



**External Evaluation of UNCTAD's Project Account-
Strengthening the capacity of policy-makers and business leaders in three
BioTrade beneficiary countries in integrating REDD+ projects into BioTrade
strategies ***

UNEDITED ADVANCE COPY

Prepared by

Monika Zabel

July 2014

*This report was commissioned by UNCTAD. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the external evaluator and do not represent the views of the UNCTAD secretariat or of the organizations or institutions with which the author may be connected, or organizations or institutions that commissioned this evaluation. This evaluation report has been reproduced without editing by the UNCTAD Secretariat.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who have contributed to this evaluation – with documentation and information and also with their time and enthusiasm. This created both, the data base and a positive working atmosphere. Both were important to compile this evaluation report.

Monika Zabel

Hamburg, 2014

List of abbreviations

BT	BioTrade
BTFPII	BioTrade Facilitation Programme II
BTI	BioTrade Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CAF	Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina ¹
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCB	Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CORPEI	Corporación de Promoción de Exportaciones e Importaciones
DA	Development Account
UN DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DFR	Draft Final Report
EMU	Evaluation and Monitoring Unit, UNCTAD
FR	Final Report
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GHG	Green House Gases
IR	Inception Report
LF	Logframe
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PCM	Project Cycle Management
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

¹ Development Bank of Latin America

REDD+	REDD plus conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
VCS	Voluntary Carbon Standard

BioTrade BioTrade refers to those activities of collection, production, transformation, and commercialization of goods and services derived from native biodiversity under the criteria of environmental, social and economic sustainability.²

REDD+ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. "REDD+" goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.³

² <http://www.biotrade.org/index.asp>

³ <http://www.un-redd.org/aboutredd/tabid/102614/default.aspx>

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Chapter 1 The Evaluation Study and its Context	10
1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation	10
1.2 Evaluation Methodology and Information Sources	10
1.3 Roles and Responsibilities	11
1.4 Deliverables	11
Chapter 2 Brief Overview of the Project	12
2.1 Project Context	12
2.2 Project brief and intervention logic	13
Chapter 3 Assessment through the DAC Criteria	16
3.1 Relevance and Quality of Design	16
3.1.1 Relevance	16
3.1.2 Quality of Design	17
3.2 Effectiveness	20
3.3 Efficiency	30
3.4 Sustainability	33
Chapter 4 Conclusions and Recommendations	36
4.1 Conclusions	36
4.2 Recommendations	39

Executive Summary

This is the final evaluation report of the project “Strengthening the capacity of policy-makers and business leaders in three BioTrade beneficiary countries in integrating REDD+ projects into BioTrade strategies”. It was compiled by Dr Monika Zabel, an independent and external evaluator contracted for this assignment by the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU) of UNCTAD after a competitive bidding process. The project implementation ended in December 2013 and its contractual Final Report is dated 31 March 2014.

The evaluation methodology is based on a desk study with a two-phase approach, i.e. data collection and analysis, and reporting. The ToR did not foresee any field phase, neither an activity implementation observation nor a country visit. The evaluation encompassed the full project, and focussed on the four evaluation criteria of relevance (including quality of design), efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

The conclusions and recommendations expressed in this evaluation are forward looking, aiming to be useful in the conception of similar future projects.

Conclusions

- The project has been and remains relevant. It was the response to a concrete request for guidance in integrating REDD+ into the BioTrade Initiative by partner countries. The project is linked to other initiatives of UNCTAD in the same sector, namely BTI and BTFPII.
- The design of the project, in particular the logframe and its indicators, can be improved for future similar projects, for example making results more measurable and introducing a theory of change approach. This will support a more results-oriented approach of a project.
- The project started with a significant delay; the project team managed in less than one year of factual implementation to introduce the main part of the intended activities and to remain within the projected implementation end date.
- Most of the intended results have been achieved as planned. However, some shortcomings have also been observed. One is the number of workshops (reduced from six to four). Also, the number of people trained per country (target of 60 people in each country, either in workshops or e-course) was only achieved in one country.
- The project team has designed and applied an appropriate toolset to capture the feedback of participants for the three formats (feedback questionnaires submitted after the milestone events).

- Unfortunately the return rate of the questionnaires varied and remained for some events rather low, jeopardizing the strength of the tool and the validity of the statements expressed for the totality of trained participants.
- Low pass rates of e-learning courses for Brazil and Ecuador point to a loss in cost efficiency and elevated cost per course graduate. Colombia, in contrast, achieved a pass rate of 87%.⁴ In total this lowers the total number of empowered beneficiaries of the e-learning courses from a potential maximum of 44 to 25 people in the three beneficiary countries, and from 54 to 33 people, including graduates from Peru and Zimbabwe.
- Over 90% of e-learning course graduates confirmed the relevance of the topic for the work and knowledge increase provided by the course. 8 percent of the surveyed participants felt that lessons learned and best practices were lacking in the current course curriculum.
- Over 90% of surveyed participants in the three workshops also confirmed the relevance of training content for the work.
- Furthermore, over 90% of workshop participants surveyed in Colombia and Ecuador also confirmed completely or mostly an improved knowledge whereas the participants in the Brazilian workshop were split: 50% completely or generally confirmed increased knowledge, 33% remained neutral and 17% rejected this statement.
- A late start shortened the implementation period and led to an end-heavy implementation; as a consequence there was no time to implement an explicit exit strategy to foster the sustainability of services and benefits provided.
- The project team can continue to support the project, also in their role as implementers of BTFPII that will be ongoing until December 2014, and thus prolonging the phase out period.
- Some in kind contributions have been provided by key national partners. Nevertheless full financial sustainability remains critical. Dimension of future uptake of the combined approach promoted by the project will depend on financial support through projects/cooperation/donors. In this context, lack of project proposal writing skills was indicated by some of the interviewed beneficiaries, among them producers' cooperatives and NGOs, as an obstacle in applying the accumulated knowledge in BioTrade/REDD+ and implementing it.

Recommendations

To project management / UNCTAD branch

⁴ For two countries that were not the core target countries but participated in the e-learning course it was 100% for Peru and 67% for Zimbabwe (absolute numbers were not provided).

- If not yet done so, to analyze the reasons for the low pass rates in Brazil and Ecuador of the two e-learning courses conducted; to take lessons and – to the extent possible - apply them to future courses.
- To consider for future projects of a similar nature, according to the available budget and dimension, a 2-3 years implementation period allowing time for a sequenced implementation, to follow up on activities and to accompanying phase-out/supporting sustainability.
- To seek advice from EMU regarding a more results oriented design of projects, including an appropriate set of indicators and a theory of change approach.
- It should be considered to strengthen the sustainability of results and services provided by coaching of technical and political key beneficiaries and their teams (on their request), for example on how to conceive concrete future projects integrating both approaches; how to respond to calls for proposals from donors or corporate clients.
- Use wherever possible synergies with the ongoing BTI activities and programmes to maximize possible sustainability of services and benefits of the DA account project.
- To make available all material on the BioTrade website; to monitor the visits and uptake of the LinkedIn forum “BioTrade”.
- To follow up on results achieved and sustained 6-9 months after project end; to consider applying the BioTrade Impact Assessment System developed on the BT/REDD+ project proposals which will be formulated and implemented after project end (no project proposal so far) and a baseline has been established, to measure contributions⁵/effects of the project to sustainable development in the three beneficiary countries.
- It is suggested to establish closer links with the UNREDD programme, to analyse in how far an integration of BioTrade concepts can be realized in REDD+ countries in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to enable all possible synergies and increase efficiency, the project team and/or its BioTrade regional/national consultants should follow. In Brazil, the German Cooperation GIZ is also providing workshops in particular on REDD+ related themes⁶. Coordination between both providers and adaptation/alignment of the course curriculum would likely enhance course effectiveness and attendance.
- For the future e-learning courses a strategy of targeted participation should be introduced. Not to spread thinly over a large number of countries, but allowing at least for the next two e-learning courses the three beneficiary countries for a certain quota of participants, working in the same institutions as former training participants (in decision making roles). This would allow taking individual knowledge increase to the level of

⁵ As there were in all three countries other initiatives aiming to the same objectives, a clear causal attribution may not be possible to establish, but a contribution.

