

2014-2015 EVALUATION SYNTHESIS REPORT

**UNEP Evaluation Office
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FOREWORD

This Evaluation Synthesis Report summarises findings produced by the work of UNEP's Evaluation Office in 2014 and 2015. The biennial programme of evaluations including its focus, selection of programmes and projects for evaluation, methods and reporting on findings and results are undertaken with complete independence. Senior Management regularly engages with the Evaluation Office on its findings and recommendations which become part of the quarterly performance dialogue between the Executive Office and Senior Managers in UNEP.

The Evaluation Office continues to produce a mix of strategic and project-level evaluations. These have included a formative evaluation of the Medium Term Strategy planning processes, three Thematic Sub-programmes (Ecosystems Management, Chemicals and Waste and Climate Change), an Evaluation of the UN-REDD global programme and an evaluation of the GEO-5 process. They have highlighted significant programmatic results and provided useful inputs into management decision-making in the organisation. The report also highlights the performance trends across a large number of UNEP projects that were evaluated during the period. A continued positive trend was evident with an increasing proportion of projects rated in the top two performance categories for the key evaluation criteria, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

However, the report highlights some areas for continued management attention. The long-term impact for about a quarter of completed projects remains somewhat uncertain. However, evidence from the Formative Evaluation shows that UNEP project designs are developing more robust strategies to sustain outcomes and the benefits that can stem from them and are placing more emphasis on the processes leading from outcomes towards longer term effects.

The report presents a number of important lessons derived from project implementation experiences that should make interesting reading for all UNEP project managers. Follow up to evaluation is also improving. The report highlights improved compliance with evaluation recommendations compared to the previous reporting period, and the rate of completion of evaluation implementation plans is also improving.

During the 2014-15 biennium the Evaluation Office was, itself, the subject of several positive independent performance assessments conducted by the JIU, OIOS and The Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF. These assessments have demonstrated the independence and credibility of the function and bolster the confidence that the organisation can place in its findings.

In the 2016-17 biennium UNEP can look forward to receiving further evaluative findings that can provide valuable insights to design, implementation and management challenges at organisation, programme and project levels.

Achim Steiner
UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP
Executive Director

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Evaluation Office

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|---|
| ADB | Africa Development Bank |
| BSP | Bali Strategic Plan |
| CWSP | Chemicals and Waste Sub-Programme |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CCSP | Climate Change Sub-Programme |
| COP | Conference of Parties |
| DCPI | Division of Communications and Public Information |
| DED | Deputy Executive Director |
| DELCD | Division Environmental Law and Conventions |
| DEPI | Division Environmental Policy Implementation |
| DEWA | Division of Early Warning and Assessment |
| DRC | Division Regional Cooperation |
| DRR | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| DTIE | Division of Technology Industry and Economics |
| EA | Expected Accomplishment |
| EbA | Ecosystem-based Adaptation |
| EF | Environment Fund |
| EGSP | Environmental Governance Sub-Programme |
| EMSP | Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme |
| EOU | Evaluation Office of UNEP |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GEO-5 | Global Environmental Outlook 5 |
| GePA | Gender Plan of Action |
| HL | Highly Likely |
| HS | Highly Satisfactory |
| HU | Highly Unsatisfactory/Highly Unlikely |
| IMDIS | Integrated Monitoring & Documentation Information System |
| IMIS | Integrated management Information System |
| IEG | International Environmental Governance |
| IPBES | The Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services |
| IPCC | International Panel on Climate Change |
| IRP | International Resource Panel |
| IWRM | Integrated Water Resource Management |
| JIU | Joint Inspection Unit |
| L | Likely |
| MAP | Mediterranean Action Plan |
| MEA | Multi-lateral Environmental Agreement |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| ML | Moderately Likely |
| MS | Moderately Satisfactory |
| MU | Moderately Unsatisfactory/Moderately Unlikely |
| MTE | Mid-Term Evaluation |
| MTS | Medium-Term Strategy |
| MU | Moderately Unsatisfactory |
| OECD/DAC | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee |
| OfO | Office of Operations |
| OIOS | Office of Internal Oversight Services |
| PF | Programme Frameworks |
| PIMS | Project Information Management System |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review |
| PoW | Programme of Work |

| | |
|---------|---|
| PPR | Project Performance Review |
| QAS | Quality Assurance Section |
| RACs | Regional Activity Centres |
| RBM | Results-Based Management |
| REDD | Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation |
| RESP | Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme |
| RO | Regional Office |
| ROtI | Review of Outcomes to Impact |
| RSPs | Regional Seas Programmes |
| S | Satisfactory |
| SCP | Sustainable Consumption and Production |
| SDTU | Staff Development and Training Unit (of UNON) |
| SP | Sub-Programme |
| SPC | Sub-Programme Coordinator |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| U | Unsatisfactory/Unlikely |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEA | United Nations Environment Assembly |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNON | United Nations Office in Nairobi |
| UN-REDD | United Nations Programme on Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report is based on evaluations conducted in the 2014-2015 biennium and utilizes information drawn from: the Formative Evaluation of planning process for the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017(MTS), evaluations of three thematic sub-programmes (Ecosystems Management, Chemicals and Waste and Climate Change), an evaluation of the UN Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) global programme and an evaluation of the Global Environmental Outlook 5 (GEO-5) process. The report also presents a new analysis of project performance across sixty six (66) in-depth project evaluations conducted during the biennium and spanning the UNEP Programme of Work (PoW) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) portfolios.
2. The evaluation synthesis report also contains review of the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations and chapters on internal / external assessments of the UNEP evaluation function.

Analysis of Project Performance and Lessons Learnt

3. The Evaluation Office of UNEP (EOU) completed a total of sixty six (66) mid-term and terminal evaluations in the biennium 2014-2015. In addition, three (3) UNEP sub-programme evaluations and three (3) strategic evaluations were also completed and a further 52 evaluations were initiated and are to be completed in the biennium 2016-2017.
4. An analysis of trends in project performance across the assessed evaluation criteria is discussed in detail in Chapter II: 'Analysis of Project Performance and Lessons Learnt'. This analysis comprises comparisons in project performance by: year, thematic sub-programme, division and funding modalities for GEF and non-GEF projects. In some instances, we have included selected lessons from various evaluation reports - especially those lessons that we highlight as being significant or recurrent in the projects evaluated.
5. The **strategic relevance** of projects to UNEP's plans and policies - including global, regional and national environmental issues and needs, attained high ratings in a majority of the projects evaluated in 2014-2015, with 98% of the projects rated in the satisfactory range ('Moderately Satisfactory' to 'Highly Satisfactory'). See paragraph 75 for Table 1: Evaluation Rating Scale for further guidance. The criteria '**project implementation and management**' showed the greatest improvement in the biennium 2014-2015, with only 3% of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range ('Moderately Unsatisfactory' to 'Highly Unsatisfactory'), in comparison to 16% in 2012-2013 and 24% in 2010-2011. Of the projects assessed for their **effectiveness** in attaining objectives and planned results, 86% were rated in the satisfactory range, effectively the same level of performance as in 2012-2013 (87%).
6. The **efficiency** criterion which considers cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution, has gradually improved over the years with 65% of projects attaining 'Satisfactory' or better (i.e. the top two performance categories) in 2014-2015 - up from 54% in 2010-2011 and 62% in 2012-2013. Performance ratings for the criterion '**achievement of programmed outputs**' also improved significantly, with 73% of projects rated 'Satisfactory' or better, comparing favourably against 66% of projects with the same rating for this criterion in both 2012-2013 and 2010-2011 biennia. The assessment of **sustainability** of project outcomes has displayed a gradual improvement in the course of the three biennia with 43% of projects evaluated in 2014-2015 rated 'Highly Likely' or 'Likely' to be sustainable, up from 32% in 2012-2013 and 23% in 2010-2011. Sixty eight percent (68%) of the projects evaluated in 2014-2015 achieved a rating of 'Satisfactory' or better for the criterion '**country ownership and driven-ness**' - considered as a critical factor affecting the progression of project outcomes towards higher level impact. 71% of projects assessed in the same period were rated as 'Satisfactory' or better for **replication** and/or **scaling-up** of project results.
7. While there are positive trends noted in the synthesised data, a few areas still remain where more attention needs to be directed, if good performance is to be sustained or further improvements are to be achieved. For about 24% of the projects evaluated in 2014-2015, the **likelihood of impact achievement** was in the unsatisfactory range. As previously reported in the Evaluation Synthesis

Report (2012-2013), the EOU attribute this in part to the increased rigour with which the 'effectiveness' criteria are being assessed. The systematic use of Theory of Change (ToC)-based evaluation approaches in effect introduced a higher required standard of evidence to receive performance ratings in the satisfactory range for this criterion. There is an encouraging development however - 43% projects were rated 'Likely' or 'Highly Likely' for impact as compared to 32% of projects rated against the same criterion in 2012-2013. It was also noted in the last Evaluation Synthesis Report (2012-2013), that there was need for improvement in the quality of **project design and preparedness**, and we are pleased to report an improvement in this biennium, with 18% projects rated in the unsatisfactory range down from 24% and 23% in the biennia 2012-2013 and 2010-2011 respectively- reflective of quality enhancements in the project design process within UNEP, a trend also highlighted in the project document design assessment made in the Formative Evaluation of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017.

8. The **monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** criterion continues to lag behind in terms of performance ratings, this in spite of the fact that a robust M&E system is better able to support results-based and adaptive management approaches during project implementation. Nevertheless, there is a notable decrease in the percentage of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range this biennium - 25% projects, down from 32% in 2012-2013 and 42% in 2010-2011.
9. **Figure 1** below provides an overview of project performance by projects evaluated in the 2014-2015 biennium, with focus on the percentage of projects rated 'Satisfactory' or better for selected evaluation criteria, including a depiction of the percentage increase or decrease in performance when compared to the previous biennium (2012-2013). Figure 2 summarises the aggregated performance of all projects against the standard evaluation criteria.

Figure 1: Overview of Project Performance by Evaluation Criteria in the Biennium (2014-2015)

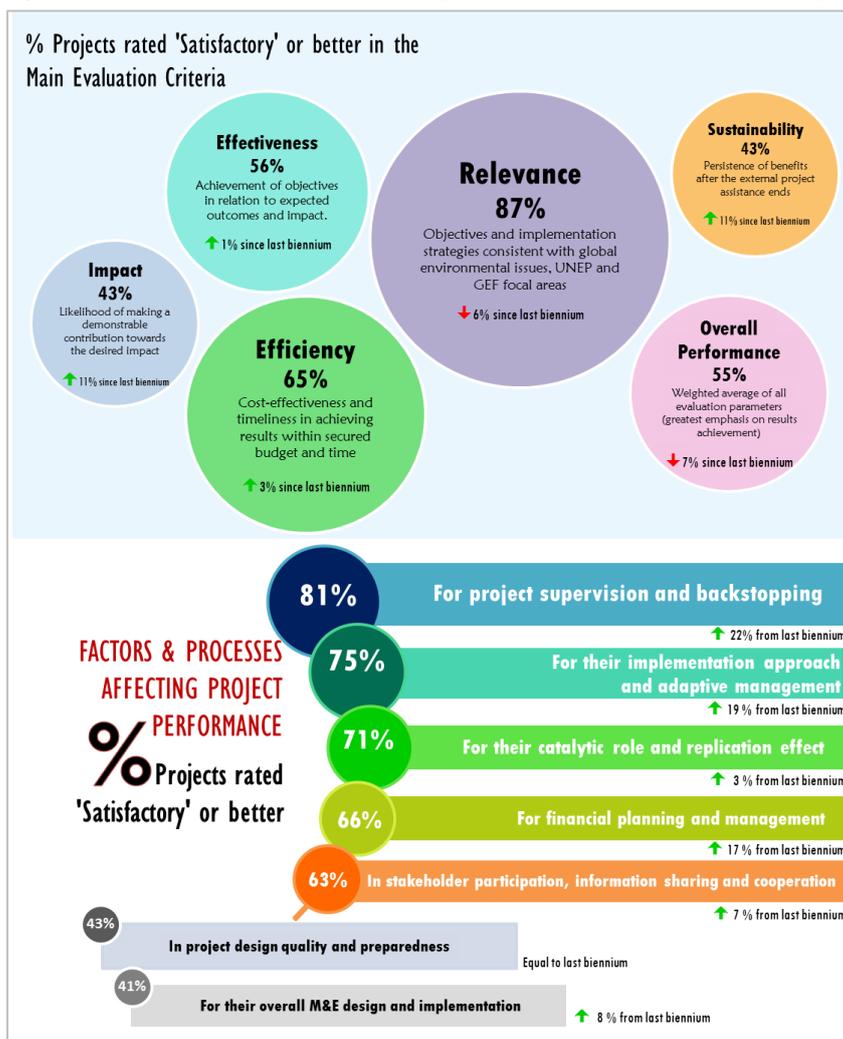
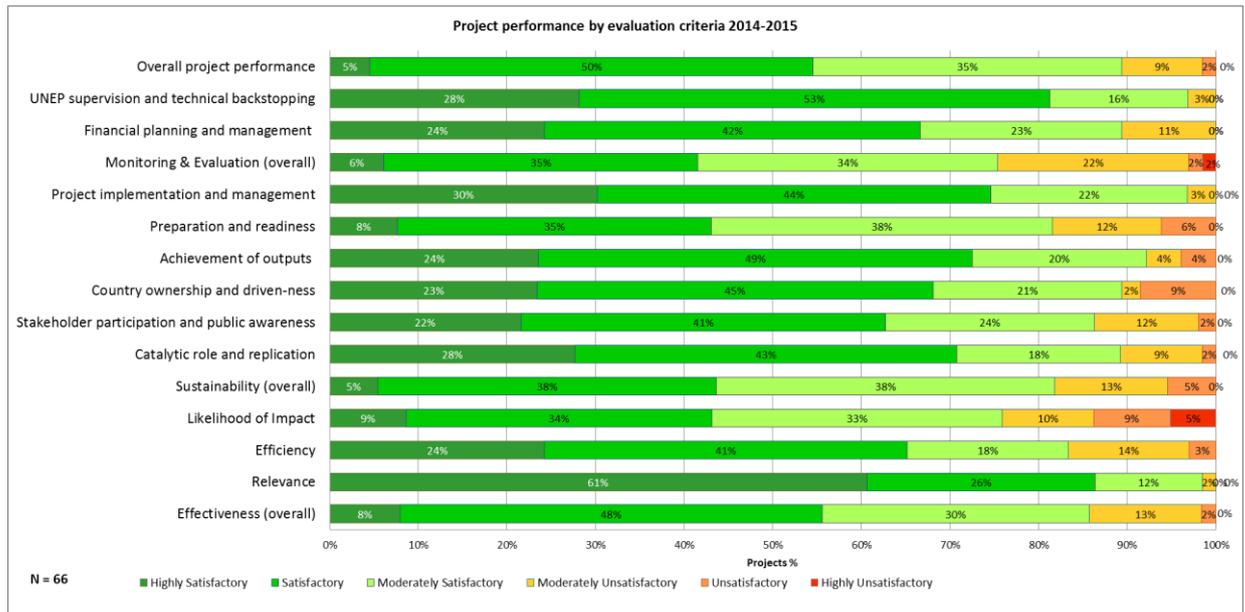


Figure 2: Overview of Project Performance by Evaluation Criteria (2014-2015 Biennium)



10. At the sub-programme (SP) level, Climate Change, Ecosystems Management and Environmental Governance were the sub-programmes associated with the greatest proportion of project evaluations (40%, 31% and 20% of projects evaluated respectively¹). The remaining three sub-programmes (i.e. Disasters and Conflicts, Chemicals and Waste and Resource Efficiency), collectively make up only 9% of the project evaluations in the same period².
11. The linkage to **Expected Accomplishments** (EAs) is specified in project documents and their causal linkages are described in the evaluation reports. The least represented EAs in the projects evaluated this biennium (i.e. less than 1% representation) were from the Disasters and Conflict, Environmental Governance and Resource Efficiency sub-programmes. There is a contrastingly high evaluation coverage of projects linked to Climate Change EAs, in particular EA(b) Clean Energy (up to 20% representation) for the biennium 2014-2015.
12. For the criterion ‘**overall project performance**’, the proportion of projects rated ‘Satisfactory’ or better showed a slight decrease from 62% in 2012-2013 to 55% in 2014-2015. The Ecosystem Management SP had the highest number of projects evaluated in the biennium, and, in addition, had 94% of projects rated within the satisfactory range. 77% of projects under the Climate Change SP were rated ‘Satisfactory’ or better in overall performance, whereas the Chemicals and Waste SP had the highest percentage of projects rated as ‘Highly Satisfactory’ in the same category (29%) but with relatively few projects covered. Of the projects evaluated in the biennium, 50% of GEF projects (n=52), were rated ‘Satisfactory’ or better in ‘overall performance’ compared to 71% for non-GEF projects (n=14).

Formative Evaluation of the Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017

13. The Formative Evaluation of the Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017 was presented to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and UNEP Senior Management in April/May 2015. Most of the recommendations made have already been wholly or partially addressed.

¹The timing of project level evaluations is determined by the project life cycle and the distribution of project evaluations across the seven sub-programmes is not, therefore, within the control of the EOU. Similarly, the seven sub-programmes vary widely in the number of projects they contain. As a result the number of project evaluations completed for each sub-programme in any time period also varies. Generalisations from the findings of evaluated projects to the sub-programmes themselves should be made with caution, especially when the number of evaluated projects is less than 30 (n<30).

²The Environment under Review (EuR) Subprogramme is not included in the analyses because the projects evaluated in this biennium (2014-2015) were designed prior to the MTS 2014-2017 which introduced the EuR SP. The variations in numbers of projects evaluated, disaggregated by sub-programme, is reflective of various factors including the number of projects submitted for evaluation.

14. The **purpose of the Formative Evaluation** was to assess the appropriateness of the design of the MTS and its associated planning documents in time to inform the next MTS and PoW planning cycle. The evaluation was to provide findings, lessons learned and recommendations in the first biennium of the 2014-17 MTS, based on an analysis of the quality, coherence and causal relationships specified across UNEP's planning documents. It was intended to support decision-making by UNEP member states and Senior Management regarding future UNEP strategic planning processes, and to provide recommendations to improve the project development process and the quality of project documents. Conscious that UNEP planning processes are already perceived as somewhat cumbersome and time-consuming, the proposed **recommendations** add as few additional requirements, procedures or processes as possible, but aim to strengthen those already in place.
15. Since the first Formative Evaluation of the PoW 2010-2011, UNEP has made considerable improvements in the strategic planning processes. **Preparation processes** for the MTS 2014-2017 and corresponding PoWs were highly consultative with prominent roles for Sub-Programme Coordinators (SPC) and focal points, involving a broad array of internal and external stakeholders.
16. The evaluation found that the MTS 2014-2017 presents a clear **vision and business plan** for the organisation. While remaining broadly in line with MTS 2010-2013, it also builds on lessons learned from the previous period. The MTS document clearly explains how UNEP is expected to influence environmental decision-making, by leading efforts to achieve UN system-wide coherence and by fully utilizing strategic partnerships 'to catalyse transformative change and leverage impact'.
17. The **sub-programme objectives** are found to be coherent with the vision and key goal statement for UNEP, with most indicating a behavioural change among stakeholders in the form of a transition or move towards some environmental aspect of sustainable development. The new MTS also presents service lines for UNEP which are directly derived from its **comparative advantages** and along which many PoW Outputs would be forged during PoW development. However, while UNEP's ambition is to tackle global environmental challenges, the 2014-2017 MTS did not present longer term objectives for environmental benefits and human well-being. UNEP's vision was inward-looking, indicating what UNEP intends to keep doing, rather than what it wants to achieve. [This was addressed for the 2018-21 MTS].
18. The Formative Evaluation strongly supports UNEP's decision to undertake more detailed planning efforts at the **Programme Framework (PF)** level. This level of detailed planning and consultation has been emphasised and strengthened since the last formative evaluation. The bulk of the planning effort for the PFs in the 2014-2017 MTS preceded the appointment of the current Sub-Programme Coordinators (SPCs). Whilst this evaluation makes a number of suggestions to strengthen the PFs, the EOU remains convinced that this level of planning combined with the new roles of SPCs and the Programme Strategy and Planning Team (PSPT) has the potential to form an effective link between longer term strategic planning and the operational 'building blocks' of UNEP's substantive work – the projects.
19. However, the final approved PF documents had been abridged and were missing much of the content proposed in the initial guidelines prepared by the Quality Assurance Section (QAS). There was no comprehensive problem analysis to justify the strategic focus and the type of support (outputs) UNEP intends to provide. The level of integration of the **GEF portfolio** in the PF documents was also rather limited. In most cases, a simple list is provided in the annex of the PF document, with no other mention of the GEF portfolio within the document, for instance under the Programme Framework Logic where reference is made only to the 'regular' projects.
20. **Project concepts** in PF documents often provide insufficient information to judge the strategic merit of the project in the broader strategic context of the sub-programme. This is especially true for new areas of work where the track record and strategic relevance of the intervention have yet to be established. In addition, many project concepts do not indicate the countries in which the project will be implemented. If they do, the choice of countries is rarely explained. Due to special attention by the Project Review Committee (PRC), recent project documents identify the **regional and country dimension** of the project better and provide a clearer description of the expected role of Regional Offices (ROs), but still remain unclear on what and how resources will be channelled to the Regional Offices. It should be noted that many critical aspects of project design, e.g. stakeholder and partnership analysis, sustainability, scale-up and replication strategy, safeguards etc. will

remain general descriptions and lack accuracy if the location of the project remains unknown or unspecified.

