Initiative for Climate Action Transparency – ICAT Project in Lesotho

Validation Workshop and Final Report

Initiative for Climate Action Transparency in Lesotho

Deliverable #5:

Validation Workshop and Final Report

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PREPARED UNDER

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List of Acronyms

BAU	Business-As-Usual
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CCPIS	Climate Change Policy Implementation Strategy
CO_2	Carbon dioxide
COP	Conference of Parties
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
GACMO	Greenhouse Gas Abatement Cost Model
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GoL	Government of Lesotho
ICAT	Initiative for Climate Action Transparency
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LMS	Lesotho Meteorological Services
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
NC	National communication
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NEP	National Energy Policy
NIR	National GHG Inventory Report
PA	Paris Agreement
QA/QC	Quality Assurance/Quality Control
RSL	Revenue Services Lesotho
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
tCO_2e	Tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent
TNA	Technology Needs Assessment
TNC	Third National Communication
UNEP-CCC	United Nations Environment Programme Copenhagen Climate Centre
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

1. Executive Summary

The Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) is a global initiative designed to help countries enhance their climate action transparency through the development of robust Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems. The ICAT project in Lesotho, led by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF) through the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) with the technical assistance provided by the UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC), aimed to support Lesotho in assessing the impacts of its climate policies and actions by developing a robust MRV system that will assist the country in fulfilling its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in the energy sector commitments under the requirements of the Paris Agreement. The ICAT project in Lesotho focused on the revision of selected mitigation actions in the energy sector using the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Cost Model (GACMO), providing recommendations and inputs for NDC revision and establishing a comprehensive national MRV system specifically for the energy sector. This project also involved the creation and implementation of institutional arrangements, legal frameworks, and standardized methodologies for data collection, reporting, and verification.

The project brought together MRV/M&E experts and stakeholders from the Energy Sector. The project commenced with an inception workshop comprising relevant stakeholders from various sectors. Through the project implementation phase, the following activities were carried out:

- Revision of the selected mitigation measures in the Energy sector using the GACMO tool
- Analysis and review of the existing national MRV/M&E systems to identify needs, gaps and barriers, and identification of barriers and gaps for developing institutional arrangements for designing a data collection system for the Energy sector
- Harmonizing methodologies for assessing greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts of policies and actions in the energy sector
- Design of the MRV System for the energy sector and establishment of roles and responsibilities
- Development of an overarching institutional arrangement
- Assessment of policies and measures across the energy sector to assist in developing NDC indicators needed to monitor Lesotho's progress in the implementation of its NDC targets.

1.1 Report Structure

This section provides an overview of the topics covered in each section of the report. The report is divided into seven (7) sections:

Section 1: Provides and overview the report, including structure, scope and objectives of the ICAT project. It also outlines the project deliverables and coordination.

Section 2: Focuses on the validation workshop, including its objectives, program, agenda and proceedings. It covers the presentation of deliverables, inputs, observations, discussions, question and answer sessions.

Section 3: Highlights the key achievements of the ICAT Project in Lesotho

Section 4: Key lessons learnt during the implementation of the project activities are emphasised in this section

Section 5: Presents key recommendations based on the lessons learned during project implementation and the challenges encountered

Section 6: Evaluation of the objectives and ICAT Work is the main focus of this section.

Section 7: Focus on conclusions, the way forward and closing remarks are discussed in this final section.

1.2 Scope and Objective of the ICAT Project

The overall objective of this project was to support the implementation of Lesotho's domestic MRV/transparency system through a capacity-building programme, training on MRV/transparency concepts, methods, and tools, including iterative testing and application of the ICAT tools, and development of a roadmap to sustain ICAT outcomes. This project also aimed to explore relevant instruments and elements that may contribute to Lesotho's efforts to prepare for cooperation with other countries under Article 6.

The main focus of the ICAT project was on Lesotho's energy sector, specifically reviewing existing MRV and/or M&E policies at a national level and within the Energy sector. The initiative aimed to establish institutional arrangements, including designing and implementing legal frameworks, data collection, reporting, and verification methodologies and procedures among relevant stakeholders to create a robust and continuous national MRV system.

To deepen ICAT's impact, a significant portion of the project was dedicated to hands-on capacity building, also utilizing ICAT transparency guidance in the energy sector, among other related guidance. The main objective of ICAT was to support a data collection system focusing on the energy sector and track greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions achieved as a result of the current energy policy and targets. With the MRV of climate policies being a relatively novel concept, ICAT has provided methodological inputs in the energy sector in Lesotho. It will also enable the testing of this new reporting throughout the entirety of the Lesotho MRV system, with the purpose of identifying non-methodological barriers such as those related to institutions, laws, processes, data, and systems.

The Government of Lesotho has identified the objectives of ICAT Lesotho, with a specific focus on the energy sector and the transport subsector within the broader energy sector. These objectives have been expanded to include the following activities:

- **Objective 1** – Revision of selected climate actions using the GACMO tool for the Energy sector
- **Objective 2** – MRV Needs and Gaps Assessment
- **Objective 3** – Harmonization of methodologies for assessing greenhouse gas impacts of policies and actions in the energy sector
- **Objective 4** – Design of the MRV System and Establishment of Roles and Responsibilities
- **Objective 5** – Dissemination Workshop and Implementation Plan

The above objectives aim to enhance Lesotho' commitment to transparency and effective reporting, particularly in relation to the National GHG Inventory and mitigation actions as the country strives to implement its NDC.

1.3 Project Deliverables

The project has 5 deliverables that were submitted for validation during the workshop, in line with the specific objectives outlined. Table 1 outlines the expected outcomes of the ICAT project deliverables in Lesotho.