⁶ Information provided by an interviewed beneficiary.

institutional learning. Also involve key technical and political beneficiaries in three countries in the proposal of candidates for e-learning course to foster institutional capacity building in leading institutions or corporates in BioTrade/REDD+.

- Include training modules on concrete case studies and on project proposal writing. Encourage participants to engage moderator and/or national BioTrade consultants and/or national partners in supporting concrete proposals they are considering; involve step-by-step method to design and implement combined REDD+ and BT projects as part of the project.
- Seek confirmation about the option for e-learning course transfer to UNIMINUTO in Colombia; clarify the input of UNCTAD as moderator/coach for the participants; also clarify the question of copyright.⁷ Otherwise seek for alternatives for course hosting.
- As much as in the hands of the project team, to speed up publication of the Lessons Learned document and disseminate it to the project participants and make it available on the BioTrade website to download. A time line of (mid) 2014, as indicated, would create a time gap and likely slow down momentum gained with training and e-learning.
- For future projects maximize efforts to get the disseminated questionnaires returned. Lessons learnt should be drawn to adapt the process of dissemination and collection of questionnaires to capture the perception of the majority of or all participants.
- For future e-learning courses the percentage of graduates to participants should be increased, to reduce the cost per participant. In order to minimize the drop outs due to conflicting tasks at workplace, it is suggested that the supervisor of the future course participant should confirm the participation of the staff member, including allocation of working hours to the task.

⁷ A formal commitment was received on 26 February for an additional course. This was reported in the Final report and 2013 annual report; As agreed in the service agreement signed with UNIMINUTO the property rights on the course belong to UNCTAD.

Chapter 1 The Evaluation Study and its Context

This is the final evaluation of the project “Strengthening the capacity of policy-makers and business leaders in three BioTrade beneficiary countries in integrating REDD+ projects into BioTrade strategies”. UNCTAD’s Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU) has tendered this evaluation, and Dr Monika Zabel (cross~~x~~culture consulting) has been selected as the evaluation consultant.

1.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

As indicated in the ToRs the purpose of the evaluation is as follows⁸: It should assess, systematically and objectively, the project framework and design, project management, and project performance. The evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, and practical, constructive and forward-looking recommendations are made in order to strengthen the work of UNCTAD in this area. The primary audiences of the evaluation report are “UNCTAD management and programme officers, the Capacity Development Office/Development Account of DESA project stakeholders, UNCTAD’s member States.”

The scope of the evaluation encompasses all activities that have been implemented under the project, and an analysis of the status of the two expected accomplishments (results) achieved. To assess the projects’ performance, the evaluator has used – as far as they were referred to - the results presented in the logical framework developed in the annual and progress reports and compared the achievements with the accomplishments targeted at project end. The evaluation questions presented in the ToRs are categorized along four of the five standard DAC/OECD evaluation criteria i.e., relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

1.2 Evaluation Methodology and Information Sources

The evaluation methodology is based on a Desk Study with a two phase approach, i.e. data collection and analysis and reporting. The ToR does not foresee any field phase, neither observing an activity implementation nor for a country visit. A two day briefing meeting in Geneva on 18 and 19 February 2014 kicked off the data collection and analysis phase and was comprised of a series of interviews with the members of the project team and the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit. Main data sources were contractual reporting and technical material generated in course of the project (for example workshop and e-learning course material). Data was also generated in a series of structured interviews held with key project stakeholders in the three countries, either directly or by a filled out and returned questionnaire. The evaluation was finalised by a reporting phase. To the maximum possible, triangulation of the data available and generated was applied to the findings and subsequent conclusions. The analysis has led to findings which are presented with related supporting evidence. Based on these findings, conclusions have been drawn, followed by pragmatic recommendations.

⁸ The following information has been directly taken from the ToRs.

1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The evaluation has been performed in close cooperation with the evaluation manager and the project manager and the project team. The evaluator, Dr Monika Zabel, reports to the Chief of the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit, EMU, Ms Yuen Ching Ho. She has undertaken the evaluation exercise under the guidance of the EMU and in coordination with the project manager, Mr. Bonapas Onguglo. The evaluation itself has been performed external and independent.

All deliverables have been channeled through the EMU for further dissemination to other key stakeholders. Feedback of the stakeholders has been condensed and returned to the external evaluator. Feedback was analyzed and considered to be included, in particular those related to factual mistakes or aspects not yet considered though in the ToR. The evaluator has been responsible for the evaluation design, data collection, data assessment and reporting. She takes full responsibility for the contents of the report generated and ensures its independence and accuracy.

1.4 Deliverables

The evaluation, on the basis of its findings and assessments made on the above criteria, aimed to draw conclusions, make recommendations and identify lessons learned, identifying the remaining challenges, gaps and needs for future courses of action; and to make pragmatic recommendations to suggest how UNCTAD's work under this area and related projects can be strengthened. In particular, the evaluator should include recommendations on how to improve the relevance and effectiveness of the logframe of similar projects. All assessments are supported by facts and findings, direct or indirect evidence, and/or well-substantiated logic. All recommendations made are related to the assessments.

Phases of absence caused by health issues in the project team delayed the provision of answers to a list of questions as well as comments to the draft final report. The evaluator provided the draft evaluation report to EMU on 23 April, and a list of questions, including requests for additional information was sent to the project team. The full consolidated comments to the draft report were sent by EMU to the evaluator on 3 June 2014.

Chapter 2 Brief Overview of the Project

Table 1 Project Summary

Project title:	Strengthening the capacity of policy-makers and business leaders in three BioTrade beneficiary countries in integrating REDD+ projects into BioTrade strategies
Duration:	Two years (1 January 2012 to 31 December 2013); actual implementation period one year (2013).
Location:	Three BioTrade beneficiary countries: Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador ⁹
Actual Start Date:	01 February 2013 (first expenditure by project)
End Date:	31 December 2013
Executing agency:	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
Co-operating agencies:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
National counterpart institutions:	Ministries of Trade and Environment, National BioTrade Programmes, Designated National Authorities of the UNFCCC.
Funding from Development Account¹⁰:	348,000 USD
Expenditure Rate to per 31/12/2013:	94%

2.1 Project Context

This project was aimed at strengthening the capacities of three developing countries in formulating and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, and sustainable development strategies in line with BioTrade and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) practices.¹¹ It aimed to achieve its anticipated results through capacity-building by providing technical assistance and training (traditional learning and e-learning) to increase the understanding of policy-makers and business leaders of the linkages

⁹ The concept has been changed from three countries, each in a different continent to three countries in the same continent, Latin America.

¹⁰ Budget stemmed from returned funds of the 7th tranche of the DA account.

between BioTrade and REDD+. In addition, a South-South platform, established already prior to project start by other sources, was supposed to be strengthened for sharing of information and best practices in the formulation and implementation of BioTrade strategies and REDD+ projects. This (strengthened) platform is meant to support the (three) project countries to identify and pursue sustainable development opportunities arising from biodiversity- and climate change-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

In the original proposal the project should have been implemented in three BioTrade beneficiary countries in three continents¹² – Africa (Namibia), Asia (Indonesia) and Latin America (Peru). This strategy had been changed in the beginning of the implementation, according to financial and political conditions at that time. Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador were finally identified as the participating countries. UNCTAD has implemented the project, in collaboration with the BioTrade counterparts in the public and private sectors, with relevant national stakeholders including the climate change focal points, local governments, businesses, local communities and indigenous groups, academia and the BioTrade partners worldwide; the main counterparts varied from country to country. The direct beneficiaries of the project are government entities and private sector with emphasis on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and micro-SMEs, communities and indigenous groups/associations as well as BioTrade national counterparts that existed already prior to the project start.¹³ The project technically concluded on 31 of December 2013.

