

Building Resilience in Ethiopia – Technical Assistance (BRE-TA) component

BRE-TA Project Completion Report

Covering the period March 2019 to March 2024

Version finalised in March 2024 (update of version shared with FCDO on 29 January 2024, with parts of the VfM assessment in Annex I redacted to remove commercially sensitive data)



A Technical Assistance project in partnership with:



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Preface

This report was partly written by, and compiled and edited by, Kandi Shejavali, with contributions from the following members of the Building Resilience in Ethiopia – Technical Assistance (BRE-TA) team: Mark Essex; Nils Riemenschneider; Stephanie Allen; Rajan Soni; Frances Hansford; and Fred Merttens.

The BRE-TA Team Leader was Mark Essex, and the Project Manager was Shiva Faramarzifar. The remaining members of the project management team included Deputy Team Leader Girma Kassa and Project Coordinator Liluy Yohannes.

The project's technical leads were Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Lead Akloweg Nigatu, Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM) Lead Dr Ayana Yeneabat, Shock-Responsive Safety Net (SRSN) Lead Tsedey Asheber, Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Lead Fantahun Asfaw, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Lead Nils Riemenschneider, and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Lead Bella Roman.

The management team and technical leads were supported by members of the wider BRE-TA team, as well as external specialist experts, all of whom provided critical contributions that helped make the project's achievements possible. However, it was the financing from donors and the engagement of counterparts in government that were central to the project's ability to deliver any results at all.

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Executive summary

1. Background and Business Case rationale

Building Resilience in Ethiopia – Technical Assistance (BRE-TA) was designed as a component of the more extensive BRE programme, which aimed to minimise shock-induced falls in welfare. The data at the time of the design of the overall BRE programme highlighted a range of issues impacting poverty and vulnerability during periods of crises:

- **Ethiopia was one of the poorest countries in the world**, with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$ 619 per head in 2015.¹ Despite steady annual economic growth rates and improvements in pro-poor service delivery, the poorest 10% were poorer in 2015 than they were in 2010.² The Business Case noted *‘Every year in Ethiopia, depending on the severity of climate and humanitarian shocks, between 11 and 18 million people are unable to meet their basic needs.’*³
- **Extreme poverty was reflected in high levels of hunger and malnutrition.** In an average year, 10 to 11 million people needed support to meet their basic needs, rising significantly during drought to reach 18.2 million in 2016. Of these, 8.2 million were regular beneficiaries of the Government of Ethiopia’s (GoE’s) Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP).⁴
- **Poor people are the most vulnerable to environmental disasters, but other factors also induce vulnerability.** Ethiopia is subject to various natural and human-induced hazards, notably drought,⁵ but also flooding and conflict. Annually, around 500,000⁶ Ethiopians are displaced through drought, conflict, and flooding, and need humanitarian support.⁷
- **GoE was constrained in its ability to prepare for and respond to these shocks.** Sub-optimal preparedness and inadequate response came at a great human and economic cost. The costs of the 2016 drought were severe in both human and economic terms,⁸ with growth slowing from 8.7% in 2015 to 6.5% in 2016⁹ due to the drought and the weaker global economic environment. Furthermore, malnutrition, including stunting (which affects just under 40% of children in Ethiopia), was estimated to cost the country \$ 4.7 billion dollars per year in lost productivity and additional malnutrition-related public services.¹⁰
- **Extremes in climate variability were set to increase.** Predictions pointed to climate change-induced trends: warming, more variable and less reliable rainfall, and more

¹ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)/Department for International Development (DFID), February 2017, Business Case for BRE, Strategic Case (for BRE). Section on ‘Poverty and Vulnerability in Ethiopia’, p. 5, attributed to the World Bank.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, Section in Intervention Strategy, first para, p. 2.

⁴ The PSNP provides cash or food assistance to the poorest families selected based on having been humanitarian assistance beneficiaries for the past three years.

⁵ FCDO/DFID Business Case for BRE, 2017, Poverty and Vulnerability in Ethiopia, p. 5.

⁶ The internal-displacement.org website figures suggest that 450,000 people were internally displaced in 2015. See graphic at www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia.

⁷ In its recent reports, internal-displacement.org gives a revised figure of 450,000 for 2015. The figure for internally displaced people had risen to 3.9 million by 2022, validating the argument in the Business Case. See www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia.

⁸ FCDO/DFID, Ethiopia, Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE) February 2017: ‘Not responding to humanitarian crisis is costly for the economy’, p. 6.

⁹ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2016) ‘Staff Report for the 2016 Article IV Consultation.

¹⁰ FCDO/DFID Business Case, Ethiopia, Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE) February 2017. Ascribed to the World Food Programme (WFP) (2014) ‘The Cost of Hunger: Ethiopia 2013’.

severe and frequent extreme events.¹¹ These trends suggest that severe weather events are likely to become more frequent,¹² decreasing Ethiopia's economic growth rates and its ability to reduce poverty and rural vulnerability.

This contextual analysis, supported by field research case studies, led to the reasoning at the heart of the BRE Business Case, that **better preparedness for disasters would reduce human suffering and be more cost-effective**.¹³ One study estimated that if Ethiopia were better prepared for disasters it could save \$2 billion over 10 years.¹⁴ Based on these considerations, the BRE programme was designed to run for five years from 2017/18 to 2021/22, through two forms of assistance to GoE:

- ⇒ **the provision of humanitarian assistance to meet emergency acute needs; and**
- ⇒ **support to systems reform through technical assistance (TA).**

Both the timeframe and budget for BRE were subsequently increased due to the extraordinary changes in Ethiopia's political, economic, public health, and environmental context during the life cycle of the programme. The initial budget for the overall BRE programme (April 2017 to March 2024) grew from £168 million to £352 million, with the increase of £184 million going to the humanitarian assistance component of BRE.

In addition, in December 2019, the then Department for International Development (DFID) finalised a delegated cooperation agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to support the TA component through a \$15m contribution. The aim of the collaboration was to “ensure a coordinated approach to reform, consistent with the Paris Principles, and will represent better value for money by pooling resources towards objectives shared by USAID, DFID and GoE”.¹⁵

Nevertheless, in spite of the USAID contribution and worsening humanitarian situation, the budget for the systems reform through TA component (March 2019 to March 2024) remained unchanged, at just under £26 million, circa 7% of the overall BRE budget, while the demands on the humanitarian and disaster risk management (DRM) system grew (over tenfold from 450,000 people in 2015 estimated in the Business Case to 4.6 million by 2022).¹⁶

¹¹ Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (2015) 'Ethiopian Panel on Climate Change: First Assessment Report'. https://www.unisdr.org/preventionweb/files/46791_summaryreportsenglish.pdf

¹² Herring, S.C., Hoell, A., Hoerling, M.P., Kossin, J.P., Schreck III, C.J., and Stott, P.A. (Eds.) (2016) 'Explaining Extreme Events of 2015 from a Climate Perspective', *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 97(12). https://journals.ametsoc.org/view/journals/bams/97/12/bams-explainingextremeevents2015.1.xml?_gl=1*1jfh33k*_ga*NTA3OTA4NDU4LjE3MDA3MjE1NTg.*_ga_0S4LETTN6J*MTcwMDcyMTU1Ny4xLjAuMTcwMDcyMTU1Ny42MC4wLjA.

¹³ Venton, C.C., Fitzgibbon, C., Shitarek, T., Coulter, C., Dooley, O. (2012) 'The Economics of Early Response and Disaster Resilience: Lessons from Kenya and Ethiopia'. pp. 60–77, provides the example of Ethiopia's Afar region, where restocking goats and sheep costs at least six times more than supplementary feeding to prevent death, and restocking cattle costs 14 times more.. <https://dici-hoa.org/assets/upload/key-resilience-and-climate-change/20200804120448435.pdf>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ DFID/FCDO, February 2020, Annual Review of 2019.

¹⁶ www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data Note that there are two distinct datasets: internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are displaced due to disasters, and IDPs who are displaced due to conflict and violence. The figures for 2022 for Ethiopia are 717,000 for disasters and 3.9 million for conflict and violence, totalling 4.6 million.

2. BRE: description of project

a. Summary overview

<p>BRE Business Case (Programme implementation from April 2017 to March 2024)</p> <p>BRE is designed to strengthen Government of Ethiopia (GoE) systems to deliver a more effective, self-financed and accountable response to humanitarian and climate shocks. It has two objectives: to meet acute emergency needs and to support system reform.</p> <p>BRE-TA (Project implementation from March 2019 to March 2024)</p> <p>The objective of the BRE-TA component of BRE is to provide <i>‘technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to lead and deliver an effective and accountable humanitarian response.’</i> This is described as Output 1 in the overall BRE logframe.</p>
<p>Title: BRE</p>
<p>Framework: Overall programme value (full life): £352 million. BRE-TA component: £26 million. Start date: April 2017. End date to coincide with the end of BRE-TA: 31 March 2024.</p>
<p>Contract: Programme Code: 300363</p> <p>The contract for the BRE-TA component was issued to Oxford Policy Management (OPM) in March 2019, with an in-country project team established in October 2019. A no-cost extension for the BRE-TA component was approved in July 2022, to cover the period to the revised overall programme end date of March 2024.</p>

b. Summary of BRE programme and BRE-TA performance

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	PCR
Overall Output score for the BRE programme (and review date)	A (Not available)	A (March 2019)	A (Feb 2020)	A (March 2021)	A (March 2022)	B (March 2023)	A (Feb 2024)
BRE-TA, Output (1) score	N/A	B ¹⁷	A	A+	A	A	A
Risk rating	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Major	Severe	Moderate	Moderate
DevTracker link to Business Case:	https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300363/documents						
DevTracker link to results framework:	https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300363/documents						

¹⁷ The annual review from March 2019 notes: *‘Technical assistance to support the GoE to continue to lead and manage an effective, transparent and accountable response, was not delivered for the second consecutive year due to procurement delays. This reflects the under resourcing in procurement and impact on our programme offer to support effective and accountable government systems. The contract of the external supplier (Management Agent) for the TA output started on 25 March 2019.’*

3. Description of the BRE-TA component

The overall BRE logframe sees the desired impact of the programme as: ‘Ethiopia more resilient to climate and humanitarian shocks’ and the expected Outcome as **‘Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks.’**

The logframe Outcome statement applies to the overall BRE programme, of which the BRE-TA project is a component. Initially, BRE-TA was one of five operational streams (this subsequently increased to 10).¹⁸ The Outcome statement establishes a conceptual framework, with two overarching objectives: **meeting emergency acute needs and supporting systemic, sustainable reforms**. Most of the other operational streams are concerned primarily (but not entirely) with the first part of the purposive objective (‘meeting emergency acute needs’). BRE-TA is associated with the second (‘supporting systemic, sustainable reforms’).

Significantly, the BRE-TA component does not have its own approved logframe but is ‘nested’ in the overall BRE logframe as Output 1. BRE-TA has sole responsibility for delivering this Output 1. It contributes accordingly to the expected outcome of BRE. (The weighting of Output 1 varied between 5% and 10% during the project cycle).

Table 1: BRE Outcome and Output statements and indicators for assessing the progress of BRE-TA

BRE logframe Outcome statement:	
<i>Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks</i>	
<i>Output 1. Technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective and accountable humanitarian response.</i>	Indicator 1.1 Technical assistance to Government of Ethiopia to plan, prepare, prevent, deliver, and budget for humanitarian response delivered and well received.
	Indicator 1.2 Significant contributions to strategic plans, systems and procedures in disaster risk management, disaster risk finance, emergency health and scalable safety nets.
BRE-TA is solely and only responsible for this output.	

Output 1 initially had only one indicator. At the request of the BRE-TA team, an additional Output Indicator, 1.2, was agreed with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), in early 2021, to enable a tighter linkage between the Output and Outcome statement to improve the tracking of progress and to enhance performance management. However, given that BRE-TA’s approach to programming was fundamentally demand-led and dependent on contextual factors, notably alignment with GoE’s evolving DRM policies

¹⁸ The five BRE outputs, with their respective weightings, are listed in the 2020 annual review (review date March 2021) as follows:

- Output 1 – Technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to lead and deliver an effective and accountable humanitarian response. (Weighting 10%).
- Output 2 – Effective response to meet food needs (in-kind/cash) with support from World Food Programme (Weighting 15%).
- Output 3 – Government of Ethiopia piloting shock-responsive safety net (Weighting 30%).
- Output 4 – An effective response to meet non-food needs (Weighting 25%).
- Output 5 – Nutrition services are provided in emergencies and vulnerable woredas, maintained above international standards (Weighting 20%).

and dynamic responses to prevailing and emergent crises, general targets for these indicators were agreed with FCDO, with an emphasis on ‘significant contributions’, i.e. qualitative assessment of policy weight, rather than quantitative figures of reforms that may be of relatively little significance. The subsequent monitoring and accountability challenge was to reduce the two general indicators for Output 1 to targets that were set annually and related to the operational structure and ambition of BRE-TA.

Contribution to BRE’s logframe - Outcome statement and indicators

BRE logframe Outcome statement:	
Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks	
Outcome indicator	Target by end of project
1. Government of Ethiopia delivering against costed preparedness plans, with automatic and clearly defined triggers	Effective use of Integrated Food and Cash Response Plan throughout 2023
2. % of response (defined as Human Resource Plan \$) delivered by GoE	Not stated in current logframe
3. Number of people supported by ICF programmes to cope with the effects of climate change	Not stated in current logframe

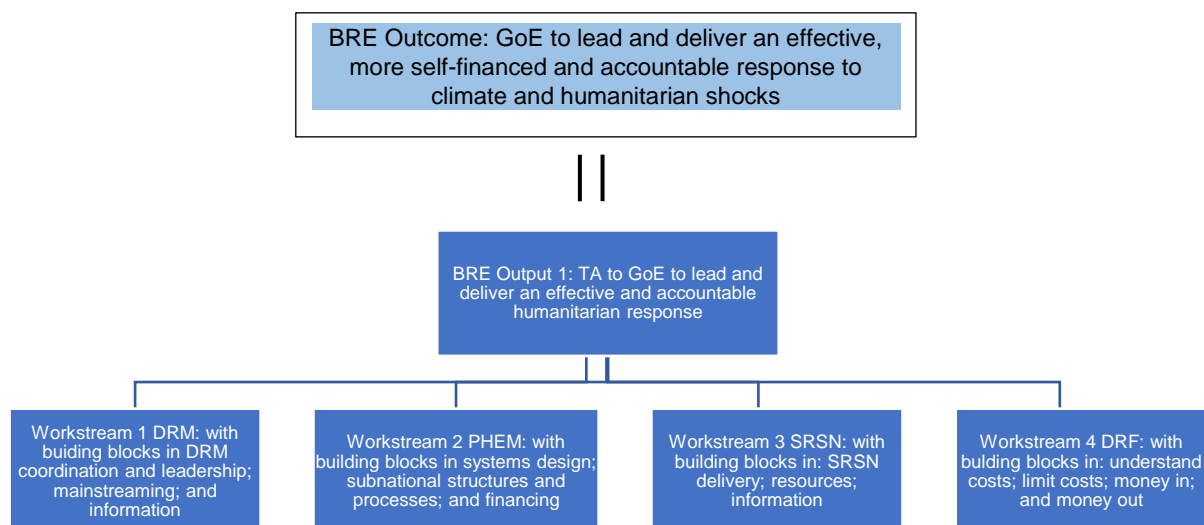
4. BRE-TA project structure and performance monitoring

The BRE-TA component was structured along four workstreams to deliver Output 1, with results mapped against the two indicators described in Table 1 above. Each BRE-TA workstream interfaced with a set of GoE institutions. **The workstreams aimed to provide ‘demand-driven support’ to these partners.** The purpose was to improve, strengthen, and reform the systems the partners use for managing frequent climatic and humanitarian shocks.

Table 2: BRE-TA project structure

Workstream	Principal GoE partners	Focus
Disaster Risk Management (DRM)	Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC)	DRM coordination, mainstreaming, and information and knowledge
Shock-Responsive Safety Net (SRSN)	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA); EDRMC	SRSN information systems, delivery systems, and resourcing
Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM)	Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI); Ministry of Health (MoH)	PHEM system design, resourcing, and sub-national structures and processes
Disaster Risk Finance (DRF)	Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Understanding and limiting the cost of disasters and shocks, mobilising resources for DRM, and expenditure management

Figure 1: Results chain: from BRE-TA workstreams to BRE-TA Output 1 and BRE Outcome



This framework provides the performance management structure for bespoke results chains/theories of change (ToCs) and indicative targets for each of the four workstreams, linking directly to the BRE logframe's Output 1 and the overall Outcome statement. The steps in the workstream ToC use familiar terminology – 'intermediate outcomes' that target 'workstream outcomes' – to describe the progressive stages within a particular workstream.¹⁹

The link between the BRE logframe Output 1 (and the related indicators) and the overall Outcome indicators is relatively weak. BRE-TA took steps to address this limitation conceptually and operationally.

1. A ToC that targets the BRE Outcome statement

The BRE-TA ToC highlights the importance of the BRE Outcome statement at the top of the logic chain. All four workstreams planned their interventions with this overarching objective in sight, and '*Significant contributions to strategic plans, systems and procedures in disaster risk management, disaster risk finance, public health emergency management and shock-responsive safety nets*' were seen as integral to the Outcome: '*GoE of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks*'.

There are two programming ambitions embedded here: (1) At the Output assessment level, the significance of individual interventions mattered. At the Outcome level, the cumulative and collective contribution of these workstream interventions were seen as critical to contributing to the BRE Outcome. Notwithstanding BRE-TA's relatively small resourcing and role in BRE, the body of work from each BRE-TA workstream collectively needed to make a significant impact in changing the DRM institutional landscape and the direction in which it was moving. (2) The importance of the sustainability of these reforms was critical and fundamentally informed how BRE-TA operated.

¹⁹ The workstream outcomes were never envisaged to be achieved during the life of BRE-TA.

Both of these objectives have been met. The main achievements of each of the four workstreams suggest a trajectory of sharpening the performance of each sub-system *at the national and sub-national level* through supporting government-led reforms:

- clarifying policies, strategies, and laws (all workstreams, but notably the DRM and DRF workstreams);
- improving intra-governmental collaboration and coordination mechanisms (all workstreams, but especially in PHEM at the national and SRSN at the sub-national level);
- organisational development, human resource development, and leadership development (notably in PHEM); and
- strengthening GoE's capacity for evidence-based learning and adaptation (all workstreams, including on GESI).

To this end, there are a large number of achievements from the four workstreams that have a bearing on the BRE Outcome statement.

The DRM institutional and policy environment

- **DRM Coordination & Leadership**
 - In October 2021, EDRMC was moved from the Ministry of Peace to the Prime Minister's Office.
 - In mid-2022, EDRMC and the Prime Minister's Office approved a legal framework to strengthen implementation of the new DRM Policy.
- **DRM Mainstreaming**
 - In 2021, MoPD incorporated DRM into the Ten Year Development Plan.
 - In 2023, Regional Development Planning offices in Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Sidama, and SNNP incorporated disaster risk into EFY 2016 development plans.
- **DRM Information & Knowledge**
 - In 2022, EDRMC committed to develop a road map to establish a multi hazard, multi-sectoral early warning system (EWS).
 - In August 2023, EDRMC validated an updated EW Bulletin format and has since produced EW Bulletins of a far higher quality and more regularly.