Deliverables	Description
Del 1:	• Recommendations and inputs for NDC revision. • Mitigation analysis of Energy sector projects identified under revised NDC.
Del 2:	Report on: • The assessment of the current national MRV/ME systems, identifying gaps and barriers. Identify barriers and gaps in developing institutional arrangements for designing a data collection system for the Energy sector. • Providing recommendations on the most effective ways to address the significant barriers identified
Del 3:	• Report on assessing selected methodologies for assessing GHG emission impacts of policies and actions with a focus on the energy sector.
Del 4:	• Report on designing the national MRV system, using the ICAT guidance tailored to the energy-related policies, establishment of roles and responsibilities and providing recommendations on how to address barriers/gaps/issues to improve data collection and reporting for the energy sector emissions.
Del 5:	• Validation workshop report and final report

Table 1: ICAT-Lesotho Deliverables

1.4 Project Coordination

The LMS was responsible for the overall coordination of the project and the review of reports from consultants (both National and International). Technical support, guidance and review of draft reports were provided by LMS and UNEP-CCC. This collaborative effort indicates a structured approach to managing and reviewing project deliverables, ensuring they meet high standards of technical accuracy and relevance to the project's objectives.

The Project Steering Committee performed the following tasks, among others:

- Held biweekly meetings to track and assess the advancement of the project against its milestones, timelines and objectives.
- Recommended strategies and provided technical support, expert advice and guidance to the national consultants to help them navigate challenges. based on knowledge and experience to the ICAT Project consultants.
- In consultations with key stakeholders, the National Consultants prepared and submitted output reports to LMS and UNEP-CCC.

Table 2 below displays the Core Team members of the ICAT Project in Lesotho.

Table 2: Core Team Members of the ICAT Project in Lesotho

S/N	Organization	Name	Role
1	Lesotho Meteorological Service	Maqhanolle Tsekoa	Lead Project Coordinator (*National*)
2	Lesotho Meteorological Services	Theletsa Mpholle	Project Coordinator (*National*)
3	UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre	Ivana Audia, Senior Advisor	Lead Project Coordinator and Technical Advisor
4	UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre	Aiymgul Kerimray	Capacity Building: GACMO Methodology
5	UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre	Jyoti Prasad Painuly	Capacity Building: ICAT Renewable Energy Methodology
6	Consultant	Buddika Hemashantha	International Consultant
7	Consultant	Molibeli Taele	National Consultant
8	Consultant	Leloko Mokhutšoane	National Consultant
9	Consultant	Malintle Kheleli	National Consultant

2. Validation Workshop Report

This section pertains to the ICAT Validation Workshop for the ICAT project in Lesotho. The ICAT Lesotho – Project Validation and Lessons Learned Workshop was held on May 28, 2024, aimed at validating the outcomes of the ICAT Project. It also provided a platform for discussing lessons learned and determining next steps post-project completion. The Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) organized the workshop, which was conducted in a hybrid format with a face-to-face session at the Maseru Avani Hotel in Lesotho. Three remote participants attended the workshop: one from UNEP-CCC, one from the ICAT Secretariat, and an international consultant. In addition, 40 local participants attended in person, comprising 24 males (60%) and 16 females (40%).

2.1 Objectives, Programme and Agenda of the Validation Workshop

The ICAT validation workshop served as a crucial milestone in ensuring the effectiveness and practicality of the MRV system being developed. The workshop brought together key stakeholders from various sectors to review and validate the outcomes of the ICAT project through discussions, focusing on the activity outputs. The main goal was to gather participants input to refine and improve the proposed data collection, reporting,

and verification methodologies, legal frameworks and institutional arrangements to ensure they are practical and tailored to Lesotho's context. This step was crucial for the continued success of the ICAT project, as the approved deliverables would be implemented based on the feedback and discussions with stakeholders.

The workshop took place on 28th May 2024 with the participation of the project's partners, representatives from relevant sector ministries, departments and agencies, national experts, academia, NGOs, and the private sector. The detailed workshop schedule can be found in Annex I, and a detailed list of participants is provided in Annex II.

2.2 Proceedings of the workshop

The validation workshop commenced with opening remarks from the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS), followed by participant introductions. The acting Director of LMS, who also oversaw the coordination of the ICAT Lesotho Project, chaired the workshop. He welcomed both in-person and virtual attendees and apologized for the Director's absence due to prior commitments. The acting Director delivered a briefly keynote address, outlined the workshop objectives, encouraged active participation and presented the day's agenda (refer to Annex III for opening remarks). In his closing statements, he expressed appreciation to all those who contributed to the project's success

Mr. Oleg Bulanyi, Senior Programme Officer at the ICAT Secretariat, introduced the ICAT programme and expressed gratitude to the government of Lesotho and LMS for their commitment to the project and for the support throughout its implementation. He thanked all involved actors for their continuous support throughout the project.

He emphasized the importance of climate transparency and indicated that it should not be seen primarily as an obligation but as an opportunity for evidence-based policymaking. Transparency serves as a cornerstone for translating policies into action by mobilizing resources and establishing a framework for monitoring and evaluating NDC implementation to enhance their effectiveness. Transparency will shape the NDCs to be consistent and supportive of the country's sustainable development objectives. Mr. Bulanyi highlighted the ICAT project's focus on enhancing NDC-related transparency efforts, leading to improved institutional arrangements for greenhouse gas inventories and monitoring reporting and verification frameworks. These developments will support Lesotho in implementing its NDCs and monitoring progress effectively. He stressed the importance of stakeholder engagement in climate change initiatives and underscored

the role of transparency in reviewing NDCs to foster trust among parties and inform policy decisions. The GACMO tool is utilized in revising the NDC, and the availability of data is crucial for this process.

Mr. Bulanyi concluded by highlighting that the project had established a strong foundation for long-term capacity building at the national level. He thanked the Lesotho Meteorological Services for their invaluable guidance and specifically commended Mr. Maqhanolle Tsekoa for his outstanding leadership in the project.