2.2 Project brief and intervention logic

The project is based on the following intervention logic: The objective is to strengthen the capacities of three developing countries in formulating and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, and sustainable development strategies in line with BioTrade and REDD+ practices. The project has two results, called expected accomplishments, EA1 - Increased understanding of policy-makers and business leaders of the linkages between BioTrade and REDD+ projects in three BioTrade beneficiary countries in Latin America and EA2 - Established South–South platform for sharing of information and best practices in the formulation and implementation of BioTrade and REDD+ projects. The indicators of achievement set at result level are: For EA1 - Increased level of understanding of the opportunities and challenges of working with BioTrade and REDD+ by BioTrade partners and practitioners in the three selected countries; for EA2 - Increased use by project beneficiaries of research, training tools and lessons learned linking BioTrade and REDD+. The project intervention logic with its two expected results is shown in the table 2 below.

¹² BioTrade beneficiary countries are those countries that are implementing BioTrade activities and programmes; www.biotrade.org. In contrast to three countries in three different geographical regions finally three countries located in Latin America have been chosen, Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil.

¹³ This information has been taken from the original project document and interviews conducted.

Table 2 Intervention Logic with its objective, results and activities

Objective: To strengthen the capacities of three developing countries in formulating and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, and sustainable development strategies in line with BioTrade and REDD+ practices.

Result 1/ Expected accomplishment 1 Increased understanding of policy-makers and business leaders of the linkages between BioTrade and REDD+ projects in three BioTrade beneficiary countries				Result 2/ Expected accomplishment 2 Established South–South platform for sharing of information and best practices in the formulation and implementation of BioTrade and REDD+ projects.	
Activity 1.1 Development of training material and e-learning modules in integrating REDD+ initiatives into BioTrade strategies/action plans.	A1.2 Organization of 6 national capacity-building workshops jointly with international and national counterparts	A1.3 Conducting 2 e-learning courses (one in English and one in Spanish) for national stakeholders of selected countries; participants will also be tested after each course as well as will be able to provide feedback on the quality, usefulness and things to be improved	A1.4 Advisory services on building capacity and developing skills in formulating and integrating BioTrade strategies with REDD+ initiatives. These services include the work of a local expert on REDD/REDD+ that will be coaching and guiding BioTrade partners in identifying and defining activities and tools to link these two issues. These experts will also support national capacity-building	A2.1 Compilation of best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the project which is disseminated by UNCTAD BioTrade, particularly through its information management system (IMS). This publication will provide not only background information of the project, but will further explore the lessons learned and best practices for developing BioTrade strategies considering	A2.2 Organization of 1 international workshop to promote South-South cooperation, information dissemination and sharing of experiences. The final selection criteria of the participants will be based considering the technical background, decision-making power, interest and potential to contribute to the development of the workshop, however emphasis will be to include seven participants per

			workshops, particularly in the mapping of actors, identification of needs/opportunities and formulation/adaptation of strategies and selected projects	REDD+ requirements. It will also provide an analysis of what are the “do’s” and “don’ts” when BioTrade partners define their strategies to develop specific sectors in order to enhance the linkages between BioTrade and REDD+. This publication is expected to be available in electronic and physical formats.	country, classified as follows: two representatives from BioTrade national programmes; two representatives from the climate change national organization/team; two representatives from the private sector; and one national expert supporting the activity.
--	--	--	--	---	--

Chapter 3 Assessment through the DAC Criteria

3.1 Relevance and Quality of Design

The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs its global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

3.1.1 Relevance

This evaluation finds that the project is fully consistent with beneficiaries' requirements. Several BioTrade countries including Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Namibia, Peru, and Uganda had requested the UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative for guidance in incorporating REDD+ into their strategies prior to project start.¹⁴ The fact that the project started in the moment of concrete demand was also confirmed in interviews held with key stakeholders in two countries finally chosen for project implementation, Colombia and Ecuador.¹⁵

The objective of the project, i.e. enhancing capacities in formulating and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, and sustainable development strategies according to BioTrade and REDD+ practices is in line with the overarching theme of the 7th tranche of the development account, i.e. support to addressing key global development changes, to further the achievement of internationally agreed development goals through collaboration at global, regional and national levels.

More specifically, the project and its activities are in line with the UNCTAD section of the UN Strategic Framework for the period 2010-2011, Subprogramme 3: International trade, aiming to contribute to the fulfillment of the expected accomplishment (e), i.e. Strengthened capacity of developing countries to formulate and implement mutually supportive trade, environment and sustainable development objectives, and to integrate sustainable development objectives in development strategies at all levels. The project's activities are also in accordance with the Accra Accord, paragraph 100 – to consider climate change in its ongoing work of assisting developing countries with trade- and investment-related issues in development strategies, and paragraph 102 - to continue building on its experience to enhance its BioTrade Initiative (BTI) and to continue to support the creation of an enabling policy environment to foster private sector engagement in the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.¹⁶

The project addresses the link between climate change policies, in particular REDD+ and biodiversity concepts such as the strengthening of value chain of BioTrade products that create livelihood opportunities in forest areas and reduce deforestation. The proposed intervention builds to more than 18 years¹⁷ experience in UNCTAD's BTI and on an existing network of

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2008/0809AS.html>

¹⁵ Interviews conducted with key stakeholders in the three beneficiary countries.

¹⁶ <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2008/0809AS.html>

¹⁷ Since its launch in 1996

partners in developing countries. The concept of the project proposal builds upon the lessons learned from previous experience in implementing the BTI and ongoing main programme, the BioTrade Facilitation Programme Phase II (BTFP II)¹⁸, and on UNCTAD's experience in enhancing developing countries' capacity to capture trade, investment and development opportunities under the climate change regime as well as their effective participation in the carbon market. This experience, together with the ongoing BTFP II and the team of its Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch (under the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities), represents an important comparative advantage of UNCTAD in this area of work.

UNCTAD, through the BTI, has been working on BioTrade issues for over 18 years ensuring those objectives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are met. In implementing the objectives of the CBD, UNCTAD provides concrete examples on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as the fair and equitable distribution of the benefits derived from its use. Case studies, examples and methodologies have been shared with the CBD Secretariat and events have been organized during its Conference of the Parties. The BTI derives its mandate primarily from UNCTAD's Plan of Action (Bangkok, 2002, Sao Paulo, 2004, Accra, 2008) and from the trade-related aspects of the CBD, specifically Article 10 on "Sustainable use of components of biological diversity" and Article 11 on "Incentive measures". UNCTAD has implemented its activities to address the Mandates mentioned, in particular those related to creating an enabling policy environment, incentive measures, private sector engagement, poverty alleviation and promoting/creating market for biodiversity-based goods and services.

3.1.2 Quality of Design

Whether the project design and choice of beneficiaries and activities have been properly reflected and addressed the needs of the beneficiaries, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates, and the alignment with the objectives of the Development Account;

The choice of activities, mainly development of training materials, provision of training and of coaching of beneficiaries for EA1, and strengthening the existent format of the "BioTrade Congress" as a forum for south-south cooperation, together with a website and a lessons learnt manual based on the project findings for EA2 are appropriate inputs to reach the thematic objective addressed by the project, if appropriate targets are set and monitored. These results, fully achieved, can certainly help contribute to the objective of the project as set out in the logframe, i.e. to strengthen the capacities of three developing countries in formulating and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, and sustainable development strategies in line with BioTrade and REDD+ practices.