The PHEM institutional and policy environment

- **PHEM system design**
 - In 2021-23 twelve regions adapted the national PHEM strategic plan to their specific regional contexts, helping them prepare implementation plans.
 - In July 2022, various nutrition-focused government agencies and donors came together to jointly prepare the Integrated Plan on Emergency Nutrition Interventions. By 2023 two rounds of monitoring its implementation had already taken place.
 - With EPHI, EDRMC, MoH and 15 universities accredited competency-based emergency nutrition modules and integrated them into their curriculum.
- **Region- and woreda-level**
 - Over 2022-23, risk-informed planning (Vulnerability Risk Assessment Mapping - Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans) was rolled-out to 279 highly vulnerable woredas.

- In August 2022, the Amhara Public Health Institute prepared response and recovery plans for 28 conflict affected woredas and for the region.
- Improved risk communication and community engagement in 2023, particularly around cholera outbreaks.

The SRSN institutional and policy environment

- **SRSN Delivery**
 - In 2021, MoA /FSCO and EDRMC established a new SRSN sub technical committee, convening on a monthly basis to enhance planning, coordination, implementation, and monitoring of SRSN-related activities.
 - Harmonisation of SRSN response improved amongst PSNP and humanitarian food assistance (HFA) operators in PSNP and non PSNP woredas in PSNP regions.
 - Better coordination amongst SRSN implementers in PSNP regions, especially those structures supported by BRE-TA in Amhara, Oromia, Somali and SNNPR.
 - A one operator per woreda principle has been agreed by all SRSN actors to be implemented in PSNP and non-PSNP woredas.
 - Consensus reached on SRSN Public Works Guideline at federal level.
- **Resources**
 - Disaster Risk Assistance Plans (DRAPs) were implemented in PSNP woredas by SRSN operators.

The DRF institutional and policy environment

- **Understand costs**
 - MoF's capacity to analyze and quantify disaster-related fiscal risks increased.
 - MoF adopts climate and disaster budget tagging with IFMIS integration in key CRGE sectoral ministries.
 - MoF adopts climate and disaster budget tagging with IFMIS integration in key CRGE sectoral ministries.
- **Limit Costs**
 - MoF develops new climate informed Public Financial Management strategy.
 - Woreda staff apply climate smart local development guidelines to develop annual plans, part of implementing a Green Climate Fund (GCF) climate finance project.
- **Money In**
 - MoF prepares and adopts the first DRF Strategy (DRFS) for Ethiopia through a highly consultative process, providing greater understanding of DRF concepts.
 - MoF taps additional \$25m window of climate finance by submitting a concept note to the GCF's Simplified Approval Process (GCF-SAP) and \$10m to the Adaptation Fund (AF).
 - MoF adopts a standard selection criteria to make more objective the process of choosing locations for inclusion in climate finance proposals.
 - EPHI and MoA acquired significant budget increases following submission of a well-justified budget proposal.

- **Money Out**
 - MoA used the findings from the VfM study recommendations and action plan to make the PSNP implementation plan more evidence-based.

Crucially, the **indications are that DRM systems reforms may not only be consolidated and continue at the federal level but also that there is a growing appetite for similar reforms at the regional and other sub-national levels.** That is a wholly unexpected outcome and certainly was not foreseen in the original Business Case.

5. Results: BRE-TA's achievements

a. BRE logframe – Output 1

As outlined in Figure 1, the pathway to meeting BRE-TA's targets, as encapsulated in the BRE logframe Output 1, was through an organisational framework based on four workstreams. Every workstream had 'building blocks' (broad functional themes) containing a set of intermediary outcomes contributing to the two indicators for Output 1. Activities were defined in this light, always keeping sight of the two indicators for BRE logframe Output 1.

There are two points to note in assessing BRE-TA's performance against Output 1 targets:

- **Every building block contained a set of ambitious intermediate outcomes.** They were conceptualised as distinct, progressive, and interlocking reforms that would incrementally move the DRM system towards greater effectiveness. They constituted a range of potential areas in which BRE-TA could make a significant contribution to Output 1. Some progressed faster than others, which reflected the inherently dynamic nature of the project of opportunistically pursuing areas in a particular area, while building credibility and momentum on other areas in the process.
- Internally, within BRE-TA, this **multiple-path, ambitious approach also served as a performance management tool for each workstream, pushing the teams to try and achieve as many significant gains as possible.** In the event, all four workstreams largely met these internal (intermediate outcome) targets.

Table 3: Achievements against logframe Output 1 indicators and targets (1.1 and 1.2)

Output indicator	Baseline	Final target (for March 2024)	Final result achieved (as at end of February 2024)
<i>1.1 Technical assistance to Government of Ethiopia to plan, prepare, prevent, deliver, and budget for humanitarian response delivered and well received</i>	Some disparate TA that the GoE has limited direct ability to draw upon.	Core deliverables from relevant Tasking Orders (TO) delivered to government and signed off.	By the end of February 2024, BRE-TA had delivered to the government 126 deliverables across the four workstreams and completed 20 TOs. (See Annex A)

Output indicator	Baseline	Final target (for March 2024)	Final result achieved (as at end of February 2024)
1.2 Significant contributions to strategic plans, systems, and procedures in disaster risk management, disaster risk finance, public health emergency management, and shock-responsive safety nets	n/a	Significant contributions towards each of the four workstreams' long-term vision, as exemplified by the completion of [key] deliverables.	29 out of 31 workstream 'intermediate outcomes' were achieved by the end of February 2024, each with significant contributions. The remaining two are likely to be achieved before the end of 2024. (See Table 5 below and deliverables in Annexes D to G).

Table 4: Achievements against logframe Output indicator (1.2) – intermediate outcomes for each workstream and achievement by the end of February 2024

	Building blocks	Intermediate outcome statements	Achievement by end of February 2024
DRM	DRM coordination and Leadership	New DRM Policy approved by Council of Ministers.	Achieved
		Knowledge and understanding of new DRM Policy and legal framework increased in four sectors and five key regions.	Achievable in 2024
		Improved leadership capacity in EDRMC to coordinate DRM operations.	Achievable in 2024
	DRM Mainstreaming	DRM integrated into national and regional Ten-Year Development Plan (TYDP) .	Achieved
		DRM mainstreamed into four priority regions' agriculture/pastoral sectoral development plans.	Achieved
		Disaster risk-informed planning (DRIP) capacity strengthened in five sectoral ministries and four regions.	Achieved
	DRM Information	Early Warning System (EWS) implementation plan in place.	Achieved
		Improved capacity within EDRMC to generate, disseminate, and use early warning information for early action.	Achieved
	PHEM	PHEM System Design	National PHEM strategy adapted by several regions (incorporating implementation plan).
PHEM leadership capacity development programme established at EPHI.			Achieved
Standardised training and planning for emergency nutrition management established at EPHI			Achieved
Region and Woreda PHEM Structures and Processes		Risk-informed planning (Vulnerability Risk Assessment Mapping - Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (VRAM-EPRP)) becomes part of national, regional, and woreda plans.	Achieved
		Recommendations from reviews to improve services taken up (e.g. from after-action reviews (AARs) and intra-action reviews (IARs))'	Achieved

	Building blocks	Intermediate outcome statements	Achievement by end of February 2024
	Financing PHEM	A national health and nutrition emergency financing strategy covering preparedness, response, and recovery integrated in the Disaster Risk Financing Strategy (DRFS)	Achieved
SRSN	SRSN Delivery	Stronger SRSN coordination mechanisms established.	Achieved
		Harmonised service delivery mechanisms in place for SRSN.	Achieved
		Gender and social inclusion integrated into SRSN grievance and redress mechanism (GRM).	Achieved
	SRSN Resources	Drought risk financing options integrated into the government's DRFS .	Achieved
		Strengthened PSNP-SRSN capacity to develop, implement, and monitor timely annual Drought Response Assistance Plans (DRAPs) .	Achieved
	SRSN Information	Improved reliability of early warning dashboard to inform drought response plans.	Achieved
		Moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) surveillance systems integrated into SRSN.	Achieved
		Consolidated management information system (MIS) module enhancement plan rolled out for SRSN.	Achieved
	DRF	Money Out	Increased capacity in value for money (VfM) methodology in MoF and MoA.
Improved oversight and coordination of climate change projects at regional level.			Achieved
Money In		DRF strategy with more and diversified DRF instruments in place.	Achieved
		Government capacity to mobilise more climate finance from Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Adaptation Fund (AF) improved.	Achieved
		Four BRE-TA focal institutions submit and defend evidence-based budgets (EBBs).	Achieved
Limit Costs		Climate-smart local development planning guidelines used in preparing annual plans in GCF woredas.	Achieved
		Government capacity to deliver climate-sensitive public financial management (PFM) increased.	Achieved
Understand Costs		Disaster-related fiscal risks identified, quantified, and captured in government plans (e.g. DRFS, Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework (MEFF), budget).	Achieved
		Government uses Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) to tag and track financial provisions for preparing for and responding to climate shocks and disaster risks.	Achieved

b. Contribution to the BRE logframe's Outcome Indicator 1

1. Government of Ethiopia delivering against costed preparedness plans, with automatic and clearly defined triggers.	Target for March 2024: Effective use of Integrated Food and Cash Response Plan throughout 2023.
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In terms of reporting progress towards the Target for March 2024, the Integrated Food and Cash Response Plan was replaced by the SRSN system in 2020, although the essence of the reform remained the same: **getting the government's new idea of a shock-responsive social protection system (PSNP's SRSN) and well-established humanitarian food assistance (HFA) working together in an integrated way**. And while there remains a lot to do, **significant improvements have been taken by GoE with the support of BRE-TA's workstreams to make the response more effective and integrated**. These include the following: the adoption of the single operator principle, as agreed by all SRSN implementers in both PSNP and non-PSNP areas; harmonised implementation procedures; improvements to the early warning dashboard and food insecure population projections; a single resource allocation instrument (the DRAP); and coordinated planning through the Prioritisation Committee.

Other important examples of BRE-TA's workstreams' contributions towards the BRE Outcome statement (by building block) include:

- **DRM Mainstreaming - 'DRM becomes an integral part of the country's development agenda at federal, sectoral and regional levels'** - There is significant evidence that DRM has become much more central to Ethiopia's development agenda than it was in the past. The inclusion of DRM as a central pillar in the TYDP has institutionalised DRM in national planning processes. DRM principles have been taken up at the regional level, with the mainstreaming of risk into regional development plans.
- **PHEM System Design - 'PHEM system provides effective leadership for health and nutrition emergency preparedness, response, recovery'** - In some cases, preparatory steps for health and nutrition emergency preparedness, response, and recovery are well under way (e.g. the national PHEM strategy has been adapted by 12 regions, leading to regional emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans); in other cases, government leadership of PHEM is well underway (e.g. an integrated emergency nutrition plan was endorsed by government and donors and is being implemented, with two rounds of monitoring conducted and lessons drawn).
- **SRSN Delivery - 'Efficient and accountable government-led delivery of cash and food to people in need'** - The national SRSN is now much better coordinated in terms of planning, implementation, and monitoring, and a robust resource allocation tool, in the form of the DRAP, now exists and is routinely utilised to allocate SRSN support throughout the country in a transparent manner.
- **DRF Understand Costs - 'More predictable, accountable and timely allocations of resources to preventative measures in budget'** - This long-term ambition is on a good footing in regard to being achieved, not least in increased budgets going to BRE-TA focal ministries but also through the implementation of the Climate-Smart Local Planning guidelines (which prioritise climate adaptation and DRR in woreda plans). These have the backing of, and the attention of, MoF and, in due course, will have the backing and attention MoPD (which will enable their roll-out to non-GCF woredas).

c. BRE-TA Value for Money (VfM)

BRE-TA VfM has been assessed annually since 2019/2020. The assessments use FCDO's '5 Es' VfM framework. **VfM judgements are made based on rubrics (programme-specific sub-criteria and standards) agreed with FCDO each year, in advance of the assessment.** The rubrics are set out in the annual BRE-TA VfM frameworks. The assessments draw on evidence from a range of sources including interviews with government, other TA providers and FCDO staff, key BRE-TA documents, data from OPM's financial systems, and, for the annual VfM assessments for 2022 and 2023, outcome harvesting workshops with government and BRE-TA staff. Assessments were undertaken by BRE-TA staff from the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and Project Management teams, and reviewed by FCDO staff before final internal approval.

The project was **assessed to provide 'good' VfM overall in the first four annual assessments, rising to 'excellent' VfM in this final VfM assessment of 2023.**

6. Operating context for BRE-TA

BRE-TA's project cycle overlapped with particularly challenging times, events, and risks that were not anticipated in the Business Case. They were captured in the first few FCDO annual reviews for BRE (before the TA component began). Namely, the country was hit by numerous and often simultaneous crises: drought, floods, famine, locust infestation, multiple regionally dispersed internal conflicts, rapid inflation, the myriad challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and potentially an existential crisis for the country triggered by the conflict in the north and the involvement of neighbouring powers.

These challenges were both structural and 'soft'. They affected not only the demand for humanitarian resources but also the socio-political mood (and time constraints) in the country and the conditions in partner GoE organisations where BRE-TA had to operate to fulfil its ambitions to enable progressive reforms in the government's DRM systems. In this regard, three issues in particular are worth highlighting: 1) Multiple crises, 2) politically sensitive environment, and the 3) importance of building sustainable systems.

1. Multiple, complex, and convergent crises, with an increasing number of people affected

One indicator captures the intensifying humanitarian crisis during BRE-TA's project cycle: the number of IDPs. The figures have grown dramatically, driven by multiple and often convergent crises, with conflict and insecurity adding to the number of people displaced by drought, locusts, and floods.

From the time BRE-TA began, in March 2019, to date, the number of Ethiopians needing humanitarian assistance grew by nearly 350% – meaning that around 25% of the country's population of 118 million people required some form of humanitarian assistance. Further, two significant global crises impacted the health system (and the economy) – the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the latter leading to significant increases in the price of fuel and food, with particularly severe consequences for the poor and marginalised.

Table 5: Rise in the number of IDPs during the BRE-TA project cycle

Driver of displacement	2019: IDPs displaced	2022: IDPs displaced
Disasters	390,000	717,000
Conflict and violence	1,300,000	3,900,000
Total number of IDPs	1.69 million	4.62 million

Source: www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia

2. *Politically sensitive environment*

Fundamental to BRE-TA's implementation strategy was the commitment to a demand-led approach to the strengthening of government DRM systems. This was a policy position on which the BRE Business Case was built, based on previous UK Aid experience in Ethiopia (and elsewhere) and grounded in orthodox development theory and a longstanding international protocol to which the UK is a signatory.²⁰

In practice, this policy position, of a commitment to a demand-led approach to the strengthening of government DRM systems, was questioned during the course of BRE-TA's operations by most of the key donors to humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia – European Union, FCDO, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank – who voiced serious concerns about the potential distribution of humanitarian aid to the conflict-affected areas of the north. The FCDO BRE annual review of 2021, conducted in March 2022, stated the *'government-led system...was unable to adapt quickly'* and that *'GoE actions around the conflict have shaken the confidence of donors to continue with strategies to increasingly work towards a humanitarian system wholly operated by the government.'*²¹ As a result, this BRE annual review reported: *'At the outset, 75% of UK humanitarian spending was either paid directly to the government or channelled through UN agencies to the government. That percentage decreased during the reporting period to less than 20%, due in large part to the need for a strong and conflict-sensitive non-governmental mechanism to respond to the worsening crisis in the north.'*

Yet, in the face of these tensions, the scope and depth of BRE-TA's demand-led approach, primarily using well-qualified and experienced local technical assistants (TAs) across the workstreams at the federal and regional levels, was maintained. This was done not only in the face of international tensions but also in the prevailing local political context of the 'No More' movement and sensitivity about external power and influence in Ethiopia.²² The implication (and credit for sustaining this approach) here is that likely all three sponsors/clients – GoE, FCDO, and USAID – quietly recognised the effectiveness of BRE-TA's change methodology at all four levels of reform and transformation in the government's humanitarian response systems: strategic, structural, process, and people.

²⁰ Notably the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, (March 2005) and 'Grant Bargain' on 10% of humanitarian assistance being provided as TA.

²¹ BRE annual review, March 2022, p. 3.

²² The notion and phrase 'African solutions to African problems' was coined by the political economist George Ayittey. This was part of a wider argument that argued that post-colonial, independent African nations needed to have full control of their civil service, security forces, judiciary, election centres, and national bank, and that a nation needed to 'correctly' sequence its institutional reforms. Arguably, these ideas have been an integral aspect of the post-colonial African development zeitgeist for several decades. Notably, during the fieldwork for this report (July 2022), the phrase was displayed on large billboards on the perimeter of Bole International Airport.

3. *The importance of building sustainable (resilient) systems*

BRE-TA's underlying assumptions in its ToC in regard to successfully effecting **sustainable reforms** in the government's DRM systems were as follows:

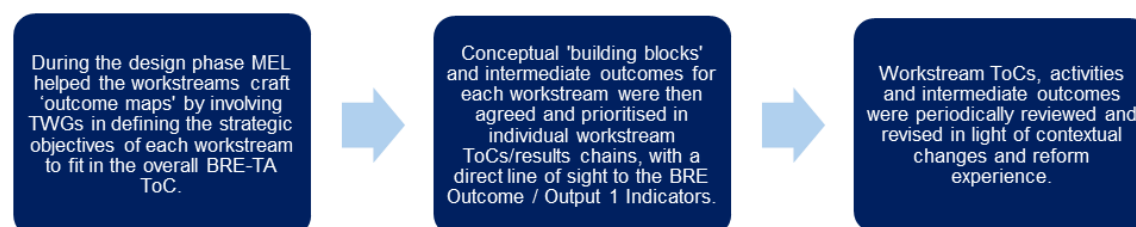
1. Given Ethiopia's history and government, public sector reforms are issues of national sovereignty. Therefore, government ownership of each initiative is imperative. Programming must be demand-led²³ to be viable and must strengthen, reform, and build on existing government systems.
2. In the absence of an overarching GoE-driven public sector reform programme, partner ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) are likely only to pursue incremental changes that speak directly to their own inclinations for improvements in the 'system' they are responsible for, locating reforms within narrow sectoral policies and objectives.
3. This will mean supporting existing plans and diagnoses and responding opportunistically and flexibly to partner requests, checking and lodging these ideas with internal stakeholders (technical working groups - TWGs) to ensure local ownership and consolidate institutional memory of the diagnoses and trajectories of system reforms.
4. Team members that understand and can apply dynamic, institutional political economy analysis is key to identifying opportunities for reforms that align with current government priorities and policies. This requires using predominantly Ethiopian technical advisers, particularly workstream leads and their core team, and regional advisers, with professional stature, political legitimacy, and cultural capital.

These assumptions underpinned the BRE-TA ToC, linking the outputs and intermediate outcomes of TA interventions to the Output 1 and Outcome statements of the BRE logframe.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Five strands of BRE-TA's intrinsic approach to dynamic programming through 'learning and adapting' can be highlighted through the role MEL played. MEL had a vital structural responsibility in BRE-TA, not just as an ex-post 'review, reflection and adaptation' function but also integrally in the design and implementation of the programme.