21. **Resource allocation** principles, criteria and priorities are not described in the PoW (or in any of the other main planning documents). In addition, the PoWs do not clarify the mechanisms in place to ensure a transparent prioritization of extra-budgetary funding. Only a small minority of project documents describe how the project will **mobilize resources** during implementation, although there are signs of improvement in recent project documents.
22. Since the last Formative Evaluation of the 2010-2011 PoW, **project designs have considerably improved** in the way they present the project context and often contain a convincing problem analysis. The use of ToC in project documents to explain the project logic has also improved and become more consistent since the requirement was introduced. However, most project documents limit themselves to presenting general groups of project partners and describe at a theoretical level how they fit into the project. In most project documents, identification of other project stakeholders, beyond project partners, is incomplete and stakeholder analysis needs to be strengthened.
23. The evaluation found that there had been significant progress in addressing **gender** issues in higher level planning documents. At the project level, gender is afforded good attention by the PRC. However, in most project documents this section often suffers from an over-generalized treatment.
24. A more detailed summary of these evaluation findings and corresponding recommendations is provided in the main body of this report.

Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme Evaluation

25. The evaluation of UNEP's Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme (EMSP), focused on the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013 but also covered the period 2008-2013. The evaluation was undertaken between June 2013 and August 2014. The main evaluation report is based largely on the findings from ten detailed case studies and a portfolio review, supplemented by information gathered from an extensive set of interviews and a review of key documents.
26. The evaluation found that the overall aims of the EMSP have been **relevant** and aligned to global and country needs and are also well aligned with UNEP's mandate as expressed in several UN General Assembly Resolutions and Reports, UNEP Governing Council Decisions and UNEP's MTS 2010-2013. The sub-programme has been relevant to the decisions and requests of the biodiversity-related Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and provided support for intergovernmental processes, particularly the Regional Seas programme and Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), as well as helping to address UN priorities for attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDG 7 - ensure environmental sustainability).
27. UNEP's **comparative advantage** in the area of ecosystem management is found to be clear at the global and regional levels, but less so at the local levels due to its limited country presence. Many other organisations are also active in the field of ecosystem management, some with large and well-established work programmes whereas the evaluation found UNEP's visibility within the ecosystem management community to be, in general, low and its distinctive niche not clear.
28. The evaluation **reconstructed a ToC** for the sub-programme which identified four Immediate Outcomes (IOs) which correspond to different dimensions of national, regional and global capacity for ecosystem management that can be improved in the short to medium term, and were at the level of results that UNEP can be realistically expected to attain after an implementation period of two to four years. There is evidence that UNEP's interventions have contributed to Medium-Term Outcomes (MTO) identified in the reconstructed ToC that can contribute to attainment of **intermediate states** and **expected impact**.
29. Project teams often make use of established systems, efforts and synergies, such as reliance on well-established national or local partners for field activities. Many of the case studies had their roots in earlier biennia and built on successful experience or lessons learnt from prior projects or represent a scaling up of earlier successful activities. Another factor responsible for the **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the more successful EMSP projects has been the development and

cultivation of strong partnerships since partners often have a better knowledge and understanding of the local situation than UNEP. However efficiency in the EMSP has been affected by significant delays to some projects for a variety of external and internal reasons.

30. Prospects for **sustainability** of EMSP results are mixed. Prospects for institutional sustainability have been supported by the EMSP's development, support and promotion of various knowledge networks to encourage information exchange, peer learning, and the transfer of experience on ecosystem management and restoration. However the lack of an overall EMSP strategy to ensure a coherent approach to capacity development has reduced the likelihood of institutional sustainability. Many of the tools developed or assessments undertaken by the EMSP projects have been captured in reports and publications that are available for download to other institutions involved in capacity development for ecosystem management, which supports sustainability and replication of project results. However promotion of these products is often unclear in many cases.
31. **Replication and up-scaling** of UNEP's direct results is essential to drive change at a larger scale, beyond the relatively few partner countries and demonstration sites of the EMSP. Unfortunately, most EMSP projects examined did not have an explicit strategy for replication and up-scaling of results for the 2010-2013 period, and these aspects were usually only briefly mentioned in project documents. Also, there was no overall replication strategy or approved communications plan for the sub-programme as a whole. UNEP is however now encouraging projects to give more attention to replication and up-scaling with increasing pressure for project managers to build them into their work.
32. A more detailed summary of the main findings is presented in in the main body of this report.

Climate Change Sub-Programme Evaluation

33. The evaluation of the Climate Change Sub-Programme (CCSP) was undertaken largely in the 2012-13 biennium.
34. The evaluation aimed at assessing the relevance and overall performance of UNEP work related to climate change in the three biennia from 2008 to 2013. The evaluation was conducted at five interconnected levels of analysis (UNEP corporate, sub-programme, component, country and project level) and focussed on three related areas of focus (strategic relevance, performance and factors affecting performance).
35. UNEP's climate change work is strongly supported by UNEP mandates and decisions by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and is considered highly **relevant** to the recommendations of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) objectives. During the biennium 2008-09, UNEP's climate change initiatives were dispersed across different divisions/sub-programmes. From 2010 onwards the biennial UNEP Programmes of Work (PoWs) were arranged in thematic sub-programmes, including one for Climate Change, that cut across divisions. The two most recent PoWs were developed by the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) through a consultative approach across all divisions involved in climate change, and also solicited input from regional and country offices. Over the period 2010-2013, based on reporting in the UNEP Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) and UNEP's Programme Information and Management System (PIMS), **achievement of Expected Accomplishments (EAs) indicator targets exceeded expectations** across most of the sub-programme.
36. UNEP's **collaborative partnerships** were found to utilize the relative contributions of UN-Agencies and also engage dedicated and/or strategic government counterparts in country. UNEP was successful in developing partnerships for adaptation and has a strong reputation for bringing highly competent technical support into projects and engaging a wide variety of stakeholders. At the time of the evaluation, UNEP did not appear to have a vision in terms of harmonizing efforts under the climate change components to look for synergies and reduce duplication of efforts. There are clear theoretical ties between science and outreach, REDD+, mitigation and adaptation, but these were not systematically addressed in UNEP's long-term strategy. As a result, collaboration across Divisions remained largely informal and ad hoc while regional engagement and the role of the Regional Offices were somewhat unclear. At the country level UNEP-supported interventions

were found to be somewhat fragmented. This is in spite of some efforts to map all related activities to examine possible synergies and risk of overlap at both national and international levels.

37. Progress was made in implementing Results-Based Management (RBM) under the MTS. Publicly available outputs (assessments, guidelines etc.) could be found online, but information on their utility and use was not available.
38. **Sustainability** plans were not systematically incorporated into UNEP CCSP projects and, at the time of the evaluation, project-planning documents typically did not outline hand-over strategies, or address risks and mitigation measures for factors affecting sustainability. On-going and pre-existing projects and programmes strongly shaped current interventions but in many cases the sustainability lessons drawn from these interventions were not explicitly stated and brought forward into current activities.
39. Further details summarizing the CCSP's strategic relevance, performance and factors affecting performance as well as recommendations made by the evaluation are presented in the main body of the report.

Chemicals and Waste Sub-Programme Evaluation

40. The evaluation of UNEP's Chemicals and Waste Sub-Programme (CWSP) was undertaken in the 2014-15 biennium and aimed to assess the relevance and overall performance of UNEP's work related to chemicals and waste from the PoW 2010-2011 onwards. The evaluation had a dual purpose: providing a basis for accountability on sub-programme performance and drawing lessons from experience for programme improvement. During the period of this evaluation, the CWSP was implemented through a portfolio of 17 UNEP projects with a planned budget of US\$ 99.74 million and an estimated programmed budget of US\$ 95.10 million. There were an additional 14 GEF projects with an estimated total budget of US\$ 98 million.
41. The sub-programme was found to be **relevant** to a number of chemicals and waste related global agreements. UNEP Governing Council (GC) approvals of the Medium-Term Strategies (UNEP/GC.25/12, UNEP/GC.26/13 and GC.27/9) as well as approvals of subsequent programmes, in and of themselves, are evidence of consistency with UNEP and member state priorities. The **objectives of the sub-programme** are also aligned with the MDGs 7 & 8 to ensure environmental sustainability, and develop global partnership for development. The new themes in Chemicals and Waste being developed in the area of Health and Environment seem consistent with GC requests and global concerns about linkages between Health and Environment.
42. The CWSP achieved positive results during the two biennia spanning 2010-13, in spite of challenges related to **funding** and the many changes in **senior leadership**. The sub-programme's efforts to generate scientific knowledge, provide policy advice, develop approaches and methods, mainstream chemicals and waste into national development policies and convene stakeholders to catalyse international action on mercury and generally on the sound management of chemicals and waste seem to have been particularly effective. The sub-programme built on tools and methodologies developed in previous biennia. However with the exception of the Mercury Convention³, this evaluation found that there is a perception of weak cooperation and collaboration between the sub-programme and the other chemicals and waste MEAs (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions). There is room to strengthen cooperation with the MEAs so that UNEP's efforts can better support the implementation of MEAs at global, national and regional level.
43. The close involvement of Regional Offices, in some cases, increased **efficiency** as project implementation benefited from their better regional knowledge, contacts and experience. However, the evaluation found that the engagement of the regions remains primarily based on the efforts and initiatives of individual project managers. While recognizing that the work is substantially driven by global initiatives, it is a key part of the delivery of UNEP's PoW. **Synergy and collaboration** between the CWSP and other DTIE Branches and UNEP divisions should therefore be strengthened for more effective coordination of the CWSP's activities. Independent evaluative evidence for the

³ The Mercury Convention was under development over the period of the 2010-2013 Medium-Term Strategy (MTS)

projects in the CWSP portfolio is very scarce and a substantial effort is required to change the **monitoring and evaluation culture** in the Branch.

44. Details summarizing the performance of the CWSP are further presented in the main body of this report.

Fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5) Evaluation

45. The GEO-5 Terminal Evaluation was undertaken in 2014 to provide a basis for accountability towards the UNEP Governing Council, donors and other stakeholders, and draw lessons for future GEOs and similar large-scale environmental assessments.
46. GEO-5, timed to launch in June 2012 in time for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20), was considered high in **relevance**. In the judgment of the evaluation, it contributed to the Rio+20 Conference and the discussions on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it enhanced the stature of UNEP. GEO-5 pursued an approach that is considered best practice by the literature on Global Environmental Assessments (GEAs), providing good prospects for use of the GEO-5 assessment by strongly engaging key decision makers and stakeholders in the assessment process.
47. The GEO-5 assessment achieved a high level of **credibility** while being completed in time for consideration at the Rio+20 Conference and benefitting from strong communication efforts. These elements were deemed critical to the success of the GEO-5 effort at the global level. Procedures to foster credibility were developed and implemented through oversight provided by the Chapter Coordinators, the GEO-5 Science and Policy Advisory Board. However, GEO-5 had mixed performance on gender: while it had a strong female presence amongst contributors at all levels and on the GEO-5 team, the substantive representation of **gender** issues in the GEO-5 assessment was muted.
48. GEO-5 aligns constructively with the global discussions on sustainable development and the new sustainable development goals and therefore proved to be **salient** for global uses. It was less salient for national/(sub-)regional scales of use, which was understandable given the high priority of intended use at global levels. However, national and sub-regional and even sub-national are the scales where mitigation and adaptation decisions are made that are most closely linked to behavioural change and environmental impacts.
49. A summary of the performance of the GEO-5 project, recommendations and lessons for future GEOs is provided in the main body of this report.

Joint Evaluation of the UN-REDD Programme

50. The external evaluation of the UN-REDD Programme was requested at the 9th UN-REDD Policy Board meeting in 2012. It was conducted by an independent team of consultants and managed by a joint Evaluation Management Group (EMG), consisting of the evaluation offices of the three participating UN agencies (FAO, UNDP and UNEP). The Evaluation Office of UNEP took a leading role in managing the evaluation. The evaluation assessed the programme's performance, covering the entire range of activities and geographic scope, from June 2008 to the end of 2013.
51. The UN-REDD Programme is a **relevant** response to UNFCCC negotiations and the emerging REDD+ agenda, but uncertainty over the future of REDD+ financing and progress that was slower than expected on most aspects of the proposed mechanism are creating new challenges. Valued for its integrated approach to sustainable resource use, the UN-REDD Programme is largely consistent with country needs and priorities and enjoys strong buy-in from host ministries downward (environment or forestry departments). However country ownership remains weak overall, with limited involvement from policy-makers, non-forest-related ministries and the private sector.
52. Overall, the UN-REDD Programme is **effective** in terms of producing key outputs, and progress towards outcomes is improving. While contributing to the expansion of the sustainable development paradigm and the development of country capacities in a number of areas (most notably in measurement, reporting and verification), achieving and sustaining outcome-level results is an ongoing challenge. Countries participating in National Programmes are not

progressing as planned and the time, effort and resources needed to achieve REDD+ readiness were greatly under-estimated. Though countries differ considerably, in terms of their initial capacity and ability to achieve stated objectives, all face considerable challenges and none of the reviewed countries have so far achieved satisfactory ratings in all outcome areas.

53. With regards to **efficiency**, the UN-REDD Programme relies on a transparent open-access framework at the global level –the Multi-Partner Trust Fund – to report on the use and distribution of funds across the three UN partner agencies. The distribution of resources across the UN-REDD Programme is not linked to a clearly articulated strategy. While national programme budgets are developed by countries with the support of programme staff, there are no clear strategic guidelines for the development of these budgets and the rationale for investing the bulk of available resources in the Support to National REDD+ Actions – Global Programme (SNA-GP) is likewise unspecified. Furthermore, UN-REDD does not rely on an integrated management system to track and monitor the use of available resources and quality of programme results, making it difficult to undertake more complex analyses and decide how best to allocate available resources to achieve objectives. Though **inter-agency coordination** is perceived to be improving, with increasing evidence of joint planning efforts in the regions, the challenges to joint programming and implementation remain considerable, especially at the country level. The complexity of the UN-REDD governance structure is generally considered essential for maintaining trust amongst UN partner agencies and across the programme’s diverse range of constituencies, but it also creates high transaction costs, delays in implementation and administrative redundancies.
54. The evaluation found that the UN-REDD Programme is helping to create enabling conditions for collective action at the country level. For instance, the programme has contributed to the development of more inclusive and transparent forms of **stakeholder engagement**, as well as some policy and regulatory reforms. Changes in the rules that condition the use, management and governance of forests at national and sub-national levels will take longer to achieve and require higher levels of commitment. However, it remains too early to tell what effects the programme will have in terms of reduced deforestation, sustainable forest resource use and improved socio-economic conditions. As currently designed, the UN-REDD Programme’s likelihood of broader development **impact** (i.e. emission reductions) largely lies beyond the programme’s reach.
55. A summary of the evaluation findings including factors affecting the programme’s performance is provided in the main body of the report.

Compliance with Evaluation Recommendations

56. The EOU has completed a combined total of 117 project, sub-programme and corporate evaluations between the years 2011 and 2015 resulting in 696 recommendations. Following the completion of an evaluation, a response to the evaluation recommendations, in the form of an implementation plan, must be prepared. In the biennium 2014 – 2015, Recommendation Implementation Plans for a combined total of forty two (42) project, sub-programme/programme and corporate evaluations were completed and sent to UNEP substantive offices. Thirty five (83%) were completed and returned to the Evaluation Office while seven (19%) failed to complete an implementation plan in the prescribed time. 86% of the responses to evaluation recommendations in the biennium indicated acceptance by the responsible office, 5% were partially accepted and 8% were rejected (1% not indicated).
57. Overall, recommendations’ compliance, assessed in terms of project managers completing the required implementation plans, improved from last biennium with 70% to 86% compliance. Since 2011, the total number of recommendations issued per annum has increased, due to the higher number of evaluations being completed. The proportions of recommendations that are closed as either ‘not compliant’ or ‘partially compliant’ have also steadily declined over the period from 2011 to present.
58. A complete assessment of compliance with recommendations is presented in the main body of the report.

Performance of the UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluation Quality

59. During the 2014-15 biennium a number of independent external assessments of the EOU have been completed. These underpin the accountability of the evaluation function and have played a significant role in enhancing the credibility of the EOU both within and outside the organisation. Trends in internal and external assessment of the quality of UNEP evaluation reports are presented in this report and include a summary of findings from the following:

- The Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations Secretariat (OIOS) Evaluation Scorecard of UNEP Evaluation Office
- Joint Inspection Unit of the UN (JIU) Evaluation Maturity Matrix
- GEF Independent Evaluation Office assessment of the quality of UNEP Evaluation Reports
- United Nations Evaluation Group - Professional Peer Review⁴
- United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) UNEP Evaluation Office Performance

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/derec/50194754.pdf>

I. Introduction

Evaluation Office

60. The mandate for conducting, coordinating and overseeing evaluation in UNEP is vested in the Evaluation Office (EOU). This mandate covers all programmes and projects of the Environment Fund, related trust funds, earmarked contributions and projects implemented by UNEP under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The EOU undertakes a variety of evaluations and management studies, in accordance with the requirements of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP, and in conformity with the Norms and Standards for evaluation of the United Nations system.
61. The activities of the EOU include high level strategic evaluations of UNEP's medium term strategies and thematic sub-programmes, formative evaluations of the UNEP strategic planning processes, in-depth project evaluations, portfolio evaluations, cross-cutting thematic evaluations and management studies. The EOU provides technical backstopping to project and programme managers undertaking project reviews, when requested, and closely follows-up on the implementation of all accepted evaluation recommendations. The EOU also prepares special studies designed to improve evaluation planning and management processes and procedures. Guidelines, formal requirements and practical advice in planning for evaluations have been specified in detail in the UNEP Programme Manual and are further elaborated in the UNEP Evaluation Manual which can be found on the UNEP Evaluation Web site at: www.unep.org/eou.
62. All UNEP projects and programmes, regardless of their funding source, are subject to evaluation. Evaluations take three main forms:
 - a. Higher level strategic evaluations: UNEP Medium-Term Strategy and thematic sub-programmes. The EOU aims to complete an evaluation one thematic sub-programme every-year.
 - b. Mid-term and terminal project or portfolio evaluations conducted as desk or in-depth studies;
 - c. Impact and influence studies; although relatively few have been completed to date, this is an emerging focus area.

Mandate and Mission

63. This evaluation synthesis report has been prepared as part of the mission of the EOU to promote the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function and evaluation across UNEP and to promote the visibility and advocate the importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability.
64. The mandate for undertaking evaluations has been stated in various General Assembly resolutions and UNEP Governing Council (now UNEA of UNEP) decisions. The Governing Council has recognized the importance of evaluation as an integral part of the programme planning cycle, while retaining its independence, and has requested the Executive Director to continue to refine evaluation methodologies in collaboration with Governments (Governing Council decisions 75 IV, 6/13, 13/1 and 14/1) and partners within the United Nations system. In its decision 19/29, the Council also requested the Executive Director to strengthen the UNEP oversight function. According to the Secretary General's bulletin on programme planning, monitoring and implementation (ST/SGB/2000/8), which consolidates the General Assembly decisions on the evaluation function, "The objective of evaluation is: (a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives; (b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives."

Scope and Objectives of the Synthesis Report

65. This report is prepared as an inter-sessional document of the UNEA of UNEP and also serves as part of the input of UNEP to the Secretary-General's report on evaluation to the General Assembly. The report provides stakeholders such as Governments, UNEP senior management and UNEP partners with an evaluative assessment of UNEP's programme and project performance in the 2014-2015 biennium. The main objective of the report is to help UNEP reflect on its programme performance through evaluative evidence and lessons from programme and project design and implementation.
66. The report is based on evaluations conducted in the 2014-2015 biennium and utilizes information drawn from the Formative Evaluation of the Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017, three sub-programme evaluations, the global evaluation of UN-REDD, an in-depth evaluation of GEO-5 and sixty six in-depth project evaluations spanning the UNEP PoW and GEF portfolios. The evaluation synthesis report also contains a review of the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations, presents external assessments of the performance of the UNEP evaluation function and other evaluation activities undertaken by the EOU to support organisational goals.

Method

Analytical approach

67. The EOU conducts all evaluations in consultation with the relevant programme and project managers to ensure that, while United Nations and UNEP evaluation standards are followed, the views and concerns of the respective programmes and projects are adequately and fairly reflected.
68. The analysis and conclusions contained in the report are based on:
 - a. Review and 'meta-analysis' of all evaluation reports prepared during the biennium;
 - b. Review of implementation plans and management responses to the recommendations of the evaluation reports over the period 2014–2015;
 - c. Discussions with UNEP staff on subjects related to partnership framework agreements and implementation of evaluation recommendations. More detail on methods and standard evaluation criteria are provided in the section below entitled "Analysis of Project Performance and Lessons Learnt 2014-15".