¹⁸ The BioTrade Facilitation Programme (BTFP), Phase II, is a 2.5 Mio USD programme; it started in 2009 and will end on 31 December 2014. The programme aims to contribute to a policy environment that promotes trade and investment as an incentive measure for the sustainable use of biodiversity.

The time frame of two years for implementation is considered to be short¹⁹, as the activities have to be implemented ideally in a logic sequence, and time should be allowed for follow up on activities completed to monitor and foster elements of its sustainability.

The project has anticipated stakeholder needs in two ways: First, in utilizing the first BioTrade conference in 2012 to approach the participants with questions related to their concrete needs regarding the integration of BioTrade and REDD+. Prior to the national workshops a questionnaire was distributed to the participants to identify their concrete needs and questions related to the workshop.

The guidelines for DA project proposals call for submission of proposals according to a standardized outline. The project document follows the guidelines for the 7th tranche that were in act at the time of the proposal's submission (2010).²⁰ Meanwhile the guidelines for the 9th tranche are in act and have addressed several of the shortcomings that had been observed in concept notes and project proposals in the past. Thus the shortcoming in design identified below do not suggest that the proposal at times has not adhered to the requirements of the template, but that the current state of the art M&E practice call for a more results oriented approach.

For the BT/REDD+ project the following aspects have been identified:

- Some of the chosen indicators are relatively weak and not consequently SMART²¹. Examples are “at least 60 stakeholders are trained per country (traditional and e-learning), of which 50% are women”. An ex ante defined indicator should be specific, and should include, for example, a distinction between national workshop participants and e-learning course participants, a target for the pass rate, and a targeted percentage of scores 5 and 4 on feed back in questionnaires.
- Baselines are missing, as a tool to providing evidence for an enhancement of knowledge. In the evaluation questionnaires disseminated, participants are asked for their perceived knowledge increase after participating in workshops and e-learning courses, and the result is used as a proxy for actual knowledge increase. For both indicators a baseline survey would be necessary to estimate the incremental increase of knowledge prior to the start of the workshop and the e-learning course.
- The model of change is not attached and applied; there is a gap between the activities performed and completed and the results: it is assumed that completion of activities leads “unconditionally” to achievement of results and outcome.

¹⁹ This project had de facto only 9 months in which expenditure was recorded; the explanation can be found in the chapters 3.3, efficiency and 3.2, effectiveness.

²⁰ Guidelines for DA account project proposals 7th tranche.

²¹ SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable and attainable, realistic and relevant and time bound. Measurable can include a value for the baseline at project start and the increase/decrease, respectively, targeted in %.

In particular, new guidelines for the 9th tranche of the DA account provide special guidance how to generate suitable indicators and means of verification and to identify countries, among other aspects. It is furthermore “strongly encouraged that project officers in charge of drafting the project document liaise and prepare this section of the project’s indicators more generally, together with their M&E colleagues.”²²

Elements of sustainability had been inbuilt in the design. The project core team is composed of staff members of UNCTAD’s Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch (under the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities). This certainly constitutes an element of sustainability. Within the programme, time can be dedicated by the team to follow up on some of the DA project related activities even beyond project end, as for new e-learning courses and for filling knowledge gaps that might be stated by beneficiaries. Some project proposals have been reported in Ecuador that can be considered as spin offs of the project.

This fact, together with the BTI and the ongoing BTFPII programme²³ represents an important comparative advantage of UNCTAD in this area of work. In addition, it presents an element to sustain some services created for the beneficiary countries beyond the completion of project activities in December 2013.

The idea suggested in the project proposal, to choose three countries in three different continents was later replaced by the approach of choosing three countries within the same continent, all running national BioTrade programmes, in Latin America. At the start of the project in 2013, Peru expressed reservations that were triggered by its indigenous population, who did not wish to jeopardize its ongoing BioTrade programme. Peru opted to take a less visible role in the project and to join only for certain activities of the project. Brazil was nominated as a replacement as the third country in Latin America.²⁴

²² See Guidelines for drafting DA account proposals, 9th tranche.

²³ The BTFP II will be going on until end of 2014.

²⁴ Interview on skype with Head of Branch and project team in Geneva in February 2014. The strong involvement is also confirmed in the publication on BioTrade in Latin America, http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditcted20103_en.pdf.

3.2 Effectiveness

The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of three developing countries in formulating and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, and sustainable development strategies in line with BioTrade and REDD+ practices. The two anticipated results, **increased understanding** of policy-makers and business leaders of the linkages between BioTrade and REDD+ projects in 3 BioTrade beneficiary countries and an **established South–South platform** for sharing of information and best practices in the formulation and implementation of BioTrade and REDD+ projects, have been achieved to a different extent, depending on the beneficiary country.

The following table provides an overview to which extent the project has implemented its planned activities and applying the set indicators, and also if implementing these activities have led to the anticipated (quantitative and qualitative) results. After providing this overview, results from the internal monitoring of the project blended with the evaluator's analysis are presented.

Table 3 Overview Activities and Outputs

	Planned (P) versus Achieved (A)	Feed back of participants; Status at project end / Reasons for deviation
O1	Objective: To strengthen the capacities of three developing countries in formulating and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, and sustainable development strategies in line with BioTrade and REDD+ practices	
EA1	Result 1/Expected accomplishment 1 Increased understanding of policy-makers and business leaders of the linkages between BioTrade and REDD+ projects in three BioTrade beneficiary countries	
A1.1	<p>P: Preparation of training material</p> <p>A: Training materials have been developed and have been disseminated to the participants in workshops and e-courses; comments on the materials were also provided by the participants after the workshops. Training Manual is available in English and Spanish.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>Additional practical examples and case studies will be added to the course in order to better illustrate all its key concepts and facilitate the learning of the project development methodology.</p>
A1.2	<p>P: Organization of six national capacity building workshops, two in each of the countries; the target regarding participants was 60 participants for workshops and e-learning in each country (3x60 = 180 participants)</p> <p>A: Four national workshops have been delivered, one in Colombia, one in Brazil and two in Ecuador; the second workshop in Ecuador was organized as part of a larger conference that hosted a workshop on</p>	<p>PARTLY ACHIEVED</p> <p>Project team cited insufficient budgeting from the outset as a reason for reducing from 6 to 4 workshops. Another reason was the short implementation period, as time was short even for the four workshops within a six months period.</p> <p>Ecuador is the country in which the set quantitative target of two workshops has been reached and the number of targeted participants, 60, was overachieved (108 participants in workshops 1 and 2). For Brazil the quantitative achievement is 57% of target (20 participants), for Colombia 88% (37 participants).²⁶</p>

	BioTrade/REDD+; it was co-financed by the Ministry of Environment and CORPEI. ²⁵																													
A1.3	<p>P: Conducting two e- learning courses</p> <p>A: Two courses were conducted, one in English/Portuguese and one in Spanish.</p> <p>There was no specific quantitative target set for the e-learning courses, other than a joint quantitative indicator set for national workshop/s and e-learning (see A1.2).</p> <p>The number of enrolled participants versus the number who passed the course is an indicator (Completion rate) introduced by the evaluator in her assessments.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED, TWO e-LEARNING COURSES PROVIDED, BUT WITH A LOW GRADUATION RATE IN TWO OF THREE TARGET COUNTRIES</p> <p>Two workshops were conducted with 54 participants in total, of which 44 were from the three targeted countries. Cost by graduate increases as the pass rate lowers.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Country e-course</th> <th>enrolled</th> <th>passed/graduated</th> <th>% graduated</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Brazil</td> <td>14</td> <td>5</td> <td>36%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Colombia</td> <td>16</td> <td>14</td> <td>87.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ecuador</td> <td>14</td> <td>6</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total target countries</td> <td>44</td> <td>25</td> <td>56,8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other countries²⁷</td> <td>10</td> <td>8</td> <td>80%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total overall</td> <td>54</td> <td>33</td> <td>61%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Country e-course	enrolled	passed/graduated	% graduated	Brazil	14	5	36%	Colombia	16	14	87.5%	Ecuador	14	6	43%	Total target countries	44	25	56,8	Other countries ²⁷	10	8	80%	Total overall	54	33	61%
Country e-course	enrolled	passed/graduated	% graduated																											
Brazil	14	5	36%																											
Colombia	16	14	87.5%																											
Ecuador	14	6	43%																											
Total target countries	44	25	56,8																											
Other countries ²⁷	10	8	80%																											
Total overall	54	33	61%																											
A1.4	Advisory Services on building capacity and developing skills in formulation and integration	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>National consultants met and discussed with BioTrade and REDD+/climate change</p>																												

²⁶ Aggregation over three target countries to reach the overall target of 180 is in the assessment of the evaluator not providing the quality of outputs/results for two of three countries.

