UK PACT (Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions)

Evaluation Methodological Annex

Annex I: Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (ToC) seeks to articulate how a programme intends to achieve a particular change. It does so by identifying the *problem* the programme aims to address, the *solutions* it proposes to address it, and the *objectives* it aims to achieve in doing so. A ToC also specifies the assumptions about how change will happen, and the causal mechanisms needed for change to occur.

Given how dynamic UK PACT's contexts are, the ToC should not be considered static or constant, but something that should be regularly returned to, to assess whether its assumptions about change remain true and applicable. Our learning framework elaborates on the processes of incorporating evidence from across the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system into the adaptive processes for the programme. Moreover, while the UK PACT ToC is a high-level ToC that seeks to cover UK PACT's wider-reaching and global remit, each country where the programme is implemented will have a 'devolved' version of the ToC that aims to still reflect the same – or a similar – causal logic, but with more specifications that are unique to that location.

A.   Problem

Greenhouse gases (GHG) cause climate change, which reduces prosperity and undermines security. While considerable progress has been made in recent years at national levels on action to reduce GHG emissions,[1] the rate of emissions reduction is still inadequate to curb climate change impacts,[2] which fall disproportionately on the poorest and most vulnerable.

Important **constraints** may prevent this problem from being adequately addressed. The influence and extent of these potential constraints vary by context, but are broadly understood to include the following:

- **Competing priorities and interests:** Conflicting priorities, whether political, developmental, social, or economic, reduce the attention that is given to climate change solutions, while competing interests, including commercial interests and incentives to continue burning fossil fuels and to maintain the status quo, crowd out adequate responses to climate change.

- **Inadequate policies:** The policy environment may need enhancement and greater coherence in the degree to which it reflects the Nationally Determined Contribution[3] (NDC) commitments of a country, or similar commitments to reducing GHG. Moreover, current NDCs in themselves may be inadequate, given the agreed international commitments of keeping emissions well below 2°C.

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[1] Such as the commitments articulated through NDCs made by 189 nations at the 2015 Paris Agreement.
[2] www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2018
[3] www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/publication/targets/

- **Lack of political support:** Limited or varied political support across different levels of government, and lack of agreement on the effects of climate change and approaches to addressing it are highly varied among political leadership, including across countries and at sub-national levels.

- **Lack of awareness and capacity:** A lack of awareness about the environmental and social impacts of various behaviours that exacerbate GHG emissions, coupled with inadequate capacity for changing policies (both in the public and private sectors) and implementing regulations that would curb GHG emissions, perpetuate a regulatory and legislative stasis.

- **Lack of financial resources:** A shortage of adequate funding and access to financial instruments and mechanisms hinders access to solutions.

B. Solution

UK PACT has been designed to provide technical assistance with the aim of accelerating the 'clean growth transitions of key developing countries, working in areas where the UK has unique and / or distinct experience and expertise'.[4]

UK PACT's delivery has been designed around four main components: skill shares, embedded secondments in institutions, country-specific bilateral programme funds, and a global challenge fund.

i. Inputs

Three types of inputs characterise UK PACT programmatically, including technical expertise, coordination and engagement, and funding. These are listed and described further below. Their utilisation within the programme is premised on the fact that all three inputs interact with and inform the other, rather than operating independently of each other. This interaction is built on a strong learning component to the programme that underpins its implementation, such that each input is able to be iteratively adapted and tailored to its context and the incremental results of its implementation. This ensures the programme's inputs are relevant and appropriate to each context, and effective in achieving the desired results. This facilitates learning across the programme, which, given its fundamental importance to the programme's design and effectiveness, is itself an input. In this way, the programme has a total of four inputs, which it utilises across its delivery modalities, described at the outset of this section.

UK PACT's four inputs are as follows:

- **Coordination and engagement**, using the relational connections and expertise from UK embassies in the countries UK PACT engages with, promoting and supporting host government coordination among various

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[4] BEIS (2018) 'Monitoring and Evaluation of the UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (PACT) Invitation to Tender Terms of Reference'.

actors and stakeholders, and wider engagement among other government and key stakeholders through various forums and communities of practice.

