

<b>Title:</b> Knowledge Evidence and Engagement Programme (KEEP)		
<b>Programme Value £ (full life):</b> £18m		<b>Review period:</b> (and review period start-end) April 24 - March 25
<b>Programme Code:</b> GB-GOV-13-ICF-0029-KEEP	<b>Programme start date:</b> April 2018	<b>Programme end date:</b> March 2027 (including extension)

## Summary of Programme Performance

Year	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25
Overall Output Score	A	A	A	A	A+	A+	A+
Risk Rating	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Link to Business Case:	KEEP BC
Link to Logframe:	KEEP Logframe
Link to previous Annual Review (if appropriate)	KEEP AR 2024

## A. SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

### Description of programme

Knowledge Evidence and Engagement Programme (KEEP) is a research and engagement facility that enables HMG climate leads to commission bespoke evidence and engagement activities to improve the delivery and increase the ambition of UK international climate finance activities, supporting developing countries to tackle climate change. It facilitates this by making funds available for research and engagement activities, filling evidence gaps and ensuring efficient quality assurance and approval procedures. The programme has research and engagement workstreams, each having separate but connected objectives, and clearance and procurement processes to ensure compliance with DESNZ research, finance and procurement standards.

KEEP has been running for seven years – three years for the initial programme period (£18m), one-year long extension (£5m), and three years of an additional £8-12m extension to March 2025. KEEP has been extended for an additional two-year period to March 2027, but exact funding is to be confirmed.

Underspend from initial programme periods were re-allocated to other ICF programmes. Just under £12 million has been spent to date, with £7 million between 2018-2022, £7.1 million from April 2022 to March 2025.

A total of 45 projects have been commissioned, with 40 projects fully completed. There have been high levels of demand for new KEEP projects throughout this review period.

### Summary of progress and supporting narrative for the overall score in this review

## Progress against recommendations from the last review

Recommendation		Progress
A recommendation is to directly follow-up with project leads to provide guidance and reminders when the programme is nearing its completion date, to ensure that overspend doesn't occur and that any underspend is manageable. This will also provide an opportunity to remind project leads of key points around closing a project, shared within the contract management training, and the internal processes required within KEEP (i.e. completion of an After Report). The guidance should be shared ahead of the final month of project delivery.	<b>Complete</b> - project leads have been contacted regularly. Where projects have been completed guidance has been shared and after reports collected.	Met
To complete a change request to extend the KEEP programme into 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial year and increase the total approved funding for the latest extension period to £12m, as per the current approvals processes and governance set out in the previous KEEP extension business case.	<b>Complete</b> – The change request was approved 25 October.	Met
If the change request is approved, to update the Logframe for the extended 2025/26-2026/27 period.	<b>Incomplete</b> – Total spend had not yet been allocated, and one metric depends on % of spend allocated to allow for the finalisation of the new logframe indicators and milestones.	Ongoing
To formally gather feedback and lessons learned from the specialists that support KEEP projects as well to ensure that the approvals process is efficient from both perspectives.	<b>Complete</b> – fed into lessons learnt.	Met
To work with leads of research projects to ensure that lessons are learnt from other programmes, this could be through an internal lessons learned document to accompany guidance on	<b>Complete</b> – fed into lessons learnt.	Met

gaining approvals so learning can be fed between programmes more systematically.		
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### Major lessons and recommendations for the year ahead