²⁵ This explains the high number of 108 participants for two workshops in Ecuador, compared to the other two national workshops (20 in Brazil and 37 in Colombia). For the second workshop in Ecuador the feedback of participants was gathered by CORPEI according to their own standards; these results cannot be directly compared with the three other workshops that were organized and for which feedback was collected by UNCTAD and national consultants. The workshop on 28 November 2013 was developed jointly with different stakeholders and addressed REDD+ and BioTrade, as well as other issues.

²⁷ Six officials from the Peruvian Ministry of Environment (100% completion rate); two representatives from BioTrade partner organizations in Zimbabwe were successfully trained (of three in total, 66.7% completion rate for this country).

	<p>of BioTrade strategies with Redd+ initiatives.</p> <p>No indicator set</p>	<p>actors in all beneficiary countries, explaining the concepts and raising interest in the possibility of integrating both.</p> <p>National consultants met and discussed with key technical and political beneficiaries, i.e. BioTrade and REDD+/climate change actors in each of the beneficiary countries, initially by describing the two concepts to them as well as by raising the interest on the possibility of integrating both initiatives. Interest of the UNREDD programme in Ecuador to include factsheets on BioTrade and its linkages to REDD+ into its training materials.</p>
EA2	<p>Result 2/Expected accomplishment 2 Established South–South platform for sharing of information and best practices in the formulation and implementation of BioTrade and REDD+ projects</p>	
A2.1	<p>Compilation of best practices and Lessons Learned in the implementation of the project are disseminated by UNCTAD BioTrade and its IMS.</p> <p>P: At least one publication available with information on lessons learned (LL) from linking the two systems;</p> <p>A: Currently, the beneficiaries and other interested parties have access to the BioTrade website where some of the documents are available. Key document on lessons learned is missing.</p> <p>Indicator: Increased use by project beneficiaries of research, training tools and lessons learnt linking BioTrade and REDD+</p>	<p>PARTLY ACHIEVED, MAIN DOCUMENT EXPECTED BUT NOT YET AVAILABLE</p> <p>A report of the issues discussed, main lessons and key recommendations from the second BioTrade congress is in the production phase. A complete first draft was expected by the end of March 2014.</p> <p>As publications are not all available as yet, the beneficiaries cannot use them.</p> <p>A compilation document is being drafted encompassing the experiences in the three countries. This key document is expected in a first draft only by first half of 2014. Indicator at present not achieved</p> <p>A LinkedIn BioTrade group was created with 54 members in order to connect participants in the three project formats with the BioTrade and REDD+ community. The LinkedIn account does not allow, according to the project team, to track the number of visitors and visits²⁸, so no statement can be generated to which extent the platform is actively used.</p>

²⁸ Information provided by the project team as comment to the draft evaluation report.

<p>A2.2</p>	<p>P: Organization of one international workshop to promote South-South cooperation, information dissemination and sharing of experiences. 21 participants budgeted to be invited (from beneficiary countries)</p> <p>A: Second BioTrade Congress organized and held in December 2013 in Geneva from 11 to 13 December 2013; 97 people participated</p>	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>Feedback on the international workshop and its usefulness as South-South platform was reported by project management. In a survey disseminated to the participants, 83% of the surveyed participants confirmed that as a result of the Congress, they are more likely to collaborate within the BioTrade Initiative and its partners. However, the project team did not disclose the absolute number of surveyed participants, thus it cannot be assessed to which extent this percentage is representative for the participants in its totality of 97 people.</p> <p>In total, 28 of the 97 participants were invited and paid by the project. 11 of the 28 invitees came from the three focal countries of the project. The funded participants can be broken down to the following nationalities: Australia (1), Belgium (1), Brazil (4), Burundi (1), Canada (1), Colombia (4), Ecuador (3), Italy (1), Papua New Guinea (1), Peru (2), The Netherlands (1), Uganda (1), United Kingdom (3), Vanuatu (1), Viet Nam (1), Zimbabwe (2).</p>
--------------------	--	--

Sources: Report on Status of Activities, 21 February 2014; Final Contractual Report for DA account office, 31 March 2014; information provided in interviews and in comments to the draft evaluation report by the project team that was received in June 2014.

The project team has designed and implemented an appropriate toolset to capture the perception of participants in the main training events (e-learning course and workshop) and the BioTrade conference. Unfortunately, the return rate of the questionnaires for workshops varied (between 47% and 100%). A 100% return rate was achieved in the Brazil workshop, showing that it is feasible. The three following tables provide an overview of the responses of the participants in e-courses, workshops and the congress, regarding collaboration, knowledge increase, usefulness in work life and likeliness of knowledge to be applied at work.

The number of surveyed participants was: 20 in Brazil (100% of participants), 22 in Colombia (60% of participants) and 21 in Ecuador 1 (47% of participants). Overall an average of 62% of participants had provided feedback. Only in Brazil did all participants fill out the workshop evaluation, thus its results realistically reflect the perception of the group as a whole.

Table 4 Total number of participants versus surveyed participants

Country	Number of Participants	Number of Surveyed Participants	% Surveyed Participants
Brazil	20	20	100%
Colombia	37	22	60%
Ecuador 1	45	21	47%
Ecuador 2 ²⁹	(63)*	n.a.	n.a.
Total	(158)* 102	63	62%

Table 5 Feedback of graduates of two e-courses (n=24)

Completely or mostly agree (score 4 and 5)	More or less agree (score 3)	Partially agree or not agree (score 1 and 2)
As a result of the course, I have an increased knowledge of the opportunities and challenges of working with BioTrade and REDD+		
95.83%	4.17%	0.00%
The course provided me with information on lessons learned and best practices from existing BioTrade or REDD+ projects		
70.83%	20.83%	8.33%
As a result of the course, I was able to expand my professional network of REDD+ and/or BioTrade		

²⁹ Ecuador 2 was not surveyed by the project. The survey performed by the Ministry was not made available to the evaluator.

practitioners		
41.67%	41.67%	16.67%
The topic of the course was relevant considering your needs with regards to BioTrade and/or REDD+		
100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
The organization and structure of the course allowed me to complete the learning objectives		
91.67%	4.17%	4.17%
It is likely that I will use some of the information I gained during the course in my professional work		
95.83%	4.17%	0.00%
Likeliness to engage in BioTrade and/or REDD+ projects as a result of the course		
91.07%	8,33%	0.00%

Source: Final Contractual Report, 31 March 2014

The workshop results show that relevance of the topic and knowledge increase was confirmed by over 90% of participants. 71% percent of respondents agreed that lessons learnt and best practices have been provided, while 8% of the surveyed participants only partly agreed or not agreed (score 1 and 2) that LL and best practices were provided³⁰. It was confirmed in structured interviews with beneficiaries held by phone³¹ that the capability of applying the accumulated knowledge in project proposals is limited. Also, knowledge in acquisition of much needed funding (donor funding or private initiatives) is felt as lacking. The usefulness of the e-course to increase professional networking was confirmed by only 41% of the respondents.