- **Technical expertise**, driven by locally-identified demands and needs, and which draws on the programme's skill shares and embedded secondments.

- **Country and thematic funding windows**, channelled through two distinct routes: i) country-specific windows for UK PACT priority counties; and ii) a global challenge fund. The country-specific programme funds are tailored to the priorities identified and agreed in country strategies. The challenge fund will support innovative projects providing technical assistance to promote emissions reductions in official development assistance-eligible countries, within and beyond UK PACT's priority countries. The funding rounds will have multiple windows that will be demand-driven in targeting different sector or geographic priorities.

- **Programmatic learning:** Each of the programme's inputs interact with one another to ensure ongoing effectiveness is maximised, relevance is maintained, and adaptation across these elements is facilitated by regular evidence-based learning.

These inputs are expected to contribute to programme outputs, **assuming** that:

- the technical expertise is relevant, responsive to demand, and adds value to existing expertise in-country;

- local demand is correctly identified and accurately selected for programmatic response;

- staff at UK embassies in priority countries have effective mechanisms to develop, maintain, and coordinate positive cross-sector stakeholder engagement and coordination among stakeholders, who themselves are willing to engage;

- operating environments are sufficiently permissive and secure for programme delivery; and

- relevant and high-quality management agencies or organisations exist, which BEIS is able to attract and procure in order to deliver projects.

ii. Outputs

An output can be described as the deliverable or product that is produced or provided by a series of inputs and activities that an intervention supports. As such, an output is within the direct control of an intervention, is provided to the intervention's direct beneficiaries or recipients, and is expected to form the basis on which the desired change will occur.

The outputs suggested below for UK PACT are assigned to a number of broad categories, which are intended to capture the different areas of support the programme offers across its diverse global portfolio. These categories provide a flexible means of describing the programme's diverse outputs. 'In the context of

complex and challenging implementation environments, the flexibility afforded by indicator [output] categories allows for the operational space needed for the adaptive nature of the programme while still reflecting its results.'[5]

UK PACT's output categories:

1) **Skills enhanced**: Intending to capture the programme's efforts to address the capacity constraints among governments and private sector entities to addressing climate change impacts, this output includes efforts to increase individuals' and institutions' capacities through events and activities such as workshops, trainings, and seminars.

2) **Recommendations proposed**: Intending to capture the programme's efforts to address the constraints preventing adequate climate action, this output covers much of the technical assistance that the programme provides, including policy and regulatory recommendations or frameworks, access to finance support, and data and analysis provided to the stakeholders and people that work within these systems.

3) **Knowledge and communication products**: Intending to capture the programme's efforts to address the awareness constraints among key stakeholders and actors that hinder climate action. The outputs cover a variety of informational and learning outputs that aim to enhance awareness and capacity about climate change impacts (environmental, social, and economic), and solutions, among a broad audience beyond the boundaries of the programme itself.

4) **Network links established**: Intending to capture the programme's premise that effective partnerships are key to unlocking solutions for reducing climate change and its impacts, and the programme's inputs of engagement and coordination to support this. The programme will undertake various efforts to foster networks and collaborations among organisations and individuals that, when collectively combined, present greater potential for addressing climate change impacts than if they were undertaken individually.

These outputs are expected to contribute to achieving the programme's intermediate outcomes, **assuming** that:

- technical expertise is sufficiently skilled, resourced, and supported to deliver value;

- there is a sufficient ecosystem of organisations to collaborate with and apply for challenge fund money and deliver effective projects; and

- in-country actors work cooperatively and complement each other.

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[5] McConnell, J. (2019) 'Adoption for Adaptation: a theory-based approach for monitoring a complex policy initiative', *Evaluation and Programme Planning* 73, pp. 212–223, p. 219 (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2019.01.008)

C. Objective

As a programme, UK PACT functions around an 'influencing paradigm' in which the actors or beneficiaries of the programme are those through whom any impact that UK PACT achieves will be effected. UK PACT aims to achieve systemic change in the policy, regulatory, and institutional environments in the countries that it supports, to facilitate low-carbon development. But UK PACT will not achieve this itself: it will achieve it by supporting the organisations, institutions, and actors that are able to do this themselves in each context.