1. **Overall ToC linked to BRE Outcome.** The MEL team led the formative process of conceptualising the programme's overall theory of change (ToC) and, in the absence of a prescribed and dedicated BRE-TA logframe, crafting the BRE-TA ToC to link with BRE's Outcome statement. Distinct ToCs for the four workstreams were also elaborated through a participatory process involving government through workstream level Technical Working Groups (TWGs).



²³ Strictly speaking, programming has not entirely been demand-driven because donors have exercised the final decision on the approval of Tasking Orders (TOs). However, BRE-TA has operated within these conditions by choosing areas of work that are likely to be of interest to all parties and adding layers of consultation with GoE partners after donor critiques/comments/proposed amendments to draft TOs.

2. **Reporting and accountability.** MEL played a central role in producing the data (with the assistance of workstreams) to fulfil the programme's significant reporting and accountability obligations to donors and to the workstream level TWGs and overall BRE-TA Steering Committee. This tracked progress towards achieving the 31 intermediate outcomes (linked to BRE logframe Output 1 indicators) in the disaggregated workstream ToCs and was presented in monthly updates, quarterly reports, and annual reports, which provided the basis for formal FCDO Annual Reviews.
3. **Continual focus on strategic objectives.** MEL provided the essential guardrails to prevent workstreams from considering ideas and opportunities suggested by GoE partners, which, while reformist and attractive, would take the programme away from its core mission and contractual obligations.
4. **Validation of results and regional learning.** The key achievements presented in this report were all tested and affirmed in stakeholder workshops involving participants from all partner MDAs and regional governments. The process led to an unexpected consequence: there was a general recognition of the need for reforms in the DRM system at the sub-national level and a sense that this is the direction that GoE should support after the end of BRE-TA. There was also an organic development stirred by the learning: regional participants from new administrations expressed particular interest in the reform initiatives undertaken by more mature and established regions and intended to take these lessons home for replication.
5. **Strengthening GoE MEL capacity and systems, notably in GESI.** This reflective orientation of 'learning and adaptation', inherent in BRE-TA, was inculcated across the programme from the specialist MEL team to federal workstreams and regional TA. The MEL team provided technical support through workstreams to government led MEL activities, and was crucial in recognising the need to address a critical and as yet not explicitly addressed dimension of the increasingly complex and convergent humanitarian crises besetting Ethiopia: it pointed the programme to look at conflict sensitivity, gender equity and social inclusion (CS/GESI).

BRE-TA made a conscious effort to strengthen the internal capacity of GoE partner institutions to monitor issues pertaining to GESI through all four workstreams. There were two intertwined strands to the approach taken by BRE-TA:

- ***Strengthening the knowledge and capacity of TA specialists and reform champions in the areas of Conflict Sensitivity, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (CS/GESI).*** This entailed building the capacity of both BRE-TA and government staff in relevant DRM ministries to understand the conceptual frameworks of CS/GESI and measures to inform and reform institutions in line with these principles.
- ***Integrating and mainstreaming CS/GESI into DRM systems-reforms initiatives.*** BRE-TA's fundamental mandate of mainstreaming DRM mainstreaming across government ministries provided many ready opportunities to work collaboratively with relevant ministries on CS/GESI mainstreaming. This included government-wide initiatives to mainstream GESI in ongoing work with the MoF, MoH, EPHI, MoA's Food Security Coordination Office (FSCO), EDRMC, and their respective regional offices and bureaus.

The systems-strengthening initiatives across the government provided opportunities to draw on learning from one sector to another, identifying progressive GESI policies and practices in partners, and facilitating dialogue to share such gender-responsive developments across

the DRM institutional landscape (including through supporting the set-up of a government-led technical community of practice on GESI for Gender Directorate staff within MDAs).

8. Lessons and recommendations

1. Aligning with **government interests and priorities** – and taking a flexible and responsive approach to delivering development support helps enable such alignment – facilitates trust and effectiveness (i.e. by increasing buy-in and ownership).
2. **Building relationships and developing trust** are time-consuming, but they are critical to later achievements.
3. Mastering the **political economy of collaboration and coordination**, at federal and regional levels, helps ensure that supported activities are aligned with government priorities and donors.
4. The **development of a solid, applied policy evidence base**, reflecting targeted localised research, takes time but is key to making the case for follow-on reforms.
5. There is a lot of interest in and support for **deepening the role of GESI** in future DRM programmes at the federal and regional levels.
6. There is significant value in **working simultaneously at federal and regional levels**, including on improving coordination capacities of the federal and regional governments.
7. Locate TA projects within the context of **wider system reform**, and plan for the TA to be provided for a **minimum of 10 years**.

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List of recurring abbreviations

AAR	After-action review	EW4All	Early Warning for All Initiative (of the United Nations)
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre	EWRD	Early Warning and Response Directorate (of the EDRMC)
AF	Adaptation Fund	EWS	Early warning system
BEP	Bulletins Enhancement Plan	FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (of the Government of the United Kingdom)
BRE	Building Resilience in Ethiopia	FSCO	Food Security and Coordination Office (of Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture)
BRE-TA	Building Resilience in Ethiopia – Technical Assistance	GC	Gregorian calendar
BoA	Bureau of Agriculture	GCF	Green Climate Fund
BoF	Bureau of Finance	GDP	Gross domestic product
CDP	Centre for Disaster Protection	GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
CIS	Climate information services	GoE	Government of Ethiopia
CMCO	Commodity Management Coordination Office	GRM	Grievance redress mechanism
CRGE	Climate-resilient green economy	GSD	Gender and social development
CS/GESI	Conflict sensitivity/gender equality and social inclusion	HEI	Higher education institution
DCT	Donor Coordination Team	HFA	Humanitarian food assistance
DRF	Disaster risk finance or disaster risk financing	HRM	Human resources management
DRFS	Disaster Risk Financing Strategy	IAR	Intra-action review
DRAP	Drought Response Assistance Plan	IDP	Internally displaced person
DRIP	Disaster risk-informed planning	IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
DRM	Disaster risk management	JEOP	Joint Emergency Operation Programme
DRR	Disaster risk reduction	KII	Key informant interview
EBB	Evidence-based budget	KPI	Key performance indicator
EDRMC	Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission	LASS	Linkage to Social Services
ENCU	Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
EPHI	Ethiopian Public Health Institute	MAM	Moderate acute malnutrition
EPRP	Emergency preparedness and response plan	MDAs	Ministries, departments, and agencies
EW	Early warning	MEFF	Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework

MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning		
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture		
MoE	Ministry of Education	SAP	Simplified Approval Process
MoF	Ministry of Finance	SAPHE	Sustaining and Accelerating Primary Health in Ethiopia
MoH	Ministry of Health	SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	SRSN	Shock-responsive safety net
MoP	Ministry of Peace	STC	Sub-Technical Committee
MoPD	Ministry of Planning and Development	TA	Technical assistance or technical assistant (determined by the context in which the abbreviation appears)
MoWSA	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs	TO	Tasking Order
MTR	Mid-Term Review	ToC	Theory of Change ToRs Terms of reference
NPDC	National Planning and Development Commission	ToT	Training of trainers
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	TSS	Technical Support Specialist
ODA	Official development assistance	TWG	Technical Working Group
OPM	Oxford Policy Management	TYDP	Ten-Year Development Plan
OR	Operational research	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PCR	Project Completion Report	USAID	US Agency for International Development
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability	VfM	Value-for-money or value for money
PFM	Public financial management	VRAM	Vulnerability and Risk Analysis and Mapping
PHEM	Public Health Emergency Management	VRAM-EPRP	Vulnerability Risk Assessment Mapping – Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
PMO	Prime Minister's Office	WFP	World Food Programme
PPIC	Project Partners Implementation Committee	WHO	World Health Organisation
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme		
PW	Public works		
RCCE	Risk communication and community engagement		
RHB	Regional Health Bureau		
RPHI	Regional Public Health Institute		
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor		
SAM	Severe acute malnutrition		

1 Introduction: purpose and background

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Purpose of the BRE-TA Project Completion Report (self-assessment)

This report serves as a record of the performance of the BRE-TA component of the wider BRE programme. BRE-TA started in March 2019 and ends in March 2024, but the main implementation period was from October 2019 to December 2023. At its core, **this report answers the question: What did BRE-TA achieve in the given context, and what can be learned from supporting government in preparing for disasters?**

1.1.2 Methodology and data sources

The methodology adopted to answer the core question was **largely qualitative in nature**, involving a **document review**, a process of ‘**outcome harvesting**’, and **key informant interviews** (KIIs).

- **Documents reviewed** included BRE-TA project documents and deliverables, as well as third-party sources.
- **Outcome harvesting workshops** were carried out in October 2022 (with a follow-up meeting held in January 2023) and October 2023, with members of the core BRE-TA team and, separately, with key government counterparts.
- **KIIs** were conducted in September and October 2023 with donors and government counterparts.

Quantitative data were drawn upon to a limited extent, mainly in the form of financial data to inform relevant criteria of the value-for-money (VfM) assessment. **All claims made in the report are supported by evidence from the above-mentioned sources.** Sources are cited in the footnotes and comprehensively listed in the references.

1.1.3 How the report is organised

- **This first Section 1 lays out the rationale for the wider BRE programme**, of which BRE-TA was one component.
- **Section 2 describes the BRE-TA component and its context** in detail.
- **Section 3 presents BRE-TA achievements** and the extent to which they are likely to be sustained; helped promote gender equality and social inclusion (GESI); contributed to the expected BRE outcome; and delivered VfM.
- **Section 4 describes BRE-TA’s approach to project management**, including programming, implementation, and delivery; and financial and risk management.
- **Section 5 discusses the learnings** distilled from the project’s performance **and forwards recommendations** for future DRM programming.
- **The annexes provide detail** on the project’s context and process, workstream-specific performance, achievement of BRE-TA logframe targets, the project’s main deliverables, a summary of the learning notes, and the assessment of VfM.

1.2 The BRE programme: supporting GoE to deliver a more effective, self-financed, and accountable response to humanitarian and climate shocks

1.2.1 What was the problem to which the BRE programme was responding?

Problem 1 - Meet emergency needs and support GoE to lead a response that is effective, increasingly self-financed, and accountable

Over the decades preceding the initiation of the BRE programme, Ethiopians had experienced severe shock-induced falls in welfare. As highlighted in BRE's Business Case, **'every year in Ethiopia, depending on the severity of climate and humanitarian shocks, between 11 and 18 million people are unable to meet their basic needs'**.²⁴ In 2017, when the Business Case was approved, the shocks the country had experienced included famine, civil unrest, wars, droughts and floods.

The most recent data at the time highlighted that a range of dimensions of poverty and vulnerability exacerbated the impact of shocks on the most vulnerable:

- **Ethiopia was** – and it continues to be – **one of the poorest countries in the world, with per capita GDP of just \$ 619 in 2015**.²⁵ Despite steady annual economic growth rates and improvements in pro-poor service delivery, the poorest 10% were poorer in 2015 than they had been in 2010.²⁶
- **Extreme poverty was reflected in high levels of hunger and malnutrition.** In an average year, 10 to 11 million people needed support to meet their basic needs, rising significantly during drought to reach 18.2 million in 2016. Of these, 8.2 million were regular beneficiaries of the PSNP.²⁷
- **Poor people were** – and continue to be – **the most vulnerable to environmental disasters, but other factors also induced vulnerability.** Ethiopia is subject to various natural and human-induced hazards, notably drought,²⁸ but also flooding and conflict. Annually, around 500,000²⁹ Ethiopians are displaced through drought, conflict and flooding and need humanitarian support.³⁰

²⁴ DFID (now FCDO) (2017) 'Business Case for Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE)'. iafi.fcdo.gov.uk/iafi_documents/D0002868.odt [last accessed 28 December 2023], see Intervention Strategy, first para, p. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.* See Strategic Case, Poverty and Vulnerability in Ethiopia, p. 5; attributed to the World Bank. However, current World Bank data gives a per capita figure of US \$630 (LCU) for 2015. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=ET&view=chart>.

²⁶ *Ibid.* Attributed to the World Bank, Ethiopia Poverty Assessment 2014, published 2015, available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/c4161170-c4a7-5049-a2bb-bb7e418200d1> [last accessed 10 January 2024].)

²⁷ The PSNP provides cash or food assistance to the poorest families selected based on having been humanitarian assistance beneficiaries for the past three years.

²⁸ DFID (2017) 'Business Case for Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE)', Section on 'Poverty and Vulnerability in Ethiopia', p. 5.

²⁹ The internal-displacement.org website figures suggest that 450,000 people were internally displaced in 2015. See graphic in Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (2015) 'IDMC's Country Profile: Ethiopia', Geneva, Switzerland. www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia [last accessed 29 December 2023].

³⁰ In recent reports, internal-displacement.org give a revised figure of 450,000 for 2015; see Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (2015) 'IDMC's Country Profile: Ethiopia', Geneva, Switzerland. www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia [last accessed 29 December 2023]. The figure for IDPs had risen to 3.9 million by 2022, validating the argument in the Business Case.

Problem 2 - A constrained government response to shocks came at a high cost

The government is constrained financially and operationally in its ability to prepare for and then respond to shocks and associated falls in welfare. This sub-optimal preparedness and inadequate response comes at a great human and economic cost.

- **The costs of a lack of access to water and food, loss of assets, and malnutrition are significant.** A 2016 study³¹ estimated that the economic cost of an insufficient humanitarian response in 2016 would be \$ 1.3 billion. Indeed, the costs of the 2016 drought were severe in both human and economic terms,³² with growth slowing from 8.7% in 2015 to 6.5% in 2016³³ due to the drought and the weaker global economic environment. Furthermore, the cost of malnutrition, including stunting (which then affected just under 40% of children in Ethiopia), was estimated to cost the country \$ 4.7 billion dollars per year in lost productivity and to require significant additional malnutrition-related public services.³⁴
- **Better preparedness for disasters reduces human suffering and be more cost-effective.** Studies have shown that appropriate prevention saves lives and money, and often prevents economic losses (See Figure 3, produced by BRE-TA for the first BRE-TA Steering Committee).³⁵ Estimates suggest that if Ethiopia were better prepared for crises, it could save \$ 2 billion over 10 years.³⁶

Problem 3 - The prospect of further disasters

- **Furthermore, at the time the BRE Business Case was approved (2017), extremes in climate variability were set to increase.** Predictions pointed to the

³¹ Cited in footnote 12 of DFID's Business Case for BRE as 'Venton (2016) "The VfM of Early Response"' (however, the correct citation appears to be: Venton, C.C. (2016) 'The Economic Case for Early Humanitarian Response to the Ethiopia 2015/2016 Drought'. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2017-06/ethiopiacontingencyanalysis.pdf> or via <https://www.gov.uk/research-for-development-outputs/the-economic-case-for-early-humanitarian-response-to-the-ethiopia-2015-2016-drought> [last accessed 9 January 2024]). DFID (2017) 'Business Case for Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE)'. iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/D0002868.odt [last accessed 28 December 2023]. 'Not responding or responding slowly is costly in human terms, which in turn has negative economic impacts', p. 6. See also Venton, C.C., Fitzgibbon, C., Shiterek, T., Coulter, C., Dooley, O. (2012) 'The Economics of Early Response and Disaster Resilience: Lessons from Kenya and Ethiopia', *Economics of Resilience Final Report*, <https://dlci-hoa.org/assets/upload/key-resilience-and-climate-change/20200804120448435.pdf> [last accessed 29 December 2023], pp. 60–77.

³² As cited in DFID (2017) 'Business Case for Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE)'. iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/D0002868.odt [last accessed 28 December 2023]. 'For example, Porter (2017) estimates that poverty depth increased among the poor (13% of poor households became poorer in 2015, while 19% poor households became poorer in 2016), while overall poverty is estimated to have increased by 2% in 2015 and by 1% in 2016 because of the drought'.

³³ See the Staff Report for the 2016 Article IV Consultation, 30 August 2016, in: International Monetary Fund (2016) 'The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2016 Article IV Consultation—Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia' (IMF Country Report No. 16/322), Washington, DC, United States of America. www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2016/cr16322.pdf [last accessed 12 January 2024].

³⁴ DFID (2017) 'Business Case for Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE)'. iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/D0002868.odt [last accessed 28 December 2023]. (Ascribed to WFP, [The Cost of Hunger: Ethiopia 2013/14](https://www.wfp.org/publications/2013/14).)

³⁵ For example, in Ethiopia's Afar region, restocking goats and sheep costs at least six times more than supplementary feeding to prevent death, and restocking cattle costs 14 times more. Venton, C.C., Fitzgibbon, C., Shiterek, T., Coulter, C., Dooley, O. (2012) 'The Economics of Early Response and Disaster Resilience: Lessons from Kenya and Ethiopia', *Economics of Resilience Final Report*. <https://dlci-hoa.org/assets/upload/key-resilience-and-climate-change/20200804120448435.pdf> [last accessed 29 December 2023], pp. 60–77.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

following climate change-induced trends: warming; more variable and less reliable rainfall; and more severe and frequent extreme events.³⁷ These trends suggested severe weather events would likely become more frequent³⁸, decreasing Ethiopia's economic growth rates and its ability to tackle poverty and increasing rural vulnerability.

Figure 2: The economic impact of shocks on GDP



1.2.2 What was the proposed solution and the related investment?

The three-pronged problem described above – of an increased prospect of further disasters, inducing falls in welfare, which government was constrained in responding to – demanded a creative solution that considered not only the humanitarian needs but also the underlying issues related to systemic preparedness and response. **Thus, the UK-funded BRE programme was designed in 2016/17 to respond through two forms of assistance to GoE:**

- **the provision of humanitarian assistance to meet acute emergency needs** (92.5% of the budget); and
- **TA for system reform** (7.5% of the budget; it was initially higher but it fell as a proportion as the main humanitarian assistance components increased).

The BRE logframe saw the desired impact of the programme as '**Ethiopia more resilient to climate and humanitarian shocks**' and the expected outcome as '**Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks**'.

³⁷ Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (2015) 'Ethiopian Panel on Climate Change: First Assessment Report', Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. www.unisdr.org/preventionweb/files/46791_summaryreportsenglish.pdf [last accessed 29 December 2023].

³⁸ Herring, S.C., Hoell, A., Hoerling, M.P., Kossin, J.P., Schreck III, C.J., and Stott, P.A. (eds.) (2016) 'Explaining Extreme Events of 2015 from a Climate Perspective', *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 97(12), pp. S1–S145.

The programme's Business Case envisaged that **BRE would run for five years, from 2017/18 to 2021/22, with an initial budget of £168 million. The budget was allocated to the following three strands:**

1. **Delivering lifesaving humanitarian support: £133 million.** To fund the United Nations-run Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund to provide emergency lifesaving interventions; to fund the WFP to provide emergency food and cash; to fund UNICEF's child nutrition programmes; and to fund GoE's main social protection programme PSNP.
2. **TA: £32 million.** To support GoE to lead an effective response to climate and humanitarian shocks.
3. **Evidence and learning: £3 million.** To understand what works in terms of system reform and most effective delivery, and to provide real-time monitoring information to the programme, including beneficiary feedback.