³⁰ Through the project, a step-by-step methodology was developed and through its implementation, lessons learned could be obtained; information about uptake and application of this manual by the beneficiaries can only be attained at a future time.

³¹ Series of seven interviews conducted by phone (6) and in writing (1) by the evaluator in March 2014

Table 6 Feedback of participants in three National Workshops

Improved knowledge of the themes presented in the workshop (BioTrade and REDD+ linkages)						
	Completely (Score 5)	Mostly (Score 4)	Fair (Score 3)	Total (score 5 to 3)	N =	% response rate
Brazil	8%	42%	33%	83%	20	100%
Colombia	33%	61%	6%	100%	37	60%
Ecuador ³²	67%	24%	9%	100%	45	47%
I will probably use the information provided in the event						
Brazil	25%	58%	17%	100%		100%
Colombia	50%	50%	0%	100%		60%
Ecuador	55%	45%	0%	100%		44%
Relevance of the workshop content for my work						
Brazil	33%	58%	8%	99%		100%
Colombia	56%	39%	0%	95%		51%
Ecuador	67%	24%	9%	100%		47%
Level of satisfaction with the workshops						
Brazil	25%	67%	8%	98%		100%
Colombia	33%	61%	6%	100%		51%
Ecuador	52%	48%	0%	100%		47%

Source: Final Contractual Report, 31 March 2014

Over 90% (scores 5 and 4) of respondents to the surveys following each country workshop confirm the relevance of the content of the workshops for their work. Over 90% of respondents from Colombia and Ecuador reported improved knowledge (scores 5 and 4), whereas only 50% of the Brazilian participants indicated the same, with 33% remaining neutral and 17% rejecting this statement. Further analysis by the project team is required to identify the reasons and to improve respectively. In Brazil, the German Cooperation GIZ^{33,34} is also providing workshops in

³² Ecuador's information relates to the first related workshop on 12 November only

³³ The State of Amazonas is one of the pioneers in establishing state-wide public policies related to climate change, environmental services and REDD+. VCS received a grant from GIZ to work with the State Centre for Climate

related fields, for example on REDD+ themes³⁵. Coordination between both providers is envisaged and adaptation/alignment of the course curricula and/or the participants and timings could likely enhance course effectiveness.

Table 7 Feedback from participants in the BioTrade Congress II

Statement	Percentage of positive or very positive replies
The II BioTrade Congress provided me a platform where I can learn from other experiences and share my own experiences	78%
Having participated in the Congress will allow me to better coordinate my activities with those of other organizations	72%
As a result of the Congress, I am more likely to collaborate with the BioTrade Initiative or its partners	83%

Source: Final Contractual Report, 31 March 2014

The majority of surveyed participants had a positive impression of the Congress providing a platform for exchange of experience and as a forum for coordination among international organizations. Furthermore a higher likeliness to collaborate with BioTrade Initiative or its partner is felt.

The female participation in the national workshops and e-courses was on average 45% with a variation between 40% and 48%. This almost reaches the envisaged target of 50% as an indicator in the project document. In fact, 50% of participants to the e-courses were female, and 57% of the graduates were women. Table 8 shows the detailed breakdown.

Change (CECLIMA) and the Institute for Conservation and Sustainable Development of Amazonas (IDESAM) to undertake a gap assessment, comparing the proposed Amazonas REDD+ System (SisREDD+) and the VCS JNR Requirements.

³⁴ http://www.bmz.de/en/publications/topics/climate/FlyerREDD_lang.pdf

³⁵ Information provided by an interviewed beneficiary.

Table 8 Female participation in National Workshops and e-courses

Country	Number of enrolled Participants	% Female Participation
Brazil e-course	14	57%
Brazil workshop	20	35%
Subtotal Brazil	34	44%
Colombia e-course	16	31%
Colombia workshop	37	43%
Subtotal Colombia	53	40%
Ecuador e-course	14	64%
Ecuador workshop 1 and 2	108	45%
Subtotal Ecuador	122	48%
Total female participation	209	45%

Source: Final Contractual Report, 31 March 2014

3.3 Efficiency

A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. What can be said about the quality, quantity and timeliness of the use of the resources?

The project team could build on previous and ongoing other experience in the BioTrade field, namely the BTI and BTFPII. This was a good starting point for the DA account project, offering synergies and complementarities with existing work; existing contacts and networks, including the BioTrade national focal points, which were all instrumental for a swift project implementation.

The project had a late start, caused by several factors: (1) the former BioTrade project manager and head of branch, who had worked five years in the climate change secretariat before joining UNCTAD and the “driver” of the DA project proposal, had taken a Special Leave Without Pay throughout the project implementation period leaving a gap in the team, (2) (major) contributions to be provided by the team in 2012 to conferences, i.e. Rio+20 conference in June 2012, for which the branch’s team prepared UNCTAD’s institutional participation, and the organization of the first BioTrade conference held in 2012 and (3) the identification and final selection of the three countries to focus on. On the other hand both conferences can be considered as events paving ground for the second BioTrade Congress with its focus on REDD+ integration, which was one of the milestones of the project that was delivered in December 2013.

The late start of the project led to a shift of implementation of the main activities and milestones into the last six months of the project, and for two main activities even beyond project end, i.e. e-learning course March 2014 and Best practice and lessons learnt report to be published expected in mid-2014. The main disadvantages caused by this end loading, as perceived by the evaluator, is the lack of time for a fully sequenced approach in implementation as originally foreseen³⁶, for a thorough monitoring of the implementation and for sustaining results by applying a phasing out strategy (see chapter 3.4 sustainability). As the team will continue to work for the BTI (UNCTAD staff) and BTFP II project staff until Dec 2014, it will however have the opportunity to further accompany the services and benefits that the DA project has delivered and to contribute support in sustaining its results.

UNCTAD’s in-house structure in the form of the Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch under the Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities is certainly a source of accumulated knowledge and strength also for the implementation of the DA project. The Branch has a staff strength of 17 team members. With the previous manager leaving the team prior to start of implementation meant a loss of a main in-house source of knowledge in climate change/REDD+. The BioTrade team being actively involved in the implementation confirmed as an – additional - result of the project a major knowledge increase within their team in course of its implementation.

³⁶ See project proposal and first annual report.

Among the synergies and complementarities with other thematically related projects the BTI and the ongoing BTFPII are the most obvious. Furthermore the REDD+ programme itself offers potential for more coordination and cooperation. A beneficiary interviewed (head of the forestry department) indicated that the German cooperation (GIZ) is also working in the field of REDD+ and is providing e-learning options and support to writing project proposals.

The low pass rate in the e-learning course is an efficiency and cost-efficiency concern the project team is well aware of.

Table 9 E-learning courses: Enrolled, dropped out, failed and passed

Country	Enrolled	Dropped out	Failed test	Passed test	Relation passed/enrolled
Brazil	14	5	4	5	36%
Colombia	15	1	1	13	87%
Ecuador	15	6	2	7	46.7%
Other countries: Zimbabwe, Peru	10	n.a.	n.a.	8	80%
Total ³⁷	54/44	13	8	33/25	56.8%/61%

Source: Final Report, contractual reporting; 31 March 2014 and Status Report, February 2014

The evaluation notes the low pass rates of 36% and 46.7% for participants from Brazil and Ecuador for the e-learning course, in contrast to an almost 90% pass rate for participants from Colombia. Overall 25 of the 44 participants from these three countries graduated the two courses, and reaches 33 out of 54 if it counts e-course participants from other countries (Peru and Zimbabwe).

