF_R%26D_AR4_ToR.docx?d=w1fd8c65bab3544dcb2239967b4b1b96a&csf=1&web=1&e=fJetkG).

**A. SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW**

**A1. Description of programme**

The International Climate Finance Research and Development (ICF R&D) Programme aims to deliver an integrated package of projects to strengthen global knowledge and understanding of the interrelationship between climate change, biodiversity loss and poverty. The programme seeks to support delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Global Biodiversity Framework and Paris Agreement, and help countries achieve a nature-positive future.

The ICF R&D Programme comprises of three components:

* + **Component 1:** *Evidence to inform policy and design of international climate finance: Evidence for policy and programming* concluded in FY22/23.
  + **Component 2:** *Evidence to strengthen operational delivery of NbS (Nature Based Solutions) policies and programmes: Driving innovation in forest protection and enforcement monitoring* will conclude in FY24/25.
  + **Component 3:** *The Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC)* is delivered in partnership with DAI Global as the Fund Management Lead and the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew as the Strategic Science Lead. The GCBC is due to run until at least FY26/27. Through annual research grant competitions (RGCs), the GCBC will support the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 8, 11 & 14 by establishing a global network of research institutions and experts to address critical research gaps in how the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity can address climate solutions and improve livelihoods.

**A2. Summary supporting narrative for the overall score in this review**

**Programme scoring**

The overall score for the ICF R&D Programme in this review period is A. This was derived from the output scores shown in the detailed output scoring in Appendix A, with each component being assigned a weighted score based on its total funding, and the overall score representing the weighted average of these scores.

**Component 1:** Evidence to inform policy and design of international climate finance: Evidence for policy and programming

This component was completed in financial year 22/23 and reviewed as part of Annual Review 1 (AR1) and 2 (AR2), therefore has not contributed to the weighted score of this AR.

**Component 2:** Evidence to strengthen operational delivery of Nature Based Solutions (NbS) policies and programmes: driving innovation in forest protection and enforcement monitoring

All live projects under component 2 are progressing well and meeting their targets.[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Component 3:** Build the long-term evidence base (Establish a Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate)

The following key achievements from the 2023/2024 Annual Review period include:

1. Research Grant Competition

* Research Grant Competition 2 (RGC2) was launched on 5 February 2024, inviting applicants to submit Project Concept Notes (CNs). A total of 507 CN applications were received from Lead Partners in 60 countries. This high level of interest reflects a strong awareness of the programme, as well perhaps as a rising global interest in the interconnectedness of biodiversity, climate, and livelihoods. 56 applications were invited to develop and submit Full Project Proposals for RGC2, of which 18 have been provisionally awarded, subject to due diligence.
* Re-design of the framework for competition delivery (moving from a one-stage to two-stage process) allows the research grant competition (RGC) to become more accessible to a wide and diverse range of applicants by having a simpler concept note phase that is easier to engage with. The RGC allows for more innovative and appropriate projects to be entered, as there are broader parameters.
* Set up of a grants management system with monitoring, evaluation and learning protocols and a focus on data collection to refine delivery and improve outcomes.
* Commissioning of evidence studies in-house and with external consultants to explore specific themes (e.g. agro-forestry, one-health, private sector engagement) to inform and enable system transformation.

2. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and capacity building

* Development of a GESI action plan (Appendix C) to ensure that the programme's strategies are inclusive and considerate of diverse needs.
* The GCBC offered a capacity strengthening pilot initiative to support research partners, particularly those in the Global South, in the submission process. Due to capacity strengthening efforts, there has been an increase in representation of Global South partners in the GCBC portfolio, with 7 organisations being successful in RGC2 subject to due diligence.
* As part of programme efforts to support grantees with capacity strengthening challenges, the GCBC provides a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) to GCBC funded grantees to stimulate improvements in key topic areas.

3. Sharing innovative research and building an international network

* Development of a stakeholder community (645 organisations across 95 countries) and the initiation of requirements for an International Network facilitate the widespread implementation of effective policies and practices.
* The GCBC's Evidence Advisory Group (EAG) has met every quarter since its inception and has provided helpful independent advice on the GCBC’s strategic science direction, as well as useful feedback on key outputs.
* RBG Kew hosted the second GCBC Research Symposium in March 2024, with project leads from both 'fast-track' Phase 1 projects and newly funded Competition 1 projects in attendance. The panel presentations highlighted emerging findings and pointed to synergies between projects, providing a platform for research partners to share findings and build networks. Beyond the high attendance rate, the enthusiastic participation and feedback from the projects involved was a positive outcome.
* The growth in online presence on platforms like LinkedIn, with over 2,000 followers, helps disseminate information about these interventions to a wider audience.

**A3. Progress on recommendations from the previous AR**

**Recommendation 1:** GCBC Delivery Partners

* Additional time for staff recruitment at the contract initiation stage has been built into the delivery timetables to ensure realistic deliverables.
* Clear roles and responsibilities within delivery partners have been established. In February 2024, GCBC Delivery Partners agreed a RACID matrix to clarify roles/responsibilities and governance processes. The RACID matrix was incorporated into the hub Ways of Working plan in June 2024 and will be reviewed quarterly.

**Recommendation 2:** Programme budget and risk management.

* The team has increased its degree of over-programming to 20% to reduce the risk of future underspend on Hub management or grantee research projects. The programme team will continue to do this in the next annual review period.
* The programme team has enhanced its risk management process via a risk register, which is updated monthly following a risk-focused team meeting.
* The programme team has created a PowerBI risk dashboard to visually display risk tailored to stakeholders based on their influence/interest.
* The programme team has incorporated risk as a standing agenda item in hub meetings to actively monitor and increase transparency of shared risks. This approach not only ensures that mitigating actions are managed and updated regularly, but also encourages delivery partners to better manage their individually owned risks.

**Recommendation 3:** Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

* The GCBC Theory of Change (ToC) and logframe were revised in September 2023 in consultation with Defra evidence colleagues, RBG Kew, DAI UK, and Defra ODA Hub.
* The updated ToC and accompanying programme level logframe outline how the programme intends to deliver on the poverty reduction element of its overall goal to 'strengthen global knowledge and understanding of the interrelationship between climate change, biodiversity loss and poverty'. It will be updated again before the next AR to include causal links, assumptions based on underpinning evidence, and an accompanying narrative.
* New and continuing projects have introductory sessions with our MEL partners (DAI Global and Cadmus International) to discuss indicators and methodologies, and sessions with Kew to discuss thematic indicators.

**Recommendation 4:** Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

* The programme team has produced a GESI action plan; the team have 0.3FTE of ODA Hub’s new Science Policy Fellow. The GCBC has also established a GESI workstream and have monthly check-ins with a Senior Social Development Adviser.
* The GCBC has commissioned a thorough GESI analysis of the programme, engaging suitable expertise and working with the programme team to produce the analysis, consideration and documentation required by the International Development Gender Equality Act (2014) and in line with the [Independent Commission for Aid Impact's recommendations](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/icai-recommendations-on-uk-aid-to-agriculture-in-a-time-of-climate-change-fcdo-response/fcdo-response-to-the-independent-commission-for-aid-impact-icai-recommendations-on-uk-aid-to-agriculture-in-a-time-of-climate-change#recommendation-1) for ICF. This should be completed in Autumn 2024.
* The RGC2 Invitation to Apply (ITA) pack made it clear that projects that have successfully considered GESI appropriately into their design and delivery plans at an early stage are likely to score more highly than those that did not.
* Grant Management Guidelines issued to Grantees also included specific guidance on GESI. The Guidelines indicated that grantees, where relevant, could be asked to prepare Gender Action Plans to provide greater detail and clarity on:
  1. the proposed gender-related activities,
  2. the intended outcomes,
  3. how the beneficiary proposes to deliver the activities; and
  4. how the impact of these activities would be measured and reported on to demonstrate success.
* The ICF R&D programme remains committed to the Safeguarding considerations set out in the original business case (p.27).
* Lead applicants for grants are responsible for safeguarding policies and procedures, actioning and reporting any complaints and ensuring partners meet safeguarding standards, including an adherence to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s Six Core Principles. DAI provides safeguarding training to all GCBC grant recipients and fed into the programme's safeguarding risk assessment (last reviewed in April 2024).
* Work with Evidence colleagues and Cadmus on including more GESI-specific indicators which will be followed up in grantees’ annual reports.
* Develop a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan that captures how progress on GESI will be monitored throughout the implementation of the programme.

**Lessons learned this year and recommendations for the year ahead**

During the annual review period we have successfully completed the set-up of the programme, establishing the necessary structures, processes, and systems to allow GCBC to become fully operational. This led the way for the design and implementation of RGC1 to enable GCBC’s first grantees to be contracted and functioning before January 2024, while also quickly adopting lessons from that process into a revised and much improved design for RGC2 which launched in February 2024. The foundations for GCBC have been set over the course of this year and it is anticipated that these will form a firm basis for the approach adopted in Year 2, that will see RGC2 realise a further group of grantees as GCBC gradually transitions towards a greater level of grants management.

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| **Item** | **Lesson** | **Recommendation** | **Timeframe** |
| **Delivery Partner Management and Performance** | Clear governance structures and performance management processes are necessary for effectively managing delivery partners. | We plan to put in place clearer governance and performance management processes. | From Autumn 2024. |
| **Delivery Partner Management and Performance** | The challenge of managing two delivery partners for the GCBC has increased the team’s workload in terms of contract and relationship management. | The ICF R&D programme board decided to move to a single delivery partner from April 2025 and will not be renewing Kew’s MoU. The programme team will develop and implement a new operating model that reflects the needs of the programme, delivers impact and efficiencies. | From April 2025. |
| **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)** | Initial GESI analysis of grantee projects revealed varying levels of success across different components such as design, engagement, monitoring, safeguarding, and team capacity. While some projects excelled, others fell short, particularly in monitoring, team capacity, and safeguarding. A significant area for improvement is the consideration of intersectionality and the inclusion of marginalised groups. | 1. **Enhance Engagement with Networks**:    * Strengthen connections with existing and new networks using the International Network Tool and events. 2. **Integrate Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge**:    * Explore ways to incorporate Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge into research and collaborate with local and indigenous communities. 3. **Improve Safeguarding Procedures**:    * Develop and implement enhanced procedures to protect Indigenous Peoples and local communities, ensuring GESI considerations are integrated into due diligence processes. | Ongoing. |
| **Risk Management** | Since GCBC hub partners monitor their risks as organisations separately, there is a lack of awareness and management of risks owned collectively by the hub. Though Management Lead and Strategic Science Lead risks were monitored by the Authority through monthly performance meetings, this did not encourage visibility across the hub. | Enhance the awareness and management of risks owned by the hub by incorporating them into fortnightly hub meeting slides. | Fortnightly. |
| **Risk Management** | The programme lacked a formalised process, with a clear chain of command and accountability, that ensures critical risks are communicated promptly and efficiently. | Establish a formalised process for escalating risks to the Authority, Hub, and Senior Management. | Monthly. |
| **Financial Management** | The programme underspends against its budget, mainly due to grantees spending less than forecast as they initiate their projects. | 1. **Programme-level:**  * Programme over-programming budget by 20% to mitigate any in-year slippage.  1. **Grantee-level:**   DAI will aim to improve forecasting performance by grantees through workshops and monthly meetings focussed on their budget, performance and forecasting-related queries. | Annually. |
| **Financial Management** | Changes in staff responsible for managing programme finances led to knowledge gaps and made audit and decision trails difficult to locate. | Ensure financial documentation, such as invoices, forecasts and actuals, budget, and expense approvals, are stored in the ICF R&D document library on SharePoint. | Quarterly. |
| **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)** | The revision of the Theory of Change after the onboarding of RGC1 grantees had implications for the design of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework, which has since been updated and accompanied by a programme level logframe. | The Theory of Change (ToC) will be reviewed annually, during the Annual Review cycle and including after independent evaluations. Any changes will be incorporated into a revised logframe and MEL plan. | Annually. |
| **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)** | Inaccessibility (or lack of collation) of research outputs (or ‘evidence products’) made it difficult to conduct the GESI analysis. | Establish a central space to store research outputs from all projects. | Ongoing. |
| **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)** | Lack of disaggregated data in Section C. Disaggregation stated in the indicator were not listed. | Include number of knowledge products broken down by type of knowledge product to help understand that was achieved. To meet Defra minimum GESI requirements we expect all people-based reporting to disaggregate by gender. | By next AR. |
| **Programme Governance** | Governance and administrative challenges of working across three different organisations have delayed programme delivery. This affected fund transfers, payments, procurement and hiring as well as document drafting reviewing and approvals. | Hub partners have allocated additional time to programme planning to ensure deadlines are agreed and visible. Following an in-person governance workshop in February 2024, the Hub is implementing an updated ways of working and governance action plan to align stakeholders, enhance collaboration, improve adherence to timelines, and establish standards and expectations. | Quarterly. |
| **Maximise Programme Impact** | The current theme selection process could be improved through greater engagement of stakeholders in target regions. | To ensure the programme is demand-driven, incorporate more evidence synthesis on specific topics identified by Defra policy colleagues, stakeholder network and outreach activities in the theme selection process. | Annually. |
| **Maximise Programme Impact** | The two-stage process implemented for RGC2 has helped to secure more Global South led proposals but it will take more time and capacity building to strengthen the engagement by the Global South with quality proposals. | Enhance capacity building and outreach to ensure more developing country partners are successful. | Ongoing. |
| **Maximise Programme Impact** | To fully achieve the programme’s intended outcomes and impact, as detailed in the ToC, the GCBC can enhance its depth and breadth of research through increased funding and extended timeframe. | Complete a costed business case extension to ensure the impacts of the programme can be delivered over a longer timeframe. | To be undertaken in Q2 FY25/26. |
| **Maximise Programme Impact** | One of the key objectives of the GCBC is to enhance partnerships and North-South collaboration. | Implement and accelerate plans for networking and engagement to enhance knowledge exchange. | Ongoing. |
| **Maximise Programme Impact** | Leveraging the knowledge and experience of similar ODA programmes has supported the programme in addressing challenges, such as due diligence processes and insurance requirements with grantees. | Establish a community of practice with other ODA programmes to raise awareness, share lessons and form stronger partnerships. | Ongoing. |
| **Competition Design** | Ineligibility rates were relatively high at the CN stage (from 507 CN applications: 470 passed initial eligibility tests but only 142 passed the more detailed eligibility requirements to proceed to full technical assessment of the CN). Promoting more focused thematic calls and a clarity of programme focus will help avoid attempts by applicants to shoehorn applications into a broad call and generate better quality proposals for consideration. These results perhaps indicate a lack of clarity in the framing of the themes for RGC2 and the enthusiasm of grantees to attempt to shoehorn applications that were not precisely suited to the theme of the window. | Provide more focus in the thematic calls with clear guidance to applicants on developing a quality proposal to fit the GCBC focus. | November – February 2024. |