Evaluation parameters

69. The report is based on a review and assessment of the key evaluation criteria that are consistently assessed in all UNEP performance evaluations. The criteria are explained in detail in Chapter II, which presents project performance from evaluations completed during the biennium.

II. Analysis of Project Performance and Lessons Learnt

Overview

71. In the biennium 2014-2015, the EOU completed a total of **sixty six (66)**⁵ **mid-term and terminal evaluations**. In addition to these, **three (3) UNEP sub-programme evaluations**⁶ and **three (3) strategic evaluations**⁷ were completed, and an additional 52 evaluations strategic evaluations scheduled for completion in the biennium 2016-2017 were initiated by the team.
72. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁸ and the Evaluation Manual⁹, these evaluations are undertaken in order to: i) provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements and ii) promote learning, feedback and knowledge-sharing through results and lessons learned, among UNEP and its partners.
73. The evaluations assess projects with respect to a minimum set of evaluation criteria grouped into six categories, namely: i) strategic relevance, ii) attainment of objectives and planned results - which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, effectiveness and likelihood of impact, iii) sustainability of outcomes and replication, iv) efficiency, v) factors and processes affecting project performance, including preparation and readiness, implementation and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership and driven-ness, financial planning and management, UNEP supervision and backstopping and project monitoring and evaluation; and vi) complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The latter is assessed but not formally rated.
74. This chapter presents an analysis of the trends in project performance across the evaluation criteria assessed during mid-term and terminal evaluations. Included in these analyses are performance ratings for projects evaluated in the biennium 2014-2015; in some instances however, we have also included data from previous biennia. This gives us a longer time series that offers two key benefits, namely: i) a clearer interpretation of performance patterns for the criteria and ii) the ability to forecast likely future performance based on the observed patterns. Such observations enable the EOU to give valuable feedback for improvement in areas where such feedback is likely to have the greatest utility.
75. A six-point scale is used to rate each evaluation criterion as presented in Table 1 below. The rating system and evaluation quality control processes used are consistent with those applied by the GEF, UNDP and the World Bank. Annual independent assessment of UNEP's GEF project evaluations by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office ensures that ratings are fully benchmarked against those of UNDP and the World Bank (see Chapter V on UNEP Evaluation Office performance).

Table 1: Evaluation Rating Scale

| Category | Rating10 | Abbrev. | Abbrev. | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|---------|--------------------------------|
| Strategic relevance; Attainment of objectives and planned results; Sustainability and replication; Efficiency; and Factors and processes affecting project performance. | Highly Satisfactory | HS | HL | ↑ satisfactory range ↓ |
| | Satisfactory | S | L | |
| | Moderately Satisfactory | MS | ML | |
| | Moderately Unsatisfactory | MU | MU | ↑ unsatisfactory range ↓ |
| | Unsatisfactory | U | U | |
| | Highly Unsatisfactory | HU | HU | |

⁵ This value (66no.) includes a few projects which, although programmed under one portfolio, were nevertheless evaluated separately at the country level (e.g. 'UNFCCC National Communication Programme', and 'Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework')

⁶ Sub-Programme Evaluation on Climate Change (2014); Sub-Programme Evaluation on Ecosystem Management (2014); and Sub-Programme Evaluation on Chemicals and Wastes (2015)

⁷ UN-REDD Programme Evaluation (2014); The Formative Evaluation of the UNEP 2014-2017 Medium-Term Strategy (2014); and Outcome Evaluation of Barcelona Convention UNEP/MAP Five Year Programme of Work 2010-2014 (2014)

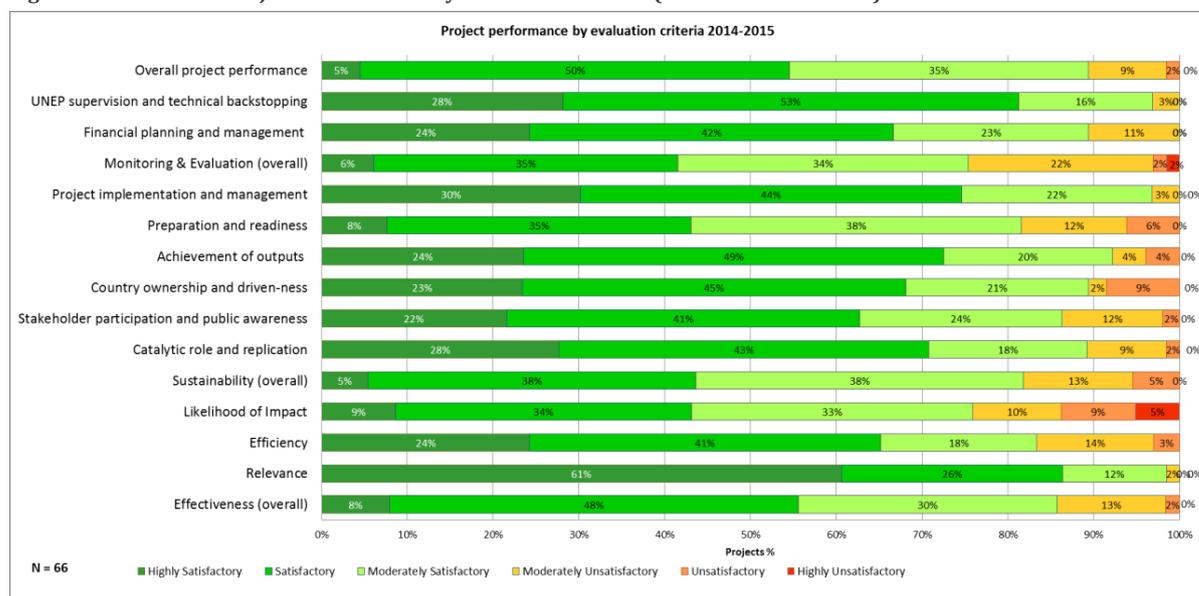
⁸ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁰ The evaluation criteria under 'Sustainability' and 'Impact' are rated based on "Likelihood", on a scale from Highly Likely (HL) to Highly Unlikely (HU)

76. Project performance by criteria is discussed in greater detail in this chapter, including comparisons by year, sub-programmes, divisions and funding modalities for GEF and non-GEF projects, as appropriate. In addition, selected lessons emerging from these evaluations have been highlighted, especially where these are recognized as representing significant and/or recurring experiences from project implementation.

Figure 3: Overview of Project Performance by Evaluation Criteria (2014-2015 Biennium)



77. Figure 3 above shows an overview of project performance ratings in key criteria for projects evaluated in the biennium 2014-2015. The **strategic relevance** of projects to UNEP's plans and policies, including global, regional and national environmental issues and needs, attained quite high ratings in a majority of the projects evaluated in 2014-2015. This has been a consistently high performing area over the last three biennia, with 98% of the projects rated in the satisfactory range (MS to HS) in 2014-2015, compared to 98% in 2012-2013 and 100% in 2010-2011.
78. **Project implementation and management** was one of the criteria that showed most improvement in the 2014-2015 biennium, with only 3% of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range (MU-HU), in comparison to 16% in 2012-2013 and 24% in 2010-2011. **Efficiency**, in terms of cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution, has gradually improved over the years, with 65% projects scoring 'Satisfactory' (S) or better in 2014-2015, up from 62% in 2012-2013 and 54% in 2010-2011. The ratings for achievement of programmed **outputs** also improved significantly, with 73% of projects rated 'Satisfactory' or better, comparing favourably against 66% of projects with the same rating for this criterion in both the 2012-2013 and 2010-2011 biennia.
79. The assessment of **sustainability** of project outcomes has displayed a gradual improvement in the course of the three biennia, with 43% of projects evaluated in 2014-2015 rated 'Highly Likely' or 'Likely' to have sustainable outcomes, up from 32% in 2012-2013 and 23% in 2010-2011. **Country ownership and driven-ness** are usually strong factors affecting the progression of project outcomes towards impact and for this criterion 68% of the projects evaluated in 2014-2015 achieved a rating of 'Satisfactory' or better. 71 % of projects assessed in the same period were rated as being 'Satisfactory' or higher for **replication and/or scaling-up** of project results.
80. It was noted in the last Evaluation Synthesis Report that there was need for improvement in the quality of **project preparation and readiness** and it is encouraging to note a modest improvement for this criterion this biennium, with 18% projects rated in the unsatisfactory range, down from 24% and 23% in the biennia 2012-2013 and 2010-2011 respectively.
81. As with previous evaluation synthesis reports, both the positive and negative aspects in project performance are highlighted. While there are positive trends in the criteria mentioned above, a few areas remain where attention needs to be focussed if further improvements are to be realised.
82. In 2014-2015, of the projects assessed for their **effectiveness** in attaining objectives and planned results, 86% were rated in the satisfactory range, effectively the same level of performance as in

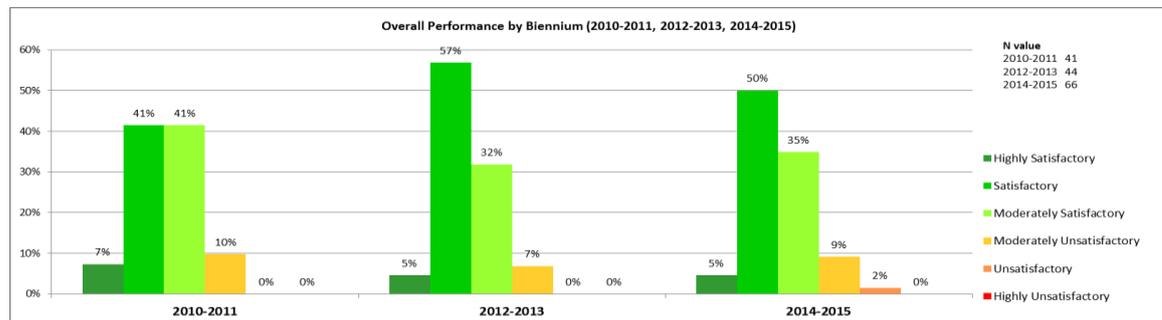
2012-2013 (87%), but significantly down from the 97% in 2010-2011. For 24% of the projects evaluated this biennium, the **likelihood of impact achievement** was in the unsatisfactory range. As was noted in the 2012-2013 Evaluation Synthesis Report, this trend is attributed to the increased rigour with which the effectiveness criteria are being assessed by the EOU. We reiterate here that the systematic use of Theory of Change (ToC) analysis since late 2011, coupled with the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach, in effect introduced a higher required standard of evidence to receive performance ratings in the satisfactory range. The pattern emerging from the synthesis data this biennium shows an encouraging development however, with 43% of projects rated 'Likely' or 'Highly Likely' to achieve impact as compared to 32% of projects rated against the same in 2012-2013.

83. **Monitoring and evaluation** as a criterion assessed under 'factors and processes that affect project performance', has continuously lagged behind the others in terms of performance ratings. Undeniably, there has been a notable decrease in the percentage of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range this biennium - 25% of projects down from 32% in 2012-2013 and 42% in 2010-2011. This notwithstanding, the sub-optimal performance against this criterion each biennium confirms previously stated concerns with regards to quality standards for monitoring and evaluation planning in project designs. Additionally, a well-designed and adequately financed M&E system should enable managers to strengthen results-oriented adaptive management approaches during project implementation.

Overall Project Performance

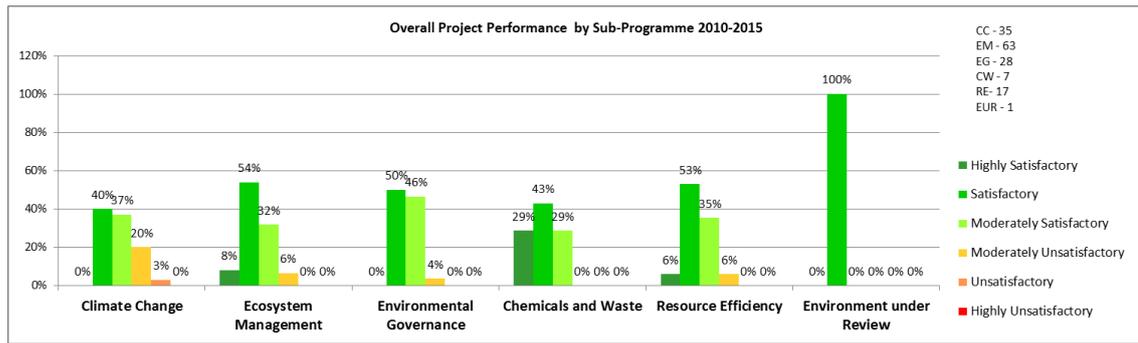
84. This criterion provides a general indication of a project's overall performance. Figure 4 below shows the trend in overall project performance over the three biennia. Projects rated 'Satisfactory' or higher decreased from 62% in 2012-2013 to 55% in 2014-2015; there has also been a minor (4%) increase in projects rated in the unsatisfactory range in 2014-2015 (n=66) as compared to the previous biennium (n=44).

Figure 4: Analysis of Overall Project Performance for the Biennia 2010-2011/2012-2013/2014-2015



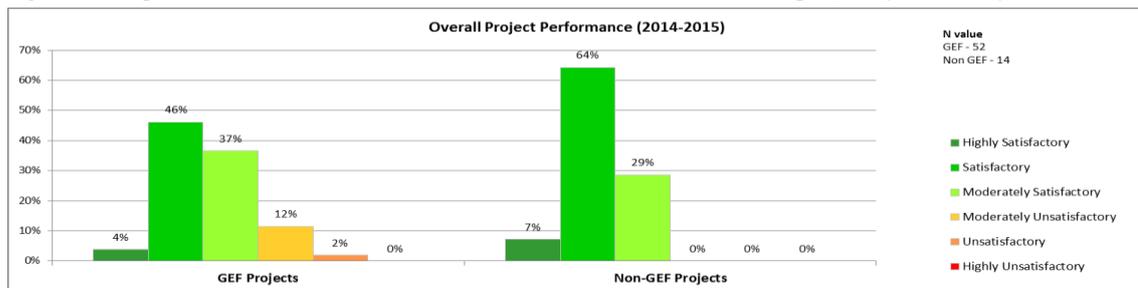
85. Due to differences in the total number of active projects in each sub-programme and the variation in the timings of each project's operational completion, there are uneven numbers of evaluations across sub-programmes. There were 63 project evaluations within the EMSP, 35 within the CCSP, 28 under the EGSP and 17 under the RESP. There were no project evaluations under the Disasters and Conflicts Sub-Programme, one under the Environment under Review Sub-Programme and 7 under CWSP. A look at the overall project performance by sub-programme (SP) in
86. Figure 5 below, shows that of the projects evaluated between 2010-2015, 77% of those under the Climate Change SP were rated 'Satisfactory' or higher. The Resource Efficiency SP (n= 17) and Ecosystem Management SP (n=63) also show good overall performance, both with 94% of projects rated within the satisfactory range over the same period. The Chemicals and Waste SP (previously Harmful Substances and Hazardous Wastes) had the highest percentage of projects rated as 'Highly Satisfactory' in overall performance (29%) - although this translates to only 2 projects.

Figure 5: Overall Project Performance by Sub-Programme in 2010-2015¹¹



87. Overall Project Performance is shown for GEF funded and non-GEF projects in Figure 6 below. Of the projects evaluated in 2014-2015, 50% of the GEF projects (n=52), were rated ‘Satisfactory’ or better in overall performance compared to 71% for non-GEF projects (n=14) in this same category. The larger data set of projects evaluated in the six years (2010-2015) also reveals a similar trend with 52% of GEF projects (n=113) and 63% of non-GEF projects (n=38) rated ‘Satisfactory’ or higher in their overall performance. Based on the available data, it is not possible to establish underlying correlations responsible for the consistently better overall performance ratings for non-GEF projects as there are several variables influencing overall project performance.

Figure 6: Comparison of Overall Project Performance between GEF and non-GEF projects (2014-2015)



Orientation to Expected Accomplishments

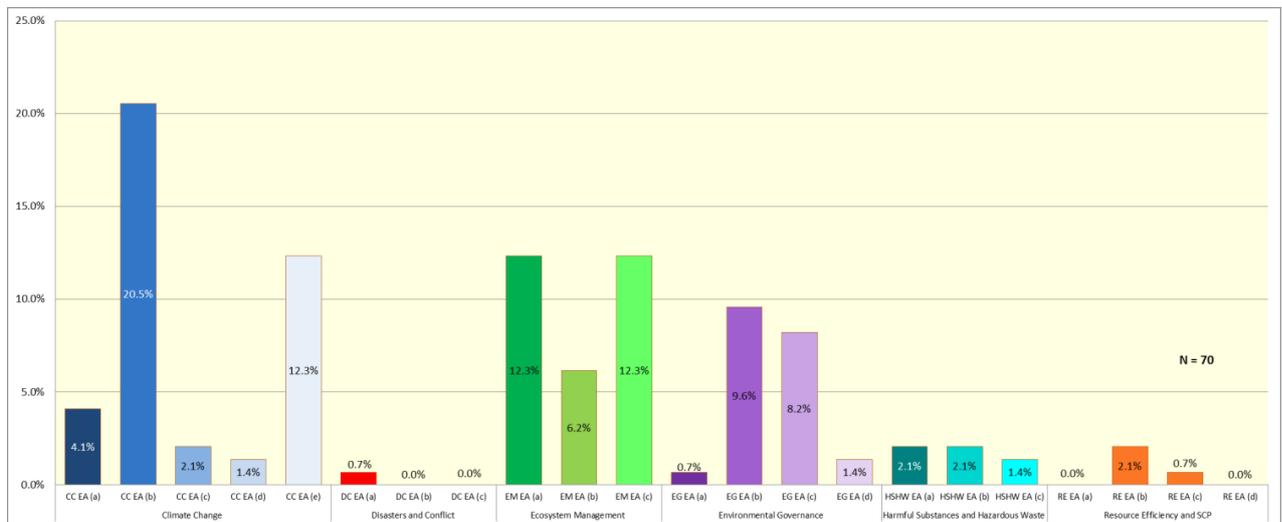
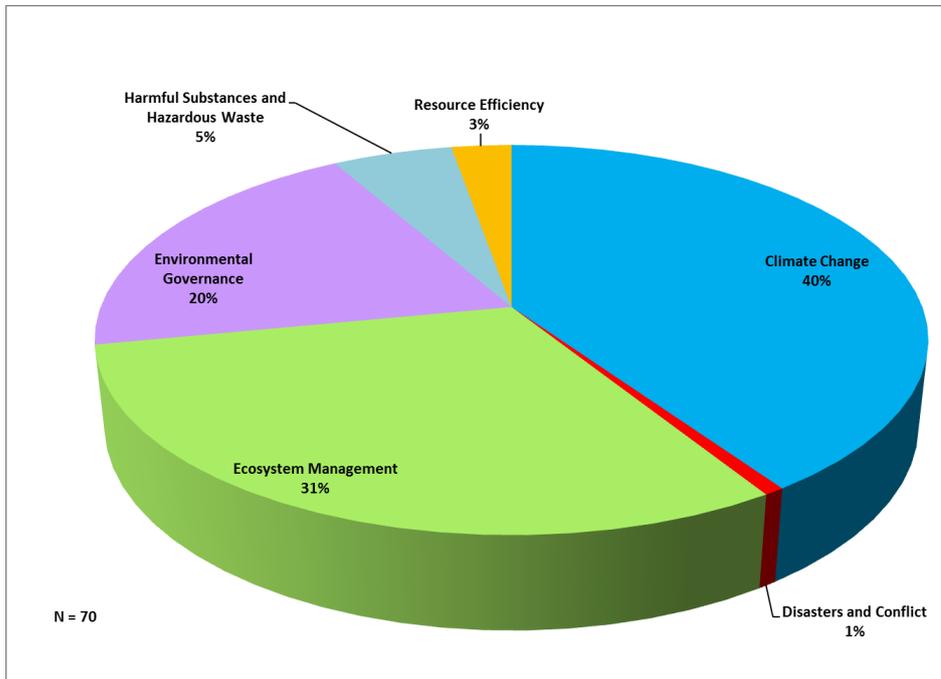
88. UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) guides programme planning over a four-year period; it identifies thematic priorities (sub-programmes) and sets out the desired expected accomplishments (or planned outcomes) and objectives for each sub-programme. In strengthening the foundation for results-based management, all UNEP’s efforts are geared towards achieving the planned outcomes as embodied in the expected accomplishments (EAs). These EAs are designed at a level where UNEP’s products and services are more easily attributable.¹²
89. Terminal evaluations assess whether projects are making a plausible contribution to any of the EAs specified in the project documents. The extent of contribution and the causal linkages are also described in the evaluation reports as applicable.
90. The PoW for the biennium 2014–2015 is guided by the MTS 2014–2017. The projects that were evaluated in 2014-2015 biennium however, comprised mostly of projects that were initially approved as part of the PoW in the MTS 2010-2013; consequently their approved designs were aligned with the sub-programmes and expected accomplishments within that period.
91. Although the evaluations themselves were undertaken during MTS 2014-2017, the analysis presented below considers the planning period during which the design documents were approved, and the projects’ stated linkages to EAs as articulated in the project documents.