Given the extraordinary changes in the political, economic, social, and climatic context during the timeframe of BRE, the initial BRE budget grew from £168 to £345 million. Most of the increase – £177 million – went to the humanitarian assistance component of BRE, while the final budget for the TA component reflected a reduction to just under £26 million (including the USAID contribution). **This report focuses on the TA, system-strengthening component of BRE.**

2 BRE-TA: the intervention and its context

2.1 BRE-TA's objective

BRE-TA was the system-strengthening component of the wider BRE programme. Per the related output in BRE's logframe, Output 1, the objective of this component was **to provide 'technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective and accountable humanitarian response'**.

2.2 Over which period was BRE-TA implemented, and with what level of investment?

On **25 March 2019**, two years after the other BRE components started, **OPM was awarded the contract to implement BRE-TA** up to August 2022 (for 41 months), **at a contract value of £25,966,490** – lower than the original allocation in the Business Case but covering a shorter timeframe. In July 2022, the contract amount was revised to **£25,927,402 in a no-cost extension of 19 months** (to March 2024).

Thus, **the final BRE-TA project period was 60 months, with a total spend of around £26 million**. At the end of the design phase in October 2019 the in-country team started to come together and the first 'Tasking Orders' (TOs)³⁹ were prepared with government partners. These started to be approved by FCDO (and USAID) in March 2020. The final three months of the project were devoted to closure activities. **Thus, the core implementation period extended from October 2019 to December 2023** (51 months).

2.3 What was the operating context at the start of BRE-TA?

By the time BRE-TA was contracted to OPM, **the humanitarian context in Ethiopia had worsened dramatically from when BRE's Business Case was drafted over two years earlier** (in February 2017). The causes and consequences of the three-pronged problem laid out in Section 1.2.1 had deepened.

- The **Business Case for BRE had been very much focused on drought**, albeit having the prescience to assert that '[e]xtremes in climate variability are set to increase with the onset of climate change...[making] the environmental factors behind humanitarian disasters in Ethiopia stronger and harder to deal with'.⁴⁰
- **What had not been foreseen in the Business Case was the increasing complexity of crises and violence**. In October 2019, at the start of the BRE-TA core implementation phase, the humanitarian landscape was increasingly characterised by localised inter-ethnic conflict and violence, drought, unseasonal rainfall causing flooding, disease outbreaks, and desert locust infestations. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported in 2019 that approximately '8.6 million people required food and non-food

³⁹ 'Tasking Orders' were requests for TA collaboratively developed by BRE-TA and the programme's counterparts in GoE.

⁴⁰ DFID (2017) 'Business Case for Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE)'. iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/D0002868.odt [last accessed 28 December 2023], p. 6.

assistance'.⁴¹ This was already a considerable deterioration from the situation flagged in the Business Case, where 'the non-PSNP food and non-food needs for 2017 are 5.6 million people (higher than in a 'normal' year given Ethiopia will still be recovering from the 2015-16 drought, and is now facing the impacts of the Horn of Africa drought in the South and South-East)'.⁴²

The context continued to evolve during the project implementation phase, as described in the next sub-section.

2.4 How did the context evolve during the BRE-TA implementation phase?

Severe shocks continued to be experienced over the 4.2 years of BRE-TA's core implementation phase, which had profound implications for the country and for the delivery of the project.

- Two years after its above-cited 2019 report, UNOCHA described the situation as follows: 'The humanitarian situation in Ethiopia remained difficult throughout 2021. Conflict and insecurity added to underlying vulnerability because of displacement, drought, locusts, and floods. COVID-19 has been an additional stress on the economy and the health system. The **number of people needing humanitarian assistance increased from 23.5 million at the end of 2020 to 29.7 million by the end of 2021**'.⁴³
- From the time when BRE-TA began in 2018 up until December 2023, the number of Ethiopians in need of humanitarian assistance grew by nearly 350% – meaning that around 25% of the country's population of 118 million people required some form of humanitarian assistance.

The major contextual changes – mainly massive internal conflict and COVID-19 – that resulted in unprecedented humanitarian needs occurred after the project began. These are worthy of the closer examination (provided in Annex B) as they had profound consequences for BRE-TA's operating environment.

2.5 What was BRE-TA's programming approach and project structure?

2.5.1 Programming approach

From the start, BRE-TA deliberately took an approach that was designed to ensure the sustainability of its provision of 'technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective and accountable humanitarian response'.⁴⁴ In organisational theory, sustainability is seen as the ability of an organisation to maintain a certain level of

⁴¹ UNOCHA Ethiopia (2020) 'Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund, 2019 Annual Report', Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. www.unocha.org/publications/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-humanitarian-fund-annual-report-2019 [last accessed 27 December 2023].

⁴² DFID (2017) 'Business Case for Building Resilience in Ethiopia (BRE)'. iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/D0002868.odt [last accessed 28 December 2023], p. 12.

⁴³ UNOCHA Ethiopia (2020) 'Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund, 2019 Annual Report', Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. www.unocha.org/publications/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-humanitarian-fund-annual-report-2019 [last accessed 27 December 2023].

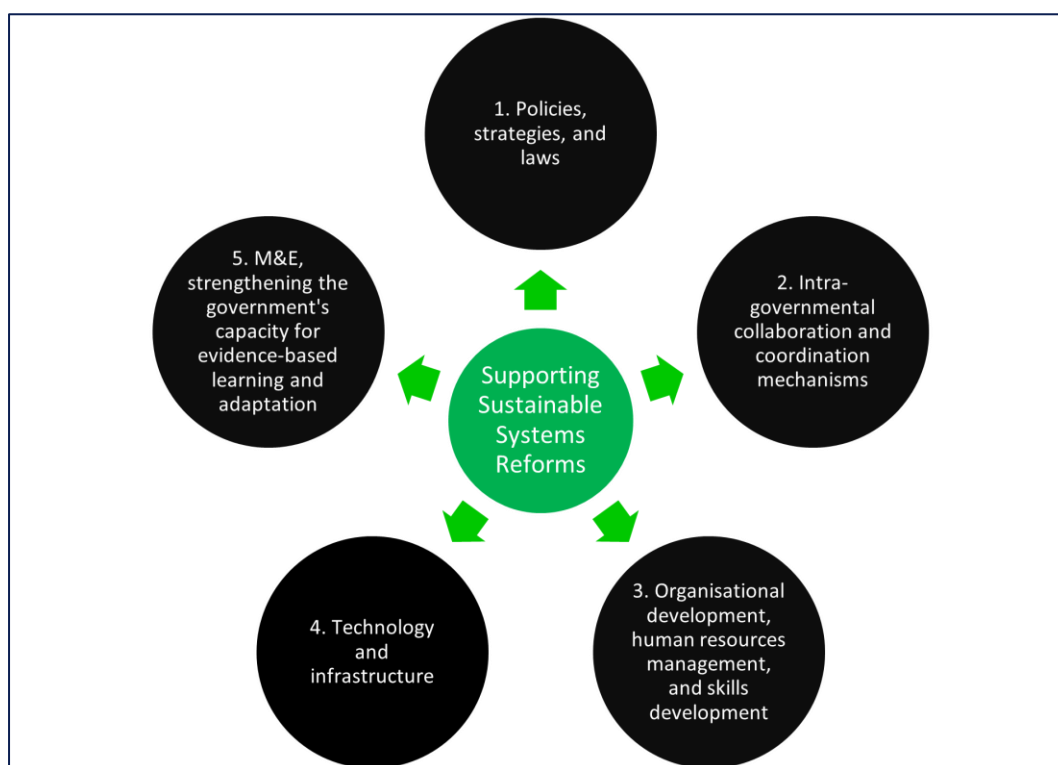
⁴⁴ Output 1 of the logframe for the wider BRE programme. This output related specifically to the TA component of BRE, i.e. to the BRE-TA project.

performance over a period. **In the context of externally assisted reform programmes, the term ‘sustainability’ generally means:**

- **that reforms to improve performance ‘stick’** and that the host system develops a capacity for self-development based on reflecting on its performance and applying this learning to other parts of the system and self-correction in the face of changing circumstances; and
- **eventual independence from external assistance**, financially and technically, having enabled the system to function autonomously at an improved level of effectiveness.

As laid out in the project’s strategy for sustainability,⁴⁵ the framework that BRE-TA adopted, drawing on (but modified from) organisational development theory, sets out the five areas of organisational and institutional development necessary to undertake comprehensive and coherent reforms and to build a system’s capacity to be self-reflective and self-sustaining. Those five comprehensive areas are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Framework used by BRE-TA for supporting sustainable system reforms



With the focus exclusively on TA, BRE-TA’s donors, FCDO and USAID, gave clear instructions to leave out activities related to ‘4. Technology and infrastructure’, due to the potentially significant financial costs associated with technology and infrastructure, which were considered the preserve of GoE.

The project thus devoted its efforts to supporting the remaining four areas, **focusing on strengthening and reforming existing government machinery to improve the**

⁴⁵ OPM (2023) ‘BRE-TA Sustainability Strategy’, Oxford, United Kingdom.

effectiveness of GoE’s own DRM systems so as to reduce dependence on donors for humanitarian assistance:

- ‘1. Policies, strategies, and laws’;
- ‘2. Intra-governmental collaboration and coordination mechanisms’;
- ‘3. Organisational development, human resources management (HRM), and skills development’; and
- ‘5. M&E, strengthening government’s capacity for evidence-based learning and adaptation’.

The first three of these four areas featured especially strongly across BRE-TA’s outputs, as reflected in the project’s ToC (see [Section 2.6](#)).

As part of the sustainability-grounded approach to building resilience, the project was predicated on government acceptance and ownership of each BRE-TA initiative.

Concretely, this meant that **each BRE-TA initiative had to be explicitly demanded by government counterparts**. This was mainly done through a system of co-creating TOs that worked as follows:

- TOs were prepared together with government partners (ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs)), outlining the request for TA and intervention logic; and
- once approved by the donors, the specified support was delivered.

2.5.2 BRE-TA’s project structure: the four workstreams

The BRE-TA project was structured around four workstreams, in order to deliver the overall objective.⁴⁶ While the project management team mainly interfaced with BRE-TA’s donors, **each workstream had to navigate and work with a particular set of government MDAs** (and donor-funded TA providers) to provide demand-driven support aimed at strengthening the systems they managed and/or used. **The workstreams organised their support around thematic areas of work, which they called ‘building blocks’**.

Table 3: The BRE-TA workstreams, with related workstream vision, building blocks, and government partners

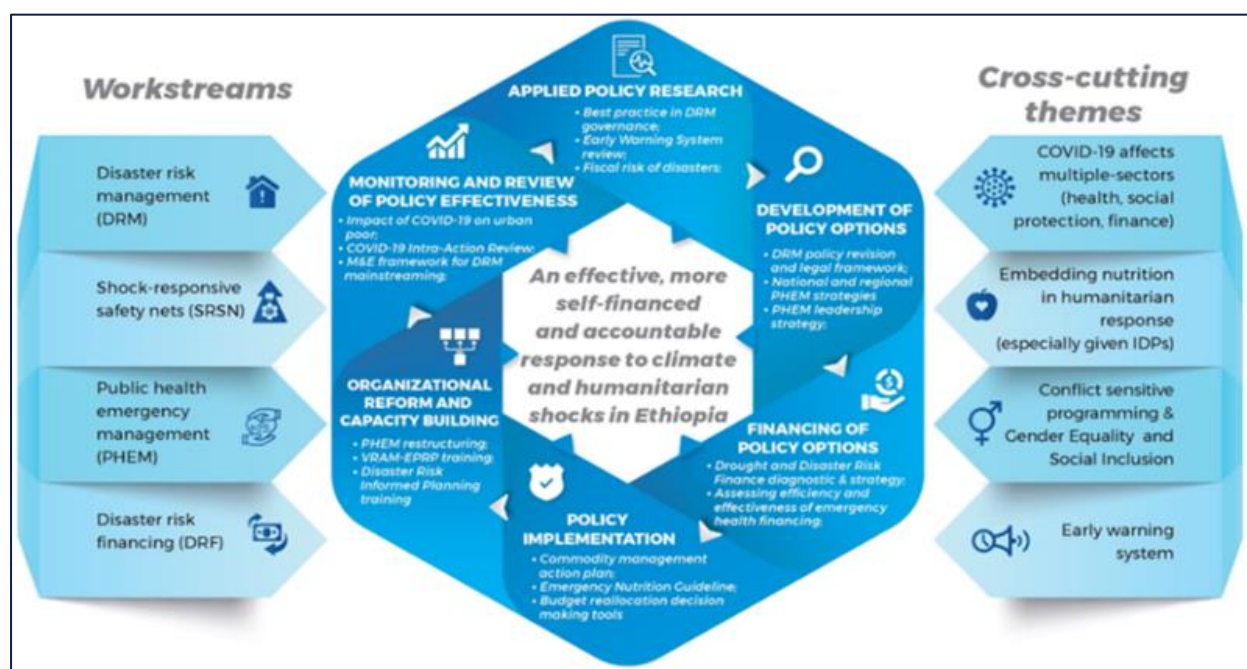
Workstream	Workstream vision	Building blocks	Government partners
DRM	Ethiopia to have a fully functional, government-led DRM system and capacity to manage humanitarian and climate shocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRM Coordination and Leadership • DRM Mainstreaming • DRM Information and Knowledge 	EDRMC and the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) (previously a commission)
PHEM	Improved PHEM systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHEM System Design • Region- and Woreda-Level PHEM Structures and Processes • Financing PHEM 	MoH and EPHI
SRSN	A single, government-led SRSN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRSN Delivery • SRSN Resources 	MoA and EDRMC (as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)

⁴⁶ BRE-TA’s logframe Output 1 was to provide ‘technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective and accountable humanitarian response’.

Workstream	Workstream vision	Building blocks	Government partners
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRSN Information 	(MoLSA) for the urban PSNP and MoF for financing)
DRF	Ethiopia's public finances are better prepared for climate and humanitarian shocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand Costs Limit Costs Money In Money Out 	MoF

It was essential to ensure programming coherence on key issues between and across the multiple workstreams and building blocks, and Figure 4 captures BRE-TA's vision of this coherence. The different workstreams' efforts were also unified in the project's results framework, as discussed next.

Figure 4: Ensuring programmatic coherence on cross-cutting themes



2.6 BRE-TA's results framework

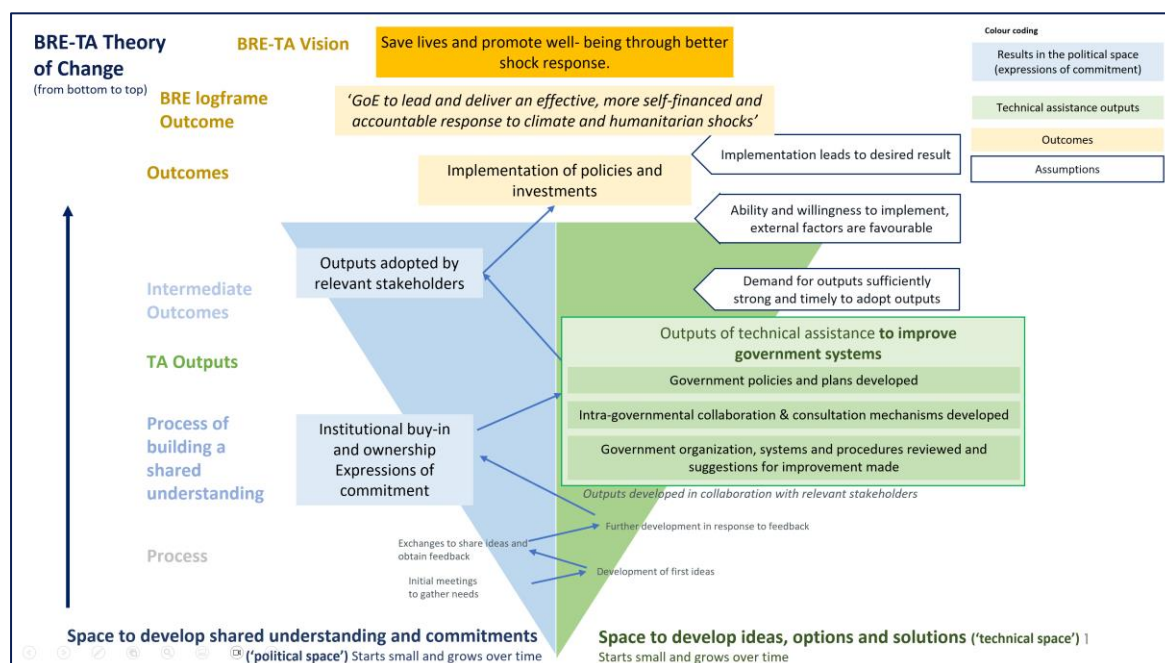
2.6.1 BRE-TA's ToC

The role of BRE-TA's ToC was to articulate the overall objective of the project⁴⁷ and the pathway to its attainment. The process of developing the ToC during the inception phase provided the opportunity for team-wide participation. Importantly, it enabled those responsible for designing and delivering BRE-TA to directly inform the ToC, drawing on their views on what success in BRE-TA meant for them and their expert knowledge of the likely challenges and potential, viable solutions. These perspectives were combined into a joint

⁴⁷ Encompassing the four workstreams and their 'building blocks'.

narrative that reflected the ambitions of GoE and workstream consensus, and that formed the basis for the final version of the ToC (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: BRE-TA's project-level ToC



At the top of the ToC is BRE-TA's 'guiding star' (to 'save lives and promote livelihoods through better shock response') and the wider BRE programme's logframe Outcome ('Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks').⁴⁸

The process of working towards the BRE logframe Outcome consisted of four essential steps that featured in each of the project's four workstreams. These four steps can be traced, starting from the bottom of the ToC (Figure 5):

- 1. The first step was to build a shared understanding with relevant stakeholders** (e.g. government and donors). This process aimed to lead to expressions of commitment that signalled institutional buy-in (e.g. a memorandum of understanding, a willingness to chair TWGs, or letters introducing BRE-TA to other agencies).
 - The need to build a shared understanding may seem obvious but articulating it explicitly in the ToC turned out to be surprisingly important. It helped to build a consensus, especially with donors, regarding the fact that time and effort were required to do the important work of developing the shared understanding with government that turned out to be so critical to the success of the project.
- 2. The expressions of commitment provided the BRE-TA team with a 'mandate' for producing outputs in close collaboration with government counterparts (step 2).** At a generic level, those outputs fell into the following broad categories aligned with the project's approach to supporting sustainable reforms (see Section 2.5):
 - government policies, laws, strategies, and plans developed;

⁴⁸ As a reminder, BRE was the wider programme, of which BRE-TA was one small component; the other two BRE components included (i) the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian support; and (ii) evidence and learning.

- intra-governmental collaboration and consultation mechanisms developed; and
 - recommendations for system improvements derived from evidenced-based learning, and organisational development and capacity building assessments.
3. However, the outputs only mattered if they were **adopted by government (step 3)**, corresponding with the 'intermediate outcomes' level of the ToC); **and were then...**
 4. **...implemented by government (step 4)**, at the 'outcomes' level of the ToC, and assumes capacity to do so and favourable external factors).

If the implementation of the systems-strengthening reforms (step 4) was successful, then that was expected to contribute to GoE's ability to lead and deliver a more effective shock response (BRE's logframe Outcome).

Reforms rarely follow a linear and logical approach and feedback loops between the different steps were inevitable. For example, taking time to build a common understanding (step 1) would increase the likelihood of adoption (step 3), and the implementation process itself (step 4) had the potential to lead to a mandate for more outputs (step 1).