## B: THEORY OF CHANGE AND PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

**B1. Summarise the** **programme’s theory of change, including any changes to outcome and impact indicators from the original business case.**

No changes to the ICF R&D Programme’s overarching ToC (Appendix B) have been made since the last annual review. The ICF R&D Programme ToC posits that by tackling some of the key evidence gaps and learning around the application of nature-based solutions (NbS) we can unlock the potential to deliver more effective policy and programmes with stronger outcomes for people, nature, and climate. The activities set out in the ToC are divided into three main component areas with subsequent sub-projects within them where relevant. These are:

* P1: Laying the groundwork for ICF 3.0 (between 2021/22 – 2025/26), building the global evidence base to inform future design of UK ODA programming on nature;
* P2: Driving innovation in forest protection and enforcement monitoring to unlock better quality data on nature to support policy and programme implementation; and
* P3: Establish a global centre of expertise on NbS to address critical evidence gaps in the application of nature-based solutions.

**GCBC (Component 3 of ICF R&D Programme) Theory of Change**

The GCBC Theory of Change (Appendix B) reflects the programme’s aims to deliver informed, effective, and inclusive climate-resilient interventions and investments to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. This will enhance ecosystem resilience to climate change, halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and contribute to poverty alleviation.

The programme is designed to address the GCBC problem statement: there is a lack of a) evidence on how the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity contributes to inclusive climate resilient development and poverty reduction; and b) processes, resource, and co-ordination mechanisms to use this evidence to bring about the transformational change is needed.

In response to the recommendation in AR3, the ToC was revised in January 2024 and logframe indicators and methodologies were updated in August 2024. This AR will assess progress against the previous logframe, and the new logframe will be used for AR5.

We have agreed to remove International Climate Finance (ICF) key performance indicators on private and public finance mobilisation from our indicators outlined in the programme’s original business case. With only a small number of projects able to report against these indicators, we anticipate KPI11 and KPI12 will be optional indicators for RGC2 and onwards.

The methodology for Key Performance Indicators was revised in August 2024 to be more robust. This indicator is included in the programme logframe as well as in all project and grantee logframes at the impact level. As a research programme, the GCBC has articulated transformational change as being achieved through the goal of ‘translating evidence into knowledge and action’ (as stated in the GCBC Annual Review 2021).

1. The sum of project results, where impact is based on the collation of changes brought about by individual projects.
2. Results that are additional to the sum of projects’ results, which could include the impact of efforts to build networks or central (programme-level) dissemination efforts for the evidence produced.

The GCBC’s impact will be independently evaluated at programme mid point and end point. This evaluation will draw on both aggregated project reporting data as well as assessing the contribution the programme has made to the outcomes and impact it seeks.

**B2. Describe where the programme is on/off track to contribute to the expected outcomes and impact. What action is planned in the year ahead?**

**Component 1**

Please note, this component has been completed and activity closed.

**Component 2**

The remaining two Kew projects under this component are on-track and progressing well towards their respective indicators (Appendix D); meeting some of their end of project targets ahead of time (Section C). Both projects will conclude in March 2025 and research will be published via Open Access.

**Component 3: GCBC**

The GCBC is progressing to achieve the programme’s intended impact of effective climate-resilient interventions, investments, and development that improve livelihoods and reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The significant increase in applications for RGC2,[[2]](#footnote-3) the establishment of a robust grantee management system,[[3]](#footnote-4) and the review of the Programme ToC, Logframe and Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning (MEL) framework all contribute to Outcome 1.[[4]](#footnote-5)

The programme is contributing towards Outcome 2 through synthesis of evidence across themes and geographies, which has resulted in 31 new case studies and 75 new policy-relevant evidence products (such as a risk analysis tool to calculate the impact of complex hazards interacting with the whole food system, a decision making framework for land use planning and a model for water managers to understand how pollutants are transported in river systems) to support policymakers and practitioners in adopting and upscaling innovative approaches for transformative change.[[5]](#footnote-6)

The evidence collection can be found on the [GCBC website](https://www.gcbc.org.uk/evidence/).

Additionally, the development of a comprehensive stakeholder community (e.g. scientists and researchers, indigenous peoples and local communities, farmers and landowners),[[6]](#footnote-7) and increased focus on gender equality and social inclusion ensures that the activities and benefits of the programme are accessible to all – including the hardest to reach. The capacity strengthening initiative and the active engagement of the Evidence Advisory Group further enhance the programme’s ability to achieve its intended impact via Outcome 3.[[7]](#footnote-8)

**Actions planned for the year ahead**

* Costed Business Case Extension
  + In May 2024, a no-cost extension of 9 months, until December 2027, was approved to offer 36-month grant terms in Competition 2 as advertised. In the next annual review period, the programme plans to develop a costed Business Case extension to change the end date to March 2034 and increase the budget by approximately £70m. Having a long-term extension with funding released through decision gateways dependent on the programme’s delivery will allow the programme to build up a critical mass of evidence and research outputs through which to achieve the transformational change outlined in the Theory of Change.
* Logframe Development
  + The programme logframe is currently being refined to reflect the revised Theory of Change, to support the monitoring and evaluation of progress against the outputs, outcomes, and impacts.
* GESI
  + The programme is currently undergoing a thorough GESI analysis. Based on its findings, there will be focused effort to enhance processes to protect and empower Indigenous Peoples and local communities and integrate GESI considerations into programme design and delivery.
* Independent Evaluator
  + An independent process evaluation and interim assessment of progress towards intended outcomes in the Theory of Change will be commissioned by the end of 2024. The findings from the evaluation will be used to inform the Programme Board in their decision around the future of the programme. In March 2024, Board members were supportive of a third grant competition round but were keen for any 4th+ competition to be based on evidence of the programme’s success. As it is an R&D programme, it will take time to have impact.
* Evidence Advisory Group (EAG)
* The EAG provides independent advice and scrutiny on the design, scope, outputs and overall strategic direction of the GCBC. We reappointed four EAG members, including the Chair, for an additional two years, following high-quality advice received. Following a recruitment campaign in April-June 2024, we appointed six new members for three years. This round increased Global South representation on the panel and addressed specific knowledge gaps. Of the six new appointees, four are from the Global South. All members are based with academic institutions or environmental organisations, at director level or as independent consultants, and bring a diversity of experience to the EAG.
* We will hold a supplementary recruitment call in Q3 to find 1-2 members with expertise in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.
* Capacity Strengthening
  + For the next annual review period, we plan to further develop the programme’s capacity initiative, utilising the learnings, qualitative and quantitative feedback from RGC2’s capacity strengthening pilot.
* Restructuring
  + Defra will work to refine the governance model for the GCBC after the departure of the Strategic Science Lead in March 2025. Under the new model, research theme selection and strategic science direction will be undertaken in-house by Defra. The Hub consortium, led by DAI will take on scientific aspects of grant competitions, MEL, international networking and annual reporting.

**B3. Justify whether the programme should continue, based on its own merits and in the context of the wider portfolio**

Component 2 of the project is due to finish in March 2025, and no extension of these activities is necessary. However, Component 3 of the ICF R&D Programme (The GCBC) should continue, and in July 2024 the programme board gave approval for an extension of the GCBC for up to 8 grant competitions. There is huge demand for research under the GCBC, with the first stage of the GCBC's Competition 2 receiving a total of 507 Concept Note applications. The demand for grant funding is increasing year on year as the programme becomes more well known as a result of our outreach activities. The programme design includes active synthesis of evidence across themes and geographies, and subsequent strategic dissemination to inform decision making and learning. This evidence synthesis process becomes more robust when more projects are funded with overlapping themes and geographies.

The programme's Theory of Change emphasises the focus on systemic change as evidence is utilised to inform widespread adoption of policies, practices, and investment strategies promoting inclusive, climate-resilient poverty reduction via biodiversity conservation. The programme has achieved notable outputs aligning with its Theory of Change, as outlined in Section B2 above.

There is scope to further refine the programme’s delivery mechanisms to enhance value for money during the next Annual Review period. Plans are underway to maximise the impacts and longevity of the programme through the multi-year Spending Review bids and a business case extension to secure future long-term funding of the programme. Enhancing sustainability and longevity of impacts could also involve adapting delivery methods, such as transitioning ICF R&D funded projects into scalable models or incorporating community-driven approaches for lasting local ownership. For example, by strengthening the networks and connections between grantees, through online and in-person events, they will be able to share examples of best practice for scalability and local ownership.

## C. DETAILED OUTPUT SCORING

Please see Appendix A for the detailed output scoring table.

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| Component | Overall score | Weighting for overall AR score |
| 2.1: Kew Timber | A | 3% |
| 2.2: Kew Non-Timber Forest Risk Commodity (FRC) | A+ | 5.4% |
| 3: Global Centre for Biodiversity and Climate (GCBC) | A+ | 89% |

Component 2 - Kew Timber

“Driving innovation in forest protection and enforcement monitoring. Tackling illegal logging: creating a timber reference library to support enforcement (World Forest ID or WFID at Kew).”

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| **Output Title** | Reference collection built to required standards, coverage, and size to enable expansion and innovation of authentication technologies and reference database construction | | | |
| Output number: | | 1 | Output Score: | A+ |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 30 | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 1.1 Size of the reference collection at Kew | 4,800 samples by end 2023/24, 5,200 samples acquired, accessioned, processed, and curated to international standards by Y5 (1200/year) by March 2025 | Exceeded through 5,200 being met by April 2024 |
| 1.2 Total number of subsamples supplied | 4,000 subsamples supplied to WFID consortium laboratories by March 2025 | Exceeded: 4,035 subsamples were supplied by July 2024. |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

The logframe target of 4,300 by October 2025 has been adjusted to align with the end of the current ICF funding cycle; thus 4,000 in March 2025 should be both the milestone and target. Overall, both project end targets are already reached.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

No changes made or planned but a small technical revision to the logframe. The project’s original close date was October 2025, but this was brought forward to March 2025 to fit the current funding cycle. The required indicator has been amended to reflect this change.

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| **Output Title** | Scientific data acquired using the WFID at Kew collection to drive scientific progress and innovation in authentication, with reduction of sampling costs | | | |
| Output number: | | 2 | Output Score: | A |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 30 | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 2.1 Number of academic publications by WFID at Kew advancing DART TOF MS, SIRA and wood anatomy as techniques for timber authentication | 3 publications by end 2023/24, 4 Academic publications by March 2025 | Exceeded - 13 Academic papers published by March 2024, 14 Academic papers by July 2024 |
| 2.2 Number of academic publications by WFID at Kew developing or enhancing methods for timber species and origin authentication publications integrating trace elements, genomics with the techniques above via models. | 4 publications by end 2023/24, 4 Academic publications by March 2025 | Under Target at present but 1 key Academic paper published: Mortier et al.): A novel framework for tracing timber following the Ukraine invasion. It is in an Impact Factor 18 Journal, setting a new baseline and state of the art for integrating multiple traceability analysis methods via modelling. |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

Indicator 2.1 project target already greatly exceeded.Indicator 2.2 may be missed on quantity, but the paper published to date is of high quality, impact, and influence, and is a particularly important landmark moment for traceability research across the board using combined analysis methods and modelling. It is open access, with over 5, 000 accesses following publication in March 2024 (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41477-024-01648-5/metrics>). The team is confident that at least one more paper will be published against this indicator by March 2025. The output milestones are met via the balance between the two indicators.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

No changes made or planned.