Following Mr. Bulanyi's remarks, Ms. Ivana Audia (Senior Advisor at the UNEP-CCC) introduced the ICAT project for Lesotho. She explained that the project was launched in September 2021 and is part of the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) to support the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. Ms. Audia expressed gratitude to Mr. Tsekoa and Mr. Mpholle from LMS for their valuable assistance and support throughout the project. She outlined the objectives of the ICAT project and the expected outcomes as follows: Outcome #1 involves revising selected mitigation actions in the energy sector using GACMO, Outcome #2 focuses on the MRV needs and gaps assessment report, Outcome #3 aims to harmonize methodologies for assessing GHG impacts of policies and actions in the energy sector, Outcome #4 involves designing the MRV system and establishing roles and responsibilities, and Outcome #5 includes a Dissemination Workshop and Implementation, along with the consultants involved. Ms. Audia also presented the Project Work plan, highlighting that there have been delays in commencing the project and submitting deliverables.

The speakers emphasized that ICAT aims to integrate guidance, capacity building and knowledge sharing to engage countries through a common framework and tools. By integrating these elements—guidance, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and common frameworks—ICAT aims to empower countries to strengthen their climate transparency efforts. This holistic approach supports countries in setting ambitious climate goals, tracking progress towards those goals, and ultimately enhancing global efforts to combat climate change effectively.

2.3 Presentation of the Deliverables, Inputs and Observations

This section details the project deliverables and provides a brief overview of each. High-level presentations were conducted for the 4 deliverables, highlighting key issues.

Deliverable #1

- The revision of Lesotho's NDC using the GACMO tool presents a valuable opportunity to enhance the country's climate ambition and contribute to global efforts to mitigate GHG emissions. By prioritizing cost-effective mitigation options and aligning with evolving national development priorities, **international climate negotiations**, **technological advancements** and **best practices** *to ensure that the revised NDC reflect the latest knowledge and global commitments. This will* accelerate the transition towards a low-carbon and resilient energy future while promoting sustainable development and poverty alleviation.
- Revising Lesotho's mitigation actions in the energy sector is crucial for boosting climate ambition, integrating technological advancements, aligning with national circumstances and priorities, attracting international support and investment, incorporating lessons learned, and improving transparency and accountability.

Observations

a) **Improve MRV Systems:** Strengthen MRV systems to enhance transparency, accountability, and tracking of progress towards NDC targets.
b) **Invest in Data Collection:** Allocate resources for enhancing data collection capacities, particularly in sectors critical for NDC implementation such as energy, to facilitate evidence-based decision-making.
c) **The GACMO tool** allows the assessment of effective solutions to reduce GHG emissions, facilitating the selection of mitigation options suitable for national conditions. Designed for ease of understanding and use, the model is highly applicable, aiding in tracking the results of national GHG mitigation efforts and developing future mitigation actions. Some of the mitigation options suitable for Lesotho in the GACMO tool are missing. However, some mitigation options suitable for Lesotho are missing from the GACMO tool. Consequently, certain parameters of the model need to be adjusted to align with the mitigation actions outlined in Lesotho's NDC, and additional mitigation options tailored for Lesotho should be developed.
d) Develop a national strategy for mainstreaming the country's NDC into NSDP.

Deliverable #2:

- Addressing the identified barriers and gaps in national MRV/ME systems for the energy sector requires a comprehensive approach encompassing standardization, capacity building, technological innovation, and institutional coordination. By implementing the recommended strategies, governments can enhance the reliability, transparency, and effectiveness of energy sector data collection,

thereby facilitating informed decision-making and progress towards sustainable development goals.

- Barriers are impediments to enhancing the MRV system, which is necessary for transitioning to the EFT. It is essential to eliminate these barriers to establish a conducive environment for the country to transparently report its NDC mitigation efforts. The barriers identified for validation and their categorization are as follows:
    - Limited knowledge of the country's NDC, MRV and the Paris Agreement Transparency Framework
    - Lack of institutional capacity: *Most of the institutions indicated limited knowledge and skills in undertaking the GHG national inventory consistent with the IPCC methodology.*
    - Lack of data and data gaps.
    - Weak institutional arrangement on data and information exchange
    - Limited trained personnel on MRV and GHG emissions inventory.
    - Low involvement and participation of the private sector.
    - Lack of financial resources.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations for Addressing Identified Barriers were presented to the stakeholders for validation

1. **Integration and Standardization:**

a) **Develop Unified Data Platforms:** Establish centralized data repositories equipped with standardized reporting formats and protocols to streamline data collection processes across the energy sector.

b) **Implement Common Methodologies:** Adopt internationally recognized methodologies and standards for data collection, ensuring consistency and comparability of energy-related information.

2 **Capacity Building and Resource Mobilization:**

a) **Invest in Training Programs:** Prioritize capacity-building initiatives to enhance the skills and knowledge of personnel involved in data collection and management.

b) **Allocate Adequate Resources:** Increase budgetary allocations and explore alternative funding mechanisms to support the development and maintenance of robust data collection infrastructures.

3 **Technological Advancements:**

a) **Upgrade Information Systems:** Invest in modern technologies and infrastructure upgrades to facilitate the efficient collection, storage, and analysis of energy sector data.
b) **Promote Innovation:** Promote the use of cutting-edge solutions like IoT devices and remote sensing technologies to improve the efficiency and accuracy of data collection.

4 **Strengthen Institutional Coordination:**

a) **Establish Interagency Collaboration:** Foster collaboration among relevant government agencies, private sector entities, and civil society organizations to ensure coherence and synergy in data collection efforts.
b) **Formulate Clear Mandates:** Clarify institutional roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance accountability in the management of MRV/ME systems.

Deliverable #3

- Harmonizing methodologies for assessing greenhouse gas impacts of policies and actions in the energy sector: Assessing the GHG emission impacts of policies and actions within the energy sector is a complex yet crucial endeavour for advancing climate mitigation efforts.
- Assessing the GHG emission impacts of policies and actions within the energy sector requires a nuanced understanding of both technical methodologies and policy contexts. By carefully selecting and integrating appropriate approaches, stakeholders can enhance decision-making processes and effectively mitigate emissions in line with climate goals.