¹¹ Note: There were no evaluations of projects within the Disasters and Conflicts Sub-Programme in the 2014-2015 biennium

¹² Budget and programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015 and the Environment Fund and other budgetary matters. Twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Nairobi, February 2013

92. Please note that the figures presented do not tell us anything of the projects' actual contribution to the EAs they align to; they do, however, illustrate project level **evaluation coverage** by showing the **frequency** with which specific EAs were specified as higher level results in those projects evaluated in the biennium 2014-2015. ¹³

Figure 7: Frequency of MTS 2010-2013 EAs Denoted in Projects Evaluated during 2014-2015



¹³ Not all Expected Accomplishments outlined in MTS 2010-2013 were represented in the design documents of projects evaluated in 2014-2015.

Table 2: List of UNEP Sub-Programmes and Respective Expected Accomplishments (MTS 2010-2013)

| Sub-programme | Expected Accomplishments |
|--|---|
| Climate Change | Climate Change: EA a/ Adaption Climate Change: EA b/ Clean Energy Climate Change: EA c/ Clean Energy Finance Climate Change: EA d/ REDD+ Climate Change: EA e/ Science and Outreach |
| Disasters and Conflicts | Disasters and Conflicts: EA a/ Risk reduction Disasters and Conflicts: EA b/ Post Crisis Assessment Disasters and Conflicts: EA c/ Post Crisis Recovery |
| Ecosystem Management | Ecosystem Management: EA a/ Capacities to Integrate Ecosystem Management into Development Ecosystem Management: EA b/ Building Capacities to use Ecosystem Management Tools Ecosystem Management: EA c/ Ecosystem Services and Financing |
| Environmental Governance | Environmental Governance: EA a/ International Policy Setting Environmental Governance: EA b/ Strengthening Environmental Law Environmental Governance: EA c/ Integrating Environment into Development Environmental Governance: EA d/ Sound Science for Decision Making |
| Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste | Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste: EA a/ Sound Management at National Level Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste: EA b/ International Policy and Technical Advice Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste: EA c/ Policy and Control Systems for Harmful Substances of Global Concern |
| Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production | Resource Efficiency and SCP: EA a/ Bridging Science and Policy Resource Efficiency and SCP: EA b/ Taking Policy Action Resource Efficiency and SCP: EA c/ Increasing Sustainable Business Practices in Key Sectors Resource Efficiency and SCP: EA d/ Stimulating More Sustainable Lifestyles and Products |

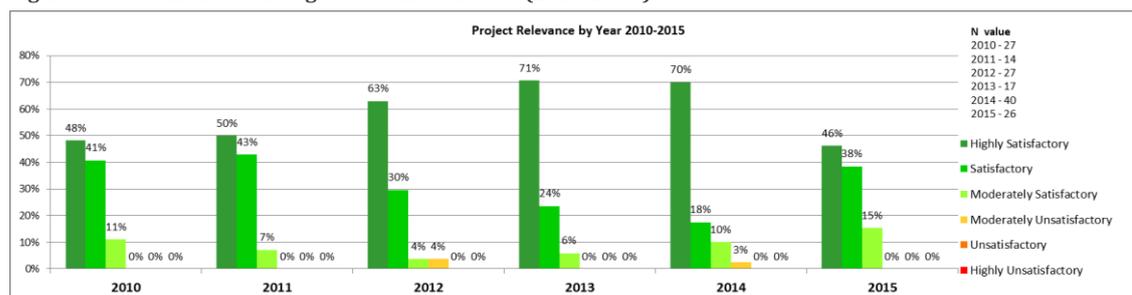
93. According to Figure 7 above, the Climate Change SP, Ecosystems Management SP and Environmental Governance SP were the sub-programmes associated with the greatest proportion of project evaluations (40%, 31% and 20% of projects evaluated respectively). The remaining three sub-programmes (i.e. Disasters and Conflicts, Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste, Resource Efficiency), collectively make up for only 9% of the project evaluations in the same period.
94. The most frequently represented EAs in projects evaluated in the 2014-2015 biennium included those from the Climate Change SP (EA b/ Clean Energy 20%, EA e/ Science and outreach 12.3%) and Ecosystem Management SP (EA a/ Capacity to integrate ecosystem management into development 12.3%, EA c/ Ecosystem services and financing 12.3%). The least frequently represented EAs in projects evaluated in the 2014-2015 biennium (i.e. less than 1% representation) were from the Disasters and Conflict SP (EA a/ Risk reduction 0%, EA b/ Post Crisis Assessment 0% and EA c/ Post Crisis Recovery 0%); Environmental Governance SP (EA a/ International Policy Setting 0.7%); and Resource Efficiency SP (EA a/ Bridging Science and Policy 0%, and EA d/ Stimulating More Sustainable Lifestyles and Products 0%).
95. A forecast of the coverage of EAs by projects scheduled for evaluation in the biennium 2016-2017 reveals a minimal variation from the trend above. When compared to the previous biennium, we however note an increased representation of EAs under Resource Efficiency SP, whereas those under the Disasters and Conflicts SP and Chemicals and Waste SP may continue to be under-represented. The three EAs under the Ecosystem Management SP¹⁴ maintain a high representation (45%) in the projects lined up for evaluation in 2016-2017.
96. Reasons for this trend relate, in part, to the numbers of projects that happen to reach completion during the biennium. Obviously, parts of UNEP that have a larger number of projects will undergo more evaluations. Similarly, parts of UNEP that adequately budget for evaluation and keep the Evaluation Office informed of impending project completions are also better represented. The EOU also prioritises project evaluations that will feed into upcoming sub-programme evaluations (e.g. the Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme Evaluation which is slated for 2016).

¹⁴ EA1 Production; EA2 Marine issues; and EA3 Enabling environment

Relevance

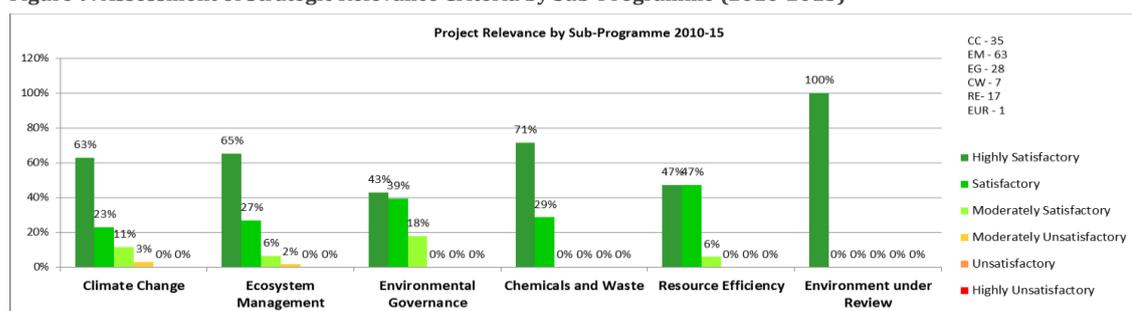
97. This criterion assesses whether the projects' objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with global, regional and national environmental issues and needs. It also assesses the projects' relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate, policies and strategies at the time of project approval; and (in the case of GEF-funded projects) the relevant GEF focal areas, strategic priorities and operational programmes.
98. Figure 8 below shows how projects have been rated for relevance over six years (2010-2015). We see an increase in projects rated 'Satisfactory' or better from 2010 up to 2013. This remains the evaluation criterion attracting the highest ratings, despite this biennium registering a small (6%) decline with an average of 86% projects being rated 'Satisfactory' or better as compared to an average of about 93% between 2010 and 2013.

Figure 8: Assessment of Strategic Relevance Criteria (2010-2015)



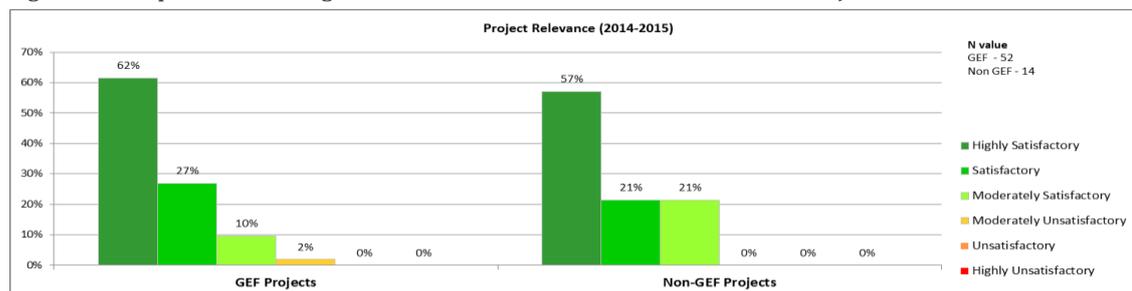
99. An assessment of relevance by sub-programme over the six years (2010-2015) reveals that most projects evaluated (at least over 80% in each sub-programme) scored 'Satisfactory' or higher for relevance (Figure 9). Over this period, the highest rating for relevance (HS) was mostly attained by projects under the Chemicals and Waste SP, Ecosystems Management SP, and Climate Change SP. There are however, instances where some projects have been rated in the unsatisfactory range under Ecosystems Management SP (2%) and Climate Change SP (3%). These two sub-programmes also happen to have the greatest number of projects evaluated and, hence, a larger proportion of the work undertaken within the sub-programmes has been subject to evaluation. It is possible that in areas of the Programme of Work that have been less frequently evaluated it is the best performing projects that first offer themselves for evaluation.

Figure 9: Assessment of Strategic Relevance Criteria by Sub-Programme (2010-2015)



100. A comparison by GEF and non-GEF projects, as shown in
- 101.
- 102.
103. Figure 10 below, indicates that up to 89% of GEF projects and up to 78% of non-GEF projects were rated 'Satisfactory' or higher for relevance in the biennium 2014-2015, a difference of about 11%. This may be indicative of the strong alignment GEF projects must have to their respective focal area strategies for GEF approval. In comparison, some of the non-GEF projects, whilst evaluated in the biennium, were designed prior to the 2010-13 MTS period, with their alignment to the PoW being 'deemed' rather than designed to align with the results framework of the PoW.

Figure 10: Comparison of Strategic Relevance Criteria between GEF and non-GEF Projects



104. Projects that attracted the highest ratings for this criterion had in common: relevance to (global, regional and/or national) environmental and developmental issues and needs; clear linkages with UNEP’s strategies and programmes of work; and, in the case of GEF projects, clear alignment with GEF focal areas. One such example is in the project ‘*Strengthening of The Gambia’s Climate Change Early Warning Systems*’¹⁵ (Relevance ‘Highly Satisfactory’). Among other contributing factors, project success was attributable to its relevance to Gambia’s development and poverty eradication goals and objectives. It addressed the second top priority identified under the country’s National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) submitted to the UNFCCC in 2007, i.e. the improvement of a national early warning system in order to inform farmers and their communities on possible climate change and its impacts and sensitize them to implement adaptation measures. This was also perceived as an urgent need in the Gambia’s First National Communication (FNC) to UNFCCC. The project objectives were in harmony with a number of national policy instruments, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP) 2007-2011, and were also well aligned to the Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP)¹⁶.

Lesson # 1. Successful projects are those that respond to long standing and expressed needs from countries. Often, in order to identify pressing needs at country and regional levels, following the discussions and resolutions from international treaties and intergovernmental bodies, allows detection of gaps in capacities and regulatory frameworks. Experience seems to show that countries will demonstrate a genuine interest if opportunities arise to help them fill those gaps and create capacity. As learned from the project “Mitigating the Threat of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean”, planning teams should conduct an analysis of the recurrent needs and gaps expressed by countries, intergovernmental bodies and international treaties and focus the selection of projects on the high priority common needs documented.¹⁷

Effectiveness

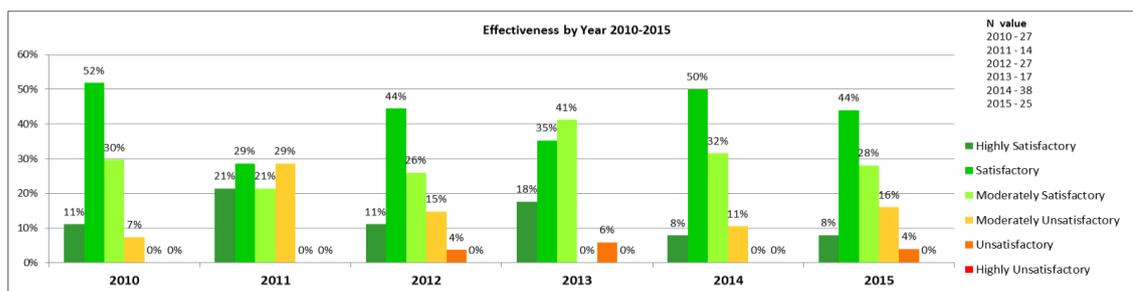
105. This criterion considers the extent to which projects have achieved, or contributed to, their stated objectives, in relation to expected outcomes and impact. Figure 11 below shows performance ratings in ‘effectiveness’ over six years (2010-2015).

Figure 11: Assessment of Project Effectiveness (2010-2015)

¹⁵ Terminal Evaluation of project “Strengthening of The Gambia’s Climate Change Early Warning Systems” GEF Project ID: 3728, May 2012.

¹⁶ The Republic of Gambia, 2008. Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP).

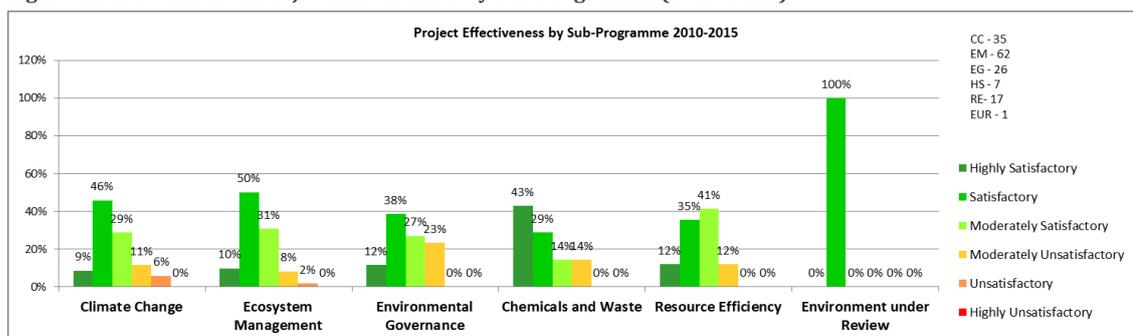
¹⁷ 3183_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_FSP_MTIASC_Invasive_Species-Final report



106. On average, about 85% of the projects evaluated for overall effectiveness in 2014 and 2015 were rated in the satisfactory range. This is only a minor variation from the average figure of about 88% of projects rated in the satisfactory range for the same criterion in the 2012-2013 biennium. The average percentage of projects being awarded ratings in the satisfactory range in the last three biennia (2010-11, 2012-13 and 2014-15) was 82%, 88% and 85% respectively .

107. At programme level as shown in Figure 12 below, the 6-year data set shows that projects under the Chemicals and Waste SP have had the highest percentage of projects (72%) rated 'Satisfactory' or better in overall effectiveness; this is followed by projects in Ecosystems Management SP (60%) and Climate Change SP (55%) over the same period. Projects under the Environmental Governance SP had the highest occurrence of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range (23%).

Figure 12: Assessment of Project Effectiveness by Sub-Programme (2010-2015)



108. Projects that rated highly for effectiveness characteristically have realistic objectives, a strong strategic direction right from the inception phase, clear strategies and mechanisms for monitoring, successful implementation approaches and adaptive management, as well as a predisposition towards lesson learning and replication.

109. Projects that scored poorly in the effectiveness criterion often had objectives and results statements that were rather ambitious and tended to focus on output production whilst failing to allocate resources to processes that enhance the use of outputs. In some cases the stated objectives were set far beyond the plausible reach of the intervention.

Lesson # 2. *Communicate effectively not only the success stories but also the hurdles to be overcome for the success of the project. Effective communication of the hurdles to be overcome for the success of the project is as important as reporting success stories based on the outcome of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of pilot initiatives. It is important to make potential stakeholders aware of the main reasons for the failures as well as the successes.¹⁸*

Lesson # 3. *Unless pilot interventions are treated as experiments that are designed to test the effectiveness of interventions and generate both positive and negative lessons that can be further acted upon, these interventions have a high risk of ending with the myriad output-oriented projects that tend to disappear, once funding ends. There is a high risk of institutional memory loss unless these lessons are archived into a dynamic information sharing*

¹⁸ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project CPL/5070-3640-1111 "African Rural Energy Enterprise Development Phase II

system, or better, a user-friendly monitoring system that can be continuously updated in order to provide evidence-based decision- and policy-making.¹⁹

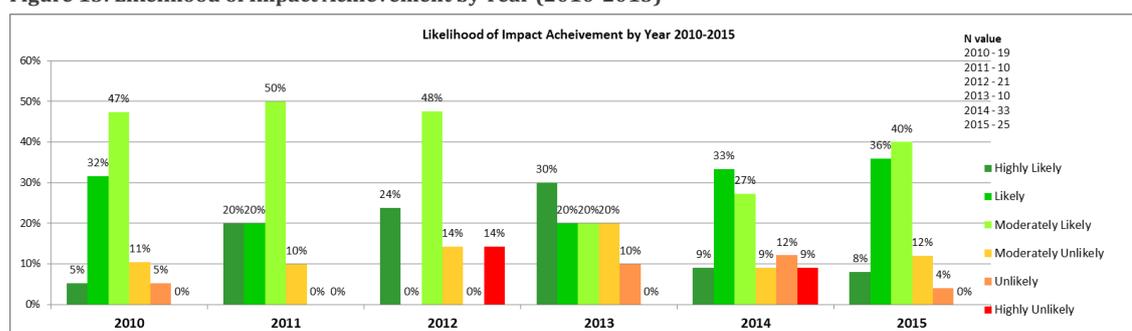
Lesson # 4. Behavioural improvements that require changes in long established government policies and traditional cultural attitudes take time and careful planning to be achieved effectively.²⁰

Impact

110. To assess the likelihood of impact, UNEP project evaluations use the Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) method. A Theory of Change (ToC) approach is used to identify the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) through outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (long term changes in environmental status and conditions and the benefits - goods and services - derived from them). This approach seeks to overcome the challenges of measuring impacts post-project, by identifying the sequence of conditions and factors deemed necessary to convert project outcomes into the ultimate impact. Once the project's intended impacts are understood and the ToC has been mapped out, it is then possible to confirm whether the outcome-impact pathways described by the ToC are realistic. The ROtI analysis calls for an examination of the extent to which the necessary drivers (external factors within the influence of the project) are present and assumptions (external factors beyond the influence of the project) are proven valid. The ROtI approach assesses the current capacity and motivation of stakeholders to follow through on what is needed to achieve impact, that is, whether the necessary conditions are in place for further change, and therefore, whether the project is likely to deliver its intended impacts.²¹

111. Figure 13 below shows a decline in the percentage of projects rated as 'Satisfactory' or better for 'Likelihood of Impact' between 2012 and 2015 as follows: 72% (2012), 50% (2013), 42% (2014), and 44% (2015). The 2012-13 Evaluation Synthesis Report also noted this trend and stated; "The systematic use of Theory of Change analyses coupled with the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach, in effect introduced a higher required standard of evidence to receive performance ratings in the satisfactory range. The appropriate conclusion is that project performance against these criteria has likely been sub-optimal for some time, with recent performance levels perhaps reflecting longer term trends that can now more readily be discerned." This statement is reinforced by the performance observed in the 2014-15 biennium.

Figure 13: Likelihood of Impact Achievement by Year (2010-2015)



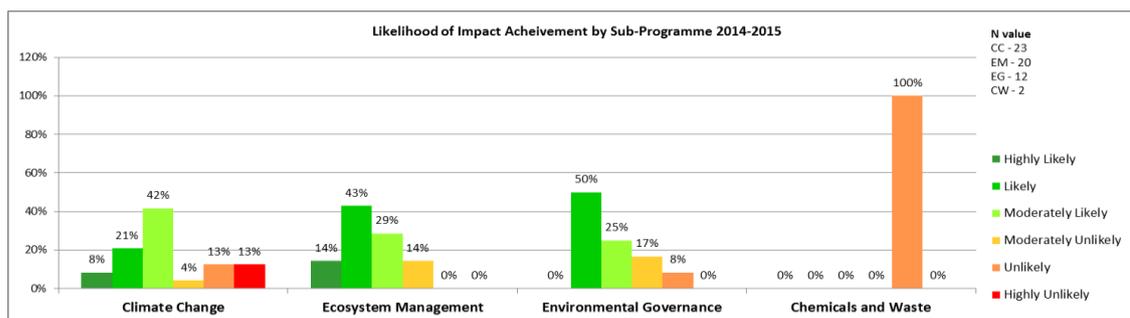
112. Over the period 2014-2015, depending on the sub-programme, Figure 14 below shows that the proportion of projects considered 'Moderately Unlikely' to 'Highly Unlikely' to achieve impact varied between 14% and 30%. The sub-programmes Chemicals and Waste, Disasters and Conflict, and Resource Efficiency have not been included in the analysis because their n values are too low for comparison (≤ 2).