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| **Output Title** | Generation of collaborations with the Office for Product Safety & Standards Environmental Enforcement & Compliance Team (OPSS) resulting in enhanced UK Timber Regulations (UKTR) enforcement expertise and scientific engagement | | | |
| Output number: | | 3 | Output Score: | B |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 20 | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 3.1.1 Number of country-based collaborations with OPSS per year | 5 collaboration years recorded by end 2021/22, 6 by March 2025 | Under Target: Limited by OPSS capacity issues in early years of project, with the team impacted sequentially through the project by COVID, loss of staff to the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU), other factors and OPSS switch of focus especially in 22-23 away from DAC list countries to conflict timber from Russia. However, bimonthly meetings continue to be held, and a wood identification leaflet has been produced and recently reviewed with industry stakeholders at the OPSS Experts Panel (16 July), see below |
| 3.1.2 Number of training events with OPSS per year | 3 training sessions by March 2025 | Exceeded: 4 sessions already held. |
| 3.1.3 Number of international country-based collaborations outside of OPSS | Use by 5 DAC list country governments or organisations by March 2025 | Performance against target will not be clear until March 2025. |
| 3.2 Number of interactions based on implementation of DART TOF-MS, SIRA, wood anatomy or other research methods delivered to OPSS and international governmental stakeholders per year via WFID geared to their needs. Interactions can include reports, presentations, and meetings. | 10 reports and 1 output like Chinese plywood enforcement project report by March 2025 | Five products in last quarter – see below. |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

Recent activities:

* Work with OPSS and Defra colleagues to generate a wood identification leaflet that was reviewed with industry stakeholders at the OPSS Experts Panel 16 July (3.1.1)
* Two CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) assessments of Dalbergia using wood anatomy and Direct analysis in real-time (DART) time-of-flight mass spectrometry (TOFMS) as applied cases in enabling UKTR enforcement (3.2)
* Participation in Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime UK with a poster on wood identification methods and their role in combatting transnational illegal logging. (3.2)
* Participation in [TDUK Learning Day 2024 (timberdevelopment.uk)](https://timberdevelopment.uk/event/tduk-learning-day-2024/) with a presentation on wood identifications methods. Co-Presenters included Soil Association, Defra, and OPSS (3.2)
* Hosting a Department for Business & Trade team for a brief tour of the wood anatomy and discussion of WFID and the role of traditional and chemical wood identification. (3.2)
* Hosting over 45 participants from Discover Kew for a brief tour of the wood anatomy and discussion of WFID and the role of traditional and chemical wood identification. Developed handouts that reviewed illegal timber trade, wood identification techniques, and the WFID program as a supplementary material. (3.2)

Under Indicator 3.1.3 (and connected to Output 4), the World Forest ID at Kew project depends on currently unfunded wider World Forest ID activities and resources to deliver data use information, specifically a

* spatial platform (working title WFID infohub) development (GBP200-300k)
* spatial platform ongoing maintenance and hosting (GBP100k/year minimum)
* modelling work to prepare historical data for inclusion in the “infohub” (GBP150k)

The project will be unable to report on the use by enforcement agents/companies of reference data without funding for wider WFID from national governments to fill those strategic gaps before March 2025. Indicator targets were not met so the output score is B.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

No changes made or planned albeit that all opportunities for wider WFID informatics and data will be sought to enable delivery on data use.

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| **Output Title** | Leveraging of matched funding via philanthropic and statutory finance during the Defra funded period of WFID at Kew and developing a roadmap towards being self-sustaining at the end of the five-year Defra ICF-funded period via development of a business model based on private sector investment and/or fee for service provision | | | |
| Output number: | | 4 | Output Score: | A |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 20 | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 4.1 Finance leveraged (£) for WFID at Kew through statutory or philanthropic funding | £2M to be raised by March 2024, 2.5M to be raised by March 2025 | Met via wider World Forest ID funding under the Conflict Timber grant, FRC grant, the FRC bolt on grant, and the IWT grant. All three have contributed positively to the achievement of WFID at Kew goals, including the Nature Plants paper (see above). |
| 4.2 % of wider WFID funding from external sources | Key private sector investment and (e.g.) fee for service clients identified by December 2024 | Performance against target will not be clear until March 2025. The World Forest ID at Kew team are targeting a new statutory grant application in partnership via Cady Lancaster. Non-grant funding for wider WFID is dependent upon spatial platform and data modelling funding for infohub described under output 3 above. |
| 4.3 Number of staff members recruited per year (based on approved project proposals) | 2 projects approved by the end of 2022 with at least 1 other person contracted | Met: Associated IWT grant in 23-24 included active research assistant and exchangers from the DRC and Gabon. |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

As per output 3, the World Forest ID at Kew project depends on currently unfunded wider World Forest ID activities and resources to deliver data use information, specifically a spatial platform (working title WFID infohub), its ongoing maintenance and hosting and modelling work to prepare historical data for inclusion in the “infohub”. WFID fundraising successes described under 4.1 and 4.3 keeps risk at moderate. Some indicator targets have been achieved, and others can’t be measured yet, so it scores A.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

No changes made or planned albeit that all opportunities for wider WFID informatics and data will be sought to enable delivery on data use.

# Component 2 – Kew Non-Timber Forest Risk Commodity (FRC)

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| **Output Title** | Cocoa, soybean, and other Forest Risk Commodity (FRC) reference collections built to required standards, coverage, and size to support reference database development and enable innovation of traceability and authentication technologies and UK regulatory framework | | | |
| Output number: | | 1 | Output Score: | A+ |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 60 | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| Collection and subsample size | Planned 250 + samples per year | Exceeded  753 |
| Collection and subsample size | Cocoa and soy obtained from each of the partner countries (4-6) | Met  6 |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

The project has successfully undertaken multiple within-year collecting expeditions to obtain geolocated soybean and cocoa pods directly harvested from the field. These have been donated and shipped to Kew for accessioning into the World Forest ID reference collection and subsampled prior to elemental, isotopic, molecular, and genetic testing. **Expeditions and sample numbers specific to within** **time period Aug ’23 to July 2024 include** Cocoa: Thailand III (75); Ecuador I (272); Nigeria I (87); Soy: Brazil III (100); Bolivia II (56); Paraguay II (110); Oil palm: Thailand (20); Rubber: Thailand (33).

The resulting analytical data forms the World Forest ID database to train the traceability models. The project is on track to hit end-of-programme targets. Significant issues remain climate-associated delays or failure of soy and cocoa harvests (e.g. droughts, floods, disease) as well as political unrest (e.g. Ecuador) and threats to personal safety of collectors in the field from hostile farmers (e.g. northern Brazil). Where these challenges have occurred, the programme and locations of collections have been adjusted accordingly to mitigate all risks.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

There have been no major changes to the output in the past year and there are no planned changes as a result of this review.

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| **Output Title** | Scientific data acquired using the WFID at Kew collection to drive scientific progress and innovation in authentication, with reduction of sampling costs. | | | |
| Output number: | | 2 | Output Score: | A |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 40 | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| Consolidate machine learning approaches by Kew and collaborator partnerships to enhance the power of sampling protocols for future supply chain sample analyses to determine soybean, cocoa, and other FRC traceability. | Model development for soybean, cocoa, and integration with timber datasets    Article drafts for publication (1-2 per year) | Met  1 |
| Development of a targeted and optimized sampling strategy for SIRA and trace elements based on the identification, through machine learning modelling of specific focus areas to effectively reduce sampling cost per unit area. | New publication for soybean and cocoa traceability methodologies (1-2 article drafts by 2023)    Model can learn to identify priority sampling locations | Met  1 |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

The project team has built a powerful model based on that which we published for Eastern European conflict timber in Nature Plants. Using the geolocated reference library of South American soybeans, we now have a complete analytic pipeline for testing origin claims based on their elemental and isotopic composition, combined into a Gaussian Processes regression model. Our method based on SIRA and trace elements analysis (TEA) alone currently predicts soybean origins to within 190 km from the true harvest location. Testing of soy with soil properties and climatic conditions as predictors has not yet improved model performance. The first draft of the South American soybean traceability manuscript has been written and awaiting some final SHapley Additive exPlanations (SHAP) analysis before sharing with other co-authors prior to journal submission. New cocoa datasets are to be analysed for both African and South American models and a manuscript will arise out of this in the next stage.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

There have been no major changes to the output in the past year, however one planned change as a result of this review is to contract an additional machine learning expert to support the in-depth analysis of our increasingly extensive datasets, including molecular and genetic, for both soy and cocoa. This will ensure that scientific publication output targets are met within the timeframe of the project.

# Component 3 – GCBC

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| **Output Title** | High-quality, new operationally relevant research evidence (what works, where why and for whom) around the sustainable use of biodiversity, including application to tools/frameworks | | | |
| Output number: | | Output A | Output Score: | A+ |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25%[[8]](#footnote-9) | Weighting revised since last AR? | No[[9]](#footnote-10) |

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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| Number of **evidence** products produced to support operational implementation of sustainable biodiversity activities (disaggregated by type e.g., models, frameworks, research products). | 99 knowledge/evidence products for the reporting period of FY 2023-2024  (1 April 2023 – 30 March 2024) | Exceeded  150 |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

A total of 150 new operationally relevant knowledge/evidence products were produced in the reporting period covering 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, of which 143 were from Phase 1 grantees and 7 from RGC1 grantees. This brings the cumulative total to 226 knowledge/evidence products since the start of GCBC (including in previous reporting periods). With a joint target of 99 knowledge/evidence products for the reporting period, grantees overachieved the indicator under Output A by 52%(Appendix E, Table 1).

Some examples of evidence/knowledge products produced during the reporting period across Phase 1 and RGC1 include: the development of a data platform (data cube) (Bio+MINE, Phase 1); the development of a risk tool to trace the impact of hazards from and to food systems (One Food, Phase 1); a policy brief outlining the need to protect wild seaweed stocks in relation to safeguarding seaweed farming (Innovative Seaweed, Phase 1); and the development market study and rapid participatory appraisal tools (International Potato Center, RGC1).

For Phase 1 grantees, of the 143 knowledge products produced during the reporting period, 56% were research products, 16% frameworks, 11% models and 17% ‘other’. DEEPEND and Environmental Pollution produced many of the knowledge products with 32% and 38% respectively, however all 7 grantees reported having produced new products within the reporting period. This brings the total cumulative number of products produced since the beginning of Phase 1 grants to 219 products.

For RGC1 grantees, a total of 7 evidence products were reported by 4 out of 12[[10]](#footnote-11) grantees, of which all but one were research products. Many grantees reported evidence products, however, during the review and quality assurance process by the Fund Management Team, it was found that some grantees were misinterpreting the definition of ‘evidence product,’ in turn lowering the final number of reported products to 7. Given RGC1 grantees only reported activities covering the 2-week period following the completion of their inception phase and the end of the reporting period, grantees have already shown great progress despite their early stage of implementation.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

The wording of the indicator supporting Output A changed in November 2023 from “Number of **knowledge** products produced to support operational implementation of sustainable biodiversity activities” to “Number of **evidence** products produced to support operational implementation of sustainable biodiversity activities”. This means there is a slight difference in wording between Phase 1 and RGC1 grantees, however, the indicator is in effect measuring the same output, but has merely been updated with the word ‘evidence’ to better encapsulate the range of products that are being produced by grantees, to avoid any confusion among grantees, and to better reflect the intended outputs from the research, namely evidence.

Another change is that this output indicator is now optional to report on, on the basis that grantees report on at least 2 out of the 4 output indicators. This is a change that was put into effect in November 2023, for the incoming RGC1 grantees, based on feedback from Phase 1 grantees, that not all indicators reflected their grants. For RGC1 onwards, it was jointly decided by the Hub and Defra, to make some indicators optional, whilst inviting grantees to add additional indicators (drawing from a thematic indicator bank supplied by the Hub, or selecting their own project-specific outputs). This approach would ensure a level of standardisation across GCBC, allowing some data to be aggregated, whilst at the same time having enough flexibility for grantees to effectively report on their grants in a way that reflected what they were doing.

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| **Output Title** | High-quality, new, or strengthened interdisciplinary research networks and partnerships are formed which can address evidence gaps and/or develop tools/frameworks on the sustainable use of biodiversity | | | |
| Output number: | | Output B | Output Score: | A+ |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25% | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |

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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| Number of research partnerships/collaborations formed or strengthened as a result of GCBC input | 76 partnerships/collaborations for the reporting period of FY 2023-2024 (1 April 2023 – 30 March 2024) | Exceeded  103 |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

A total of 103 new research partnerships/collaborations were formed or strengthened in the reporting period covering 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, of which 64 were from Phase 1 grantees and 39 from RGC1 grantees. This brings the cumulative total to 236 partnerships/collaborations since the start of GCBC (including in previous reporting periods). With a joint target of 76 partnerships/collaborations for the reporting period, grantees overachieved the indicator under Output B by 36% (Appendix E, Table 2).

Examples of partnerships/collaborations formed or strengthened across Phase 1 and RGC1 include with various national and international organisations. For Phase 1 grants, the focus was on collaborating with new research institutes to support in analysis and providing additional expertise, as well as with public sector to disseminate evidence. For RGC1 grants, the focus was more on establishing core partnerships, with key activities around contracting, sub-granting, and updating documents. For those RGC1 grantees who did not report partnerships, this was due to the early stage of the grant, with partnerships expected to be formed in the subsequent quarter.

For Phase 1 grantees, the 64 new research partnerships/collaborations formed or strengthened during the reporting period reaching a cumulative 197 partnerships and collaborations for Phase 1 since the beginning of Phase 1 GCBC grants.