The importance of understanding this form of 'indirect impact', and incorporating it into the ToC and subsequent results framework, is that this enables the programme to more effectively monitor its results and understand its causal mechanisms for achieving change.

i. Intermediate outcome

An intermediate outcome provides an interim indication of initial uptake by programme stakeholders and enables more effective programme monitoring of outcome results by tracing the process of reaching the results articulated in the ToC.[6] The logic of the intermediate outcome is that programme-supported outputs should be *adopted* or taken up by the stakeholders that work most directly with the programme, who are then responsible for using or implementing those outputs to achieve their intended purpose. That process of effective implementation is where the programme's outcomes are captured, the result of which is then understood as its impact.

For UK PACT, the intermediate outcome is stakeholders adopting programme outputs, improving the political economy for accelerated climate action.

What this means in practice, and what we aim to monitor at this level of the results framework, is how individual-level capacity building translates into increased organisational capabilities (Output 1); how proposed recommendations are agreed and adopted into key components of regulations, or become successful funding proposals (Output 2); how knowledge products are used to inform decisions and change people's perspectives (Output 3); and how partnerships and communities of practice form active forums in which members engage with each other's capacities and capabilities (Output 4).

Changes in each of these areas, which the programme influences, can be understood as constituting improvements in the political economy in which wider efforts to accelerate climate change transitions are being forged. Supporting activities from the BEIS embassy teams, including ensuring continued and ongoing dialogue with government counterparts and other stakeholders, will be critical to success in encouraging the adoption and implementation of programme outputs.

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[6] See, for example, Collier, D. (2011) 'Understanding Process Tracing', *Political Science and Politics* 44(4), pp. 823–30; and Bennet, A. (2010), 'Process Tracing and Causal Inference', in *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (available at: http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/8872/1/Bennett_Chapter_in_Brady_and_Collier_Second_Edition.pdf)

This intermediate outcome is expected to contribute to achieving the programme's outcomes, **assuming** that:

- the programme's outputs are applicable, relevant, and useful to their intended beneficiaries in their intended contexts; and

- the recipients of the programme's outputs have the necessary authority, access, and motivation to enable output adoption.

ii. Outcomes

If *adoption* forms the key change mechanism at the intermediate outcome level, where output adoption marks a significant step in the programme's causal pathway, the outcome seeks to go a step further by identifying the *implementation* or *use* of programme-supported outputs as its change mechanism.[7] If the programme's adopted outputs are effectively implemented by its beneficiary stakeholders, we articulate this as *enhanced and sustained action on emissions reduction*.

These outcomes **assume** the following:

- host governments and institutions retain policy priorities, commitment, and motivation around emission reductions, and allocate financial and human resources accordingly;

- key decision makers and institutions have the authority, will, and motivation to implement lasting change;

- embassy teams continue to support stakeholders in the adoption and implementation of outputs beyond the completion of specific interventions or project support; and

- institutions have the necessary capacity and capabilities to implement the sustained changes needed for reducing emissions.

iii. Impact

With the effective implementation (programme outcome) of programme-supported outputs, UK PACT's impact can be articulated as *accelerated emissions reductions in target countries*.

This impact **assumes** the following:

- there are no major economic, social, or political shocks in-country which could outweigh emission reduction efforts;

- the increased capabilities feed into improved national policies and processes, and lead to concrete action at scale; and

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[7] One example is a series of recommendations for a policy that regulates industry caps on GHG emissions. The *adoption* of these recommendations may involve their being added to an existing legal framework, while their *implementation* may be their enforcement across various industry standards to ensure their compliance. The nature of adoption and implementation will invariably depend on the specific outputs but should nevertheless provide a basis for a relatively consistent logic to be applied across the variability.

- there is sufficient ambition at the institutional, governmental, and societal levels to increase plans for emissions reductions.