The pass rate for the e-learning course points to difficulties encountered by those enrolled in the course to continue throughout and to pass the course. Interviewed participants indicated scarcity of time to dedicate to the course and another course that was run in parallel as reasons for dropping out. Every person who enrolls and did not pass presents an efficiency loss and an increase of cost per successful participant. The example of Colombia shows that achieving an almost 90% completion rate has been feasible.

In the perception of the evaluator, only those course participants who have passed³⁸ can be counted as beneficiaries that have increased their knowledge as anticipated. Applying this logic, the number of beneficiaries of the e-learning would decrease from 44 to 25 as the total of three

³⁷ All countries and three target countries (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador).

³⁸ The cut-off grade for passing the course was 70% of the test correctly answered.

countries, and reaches 33 if it counts e-course participants from other countries (Peru and Zimbabwe).³⁹

The project budget granted by the Development Account was almost USD 0.35 million. First budget expenditure was recorded in February 2013⁴⁰ and the expenditure rate at project end date 12/2013 has been 94%. Remaining unspent funds had to be returned to the DA account. The project team confirmed that initial implementation related activities had already taken place in 2012; the cost of these activities were not drawn against the project but from another funding source. Financial information as an input to calculate cost per participant/graduate in workshops and e-courses has been requested from project team⁴¹, but it has not been provided to the evaluator.

³⁹ Final Report, contractual reporting of the project team, 31 March 2014.

⁴⁰ Information provided by the DA focal point at UNCTAD.

⁴¹ Communication to project team of 21 and 23 April 2014.

3.4 Sustainability

The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

The project has trained the political and technical BioTrade focal points in the beneficiary countries, which offers a potential of continuity of activities beyond the project implementation. BioTrade partners and country stakeholders have demonstrated ownership in the objectives of the project by their in-kind contributions to project activities. The main contributions are listed in the table below.

Table 10 Supplementary Funding of Activities

Country	Contributing Entity/Donor	Form of Contribution	In-Kind Contributions (estimated worth in USD)
Brazil	Forests Alive	Support activities in Brazil, including the preparation of the proposal submitted to Petrobras, revision of training manual and material prepared by UNCTAD	24.000
Colombia	Corporación Biocomercio Sostenible	Staff time of experts assigned to the project	3.000
Ecuador	BioTrade Programme Ecuador (Ministry of Environment of Ecuador/CORPEI/Eco Ciencia)	Co-funding of the second national workshop, 28 November 2013 Staff time of experts and assistants assigned to the project, and use of its web platform	14.400
Colombia	UNIMINUTO ⁴²	Organization of two (planned) additional e-courses (one in English and one in Spanish) for 2014	10.000

Source: Final Report, contractual reporting, 31 March 2014

In Ecuador a high-level participation from the Ministry of Environment at the workshop was reported by the project team; the Sub-secretaries on Natural Heritage and Climate Change convened the national workshop on 12 November. Together with Ecuador's in-kind contribution to one of the workshops, this is an expression of interest of the BioTrade National Programme

⁴² www.uniminuto.edu

(Ministry of Environment/CORPEI/EcoCiencia) to continue working on both topics. The Sub-Secretary of Climate Change within the Ministry also expressed concrete interest to develop a REDD+/BioTrade proposal for submission to the AVINA Foundation.

Another indicator for sustainability is the fact that BioTrade and REDD+ are institutionally more closely linked than prior to the project. Within the Ministry of the Environment of Colombia, the work on REDD+ was included as part of the thematic categories overseen by the Office of Green and Sustainable Businesses, which is UNCTAD's national BioTrade focal point. This can foster a joint formulation and implementation of BioTrade/REDD+ initiatives. Similarly, the Regional Autonomous Development Corporation of Chodechoco has expressed an interest in developing initiatives that integrate REDD+ into BioTrade strategies.⁴³

UNIMINUTO, the university in Colombia that hosted the first two e-courses, has expressed interest in hosting two additional courses (one in English and one in Spanish) in 2014. UNCTAD will contribute its technical expertise as course mentor/coach⁴⁴. This is a concrete example of continuation of services for the beneficiaries. Plans to broaden the scope of participation to other English and Spanish speaking countries working on BioTrade⁴⁵ have to be analyzed carefully. In order to sustain the results of this project and contribute to its objectives, participation has not to be spread too thinly over many countries but aiming to target expert pools around national key partners in the three beneficiary countries as a starting point.

Financial sustainability remains critical. Future financing will widely depend on donor funded or co-financed initiatives. It is not clear to which extent initiatives like Socio Bosque⁴⁶ have set aside earmarked budget for targeted initiatives. Key participants interviewed confirmed opportunities for co-funding as crucial.

Although knowledge increase, usefulness and applicability of the information provided by the project has been widely confirmed by participants of workshops and e-learning course, there is a call for more practical applications and a felt lack of knowledge on how to apply such information to concrete projects in this field⁴⁷. This should be considered for further e-learning as well as for targeted counseling provided by national BioTrade consultants, to foster sustainability of project results.

⁴³ Final Contractual Report, 31 March 2014; interviews conducted with project manager and with national focal point offices.

⁴⁴ Project team informed that there is an official letter, but it has not been made available to the evaluator.

⁴⁵ Draft Final Contractual Report, 31 March 2014

⁴⁶ Socio Bosque was funded entirely by the Government of Ecuador in its initial phase. While recognising that it will likely remain the largest contributor, the government is now looking to diversify the sources of funding for the programme, including: new green taxes, ear-marked for Socio Bosque, payments by industry as compensatory condition for obtaining licenses for extractive and other high-impact activities, eventually contributing up to 40% of Socio Bosque's budget. Voluntary contributions from domestic and/or international companies, possibly linked to some form of environmental offsetting, international cooperation funds and international REDD+ payments. <http://cdkn.org/resource/private-conservation-agreements-support-climate-action-ecuadors-socio-bosque-programme/>; the interviewed participant could not provide concrete information on the budget for next years.

⁴⁷ Structured interviews conducted with key participants on skype, March 2014

UNCTAD, through its BTI and BTFPII, would explore synergies to ensure sustainability of the project and continue disseminating its training material through its website and the BioTrade Congress platform. The key output contributing to EA2 is the Lessons Learnt document. It should have been available to the beneficiaries after completion of workshops and the congress to apply knowledge in practice, i.e. by the end of 2013. The document is envisaged to be ready to be published and disseminated only in (June) 2014, partly due to reasons outside the influence of the project team.

UNCTAD has created a BioTrade Network LinkedIn group that includes currently 54 members (participants of BioTrade I and II congresses, workshops and e-courses, and partners' staff). So far the uptake of this virtual opportunity and the content shared has not been analyzed and thus cannot be commented on.

Chapter 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the final evaluation of the project that contractually ended in December 2013. The conclusions and recommendations expressed in this evaluation are forward looking, aiming to be useful in the conception of similar future projects. This chapter should be read as good practice and lessons learned guidance drawn from this project.

4.1 Conclusions

The main conclusions of the evaluator regarding this project are the following:

Relevance

- The project has been and remains relevant. It was the response to concrete requests for guidance in integrating REDD+ into the BioTrade Initiative by partner countries. The project is linked to other initiatives of UNCTAD in the same sector, namely BTI and BTFPII.
- The design of the project, in particular the logframe and its indicators, can be improved for similar future projects, for example enunciating more measurable results and introducing a theory of change approach. This will support a more results oriented approach of projects.