For RGC1 grantees, the 39 new research partnerships/collaborations formed or strengthened during the reporting period were reported by 7 of the 11 RGC1 grantees that report against this indicator. Given RGC1 grantees only reported activities covering the 2-week period following the completion of their inception phase and the end of the reporting period, grantees have already shown great progress despite their early stage of implementation.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

This output indicator is now optional to report on, on the basis that grantees report on at least 2 out of the 4 output indicators. As above this is a change that was put into effect in November 2023, for the incoming RGC1 grantees.

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| **Output Title** | Translation, communication, and dissemination of new research to relevant stakeholders via appropriate means | | | |
| Output number: | | Output C | Output Score: | A+ |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25% | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |

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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). | 1,466 people participating in research activities in the reporting period of FY 2023-2024 (1 April 2023 – 30 March 2024) | Exceeded  11,865 |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

A total of 11,865 people participated in GCBC led research activities in the reporting period covering 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, of which 11,570 were from Phase 1 grantees and 295 from RGC1 grantees. This brings the cumulative total to 14,605 people reached since the start of GCBC (including in previous reporting periods). With a joint target of 1,466 people participating in research activities in the reporting period, grantees significantly overachieved the indicator under Output C (Appendix E, Table 3).

Examples of how people were reached during the reporting period across Phase 1 and RGC1 include through field site visits (The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, RGC1); Community of Practice Workshops (One Food, Phase 1); Women’s groups (Environmental Pollution, Phase); and a Capacity Building Workshop (Innovative Seaweed, Phase 1). For the Capacity Building Workshop, the theme was “safeguarding the seaweed industry through biosecurity and seaweed conservation” and there were four invited speakers (3 females, 1 male) and an audience of 71 attendees (35 female, 36 male). Innovative Seaweed carried out a post-workshop questionnaire, gathering information on – and feedback from – attendees, the latter of which was positive, with the majority of scores 4 or 5 (5 top).

For Phase 1 grantees, 11,570 people were reached during the reporting period and a cumulative 14,310 people since the since the start of GCBC. This significant overachievement is driven by the Environmental Pollution (EP) project who significantly overachieved against their milestone targets by reaching 8,224 people as part of their project activities. This is because of the significant uptake in the IPM work in Vietnam. As EP is receiving continued funding through GCBC until 2025, targets will be reviewed an updated to better reflect the increased scope and outreach of activities. Gender disaggregation was not available across all Phase 1 grantees, and so it was not possible to report this for Phase 1. This has been strengthened for RGC1 onwards and considered a minimum reporting requirement across grantees moving forward.

For RGC1 grantees, a total of 295 people participated in GCBC led research activities out of the 8 of 12 grantees that report against this indicator. Of the 295 people, 50% were women, 48% were men, and 2% either preferred not to say or disaggregation was not gathered. Given RGC1 grantees only reported activities covering the 2-week period following the completion of their inception phase and the end of the reporting period, grantees have already shown great progress despite their early stage of implementation. Detailed disaggregated data can be found in Annex E.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

This output indicator is now optional to report on, on the basis that grantees report on at least 2 out of the 4 output indicators.

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| **Output Title** | High quality, new policy-relevant research evidence on the sustainable use of biodiversity, including application to tools/frameworks | | | |
| Output number: | | Output D | Output Score: | A+ |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25% | Weighting revised since last AR? | No |

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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| Number of evidence products produced that capture new, policy-relevant GCBC-funded research on the sustainable use of biodiversity for climate resilience and improved livelihoods (disaggregated by type e.g., models, frameworks, research products, policy briefs) | 60 policy-relevant knowledge/evidence products for the reporting period of FY 2023-2024 (1 April 2023 – 30 March 2024) | Exceeded  81 |

**C1. Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

A total of 81 new policy-relevant knowledge/evidence products were produced in the reporting period covering 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, of which 77 were from Phase 1 grantees and 4 from RGC1 grantees. This brings the cumulative total to 114 policy-relevant knowledge/evidence products since the start of GCBC (including in previous reporting periods). With a joint target of 60 policy-relevant knowledge/evidence products for the reporting period, grantees overachieved the indicator under Output D by 35% (Appendix E, Table 4).

Some examples of evidence/knowledge products produced during the reporting period include a report assessing public policy alignment for a transition to a nature-positive economy (NTSP, Phase 1); a policy brief on wild stock protection and the future of our seaweed industries (Innovative Seaweed, Phase 1); and a report on how social exclusion influences hazard transmission in food systems (One Food, Phase 1).

For Phase 1 grantees, of the 77 knowledge products produced Environmental Pollution and Kew Agroforestry produced the majority. This brings the total cumulative number of products produced since the beginning of Phase 1 grants to 110 products.

For RGC1 grantees, a total of 4 evidence products were reported by 2 out of 12 grantees. The 4 products were reported by Nature Kenya and WWT. Given RGC1 grantees only reported activities covering the 2-week period following the completion of their inception phase and the end of the reporting period, this level of progress was anticipated.

**C2. Describe any changes to this output during the past year, and any planned changes** **as a result of this review.**

The wording of the indicator supporting Output D changed in November 2023 from “Number of knowledge products produced to support “policy implementation/production supporting and mainstreaming the use sustainable biodiversity activities” to “Number of evidence products produced that capture new, policy-relevant GCBC-funded research on the sustainable use of biodiversity for climate resilience and improved livelihoods.”. This means there is a slight difference in wording between Phase 1 and RGC1 grantees, however, the indicator is in effect measuring the same output, but has merely been updated with the word ‘evidence’ to better encapsulate the range of products that are being produced by grantees and to better reflect the intended outputs from the research, namely evidence.

Another change is that this output indicator is now optional to report on, on the basis that grantees report on at least 2 out of the 4 output indicators.

# Component 3 - SMEP project (GCBC underspend through FCDO)

This project was part of a larger FCDO programme therefore the SMEP logframe reporting framework was utilised to report results instead.

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| **Output Title** | Improved knowledge and understanding of the environmental and health impacts of, and solutions for, pollution from manufacturing, including plastics. | | | |
| Output number: | | 1 | Output Score: | A |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25% | Weighting revised since last AR? | N/A |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 1.2.i Number of "research outputs" aimed at advancing our understanding of the environmental and health impacts of, and solutions for, pollution from manufacturing. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Exceeded**  3 |
| Sub-indicator - Output 1.2.ii Number of "research outputs" that address the Gender, Equality and Social Inclusion implications of environmental health impacts of, and solutions for, pollution from manufacturing. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |

**Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

In the period under review the ‘Piloting Pineapple Plant Waste to Biochar’ project has contributed to output 1. While output indicators 1.1 and 1.3 are not relevant to this project as they will not be developing peer-reviewed research papers or policy briefs, three research outputs and one GESI output are being developed. These are listed below:

* **GESI research output:** a social impact assessment for the application of biochar enriched compost on the livelihoods of surrounding communities.
* **Research output 1:** a life cycle analysis report for combined fibre and biochar production process from pineapple waste, as well as soil nutrient enhancement analysis and an analysis of the long-term impact of the application of biochar enriched compost on biodiversity.
* **Research output 2:** a carbon credit road map for the process of obtaining and selling carbon credits associated with biochar produced from pineapple waste. The roadmap will include methodologies used, verification processes, and the financial benefits accrued
* **Research output 3:** a business model defining the economic viability and potential for scaling the production of biochar from pineapple waste. The model will be tailored to different scenarios and geographies.

The completion of these deliverables has been delayed into FY2024-25, as additional time was required to adapt the project to address unanticipated challenges including changes in the supply of feedstock, adverse weather conditions and administrative issues. The research outputs will be delivered with the SMEP Q1 FY 24 25 quarterly reporting cycle.

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| **Output Title** | Identification and development, in conjunction with key stakeholders, of policy and regulatory models that can promote and facilitate the adoption of technology-based solutions to address the pollution caused by manufacturing sector and plastics. | | | |
| Output number: | | 2 | Output Score: | B |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25% | Weighting revised since last AR? | N/A |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 2.4 Programme scoping and outreach including development of partnerships with private sector and civil society necessary for achieving the programme targets. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Partnerships**:   * DelMonte * 3 small holder banana farmers   **Events**:  None |

**Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

In the period under review the ‘Piloting Pineapple Plant Waste to Biochar’ project has made considerable progress under Output 2. Output indicators 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 are not relevant to this project, as there are no policies or regulatory models that will be identified, developed, tested, or verified.

Regarding output indicator 2.4, the project partnered with Del Monte to supply feedstock and trial the application of biochar-enriched compost in their fields. The project aimed to partner with at least 5 smallholder banana farmers, to trial the application of biochar enriched compost in their fields. The amount of biochar produced by the pilot was lower than anticipated, due to a change in the supply of the feedstock required. This is explained in more detail under Output 4. These project changes affected the amount of biochar enriched compost available for testing with the smallholder farmers. As a result, the project partnered with just 3 smallholder farmers.

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| **Output Title** | Development of technology-based solutions and supporting business models, to reduce the environmental impact and enhance the gender and social equity of selected manufacturing processes including the plastics value chain. | | | |
| Output number: | | 3 | Output Score: | A |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25% | Weighting revised since last AR? | N/A |
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| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 3.1 Number of new technology-based solutions **identified** across all target countries to address key sustainability and pollution issues related to selected manufacturing processes in SMEP target countries. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |
| 3.2 Number of new technology-based solutions **developed** across all target countries to address key sustainability and pollution issues, in SMEP target countries. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |
| 3.3 Number of successful **pilot projects and/or field testing** of technology-based solutions developed by SMEP programme across all target countries, providing proof of technical and commercial viability | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |
| 3.4 Number of grants with objectives to improve GESI as part of the technology or business model being developed | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |

**Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

In the period under review, ‘Piloting Pineapple Plant Waste to Biochar’ project was implemented and met the indicators above, with regards to the development of technology-based solutions and supporting business models, to reduce the environmental impact and enhance the gender and social equity of selected manufacturing processes, in the target location.

With regards to output indicator 3.1 and 3.2, the project identified, selected, and developed the Kon-Tiki Kiln pyrolysis technology to produce biochar using pineapple waste rejected from the fibre extraction process. The project retrofitted the technology design to suit the feedstock applied and was fabricated on site. There were slight delays in the fabrication and commissioning of the technology due to administrative delays experienced at the commencement of the project.

With regards to output indicator 3.3 the pilot is fully operational, and the production of biochar is underway. It is below the planned quantities due to the learning process of the pyrolysis technology and Del Monte’s waste management strategy changes. Trials for the application of biochar enriched compost on the Del Monte pineapple fields and banana fields owned by nearby smallholder farmers are underway. The project biochar is also being applied to filter wastewater from the pineapple decortication project before it is either reused or released to the environment.

With regards to output indicator 3.4, the project aimed to create new jobs for 70 people for the collection of feedstock and biochar production at the site. Due to project changes, which resulted in slower and lower production, 29 people were employed, including 6 women. The project provided transportation for is employees including labourers who collect the feedstock from the fields. The project has also built a canteen, changing rooms, bathroom facilities which include sanitary disposal facilities.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Output Title** | Establishment of new circular processes that reduce environmental damage and industrial waste, from manufacturing and plastics value chain, and establish new sources of wealth and growth. | | | |
| Output number: | | 4 | Output Score: | A |
| Impact weighting (%): | | 25% | Weighting revised since last AR? | N/A |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator(s)** | **Milestone(s) for this review** | **Progress** |
| 4.1 Number of new circular processes identified, aimed at reducing waste and pollution from selected manufacturing production processes and value chains in target countries. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |
| 4.2 Number of new circular processes developed and established, aimed at reducing waste and pollution from selected manufacturing production processes and value chains in target countries. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |
| 4.3 Number of successful pilot projects and/or field testing of new circular processes, providing proof of technical and commercial viability. | **Milestones set at programme level** | **Met**  1 |

**Briefly describe the output’s activities and provide supporting narrative for the score.**

In the period under review, ‘Piloting Pineapple Plant Waste to Biochar’ project completed trials on new circular processes related to converting pineapple waste to biochar.

With regards to output indicators 4.1, and 4.2 the project identified, developed, and tested pyrolysis technology to treat pineapple waste that would otherwise have been burnt in the field. The biochar produced from the pyrolysis has commercial value and has agricultural benefit when combined with compost. The project produced 5.6 tonnes of biochar from 141 tonnes of pineapple waste. This biochar was blended with compost, producing 15 tonnes of biochar enriched compost. Two tonnes of biochar enriched compost were applied in the Del Monte pineapple fields, and another 2 tonnes applied on banana fields owned by local smallholder farmers. An additional 1 tonne of biochar (as a standalone product) was also applied on Del Monte fields.

With regards to output indicator 4.3 the pilot project experienced challenges in the quality of the feedstock supplied. The original proposition was based on the collection of dry feedstock from the Del Monte fields. However, Del Monte changed their waste management strategy shortly after the pilot commenced. As a result, only wet feedstock was available, and this required changing the biochar production process. This resulted in additional costs and critically, a significant reduction in the efficiency and time of the production process. While the original proposal may have proven viable given the forecast volumes, the piloting, with the requirement of an additional drying process, proved short of commercial viability.

While the biochar pilot – facing an insurmountable commercial challenge – will not see replication, the fibre from pineapple waste (to which it was attached) has shown good outcomes with a high probability of uptake and expansion. There are learnings from the biochar project that will form the basis of knowledge products and even some positive outcomes (such as the use of biochar as filtration medium for decortication wastewater) which may be incorporated in the larger (fibre) project. As part of project close out, and in addition to documenting the learning, an asset disposal plan will be submitted for sign-off.