Observations

a) **Integrated Approach:** Combine multiple methodologies to leverage their respective strengths and compensate for weaknesses.
b) **Continuous Improvement:** Invest in data collection, modelling capabilities, and sensitivity analysis to enhance the accuracy and robustness of assessments.

Deliverable #4

- Designing a national MRV system tailored to energy-related policies requires integration of ICAT guidance, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, and concerted efforts to address barriers and gaps. Lesotho has established a functional institutional architecture to implement climate change interventions and comply with UNFCCC requirements, consisting of the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) and the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC).
- In terms of the legal framework, Lesotho has developed policies to facilitate data flow and exchange among stakeholders, including the National Climate Change Policy and National Energy Policy.
- However, there are identified limitations and weaknesses that need to be addressed.
- Recommendations for strengthening the institutional arrangements and legal frameworks include:
    - Enhancing the capacities of NCCC members and the national GHG inventory team to effectively carry out their responsibilities.
    - Strengthening the legal frameworks related to institutional arrangements and data reporting/sharing.
    - Developing a national strategy to integrate the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) into the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP).
    - Ensuring the existing institutional arrangements are strengthened to achieve both vertical and horizontal integration.

Additional Recommendations to Address Barriers and Gaps

a) **Resource Allocation:** Increase budgetary allocations for MRV system development and capacity-building initiatives to overcome resource constraints.

b) **Policy Support:** Develop supportive policies and incentives to encourage data collection, reporting, and technology adoption in the energy sector.

c) **Stakeholder Engagement:** Foster collaboration and communication among government agencies, industry stakeholders, civil society, and academia to address data collection challenges and improve transparency.

d) **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly review and update the MRV system to incorporate new methodologies, technological advancements, and emerging best practices in emissions monitoring and reporting.

2.4 Discussions, Question and Answer Sessions

Session I: Deliverables 1 and 2

1. **Question**: Targeted reduction of 4%: How is the gap in calculating the emissions bridged?

    - **Answer**: *The 4% target was established following a comprehensive review of 14 mitigation measures in the updated NDC. The assessment took into account what can feasibly be accomplished within the context of Lesotho. For example, in the Solar Home Systems sector, an evaluation was carried out on the yearly installation rate of systems in recent times, and a forecast was made for the number of systems that will be installed by 2030.*

2. **Question**: The Nationally Determined Contributions are supposed to be communicated to all levels of society. However, the revised NDC currently lacks strategies for raising awareness.

    - **Answer***: It is acknowledged that communication is an important component of reaching all levels of society for successful measurement, reporting and verification of the NDC.*

3. **Question**: Why is there a difference in the targeted reduction of GHG emissions between the 2017 NDC and the 2024 NDC even though the target year is the same?

    - **Answer:** *The difference is primarily attributed to different and improved assumptions in the methodology and updated data for 2024 compared to 2017.*

4. **Question**: Why was the energy balance of 2017 taken from UN Energy Statistics instead of the Department of Energy?

    - **Answer:** *This was the only energy balance available to the consultants, but is there another energy balance for 2017? It would be helpful to have access to it in order to enhance the document*.

        - **Comment**: In the 2019 energy balance, household energy consumption has been revised.

        - *The comment is noted*

5. **Question:** It was mentioned in the presentation of Deliverable 1 that there are no standards on vehicle performance to regulate, imports of used cars. Will the project help the country establish such standards?

   - **Answer:** *The project is intended to support the country in achieving GHG emissions reduction. It is hoped that the support will address those areas as well.*

Session II: Deliverables 3 and 4

1. **Question:** ICAT – Renewable Energy Methodology was used in selecting Feed–In Tariff for SHS. Is it possible to implement such a policy in less than a decade?

   - **Answer**: *The Lesotho Energy Policy 2015-2025 includes a provision for a feed-in tariff. Based on this, it is possible to implement a feed-in tariff in a relatively shorter timeframe.*

2. **Question:** Will Solar Home Systems solve the problem of biomass usage in the country?

   - **Answer:** *No. The solar home system contributes to the reduction of kerosene used for lighting which in turn will reduce the GHG emissions resulting from the use of kerosene for lighting.*

3. **Question:** In the Harmonisation of Methodologies, the analysis seemed confined to the ICAT Renewable Energy Methodology and CDM methodology. How many other methodologies seemed to be aligned with Lesotho's condition?

   - **Answer**: *The methodology selection was done in Output 3, leading to the choice of the RE methodology. The ICAT RE Methodology is suitable for use with limited data, while CDM Methodologies often necessitates more data input for obtaining reliable results.*

3. Key Achievements of the Project

This section highlights the key project successes achieved during the implementation of the project activities.

The energy sector plays a vital role in Lesotho's growth and economy by supplying power to industries, businesses, households, and infrastructure. Despite encountering challenges, there are ongoing efforts to enhance the sector through initiatives such as the ICAT project. The transport sector in Lesotho faces challenges in collecting and

reporting GHG data and has a limited institutional framework. The MRV framework seeks to tackle these issues by establishing a strong reporting system and institutional structure to improve transparency, planning, and implementation in alignment with global standards and the Paris Agreement.

During the ICAT project, several significant achievements were documented. Some of these achievements include, but are not limited to:

- **Recommendations and inputs for revising Energy Sector NDC**: In collaboration with the UNDP, the ICAT Project embarked on a substantial initiative to review and revise Lesotho's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) specifically focusing on the energy sector, utilizing the Greenhouse Abatement Cost Model (GACMO) tool:
    - **Objective of Using GACMO in the Energy Sector**: The GACMO tool is specifically tailored to assess the costs and effectiveness of GHG mitigation measures within the energy sector. It helps quantify the potential emissions reductions achievable through various energy-related actions and evaluates their economic feasibility.
    - **Review and Assessment of Current NDC Targets**: This involved analyzing existing mitigation goals, strategies, and actions outlined in the NDC to understand their alignment with national priorities and international commitments.
    - **Application of GACMO Tool**: Utilizing the GACMO tool, the project team conducted a detailed analysis of potential mitigation options within Lesotho's energy sector. This included assessing the cost-effectiveness of different measures such as renewable energy deployment, energy efficiency improvements, and clean technology adoption.
    - **Identification of Optimal Mitigation Pathways**: Through the GACMO analysis, the ICAT Project identifies optimal pathways for enhancing Lesotho's NDC targets in the energy sector. This involves prioritizing mitigation actions that offer significant emissions reductions while considering their affordability and feasibility within the country's economic context.