BRE-TA's ToC distinguished between two reform 'spaces':

1. **'space to develop shared understanding and commitments'** (the blue triangle on the left of the ToC), which consisted of engagement with the more political and policy-orientated side of government (step 1), which ultimately required government's adoption of BRE-TA-supported outputs (step 3); and
2. **'technical space'** (the green triangle on the right of the ToC), which was where ideas, solutions, and outputs were allowed to take shape and flourish (step 2).

Both the policy and technical arenas and the related strands of work started small and then built up over time, as trust grew (represented graphically in the growing shape of the ToC's blue and green triangles).

There was also an expectation from the outset that there would be a natural 'back and forth' between the engagement and the development of ideas and reforms, as indicated by the arrows running across the 'policy-making/political space' and the 'technical space'. This reflected the real world, which is of course more complex than can be conveyed in the simplified representation that is the ToC. There would, for example, be setbacks and iterations along the way. However, the ToC conveyed the general direction of travel towards the intended outcome.

Lastly, **the BRE-TA ToC included critical assumptions** that reflected the conditions that allow TA programmes to perform successfully, namely: strong and timely demand (government buy-in and ownership); an enabling environment and no major crises that interfere with implementation; and implementation leading to results.

The workstream-specific ToCs

The project-level ToC for BRE-TA formed the basis for bespoke ToCs for each of the project's four workstreams. The workstream-specific ToCs were developed with the workstreams through a series of meetings and workshops, during which the teams articulated what government commitment, outputs, output adoption (i.e. intermediate outcomes), and higher-level outcomes would look like for their workstream.

The **workstream-specific ToCs were organised by the workstream's main areas of work, or 'building blocks'** (see Section 2.5.2).

- The building blocks provided a structure for a wide scope of workstream interventions that, if successful, would contribute to advancing towards the workstream outcomes.⁴⁹
- For each building block, the ToC reflected the 'journey' from outputs to outcomes.

Interestingly, the workstream teams did not differentiate between output adoption and subsequent implementation in the same way that the generic, project-wide ToC did. **Adoption and implementation were merged at the intermediate outcome level, resulting in a substantial increase in ambition at that level,**⁵⁰ while indicating the direction of travel towards the workstreams' follow-on outcomes, which fall outside the lifespan of the BRE-TA project.

(The workstream-specific ToCs are shown in the workstream annexes. Like the project-level ToC, they should be read from bottom to top.)

Finally, **each workstream-specific ToC not only provided the structure for the wide range of results but also provided context for understanding those results.** In so doing, the ToCs addressed two recurring challenges related to reporting on BRE-TA:

1. the wide scope of results; and
2. the difficulty of fully appreciating the relevance of the results unless the reader is deeply familiar with the Ethiopian context, particularly the workings of government at federal and regional levels.

The implication for reporting is that the need for succinctness may come at the expense of providing the depth of contextual information needed to appreciate the project's performance. BRE-TA's reports – including this one – have aimed to strike a balance between those distinct considerations (detailed information on the progress of each of the workstreams is in Annex D to F).

⁴⁹ See Section 2.5.2. For example, in the DRF workstream, it is important to understand costs, to limit them, to get the necessary money in, and then to ensure that the money reaches the intended recipients. This narrative helped to organise the wide range of interventions into the four corresponding DRF building blocks: 'Money Out'; 'Money In'; 'Limit Costs'; and 'Understand Costs'.

⁵⁰ Elevated levels of ambition can also be seen at the output level of the workstream ToCs, where adoption is often folded into the output statement.

3 Contributing to a more resilient Ethiopia: the reforms BRE-TA helped achieve and where it fell short

BRE-TA's achievements can be measured against the overall BRE logframe, as well as against the project's internal results framework (based on the ToC) by, respectively:

- comparing the project's results to the **logframe targets**; and
- assessing progress at the output adoption level – i.e. **intermediate outcome level** – of the workstreams' ToCs.

3.1 BRE-TA's contribution to the BRE logframe

3.1.1 Contribution to the overall BRE Outcome

Because of the dramatically changed operating environment for BRE, and in the absence of an appropriately robust evaluation, **it is difficult to determine the relative or absolute magnitude of the BRE-TA-specific contributions to the wider BRE programme's logframe outcome.** Namely:

- **The outcome in the BRE logframe:** '*Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks*'.

...with the following associated indicators:

- Outcome Indicator 1: '**Government of Ethiopia delivering against costed, preparedness plans with automatic and clearly defined triggers**'⁵¹
 - **with the following target for March 2024 – 'Effective use of Integrated Food and Cash Response Plan throughout 2023'**.
- Outcome Indicator 2: '% of response (defined as HRP \$) delivered by GoE'; and
- Outcome Indicator 3: 'Number of people supported by ICF programmes to cope with the effects of climate change'.

Because the operating environment changed so dramatically during the life of the BRE programme, FCDO Annual Reviews stopped trying to report progress against the three Outcome indicators. A pivotal review of conflict in the country in March 2022, in the FCDO Annual Review of 2021, noted that '**The overall impact and outcome is unlikely to be achieved** within the time and budget originally planned as considerable challenges have delayed progress and increased the level of humanitarian need in Ethiopia, at a time when global aid budgets are under exponential pressure due to the [COVID-19] pandemic. While the outcome indicators were revised downward at the start of this reporting year, the **impact**

⁵¹ The changes made to the BRE logframe in September 2023 noted 'Outcome indicator 2 - Data to measure indicator milestones no longer available. The milestone for April 2023 and target for March 2024 have been discontinued. Alternative indicator/measurement being explored'.

of [COVID-19], internal conflict in Tigray and instability in other parts of Ethiopia cannot be underestimated.'

Thus, instead of trying to assess progress against clearly unachievable Outcome indicators, this one and subsequent FCDO Annual Reviews noted the following:

- Annual Review of 2021 in March 2022 – 'The **programme is off-track to contribute to expected outcomes and impact due to substantial changes in the operating context.**'
- Annual Review of 2022 in March 2023 – 'We assess that **at the outcome level the programme is off-track.** As a result, BRE's **intended impact** of making Ethiopia more resilient to climate and humanitarian shocks - as measured by a decrease in the number of people in humanitarian need and reduced requirement for humanitarian funding - **will not be fully realised during this reporting period nor by the close of the programme in 2024.**'⁵²

Nevertheless, in relation to Outcome Indicator 1, the one most closely related to BRE-TA, despite all the flaws and challenges relating to what was intended in regard to strengthening many crucial parts of the 'Integrated Food and Cash Response Plan' and subsequent SRSN system (the new name for the Integrated Food and Cash Response Plan from 2020), there is no doubt that some improvements were made by GoE with the support of BRE-TA to address many elements of this first ambitious outcome indicator.

'Overall, I'm a fan of BRE-TA...'

– Donor key informant

The government reforms, supported by BRE-TA, have included the following: the adoption of the single operator principle, as agreed by all SRSN implementers (FSCO, EDRMC, the Joint Emergency Operation Programme, and WFP), to be implemented in both PSNP and non-PSNP areas; harmonised implementation procedures (arising from capacity building on SRSN implementation and job aids); improvements to the early warning dashboard and food insecure population projections; a single resource allocation instrument in the form of the DRAP; and coordinated planning through the Prioritisation Committee. Of particular note, in so far as the indicator target for March 2024 is concerned, the DRAP is a comprehensive resource allocation tool that has been used since October 2022 by the Prioritisation Committee to coordinate SRSN delivery in PSNP woredas across both PSNP and HFA actors. It is generated annually, then updated on a quarterly basis, to provide advanced estimates of the food insecure population at woreda-level each quarter. In 2022 the SRSN reached just under 4 million people (out of a costed estimate in July 2022 in the DRAP calling for \$ 1.06 billion worth of food for 9.9 million people). While currently there is no more money for the SRSN, at least potentially the DRFS could help secure more resources for PSNP and the SRSN component.

Furthermore, BRE-TA's achievements, captured in this report, make it reasonable to conclude that if most of the reforms are sustained, **the project's efforts will make a meaningful contribution towards the 'Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks'.**

'It is clear to me that this programme has achieved a huge amount...'

– Donor key informant

⁵² FCDO (2023) 'BRE Annual Review for the Year 2022/2023', London, United Kingdom, p. 3.

Indeed, **the project appears to have built a reputation of success** among many stakeholders, including government counterparts,⁵³ donors,⁵⁴ and partners/TA providers,⁵⁵ because of this ability to work patiently with government in very challenging circumstances. It is almost certain, given the focus of support provided through BRE-TA to government, that its contribution is more sustainable than the other components of the BRE programme that provided humanitarian assistance to meet acute emergency needs.

‘...BRE-TA is well regarded by GoE officials and there are indications that this element of the programme is contributing to BRE’s overarching outcome.’

– FCDO annual review, March 2023

3.1.2 Progress towards the BRE logframe Output indicator targets

The two indicators associated with the BRE-TA-specific Output 1 in the wider BRE programme’s logframe are as follows:

- **Output Indicator 1.1:** ‘Technical assistance to Government of Ethiopia to plan, prepare, prevent, deliver, and budget for humanitarian response delivered and well received’; and
- **Output Indicator 1.2:** ‘Significant contributions to strategic plans, systems and procedures in disaster risk management, disaster risk finance, public health emergency management and shock responsive safety nets’.⁵⁶

BRE-TA’s progress against the logframe Output indicators suggests that the project exceeded both final targets (see Table 4 and full information on BRE-TA’s progress against the logframe indicators in [Annex A](#) and by workstream in Annex D to G).

Table 4: Snapshot of BRE-TA’s progress towards logframe final Output 1 targets

Output indicator	Final target (for March 2024)	Final result achieved (as at end of February 2024)
1.1 Technical assistance to Government of Ethiopia to plan, prepare, prevent, deliver, and budget for humanitarian response delivered and well received	Core deliverables from relevant TOs delivered to government and signed off.	By the end of February 2024, BRE-TA had delivered to government 126 deliverables across the four workstreams and closed out 20 TOs.
1.2 Significant contributions to strategic plans, systems and procedures in disaster risk management, disaster risk finance, public health emergency management and shock responsive safety nets	Significant contributions towards each of the four workstreams’ long-term visions, as exemplified by the completion of [key] deliverables.	Significant contributions by each workstream were completed and 29 out of 31 intermediate outcomes were achieved.

⁵³ Based on evidence gathered during the October 2023 outcome harvesting workshop with government stakeholders (17 October 2023) and in KIs held with government respondents.

⁵⁴ Based on notes from KIs with donors and on FCDO annual reviews (e.g. FCDO (2023) ‘BRE Annual Review for the Year 2022/2023’, London, United Kingdom. https://iati.fcdo.gov.uk/iati_documents/D0003105.odt [last accessed 10 January 2024]).

⁵⁵ At the 17 October 2023 outcome harvesting workshop with BRE-TA staff, a World Bank staffer was cited as having said that the Bank ‘can’t compete with [BRE-TA]’ in terms of policy influence.

⁵⁶ Targets for Output Indicator 1.1 were determined on an annual basis, reflecting the adaptive nature of the programme. Output Indicator 1.2 implied that the most significant achievements were reported each year. Progress towards these indicators’ annual targets is set out in the logframe in [Annex A](#), which also serves as a useful summary of BRE-TA’s main achievements.

3.2 Progress towards achieving BRE-TA’s own results framework

3.2.1 Snapshot of BRE-TA achievements against the ToC

By the end of BRE-TA’s core implementation period (i.e. December 2023), **significant results were delivered** across all four workstreams and across all four stages of the ToC.⁵⁷ Namely:

- Step 1 - **Shared understanding had been built** with the relevant project-wide and workstream-level stakeholders.
- Step 2 - The project had **produced over 126 key deliverables**, many of which were considered ‘game-changers’ for their respective sectors.
- **Step 3 - Over 90% of the intermediate outcomes were achieved (29 out of 31).**⁵⁸
- Step 4 - There were also **emerging signs of movement towards the level of the workstream outcomes** that fall beyond the lifespan of the BRE-TA project.

The rest of this section focuses on **Step 3 progress at the intermediate outcome level** (the level most clearly related to measuring the effectiveness of the project), while the details of the *process* underpinning progress can be found in detail for each of the workstreams in Annex D to G.

Progress towards the intermediate outcomes

In the context of BRE-TA, intermediate outcomes were considered achieved by the integration or official adoption of the project’s outputs/deliverables. Whereas the earlier step of gaining **buy-in and ownership** (the first step of the ToC) was considered by the BRE-TA team to be a mini-victory, and while producing validated *outputs* (second step of the ToC) provoked huge sighs of relief after often-extended processes, **the achievement of each intermediate outcome was a major win for the team**, particularly given their elevated level of ambition at the workstream level (as noted in Section 2.6).

By the end of the project, the workstreams were able to celebrate many such ‘major wins’. Overall, **a total of 29 out of 31 intermediate outcomes were achieved (>90%)** by the end of the core project implementation period (the end of December 2023), while the remaining two intermediate outcomes are likely to be achieved in 2024. All 31 intermediate outcomes targeted are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Extent of achievement of intermediate outcomes, per workstream

Workstream	Building block	Intermediate outcome (IO)	Current achievement status
DRM	DRM Coordination and Leadership	DRM IO1. New DRM Policy approved by Council of Ministers	Achieved
		DRM IO2. Knowledge and understanding of new DRM Policy and legal framework increased in four sectoral ministries and five key regions	Achievable in 2024

⁵⁷ See annexes that set out the detailed workstream-specific achievements.

⁵⁸ It must be noted at the outset, however, that for a systems-strengthening programme like BRE-TA, where technical and policy issues are worked on with government through cycles of problem identification, refinement, and improvement, the idea of an outcome ever being definitively ‘achieved’ is somewhat anomalous.

Workstream	Building block	Intermediate outcome (IO)	Current achievement status	
		DRM IO3. Improved leadership capacity in EDRMC to coordinate DRM operations	Achievable in 2024	
	DRM Mainstreaming	DRM IO4. DRM integrated into national and regional TYDP	Achieved	
		DRM IO5. DRM mainstreamed into four priority regions' agriculture/pastoral sectoral development plans	Achieved	
		DRM IO6. DRIP capacity strengthened in five sectoral ministries and four regions	Achieved	
	DRM Information and Knowledge	DRM IO7. EWS implementation plan ('roadmap') in place	Achieved	
		DRM IO8. Improved capacity within EDRMC to generate, disseminate, and use early warning information for early action	Achieved	
	PHEM	PHEM System Design	PHEM IO1. National PHEM strategy adapted by several regions	Achieved
			PHEM IO2. PHEM leadership capacity development programme accredited and established at EPHI	Achieved
PHEM IO3. Standardised training and planning for emergency nutrition management established at EPHI			Achieved	
Region- and Woreda-Level PHEM Structures and Processes		PHEM IO4. Risk-informed planning (VRAM-EPRP) becomes part of national, regional, and woreda plans	Achieved	
		PHEM IO5. Recommendations from reviews to improve services taken up (e.g. AAR/IARs)	Achieved	
Financing PHEM		PHEM IO6. A national health and nutrition emergency financing strategy integrated in DRFS	Achieved	
SRSN	SRSN Delivery	SRSN IO1. Stronger SRSN coordination mechanisms established	Achieved	
		SRSN IO2. Harmonised service delivery mechanisms in place for SRSN	Achieved	
		SRSN IO3. Gender and social inclusion integrated into SRSN's GRM	Achieved	
	SRSN Resources	SRSN IO4. Drought risk financing options integrated into the government's DRFS	Achieved	
		SRSN IO5. Strengthened capacity to develop, implement, and monitor annual DRAPs in a timely manner	Achieved	
	SRSN Information	SRSN IO6. Improved reliability of early warning dashboard to inform drought response plans	Achieved	
		SRSN IO7. MAM and SAM surveillance system integrated into SRSN	Achieved	
		SRSN IO8. Consolidated MIS module enhancement plan rolled out for SRSN	Achieved	
DRF	Understand Costs	DRF IO1. Government uses IFMIS to tag and track financial provisions for preparing for and responding to climate shocks and disaster risks	Achieved	
		DRF IO2. Disaster-related fiscal risks identified, quantified, and captured in government plans (e.g. DRFS, MEFF, budget)	Achieved	
	Limit Costs	DRF IO3. Climate-smart local development planning guidelines used in preparing annual plans in GCF woredas	Achieved	
		DRF IO4. Government capacity to deliver climate-sensitive PFM increased	Achieved	
	Money In	DRF IO5. Three BRE-TA focal institutions submit and defend EBBs	Achieved	

Workstream	Building block	Intermediate outcome (IO)	Current achievement status
		DRF IO6. Government capacity to mobilise more climate finance from GCF and AF improved	Achieved
		DRF IO7. DRFS with more and diversified DRF instruments in place	Achieved
	Money Out	DRF IO8. Improved oversight and coordination of climate change projects at regional level	Achieved
		DRF IO9. Increased capacity in VfM methodology in MoF and MoA	Achieved

Note: See the workstream-specific annexes for detailed discussions of the progress towards each intermediate outcome.

The reason for the failure to achieve two intermediate outcomes by the end of BRE-TA's core implementation period or just after (i.e. by February 2024) was the knock-on effect of the delay in GoE's internal approval of the new DRM Policy and legal framework.

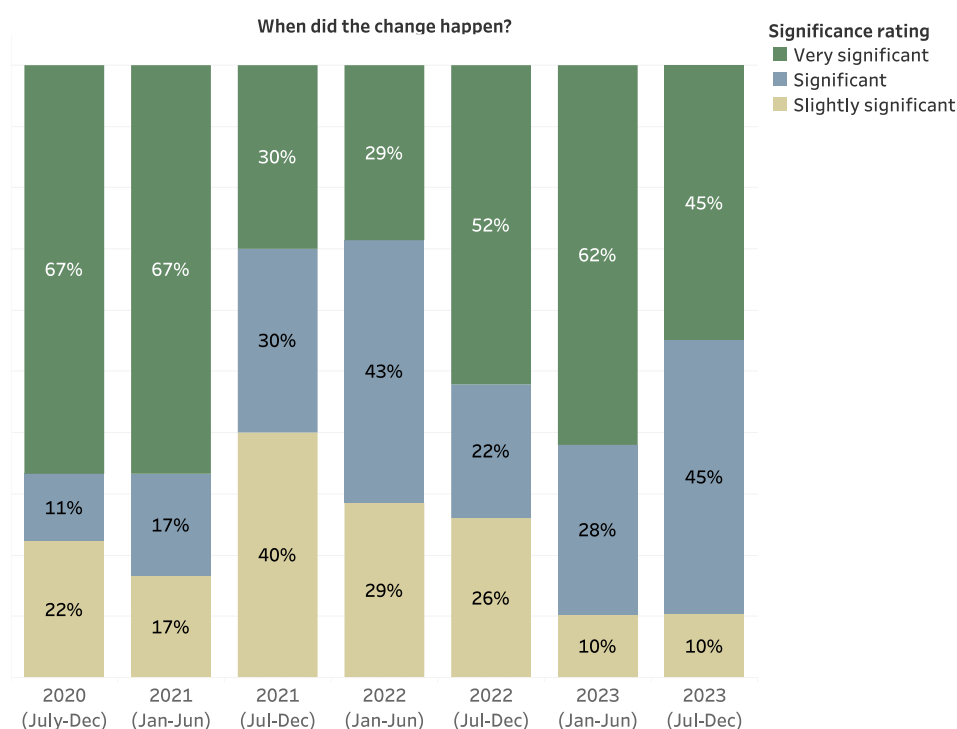
Aside from the large number of intermediate outcomes achieved in partnership with government by the end of 2023, the BRE-TA team was also gratified by the **significance of the outcomes** achieved and their **contribution** towards their achievement.