The business case learnings are likely to show the feasibility and the commercial viability in the case **only** where dry waste can be easily collected. Therefore, the plan to scale to manage 100% of DelMonte’s waste, will not be taking place through biochar production, as a standalone project. At proposal stage, the target to address 100% of Delmonte’s waste, with the biochar taking a portion of this was realistic. The unexpected change in DelMonte’s waste management strategy means that biochar production is unlikely to be scaled as things stand. And while the production of biochar will not form a significant part of the business case for scaling to 100% of DelMonte’s waste, the use of decortication pulp as a vital component of effective composting, is likely to see 100% of the DelMonte waste addressed as part of a complete waste management strategy. The plan for scaling of the fibre production is a deliverable to be completed during the next financial year. However, DelMonte’s ambitions to bring forward the scaling of the operations will, see a revision of the timeline for this deliverable (bringing it forward to the current year), and the inclusion of composting to go with fibre extraction as part of a complete circular solution for 100% pineapple plant waste problem.

**D: RISK**

**Overview of risk management**

The programme has maintained its overall risk rating at a ‘low’ level. This is a testament to the proactive efforts of the programme team in addressing its major risks. All residual risk ratings remain within the overall risk appetites of the programme. This is a crucial aspect of our risk management strategy, ensuring that we are not exposing the programme to unnecessary risk.

Being a Research & Development programme, the programme has a higher tolerance for strategic, delivery, and operational related risks. This is inherent in research and development, where uncertainty and risk are often necessary for innovation and progress. However, Defra remains vigilant towards safeguarding, fiduciary, and reputational risks. There have been no cases of safeguarding or fiduciary risks during this annual review period. As a public sector body, we have a responsibility to manage these risks carefully to maintain public trust and ensure the effective use of public resources. Therefore, we have implemented a financial process where grantees have to ensure that funds are completely traceable, require authorisations, and can only be used for their designated purposes. The risk register and matrix can be found in Appendix F.

**Risk Management Approach**

Our Management Lead, DAI, actively monitors project-level risks, such as those associated with RGC1 projects, through monthly meetings with grantees. The Defra programme team monitor Component 2 and Phase 1 project-level risks via monthly project reporting, challenging content and ratings where necessary. When project risks escalate to a level that could impact programme delivery, they are recorded in the programme level risk register.

Each delivery partner also maintains their own risk registers, and these risks are shared with the Authority during their respective monthly performance meetings. If a risk impacts the hub consortium, it is discussed during fortnightly hub meetings where mitigating actions are agreed between the parties. Any risks that have high severity, significant impact on project milestones, or require resources beyond the hub's control to mitigate are escalated to the Senior Management Team (SMT) in fortnightly Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings. The programme team outlined the risk escalation process (Appendix F, Diagram 1), which was shared with delivery partners on 6 June 2024. Our approach to risk management aims to strengthen the programme’s Theory of Change and increases the likelihood of achieving the desired outcomes through risk mitigation efforts. It also plays a significant role in providing the necessary evidence and insights to inform decision-making, address challenges and enhance the programme’s ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The process of escalating and recording risks in the programme level risk register allows for a coordinated response to significant risks. This ensures that key issues are dealt with at the appropriate level and contributes to the overall resilience of the programme.

**Safeguarding, Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) Measures**

Delivery partners and subcontracted parties are obliged to provide a safe and trusted physical environment, an open and supportive culture, accessible and clear policies, procedures and measures, and clear escalation paths. DAI and Kew report on safeguarding risks monthly through their respective performance meetings. Following the recommendations from the Service Delivery Directorate (SDD) internal audit, we plan to strengthen safeguarding measures (including Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment) and clarify research ethics requirements separately. This is crucial for the programme’s credibility and reputation, and it also contributes to the achievement of its Theory of Change outcomes by ensuring that all participants can contribute fully and effectively.

To effectively engage Indigenous People and local communities in a safe and inclusive manner, we plan on exploring opportunities to partner with local networks and organisations experienced in creating safe ways for women, girls, and other marginalised groups to participate and express their ideas, particularly in terms of promoting local community natural resource management. This approach can enhance the programme’s impact and contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

**Due Diligence Process**

The GCBC’s Management Lead, DAI Global, is responsible for conducting due diligence on all potential grant recipients from the GCBC’s research calls; DAI assessed GCBC research grant applicants for RGC1 and RGC2 against safeguarding criteria in its first sift of entries and conducted due diligence on grant winners. All findings are presented to the Defra programme team before grant agreements are signed.

Conducting due diligence on all potential grant recipients helps to ensure that funds are allocated to projects that align with the programme’s Theory of Change and that have the capacity to deliver on their objectives. This contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.

In summary, these practices not only mitigate potential risks and safeguard all stakeholders involved, but they also ensure that the programme remains resilient, credible, and capable of achieving its intended impact.

**E: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT:** **DELIVERY, COMMERCIAL & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

**Summarise the performance of partners and Defra, notably on commercial and financial issues.**

Defra/DAI/Kew

Throughout the annual review period, Defra encountered challenges establishing a multi-party consortium (Evidence Advisory Group; Management Lead, DAI; and Strategic Science Lead, Kew) within compressed timeframes. Despite the challenges, we were able to successfully complete the set-up of the programme, establish the necessary structures, processes and systems to allow the GCBC to become fully operational. This led the way for the design and implementation of RGC1 to enable GCBC’s first grantees to be contracted and delivering before the year end, while also quickly adopting lessons from that process into a revised and much improved design for RGC2 which launched only 8 months after RGC1. This has set the foundations for the GCBC. Strategies implemented by the programme team to improve performance include:

* Working with hub partners to update the Ways of Working plan to address some of the challenges associated with working across three organisations.
* More formalised approach to contract management with Hub partners, to improve the timeliness, quality and clarity of reporting.
* The Authority's proposed hub escalation risk process, implemented from June 2024, and the inclusion of risk in the fortnightly hub meeting agenda, horizon-scanning and scenario analysis exercises is expected to support Kew and DAI’s risk reporting.
* The Authority holds monthly meetings with the hub Senior Management to discuss strategic decision making, direction, resource issues, risks and concerns.
* DAIs KPIs are closely monitored in monthly performance meetings ensuring a quality service is provided.
* Applying service credits to DAI’s quarterly invoice in recognition of poor performance.

In addition to implementing measures with both delivery partners, the Programme Board decided to transition to a single partner model in July 2024; removing the function of the Strategic Science Lead (Kew) and having the programme chiefly delivered by the Management Lead (DAI). This would simplify and streamline management, aligning with the wider drive across Defra to improve efficiencies and value for money.

Additional Partners

Component 2 and Phase 1 GCBC delivery partners have generally been pleasant to work with and respond well to commissions. However, late reporting was a common theme across all delivery partners. To mitigate this, the programme circulates monthly reminders to projects prior to reporting deadlines.

**E2. Assess the VfM of this output compared to the proposition in the Business Case, based on performance over the past year**

**Assessment of the programme’s value for money**

The programme is demonstrating good overall progress against milestones at this stage and provides good evidence of the programme’s performance in terms of economy and efficiency. Further evidence is needed to fully assess effectiveness, given several output indicators are expected to be reported on at a later stage of the programme. Finally, the programme team has outlined ways in which they expect to improve GESI considerations for the remainder of the programme.

Quantitative evaluation of research and development programmes can be challenging. Pathways from funded research to development impact are often complex and indirect. Research and development programmes can achieve Value for Money (VfM) through ensuring: research areas that address evidence gaps and stakeholder/audience needs are selected; they are delivered by strong partnerships; there is a high standard of research; effective programme management; good commercial approach and shared learning.

**Economy**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **£m** | **20/21** | **21/22** | **22/23** | **23/24** | **24/25** | **25/26** | **26/27** | **27/28** | **Total** |
| **Original BC allocation** | **1.02** | **2.59** | **16.00** | **20.00** | **12.00** |  |  |  | **51.6** |
| **2022 reprofiling** |  |  | **14.00** | **14.00** |  |  |  |  | **-** |
| **No-cost extension agreed by IC in 2023** |  |  |  | **14.00** | **12.00** | **7.00** | **4.50** |  | **-** |
| **Actual spend** | **0.66** | **1.88** | **11.58** | **11.45** |  |  |  |  | **25.8** |
| **Past Underspend** | **0.36** | **0.71** | **2.42** | **2.30** |  |  |  |  | **5.8** |
| **Proposed reprofile** |  |  |  |  | **12.00** | **10.00** | **4.80** | **2.00** | **25.8** |

As set out in the business case, the programme team follows strict and transparent processes to ensure that it spends economically. Across the programme, all delivery partners undertake monthly risk reporting via performance meetings to monitor delivery, financial, strategic, safeguarding, and fraud risks. The Defra programme team also conducted a Fraud Risk Assessment in May 2024, as commissioned by ODA.

For Component 2, delivery partner RBG Kew is paid through the Risk & Opportunities process: any deviation in agreed spend is flagged to Defra Finance Business Partners quarterly and any money not spent as agreed is returned to Defra at the end of the financial year.

For Component 3, DAI Global are the management lead procured to administer the disbursements to grantees. DAI are paid quarterly in arrears based on fixed core deliverables set out in the specification, and on agreed variable costs that reflect the size and complexity of each grant competition. The inclusion of variable costs ensures that DAI only bills for resource used and that the programme team can review spend and adjust in monthly performance management meetings. RBG Kew are the strategic science lead for Component 3 and are paid through the Risk & Opportunities process, where any deviation in agreed spend is flagged to Defra Finance Business Partners quarterly and any money not spent as agreed is returned to Defra at the end of the financial year. Close monitoring of DAI and Kew deliverables and KPI’s through the monthly performance management meetings helps to ensure that money is being spent economically.

Component 3 projects fall into two categories: Phase 1 projects, and research grant competition projects (RGC). Phase 1 projects under Component 3 are paid in arrears based on pre-agreed outputs. DAI Global are contracted to ensure that: no grantee payments are made in advance of need; claims for payment must include evidence of spend and evidence of agreed outputs; any money clawed back from a project is returned to Defra in 10 working days; and all GCBC work is managed in line with HMG’s Managing Public Money guidelines. DAI also conduct due diligence on all potential grant recipients from the GCBC’s research calls to ensure that funds are allocated to projects that align with the programme’s Theory of Change and that have the capacity and resources to deliver on their objectives, whilst ensuring that money is spent economically.

In FY 23/24, spending amounted to £11.5 million, which is below the reprofiled projected spend of £14 million. This cost can be broken down into £1,105,713 for Component 2; £7,993,264 for Phase 1 (Component 3); £541,734 for RGC1 (Component 3); and £1,477,133 for the Hub costs (Strategic Science and Management Leads). Spend for 24/25 is projected to be £13m, exceeding the £12.0m business case allocation. However, this is due to deliberately overprogramming and we expect the spend to come in on budget.

The above table compares the FY allocations approved in the business case with actual spend and revised FY forecasts. Between 2020-2025, the programme team anticipates spending c.£12m less than the business case allocation of £51.6m. This is primarily due to a ‘reapportioned’ extension to the business case to extend the programme’s £51.6m allocation until 31 March 2027. This change was made to offer longer (36 month) research grants to selected RGC projects, which makes the programme competitive with comparable R&D programmes and gives researchers enough time to carry out more complex research. Therefore, not all the initial business case allocation will be spent before 31 March 2025. Additionally, procuring and establishing the GCBC Hub took longer than anticipated and delayed the spend on research grant competitions, and RGC projects are still in the initial stages of implementation so have lower spend. The delays to procurement did not change the cost of procurement or amount being offered in grants. It only delayed the start of the first competition.

To prevent underspend, the GCBC programme team have overprogrammed the £12m by c.£1m and aim to overprogramme by a further £1.4m to meet target budget of £14.4m (120% FY allocation). The additional spend will be used for capacity strengthening for RGC2 applicants; hosting an International Symposium in a GCBC priority region; increasing the ambition and/or size of RGC2; and enhancing the network and partnerships element.

**Efficiency**

The cost of producing programme outputs is on par with that anticipated in the business case. The overall scores of A and A+ of Component 2’s Timber and Non-timber FRC projects demonstrates that the programme was efficient in delivering high quality outputs proportionate to the expenditure.

In Component 3, the team ensured that 19 research projects delivered all four outputs at ‘A+’ grade. GCBC funded projects delivered 150 evidence products to support operational implementation of sustainable biodiversity activities, and 81 evidence products that capture new, policy-relevant GCBC-funded research on the sustainable use of biodiversity or climate resilience and improved livelihoods. These outputs exceeded the targets of 99 and 60 respectively. Additionally, 103 research partnerships/collaborations were formed because of GCBC input, and 11,865 people participated in GCBC led research activities. These results exceeded the targets of 76 partnerships/collaborations and 1,466 participants. These four outputs demonstrate that the programme has been efficient in delivering the outputs set out in the business case at a lower cost than the business case forecast. In terms of outputs expected in the business case; Component 2 is on track to deliver its reference libraries; and the GCBC is delivering its range of evidence products. In summary, programme outputs have exceeded targets whilst keeping spend within budget, therefore, the programme has demonstrated efficiency in converting inputs to outputs.