- **Identification and Engagement of Relevant Sector Stakeholders:** The process of identifying and engaging sector stakeholders ensured that all stakeholders are included in the MRV process. This process also helped to define the various responsibilities of the stakeholders to maintain a functional MRV system. Among

many other responsibilities, stakeholders are to be involved in data collection, reconciliation, and verification processes.

- **Identification of Needs and Gaps:** The energy sector is a key priority sector in the country; therefore, it was important to conduct a need and gap analysis to identify the challenges of the sector and propose ways to address them. The outcome of the analysis includes *inadequate institutional arrangements*, which was addressed by proposing a robust institutional arrangement; lack of technical knowledge of a functional MRV system, which was addressed by enhanced capacity building, and data and technology issues, which the proposed institutional arrangement and capacity building process are expected to address.

- **Proposed Sectoral Institutional Arrangements:** The proposed institutional arrangement was designed to aid in the accomplishment of the country's climate goals and targets and ensure that responsible stakeholders are tasked with effectively tracking and monitoring progress across various sectors. The proposed institutional arrangement was structured to capture and address issues related to relevant data flow, expertise, organizations, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the MRV system.

- **Capacity Building:** The capacity building process took the form of continuous stakeholder engagements (formally and informally), technical virtual meetings, and consultative workshops. It is recommended that this process be carried out periodically to continue improving the skills and knowledge of sector stakeholders after the project's completion where possible. It is important to mention that stakeholders provided valuable inputs in the development and validation of various project deliverables.

- **Revision of the selected mitigation actions in the Energy sector using GACMO**: The use of GACMO in revising climate actions in the energy sector enhances transparency, facilitates informed decision-making, and strengthens accountability in the pursuit of climate goals. The GACMO analysis reveals the most cost-effective mitigation options in Lesotho's energy sector, such as deploying renewable energy, implementing energy efficiency measures and transitioning to cleaner fuels.

- **Reports and Presentations**: Reports, presentations, and other documents developed and presented during the project were a useful source of information and reference materials for all sector stakeholders.

- **Capacity Building on GACMO and ICAT Methodologies**. Remote training sessions were conducted to introduce and improve understanding of the GACMO tool and ICAT Renewable Energy Assessment Guide. Aiymgul Kerimray (UNEP-CCC) led the GACMO training from April 18-20, 2023 providing insights on transparency requirements and how GACMO calculations could be beneficial. Participants were trained on using the GACMO tool, selecting appropriate parameters, and analysing data to identify priority mitigation actions. Jyoti Prasad Painuly (UNEP-CCC) conducted the training on the ICAT Renewable Energy on July 5-6, 2023, providing guidance on evaluating the impacts of the country's climate actions and policies. These trainings used existing national data on energy consumption and sectoral emissions to demonstrate the application of the GACMO approach and ICAT Renewable Energy Methodology. Both LMS staff and national consultants participated in the two training sessions: one on GACMO for modelling the costs and impacts of mitigation actions, and the other on the ICAT Guide on Renewable Energy, which was used to aid in an ex-ante assessment of the mitigation potential of the Tax Incentive policy.

4. Key Takeaways and Lessons Learnt

During the project implementation, valuable insights were obtained through the collaboration between stakeholders, national and international consultants and the LMS. The report emphasizes key overarching lessons learnt, with further details on specific activities included.

Key lessons learnt during the implementation of the project activities include:

- Engaging stakeholders and institutions across all sectoral levels fosters a sense of belonging, thereby encouraging active participation.
- Continuous capacity building is required to sustain a good understanding of MRV concepts with the sector.
    - *MRV practices are often influenced by evolving international standards and guidelines, such as those from the UNFCCC. Continuous capacity building ensures that stakeholders stay updated with the latest standards and can implement them effectively.*

  - Capacity building of key staff and stakeholders is essential to ensuring long-lasting impact of projects.
  - Capacity building (i.e., finance, technology, technology transfer, stakeholder engagement and training) is necessary on a sustained basis, and is crucial to the success of domestic MRV systems and NDC implementation.

- There is a need to establish a legal institutional framework to ensure an effective institutional arrangement in the energy sector. This will help define the responsibilities and mandates of the institutions involved in the MRV process, further enhancing a functional MRV system.
- Continuous identification and engagement with stakeholders directly involved in supplying data information is key to sustaining the MRV Process.
- There is a need to develop and establish a data-sharing agreement (DSA) that would protect data shared by various entities. This will encourage stakeholders to freely share their data information knowing that their confidentiality is guaranteed.
- The Inception Workshop was vital to sensitize stakeholders on the project's goals and objectives and to set the stage for engaging them throughout the life of the project. Early involvement of sector stakeholders facilitated good cooperation during the project.
- Leveraging existing national arrangements was imperatively effective in developing the MRV system.

Highlighted below are important lessons learnt that are considered valuable for the future:

- **Clear Legal Framework**: There is a need for a legal institutional framework to ensure an effective institutional arrangement. The importance of establishing a clear legal framework cannot be overstated. It provides the foundation for MRV activities, defining roles, responsibilities, and accountability across stakeholders.

- There is a need to expand the existing institutional mandates to accommodate a wider coverage for MRV needs thus enhancing the smooth operation of the MRV system.

- It is important to identify and develop the competence of the sectoral focal points and key data suppliers to sustain the MRV process.

- Institutions to be involved in the MRV process will need a clear understanding of how their activities contribute to enhancing the MRV process.