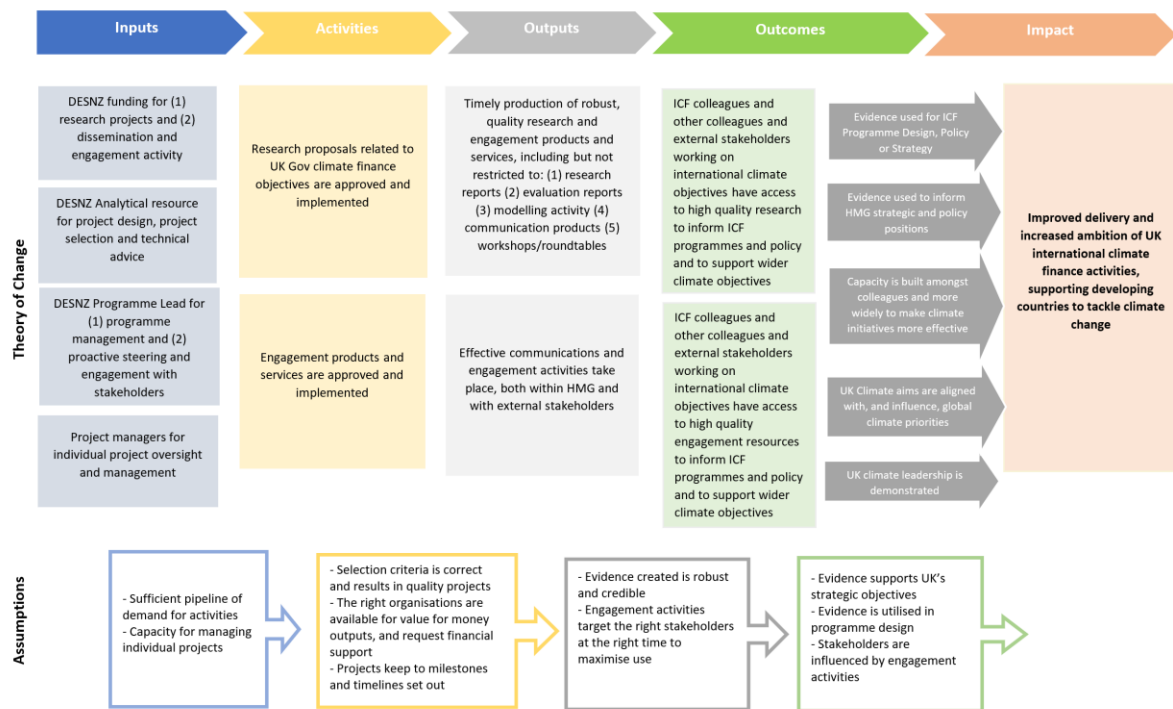
Additionally, alongside the recommendations, please complete a lessons learnt form to capture the key lessons learnt over the past year.

Lessons Learnt 2025:

Recommendation	Deadline	Progress
To work with MEL team to conduct an evaluation of the KEEP programme. This is to further inform the lessons learnt and support the evidence base for potential extension to KEEP beyond 2026/27.	<i>By November 2025</i>	
To update the After Reports and Interim Survey forms to ensure these allow for the collection of data relevant to ICF KPI reporting.	<i>By November 2025</i>	
To assess the extent to which KEEP projects are minimally compliant with respect to relevant GEDSI frameworks/acts, and progress towards 'GEDSI empowering' or 'GEDSI transformative' status in line with the ICF GEDSI Guidance Note for Delivery Partners.	<i>By November 2025</i>	
To assess the extent to which KEEP milestones/targets are suitably ambitious	<i>By September 2025</i>	

## B: THEORY OF CHANGE AND PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES [

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



The theory of change was reviewed as part of the extension business case approved in 2022. The assumptions in the theory of change hold true:

- Sufficient pipeline of demand for activities and capacity for managing projects;
- Suitable selection criteria and appropriate supplier availability, projects keeping to milestones and timelines;
- Evidence is robust and credible with engagement activities targeting the right stakeholders;
- Evidence supports UK's strategic objectives, is utilised by programmes and stakeholders are influenced by engagement activities.

**Describe the programme's contributions to the overall DESNZ ICF Theory of Change so far**

Looking at KEEP in the context of the DESNZ ICF theory of change, the programme supports multiple points across the various levels. At the level of activities, KEEP supported with "assessing impacts and VFM of our programming through monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and economic analysis." Research projects procured through KEEP explored how to make ICF programmes more effective, either at the conception stage (such as the research into the green finance toolkit), or once the programme is established (such as the partnership engagement budget).

At the level of outputs, KEEP supported a number of points, most relevant is the section on capacity, co-ordination, innovation and improved enabling environments, for example the ZEV-FRR grid modelling which analysed and how the integration of Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs), particularly electric vehicles, impacts the electricity grid.

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

The programme is on track with 100% of KEEP projects having reported that at least one of the goals (shown below) were met. This exceeds the milestone in the Logframe (75%) for the impact indicator 1.1 'Improved delivery and increased ambition of UK international climate finance activities, supporting developing countries to tackle climate change'.

Programme goal	Number of projects reporting these goals were met within After Reports
Evidence used to inform HMG strategic and policy positions	6
Evidence used to feed into a new ICF business case	4
Built capacity to make climate initiatives more effective	3
UK climate goals alignment/influence global climate priorities	3
UK government climate leadership demonstrated	4

The outcome indicator 1.1 'All research projects have a dissemination plan in their business case and project leads have confirmed this has taken place where projects have ended', was met with 89% (one project's dissemination plan was delayed beyond the period of this review) reaching this milestone.