The outcomes harvested during the 2022 and 2023 outcome harvesting workshops with BRE-TA staff – which fall into the workstream building block categories but are not a one-to-one match with the intermediate outcomes in the workstream-specific ToCs – shed light on the degree of significance of, and the extent of, BRE-TA's contribution.

Significance of the outcomes achieved

Overall, 50% of harvested outcomes⁵⁹ were rated as being very significant in view of the long-term goal of BRE-TA; 31% of the outcomes were rated as being significant; and 19% were rated as being slightly significant. The most significant outcomes occurred in the beginning and at the end of the project, and again in the first part of 2023. This likely reflects early wins that helped spur follow-on results, as well as heightened project efficiency and effectiveness over time, as the project team met the growing demand for BRE-TA support.

⁵⁹ The harvested outcomes differ from – but align with – the programme's 31 ToC-grounded intermediate outcomes. The harvested outcomes are the outputs of outcome harvesting workshops held with BRE-TA staff and, separately, government officials, at various points in time, with the final outcome harvesting workshops being held in October 2023. Outcome maps were developed in the course of the workshops with BRE-TA staff. In contrast to the ToC, which is theoretical and prospective in nature, the outcome maps are based on what *actually* happened. As such, they are retrospective, showing a more or less sequential chain of events, with key outputs and outcomes. However, all the workstreams' outcome maps largely aligned with the ToC.

Figure 6: Timing of harvested outcomes across the project lifespan

Source: BRE-TA outcome harvesting database.

Beyond technical outputs and outcomes, it is worth mentioning that **the BRE-TA process produced something else: a shift in mindset among government officials**. Government counterparts acknowledged⁶⁰ that a long-awaited ‘paradigm shift’ seemed to have occurred in parts of government, namely moving from managing crisis to managing risk. BRE-TA staff also said⁶¹ they observed the following in government: enhanced understanding of risk management; an appreciation that problems are best solved through relationship-building; and a strong desire for preparedness and response efforts to be self-financed.

This **shift in the government’s conceptualisation of its own agenda and in its approach to delivering on that agenda and addressing the numerous challenges that come with the territory** is a highly valued result. It is this mindset shift that will sustain the reforms and support the government’s willingness and ability to drive through the system reforms initiated under BRE-TA’s support.

‘The BRE-TA discussions have led to increased understanding on pre-planned preparation, integration of institutions and anticipation of disasters.’

– Government key informant

⁶⁰ Outcome harvesting workshop with government officials, 17 October 2023.

⁶¹ Outcome harvesting workshop with BRE-TA staff, 19–20 October 2023.

Progress towards workstream outcomes

The implementation step of the ToC not only **falls entirely outside of the BRE-TA team’s sphere of control** but also **beyond the project’s lifecycle**. Nonetheless, the team could and did bring its influence to bear, and early **signs of movement towards the programme-wide higher-level outcome** – and, underpinning that, at the workstream level – **were evident by the time the core project implementation phase ended** in December 2023. Examples of such signs are highlighted in Table 9.

‘There are a lot of areas where we can see some movement towards the higher-level outcomes...’

– Donor key informant

Table 6: Examples of progress towards workstream outcomes

Workstream	Selected building block	Workstream outcome statement (by building block)	Signs of movement towards the workstreams’ outcomes
DRM	DRM Mainstreaming	‘DRM becomes an integral part of the country’s development agenda at federal, sectoral and regional levels’	There is significant evidence that DRM has become much more central to Ethiopia’s development agenda than it was in the past. The inclusion of DRM as a central pillar in the TYDP has institutionalised DRM in national planning processes. DRM principles have been taken up at the regional level, with the mainstreaming of risk into regional development plans.
PHEM	PHEM System Design	‘PHEM system provides effective leadership for health and nutrition emergency preparedness, response, recovery’	In some cases, preparatory steps for health and nutrition emergency preparedness, response, and recovery are well under way (e.g. the national PHEM strategy has been adapted by 12 regions, leading to regional emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans); in other cases, government leadership of PHEM is well underway (e.g. an integrated emergency nutrition plan was endorsed by government and donors and is being implemented, with two rounds of monitoring conducted and lessons drawn).
SRSN	SRSN Delivery	‘Efficient and accountable government-led delivery of cash and food to people in need’	The national SRSN is now much better coordinated in terms of planning, implementation, and monitoring, and a robust resource allocation tool, in the form of the DRAP, now exists and is routinely utilised to allocate SRSN support throughout the country in a transparent manner.
DRF	Understand Costs	‘More predictable, accountable and timely allocations of resources to preventative measures in budget’	This long-term ambition is on a good footing in regard to being achieved, not least in increased budgets going to BRE-TA focal ministries but also through the implementation of the Climate-Smart Local Planning guidelines (which prioritise climate adaptation and DRR in woreda plans). These have the backing of, and the attention of, MoF and, in due course, will have the backing and attention MoPD (which will enable their roll-out to non-GCF woredas).

Further discussion of movement towards workstream outcomes is provided in the detailed descriptions of the workstreams and analyses of their achievements in the workstream annexes D to G.

If **implementation** by government is successful (which, per the ToC, assumes the capacity to implement, and favourable external factors), then, over time, this **is expected to contribute to the government's ability to lead and deliver a more effective shock response (BRE's logframe Outcome)**. Beyond that, it is expected to translate into saved lives and improved wellbeing for the Ethiopian people (BRE-TA's vision).

Assessing the project's progress in terms of VfM

The VfM criteria are also arranged along the ToC. Throughout its implementation, the project **consistently delivered 'good' VfM, rising to 'Excellent' in the last year (2023)**.⁶²

Box 1: VfM assessment of BRE-TA's effectiveness in 2023

- The project achieved, or made important contributions to, all of its intended intermediate outcomes, and overachieved against some of them, in the context of a number of constraining factors. The intermediate outcomes that have not yet been fully achieved are expected to be realised soon, and were delayed due to internal processes within GoE that were beyond BRE-TA's control.
- The project followed good practice to manage key effectiveness drivers; at 91%, the proportion of national staff in the core full-time team was above the level of 80% set in the commercial proposal.

Source: VfM assessment for 2023 in Annex I of this report.

3.2.2 Extent to which BRE-TA supported reforms are likely to 'stick'

Considering BRE-TA's approach to sustainability (described in [Section 2.5.1](#) and further touched upon in [Section 4](#)), the key elements that frame the response to the question of 'How sustainable are BRE-TA's achievements?' are the following:

- **The extent to which reforms to improve performance are likely to 'stick'** and the extent to which the host system has developed a capacity for self-development based on reflecting on its performance and applying this learning to other parts of the system and self-correction in the face of changing circumstances.
- **The extent to which eventual independence from external assistance**, financially and technically, can be envisioned after having enabled the system to function autonomously at a higher, improved level of effectiveness.

BRE-TA's **flexible, demand-led**,⁶³ **collaborative approach**, and its focus on **strengthening and reforming existing government machinery**, bode well in regard to related reforms sticking – and thus in regard to the intermediate outcomes that the project achieved being

⁶² See OPM, 'BRE-TA, Value for Money Assessment for 2021 (February 2022), OPM BRE-TA, Value for Money Assessment for 2022 (6 March 2023), and Annex I of this report (VfM assessment for 2023).

⁶³ In other words, the programme was predicated on government acceptance and ownership of each BRE-TA initiative. Concretely, this meant that each BRE-TA initiative had to be explicitly demanded by GoE, which, in its most formal form, was done through the system of TOs described in [Section 2.5.1](#).

sustained. **The significant amount of time, and the level of effort**, invested by BRE-TA to...

- first, gain trust and buy-in;
- then collaboratively produce the requested, quality deliverables focused on system change;⁶⁴
- get the deliverables validated;
- institutionalise the deliverables; and then
- guide stakeholders towards implementation...

...is likely to pay off handsomely in terms of ‘stickiness’⁶⁵ in the long term.⁶⁶

‘We can certainly see elements of the work that have reached a degree of maturity that they have become part of business as usual and something that is picked up.’

– Donor key informant

Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the interlocking nature of the reforms of existing government machinery, and that developing institutional memory, increases the likelihood that the momentum of system-wide reform gained during the project’s life **will be advanced and sustained**.

Encouraging government counterparts to **publish outputs was intended as a way to** not only enhance awareness but also **to underpin sustainability**.⁶⁷ In addition, the provision of high-quality local TA left **a residual stock of national technical capacity** that is available to partner institutions beyond the lifespan of the BRE-TA project.

The fact that signs of **workstream outcomes are already emerging**, and especially the fact that the project succeeded in creating **a mindset shift among government staff** (see Section 3.1.1), are additional encouraging signs the reforms will stick.

⁶⁴ Namely: policies, strategies, and laws; intra-governmental collaboration and coordination; organisational development, HRM, and skills development; and strengthening government’s capacity for evidence-based learning and adaptation (see Figure 2).

⁶⁵ Put differently, the extent to which the programme’s products are going to be taken up and continued after the end of the programme.

⁶⁶ The importance of institutionalising deliverables was affirmed by government officials in the context of the validated DRM Policy and related legislation, as an example. The officials stated that these deliverables would give them/the system the necessary teeth to hold the relevant MDAs accountable, and thus advance and sustain the reform momentum. (Outcome harvesting workshop with government officials, 17 October 2023.)

⁶⁷ For example, the DRF workstream’s support to fiscal risk modelling and associated outputs have been published in routine publications, thereby generating an expectation that it will continue to be updated and used. Similarly, GoE endorsement and publication of the VfM report, the opportunity cost study, and the DRFS underpins their prospects of being implemented in future.

‘A key lesson from 2022/2023 relating to BRE-TA was the high regard GoE institutions, at both federal and regional levels, held towards the OPM-managed programme. GoE interlocutors noted the demand-driven nature of the TA, and how this promoted GoE leadership’ –

FCDO annual review, March 2023

Sustainability was ‘baked-in’ to the BRE-TA approach to working with government, and opportunities to reaffirm an activity was for government were regularly sought. For example when an activity was completed or intermediate outcome achieved, the project sought validation from collaborations within and beyond government:

- During BRE-TA’s last year of implementation, the DRF workstream (1) lobbied MoF to send a request to BRE-TA’s partner, the Centre for Disaster Protection (CDP), to continue supporting them in 2024 on developing DRFS instruments; and (2) engaged the new ‘EU Support for PFM Reforms in Ethiopia (EUSPRE)’, who want to continue the tagging and tracking support to the CRGE unit and evidence-based budgeting support to MoF.
- The PHEM workstream (1) continued to build capacity and establish trust between the media and EPHI/MoH on public health and nutrition emergencies with BBC Media Action; and (2) joined UK-MED2 and WHO in supporting MoH and EPHI to develop a National Strategy for Emergency Medical Response to guide emergency medical teams in managing mass casualties and ensuring continuity of essential health services in humanitarian situations. Furthermore, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (APDC) started working on the PHEM leadership training programmes to build EPHI’s capacity in PHEM leadership.
- More generally, weekly coordination calls continued: (1) with CDP on developing the DRFS, and with the UK’s Government Actuary’s Department; and (2) with the World Bank on the SRSN component of PSNP.

The above efforts to engage other external partners may seem to decrease the likelihood that eventual independence from external support will be gained. However, it was **part of the BRE-TA team’s follow-up on the 2022 VfM assessment’s recommendations** related to extending impact and ensuring sustainability⁶⁸ by **using the political and social capital of the team to build a broader base of support to achieving the government’s desired outcomes.**

So in the long-term, helping government engage others is likely to work in favour of sustainability. Indeed, recognising that system strengthening takes a minimum of 10 years, it would be naïve to expect that a five-year project could achieve this to such an extent that external support is no longer needed.

‘Greatest thanks to you and your organisation’s very experienced staff. You have been extraordinarily supportive to us on strengthening PHEM systems all over the nation on the pillars of preparedness, early warning, mitigation, response and recovery activities. No organisation can be comparable to your effort in fully supporting our institute, regional and sub-regional levels.’

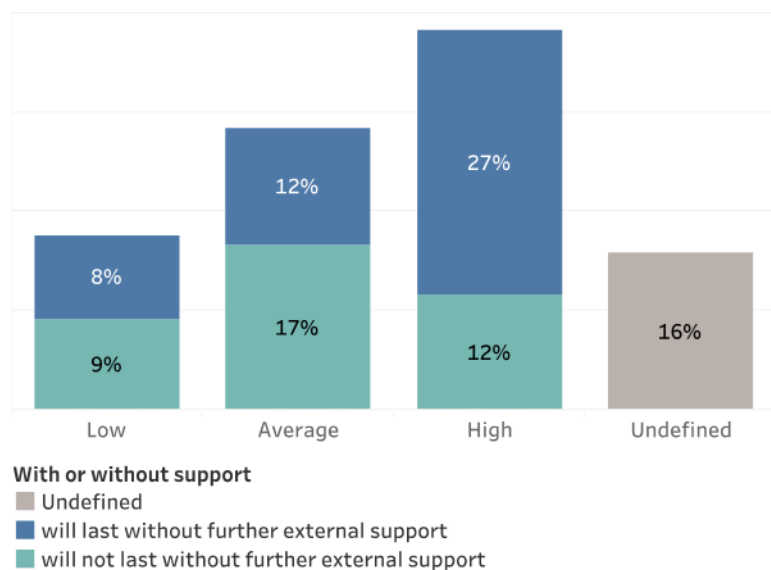
– EPHI Director General after the final BRE-TA Steering Committee, December 2023

⁶⁸ BRE-TA (2023) ‘VfM Assessment for the year 2022’.

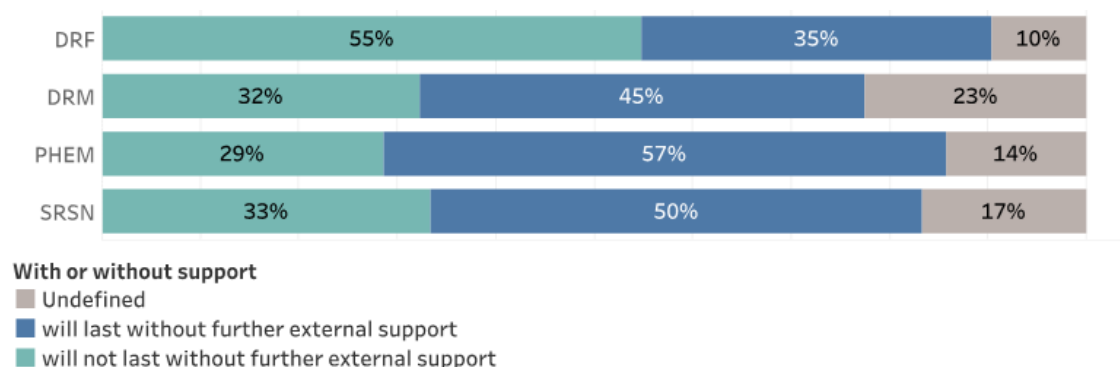
Did BRE-TA’s approach to sustainability and to locking in achievements have the desired effect?

Based on the project’s own assessment of the sustainability of BRE-TA’s harvested outcomes, **the answer to that question is ‘yes, to some extent’**. In equating sustainability with institutionalisation, findings from the October 2023 outcome harvesting workshop with BRE-TA staff indicate that 27% of outcome changes have a high level of institutionalisation and will last without any further external support (shown in blue below). These achievements can be seen as structural changes in Ethiopia’s DRM system. However, BRE-TA staff reported that they thought that 17% of the harvested outcomes had a low level of institutionalisation (green).

Figure 7: Assessment of the sustainability of BRE-TA’s harvested outcomes



Substantial differences across the outcomes of the different workstreams and their level of institutionalisation were also observed, especially between the perceptions of the DRF workstream (lowest sustainability rating) and PHEM (highest sustainability rating) (see below).



Source: BRE-TA outcome harvesting workshop in October 2023.

3.3 To what extent did BRE-TA help promote equity?

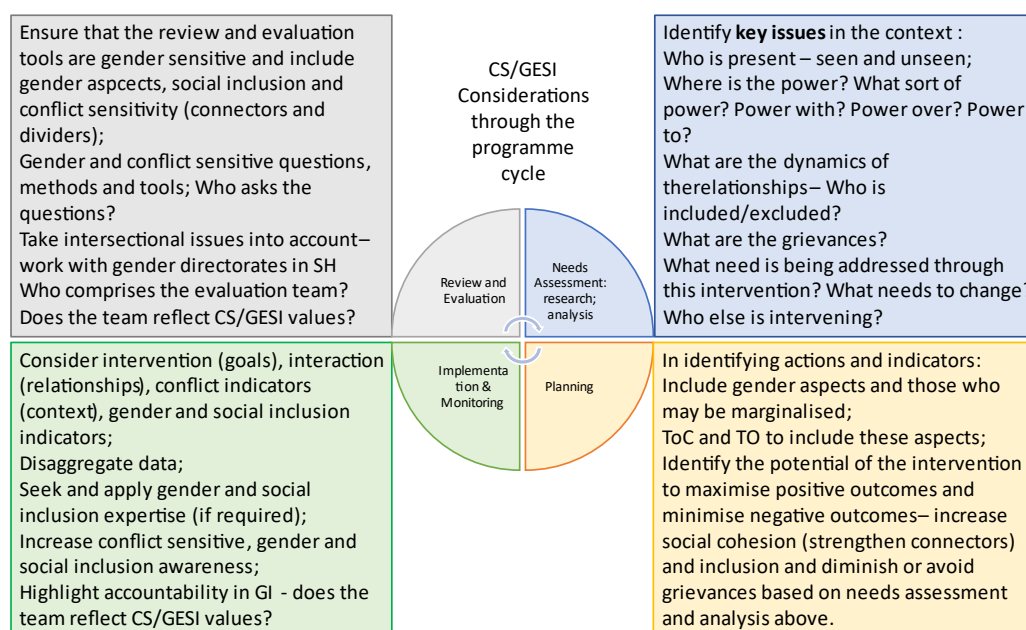
3.3.1 How was GESI addressed in BRE-TA programming and implementation?

Active efforts to **mainstream conflict sensitivity and GESI (CS/GESI) issues into BRE-TA's programming were triggered by the violent conflict that started in Tigray in November 2020**. During the March 2021 FCDO Annual Review of progress made in 2020, the idea of providing TA focused more explicitly on conflict mitigation was discussed with FCDO and rejected.

From that point on, GESI was prioritised and a team was recruited to help improve the extent to which BRE-TA workstream activities were primarily GESI-sensitive, but also ensuring they were 'doing no harm' from a conflict-sensitive programming perspective. New approaches and tools were introduced, notably **a structured approach for making sure CS/GESI was considered** throughout project implementation (see Figure 9).

The CS/GESI considerations framework was one of several tools that operationalised the CS/GESI guide for BRE-TA staff developed in 2022.⁶⁹ It provided an overview of the main points to be considered at different stages of the project cycle, **to ensure that BRE-TA became, and remained, sensitive to conflict and gender-related issues**.