- Expanding existing institution mandates is essential to allow for more coverage for MRV needs and requirements;

- **Comprehensive Data Collection:** Effective MRV systems rely on comprehensive data collection mechanisms. Investing in robust data collection processes ensures the availability of accurate and reliable data for reporting and decision-making.

- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Collaboration between relevant stakeholders is indispensable for the success of MRV systems. Engaging stakeholders from government agencies, industry, academia, and civil society fosters shared ownership and facilitates knowledge exchange.

- **Capacity Building**: Investing in capacity building initiatives is crucial for building institutional and individual capabilities to effectively manage MRV systems. Training programs and workshops help enhance technical expertise and promote adherence to best practices.

- **Continuous Improvement**: MRV systems should be dynamic and adaptive, continuously evolving to address emerging challenges and incorporate lessons learned from implementation experiences. Regular reviews and assessments help identify areas for improvement and inform future decision-making.

- **Resource Mobilization**: Adequate financial and human resources are essential for the successful implementation of MRV systems. Securing sustained funding commitments and allocating resources efficiently are critical considerations for long-term sustainability.

The lessons learnt from this current ICAT project will be used as references for similar projects in the future in order to determine what problems occurred and recommendations on how those problems were handled.

5. Recommendations and Challenges Encountered

5.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations will further enhance the operationalizing the MRV framework in the country. The recommendations are drawn from the lessons learnt during the project implementation and include, but are not limited to:

- Bureau of Statistics is responsible for collecting, processing, analyzing, disseminating and archiving statistical information across the economy, covering all major sectors. Therefore, it is the lead data provider for mitigation measures.
    - *It is important that the Bureau of Statistics is engaged at early stages on the data requirements for the tracking tools to ensure data availability, along with other stakeholders such as the Department of Energy*
- **Methodological Integration:** Explore hybrid approaches that combine complementary methodologies to improve the accuracy and reliability of emission assessments.
- **Stakeholder Engagement**: Foster collaboration between policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of emission assessment methodologies.
- **Allocate Adequate Resources:** Increase budgetary allocations and explore alternative funding mechanisms to support the development and maintenance of robust data collection infrastructures.
- **Upgrade Information Systems**: Allocate resources to implement cutting-edge technologies and improve infrastructure to enhance data collection, storage, and analysis in the energy sector.
- Improving the existing institutional arrangement will require a legislative framework to guide its implementation.
- Some sector stakeholders already have a framework that supports compliance in terms of data collection and transmission to the institution collating the data on behalf of the government; thus, this needs to be further enhanced.
- There should be a nexus between stakeholders, policy-makers, and country focal points on climate issues in the country especially in policy implementation. This is necessary to reduce complexities especially as it relates to data collection, reporting and coordination.
- The government, through the LMS will need to arrange training programs for all stakeholders periodically to keep them informed with updates on international industry practices and requirements.
- Climate financing plans need to be mainstreamed into the annual budgeting process to ensure that climate actions (mitigation and adaptation) are supported.

- There is a need to continuously engage all sectoral stakeholders on the need for continuous data improvement.
- The government should ensure that national consultants, QA/QC experts and researchers/academics are an integral part of the MRV process to enhance the quality of output.
- It is important to develop the competence of the sectoral focal points and the key data suppliers to continually engage in the MRV process and ensure that it is embedded in each institution and organisation engaged in the MRV process.
- Institutions to be involved in the MRV process need to understand how they can and should actively contribute towards enhancing the MRV process.

Furthermore, this project has supported Lesotho's ambition to build adequate capacity in the development of a sustainable MRV system especially in the energy sector. This will enhance the country's ability to measure the performance of targeted climate policies and actions across the various NDC sectors. The robust MRV system when adopted and functional will allow for coordinated tracking of progress towards GHG emission reduction targets.

5.2 Challenges Encountered

Key primary challenges encountered during project implementation can be summarized as follows:

- The main challenge in effectively implementing climate change projects is the limited capacity and expertise in this area. Furthermore, there is a lack of institutional capacity to retain the knowledge and skills acquired through training.
- Several gaps have been identified, including financial constraints, limited data availability, lengthy procedures for accessing existing data, lack of a specific budget for data collection, insufficient capacity to assess the GHG effects of mitigation measures, limited collaboration among organizations, shortage of personnel, staff turnover and absence of a policy framework for data collection and dissemination.
- Lack of extensive stakeholder consultation systems for gathering information and data.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders are currently non-existent and those who are aware of them do not have access to the appropriate tools and technologies for data and information collection.

- Relevant ministries and departments have competing priorities and limited human and financial resources to redirect their focus on climate change data and information gathering systems.
- There are no dedicated staff or positions in relevant government departments planned and tasked with this responsibility. Activities, such as the National Communications (NCs) and Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) are currently conducted on an ad-hoc basis with funding from external agencies.

6. Evaluation of Objectives and the ICAT Work

Lesotho is one the countries most severely affected by climate change. Despite being a developing nation, Lesotho is committed to addressing climate change and actively engaging with the international community to achieve the goals of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. With support from partners, Lesotho's capacity in climate change has been enhanced. The ICAT project, with the technical support of the UNEP-CCC, assisted Lesotho in developing its GHG MRV system for the energy sector in alignment with the enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement.

In collaboration with the UNDP, the ICAT Project embarked on a substantial initiative to review and revise Lesotho's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) specifically focusing on the energy sector, utilizing the Greenhouse Abatement Cost Model (GACMO) tool.

- **Objective of Using GACMO in the Energy Sector**: The GACMO tool is specifically tailored to assess the costs and effectiveness of GHG mitigation measures within the energy sector. It helps quantify the potential emissions reductions achievable through various energy-related actions and evaluates their economic feasibility.
- **Review and Assessment of Current NDC Targets**: This involved analyzing existing mitigation goals, strategies, and actions outlined in the NDC to understand their alignment with national priorities and international commitments.
- **Identification of Optimal Mitigation Pathways**: Through the analysis with GACMO, the ICAT Project identifies optimal pathways for enhancing Lesotho's NDC targets in the energy sector. This involves prioritizing mitigation actions that offer significant emissions reductions while considering their affordability and feasibility within the country's economic context.