This ToC is portrayed graphically in Figure 1.

Figure 1: UK PACT theory of change (v2)

UK PACT Theory of Change (v2)

Problem:

Greenhouse gases cause climate change, which reduces prosperity and undermines security.

The rate of emissions reduction is inadequate for curbing climate change impacts and is systemically embedded, disproportionately affecting the poorest and most vulnerable.

Constraints: to addressing the problem

- Lack of coordinated action
- Competing priorities and interests
- Inadequate policies
- Lack of awareness
- Low capacity for action
- Lack of financial resources

Inputs:

Engagement

Programmatic learning

Technical expertise

UK Embassies

*The programme's delivery and its outputs must **do no harm**, should **empower** gender equality and social inclusion, and are strongly encouraged to support GESI **transformation** wherever possible. To achieve these objectives, GESI considerations are mainstreamed across the programme and built into its outputs accordingly*

Delivery:

- Skill-shares & Secondments
- Country Programmes
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund

Outputs:

- Skills & capability enhanced
- Recommendations proposed
- Knowledge & communication products
- Network links established

output

adoption

Impact:
Accelerated emissions reductions that support just transitions and green recoveries to green economies, equitably reducing the causes and differential impacts of climate change in target countries

Outcome:
Enhanced, sustained, and inclusive action on emissions reduction

- *Enhanced skills and capability improve actions to reduce emissions*
- *Enhanced implementation of public policies and regulations to reduce emissions*
- *Greener financial systems and markets*

output

implementation

Intermediate Outcome:
Improved political economies for accelerated climate actions, including benefits to the marginalised and excluded

- *Enhanced skills and capability of key institutions to reduce emissions*
- *Improved public policies and regulations to reduce emissions*
- *Finances accessed or leveraged to reduced emissions*
- *Knowledge and communication products inform decisions for reduced emissions*
- *Climate-related networks mobilised to reduce emissions*

Assumes technical assistance is responsive to demand; local demand is correctly identified and accurate; staff at priority country posts have effective mechanisms to coordinate stakeholder engagement; operating environments are sufficiently permissive and secure; technical expertise are sufficiently skilled, resourced and supported; outputs are accurately tailored to beneficiary needs; gender and inclusion considerations are mainstreamed in programme outputs and delivery; there is a sufficient ecosystem of organisations to deliver effective projects; in-country actors work cooperatively and complement each other.