Figure 8: Framework for checking CS/GESI considerations across BRE-TA activities



Examples of how the **CS/GESI guide was used during BRE-TA implementation**:

- The CS/GESI framework was tested and piloted within the PHEM workstream under TO#18 (support on three key intervention areas) during its design stage. As a result,

⁶⁹ BRE-TA (2022) *Conflict Sensitivity, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (CS/GESI) Guide for Staff* (work in progress). The guide and its tools aimed to ensure that all teams applied a gender- and conflict-sensitive lens while designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating BRE-TA activities, were mindful of the potential risks and unintended harm, and had mitigation strategies/options in place.

CS/GESI elements were integrated into the cascading of the VRAM-EPRPs to the regions, as well as in training-of-trainer (TOT) and PHEM leadership trainings.

- The pilot ‘helped to shed light on previously overlooked dimensions of PHEM... [and] ...highlighted the need to integrate GESI considerations at all stages of emergency management. It strengthened participants’ understanding of the potential consequences of unintentional exclusion for diverse groups, and the need to consider tailored emergency response strategies to address different vulnerabilities.’ The ultimate result was more inclusive training material for risk-informed planning and the approach was written up in a blog.⁷⁰
- The GESI team used the CS/GESI guide as an entry point to supporting government in systems strengthening through the SRSN workstream.
 - The GESI team supported an experienced team of social protection advisers who had limited practical CS/GESI experience (as it related to gender and social development (GSD) and GRM) and helped them conduct a ‘Rapid assessment of GSD, GRM and nutrition assessment of SRSN of Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) 5’.
 - The assessment was conducted to address insufficient understanding of GSD and GRM issues in SRSN implementation by identifying appropriate GESI entry points.
- The GESI team also assisted the DRF workstream during a government consultation workshop on preparing climate finance proposals for the AF. The team’s contributions played a fundamental role in ensuring that the proposal adopted an all-encompassing approach, effectively addressing issues related to GESI.

In addition, in 2023, BRE-TA rolled out the ‘**Gender Marker**’ tool. The Gender Marker tool was used by BRE-TA’s workstream leads with the help of the GESI team to improve the integration of GESI into planned activities.

Figure 9: BRE-TA’s Gender Marker tool

Gender Marker	Description
Gender Code 0	Gender is not reflected in any component of the project. There is risk that the project will unintentionally nurture existing gender inequalities or deepen them.
Gender Code 1	The project is designed to contribute in some limited way to gender equality. Gender dimensions are meaningfully included in only one or two of the three essential components: needs assessment, activities and outcomes.
Gender Code 2a Gender Mainstreaming	The project is designed to contribute significantly to gender equality. The different needs of women/girls and men/boys have been analyzed and integrated well in all three essential components: the needs assessment activities and outcomes.
Gender Code 2b Targeted Actions	The principal purpose of the project is to advance gender equality. The entire project either: a) Targets women or men, girls or boys who have special needs or suffer from discrimination b) Focuses all activities on building gender-specific services or more equal relations between women and men.

Source: Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Gender Marker. <http://gender.oneresponse.info/>

⁷⁰ ReBUILD Consortium, ‘Unveiling new perspectives in public health emergency management: integrating gender equality and social inclusion in vulnerability risk mapping and emergency planning’ (blog article), available at: <https://www.rebuildconsortium.com/public-health-emergency-management/> (last accessed 17 December 2023).

BRE-TA's overall performance in terms of mainstreaming GESI was reflected in the project's performance on the 'equity' criterion of VfM, which was judged to be 'Good'.⁷¹

Box 2: Summary assessment of BRE-TA's VfM performance against two 'equity' sub-criteria

- The GESI Advisor reported substantial improvement in the workstreams' understanding of the importance of GESI and ability to use GESI evidence to inform design of their activities and output. The improvements were realised through staff training and the introduction of guides and tools.
- The project has demonstrated that GESI considerations have been integrated into workstream activities and deliverables. This was accomplished through planned activities with Gender Directorates and the MoWSA, including training, workshops, and a new GESI Community of Practice, alongside direct initiatives by the workstreams and relevant ministries.

Source: BRE-TA VfM assessment for 2023, see Annex I of this report.

See Section 3.4 and Annex I for a detailed assessment of BRE-TA's VfM (covering all VfM criteria, of which equity is only one).

'The [BRE-TA] assistance has complemented the existing approach to equity and the need to reach the most vulnerable of communities.'

– Government key informant

3.3.2 To what extent is GESI reflected in intermediate outcomes?

Beyond ensuring that BRE-TA staff and government partners gained an understanding of how to incorporate CS/GESI considerations into programming, **the GESI team also helped the workstreams to identify where greater GESI sensitivity could contribute towards their intermediate outcomes.** To this end, and in line with previous VfM recommendations,⁷² the project **continued to draw attention to the need to properly embed GESI considerations in government policies, systems, and practices.** This was done by working with line ministry Gender Directorates and other allies.

- For example, after identifying GESI capacity gaps at the federal and regional levels, **BRE-TA prioritised relevant training**, which involved helping government officials to identify gaps in their knowledge and to build skills to mainstream CS/GESI across policy and practice.
- This led to **BRE-TA helping government counterparts, with gender offices and structures, to set up a 'technical community of practice' to support gender and social inclusion issues in their respective areas of work and mandates.** Led and managed by Gender Directorate staff, the primary goal of this community of practice is to enhance the capacity and foster collaboration among federal and regional Gender Directorates. The idea of a community of practice was developed during 2023 and was launched in November 2023 to sustain the GESI efforts by facilitating easier professional networks (document sharing, peer support etc) among gender experts at both the federal and regional levels. Members decided on a Telegram group as the official platform for sharing documents and ideas, and four volunteers from Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, EDRMC, Oromia Regional Health Bureau

⁷¹ BRE-TA VfM Assessment for the year 2023, see Annex I of this report.

⁷² BRE-TA (2023) 'VfM Assessment of the year 2022'.

(RHB), and Amhara RHB volunteered to manage it. In addition, it was agreed to use a Google Meet platform for bi-monthly virtual sessions to facilitate deeper discussions on challenges, exchange experiences, seek guidance, and support capacity building through virtual and in-person trainings, workshops, and webinars. One key aim is to promote innovation and the development of practical solutions for integrating GESI into projects and programmes.⁷³

The VfM sections of this report (see Section 3.4 and Annex I) include a discussion on the extent to which the project demonstrated that GESI considerations informed the development of workstream intermediate outcomes with the relevant government stakeholders.

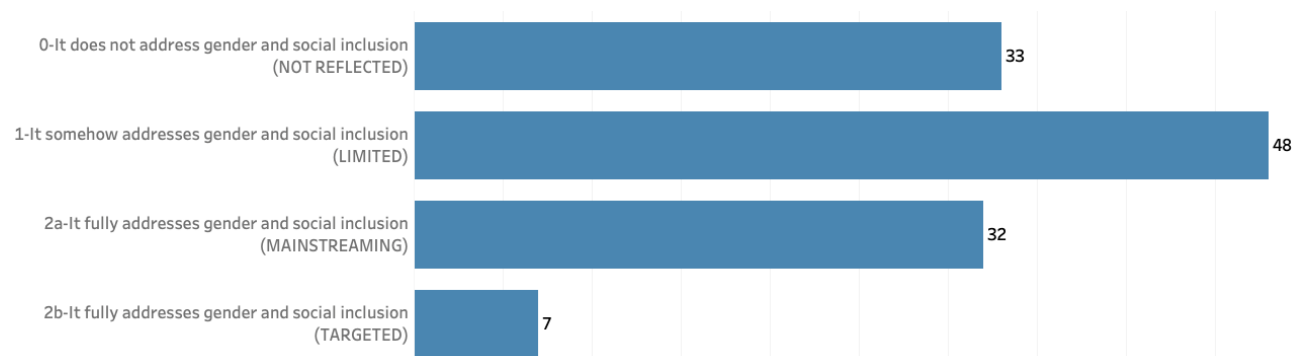
Box 3: Summary assessment of BRE-TA's VfM performance against the outcome-related sub-criterion of 'equity'

- There was greater demand from government for BRE-TA support on GESI in this last year, and there is good evidence that government incorporated GESI considerations into the development of workstream intermediate outcomes (such as policies, plans and guidelines). BRE-TA has put measures in place to help government to continue this work.

Source: BRE-TA VfM assessment for 2023, see Annex I.

Concrete examples of how GESI considerations were incorporated into programming and are reflected in intermediate outcomes are provided in the workstream annexes (D to G). Going a step further, the BRE-TA team assessed **the extent to which harvested outcomes had the potential to contribute to gender equality**, per the Gender Marker tool shown earlier. The results of that assessment are reflected in the figure below:

Figure 10: Number of harvested outcomes vis-à-vis contribution to gender equality



Source: BRE-TA outcome harvesting workshop, October 2023.

Below is a summary of the overall GESI aspects, across all workstreams, based on the explanations for the categorised outcomes 2a 'It fully addresses gender and social inclusion (MAINSTREAMING)' and 2b. 'It fully addresses gender and social inclusion (TARGETED)'.

- **Inclusive planning processes:** Utilisation of field manuals and checklists ensures inclusive planning by incorporating GESI considerations in objective setting, climate-smart strategies, and participatory approaches.
- **Policy revisions and mainstreaming gender:** Revised policies emphasise GESI, with dedicated sections and requiring guidelines for implementation. Gender

⁷³ BRE-TA supported the launch of the first virtual trial session on 25 December 2023, where Dr Sinafikesh from EPHI presented best practices from her field.

mainstreaming is evident in plans and interventions, resulting in gender-disaggregated outcomes.

- **Capacity building and training:** Efforts to enhance the capacity of the Gender Directorate and training programmes focus on integrating GESI issues using specific tools and instruments.
- **Integration in plans and assessments:** Vulnerability assessments and strategic plans integrate GESI by targeting underserved areas, reducing vulnerabilities, and emphasising community-centred approaches.
- **Monitoring, reporting, and data disaggregation:** Monitoring, reporting, and data collection mechanisms incorporate GESI considerations, including gender-disaggregated data, in dashboards and planning documents.
- **Sector-specific guidelines:** Sector-specific guidelines across emergency nutrition, public works, and public health integrate GESI for improved implementation.

3.4 Summary of overall project VfM

BRE-TA VfM has been assessed annually since 2019/2020. The assessments use FCDO's '5 Es' VfM framework. **VfM judgements are made based on rubrics (programme-specific sub-criteria and standards) agreed with FCDO each year, in advance of the assessment.** The rubrics are set out in the annual BRE-TA VfM frameworks. The assessments draw on evidence from a range of sources including interviews with government, other TA providers and FCDO staff, key BRE-TA documents, data from OPM's financial systems, and, for the annual VfM assessments for 2022 and 2023, outcome harvesting workshops with government and BRE-TA staff. Assessments were undertaken by BRE-TA staff from the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and Project Management teams, and reviewed by FCDO staff before final internal approval.

The VfM assessment for 2023 is provided in Annex I, which contains the evidence and rationale for the judgement against each of the five sub-criteria (the Es), as well as lessons about providing VfM that may be useful in other similar TA projects.

The project was **assessed to provide 'good' VfM overall in the first four assessments, rising to 'excellent' VfM in this final VfM assessment in 2023.**

Table 7: VfM judgments for project duration (2019/20 to 2023)

VfM criterion	Evaluative judgement 2019/2020 ⁷⁴	Evaluative judgement 2020	Evaluative judgement 2021	Evaluative judgement 2022	Evaluative judgement 2023
Efficiency	N/A	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Effectiveness	N/A	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Equity	N/A	Good	Good	Good	Excellent

⁷⁴ The first VfM assessment, after 8 months of implementation (October 2019 to May 2020) focused only on the Economy criterion as it was too early to make judgements on delivery and results-related criteria.

VfM criterion	Evaluative judgement 2019/2020 ⁷⁴	Evaluative judgement 2020	Evaluative judgement 2021	Evaluative judgement 2022	Evaluative judgement 2023
Economy	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Cost-effectiveness	N/A	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
Project VfM	N/A	Good	Good	Good	Excellent

4 Learning from programming and implementation, and delivery against KPIs

4.1 Programming and implementation

As described in Section 2.5, the programming approach to delivering the five-year BRE-TA project **was grounded in ensuring the sustainability of its progress** towards the outcome of 'Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks'.⁷⁵

This implied a focus on:

- **strengthening and reforming existing government machinery**⁷⁶ to improve the effectiveness of GoE's systems and to reduce dependence on humanitarian aid;
- **government acceptance and ownership of each BRE-TA activity and output**, meaning that **BRE-TA support had to be explicitly requested and outputs appreciated and used by government** (mainly done through the workstream-level TWGs overseeing delivery of TOs, as described in Section 2.5.1);
- **the provision of high-quality TA** that left a residual stock of national technical capacity, available to partner institutions beyond the life of the BRE-TA project; and
- **interlocking reforms and institutional memory**, mainly done through BRE-TA's participation in government-led technical task teams set up to address reform issues and intra/inter-governmental committees at national and regional levels to increase awareness and ultimately sustain the momentum of system-wide reforms.

BRE-TA's sustainability-grounded approach carried across and through each of the programme's four workstreams, with each workstream interfacing with a particular set of MDAs to provide demand-driven support, **while the programme management team ensured programmatic coherence**. Several elements were key to this overall sustainability-grounded programming approach.

Observation 1 - The workstream-level TWGs were an important element

- Comprised of **sector-specific, director-level technical leads from government and BRE-TA workstream staff and sub-contractors**, the TWGs played a **pivotal role in directing and legitimising** BRE-TA with partner organisations and **ensuring the TA was strategically aligned with current and emerging institutional priorities**.
 - The workstream TWGs were often useful in **opening up access for BRE-TA to intra-/inter-governmental committees at national and regional levels**. These engagements were helpful in building interest in and momentum for system-wide reforms.

⁷⁵ Output 1 of the logframe for the wider BRE programme. This output related specifically to the TA component of BRE, i.e. to the BRE-TA project.

⁷⁶ With efforts directed at the following four of the five components of the organisational development framework that BRE-TA adopted in modified form: '1. Policies, strategies, and laws'; '2. Intra-governmental collaboration and coordination mechanisms'; '3. Organisational development, human resources management (HRM), and skills development'; and '5. M&E, strengthening government's capacity for evidence-based learning and adaptation'.

- The individuals on the TWGs had a deep understanding of the problems at hand and of the **political economy of overcoming those challenges through reforms** (i.e. excellent insights and judgement in terms of what reforms were feasible and how to go about achieving them).
- The TWGs were effective at scoping and moreover **overseeing the delivery of good-quality work that mattered to them.**⁷⁷
 - The government officials saw BRE-TA support as an effective way to strengthen the relative position of their MDAs, while the workstream leads were highly motivated to deliver good-quality relevant TA to their professional peers.⁷⁸

Observation 2 - The high quality of BRE-TA staff was another important element of the sustainability-grounded approach.

- The project ensured that the core team, who were central in designing and overseeing BRE-TA interventions, brought extensive national and international experience that allowed GoE to benefit from **context-adapted best practices**.
- Similarly, **all local TAs were also highly experienced Ethiopian nationals**. These experts, whether external specialists or short- or long-term embedded TAs, were often known and respected entities in the country, and the thinking was that they would provide a stock of residual national technical capacity that would be available to partner institutions beyond the life of the BRE-TA project.

Donors and BRE-TA staff alike recognised the important role that the quality of staff played in establishing credibility, gaining trust and buy-in, and delivering results.⁷⁹

Observation 3 - Strong accountability ensued from the combination of expertise, aligned interests, power, and access to resources (through the BRE-TA project and from GoE).

- The impactful and realistic scopes of work in the TOs remained remarkably consistent and tightly defined for each workstream.
- Once TOs were approved by BRE-TA's donors (itself sometimes a slow process taking typically a minimum of two months and up to 10 months at times), the delivery of related activities and the use of the resultant outputs by government largely fell into place, albeit again at a much slower pace than had been anticipated, due to the need to match the pace of government, which was responding to multiple shocks.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ BRE-TA consistently scored well in FCDO's annual reviews (usually obtaining an 'A') and in VfM assessments (consistently receiving scores of 'Good' in the 2020, 2021, and 2022 assessments). The 'thoroughness' of BRE-TA's approach to measuring VfM was praised in the March 2023 annual report, where it was noted that 'Due to the substantial lack of VfM metrics and indicators across all components with the exception of BRE TA, the assessment of VfM presents an incomplete and mixed picture'.

⁷⁸ Many of the government counterparts were considered by BRE-TA workstream leads as peers, given that most of the workstream leads had held a comparable technical position of power within government at some point in their pre-BRE-TA lives.

⁷⁹ Notes from KIIs with donors, September 2023; outcome harvesting workshop with BRE-TA staff, 19–20 October 2023. For example, a donor key informant put it this way: 'One of the things that was highlighted to us quite consistently when we spoke the stakeholders is the quality of work that you get from BRE – the quality of the advisers working on the different work strands – it was really appreciated also and should be seen as one of the contributing factors to the success of the programme.'

⁸⁰ The internal donor approval process took a year at the programme's outset.

Strengths of the programming approach and related implementation

BRE-TA's programming approach proved to be **an efficient way of working towards achieving the project-specific results**. The relatively flexible contractual arrangements between OPM and FCDO (and FCDO and USAID) meant that once a TO was finally approved and implementation actually started, **it was relatively straightforward** – although by no means simple or easy – **to deliver an adaptive project that worked at the pace of government while remaining relevant to their needs in the face of major external challenges**.

The following issues are of note:

- **The politically informed approach to programming** – captured explicitly in the workstream ToCs, which underscored the need to work on both the 'technical' and the 'political/policy-making' areas of reform – **meant there was both room to, and recognised value in, undertaking smaller incremental activities that would help lead to 'bigger results'**.⁸¹
- **Sticking to a narrow range of issues, and scope of activities**, and holding-back from pushing to overtly on controversial areas until they had been de-escalated (like Early Warning System reform, Grievance Redress Mechanisms), meant that when reform moments came along **the evidence base and justification for change was already well understood and often readily accepted**.
 - This also helped **BRE-TA avoid being pulled, by government, from one issue to the next**, and BRE-TA's donors played an important supporting role in ensuring this consistency and clarity of focus on a few issues.
 - Most **instances of disagreement between donors and government**, where BRE-TA was caught in-between, were managed amicably.