The ICAT project implementation in Lesotho started in March 2023 with the overall objective of supporting the implementation of Lesotho's domestic MRV/transparency system through a capacity-building program, training on MRV/transparency concepts, methods, and tools, including iterative testing and application some of the ICAT Policy Assessment Guides, continued observation of future UNFCCC transparency requirements, and development of a roadmap to sustain ICAT outcomes.

Overall, the ICAT project was successful in achieving all its objectives, with both implementing partners and country-based consultants highlighting that ICAT's capacity-building activities were well-aligned with the country's needs and priorities. Even though this project focused only on the energy sector, the support received has helped to improve Lesotho's team capacity. Through the introduction of ICAT methodologies and the fruitful discussions on them during a series of workshops and meetings that took place during the project, the Lesotho team had the chance to approach a new way to assess GHG mitigation using quantitative methods. The ICAT methodologies would be appropriate to assess the impacts of different policies in response to climate change. Thus, it could be a tool to effectively guide investments to achieve the objectives of our NDC.

7. Conclusion, Way Forward and Closing Remarks

7.1 Conclusion

Despite initial delays in starting project activities and submitting the first two deliverables, the ICAT project in Lesotho has been successful, with both implementing partners and country-based consultants highlighting that ICAT capacity building activities were well aligned with the country's needs and priorities.

Looking ahead, Lesotho is now focusing on implementing the government's net-zero target commitment. The revised NDC for 2024 is on its way to being finalized and will be submitted soon, having been reviewed and with the inclusion of updated activities that could inform the next phase of ICAT in Lesotho for tracking NDC progress. The existing methodologies of ICAT and the GACMO tool will be further explored to develop specific factors tailored to Lesotho, enhancing the accuracy of the estimations.

The ICAT support in Lesotho has been instrumental in establishing a robust and continuous national MRV system for the energy sector. The final validation workshop ended successfully with national experts presenting the project deliverables to

stakeholders, who then validated and approved them. This comprehensive effort encompassed:

- Revising the selected mitigation actions using GACMO for the energy sector,
- Assessing the existing national MRV/ME systems and identifying gaps and barriers for developing institutional arrangements to design a data collection system for the energy sector,
- Evaluating selected methodologies for assessing GHG emission impacts of policies and actions with a focus on the energy sector,
- Designing the national MRV system, using the ICAT guidance tailored to energy-related policies, establishing roles and responsibilities and providing recommendations on how to address barriers, gaps and issues to improve data collection and reporting for energy sector emissions.

Key Achievements:

- **Institutional Arrangements:** Defined roles and responsibilities for various stakeholders, ensuring coordinated efforts in the MRV system.
- **Legal Frameworks:** Developed and proposed legal structures to support MRV activities, enhancing regulatory support and compliance.
- **Methodologies and Procedures:** Established standardized procedures for data collection, reporting, and verification, ensuring accuracy, consistency, and reliability.

7.2 Way Forward

As Lesotho moves forward, it is crucial to focus on the following areas to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the MRV system:

1. **Implementation of Legal Frameworks:**
    - **Adoption:** Ensure the proposed legal frameworks are adopted and enacted by the relevant authorities.
    - **Enforcement:** Develop mechanisms for enforcing these legal frameworks, ensuring compliance across the energy sector.
2. **Ongoing Capacity Building:**
    - **Continuous Training:** Establish ongoing training programs to keep stakeholders updated on best practices and new developments in MRV methodologies.

- **Resource Allocation:** Secure resources and funding for sustained capacity-building efforts, including workshops, seminars, and technical support.

3. **Enhanced Data Management:**
    - **Technological Integration:** Utilize advanced technologies for data collection and management to improve accuracy and efficiency.
    - **Quality Assurance:** Implement rigorous quality assurance protocols to ensure the reliability of the collected data.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:**
    - **Continuous Involvement:** Maintain active engagement with all stakeholders, ensuring their input and feedback are considered in the MRV process.
    - **Public Awareness:** Increase public awareness about the importance of MRV in the energy sector and encourage broader participation and support.
5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
    - **Regular Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews and evaluations of the MRV system to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.
    - **Performance Indicators:** Develop and monitor key performance indicators to track the effectiveness and impact of the MRV system.

7.3 Closing Remarks

The successful completion of the validation workshop and the finalization of the report mark significant milestones in Lesotho's journey toward enhanced climate action transparency in the energy sector. The collaborative efforts of government officials, NGOs, private sector representatives, and other stakeholders have laid a strong foundation for a robust MRV system.

As Lesotho embarks on the next phase of implementing and sustaining the MRV system, it is imperative to maintain the momentum and continue the collaborative efforts. By doing so, Lesotho can ensure a transparent, accountable, and effective approach to climate action, contributing significantly to global climate goals.

The project's key takeaways predominantly centre on stakeholder engagement and highlight the crucial role of capacity building for key stakeholders. Involving stakeholders and institutions from the outset gives them a sense of being integral to the process and fosters active participation by creating a sense of ownership. Capacity building must be ongoing and is essential for the success of domestic MRV systems and

the implementation of NDCs. Building the capacity of key staff and stakeholders is crucial for ensuring the long-term impact of project interventions. A key challenge faced was the difficulty in accessing data or not receiving data from stakeholders in a timely manner. Overcoming these data sharing challenges requires collaboration between relevant parties, facilitated by a memorandum of understanding with concise data sharing agreements. Institutional and infrastructural arrangements can positively impact research data sharing and reuse in specific cases. The lessons learnt from this ICAT project will serve as a reference for similar projects, such as the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) project, in the future to identify problems and provide recommendations on how to address them.