The outcome indicator 1.2 '75% of research projects have met the most recent project milestone within 2 weeks of original date' was not met as three project's deliverables fell outside of the two weeks of the original date. The total of 66% fell below the goal of 75%.

For outcome indicators 2.1 '75% of engagement projects have met the most recent project milestone within 2 weeks of original date and 2.2 '75% of engagement project leads report reaching the right stakeholders' 100% of projects met the target, exceeding the goal of 75%.

**Has the logframe been updated since the last review?**

The Logframe was last reviewed during the process for the KEEP Annual Review 2023 and therefore there have been no further changes since the last review. The logframe is being reviewed based on the extension to the programme.

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

Given the wide-ranging influence of KEEP projects on much larger ICF programmes and wider global climate priorities the cost-effectiveness of this programme as a whole is high. It has performed well against all of the output indicators and there is increasing demand for the programmes.

KEEP also offers agility and allows the department to respond to specific needs quickly. This is especially important in the context of ODA reductions.

KEEP should continue for the current year and beyond, depending on departmental priorities.

## C. DETAILED OUTPUT SCORING

<b>Output Title</b>	KEEP approval processes enable effective and timely approval of funding for KEEP engagement and research projects		
Output number:	1	Output Score:	<b>A++</b>
Impact weighting (%):	35%	Weighting revised since last AR?	No
Risk rating	Minor	Risk revised since last AR?	No

Indicator(s)	Milestone(s) for this review	Progress	Score
1.1 1.1: % who found the approvals process efficient	75% of project leads who said the approvals process was 'very efficient' or 'somewhat efficient'	Progress substantially exceeded expectation – 100% of project leads said the approvals process was 'very efficient' or 'somewhat efficient' in the project after reports or annual surveys.	A++
1.2: % of project leads for completed KEEP projects who found specialist support 'useful' or 'very useful' during the approvals process	<i>75% of project leads find specialist support 'useful' or 'very useful'</i>	Progress substantially exceeded expectation – 100% of project leads said the specialist support was 'very useful' or 'useful' in the project after reports or interim surveys. Of these, 60% responded as 'very useful'.	A++

### Briefly describe the output and provide supporting narrative for the score.

Twelve projects completed either an interim survey or after report. All had positive feedback on the approvals process, As programme lead, I believe that the documented clear guidance sets out clearly the steps needed for approvals. The move to requiring Chief Scientific Officer's review of research has been beneficial in ensuring robust research and has not led to longer approvals timelines.

### Describe any changes to this output, and any planned changes as a result of this review.

No changes have occurred since 2024. Given that this programme has consistently over-achieved its milestones we will be reviewing this milestones as part of a review of the Logframe for the 2026 review.

### Progress on recommendations from the previous AR (if completed), lessons learned this year and recommendations for the year ahead

In 2024, a recommendation was made to conduct annual collection of feedback from KEEP specialists to ensure that the approvals process is efficient from both perspectives, this is now adopted as business as usual and will be conducted annually.

<b>Output Title</b>	KEEP procurement and contract management processes enable effective and timely procurement and delivery of KEEP research and engagement projects		
Output number:	2	Output Score:	<b>A+</b>
Impact weighting (%):	35%	Weighting revised since last AR?	No
Risk rating	Minor	Risk revised since last AR?	No

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Milestone(s) for this review</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Score</b>
2.1: % who found the procurement process efficient	75% of project leads who said the procurement process was 'very efficient' or 'somewhat efficient'	Progress substantially exceeded expectation – 100% of project leads said the procurement process was 'very efficient' or 'somewhat efficient'.	A++
2.2: % of projects that have not exceeded the original costs set out in the contract with delivery partners, except where the scope the project has expanded	75% of projects have not exceeded original costs	Progress moderately exceeded expectation - 89% of projects have not exceeded original costs	A+

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

One project had a minor overspend which had to be retrospectively approved. The amount was less than £5k and represents a very small % of the overall budget. However, this is not in line with commercial protocol.

**Describe any changes to this output, and any planned changes as a result of this review.**

No changes have occurred since 2024 and no further changes are planned. Given that this programme has consistently over-achieved its milestones we will be reviewing this milestones as part of a review of the Logframe for the 2026 review.

**Progress on recommendations from the previous AR (if completed), lessons learned this year and recommendations for the year ahead**

We recommend regular (at least quarterly) follow-up with project leads before end of financial year to ensure that overspend doesn't occur and that any underspend is manageable.