Assumes the outputs are applicable and useful, and recipients have the authority to enable output adoption; support continues to enable and enhance output adoption; host governments and institutions retain policy priorities around emission reductions and the differential impacts of climate change, allocating financial and human resources accordingly; decision makers and institutions have the power to implement lasting change; decision-makers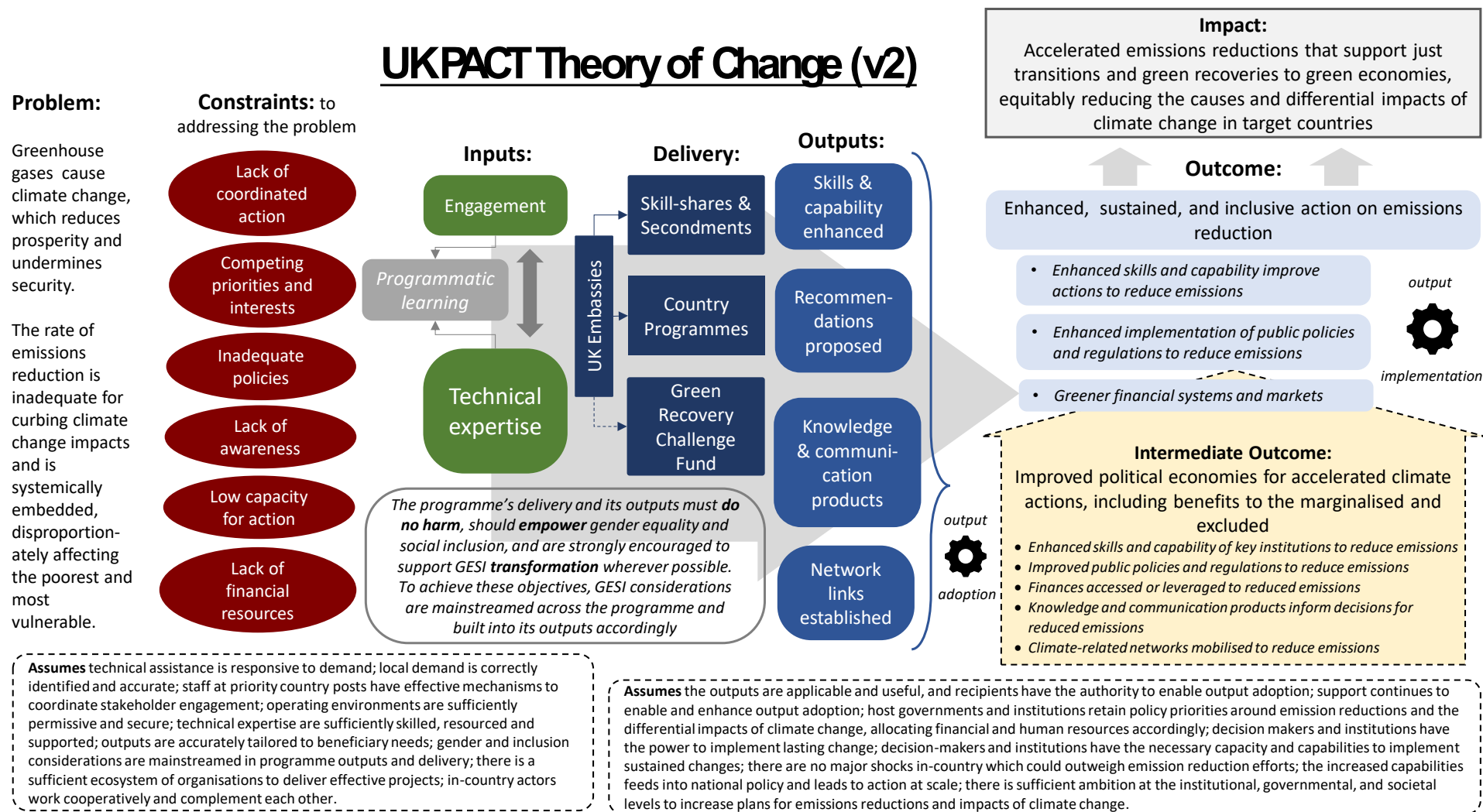 and institutions have the necessary capacity and capabilities to implement sustained changes; there are no major shocks in-country which could outweigh emission reduction efforts; the increased capabilities feeds into national policy and leads to action at scale; there is sufficient ambition at the institutional, governmental, and societal levels to increase plans for emissions reductions and impacts of climate change.

D. Causal pathways

The overarching *logic* of the ToC is that the inputs and activities that the programme supports are converted into outputs (within the programme's control), which are then provided to beneficiaries in the hope and understanding that these outputs will be *adopted* into an existing system (the programme's intermediate outcome) and then *used* or *implemented* within that system (the programme's outcomes). By observing the correct and adequate utilisation of the programme's outputs by its intended beneficiaries, an outcome is observed.

The **causal pathways** occur between the programme's production of its outputs and the achievement of the results that it claims, as well as the relationship of other extraneous factors and whether its assumptions about change hold true or not (in the case of our analytical framework).

The **causal mechanisms** relate to the programme's successful or unsuccessful conversation of outputs into results. These may include such factors as engagement with beneficiaries (demand-driven), that outputs are appropriate and proportional to their contexts (relevance), and that there is contextual and recipient readiness for the outputs (traction).

While we acknowledge UK PACT's component-based implementation architecture, we believe that the fundamental nature of each of these components do not diverge in their causal logic.

For the **bilateral projects of Component 1**, this follows a fairly standard technical assistance-type project modality of providing a specific output through various consultation processes, after which the output is delivered to the beneficiary. For the **global challenge fund activities under Component 2**, these follow similar project processes as Component 1, just administered through a more global and bespoke approach to the funding.