Efficiency, Effectiveness

- The project started with a significant delay; the project team managed in less than one year of factual implementation to introduce the main part of the intended activities and to remain within the projected implementation end date.
- Most of the intended results have been achieved as planned. However, some shortcomings have been observed. One is the number of workshops (reduced from six to four), and the number of people trained per country (target of 60 people in each country, either in workshops or e-course) was only achieved in one country.
- The project team has designed and applied an appropriate toolset to capture the feedback of participants for the three formats (feedback questionnaires submitted after the milestone events). Unfortunately the return rate of the questionnaires varied and was rather low for some events, jeopardizing the strength of the tool and the validity of the statements expressed for the totality of trained participants.
- Low pass rates of e-learning courses for participants from Brazil and Ecuador point to a loss in cost efficiency and elevated cost per course graduate. Colombia, in contrast,

achieved a pass rate of 87%.⁴⁸ In total this lowers the total number of empowered beneficiaries of the e-learning courses from a potential maximum of 44 to 25 people in the three primary beneficiary countries, and from 54 to 33 people, including eight additional graduates from Peru and Zimbabwe.

- Over 90% of e-learning course graduates confirmed the relevance of the topic for their work and knowledge increase provided by the course. 8% percent of the surveyed participants felt that lessons learned and best practices were lacking in the current course curriculum.
- Over 90% of surveyed participants in the three workshops also confirmed the relevance of training content for their work.
- Furthermore, over 90% of workshop participants surveyed in Colombia and Ecuador also confirmed completely or mostly an improved knowledge whereas the participants in the Brazilian workshop were split: 50% completely or generally confirmed increased knowledge whereas 33% remained neutral and 17% rejected this statement.

Sustainability

- A late start shortened the implementation period and led to an end-heavy implementation. As a consequence, there was no time to implement an explicit exit strategy to foster the sustainability of services and benefits provided.
- The project team (UNCTAD permanent/full time staff members) can continue to support the project, also in their role as implementers of BTFPII that will be ongoing until December 2014, and thus prolonging the phase-out period.
- Some in kind contributions have been provided by key national partners. Nevertheless full financial sustainability remains critical. Dimension of future uptake of the combined approach promoted by the project will depend on financial support through projects/cooperation/donors. In this context, lack of project proposal writing skills was indicated by some of the interviewed beneficiaries, among them producers' cooperatives and NGOs, as an obstacle in applying the accumulated knowledge in BioTrade/REDD+ and implementing it.

⁴⁸ For two countries that were not the core target countries but participated in the e-learning course it was 100% for Peru and 67% for Zimbabwe (absolute numbers were not provided).

A summary of the conclusions of the evaluation are shown in the SWOT analysis below:

Table 10 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term experience in BioTrade upon which the project team could built on; ongoing BTFP II programme • Established links in particular to the BioTrade partners in Latin America. • Generally positive feedback of participants in national workshops and e-learning. • Positive response of surveyed participants regarding perceived increase of knowledge and likeliness to apply knowledge in working environment. • Expressed interest and need for the subject by the participants in all three formats. • Knowledge transfer to and increase in REDD+ in UNCTAD project team and staff at the end of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short implementation period and reduced time for a sequenced approach and follow up. • Response rate to evaluation questionnaires distributed after trainings and congress varied between 50% and 100%, jeopardizing the strength of the survey results. • Main knowledge carrier on REDD+ knowledge were external (UNCTAD) consultants. • E-learning courses had low pass rates in Brazil and Ecuador with 36% and 43%, two of the three target countries. • Not clear to which extent the knowledge increase translates into institutional (public or private) knowledge increase. 	Internal – attributes to the organisation
Opportunities	Threats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued and newly established partnership with public and private institutions. • Further potential partners working in same or related field like UN REDD+ and GIZ (Brazil). • Continue and further roll out e-courses; provide partner institutions with opportunity to suggest suitable participants who would be supported in their graduation and would strengthen the knowledge pool of the partner institution. • Potential partner UNIMINUTO in Colombia as host also for future e-courses; BioTrade team as moderator; some partners contributed in kind to project activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial sustainability of partner institutions is often weak. Varying financial commitment of partners. • Perceived lack of project proposal writing skills for combined BioTrade and REDD+ projects, hampering to implement new knowledge as financial capacity (core budget) is often modest and/or institution depends on third party funding. • No main Government partner in Brazil; Workshop feedback in Brazil partly critical. 	External – attributes to the environment
Positive, potentially helpful	Negative, potentially harmful	

4.2 Recommendations

To project management / UNCTAD branch

- If not yet done so, to analyze the reasons for the low pass rate in Brazil and Ecuador for the two e-learning courses conducted. To take lessons from this analysis and – to the extent possible - apply them to future courses.
- To consider for future projects of similar nature, according to the available budget and dimension, a 2-3 years implementation period, allowing time for a sequenced implementation, and to follow up on activities, including phase-out activities that support sustainability.
- To seek advice from EMU regarding a more results-oriented design of projects, including an appropriate set of indicators and a theory of change approach.
- It should be considered to strengthen the sustainability of results and services provided by providing coaching to technical and political key beneficiaries and their teams (on their request), for example on how to conceive concrete future projects that integrate both approaches, and on how to respond to calls for proposals from donors or corporate clients.
- Use wherever possible, synergies with the ongoing BTI activities and programmes to maximize possible sustainability of services and benefits of the DA project.
- To make available all material on the BioTrade website; to monitor the visits and uptake of the LinkedIn forum “BioTrade”.
- To follow up on results achieved and sustained 6-9 months after the end of the project; to consider applying the BioTrade Impact Assessment System on the BT/REDD+ project proposals which will be formulated and implemented after project end (no project proposal so far) and a baseline has been established, to measure contributions⁴⁹/effects of the project to sustainable development in the three beneficiary countries.
- It is suggested to establish closer links with the UNREDD programme, to analyse how far an integration of BioTrade concepts can be realized in REDD+ countries in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to enable all possible synergies and increase efficiency. In Brazil, the German Cooperation GIZ is also providing workshops in particular on REDD+ related themes⁵⁰. Coordination between both providers and adaptation/alignment of the course curriculum would likely enhance course effectiveness and attendance.

⁴⁹ As there were in all three countries other initiatives aiming to the same objectives, a clear causal attribution may not be possible to establish, but a contribution.

⁵⁰ Information provided by an interviewed beneficiary.

- For the future e-learning courses, a strategy of targeted participation should be introduced. Not to spread thinly over a large number of countries, but allowing at least for the next two e-learning courses, a certain quota of participants from the three primary beneficiary countries who have participated in previous training activities under the project, and who work in the same institutions and have decision making roles. This would allow taking individual knowledge increase to the level of institutional learning. Also involve key technical and political beneficiaries in the three countries in the proposal of candidates for e-learning course to foster institutional capacity building in leading institutions or corporates in BioTrade/REDD+.
- Include training modules on concrete case studies and on project proposal writing. Encourage participants to engage moderator and/or national BioTrade consultants and/or national partners in supporting concrete proposals they are considering; include a step-by-step method to design and implement combined REDD+ and BT projects as part of the project.
- Seek confirmation about the option for e-learning course transfer to UNIMINUTO in Colombia; clarify the input of UNCTAD as moderator/coach for the participants; also clarify the question of copyright.⁵¹ Otherwise seek for other alternatives for hosting the courses.
- To the extent that it is within the hands of the project team, to speed up publication of the Lessons Learned document and disseminate it to the project participants and make it available on the BioTrade website to download. A time line of mid-2014, as indicated, would create a time gap and likely slow down momentum gained with training and e-learning.
- For future projects, maximize efforts to get the disseminated questionnaires returned. Lessons learnt should be drawn to adapt the process of dissemination and collection of questionnaires to capture the perception of the majority, if not all participants.
- For future e-learning courses, the percentage of graduates to participants should be increased, to reduce the cost per participant. In order to minimize the drop outs due to conflicting tasks at the participant's workplace, it is suggested that the supervisor of the course participant should confirm the participation of the staff member, including allocation of working hours to the task.

⁵¹ A formal commitment was received on 26 February for an additional course. This was reported in the Final report and 2013 annual report; As agreed in the service agreement signed with UNIMINUTO, the intellectual property rights of the course belong to UNCTAD.