Figure 14: Likelihood of Impact Assessment by Sub-Programme (2014-2015)

¹⁹ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project SFL-2792-2B65-1131 "Integrated Coastal Management with Special Emphasis on the Sustainable Management of Mangrove Forests in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua"

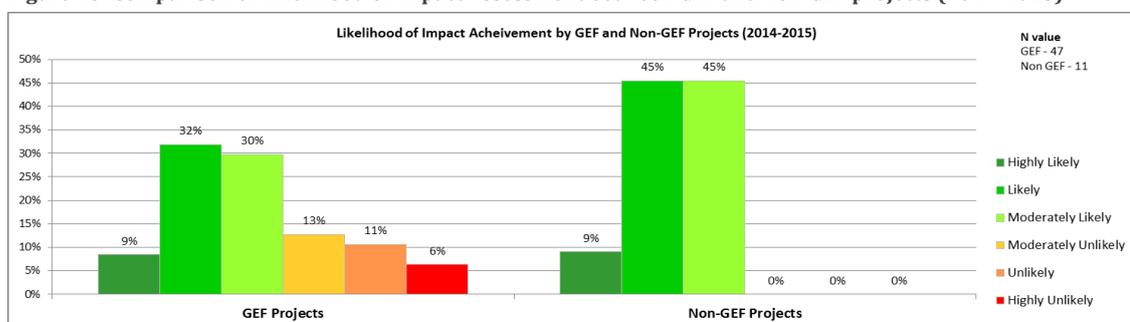
²⁰ 3645_2015_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_IW_MSP_NWSaharan Aquifer

²¹ ROtI Handbook: Towards Enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects. GEF August 2009



113. The comparison shown by Figure 15 below shows a greater likelihood ('Moderately Likely' – 'Highly Likely') for impact achievement by non-GEF projects (100%) than for GEF projects (71%) for those projects evaluated in 2014-2015. GEF projects however make up about 81% of the projects evaluated for this criterion - the small data set (n=11) for non-GEF projects being less likely to reveal a full normal distribution. It may however also be symptomatic of GEF projects being designed with over-ambitious objectives with respect to planned project duration and resources.

Figure 15: Comparison of Likelihood of Impact Assessment between GEF and non-GEF projects (2014-2015)



114. Successful projects are likely to be those where immediate to medium-term outcomes are supported by well-designed strategies to promote progress towards the intended impacts. The sustainability of project outcomes is also often significantly influenced by the quality of the key project outputs and the existence of appropriate capacity at a national level. In order to increase the likelihood of achieving impacts, therefore, it is important to improve project design to better articulate explicit linkages and causal processes between outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and intended impacts.
115. A good example of likelihood of impact achievement was in the project 'Rwanda LCDP Project'²² ('Highly Likely' rating), where the achieved outcomes had clear forward linkages to intermediate states and impacts. The project's intended outcomes were designed to feed into a continuing process, with the specific allocation of responsibilities for action leading to higher level results after project funding. The measures needed to move towards intermediate states had already begun to produce results at the time of the terminal evaluation and the project started to document changes in the environmental status during its lifetime. The high level of ownership of project results at national and local levels also contributed to the 'high likelihood of impact' rating.

Lesson # 5. *The ToC approach is a useful tool for articulating the key drivers and assumptions and explaining the causal relationship between intended actions, outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and impact of projects. In order to depict the causal pathways from outputs to outcomes over intermediate states towards impact, it is ideal that the ToC be envisaged at the project design stage.*²³

Lesson # 6. *On the question of why project implementation strategies do not follow causal pathways from the start, if such pathways maximize linkages and cumulative impact: The answer is likely to centre on structural factors that*

²² Terminal Evaluation of the Project: "Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change by Establishing Early warning and disaster preparedness systems and support for integrated watershed management in flood prone areas (Rwanda LCDP)" GEF Project ID: 3838. September 2015.

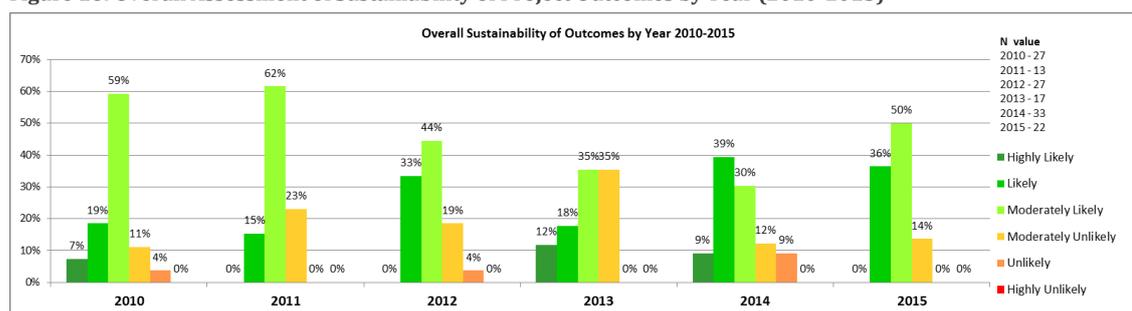
²³ 3838_2015_TE_UNEP_CCA_LDCF_Rwanda EWS_Final Report

are inherent to the project cycle - starting with funding ceilings, time allotments and management guidelines that apply to GEF projects (and all others as well in some form). While causal pathways illustrate the linkages and sequence of outputs that lead to impact and therefore raise project effectiveness, an implementation strategy that follows a project's causal pathways is likely to have a greater cumulative impact, but might also move at a more incremental pace and require more time.²⁴

Sustainability

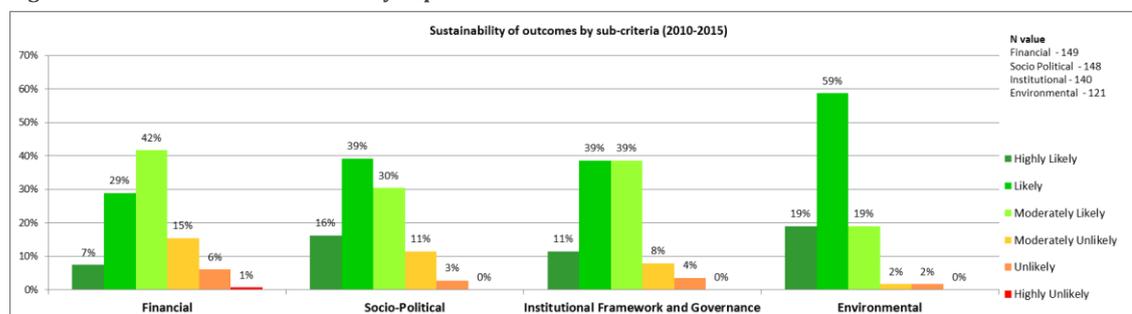
116. The assessment of project 'Sustainability' considers the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation ascertains to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. In the case of mid-term evaluations, the project is assessed to determine if an appropriate exit strategy has been put into place, including measures to mitigate risks to sustainability. Four dimensions that may affect sustainability are assessed, namely: i) Financial, ii) Socio-political, iii) Institutional framework and governance and iv) Environmental.
117. The trend in projects' likelihood to sustain project-derived results and impacts, as indicated by evaluations completed between 2010 and 2015, is shown in Figure 16 below. In this biennium there has been an 11% increase of projects rated in the satisfactory range for overall sustainability, that is, from 71% in 2012-2013 to 82% in 2014-2015.
118. Among those projects evaluated in the 2014-2015 biennium there was a sustained high performance on the sustainability criterion with 78% and 86% of projects scoring in the satisfactory range, respectively.'

Figure 16: Overall Assessment of Sustainability of Project Outcomes by Year (2010-2015)



119. An assessment of the sustainability sub-criteria over six years, as shown in Figure 17 below reveals that projects are 'Likely' or 'Highly Likely' to achieve environmental sustainability (78%), than they are to be sustainable against socio-political risks (55%), institutional framework and governance risks (50%) and financial risks (36%).

Figure 17: Assessment of Sustainability Aspects from 2010 to 2015



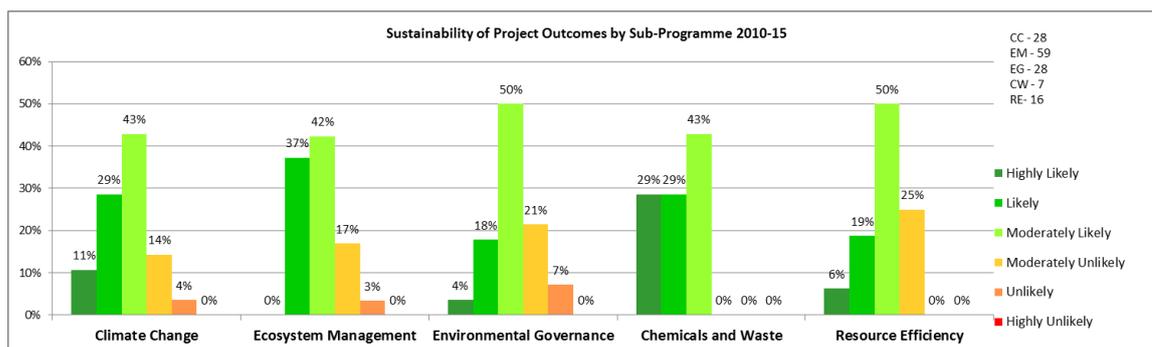
²⁴ 3630_2015_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_MSP_Guatemala_Cartagena_Protocol_Final_Report

120. The relatively higher ratings in environmental sustainability may be due to the fact that environmental risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes, or even neutralize project gains, are uncommon. Field-based interventions are often directly promoting environmental sustainability and normative interventions are seldom vulnerable to environmental factors.
121. Sustainability of funding has continued to be a challenge for projects evaluated in 2010-2015. Of the projects evaluated over this period, 22% are considered 'Moderately Unlikely' to 'Highly Unlikely' to achieve financial sustainability after the external project assistance ends. As pointed out in the 2012-2013 Evaluation Synthesis Report, financial sustainability is also closely linked to political goodwill at national level as well as among donor communities, as this helps to increase the likelihood of stable and predictable funding. Private sector involvement to leverage financial resources also affects this aspect of sustainability. For those projects that are dependent on financial resources to utilize capacities built by the project, financial risks jeopardize the sustainability of results and onward progress towards impact.
122. The 'institutional frameworks' and 'socio-political' sub-criteria, which have more to do with governance structures, government level buy-in and political commitment necessary for onward progression towards impact, are also challenging'. These often involve contextual circumstances or developments that are for the most part beyond the direct control of the project.
123. A good example where overall sustainability of project outcomes is demonstrated is in the project '*Second National Communication (SNC) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - South Africa*'.²⁵ The high level of socio-political buy-in (socio-political sustainability) was driven by the contribution of the SNC to much needed in-country scientific knowledge on vulnerability, adaptation and evidence-based climatic impact for the National Climate Change Response Policy (NCCRP) process. The level of socio-political commitment was also demonstrated by the Government of South Africa in the elevation of the Department of Environment to a Directorate of Environmental Affairs with an associated ministerial position to coordinate NCCRP and the National Communication (suggesting that there would be sustainability of the institutional frameworks). In addition, the NCCRP established a financing mechanism to secure resources for the implementation of priority programmes identified under the NCCRP; the demonstrated commitment of the Government of South Africa to the NCCRP is considered likely to support the raising of funds for the continued implementation of outcomes associated with the SNC (indicating financial sustainability).
124. A look at overall project sustainability by sub-programme over a six year period (Figure 18)²⁶, shows that up to 58% of projects that had a focus on Chemicals and Wastes were considered 'Likely' to 'Highly Likely' to sustain their planned outcomes; the Climate Change SP and Ecosystem Management SP followed with 40% and 37% respectively, for projects rated 'Likely' to 'Highly Likely' for overall sustainability. Projects under Environmental Governance SP had the lowest number (22%) in the same performance range ('Likely' to 'Highly Likely'), and had up to 28% projects considered as unlikely to sustain their results ('Moderately Unlikely' to 'Highly Unlikely' rating).
125. A possible explanation for this finding is that projects under the Environmental Governance SP by their nature require significantly longer-term intervention / engagement in order to progress from outputs to impacts, and are also more profoundly influenced by factors beyond the direct control of projects. While projects can indeed create enabling environments for policy and legal reforms during their lifetime, several years of sustained effort may be required to obtain project-derived results and impacts.

Figure 18: Assessment of Sustainability by Sub-Programme (2010-2015)

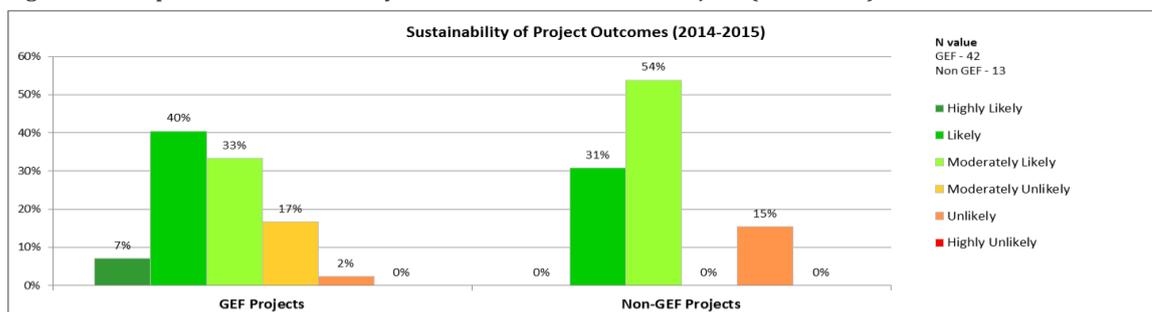
²⁵ Terminal Evaluation of the Second National Communication (SNC) under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), South Africa. December 2013

²⁶ Environment under Review is not included because the n value = 1



126. With reference to GEF and non-GEF projects evaluated in 2014-2015, 47% of GEF projects were rated 'Likely' to 'Highly Likely' to achieve sustainability of results, in comparison with 31% of non-GEF projects in the same range (
- 127.
- 128.
129. Figure 19).

Figure 19: Comparison of Sustainability between GEF and non-GEF Projects (2014-2015)



Lesson # 7. *The development and / or strengthening of legal frameworks normally requires several years of sustained effort in order to bear fruit, often with little or no intermediate results. It is therefore necessary to take a long-term perspective when assessing the results of these activities, as they are seldom realizable within a project term. For future project design and in order to facilitate institutional change to improve enabling conditions where legal changes are needed, it is important to have a multi-sectorial and multilevel (technical and decision makers) approach with an active involvement and participation of these actors from the very beginning. In addition, technical assistance and training to raise awareness, involving high level officials or decision makers need to also be included.²⁷*

Lesson # 8. *Creation of appropriate institutions is no guarantee that they will automatically perform as anticipated without strong political direction, provision of adequate resources, appropriate incentive mechanisms for executives and staff, enhanced technical capacity and agreements with other agencies from whom other services and inputs are required.²⁸*

Lesson # 9. *Involvement of key beneficiaries: One of the project's strengths was involving the local communities, who are among the most vulnerable [to climate change impacts] and key project beneficiaries, in the design and execution of the project. Ultimately, it is these communities who will be the main implementers of adaptation efforts*

²⁷ 2391_2015_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_FSP_Andeian_Biotrade_Final_Report

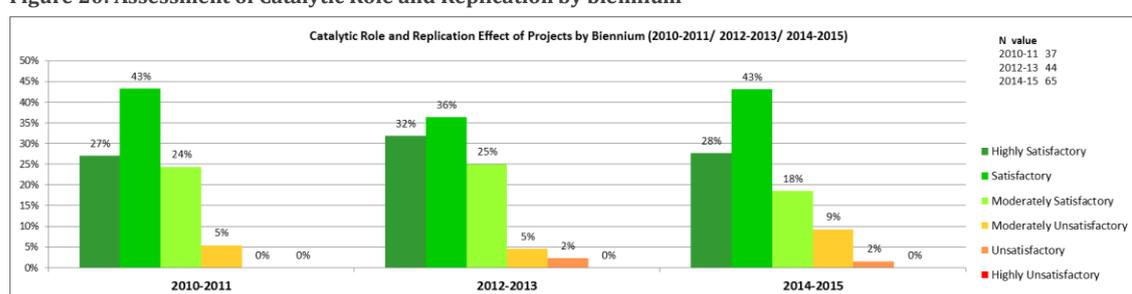
²⁸ 2954_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_CC_FSP_Jakarta_BRT_May_2014

on the ground. By involving them at an early stage, the project promoted acceptance of adaptation actions and increased the likelihood that outcomes will be sustained.²⁹

Catalytic Role and Replication

130. The catalytic role of UNEP interventions is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. Evaluations assess the catalytic role played by projects, namely to what extent they have: catalysed behavioural changes; provided incentives to contribute to catalysing changes in stakeholder behaviour; contributed to institutional changes; contributed to policy changes; contributed to sustained follow-on financing and created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ('champions') to catalyse change. Project evaluations also assess the approach adopted to promote replication and determine to what extent actual replication has already occurred - or is likely to occur in the near future.

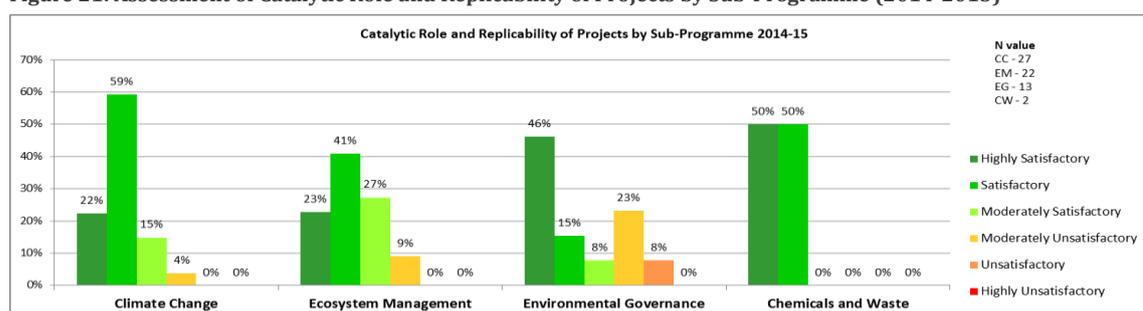
Figure 20: Assessment of Catalytic Role and Replication by biennium



131. This criterion is generally highly rated in most projects, with an average of about 92% rated in the satisfactory range in evaluations conducted between 2010 and 2015 (Figure 20). We note that there has been a modest increase in sub-optimal ratings unsatisfactory range for this criterion in projects evaluated in the biennium 2014-2015 (11%) as compared to the previous two biennia (7% in 2012-2013 and 5% in 2010-2011).

132. At programme level as shown in Figure 21 below, the Climate Change SP had the highest percentage of projects receiving 'Satisfactory' or better rating in this criterion (81%), while Environmental Governance SP had the lowest percentage of projects (61%) in the same range as well as the highest percentage of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range (31%) in 2014-2015.³⁰

Figure 21: Assessment of Catalytic Role and Replicability of Projects by Sub-Programme (2014-2015)

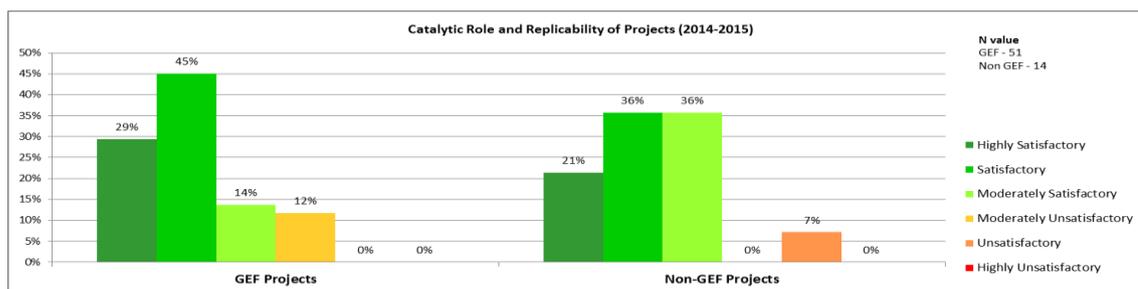


133. A comparison between GEF and non-GEF projects in 2014-2015 (Figure 22) shows that the former has stronger performance in this criterion, with up to 74% GEF projects rated 'Satisfactory' or better for their catalytic role and replication effect, as compared to 57% of non-GEF projects within the same range.

Figure 22: Assessment of Catalytic Role and Replicability of GEF and non-GEF projects (2014-2015)

²⁹ Nile Basin Final Terminal Evaluation Report - Final Report, September 2014

³⁰ Chemicals and Waste SP has not been considered in this comparison because the 'n' value is only 2



134. Replication is often inspired by validated successes in implementation. An example of a project rated highly for its catalytic role and replication is 'Reducing Risks to the Sustainable Management of the North Western Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS)'³¹. The project's results have helped define a new vision for irrigated agriculture in the NWSAS basin, with a new approach that can improve the sustainability of water management while improving livelihoods. The main incentive for making a shift towards the new approach to irrigated farming has been the demonstrated micro-economic returns of the pilot projects. At local level, farmers and their local government supporters have become catalysts for positive local change by playing lead roles in the planning and implementation of their pilots and the dissemination of their results. The project carried out a series of workshops and study visits to share the results of pilot projects and replication of the most successful pilot experiences has begun.