And for the **skill shares and secondments of Component 3**, while less focused on specific outputs and deliverables than Components 1 and 2 and their respective technical assistance-type modalities, while providing more ongoing support and capacity building (presumably alongside specific technical inputs), we would still expect to see those elements of capacity building and technical support adopted and used by the beneficiaries, even if the form of adoption and use is different to that of a technical output.

Annex II: Evaluation methodology

Our overall evaluation approach is to conduct an **annual evaluation** using the **theory-based contribution analysis approach**. This comprises two main facets: a **primary data collection** activity, which forms the bulk of the annual evaluation undertaking; and a **secondary data** collection component, which allows us to derive particular aspects of contributing data from the other components in our MEL system. The subsequent sections describe and respond to this approach.

A.   Analysis

Our application of a **theory-based approach** is largely in response to the underlying complexity of UK PACT, given its implementation in multiple countries over multiple years, with interacting and often unpredictable elements – complex political economies, competing interests and priorities, and varied resource and capacity levels across the implementation environments. The adoption of this approach is also in response to the fundamental purpose of the evaluation: to use the ToC to test the programme's effectiveness.

What this means is that the programme's ToC sits at the centre of the evaluation's design.[8] This is in contrast to a methods-based approach, in which a specific methodology is central to the evaluation's design, and where the evaluation's credibility and rigour are based on the strict application of the methodology, rather than on the quality of the evidence gathered to address specific evaluation questions, as is the case with a theory-based approach.[9]

The reason for applying a theory-based approach in response to the programme's complexity is that theory-based approaches tend to be methodologically agnostic, able to utilise various types of methods and tools for undertaking the evaluation, allowing for considerable flexibility and adaptation to its approach – a virtuous characteristic, given the programme's diverse implementation environments.[10] Moreover, theory-based approaches have also been generally accepted as providing greater explanatory power for understanding not only *what* a programme achieves, but *why* and *how* it does so within its specific context.[11]

B.   Respondents

Three respondent types were identified to frame the data collection: beneficiaries, IPs, and programme staff. The interviews were all qualitative and in-depth, with tools tailored to each respondent type.

Beneficiaries were defined as any person or organisation that was identified as a target for the programme's support and that was intended to benefit from the programme's support. These

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[8] Weiss, C. (1997) 'Theory-based evaluation: Past, present and future', *New Direction for Evaluation* 76, pp. 68–81.

[9] Stame, N. (2004) 'Theory-based evaluation and types of complexity', *Evaluation* 10(1), pp. 58–76.

[10] Bamberger, M., Rough, J. and Mabry, L. (2012) *RealWorld Evaluation: Working Under Budget, Time, Data and Political Constraints*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

[11] Scriven, M. (2008) 'A summative evaluation of RCT methodology: an alternative approach to causal research', *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* 5(9), pp. 11–24; also see Bamberger, Rough, and Mabry (2012).

included, for example, individual people (beneficiaries of training to enhance technical skills), government departments or agencies (beneficiaries of technical recommendations), academics or political decision makers (beneficiaries of knowledge products), and civil society organisations (beneficiaries of networking and partnerships).

Implementing Partners (IPs) were the organisations within each priority country that were contracted to deliver UK PACT. In some cases, such as the skill shares, the IPs were from BEIS itself, given that the evaluation was carried out early within the programme's implementation, therefore the full delivery phase using external delivery partners had not yet begun.

Programme staff include the people within BEIS, whether in London or in the country offices, who manage the programme's implementation, typically overseeing the IPs and ensuring that their delivery of UK PACT is on time and to standard.

C.   Implementation

2020:

Given the mid-term and formative nature of the evaluation, **the evaluation questions** oriented around the programme's design and delivery and early indications of results. Five evaluation questions framed its design:

1) To what extent is the programme and its interventions designed and implemented appropriately to deliver its intended outputs?

2) To what extent is the programme effectively able to convert its outputs into intermediate outcomes, outcomes and impact along each of its causal pathways?