4.2 Delivery against contract key performance indicators (KPIs)

In line with the terms of reference (ToRs) and contract, 20% of fees were retained by FCDO each month and paid at the end of the quarter based on achievement of a set of KPIs where OPM would be financially penalised if the score went below 400 (the maximum score was 600 – see Table 8 and Figure 11 below).⁸²

Table 8: Measuring performance against KPIs

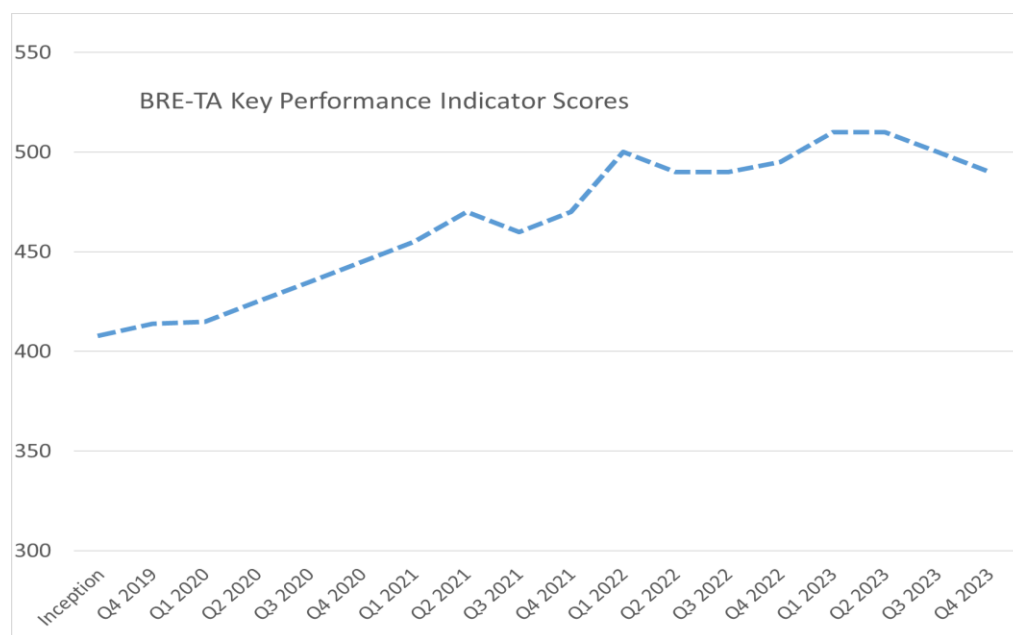
KPI	Performance against the following:	Weighting
KPI 1: management, strategy, and financial	Milestones/deliverables on time to the satisfaction of the client	20
	Strong VfM performance as per DFID economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity	10
	Accurate and timely submission of forecasting, invoices, and audits	10

⁸¹ It was just a matter of remaining patient and being ready to jump when a reform window opened up and offered the opportunity to secure a programme outcome.

⁸² Each of the KPIs was given a score as follows: **1 = Serious underperformance** (consistently below requirements); **2 = Underperformance** (often below requirements); **3 = Less than satisfactory** (sometimes performs below requirements); **4 = Satisfactory** (meets requirements); **5 = Good performance** (meets and sometimes exceeds requirements); and **6 = Exceeding performance** (meets and often exceeds requirements).

KPI	Performance against the following:	Weighting
KPI 2: customer relationship	Active engagement with FCDO throughout (monthly meetings)	10
	Good relationship management with GoE	10
	Collaboration with non-management Agent-funded TA and other local partners	5
KPI 3: personnel	Team leader performance	10
	Team performance (full OPM team), including quality of delivery, team coherence, and responsiveness to requests	10
	Demonstrated strong levels of quality assurance	10
KPI 4: continued improvement	Degree to which the supply partner's management team quickly responds and adapts to changing contexts or requests	5

Figure 11: BRE-TA KPIs from project start (inception)



Payment-related deliverables

In addition to the 20% of fees held against the KPIs, 30% of fees were retained against satisfactory delivery of a set of ‘payment-related deliverables’. In general, these deliverables marked progress made by the four workstreams during the quarter towards an important outcome, rather than being final outputs that signified the completion of a TO. The payment-related deliverables were proposed in advance and captured in the monthly progress slides. Out of the 126 deliverables referenced above well over half were payment-related deliverables.

Limitations inherent in the tightly defined scope and limited resources

Behind the strengths of the programming approach lay certain limitations – at least from the perspective of the BRE-TA team, whose members were committed not only to delivering project-specific results but also to supporting comprehensive, system-wide reforms.

Comprehensive system-wide reforms are generally driven by a strong central authority with political and bureaucratic power, a unifying vision, and weight to change whole-of-government structures, processes, and organisational culture. Such an approach allows the reform process to tackle related issues, such as underlying incentives, HRM, and capital investment.

Against this background, **there were two key inherent limitations in BRE-TA’s programming:**

1. During the life of the project, **there was no wider public sector reform programme in which to locate BRE-TA**. Per the quote in this page, about PSNP’s SRSN component, donors were not ignorant of this weakness.
2. Furthermore, as a donor-funded project with a strictly defined scope and limited resources, **there was no mandate to go beyond the four workstreams’ focus on DRM systems strengthening**.

‘...it begs the question of, yes, we’ve done all these technical things, but we still have a system that is falling apart...or...is severely at risk at this point in time...’

– Donor key informant

(Even if the project had been in a position to support wider system reform, such reform requires a 10–20-year timeframe to be done effectively.⁸³)

As such, the project responded opportunistically to requests from MDAs for support to advance institutional changes to improve the effectiveness of the DRM systems narrowly related to reform within their respective organisational mandates (mostly related to policies and strategies, inter-/intra-governmental collaboration and consultation mechanisms, and leadership and skills development (areas 1 to 3 of Figure 3, the framework adopted by BRE-TA to ensure sustainability)).

⁸³ In the words of a BRE-TA team member at the 19–20 October 2023 outcome harvesting workshop with staff: ‘system strengthening can’t be done in five years’.

- Invariably, a reform in one aspect of the sub-system led to a request to improve a related element (e.g. training to improve PHEM leadership at the federal level led to extending that initiative to the regional level).
- However, the project could not and did not engage with broader and deeper ancillary public sector management issues, such as financial rewards and sanctions within the public service, or organisational restructuring (other than internal, as in the case of EPHI), nor did it provide technology and infrastructure (area 4 of Figure 3), even when this significantly affected DRM effectiveness (e.g. EWS and digitalisation).

Furthermore, **requests for TA coming from the workstreams' TWGs were contingent on donor approval.**

Delivery of this sub-systemic approach, which was simultaneously needs- and demand-driven but donor approved, in the absence of a broader DRM reform programme, was a significant challenge when trying to ensure that reforms across sectors and different levels of government cohered conceptually and operationally and ultimately were effectively implemented.

Nevertheless, as outlined throughout this report, **notable successes were achieved despite these structural challenges and practical difficulties** – not to mention the challenging operating context for GoE and BRE-TA (see [Section 2.4](#) and [Annex B](#)). The appropriate programming approach and the project's underlying ToC enabled BRE-TA to continue to deliver relatively sustainable results in particularly unfavourable conditions.

4.2.1 M&E as a key tool for project management

From the outset of the project, **the objectives of BRE-TA's M&E team was primarily to support internal project management** to fulfil accountability obligations.

In support of this, one of the biggest contributions that M&E made was to capture the ambition and strategic approach of the workstreams in the workstream-specific ToCs (best thought of as workstream-level results frameworks).

- During the design phase of the project, BRE-TA workstream teams held informal 'outcome mapping' events with members of their respective TWGs to identify, and agree upon, priorities around core building blocks of work (see [Section 2.5.2](#)).
- Agreed activities were scoped out within those building blocks, along with intended intermediate outcomes that could be achieved within the life of BRE-TA.
- It was expected that the intermediate outcomes would ultimately lead to the project's – and to government partners' – envisioned workstream outcomes.

The M&E team supported the workstreams in **regularly updating their ToCs**, drawing on the success or otherwise of earlier activities to refine the description and ambition of around 30 intermediate outcomes in the ToCs. Progress towards these was then **captured in detailed monthly updates, quarterly performance monitoring reports, and annual reports.**

With such a broad range of activities across four workstreams, progressing at different speeds, with distinct government counterparts and interests, **it was critically important that the team and donors could easily understand the project's priorities and direction of travel.** By updating the ambition of the workstreams and regularly capturing

progress in the monthly updates, quarterly reports, and annual reports, **M&E delivered on this critical task.**

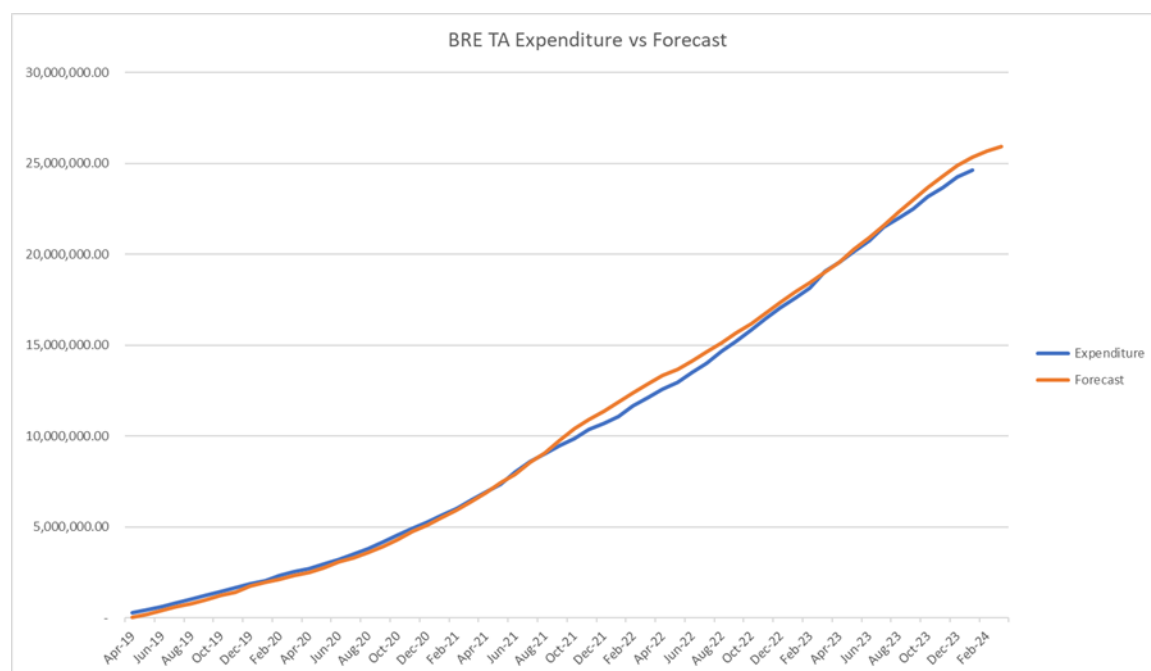
Furthermore, **without the constant oversight and updating of the progress of a multitude of deliverables, it would have been much more difficult to push back on requests from government that did not align** with the project's scope, the adopted programming approach, and the ambition of the workstreams and TWGs. This is the difference between a purely 'demand-driven' project and a 'needs-driven but donor-approved' one like BRE-TA, where judgements were made by the workstream and donors about the political and practical relevance of requests for TA.

4.3 Financial management

The project was relatively complicated from a financial management perspective, with the two donors (FCDO and USAID) paying for different things from the core budget and the TO budget, respectively, and then separate monthly and quarterly invoicing (the latter based on approval by FCDO of payment-related deliverables and the achievement of a minimum score of KPIs). Fortunately, because there were so few problems, FCDO generally did not request detailed financial information in the monthly updates, quarterly performance monitoring reports, and annual reports. The main financial management discussions were taken in the first few years around the approval of TOs and then subsequently approval of extensions and amendments to TOs.

Throughout the project, workstream leads were encouraged to focus on engaging GoE on the quality, relevance, and usefulness of deliverables rather than the 'burn rate' of TO budgets. This was to ensure the project stayed 'in step' with government. However, the relatively slow pace of spend in the early years led to a **no-cost contract extension for the project's delivery** (from an end date of August 2022 to an end date of March 2024). BRE-TA's donors recognised that securing government support for reforms took time, and that delivering activities was then much slower than initially planned but that, ultimately, the workstreams were much more successful than expected in securing government backing and also co-funding for activities (which was particularly the case for the PHEM workstream, as they could lean on the relatively well-resourced health sector).

However, in hindsight, it might have been more beneficial to provide the workstreams with more regular updates on spend, but it was not until the final six months of the project that the financial aspects of TO management became a concern, given the small risk of underspend against forecast. This was also when **the flexibility to move funds within and between workstreams was appreciated.**

Figure 12: BRE-TA expenditure against forecast

Detailed information on economy metrics is covered in the VfM annex.

4.4 Risk management

The various risks to the project were identified and tracked in (1) the 'Emerging risks and challenges' section of the quarterly performance monitoring reports; and (2) the risk register that was updated and shared with FCDO quarterly. **For much of the project's lifecycle, the risks themselves did not change significantly, but there was a significant increase in the risk of physical harm to BRE-TA staff and sub-contractors from 2020** as security and conflict worsened across the country. To mitigate this risk:

- 15 BRE-TA staff received hostile environment awareness training (HEAT) from OPM's security provider Spearfish during a first round of training by Spearfish's Senior Security Adviser in November 2022; and
- a second round of training was conducted for 17 BRE-TA staff and embedded advisers by Spearfish's BRE-TA office-based Regional Security Adviser in 2023.

Having an adviser based in Mekelle when the Tigray conflict started on 5 November 2020 was a major concern and **absorbed an amount of management time that was disproportionate to the small size of the project**, as did the events leading up to the second State of Emergency (announced during the life of BRE-TA) for Amhara region in August 2023.

Fortunately, there were no major personnel incidents, and overall management practices helped ensure the high level of performance of staff and consultants. There was only one incident of unprofessional behaviour, which led to a sub-contractor's contract ending early.

The risk that was perhaps less well managed related to **government capacity at the close of the BRE-TA project, particularly at the regional level**. Although the workstreams dedicated time and attention to transition activities, such as handing over responsibilities and

training government counterparts,⁸⁴ the question of how to smoothly transition out embedded TA without abruptly draining government capacity to manage ongoing disasters and related policy reform matters remains a concern. This is a perennial issue in development work.

As a whole, **the project was delivered in compliance with FCDO terms and conditions, Ethiopian law and taxation requirements, and United Kingdom taxation and legal requirements.** This includes compliance with the Counter Aid Diversion Strategy, and the project team's management confirmed that there were no cases of aid diversion during implementation.

⁸⁴ Including that the four workstreams' counterparts were regularly reminded, informally and during more formal contexts, such as TWG meetings, that BRE-TA was closing at the end of 2023. Related meetings and other closure events were held with GoE and the donors in quarter 3 and quarter 4 of 2023.

5 Lessons and recommendations

5.1 Lessons from BRE-TA

The lessons listed below draw on the most common themes across the workstream-specific lessons (see Annexes D-G) and the learning notes (see Annex H).

- **Aligning with government interests and priorities – and adopting a flexible aid modality to enable such alignment – facilitates trust and effectiveness.** BRE-TA's offer was crucial in its ability to respond flexibly to government demand, which necessarily changed, ebbed, and flowed in line with national priorities and events in the country. BRE-TA was flexible both in form and content, and it is this flexibility that enabled the BRE-TA team to respond to government demand with the right kind of support at the right time (i.e. working opportunistically), and thereby not only to maintain its position as a credible and trusted partner (during what were often long and complex reform processes taking place in a challenging context), but also to ensure relevance, demonstrate effectiveness, and maximise the potential for sustainability.

Beyond alignment on substantive issues, alignment with government interests also encompasses taking an approach that focuses on building internal capacity (including training, learning exchanges, peer learning activities) and strengthening existing systems and processes.

'...unless you have something that is country-led – the likelihood that any of this would stick is limited.'

– Donor key informant

- **Building relationships and developing trust are time-consuming, but are critical to later achievements.** Facilitating collaboration and addressing diverse needs necessitates time, which often conflicts with the pressure for swift delivery. However, across all four of BRE-TA's workstreams, it was crucial to invest time and energy to create trust and gain buy-in from officials in MDAs relevant to the activity before moving into more contested spaces. Key to building trust was the quality of the BRE-TA team, the time invested in building a shared understanding of problems and consensus on the way forward (rather than imposing solutions), participating in GoE's own technical task teams and *ad hoc* reform committees, and aligning activities with the government's fiscal calendar and getting BRE-TA support captured in their workplans – *throughout* the project's life. This all helped to ensure that BRE-TA's activities remained visible, allowing success to build on success as implementing one activity opened up opportunities for the next.
- **Navigating the political economy of collaboration and coordination helps ensure that supported activities are aligned with government priorities and other technical support projects.** Participating in and/or establishing formal coordination mechanisms at federal and regional levels was key across all of BRE-TA's four workstreams to ensure that the extensive consultation (to address both technical and political challenges) that was needed to reach consensus took place and that the interlocking reforms supported were aligned across government and among donors.
- **Development of a solid evidence base takes time but is key to making the case for follow-on reform.** Although it seemed to slow the pace of work early on in the project, taking the time to generate evidence and build the case for reform paid off by providing a solid foundation for the way forward (thus enhancing effectiveness), while also helping to

deepen the relationship with and between stakeholders and a shared understanding of what was needed.⁸⁵ Falling under both the relationship-building and evidence base umbrellas, a sub-lesson is that **using targeted, localised research to inform national policy decisions helps ensure understanding and buy-in.**

- **There is significant interest in and appetite for doing more on GESI, which needs to be prioritised** in DRM. There is widespread understanding that particular shocks impact the needs of vulnerable populations in different ways, and that these issues must be taken into consideration and addressed.
- **There is significant value in working simultaneously at federal and regional levels as it increases impact at both levels.** Dramatically different regional structures and capacity levels pose a major challenge to rolling out new activities consistently. Establishing support in the form of embedded advisers at both federal and regional levels and inviting regions' input on federal-level initiatives not only (1) helped ensure that regions felt more engaged in, and bought into, the (essentially federally driven) reform process; but also (2) helped BRE-TA to understand differences among regional administrations and their in-house capacity, as well as to recognise the need for different policy and strategy processes at regional and federal levels. This multi-tiered structure of support thus enabled BRE-TA to coordinate activities and responses across levels, thereby ensuring greater consistency and inclusivity among stakeholders. Ultimately, it strengthened the resultant reform itself.

5.2 Recommendations for future DRM systems-strengthening projects

The BRE-TA team – alongside development partners and humanitarian actors, as stakeholders in the DRM space – supported GoE to make great strides in strengthening systems to lead and deliver an effective and accountable humanitarian response (as per the BRE-TA ToC and the outcome of the BRE logframe). However, institutional and organisational reform is a long and complex process that cannot be fully accomplished with a one-off 60-month project like BRE-TA.

It is, therefore, not surprising that **much work remains to be done** for the 'Government of Ethiopia to lead and deliver an effective, more self-financed and accountable response to climate and humanitarian shocks'. To that end, and based on the issues discussed in this report, the BRE-TA team forwards the following two key recommendations to governments and potential development partners:

- **Align with government at the federal and regional level** – not only in terms of interests and priorities but also systems, processes, and coordination mechanisms. In so doing, take a flexible, responsive approach and **allow for the time needed to build shared understanding and commitment (i.e. buy-in and ownership)**; this process is indispensable in order to ensure relevant and impactful outputs and to enhance the likelihood of adoption and implementation – and, thus, of securing desired outcomes.
- Where feasible, **locate TA projects in the context of wider system reform**, and plan for the TA to be provided for **a minimum of 10 years.**

⁸⁵ Drawing on an example from the DRF workstream, TA in the area of DRF tends to treat the development of a DRF strategy as the first step, which can lead to strategies which are developed by donor agencies with minimal government buy-in. BRE-TA spent the first two years of the programme building understanding within MoF as to why disasters deserved to be on its agenda.

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