Lesson # 10. *The timing of projects and inclusion of "exit strategies" are important to enable the transfer of results and their appropriation by national stakeholders. This is a recurrent lesson often found in project evaluations.*³²

Lesson # 11. *In order to guarantee replication and scaling up from demonstrating pilots at local level to a broader geographical area, projects need to include in the design and budget, a component or activity based on knowledge management from the start of the project. This platform of communication can be used to promote the project, to exchange ideas, share experiences, learn new concepts and trends, etc. This way, projects don't need to wait on results for dissemination and replication purposes.*³³

Lesson # 12. *Initiatives taken to improve technical abilities of manpower will have a positive and durable effect over both the maintenance of project activities and their replication. The lesson for future projects is the need to pay adequate attention to improve abilities of working personnel, to create qualified manpower, and to supply enough incentives for this manpower to remain in their posts. In fact, potential for replication of projects can only be guaranteed when adequately qualified manpower exists.*³⁴

Efficiency

135. This criterion assesses the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. This includes any cost- or time-saving measures put in place to realise project results within the agreed budget and timeframe secured budget and time. Special attention is given to efforts by project teams to build on pre-existing resources and complementarities with other initiatives to increase project efficiency.
136. For this criterion, there has been a gradual improvement in performance from 2010 to 2014; Figure 23 below shows a steady decrease in the percentage of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range, from 22% in 2010 down to 11% in 2014. 2015 however shows a change in this positive trend, with about 27% of the projects evaluated being rated in the unsatisfactory range – a greater proportion than any of the previous five (5) years.

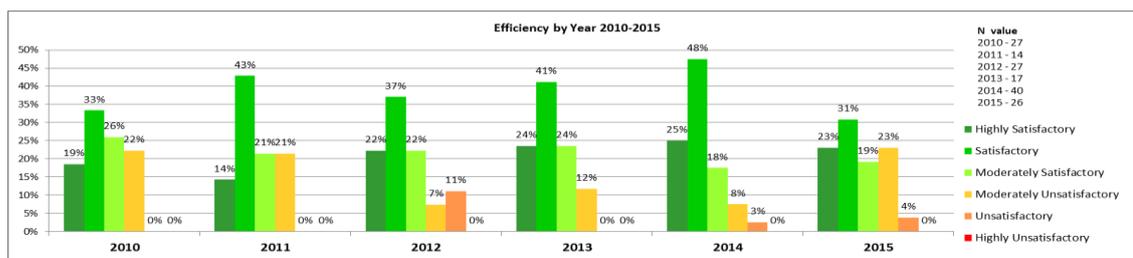
Figure 23: Assessment of Project Efficiency by Year (2010-2015)

³¹ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project entitled "Reducing Risks to the Sustainable Management of the North Western Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS)". September 2015.

³² 3629_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_MSP_Costa_Rica_NBF_FinalReport

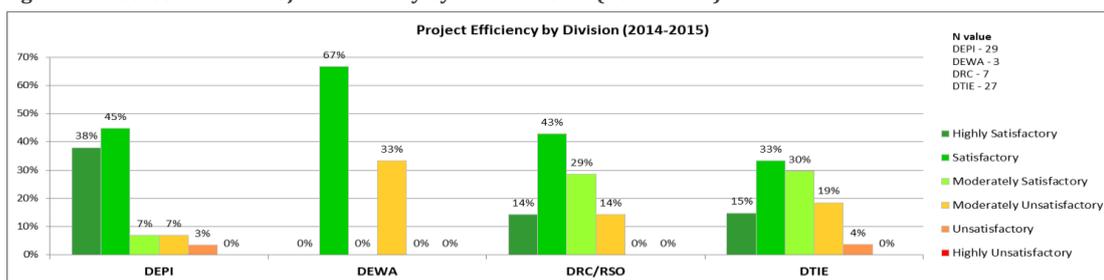
³³ 2391_2015_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_FSP_Andean_Biotrade_Final_Report

³⁴ 1361-2015-TE-UNEP-REGIONAL-CC-FSP-CUBA-Renewable-Final Report



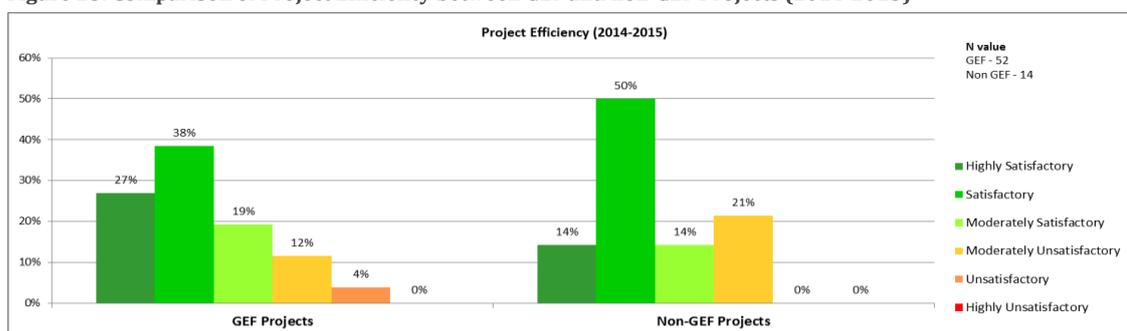
137. The best performance for the efficiency dimension in 2014-2015 was by projects led by the Division for Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) and the Regional Support Office (RSO, formerly Division for Regional Cooperation - DRC), achieving ratings in the satisfactory range in 90% and 86% of projects respectively (Figure 24)^{35/36}.

Figure 24: Assessment of Project Efficiency by Lead Division (2014-2015)



138. GEF projects had a higher percentage of projects achieving ratings in the satisfactory range (84%) than the non-GEF projects (78%) evaluated for this criterion in 2014-2015 (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Comparison of Project Efficiency between GEF and non-GEF Projects (2014-2015)



139. Projects that score highly for this criterion are likely to demonstrate the following common features: economical use of resources to achieve their objectives; timely delivery of activities and outputs and achieving an adequate ratio between the funds used and the effects achieved. Efficiency is also influenced by the utilisation of strategic partnerships, synergies and complementarities with pre-existing interventions in the project region. Inefficiencies in project operations were attributed to an array of challenges such as: significant start-up delays and subsequent reduction in project duration; delays in the signing of counterpart funding agreements by governments; delayed disbursement of funds; political volatility in participating countries; complex government structures and bureaucracies; failure to establish partnerships with strategic partners; incongruent administrative procedures and financial reporting policies and insufficient human/technical capacity, among others.
140. An example of a project that exemplified efficiency through building on pre-existing initiatives is the GEF project *Implementing Sustainable Water Resources and Wastewater Management in Pacific*

³⁵ Please note that n value for the RSO projects is 7

³⁶ The n value for DCPI and DELC projects is zero therefore not included in the graph and analysis

*Island Countries*³⁷. Building on the endorsed Pacific Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Water Management gave credibility and direction to the regional project. The evaluation report tells of the two-way benefits of connecting the demonstration projects with existing national strategies/plans; the projects providing a means to deliver on national plans and the national plans ensuring high-level support for the project. The successes of the demonstration projects became springboards or catalysts, starting the added-value cycle again.

141. A project that experienced efficiency challenges but was able to implement an adaptive management approach in response is the GEF project *Facilitation on Financing for Biodiversity - Based Business and Support of Market Development Activities in the Andean Region*. The project suffered a considerable delay of 2.5 years from approval effectively reducing the implementation phase by almost half. The signature of the memorandum of understandings took almost a year. In addition, long bureaucratic internal contracting processes in Peru caused more delays. Following an adaptive management approach, the project made changes to the budget structure and facilitated the participation of implementing partners, who also brought co-funding and expertise to the project, via sub-contracting. The strategy implemented by the project was effective in responding to these challenges.

Lesson # 13. *A technically strong host is essential. A technically and managerially strong host provides several benefits to an efficient administration, but even more importantly by providing easy access to a strong base of experts and international recognition.*³⁸

Lesson # 14. *During project implementation, only those planned activities/studies or those that have a direct link to project outcomes and impact should be implemented in an effort towards maximising the efficient use of available resources.*³⁹

Lesson # 15. *Adding value by building off other work: Sometimes building upon others' initiatives rather than establishing one's own new ones requires a certain level of institutional maturity and ability to drop institutional egos. This needs to be explicitly dealt with in project formulation.*⁴⁰

Lesson # 16. *Too often international organizations respond to challenges faced by adding increased layers of inputs to projects - during design, review and approvals and also execution. Unfortunately the addition of multiple processes and reviews does not often provide the solution hoped for but actually adds to the challenges by slowing down decision processes, adding costs for administration as well as uncertainties in implementation.*⁴¹

Factors Affecting Project Performance⁴²

Preparedness and project design

142. This evaluation criterion assesses the quality of project design and preparation. In general, the elements that are considered include: clarity and practicability of the project document, its objectives and components, to enable effective and efficient implementation within the set timeframe and allocated resources; adequate identification of stakeholders and partners and the sufficiency of their involvement in project development; proper consideration of implementing institutions' and partners' capacities, roles and responsibilities; adequacy of project management arrangements; assurance of enabling legislation and resources - including counterpart resources - to implement the project and the incorporation of lessons learned from other relevant projects, among others.

Figure 26: Assessment of Project Design by Year (2010-2015): preparation and readiness

³⁷ 2586_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_IW_FSP_IWRM_Evaluation_Final_Report

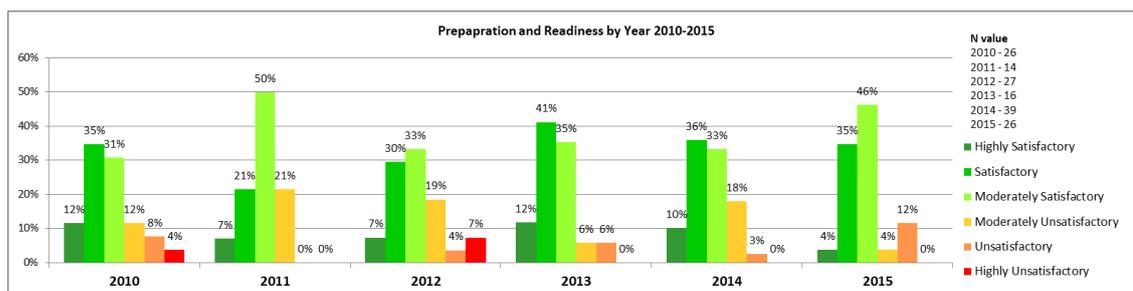
³⁸ Mid-term Evaluation of the UNEP- DHI Centre for Water and Environment

³⁹ 3838_2015_TE_UNEP_CCA_LDCF_Rwanda_EWS_Final_Report

⁴⁰ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDP/GEF Project "Implementing Sustainable Water Resources and Wastewater Management in Pacific Island Countries" (GFL-2328-2731-4A51/GF/6030-09-03)

⁴¹ Terminal Evaluation of project "Assessments and Guidelines for Sustainable Liquid Biofuels Production in Developing Countries Report 2012-2013 (A Targeted Research Project) GEF Id. 3224

⁴² In this section, some comparisons have been presented by division; factors affecting project performance can sometimes be attributed to divisional level directives and are therefore presented as appropriate



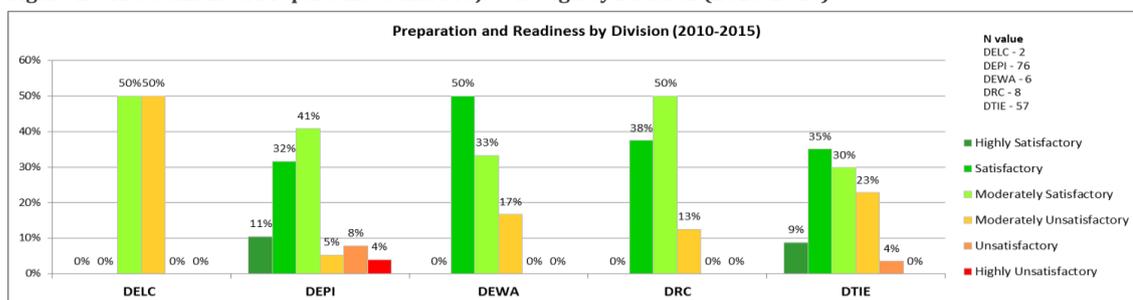
143. In the period 2010 to 2015, there has been a slight improvement over the years with 85% of the evaluated projects rated in the satisfactory range in 2015 compared to 78% in 2010 as seen in Figure 26 above. When the three biennia are compared, the same trends are observed with marginal improvements as seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Comparison in Performance in Project Preparedness and Preparation in the Biennia 2010-11, 2012-13 and 2014-15

| Biennium | Satisfactory Range (HS, S, MS) | Unsatisfactory Range (MU, U, HU) |
|----------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2010/11 | 78% | 22% |
| 2012/13 | 79% | 21% |
| 2014/15 | 82% | 18% |

144. A comparison by Division over the 6 year period (2010-2015), shows that of the evaluated projects led by DEPI, DEWA and DRC, 83%, 83% and 87% respectively had been rated "Satisfactory" or better. DTIE however had the highest proportion of projects (27%) rated in the unsatisfactory range for their project design and preparation (see Figure 27 below)⁴³. A minor variation is observed when the comparison is made according to funding modality for GEF and non-GEF projects, with evaluated projects attaining ratings of 80% and 77% respectively in the satisfactory range. A common finding in evaluated projects was the high level of ambition of project objectives and outcomes, especially for GEF projects.

Figure 27: Assessment of Preparedness and Project Design by Division (2010-2015)



145. Projects with overly-ambitious objectives that are not commensurate with the available resources (e.g. time, finances, capacities, etc.) have a high probability of experiencing revisions in the design framework, budget and duration within the project's lifetime. In general, projects that received high ratings for their preparation and readiness tended to also perform well in the other criteria such as stakeholder participation and monitoring and evaluation. Preparation and readiness for project implementation appears to have far-reaching effects for the general success and sustainability of projects.

146. It should be noted, however, that significant steps have been made in UNEP to improve the design and preparation of projects. The rigour with which this criterion is assessed was also enhanced at the beginning of 2015 with the introduction of a rubric that enables a more systematic assessment of project preparation and design.

⁴³ DELC and DCPI have not been included in the analysis because the n values are 2 and 0 respectively

147. A project attaining a 'Highly Satisfactory' rating in this criterion will ideally have the following: excellent project design; clear results framework; monitoring plan; well-defined partner roles and responsibilities, governance and oversight arrangements and well specified budgets and workplans.
148. In contrast, a 'Highly Unsatisfactory' performance for this criterion would include: very poor project design lacking clear causal intent; ill-defined roles and responsibilities within the project; no monitoring plan; loosely-specified budgets that are not tied to activities; unclear oversight and organizational arrangements and a project document that is not useful for day-to-day project management and is of little use for accountability purposes.⁴⁴

Lesson # 17. Project design must be realistic and appropriate for the institutional environment and the technical capacity of prevailing agencies. Focus of the project design on technical aspects is important, but alone, is insufficient. The failure to understand the actual institutional constraints during project design leads to an underestimation of risk and hence the setting of overly ambitious targets.⁴⁵

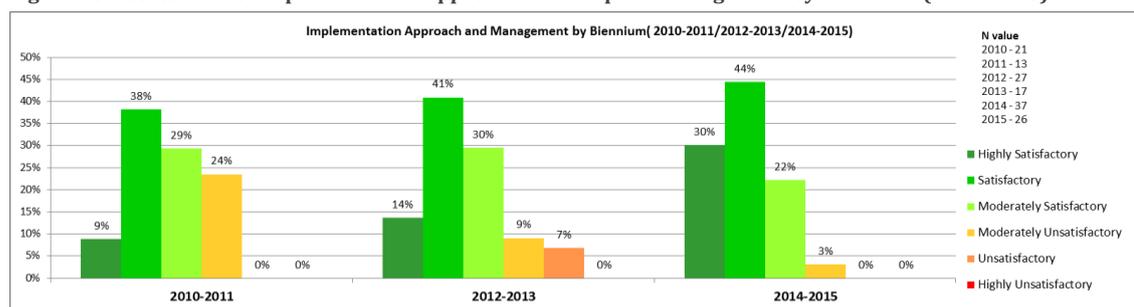
Lesson # 18. A weak project design with unclear objectives, outcomes and causal logic and poor ownership often leads to difficulties in implementation and for delivery of project results and reduces the likelihood of achieving the environmental change sought. The project design should be collaborative and participative. Relevant technical and project management expertise brought in where capacity and experience are lacking.⁴⁶

Lesson # 19. Project inception workshops are an important tool particularly when there is a delay between design and implementation to solicit views, requests and ideas from a broad group of stakeholders. If a project can secure stakeholder support then shortcomings in design can be overcome because there will be some momentum from a range of stakeholders who might have access to additional and different resources and thus contribute to a greater achievement of the outcome.⁴⁷

Implementation approach and adaptive management

149. This criterion involves the analysis of implementation approaches used by the project, including: the management framework; adaptation to changing conditions and responses to changing risks (adaptive management); performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships; relevance of changes in project design and overall performance of project management.
150. Over the three biennia, the quality of project implementation and adaptive management has steadily improved in the projects evaluated, with about 74% rated 'Satisfactory' or better for this criterion in 2014-2015, up from 55% in 2012-2013 and 47% in 2010-2011 (see Figure 28 below). The trend is consistent with the observed improvements in the quality of project design and preparation in UNEP, as discussed above and confirmed in the recent formative evaluation report.

Figure 28: Assessment of Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management by Biennium (2010-2015)



151. Over the six years (2010-2015), the Chemicals and Waste and Climate Change sub-programmes recorded the highest percentage of evaluated projects attaining a 'Satisfactory' rating or better for

⁴⁴ Quality of Project Management Review (QPMR) matrix. UNEP QAS 2013.

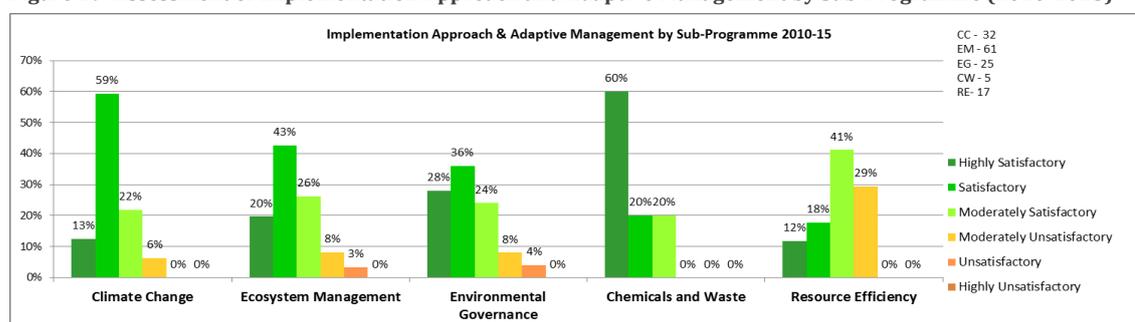
⁴⁵ 2954_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_CC_FSP_Jakarta_BRT_May_2014

⁴⁶ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2713-4B56 "Facilitating Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)", GEF Id no. 4235

⁴⁷ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Renewable Energy Based Electricity Generation for Isolated Mini-Grids In Zambia" ID No. 1358

this criterion, with 80% and 72% respectively.⁴⁸ In contrast, only 30% of evaluated projects under the Resource Efficiency SP attained the same rating over the same period - notably lower than the other sub-programmes (including 64% for Environmental Governance SP and 63% for Ecosystem Management SP) as illustrated in Figure 29 below. The reasons for this remain unclear.

Figure 29: Assessment of Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management by Sub-Programme (2010-2015)⁴⁹



152. At divisional level, projects led by DEWA comprised the highest percentage of evaluated projects rated 'Satisfactory' or better in this criterion over the six year period (2010-2015) however it also accounted for the lowest percentage of projects evaluated (4%). Projects led by DEPI came second, with up to 65% of evaluated projects rated 'Satisfactory' or better, while having the highest percentage of projects (52%) evaluated against this criterion in the same six year period.⁵⁰
153. In the projects evaluated in the 2014-2015 biennium, almost 80% that attained a rating of 'Highly Satisfactory' against this criterion also achieved a satisfactory or better rating in overall performance. For those projects that were rated in the unsatisfactory range, other criteria, such as monitoring and evaluation and financial planning and management, were also often rated in the unsatisfactory range.
154. A common challenge in the implementation approach and management of some of the evaluated projects was having more than one implementing agency – which though beneficial, requires a more conscientious approach to harmonization of reporting mechanisms and financing systems. Examples of some projects that faced this hurdle include: 'Vulnerability to Climate Change by Establishing Early Warning Disaster Preparedness Systems and Support for Integrated Watershed Management in Flood Prone Areas (Rwanda LDCF)'⁵¹; 'Generation and Delivery of Renewable Energy Based Modern Energy Services; the Case of Isla de la Juventud'⁵²; 'Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Bhutan'⁵³; and 'Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (COAST)'⁵⁴.
155. Projects that aim to influence national policy or legal frameworks also face challenges because the achievement of key outputs often relies on political decisions or other externalities that are outside the project's direct control. Adaptive management becomes essential under such circumstances.