As the programme has onboarded more grantees and developed a suite of guidance documents, the marginal cost of managing grantees has reduced, in terms of resourcing and time. In addition, as we pass 50 grants funded, which will happen from RGC3 onwards, the cost of grant management will drop by 24% from £221 pm to £167 pm, further improving cost-efficiency.

Delays to the programme have been minimal and have not impacted value-for-money in terms of cost per output. The transition from two delivery partners to one will increase efficiency by reducing the burden of contract management and by improving coordination. The overall budget spend allocated to delivery partners, given DAI will pick up some of RGB Kew’s science deliverables, and in-house delivery, is likely to remain the same or fall slightly.

**Effectiveness**

At this stage, it is too early to assess whether outputs have led to envisaged outcomes, as outcomes and impact occur over a longer time horizon, particularly with R&D programmes. Meeting and exceeding expectations for outputs is a strong indication that, providing the underlying assumptions in the programme ToC are correct, the programme is on track to deliver the desired outcomes. Component 2 is on track to deliver accessible and useable timber and FRC reference libraries to enable enforcement agents to accurately assess the origin of samples they receive. This makes progress towards increasing access to high quality data to support efforts to protect and restore forest cover. Component 3 is also on track to deliver a range of accessible evidence products, including design support tools, best practice guidance, models, briefing papers, and policy reports as well as peer reviewed articles in high impact journals. The GCBC independent evaluation planned for 2025 will include an assessment of early outcomes and give an indication of the effectiveness of the programme.

**Equity**

The original business case integrates equity considerations into each of the programme components. However, the lack of disaggregated data available for this annual review period makes it difficult to assess the equity of the ICF R+D programme at this stage. Neither of the Component 2 projects were able to provide data with disaggregation for any of the four main ICF categories (sex, age, disability, or geography) as their output indicators do not pertain to people. It is therefore not possible to assess the equity of these two projects.

As in the original business case, equity monitoring is integrated into GCBC project reporting as projects are required to disaggregate data for output indicator C (the number of people participating in GCBC-led research activities) by gender. However, gender disaggregation was not available across all Phase 1 projects, so it was not possible to report this for Phase 1. For RGC1 projects, 295 people participated in GCBC led research activities for projects that report against this indicator. Of the 295 people, 50% were women, 48% were men, and 2% either preferred not to say or disaggregation was not gathered. While these figures only represent a small portion of the people participating in all GCBC-led research activities, they are encouraging.

Delivery partners are expected to ensure the integration of gender and social equity metrics into all policies, programmes, and mechanisms to empower women and men, reduce inequalities between and among populations, and promote human rights. Both DAI and Kew are committed to equity through numerous Equality, Diversity, Equity, Engagement, and Inclusion plans which are updated regularly and available online**.** At the programme level, the GCBC was scored as GESI Unaware by the Service Delivery Directorate audit, however, the programme team aim to achieve GESI Sensitive by 2025. The team have commissioned a GESI analysis for the GCBC and are working with the delivery partners to develop more GESI specific indicators for projects to report against and a MEL plan that will capture how GESI will be monitored throughout programme implementation. The results from the GESI analysis and independent evaluation will give insight into the equity of the GCBC.

**Appendix A: Annual Review 4 Detailed Output Scoring**

The overall programme score, A, was calculated through the method shown below (weighted scores were calculated using C=1, B=2, A=3, A+=4, A++=5, with weightings being calculated from total funding per component and with final scores being the weighted score rounded to the nearest whole score).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Output no.** | **Output weighting** | **Score** | **Score description** | **Project weighted score** |
| SMEP | 1 - Improved knowledge and understanding of the environmental and health impacts of, and solutions for, pollution from manufacturing, including plastics. | 25% | A | Output met expectation | A (2.75) |
| 2 - Identification and development, in conjunction with key stakeholders, of policy and regulatory models that can promote and facilitate the adoption of technology-based solutions to address the pollution caused by manufacturing sector and plastics. | 25% | B | Output moderately did not meet expectation |
| 3 - Development of technology-based solutions and supporting business models, to reduce the environmental impact and enhance the gender and social equity of selected manufacturing processes including the plastics value chain. | 25% | A | Output met expectation |
| 4 - Establishment of new circular processes that reduce environmental damage and industrial waste, from manufacturing and plastics value chain, and establish new sources of wealth and growth. | 25% | A | Output met expectation |
| Kew Timber | 1- Reference collection | 30% | A+ | Output moderately exceeded expectation | A (3.1) |
| 2- Scientific data acquired | 30% | A | Output met expectation |
| 3- Collaborations with OPSS | 20% | B | Output moderately did not meet expectation |
| 4- Leveraging of matched funding | 20% | A | Output met expectation |
| Kew FRC | 1- Soybean and cocoa reference collections | 60% | A+ | Output moderately exceeded expectation | A+ (3.6) |
| 2- Scientific data acquired | 40% | A | Output met expectation |
| GCBC | 1- Operationally-relevant research evidence | 25% | A+ | Output moderately exceeded expectation | A+ (4) |
| 2- Interdisciplinary research networks and partnerships | 25% | A+ | Output moderately exceeded expectation |
| 3- Dissemination of new research | 25% | A+ | Output moderately exceeded expectation |
| 4- Policy-relevant research evidence | 25% | A+ | Output moderately exceeded expectation |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **Funding FY 22/23-23/24 period (£)** | **Weighting** | **Score** | **Overall programme weighted score** |
| SMEP | 337,787 | 2.6% | A (2.75) |  |
| Kew Timber | 396,518 | 3% | A (3.1) |
| Kew FRC | 709,195 | 5.4% | A+ (3.6) | A+ (3.9) |
| GCBC | 11,582,698 | 89% | A+ (4) |  |

**Appendix B: ICF R&D Theory of ChangeA diagram of a company's flowchart

Description automatically generated  
GCBC Theory of Change**

A close-up of a diagram

Description automatically generated

**Appendix C: GCBC GESI Action Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | | | |
| **GESI mainstreaming requirement** | **Programme Baseline: GESI unaware**    ***(SRO to insert SDD audit findings and other relevant evidence)*** | **Programme Ambition: GESI sensitive by January 2025. GESI aware by January 2026.** | **Actions Planned for April 2024-April 2025** | | | **Updates**   ***SRO ambition to be GESI sensitive sooner than April 2025. Provisional target changed to January 2025.***    ***GESI empowering target date will be no more than 12 months after the programme achieves GESI sensitive*** |
| **DAI** | **Kew** | **Defra** |
| **Team capacity** | *Lack of expertise / resourcing dedicated to GESI.*  **SDD audit findings /other evidence:** | *Relevant GESI expertise and resources are drawn on as needed* | * DAI as ML has Subira Bjornsen (Cadmus) as contact * To monitor GESI actions and capacity through down-stream partners and GCBC grantees. | * Kew as SSL has Joanna Lane as contact * To ensure GESI and marginalised perspectives are included in research principles and priorities. | Monthly GESI check-ins with Helen Poulsen, ODA.    GESI sub-working group within the programme team (Kelsey and Bingbing) and Helen to meet with delivery partners regularly to track progress.  Jamie’s work: Support GCBC in strengthening its internal approach to poverty reduction, gender equality and social inclusion  Work with GCBC colleagues to identify and define outcome & deliverables of this work by March 2025 (e.g. could be delivery of GESI Action Plan) including support to Kew & partner organisations in building their own capacity, capability, and leadership on the poverty reduction & human development impact of their work  Train/ build team capacity  Review internal systems & processes  Analyse results | 1. Both delivery partners have nominated key contacts to ensure that GESI remains at the forefront of GCBC design, planning, and delivery.      1. Jamie is collecting materials for his GESI analysis and speaking to delivery partners (July). |
| **Identification of safeguarding risks** | *Lack of social and gender analysis may result in safeguarding risks not being identified or adequately mitigated against.*  **SDD audit findings /other evidence:** Commission a thorough GESI analysis of the programme, engaging suitable expertise and working with the programme team to produce the analysis, consideration and documentation required by the International Development Gender Equality Act (2014) and in line with ICAI's recommendations for ICF. Ideally this should be done in time to ensure that due diligence and documentation are complete before new spending decisions are approved. | *Social and gender analysis supports identification of Safeguarding / GESI risks and mitigation actions which are monitored via the risk management process.* | Project-level action plans include:​   * Analysis of the link between the research and women and marginalised groups. * Participation of women and marginalised groups in the research. * Description of how MEL data will be disaggregated to show GESI​. * Outline of resource on GESI within the grant.     In addition to DAI reviewing project-level self-assessments and action plans, DAI will develop guidance and deliver webinars for grantees as part of GCBC’s technical assistance facility (TAF). | As of July 2024, Kew has fed into the scope and research questions for the GESI analysis. Kew will support the GESI analysis where needed/commissioned. | Jamie to conduct GESI analysis.  To prove that the programme is achieving “GESI empowering” we must report in the annual review on progress along with evidence. | 1. DAI submitted delivery chain report. 2. Cadmus are updating logframe indicators to get us data for GESI sensitive. 3. Defra has reviewed DAI’s TAF proposal and sent feedback (July). |
| **Mitigation of safeguarding risks** | *Safeguarding policies and procedures may not be well established and/or project stakeholders may not be aware of available channels to raise concerns.*    **SDD audit findings /other evidence:** Strengthen safeguarding (including SEAH) and (separately) clarify research ethics requirements. For a research and innovation programme with the intention of engaging Indigenous People and local community safeguarding issues related to participation need to be addressed, for example, explore opportunities to partner with local networks and organisations with a track record of creating safe ways for women, girls and other excluded groups to engage and express their ideas without backlash.    For Output 2, develop a strategy and plan to assess and mitigate the risk that strengthening forest protection and enforcement mechanisms undermines the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to their lands and critical resources. Ensure that this output takes a GESI approach to understand the power dynamics within and between different communities and stakeholders and considers safeguarding risks. | *Delivery partners have robust safeguarding measures in place, assessed through due diligence. Safeguarding policies and procedures are well established and effectively managed by all project partners. All project stakeholders are made aware of channels to raise any concerns.* | * Ensure that Delivery Partners have the right skills and approach through GESI- aligned tendering and procurement process, as well as through the Due Diligence assessment. * DAI to produce GESI guidance for grantees (based on below BEIS and Sida’s documents). Includes risk assessment and mitigation for IPLC engagement and participation. Defra to approve. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60af82b2e90e071b589e9cdf/research-innovation-oda-gender-equality.pdf>   Doc 2: <https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/05/06123132/human-rights-based-approach-research.pdf>   * DAI to update on SEAH monthly | * Kew to update on SEAH monthly * Kew to actively monitor and manage safeguarding risks in their risk register. * Kew to ensure staff are trained in line with SEAH policy. * Kew to consider IPLCs as part of their stakeholder mapping and international network tool, | * Programme team to reassess DAI safeguarding given KPMG DD shortcomings. * Defra to review Kew safeguarding policies with Joanna Lane.     \*Check for alignment with HMG Safeguarding Strategy and use the Due Diligence on SEAH Safeguarding Guidance by FCDO. | 1. Both delivery partners are included in the Safeguarding self-assessment.    2. Both delivery partners have added SEAH risk to their risk registers and report on them monthly to Defra. |
| **Analysis/ Design** | *Lack of social and gender analysis means that interventions may fail to acknowledge the role of gender and exclusion. These do not necessarily do harm but may indirectly support the status quo.*    **SDD audit findings /other evidence:** Ensure that scoping and intervention analysis for future research priorities reflects a diverse range of stakeholder perspectives and priorities, particularly from feminist researchers and civil society organisations in the programme countries, consult with relevant stakeholders to scope out gaps in evidence and research related to GESI. Where research priorities support National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, refer to commitments and Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, which sets out when and how to involve stakeholders with GESI expertise and lived experience to shape inclusive agendas and priorities.    BEIS has produced excellent guidance to clarify expectations and support staff and delivery partners to meet (and where possible exceed) the requirements of the International Development Act (Gender Amendment) 2014 specifically for research and innovation programmes. This can be used to develop practical approaches to GESI mainstreaming for the GCBC.  <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60af82b2e90e071b589e9cdf/research-innovation-oda-gender-equality.pdf>    Expand funding opportunities beyond established institutions, e.g. supporting WROs to engage in an evidence-based manner with local and national governments. Explore the possibility of direct or participatory small grants. | *Social and gender analysis used to be confident that programming will “do no harm” will not exacerbate inequality; Suppliers assess impact of interventions on women and men, and relationships between them.* | Have research projects conduct project-level social and gender analysis, signed off by DAI, Kew, and Defra teams. Analysis to consider in what ways will activities, outputs, outcomes of projects affect/aid target groups.  Use new Defra wide MEL Services Contract to get necessary social and gender analysis.    The planned capacity strengthening proposal aims to strengthen research and bids in the global south. | Have research projects conduct project-level social and gender analysis, signed off by DAI, Kew, and Defra teams. Analysis to consider in what ways will activities, outputs, outcomes of projects affect/aid target groups.    Strategic Science Lead to incorporate marginalised perspectives into research principles and priorities, as well as International Network plan. | Have research projects conduct project-level social and gender analysis, signed off by DAI, Kew, and Defra teams. Analysis to consider in what ways will activities, outputs, outcomes of projects affect/aid target groups.    Include a proportionate statement in the Business Case to summarise how the programme is aligned with the International Development Act and the Gender Equality Act, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Include details on how the programme contributes to the Strategy for International Development, the International Women and Girls Strategy and the Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy. | 1. Business Case extension still being drafted.      1. First draft of ITP document due 8 April.      1. The recent GCBC Symposium had a GESI-focused presentation.      1. Capacity strengthening CCN signed (April). |
| **Engagement** | *Failure to effectively consult with women and marginalised groups (including people living in poverty, IPLCs) that are impacted by the programme.*    **SDD audit findings /other evidence:** Output 3 highlights the need to engage with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to ensure their expertise is used and research is relevant to their contexts. Ensure that this output takes account of gendered divisions in roles, responsibilities, opportunities and access needs of different groups. Where consultation is planned, the programme must ensure that a strategy is in place to work with local organisations and networks, so that women and other marginalised groups can be involved and express their ideas safely. | *Stakeholder consultation including women and marginalised groups.* |  | Use weekly check-ins with Kew’s GESI POC, Joanna, to progress recommendations for IPLC engagement.  Engage with Kew to incorporate the research question ‘How can GCBC strengthen its links with and voice of marginalised groups - women, indigenous people, people living in poverty?’ into the programme’s Research Strategy and principles. This activity will take place from Autumn 2024 in preparation for RGC3. | Meet with successful programmes like BLF, the Blue Planet Fund and Climate Promise to find out how they engage with IPLCs marginalised groups and women, with the potential to extend this to a cross-programme round table if or when appropriate e.g. in the run-up to CBD COP, when conducting lessons learned. |  |
| **Monitoring Results** | *Lack of disaggregated data.*    **SDD audit findings /other evidence:** In Output 1 update and strengthen the 'Triple Win' Tool kit, ensuring that sufficient social development expertise is available to support the JNCC in its role.    Strengthen MEL and VfM by including a specific objective around the intention to engage and support southern-based research institutes. | *Logframe includes data disaggregated to track impacts of interventions on women and other targeted groups, where relevant.* | 1. Work with Evidence colleagues and Cadmus on including more GESI-specific indicators which will be followed up in grantees’ annual reports. 2. Develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) plan that captures how progress on GESI will be monitored throughout the implementation of the programme. Social and gender analysis should inform the programme Theory of Change and logframe. In line with the Inclusive Data Charter, programmes with defined beneficiaries should disaggregate their data by sex, age, disability, geography and other relevant characteristics where possible (e.g. race, ethnicity, income, migratory status), and qualitative as well as quantitative indicators should be applied where possible. 3. Report annually on progress in Annual Reviews in the ‘Equity’ section. Include details on how the programme has ensured alignment with the International Development Act (Gender Equality). Explain how the programme has delivered against the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), by giving due regard the need to tackle discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share and do not share protected characteristics. Self-assess against the OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy marker and OECD Disability marker.  * Grantees to outline any changes that have been made during the year which progress ‘GESI sensitive.’ | Kew will support Evidence colleagues and Cadmus on monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and data analysis.  Kew to produce annual evidence synthesis review. | Programme team to work with Helen to incorporate GESI into Annual Review. | 1. Programme team updated ToC, including foregrounding GESI language. Next ToC review c. Jan 2025. 2. MEL plan received (June). 3. Logframe workshop took place. 4. Annual review drafting ongoing, we have commissioned the Evidence team to support with VfM section. |