3) What are the key mechanisms that enable, enhance, and support the adoption and implementation of outputs? Do these appear effectively sustainable beyond the programme's lifespan?

4) Is there evidence or indication of UK PACT having unintended outcomes, whether positive or negative?

5) To what extent does UK PACT represent Value for Money?

A total of 69 interviews were conducted during the data collection. The distribution of these interviews – included the total non-response rate – is shown in Table .

Table 1: Total interviews, by respondent type

Interview type	Intended sample	Non-responses	Sub-total
Beneficiary	39	11	28
IP	39	6	33
Programme staff	8	0	8
Total:	**86**	**17**	**69**

In-person interviews were initially planned; however, COVID-19 precipitated a radical shift in how the evaluation would be implemented. As a result, the evaluation team pivoted to remote implementation. We undertook this primarily through Microsoft Teams, given its security standards and technical effectiveness. The interviews were also recorded to enhance transcription quality. Reflections from the interviewers were that the remote implementation was successful and did not appear to hamper data quality.

Our general approach was to explain the evaluation and its objectives to the BEIS country teams, who then allowed us direct access to IPs, with whom we then communicated to schedule interviews. Beneficiary lists were provided by BEIS or the IPs, with whom we also communicated directly to schedule interviews. These were conducted between 30 March and 20 May 2020. The list of programme staff respondents was provided by BEIS and scheduled directly by the evaluation team.

Preparation for the interviews involved the development of the data collection tools; these were agreed by BEIS and then translated into Spanish and Chinese. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, Chinese, or English, depending on the respondent's preference. Once the interviews were complete, they were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Finalised transcripts were then coded in NVivo.[12] The coding was done in accordance with a plan developed by the evaluation team in conjunction with the evaluation questions and analysis plan. These findings further contributed to the Annual Progress Report (APR) 2019-20, the Value for Money (VfM) report 2019-20, and the MEL synthesis report 2019-20.

2021:

The **evaluation questions** were identified in the evaluation plan, all centring around the ToC. From these, a list of five overarching evaluation questions has guided the evaluation:

1) Effectiveness: To what extent is the programme effectively able to convert its outputs into intermediate outcomes, outcomes, and impact along each of its causal pathways?

2) Impact: What are the early indicators of impact – positive and negative – of UK PACT to date, particularly that of its pilot projects?

3) Gender, Equality, and Social Inclusion (GESI): To what extent does UK PACT appear to be achieving its GESI objectives?

4) Sustainability: To what extent do UK PACT's indicative impacts appear sustainable beyond the life of the project (in terms of financial and technical support)?

5) VfM: To what extent does UK PACT represent Value for Money?

A total of 62 interviews were conducted during data collection. Each interview was conducted with one individual representing a beneficiary organisation, IP organisation, or programme staff

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[12] NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software.

themselves.[13] The distribution of these interviews – including the total non-response rate – is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Total interviews, by respondent type

Interview type	Intended sample	Non-responses	Sub-total
Beneficiary	40	15	25
IP	38	9	29
Programme staff	8	0	8
Total:	**86**	**24**	**62**

Given the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, all data collection was undertaken virtually. This enabled the data collection methodologies to be consistent across both evaluations and maximised data comparability across both evaluations.

Interviews were recorded to enhance transcription quality. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, Chinese, or English, depending on the respondent's preference. Once the interviews had been completed, they were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. Finalised transcripts were then coded in NVivo.[14] The coding was done in accordance with a plan developed by the evaluation team in conjunction with the evaluation questions and analysis plan.

The data and analysis from this evaluation have also fed into other outputs across the MEL system, including the Annual Progress Report (APR) 2020–21, the Value for Money Report (VfM) 2020–21, and the MEL synthesis report 2020-21.

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[13] There were a few exceptions to this, where more than one representative attended an interview for a beneficiary organisation, IP, or representing an element of UK PACT, but these were exceptional cases and usually occurred for specific reasons. Such cases were agreed before the interview took place.

[14] NVivo is qualitative data analysis software.