Lesson # 20. Complex management arrangements with multiple agencies and levels create managerial and operational problems that put the project at risk. Inadequate managerial and technical capacity hampers implementation progress and places heavy demands on the project management team to build the required capacity of project executives and, in some cases, compensate for the limited capacity themselves.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ There is a significant variation in the number of evaluated projects – ranging from 61 in EM and only 7 in CW in the 2010-2015 period

⁴⁹ Environment Under Review (EUR) and Disasters and conflict SPs not included because of the low N value of 1 and 0 respectively

⁵⁰ DELC and DCPI not included due to the low N value of 2 and 0 respectively

⁵¹ 3838_2015_TE_UNEP_CCA_LDCF_Rwanda_EWS_Final Report

⁵² 1361-2015-TE-UNEP-REGIONAL-CC-FSP-CUBA-Renewable-Final Report

⁵³ 3850_2015_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_MSP_NBF_Bhutan

⁵⁴ 2129_2015_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_IW_FSP_COAST_Final report

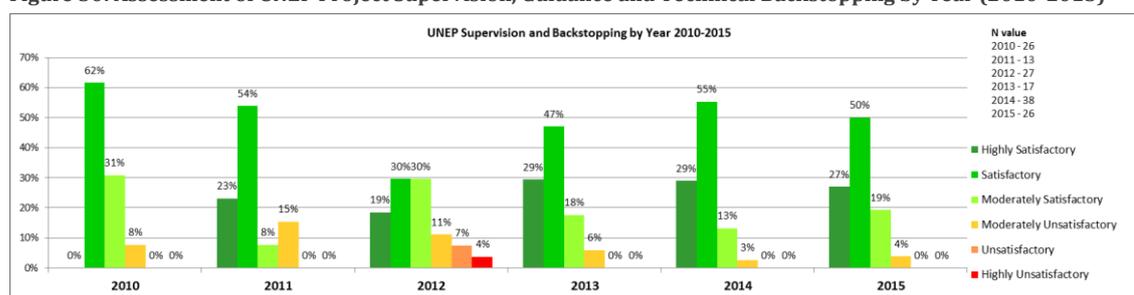
⁵⁵ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2732-4987 (2129) "Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (COAST)"

Lesson # 21. *Effective project management that promotes clear and transparent communication is key to creating strong working relationships and avoiding raised expectations resulting in disappointment, loss of hope and mistrust.*⁵⁶

UNEP supervision and backstopping

156. This criterion provides an assessment of UNEP’s role in supervising projects and providing quality and timely technical and administrative support in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Specifically, evaluators assess: effectiveness of supervision on finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes; adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes; realism and candour of project reporting; emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management) and the different guidance and backstopping bodies, their roles and the effectiveness of their intervention mechanisms. Figure 30 below shows the performance in this criterion by projects evaluated over the period 2010 to 2015.

Figure 30: Assessment of UNEP Project Supervision, Guidance and Technical Backstopping by Year (2010-2015)



157. In the six year period, 2014 attained the highest ratings with 84% of the evaluated projects rated as satisfactory or better. 2014 also had the highest number of projects evaluated (n=38). On the other hand, projects evaluated in 2012 performed less well with 22% rated in the unsatisfactory range compared to 3% and 4% in 2014 and 2015 respectively (Figure 30). However overall, the biennium data (Table 4) shows an 18% improvement of the evaluated projects rated ‘Satisfactory’ or better in 2014-2015 compared to the preceding biennium (2012-2013).

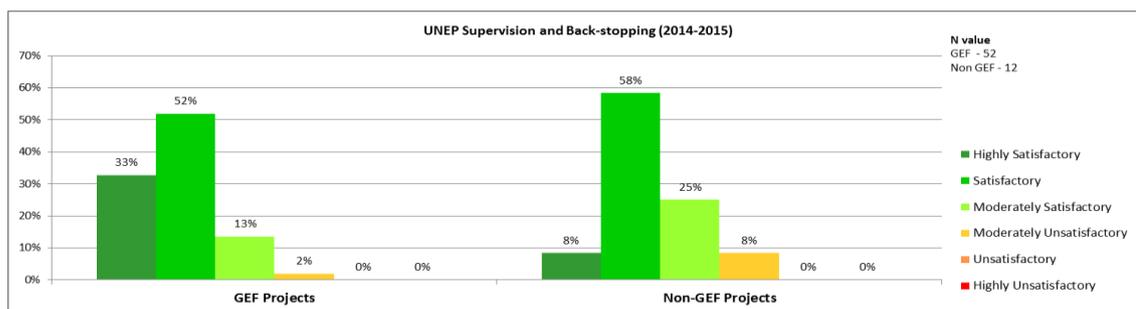
Table 4: UNEP Project Supervision, Guidance and Technical Backstopping by Biennium

| Biennium | Satisfactory or Better Rating |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 2010/11 | 69.5% |
| 2012/13 | 62.5% |
| 2014/15 | 80.5% |

158. When the projects were grouped according to funding modality for GEF and non-GEF projects, there was a higher percentage of GEF projects attaining a ‘Satisfactory’ or better score in this criterion (85%) as compared to non-GEF projects (66%) in 2014-2015 – a 19% difference with GEF projects appearing to be better supervised and backstopped. Up to 25% of non-GEF projects were rated as only ‘Moderately Satisfactory’ while 8% were scored in the unsatisfactory range for effectiveness of supervision and backstopping (See Figure 31). Note that the GEF projects outnumber the non-GEF projects at a rate of approximately 4 to 1.

Figure 31: Comparison of UNEP Supervision and Backstopping for GEF and non-GEF Projects (2014-2015)

⁵⁶ 3728_2015_TE_UNEP_CCA_LDCF_Gambia EWS_Final Report



159. Previous studies have shown that projects receiving strong management and supervision attention are much more likely to achieve the desired project outcomes and results as compared to projects receiving less satisfactory attention. Therefore, a greater focus on quality of project management by UNEP staff will help to ensure that a large proportion of UNEP projects will achieve their intended outcomes.⁵⁷
160. Projects that were rated highly had Task/Project Managers that were highly involved, adaptive and responsive. There was also evidence of: sufficient identification and assessment of challenges and risks; efforts by the Task/Project Manager and partners in responding to advice provided and timely follow-up action to manage known problems and challenges was. This included country engagement and flexibility to deal with stakeholders/country requests; ability to assess and address risks and changes in contexts (adaptive management); effective communication – to member states, stakeholders and of technical reports, among others.
161. An example of a project that received a ‘Highly Satisfactory’ rating under this criterion was the regional project for *‘Implementing Biosafety Frameworks in the Caribbean Sub-Region’*. From the onset, the challenges faced by this project required attention and UNEP exemplified a high level of engagement as the implementing agency. According to the findings, the UNEP Task Manager contacted the Project Management Unit (PMU) regularly and provided valuable guidance. Together with the UNEP Fund Manager, they sat on the Regional Steering Committee and invested time to explain reporting guidelines to the PMU and national focal points. The Task Manager also updated the project Risk Management Plan with the PMU and prepared a system of correlating budget lines contained in the project document with those in common use by project countries, in response to the difficulties being experienced in charging project expenditure to budget lines for specific activities.⁵⁸

*Lesson # 22. The guidance and backstopping support of the UNEP task/project manager is an important driver of project efficiency and delivery, particularly during the inception phase. It is therefore important that a qualified Task Manager be in place from the beginning.*⁵⁹

Financial planning and management

162. This criterion assesses the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project’s lifetime. The evaluation considers the actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues) and co-financing.
163. Financial planning and management attained the highest ratings in 2014 with 77% of projects rating ‘Satisfactory’ or better. Whilst the proportion of projects attaining a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ or better declined by 28% in 2015, the overall percentage of projects performing in the ‘Satisfactory’ range remained high, as illustrated in Figure 32 below. However, on comparing the performance across the biennia, there has been a steady increase in performance with 51%, 49.5% and 64% of

⁵⁷ UNEP Quality of Project Management Review. UNEP Quality Assurance Section. 2013

⁵⁸ Mid-Term Evaluation of the Regional Project for Implementing Biosafety Frameworks in the Caribbean Sub-Region (4C20/GEF Id 2967/3735)

⁵⁹ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project, “Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Costa Rica” (4B61/GEF Id 3629)

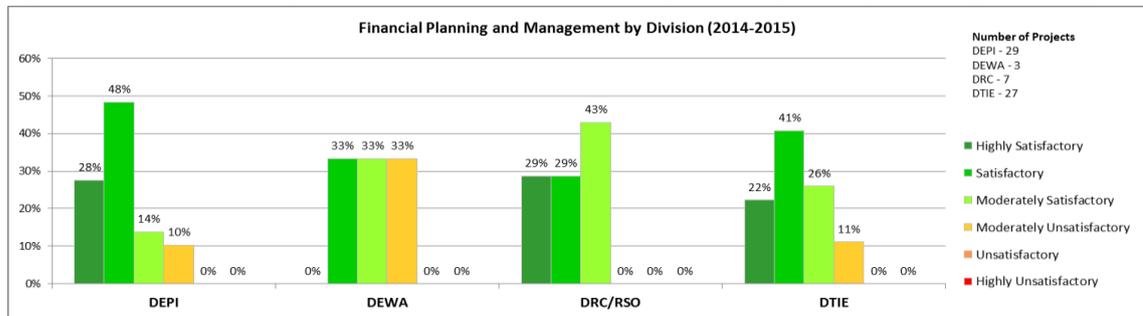
evaluated projects attaining a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ or better against this criterion in 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 respectively.

Figure 32: Assessment of Performance in Financial Planning and Management by Year (2010-2015)



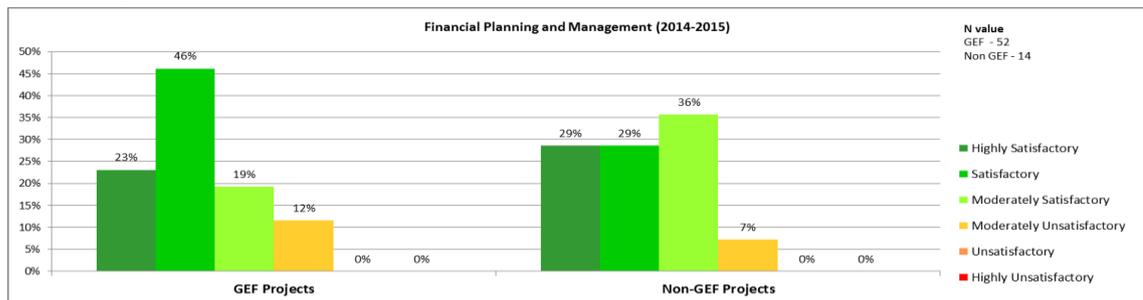
164. When assessed by Division, DEPI-led projects performed best against this criterion in 2014-2015 evaluations, with 76% of the projects rated as ‘Satisfactory’ or better for the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources. It should be noted that projects led by DEPI also comprise the greatest proportion (44%) of the total projects assessed against this criterion (See Figure 33 below).

Figure 33: Assessment of Project Performance in Financial Planning and Management by Division (2014-2015)



165. A comparison between GEF and non-GEF funded projects shows that in 2014-2015 the former had a higher percentage of projects (69%) rated ‘Satisfactory’ or better for financial management while the latter had 58% in the same scale. GEF projects comprised 75% of the total projects assessed against this criterion. (Figure 34 below)

Figure 34: Assessment of Project Performance in Financial Planning and Management for GEF and non-GEF Projects (2014-2015)



166. Projects that perform well in this criterion are likely to be those that were able to provide documented evidence of: regular financial progress reporting; effective collaboration between the Project Manager and the Funds Management Officer; diligent monitoring of disbursements, procurements and recruitment, and guidance given to executing partners on UNEP financial requirements and procedures. In general, projects that obtained high ratings (‘Satisfactory’ and ‘Highly Satisfactory’) in this criterion also performed well in other areas such as UNEP supervision and backstopping, project implementation and management, achievement of outputs, as well as in the overall project performance.

167. One of the challenges reported under the financial management criterion is that projects were not able to fully mobilize financing or co-financing as projected in the project design phase. The response to a lack of resources requires appropriate adaptive management and, in some cases, can limit the delivery project outputs and jeopardise the attainment of outcomes. The challenge is often greater when multiple partners/stakeholders are involved in project implementation.

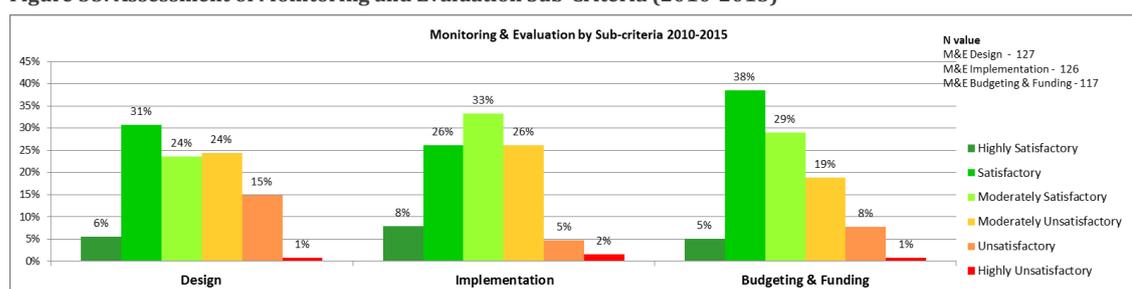
Lesson # 23. Complex programs with multiple funding partners, implementing agencies and country partnerships will often in and of themselves demand complex administrative arrangements. These arrangements however need to balance efficiency with effectiveness and take into account the nature of adaptive management that make projects successful. Tracking of co-financing needs to be formalized and more readily available.⁶⁰

Lesson # 24. A regional project will always have complex finance administration challenges (different currencies, banking systems, transaction costs, etc). Local expectations and practices also play a role in making administration even more complex. By nature, practitioners are far more inclined to be in the field doing ground work than staying for a couple of days at the office preparing reports. In case of future regional projects but also single country projects, there must be regional and country level inception workshops or meetings. Detailed instructions must be provided to all participants particularly to pilot project leaders. The executing agency administration must be streamlined as much as possible and the project participants must commit to put the necessary time that narrative and financial reports require.⁶¹

Monitoring and Evaluation

168. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) evaluation criterion assesses the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified by the projects. Information generated by an M&E system during project implementation is generally expected to contribute to adaptive management, improve project execution, improve achievement of outcomes and contribute to sustainability. Three components of M&E are assessed under this criterion: design, implementation of M&E systems as well as M&E budgeting and funding.
169. Project M&E in UNEP is often carried out using: periodic reports to Project Steering Committees; technical progress reports and financial expenditure reports; Project Implementation Reviews (PIR); Programme Information and Management System (PIMS); mission reports and workshop reports and mid-term reviews or mid-term evaluations as well as terminal evaluations. Projects with satisfactory M&E systems often provided baseline data, had SMART⁶² indicators and specified milestones that could be used to bench mark the progress in delivery of outputs, and progress towards outcomes and objectives.

Figure 35: Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Criteria (2010-2015)



170. Similar to previous biennia, M&E remained one of the weaker components of project design and implementation in comparison to other factors affecting performance. Over the period 2010 to 2015, the M&E design sub-criterion received the poorest ratings with 40% of evaluated projects rated in the unsatisfactory range (see Figure 35 above). M&E Implementation and M&E Budgeting and funding criteria were rated at 33% and 28% respectively on the same scale.

⁶⁰ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDP/GEF Project "Implementing Sustainable Water Resources and Wastewater Management in Pacific Island Countries" (GFL-2328-2731-4A51/GF/6030-09-03)

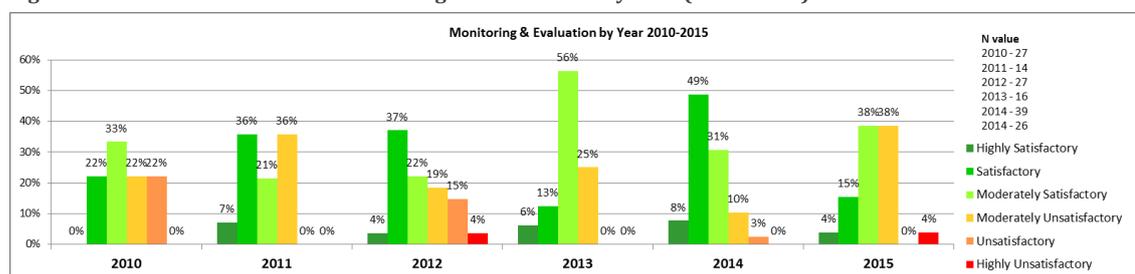
2586_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_IW_FSP_IWRM_Evaluation_Final_Report

⁶¹ 3183_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_FSP_MTIASC_Invasive_Species-Final report

⁶² Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Result-oriented and Time-bound

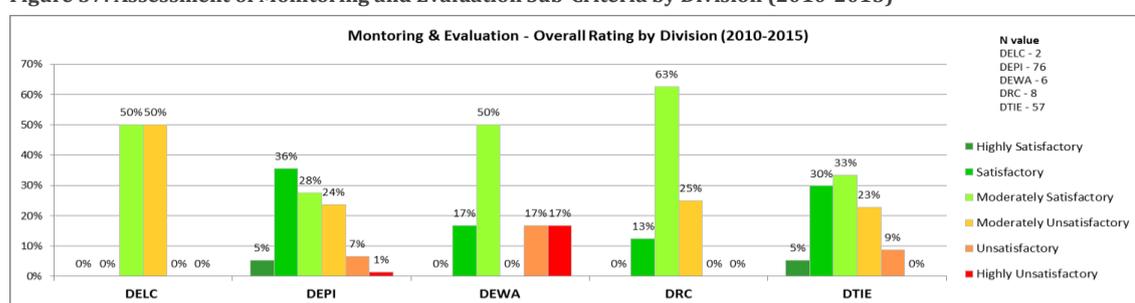
171. When assessed across the six year period (2010-15) an improvement is observed with almost 87% of the projects evaluated in 2014 rated in the satisfactory range. However, there is a significant drop in 2015 with 42% of the projects assessed in the unsatisfactory range - returning to performance levels previously observed in 2010 (see Figure 36 below).

Figure 36: Assessment of Overall Monitoring and Evaluation by Year (2010-2015)



172. At Divisional level, performance against this criterion remained low across the board with all Divisions recording over 25% rating in the unsatisfactory range during the 2010-2015 period (See Figure 37 below)⁶³.

Figure 37: Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Criteria by Division (2010-2015)



173. A common finding among the projects evaluated in 2014-2015, was that M&E systems are often inadequately funded and staffed and there were seldom dedicated M&E officers assigned, with this role being performed by project staff having other tasks and responsibilities. Available evaluation funds in 2014-2015 were in several instances below the budgeted amounts, which created limitations in the conduct and depth of terminal evaluations.
174. The trend shown by these statistics confirm that project-level M&E in UNEP needs to be afforded greater weight - not only in the design and budgeting, but also during project implementation. M&E ought to be promoted as an essential tool for acquiring the information needed to make informed decisions about project operations. It should be noted that UNEP has made considerable efforts in M&E design in recent years. These efforts are expected to become more apparent in future project evaluations.

Lesson # 25. Systematic monitoring and documentation of adaptive management decisions is essential to projects. When project monitoring is better designed and implemented, the overall performance of the projects increases. Effective monitoring is of particular importance for projects that are implemented in rapidly changing environment context and large number of stakeholders.⁶⁴

Lesson # 26. Where possible, monitoring systems should be simple and participatory. Stakeholders should be involved in the monitoring process in order to increase ownership. This improves efficiency of monitoring and evaluation programs by lowering costs and reducing time spent in gathering data.⁶⁵

Lesson # 27. It is not uncommon that projects need to go through important changes at mid-term. Those changes and their causal factors bring in important lessons to be learned. But these lessons would not be collated and

⁶³ DCPI not included – n value is 0
⁶⁴ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project “Renewable Energy Based Electricity Generation for Isolated Mini-Grids In Zambia ID No. 1358
⁶⁵ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project “Partnering for Natural Resource Management – Conservation Council of Nations (CCN)”, GEF Id 4527

disseminated if they are not documented, discussed and reported adequately. In addition, lacking adequate documentation of changes introduced to the project or finding contradictions between documents when explaining those changes make learning and evaluation more difficult.⁶⁶

Stakeholder participation and public awareness

175. This criterion assesses the effectiveness of mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation with other UNEP projects and programmes, external stakeholders and partners and target users of project products using three related and often overlapping processes: i) information dissemination to and between stakeholders, ii) consultation with and between stakeholders and iii) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities.