**Appendix D: Early Outcomes & Impacts of Component 2 Projects**

**Kew Timber**

**Outcome**: Global collection of physical timber samples from ODA countries developed and samples used by stakeholders to indicate identity and provenance using data from up to five scientific techniques separately and in combination.

**Outcome Indicators**

* 1. **Number of stakeholder organisations using wider World Forest ID (WFID) reference data, disaggregated by those with links to DAC list countries with target of at least 10 by 2025, with 5 with links to DAC list countries**

Kew Timber have generated, via outputs 1-4, collections, scientific outputs, and data to inform documentary claims about timber product identity and provenance using data from more than three scientific techniques, including trace element analysis (TEA), DART-TOF MS, SIRA and wood anatomy. The IT resources listed below are required for dissemination of those results and hence outcome achievement.

As of July 2024, and as raised in previous interim reports and since 2023 by wider WFID, Kew cannot report on the use of reference data by enforcement agents, companies, or other users (Indicator 1.1) without additional funding from Defra or other sources. The funding is needed to address strategic gaps in WFID data provision via IT systems, including:

* spatial platform (working title WFID infohub) development
* spatial platform ongoing maintenance and hosting
* modelling work to prepare historical data for inclusion in the “infohub”

These gaps have arisen as the strategy and approach to data use has evolved within WFID from 2020-2024. Efforts to secure funding are ongoing.

* 1. **Number of organisations partnered with wider World Forest ID developing reference collections and data via subsampling that enables sample identification and provenance with target of at least 4**

Against Indicator 1.2, the WFID consortium and organisation continues to evolve, and we are confident that Indicator 1.2 will be met via the number of international WFID partners. Kew has made in Q1 24-25 an in-principle decision to extend its presence in the WFID consortium post March 2025 and the end of ICF R&D funding, dependent on funding and a suitable legal agreement, to which end we are working with WFID on bridging gaps between Kew’s policy and strategy goals and the text of the current consortium agreement. The decision will be reviewed Autumn 2024.

**Impact**: Enabling forest risk commodities, especially timber, from specific ODA countries, to be demonstrably legally harvested and supplied, raising income in ODA countries from timber exports and enhancing livelihoods throughout the value chain, whilst supporting sustainability of forests and forestry in stakeholder ODA countries

**Impact Indicator**

1. **Extent to which ICF intervention/WFID at Kew is likely to lead to Transformational Change with target Multiple major timber corporates using WFID authentication science to audit supply chains by March 2025**

Achievement of impact through transformational change in timber supply chains is dependent on provision of data to stakeholders as described the Outcome section above. Both Kew and wider WFID are taking all steps to realise funding in 2024-25 to generate the necessary IT systems to deliver data to those stakeholders. Outputs 2 and 3 are delivering impact via high profile scientific outputs such as that published in Nature Plants (Mortier et al. **A novel framework for tracing timber following the Ukraine invasion** <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41477-024-01648-5>. This paper sets a new baseline and state of the art for integrating multiple traceability analysis methods via modelling. The trade-oriented leaflet being produced with DBT-OPSS under Output 3 (publication September) will have impact on trade uptake of traceability science and its employment in supply chains. We look forward to reporting on this in subsequent interim and final reports.

**Kew Non-Timber Forest Risk Commodity (NT FRC)**

A diagram of a business

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Outcome**: Consolidate the accessible and useable reference collection for soybean and cocoa seeds and their signatures of origin using SIRA, trace elements, and other analyses.

**Outcome Indicators**

* 1. **Reference Collection built and maintained to required standards, coverage and size.**

The project has georeferenced South American soybean and West African and Latin American cocoa collections, data curation and analysis, and subsequent scientific outputs to determine commodity provenance. Our current origin testing model is based on data from trace element and stable isotope analysis (TEA and SIRA, respectively). They are also leveraging the collection to obtain molecular and genetic datasets from both soy and cocoa, using DART-TOF MS, genome sequencing, and seed metabarcoding of fungal and other microbial endosymbionts.

**1.2 Reduced illegal soy/cocoa grown and present in supply chains via enhanced enforcement and compliance.**

**1.3 Increase in legally sourced FRCs.**

To date, the Kew FRC project is unable to assist the implementation of measures to reduce trade beyond the development of the reference collection and associated datasets and models/tool, until the UK Deforestation Regulations legislation in The Forest Risk Commodities Scheme is introduced through provisions in Schedule 17 of the Environment Act 2021.

**1.4 World Forest ID model financially self-sustaining.**

The project may soon be able to assist World Forest ID with Anticipated Outcome 1.4 as they are close to submitting their soybean traceability manuscript for peer review in a scientific journal and once published WFID can use this tool to support soybean supply chin stakeholders and regulators involved in the enforcement of EUDR.

**Impact**: Transformational change in protection and more sustainable use of forests and forestry.

**Impact Indicator**

1. **Extent to which ICF intervention/WFID at Kew is likely to lead to Transformational Change with target multiple major soybean corporates and regulators using WFID authentication science to audit supply chains.**

Achievement of impact through transformational change in timber supply chains is dependent on the existence of the legal UKDR framework and tool provision to stakeholders as described in the Outcome section above. Both Kew and wider WFID are taking all possible steps to realise funding in 2024-25 to generate the necessary continuity of Kew and WFID staff post March 2025 to enable the use of our tools in eventual UKDR.

1. **Improvements in livelihoods and economic benefits for DAC listed countries and UK from enhanced legal trade**

Improvements in livelihoods and economic benefits for DAC listed countries and UK from enhanced legal trade in FRCs is also dependent on the existence of the legal UKDR framework and tool provision to stakeholders as described in the Outcome section above. We are very hopeful that the project can be further funded for the realization of these longer-term positive impacts.

**Appendix E: GCBC Indicators**

*Table 1: Number of operationally relevant knowledge/evidence products produced by grantees in FY23-24*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | **Grant Competition Round** | **Planned** | **Achieved** |
| DEEPEND | Phase 1 | 5 | 46 |
| BIO+MINE | Phase 1 | 10 | 10 |
| EP | Phase 1 | 43 | 54 |
| Kew | Phase 1 | 19 | 7 |
| NTSP | Phase 1 | 4 | 4 |
| One Food | Phase 1 | 13 | 16 |
| Innovative Seaweed | Phase 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 3ie | Phase 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust | RGC1 | 0 | 1 |
| Scottish Association for Marine Science | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Oxford University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Nature Kenya | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| International Potato Center | RGC1 | 0 | 3 |
| IIED | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| International Centre for Research in Agroforestry | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Durham University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| University of Birmingham | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Bangor University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Birdlife International | RGC1 | 0 | 1 |
| CIASE | RGC1 | 0 | 2 |
| ***Total*** | | ***99*** | ***150*** |

*Table 2: Number of research partnerships/collaborations formed or strengthened by grantees in FY23-24*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee[[11]](#footnote-12)** | **Grant Competition Round** | **Planned** | **Achieved** |
| DEEPEND | Phase 1 | 15 | 15 |
| BIO+MINE | Phase 1 | 13 | 12 |
| EP | Phase 1 | 9 | 8 |
| Kew | Phase 1 | 13 | 10 |
| NTSP | Phase 1 | 2 | 1 |
| One Food | Phase 1 | 20 | 13 |
| 3ie | Phase 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Innovative Seaweed | Phase 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Scottish Association for Marine Science | RGC1 | 0 | 16 |
| Oxford University | RGC1 | 0 | 5 |
| Nature Kenya | RGC1 | 0 | 5 |
| International Potato Center | RGC1 | 0 | 3 |
| IIED | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| International Centre for Research in Agroforestry | RGC1 | 0 | 5 |
| Durham University | RGC1 | 0 | 1 |
| Bangor University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Birdlife International | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| CIASE | RGC1 | 0 | 4 |
| ***Total*** | | ***76*** | ***103*** |

*Table 3: Number of people participating in GCBC led research activities in FY23-24*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee[[12]](#footnote-13)** | **Grant Competition Round** | **Planned** | **Achieved** |
| DEEPEND | Phase 1 | 163 | 1,145 |
| BIO+MINE | Phase 1 | 65 | 454 |
| EP | Phase 1 | 30 | 8,224 |
| Kew | Phase 1 | 500 | 1,269 |
| NTSP | Phase 1 | 500 | 101 |
| One Food | Phase 1 | 208 | 114 |
| Innovative Seaweed | Phase 1 | N/a[[13]](#footnote-14) | 263 |
| 3ie | Phase 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust | RGC1 | 0 | 34 |
| Scottish Association for Marine Science | RGC1 | 0 | 63 |
| Nature Kenya | RGC1 | 0 | 83 |
| International Potato Center | RGC1 | 0 | 18 |
| Durham University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Bangor University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Birdlife International | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| CIASE | RGC1 | 0 | 97 |
| ***Total*** | | ***1,466*** | ***11,865*** |

*Table 4: Number of policy-relevant knowledge/evidence products produced by grantees in FY23-24*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | **Grant Competition Round** | **Planned** | **Achieved** |
| DEEPEND | Phase 1 | 1 | 0 |
| BIO+MINE | Phase 1 | 2 | 4 |
| EP | Phase 1 | 43 | 46 |
| Kew | Phase 1 | 5 | 16 |
| NTSP | Phase 1 | 4 | 6 |
| One Food | Phase 1 | 4 | 3 |
| 3ie | Phase 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Innovative Seaweed | Phase 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust | RGC1 | 0 | 3 |
| Scottish Association for Marine Science | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Oxford University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Nature Kenya | RGC1 | 0 | 1 |
| International Potato Center | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| IIED | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| International Centre for Research in Agroforestry | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Durham University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| University of Birmingham | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Bangor University | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| Birdlife International | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| CIASE | RGC1 | 0 | 0 |
| ***Total*** | | ***62*** | ***83*** |

*Table 5: Aggregated RGC1 Indicator Data*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **RGC 1 Standard Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Frequency** | **Mandatory** | **Disaggregation** | | **Apr-24** |  |  |
|  |  |
| 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Quarterly | No | New | ***Total*** | 295 |  |  |
| Women | 147 |  |  |
| Men | 142 |  |  |
| Neither women or men | 6 |  |  |
| Repeat | *Total* | 0 |  |  |
| Women | 0 |  |  |
| Men | 0 |  |  |
| Neither women or men | 0 |  |  |
| *New and repeat* | ***Total*** | 295 |  |  |
| *Women* | 147 |  |  |
| *Men* | 142 |  |  |
| *Neither women or men* | 6 |  |  |