Given that there was one instance of a small overspend we will communicate further with programme leads to ensure a clear message on seeking full approval before any overspend, no matter how small the amount.



<b>Output Title</b>	Sufficient demand for KEEP translates into a strong portfolio of projects		
Output number:	3	Output Score:	<b>A</b>
Impact weighting (%):	30%	Weighting revised since last AR?	No
Risk rating	Minor	Risk revised since last AR?	No

<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Milestone(s) for this review</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Score</b>
3.1: Sufficient forecast spend for projects that have either been approved or where business case is in progress	KEEP successes and achievements so far disseminated, with a final call for proposals if budgets allow.	Progress met expectation - £4.7m (94%) of forecast was spend by March 2025. Results of research have been collected and shared.	A

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

Demand and interest in the KEEP programme has increased in the past year with £4.7m (94%) of forecast was spend by March 2025.

Results of research have been collected and shared as part of the ICAI review process.

**Describe any changes to this output, and any planned changes as a result of this review.**

The milestone for this indicator will need to be updated to reflect the amount of budget once final confirmation of the figure has been received. Given the changeable content of ODA funding, it is likely that the indicator will need to be based on 2025/26 funding alone. We will review this milestone, along with the others, as part of the current review of the Logframe.

**Progress on recommendations from the previous AR (if completed), lessons learned this year and recommendations for the year ahead**

There was a recommendation to complete a Change Request in both time and money, in line with the requirements set out in the previous KEEP Extension Business Case and current approval processes. This was completed and approved in October 2024.

## **D: PROJECT PERFORMANCE NOT CAPTURED BY OUTPUTS**

While the interim survey and completion reports provide valuable data, as we move into the new phase of KEEP funding now is a good time to evaluate the programme. As such, we recommend that we work with MEL team to conduct an evaluation of the KEEP programme. This is to further inform the lessons learnt and support the evidence base for potential extension to KEEP beyond 2026/27.

KEEP projects have supported the UK's International Climate Finance (ICF) – for example, the DESNZ ICF Assessment of Mitigation Options report has provided evidence to inform the spending review and the proposition for ICF4, providing wider support to achieving DESNZ goals.

There have however been challenges, the announcement of the reduction in UK's % of GNI spent on ODA meant that KEEP projects had to be paused while implications and priorities were worked through. This was a challenge for project managers and the pause in approving new project will likely have implications for 2025/26 spending.

## E: RISK

### Overall risk rating:

Moderate

### Overview of risk management

Risks associated with KEEP are low and are reviewed at the monthly KEEP progress meetings. This is primarily because the programme is flexible to circumstances, so there is not the same level of risk to programme delivery as other programmes might be susceptible to; furthermore, KEEP is comparatively small and tends to use relatively straightforward commercial instruments. The risks in terms of safeguarding are also low because most projects funded by KEEP do not involve much on the ground activity, nor much activity with vulnerable groups. In the past year, there have also been improvements to safeguarding policy with delivery partners required to commit to adhere to the Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (CAPSEAH).

The main risk to the commissioning of projects towards the end of this review period has been the uncertainty in funding beyond 2025. Larger projects which are multi-year in some cases may have delayed the approvals process to get more clarity on the scale and length of programme funding before commissioning. Furthermore, the announcement of the reduction in UK's % of GNI spent on ODA meant that KEEP projects had to be paused while implications and priorities were worked through impacting projects at the end of 2024/25 and into the next financial year.

### Current risks

A description of current risks should be set out below, along with mitigations and residual risk. Mitigations should include clear timeframes and action owners (project leads and deliver partners).

Risk description	Mitigation strategy	Residual Risk rating
Significantly higher or lower number of proposals received compared to expectations.	<b>Owner: KEEP programme manager.</b> Demand for KEEP is inherently uncertain, and priorities for research and evidence and availability of staff resource could change. If KEEP budget is underspent the budget could potentially be used for other ICF programmes.	Moderate
Ineffective dissemination within DESNZ, OGD's and external stakeholders	<b>Owner: KEEP project leads.</b> Each project will be required to produce a dissemination plan that is factored into the budget. All outputs will be published unless they are explicitly for internal use only, subject to DESNZ research publication protocols, currently SpAd and Ministerial approval for research outputs.	Moderate: effective research dissemination with key stakeholders has taken place.
Time slippage will mean studies aren't useful for	<b>Owner: KEEP project leads.</b> Robust project management	Moderate: to date, all completed projects have been