The ICAT methodologies and the GACMO tool will be further studied to develop specific factors suitable for Lesotho, thus improving the accuracy of the estimation. The robust MRV system, when adopted and fully functional, will allow for coordinated tracking of progress towards GHG emission reduction targets.

The following recommendations will further enhance operationalizing the MRV framework in the country. These recommendations are drawn based on the lessons learnt during the project implementation, and include but are not limited to:

- Improving the existing institutional arrangement will require a legislative institutional framework to guide its implementation.
- Some sector stakeholders already have a framework that supports compliance in terms of data collection and transmission to the institution collating the data on behalf of the government; thus, it should be enhanced.
- There should be a nexus between stakeholders, policymakers and country focal points on climate issues in the country especially in policy implementation. This is necessary to reduce complexities, especially as it relates to data collection, reporting and coordination.
- Climate financing plans need to be mainstreamed into the annual budgeting process to ensure that climate actions (mitigation and adaptation) are supported.
- The Government should ensure that national consultants, QA/QC experts and researchers/academics are an integral part of the MRV process to enhance the quality of output.

Acknowledgements:

- **Government of Lesotho:** For its commitment and leadership in advancing climate action transparency.

- **Stakeholders:** For their active participation, valuable input, and dedication to improving the MRV system.
- **ICAT Team:** For their technical support, guidance, and expertise throughout the process.

Annexes

Annex I: ICAT Validation Workshop Agenda; 28 May 2024 Maseru Avani Hotel

Validation Workshop

Project Title: Review of the NDC Energy Sector under the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT)

Venue: Avani Maseru, Lesotho

Date: Tuesday 28th MAY 2024

Programme

Time	Activity	Responsibility
8:30 – 9:00	Arrival and Registration	ALL
9:00 – 9:30	Opening Prayer and Self-Introductions	ALL
9:30 – 9:40	Opening remarks and objective of the Workshop	LMS
9:40 – 9:50	ICAT presentation	Oleg Bulanyi, ICAT Secretariat
09:50 -10:00	ICAT Lesotho Project Workplan Overview	Ivana Audia, UNEP-CCC
10:00 – 10:30	Deliverable 1: Revised NDC – Energy Sector using GACMO	Molibeli Taele
10:30 – 11:00	Deliverable 2: MRV needs and gaps assessment	Leloko Mokhutšoane
11:00 – 11:15	Q&A Session	***ALL***
11:15 –11:30	***Tea Break***	***ALL***
11:30 – 12:00	Deliverable 3: Harmonizing methodologies for assessing greenhouse gas impacts of policies and actions in the energy sector	Molibeli Taele
12:00 – 12:30	Deliverable 4: Design of the MRV System in Energy Sector, Establishment of Roles and Responsibilities	Buddika Hemashantha (ClimateSI)
12:30 – 12:55	Q&A Session	**ALL**
12:55 – 13:00	*Closure*	LMS
13:00 –14:00	***Lunch and Departure***	***ALL***

Annex II: Opening Remarks by Director of Lesotho Meteorological Services

LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

We are at your service/ Re sebelise

Review of the NDC-Energy Sector under the initiative for climate action transparency (ICAT)

Validation Workshop

Talking Points – Opening remarks by Director LMS

- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, called on Parties to stabilise GHGs in the atmosphere "…at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system…", and "within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner".
- The UNFCCC did not, however, include any specific reduction targets for countries. These were subsequently negotiated for Developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol, with targets ranging from a certain percent of Parties' emission levels compared to 1990.
- In 2012, Parties decided to "launch a process to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties",
- As the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol came to an end in 2012, negotiations for a successor instrument began and through that discussion,
- After years of negotiating, all Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), came together in Paris (2015) to agree

upon a set of principles on how we can curb greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change impacts head on. This was called the Paris Agreement.

- The overarching aim of the Paris Agreement is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure that global temperatures don't rise more than 2^0C above pre-industrial levels this century, and ultimately pursue a scenario where temperature rise remains below 1.5^0C (article 1a) as well as to enhance adaptation and climate resilience effort (article 1b).
- Article 4 of the Paris Agreement requires countries shall prepare, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve. It further requires that successive nationally determined contribution (NDC) represent a progression beyond the Party's then current nationally determined contribution and reflect its highest possible ambition, reflecting its common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.
- Lesotho submitted her First NDC in 2017 which had the mitigation and Adaptation Component. Lesotho's unconditional and conditional targets are a reduction of GHG emission by 2030 compared to BAU by 10% and 35%, respectively. Lesotho also intends to undertake numerous adaption measures and initiatives to enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability of her population, environment and economy to the adverse impacts of climate change.
- Since late 2021, Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) received financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to review and update its NDC (covering adaptation and mitigation components excluding energy) to be more ambitious in emission reductions as well as building resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- LMS also received financial support to implementing "The Review of Lesotho's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) - Energy Sector" from the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) while the implementing entity is the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). You may recall that the inception workshop of the ICAT project was on 29th March 2024 at Avani Lesotho and there

after consultants were trained on the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Cost Model (GACMO) and consultations began. More information will be covered by 'Mé Ivana in the next presentation on ICAT Lesotho Project workplan.

- The NDC is grounded in national sustainable development plans, builds national capacity and facilitates financial flow to support the implementation of the UNFCCC Convention and the Paris Agreement.
- The NDC review project followed a country-driven approach led by LMS and involves broad stakeholder engagement. We believe consultations were conducted and reviews of the report made. The project was aligned with other national processes, such as the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP - 2), Technology Needs Assessment, National Adaptation Plan, and so forth.
- This workshop is meant to validate all the reports developed from four (4) deliverables of the project.
- NDC is not meant only to generate information for reporting purposes, but also to contribute towards achievement of other national development plans and policy decisions. Moreover, stakeholder ownership of this process is key for sustainability, so you have time to go through the reports and provide inputs. There is also another project called "Enabling Lesotho's Enhance Transparency Framework" which is going to build on the lessons learned and cover other sectors.
- Active participation and engagement in today's workshop is therefore highly important.