**Individual RGC1 Grantee Achievements\***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 34 |
| Women | 12 |
| Men | 22 |
| Neither women or men | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 63 |
| Women | 35 |
| Men | 28 |
| Neither women or men | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | Nature Kenya | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 83 |
| Women | 31 |
| Men | 52 |
| Neither women or men | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | The Corporation for Research and Social and Economic Action (CIASE) | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 97 |
| Women | 64 |
| Men | 27 |
| Neither women or men | 6 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | International Potato Center (IPC) | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 18 |
| Women | 5 |
| Men | 13 |
| Neither women or men | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | Birdlife International | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 0 |
| Women | 0 |
| Men | 0 |
| Neither women or men | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | Durham University | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 0 |
| Women | 0 |
| Men | 0 |
| Neither women or men | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grantee** | Bangor University | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **#** | **Indicator** | **Unit of Measurement** | **Gender Disaggregation** | **Grantee Achievements** |
| RGC 1 Indicator 9 | Number of people and/or teams participating in GCBC led research activities (workshops, communication events, stakeholder engagements, project meetings and other group events). Disaggregate by gender, age, ethnicity when reporting (if possible). | # of people | Total | 0 |
| Women | 0 |
| Men | 0 |
| Neither women or men | 0 |

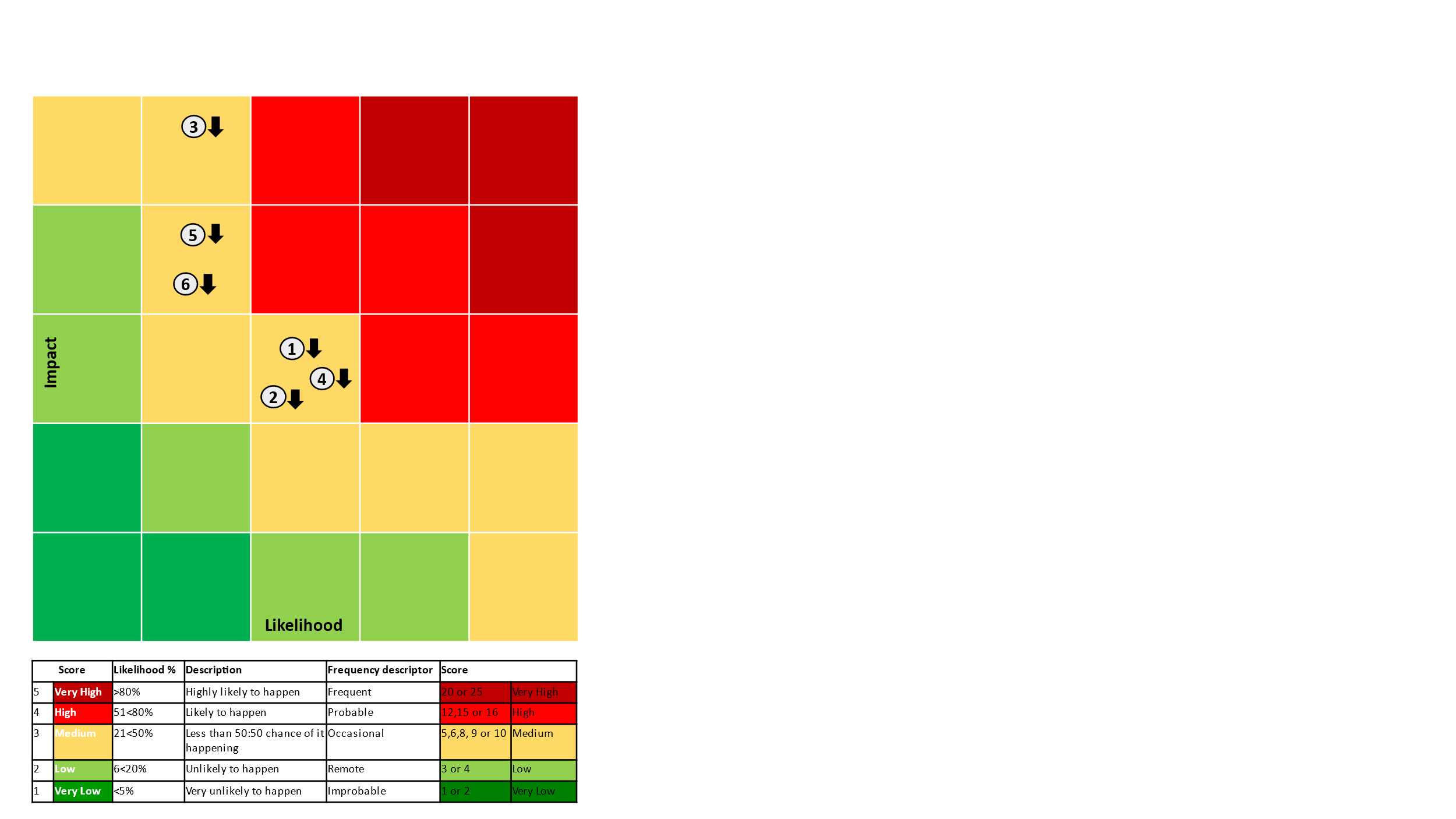
*\*Note – Indicator 9 is an optional indicator for RGC1, with 8 grantees out of the 12 on board at annual reporting stage including it in their logframes.*

**Appendix F: Risk register**

The table below summarises some of the key risks that we have experienced during the year under review, along with the actions we have taken to mitigate these risks. This is part of our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement in our risk management practices.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk Description | Probability | Impact | Rating | Mitigation | Residual rating |
| 1. **Grantees challenge the results of RGC2 due to the Capacity Strengthening pilot.** This could lead to a re-evaluation of the capacity strengthening component and its effectiveness as well as impact the delivery timeline of the grant competition, incurring additional cost and resource. | Low - 2 | Very High - 5 | Medium - 10 | * Hub representatives will meet weekly through a Capacity Strengthening working group to monitor progress and mitigate risk associated with the pilot initiative. * The seminars for the CS pilot will reduce risk by:  1. having the coordinator present in each seminar to stop the answering of any individual application related questions; 2. having a disclaimer at registration of the session to say the sessions will not affect final scoring; 3. having clear text shared in the ITP about how the assessment and selection of applications will take place; 4. keeping a clear audit trail of the process steps; 5. having a contingency plan for mitigating reputational risk (statements etc...); 6. senior management sign off within Defra and DAI to ensure there is an awareness and tolerance of the risks. | Low - 8 |
| 1. **Inadequate promotion and outreach efforts to attract quality applicants for research** grant funding results in insufficient interest from research institutions in applying for the GCBC's grant funding opportunities. A reduced pool of applicants will result in a lack of diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources needed to achieve the project's intended level of outputs and impact. This may lead to compromised research quality and diminished overall programme success. | Medium - 3 | Medium - 3 | Medium - 9 | * Enhance the projects visibility and attractiveness through targeted promotion and outreach (social media, academic networks, organisations to disseminate information about the grant funding opportunities). The GCBC is actively engaging with potential applicants through webinars, informational sessions, and networking events to provide guidance and support through the application process. The GCBC's revised application process, capacity strengthening, evaluation and selection criteria aims to make the programme more accessible and appealing to a broader range of research institutions. | Low - 6 |
| 1. **Failure to fulfil outputs or communicate outcomes** means that findings are not adequately disseminated to or actioned by policymakers and decisionmakers. This results in missed opportunities for leveraging the programme's value, resulting in diminished reputation and impact. | Low - 2 | High - 4 | Medium - 8 | * Establish a communication plan that includes regular updates and presentations for policymakers and key stakeholders. * Ensure active engagement with decision-makers to provide insights into programme progress, findings. * Employ various communication channels such as reports, presentations, briefings, and workshops/symposiums to convey the programme's value and relevance to inform policy and action. | Low - 6 |
| 1. **Grantees within the programme either deliberately exclude or are unaware of their relationship with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).** This lack of engagement or awareness leads to safeguarding risks, including Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), potentially leading to harm or negative impacts on the involved communities. This could also lead to reputational damage for the programme. | Low - 2 | High - 4 | Medium - 8 | * Programme team to take GESI training by start of November 2023. * Risk is decreasing with support from & new GESI roles in ODA Hub. * Programme teams are producing a GESI action plan, with support from ODA. * GESI research-fellow joined the GCBC in March 2024. * Initial mapping of Grantees engagement with partners, affected groups and IPLCs.​ * Grant Managers to discuss safeguarding and relationships in Monthly Snapshot calls. ​ * Conduct regular training sessions to ensure that all grantees are aware of their relationship with IPLCs.​ * Implement clear policies that promote IPLCs in the programme and procedures to prevent/respond to SEAH.​ * Engage directly with IPLCs to understand their needs and perspectives. This could involve regular meetings, consultations, or community-led initiatives. | Low - 6 |

*Risk Matrix*



*Diagram 1: Risk Escalation Process*

A close-up of a risk management process

Description automatically generated

**Appendix G: Table comparing business case allocation with actual programme costs/forecasts**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **2020/21** | | **2021/22** | | **2022/23** | | **2023/24** | | **2024/25** | |
| **Component costs** | | **BC** | **Actual** | **BC** | **Actual** | **BC** | **Actual** | **BC** | **Actual** | **BC** | **Forecast** |
| **1a. Measuring the impact of aid on nature & identifying ‘best buys’** | | £343,696 | £339,469 | £198,532 | £198,310 | £0 | - | £0 | - | £0 | - |
| **1b. Scoping and intervention analysis for future ICF programming** | | £230,694 | £122,164 | £140,000 | £145,210 | £0 | - | £0 | - | £0 | - |
| **2a. Tackling illegal deforestation** | | £443,128 | £198,035 | £840,000 | £974,766 | £420,000 | £1,518,177 | £400,000 | £1,105,713 | £1,227,264 | £1,225,164 |
| **2b. Strengthening monitoring, reporting and verification:** | | £0 | - | £430,000 | 560,695 | £200,000 | 298,578 | £190,000 | - | - | - |
| **3. Establish a Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate** | **of which fast-track projects** | £0 | - | £900,000 | - | £15,380,000 | 9,690,316 | £19,410,000 | £7,993,264 | £4,507,507 | £4,751,507 |
| **of which Hub costs** | - | - | 75,626 | £1,534,875 | £1,480,636 | £1,487,171 |
| **of which research grants** | - | - | - | £541,734 | £5,984,684 | £5,534,322 |
| **Evaluation** | |  | - | £85,000 | - |  | - |  | - |  | - |
| **Programme total** | | **£1,017,518** | **£659,668** | **£2,593,532** | **£1,878,981** | **£16,000,000** | **£11,582,697** | **£20,000,000** | **£11,175,586** | **£12,000,000** | £12,998,164.37 |

1. Project 2a: Tackling illegal logging and deforestation: the Kew Timber and Non-Timber Forest Risk Commodities (FRC) projects are progressing well against respective logframes, meeting some of their project end targets ahead of time. Both projects are expected to conclude in financial year 24/25.

   Project 2b: Strengthening monitoring, reporting and verification: the 30x30 Protected Areas Evidence Review and Scoping project had concluded and was reviewed as part of AR3. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The launch of RGC2 on 5 February 2024, which received 507 applications from 60 countries, marks a substantial increase from the 155 applications received in RGC1. This surge reflects growing global interest. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. An e-platform has been developed and launched, along with grantee management and communication guidelines. Webinars on MEL, communications, ethics and safeguarding, finance, and forecasting have been conducted. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. **Outcome 1:** *‘system transformation through local community natural resource management is informed and enabled by the demonstration of the interconnectedness of biodiversity, climate, and livelihoods’* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. **Outcome 2:** *‘Widespread implementation of policies, practices and investment strategies that deliver inclusive climate resilient poverty reduction through conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.’* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Broadening access to the evidence and knowledge base developed across the programme has also been a focus. The Annual Symposium, delivered on 21 March 2024, was a key event in this regard. Quarterly virtual and in-person learning events, along with Annual Symposia, help project partners and stakeholders benefit from programme outputs. Moreover, the programme has successfully recruited over 2,000 followers on LinkedIn and the monthly issuance of the GCBC Newsletter reaches 647 organisations across 95 countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. **Outcome 3:** ‘*Research partners have stronger capacity, capability, and networks to identify, fund, implement and disseminate research (with or without GCBC funding).’* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Note, we are assuming the 4 outputs are weighted equally as per last year’s Annual Review. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. See above [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. As of June 2024, there are 14 RGC1 grantees, however only 12 were included in the FY 2023/24 annual report. The 2 missing grantees include Kew Gardens and Bioversity. Kew Gardens had yet to complete their inception phase and did not have a final set of indicators to report on, and Bioversity joined the programme in May, hence were still in their inception phase at time of reporting. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. RGC1 grantee University of Birmingham is omitted from the table, as they do not report on this optional indicator. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. RGC1 grantees University of Birmingham, ICRAF, IIED, and Oxford are omitted from the table, as they do not report on this optional indicator. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Innovative Seaweed did not have a quantitative target for this indicator. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)