<b>business case design and will reduce the returns to investment</b>	and realistic time frames can help mitigate this risk.	completed in a time frame that allows them to strategically feed into the relevant programme design or strategic decision-making process
<b>Risk that engagement activities are ineffective, through poor choice of timing, audience or messengers</b>	<b>Owner: KEEP project leads.</b> All engagement activities will be required to clearly identify their proposed objectives, audience, communicators and methods of engagement, justifying their choices and how this maximises the potential for changing real decision making.	Moderate: to date, all completed KEEP engagement projects have been assessed as effective.
<b>Difficulty in robustly measuring the overall effectiveness of the portfolio</b>	<b>Owner: KEEP programme manager.</b> This risk can be mitigated by ensuring research tenders are designed to ensure ongoing relevance and the ability to feed in evidence at later stages of programmes, e.g. in finalising contracts, agreeing project proposals or agreeing log-frames. Involvement and buy in from finance, legal and procurement will be vital in ensuring this risk is mitigated.	Minor
<b>Duplication of effort with other research undertaken by HMG, other knowledge platforms and DESNZ's academic network on energy</b>	<b>Owner: KEEP programme manager and project leads.</b> This risk has not so far been realised. All DESNZ research is required to seek the approvals required to proceed with external procurement for a Research & Development (R&D) related activity. The KEEP programme lead will continue to ensure evidence builds on what is already available or planned and regular communication with other ODA spending Government Departments also helps mitigate this risk. ICF analysts use their networks and connections to keep up to date with research developments across HMG and provide assurance that what is being proposed is new and additional.	Minor

### Outstanding actions from risk assessment

No outstanding actions apart from continuous monitoring of risks.

## **F: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT: DELIVERY, VFM, COMMERCIAL & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

**Summarise the performance of partners and DESNZ, notably on commercial and financial issues, and including consideration of Vfm.**

Nine KEEP projects completed in 2024/25 and a total of £2.63m was spent. MEL activities are proportionate and specific to each of the projects, developed with input from specialists. All projects are required to fill out an after-report once the project is finished, and an annual survey was developed in the last year to further enable more responsive learning during a projects' lifetime. At a programme level, KEEP board meetings, KPI 15 reporting and annual reviews provide opportunities to review risks and programming decisions, which hadn't systematically happened in the 2023 review period. In addition, an internal review of the KEEP programme has been commissioned and will report in late 2025 (as per recommendations with deadline of Nov 2025).

### **Economy**

All processes undertaken have received sign offs from DESNZ Procurement, Finance and Legal (where relevant) which means the processes are in accordance with the UK's best practice in procurement. This provides assurances that each individual project is procuring from the right delivery partner, at the right price and at the right time. Aside from the procurement process, project leads must fill in a short business case (for all projects greater in value than £10k) and a research assessment form (for research, or combination, projects), working with specialist procurement, finance, legal and analytical colleagues. This must then be approved by the KEEP senior responsible officer (and the DESNZ central research approvals for research projects). This provides further Vfm assurances as any potential issues that might impact project delivery are flagged, whether the right deliverables are sought, whether the scale of the project is appropriate and whether the process being undertaken is most suitable.

Lessons learned that have been implemented includes ensuring that new potential project leads identify where additional analytical support may be required. This ensures there is sufficient resource available from the local analytical teams to review outputs alongside the KEEP specialists.

### **Efficiency**

The output indicators demonstrate that the approvals process is working effectively, with improvements to the KEEP guidance in the past period and clarity from the introductory chats allowing potential KEEP project leads to determine when is best to apply for the KEEP funding.

### **Effectiveness**

Reporting against KPI 15 found there is "Substantial evidence transformational change is likely or already occurring." (Score: 5), a rise from 2024 where it was assessed as "substantial evidence that transformational change is judged likely" (Score: 4).

Given the wide-ranging influence of KEEP projects on much larger ICF programmes and wider global climate priorities, the cost-effectiveness of this programme as a whole is high.

### **Equity**

While KEEP's outputs and outcomes are unlikely to be immediately received by the poorest people or communities in the countries we work in (and it being demand-led means equity

considerations will differ across projects), its objective of enhancing the overall performance of the ICF will help better mitigate the climate risks to which the world's poorest communities are exposed, building a more resilient and cleaner future for all. Additionally, all potential KEEP projects will need to outline how the project meets the requirements of the International Development Act and the Equality Act to ensure equity considerations have been factored in.

In 2023 the PSED section of the KEEP project business case template has been redesigned to ensure that project leads are able to easily access the latest guidance and complete a PSED assessment that is proportionate to the project and scale of funding.