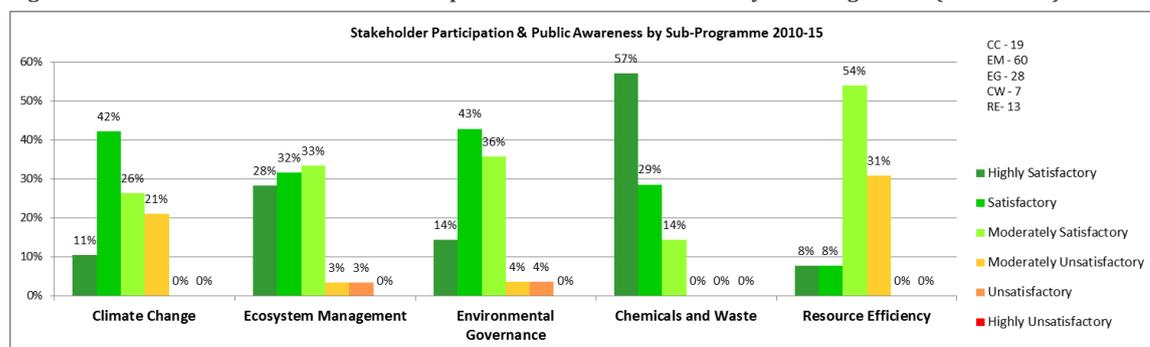
176. Stakeholder participation and public awareness was one of the well performing criteria in comparison to other factors affecting project performance. As shown in Table 5 below, in the three biennia over 86% of the projects evaluated against this criterion were rated in the satisfactory range. In general, projects that performed well in this criterion also performed well in achievement of outputs and catalytic role and replication criteria.

Table 5: Project Performance in 'Stakeholder Participation and Public Awareness over 3 Biennia (2010-11, 2012-13, 2014-15)

| Biennium | Satisfactory Range | Unsatisfactory Range |
|----------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 2014/15 | 86.5% | 14% |
| 2012/13 | 88% | 12% |
| 2010/11 | 96.5% | 2.5% |

177. Based on sub-programme classification, 57% of the evaluated projects under the Chemicals and Waste SP obtained a 'Highly Satisfactory' rating for stakeholder participation and public awareness between 2010 and 2015. Projects under the Ecosystem Management SP also performed well in this category, with the second highest percentage of projects (28%) rated 'Highly Satisfactory' over the same period - notwithstanding having the largest proportion of projects (47%) evaluated against this criterion. Resource Efficiency SP and Climate Change SP had the highest proportion of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range (31% and 21% respectively) (See Figure 38).

Figure 38: Assessment of Stakeholder Participation and Public Awareness by Sub-Programme (2010-2015)



178. Projects that performed well in this criterion would often have: well-defined stakeholders (within and outside of UNEP) and the specific roles and responsibilities; involvement of partners and stakeholders in the design and implementation of the project; leveraged on opportunities for joint activities, pooling of resources and mutual learning with stakeholders and other organizations and networks; and amicable relationship between the project and the collaborating partners that promote participation among other attributes.

Lesson # 28. Involving stakeholders and key beneficiaries in the design and execution/implementation of the project at an early stage, promotes acceptance, ownership of project activities increases the likelihood that outcomes will be sustained.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ 3183_2014_TE_UNEP_REGIONAL_BD_FSP_MTIASC_Invasive_Species-Final report

Lesson # 29. Awareness raising activities have to differentiate stakeholders with a decision making role from the general public and civil society organizations. The former group has to be addressed by presenting case studies and success stories from other countries, if they are not locally available, and by organizing exchanges of experiences with representatives of institutions / private sector from other countries.⁶⁸

Country ownership and driven-ness

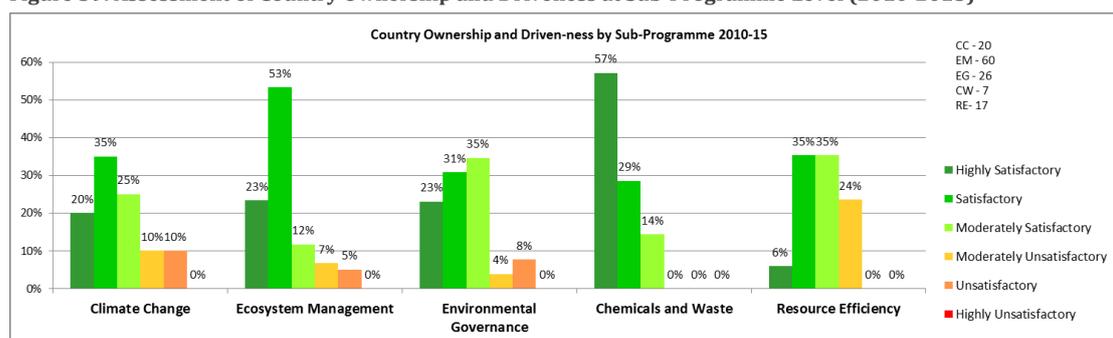
179. This criterion is used to assess the degree and effectiveness of involvement of government and public sector agencies in evaluated projects. This includes: assessing how well governments assumed responsibility for projects and provided adequate support to project execution; the degree of cooperation received from the various contact institutions in the countries involved and the timeliness of the provision of counter-part funding and in-kind contributions to project activities.
180. This was also one of the well performing criteria under factors affecting project performance, with over 80% of the evaluated projects attaining performance ratings in the satisfactory range across the three biennia (See Table 6). There is also marginal improvement in ratings in the successive biennia.

Table 6: Project Performance in Country Ownership and Driven-ness Criterion (2010-11, 2012-13, 2014-15)

| Biennium | Satisfactory Range | Unsatisfactory Range |
|----------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 2014/15 | 89% | 11% |
| 2012/13 | 86% | 14% |
| 2010/11 | 83% | 17% |

181. Projects under the Ecosystem Management SP showed a strong performance against this criterion, with up to 76% of the projects evaluated attaining a ‘Satisfactory’ or better rating over the same period – a robust finding since this SP had the largest proportion of projects evaluated in the cohort (46%). This is quite encouraging in view of the fact that projects under Ecosystems Management by their nature are significantly reliant on the social dimension in developing and implementing ecosystem-based approaches at country level (see Figure 39 below). All projects under the Chemicals and Waste SP evaluated over this period achieved ratings in the satisfactory range and among those 57% attained a ‘Highly Satisfactory’ rating. However, this is based on just seven project evaluations; 5% of the cohort, and therefore may not be representative of the broader sub-programme portfolio.

Figure 39: Assessment of Country Ownership and Drivenness at Sub-Programme Level (2010-2015)



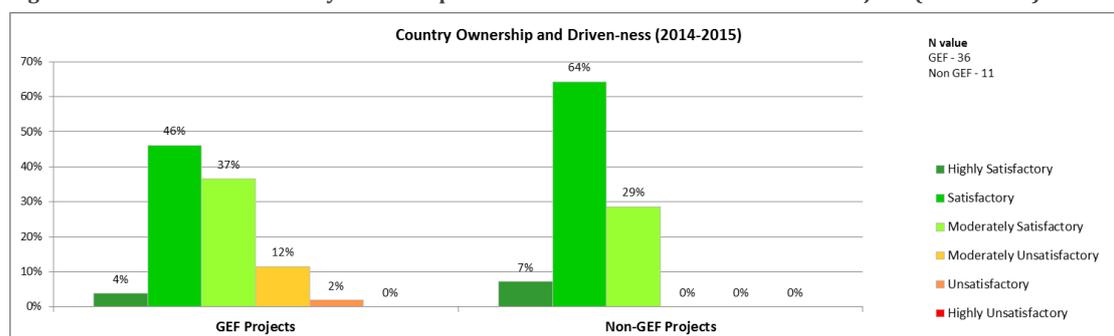
182. Evaluated projects that were rated as ‘Highly Satisfactory’ in this criterion, also performed well in the following criteria: preparation and readiness; stakeholder participation; UNEP supervision and backstopping and relevance. These projects tended to have a strong alignment with national/country priorities, and their project/task teams provided adequate responses to the country needs.

⁶⁷ Terminal Evaluation of the Project “Adapting to Climate Change Induced Water Stress in the Nile River Basin”

⁶⁸ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project “Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Tunisia” (4953/GEF Id 2648)

183. The comparison between GEF and non-GEF funded projects evaluated in the biennium 2014-2015 shows that the latter has the better performance in this criterion, with 100% of the projects evaluated attaining ratings in the satisfactory range – of these over 70% rated as ‘Satisfactory’ or better for achieving country ownership (See Figure 40).

Figure 40: Assessment of Country Ownership and Driven-ness for GEF and non-GEF Projects (2014-2015)



184. Projects that attracted the highest ratings for this criterion had in common: relevance to national, regional or global environmental and developmental issues and needs and buy-in/ownership of the project by governments and country stakeholders. A good example that can be cited was the ‘Regional Project for Implementing Biosafety Frameworks in the Caribbean Sub-Region’. National ownership was encouraged through early consultations during the project’s formulation. The resulting project design and institutional arrangements established national budgets and project management units hosted by National Executing Agencies (NEAs) responsible for annual work planning and the execution of activities. National steering committees were also created for oversight and inter-institutional coordination. The general public was also engaged, albeit on a small scale, through public awareness activities such as biosafety awareness materials distributed to schools, farmers and other target groups.

Lesson # 30. Alignment of projects with national and local needs and priorities enhances ownership and strong coordination, and should therefore be promoted in design and implementation of projects. Strong coordination at country level enhances ownership and opens channels for future collaboration and knowledge sharing.⁶⁹

Lesson # 31. Involving partner government intuitions and other important stakeholders in the design and evaluation phases of the project increases their commitment and inputs. This joint learning process helps reduce tensions and strengthens relationships and the decision making process. It also helps to develop a shared vision that can be useful in formulating creative solutions to challenges/adaptive management.⁷⁰

Lesson # 32. Projects need to be owned by the participants, and conditions need to be created for national partners to participate effectively. It is not reasonable to expect national input and participation from countries without their consultation and buy-in during the design phase and sufficient financial resources to enable them to take part in activities.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Strengthening of The Gambia's Climate Change Early Warning Systems

⁷⁰ Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project “Partnering for Natural Resource Management – Conservation Council of Nations (CCN)”, GEF Id 4527

⁷¹ 4235_2015_TE_UNEP_GLOBAL_BD_MSP_SIDS Low Forest Cover

III. Key Findings from Strategic Evaluations

185. Summary findings from major evaluations undertaken during the biennium are presented in the sections below.

Formative Evaluation of the MTS: Planning processes- summary of findings and recommendations

186. This evaluation was presented to UNEP Senior Management and the Committee of Permanent Representatives in 2015. Evaluation recommendations have been discussed and in many cases, measures have already been taken to address them.
187. UNEP is the United Nations' designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional levels. UNEP's vision for the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-2017, which defines the long-term ambition of UNEP, continues the vision presented in the MTS 2010-2013: 'To be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment'.
188. The UNEP MTS is a strategic document approved by the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA) – previously the UNEP Governing Council. It sets out UNEP's vision, objectives, priorities and impact measures for a four-year period. It outlines the emerging issues to be taken into consideration in the MTS, reviews the programmatic and operational achievements of the preceding MTS and identifies lessons learned. An addendum to the document sets out the strategic focus for the MTS including sub-programme objectives, Expected Accomplishments (EAs) and implementation strategies; the associated overall business strategy; a description of UNEP's corporate risk management strategy and arrangements for the evaluation of the MTS.
189. The Biennial Programme of Work and Budget (PoW) is UNEP's actual work plan and budget document approved by UNEP's Governing Council (UNEA for the PoW 2016-2017) and the United Nations General Assembly's (UNGA) Fifth Committee. Essentially, it builds on the MTS and Strategic Framework⁷², providing more detail by adding the human and financial resource estimates and outputs for UNEP corporate functions and each sub-programme. It describes the overall orientation of UNEP, lessons learned, resource projections and policy making organs of UNEP. It also presents the objectives, strategy, results framework and resource requirements of executive management, the seven sub-programmes and the programme support functions (including units of measure, baselines and targets for each EA).
190. The Programme Frameworks (PFs) are internal UNEP planning documents that present the context and intervention logic of the sub-programme, explaining how projects – presented in the form of project concepts – are expected to deliver the PoW outputs and how these outputs would contribute to outcomes and impact. For the MTS 2014-2017, it was decided to have one single PF for each sub-programme. PFs are approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT).
191. Projects are the "building blocks" that operationalize UNEP's PoW. The Project Document (ProDoc) specifies the project boundaries in terms of project duration and planned resources, and shows the logical flow of project elements towards a clearly specified objective. All UNEP Project Documents are reviewed and approved by the SMT as part of a Programme Framework and the PoW. Fully developed ProDocs are reviewed by a Project Review Committee (PRC).

Purpose and approach - Formative Evaluation

192. The purpose of the Formative Evaluation was to assess the appropriateness of the design of the MTS and its associated planning documents in time to inform the next MTS and PoW planning cycle. The evaluation was to provide findings, lessons learned and recommendations in the first biennium of the 2014-17 MTS, based on an analysis of the quality, coherence and causal relationships specified across UNEP's planning documents. It was intended to support decision-

⁷² The Strategic Framework (SF) is a planning document approved by the UN General Assembly for a two-year period as part of the overall, biennial Strategic Framework of the United Nations. The SFs constitute the principal policy directive of the UN and should serve as the basis for programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.

making by UNEP member states and senior management regarding future UNEP strategic planning processes and to provide recommendations to improve the project development process and the quality of ProDocs.

193. The evaluation approach is based on careful review of draft and approved versions of the MTS 2014-2017, the PoWs for 2014-2015 and 2016-2017, the seven PF documents for the MTS period and all ProDocs approved between January 2011 and May 2014⁷³ and a sample of ProDocs approved between May 2014 and January 2015. It also considered planning related guidance documents, presentations and correspondence by the Office for Operations, and minutes of Task Team, Senior Management Team and UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives meetings. The evaluation team conducted interviews and held informal discussions with staff in the Office for Operations, the Programme Strategy and Planning Team, the Regional Support Office and Task Team members.

Evaluation findings

194. The evaluation presents a number of conclusions and recommendations to further enhance UNEP planning documents and processes with the goal of improving organisational performance. Conscious that UNEP planning processes are already perceived as somewhat cumbersome and time-consuming, the proposed recommendations add as few additional requirements, procedures or processes as possible, but aim to strengthen those already in place. There are generally fewer recommendations for the higher level planning processes and documents (MTS and PoWs), whilst more opportunities for improvement have been identified at the Programme Framework and Project Document level. It is at these latter levels that the greatest potential for improvement coincides with the highest likelihood of translation into improved UNEP strategic focus and operational performance.

Planning processes

195. Since the Formative Evaluation of the PoW 2010-2011, UNEP has made considerable improvements in the strategic planning processes. Preparation processes for the MTS 2014-2017 and corresponding PoWs were highly consultative with prominent roles for Sub-Programme Coordinators and focal points, involving a broad array of internal and external stakeholders and with an important role played by a Task Team of hand-picked staff across the organization that had a strategic perspective. However, because the preparation processes involved many review steps by multiple review bodies, they required very long preparation timelines. Additionally, it was a real challenge to formulate results statements and indicators that would be acceptable for all parties, often ending up in compromise.
196. Due to tight deadlines in the PoW development process, the preparation of Programme Framework documents was postponed until after the PoW had been submitted to the UNEP GC, and their approval came too late for them to be useful as strategic planning tools for the MTS 2014-2017 or PoW 2014-2015. However, the development of Theories of Change for the PFs did help to strengthen the causal relationships between results levels presented in the sub-programme-specific sections of the PoW 2016-2017. There was also a sequencing problem in the preparation of the PFs whereby project identification took place before the programme logic (theory of change) for the sub-programmes was developed. Thus, the programme logic presented in the PFs was not based on an in-depth problem analysis for the sub-programme but was 'reconstructed' from the EA and PoW output statements in the MTS and PoW 2014-2015 and the predetermined project pipeline.
197. **Recommendation 1:** For the PFs to fulfil their full potential as a strategic planning tool on which higher level strategy (MTS, SF and PoW) can be based, they should be regarded as a 'living document'. PFs should be regularly updated by SPCs –in consultation with Divisions and Regional Offices– between PoW planning cycles and re-approved by the SMT at the onset of each new planning cycle so that they can constitute the reference and basis for MTS and PoW development,

⁷³ To gauge changes over time in the quality of project design, all projects approved since the last Formative Evaluation in 2011 were assessed. To gauge the quality of project design in the current MTS period the Evaluation Office also assessed the quality of a sample of project documents approved since the beginning of the current biennium.

and not the other way around. As such, the Theories of Change presented in the PFs should be based on an in-depth and up-to-date problem analysis for the sub-programme. The EAs and PoW Outputs in the MTS and PoWs should be derived from these Theories of Change, which should also provide the basis for identification of new projects.

198. Significant efforts have been made to strengthen project design and approval processes: involvement of Sub-Programme Coordinators in the project design process, more systematic peer review of draft ProDocs by colleagues before submission to PRC, clearer guidelines in a revised UNEP Programme Manual, a Results-Based Management (RBM) training module on project design rolled out to the majority of programme staff, improved PRC guidelines and quality-at-entry criteria, the Project Preparation Proposal etc. However, because the Quality Assurance Section (QAS) provides feedback on early drafts of ProDocs and clears ProDocs before submission to PRC, there is a risk of bias stemming from conflicting roles. In addition, QAS lacks staff resources to provide systematic, in-depth guidance to all projects under preparation. The evaluation also found that PRC comments are not always taken on board and verification of the final ProDoc at approval could be more rigorous.
199. **Recommendation 2:** The project design support function and the project design quality assurance function, currently both within QAS, should be separated to avoid conflicting roles. QAS should focus on project quality assurance, providing an objective assessment of design quality at submission to PRC and at submission to the Deputy Executive Director (DED) for signature. Project design support should be done jointly by Branch Heads and SPCs, who should also ensure that ProDocs are subject to in-depth peer review by sub-programme staff or subject experts prior to submission to PRC. The quality rating of projects submitted to PRC and to the DED for final approval should also be used as a performance measure for Division Directors, Branch Heads and SPCs.

Contents of the MTS and PoW documents

200. The MTS 2014-2017 presents a clear vision and business plan for the organisation. While remaining broadly in line with MTS 2010-2013, it also builds on lessons learned from the previous period. The MTS document clearly explains how UNEP is expected to influence environmental decision-making, by leading efforts to achieve UN system-wide coherence and by fully utilizing strategic partnerships 'to catalyse transformative change and leverage impact'. The MTS document demonstrates clearly how UNEP's mandate, vision and strategic approach is relevant to the broader global context by linking the global environmental challenges to the areas of strategic focus of UNEP (the sub-programmes).
201. The sub-programme objectives are coherent with the vision and key goal statement for UNEP, most of them indicating a behavioural change among stakeholders in the form of a transition or move towards some environmental aspect of sustainable development. The new MTS also presents service lines for UNEP which are directly derived from its comparative advantages and along which many PoW Outputs would be forged during PoW development.
202. The MTS declares that UNEP intends to promote 'further integration of gender considerations in programme planning and delivery, entailing integration of a gender perspective into all phases of UNEP's programme cycle, from planning to monitoring and evaluation.' Quite some progress has been made in integrating gender in the PoWs, including in an Executive Office Expected Accomplishment (geographical representation and gender balance of staff), a programme support indicator of achievement (percentage of UNEP projects that can demonstrate the integration of gender considerations in project implementation) and, increasingly, in sub-programme narratives and results.
203. However, while UNEP's ambition is to tackle global environmental challenges, the MTS does not present longer term objectives for environmental benefits and human well-being. UNEP's vision is inward-looking, indicating what UNEP intends to keep doing, rather than what it wants to achieve.
204. **Recommendation 3:** UNEP's vision statement in the MTS should not only describe where UNEP as an organisation wants to be in the long term future (10-20 years from now) but should also present how UNEP envisions the long term future of humankind and its living environment. In-line with this global vision, UNEP should set long-term environmental objectives for each sub-programme with indicators, baselines and long-term targets. The Environment under Review Sub-programme should play a stronger role in helping define higher-level indicators for UNEP and measuring the

baselines for these indicators. Sub-programme strategy sections in the MTS should also present the changes that might need to happen (intermediate states) in between EAs and sub-programme objectives and summarize the external factors affecting achievement of these objectives [already addressed in MTS 2018-21].

205. A result focus and strengthened accountability are clearly evident in UNEP's new strategic planning documents. The MTS proposes an adequate independent evaluation approach but does not mention any form of self-evaluation, which is currently lacking in UNEP, and monitoring arrangements are not detailed in the MTS and PoW documents. A larger portion of expected accomplishments and PoW outputs have been formulated at the right results level and PoW outputs are, overall, more logically connected to the EAs. In the PoW 2014-2015, sets of indicators of achievement for the EAs often lack specificity or miss part of the results captured in the EA. For the PoW 2016-2017, several indicators have been added to provide a fuller picture of the changes and improve the accuracy of measurement, but this will increase the monitoring and reporting burden.
206. **Recommendation 4:** Continued efforts to improve the clarity of results statements and the robustness of their associated indicators in the MTS/SFs/PoWs are required. EAs should be set at the immediate / direct outcome level, representing changes that can be directly caused by the use of UNEP outputs. EA milestones could be used to indicate progress towards EA achievement and would be easier to monitor than some of the EA indicators that are more appropriately assessed through evaluation. Regional targets for the EA indicators could be set to reflect where the geographical emphasis of UNEP's support should be towards specific, expected results. PoW Outputs should be formulated as concrete types of products or services delivered by UNEP interventions, in line with the UNEP service lines.
207. Human and financial resource needs estimates are presented in the PoWs for all elements of the work plan. Human and financial resource needs were initially estimated by Office of Operations for the corporate functions and the SPCs for each sub-programme, but the sub-programme allocations of the Environment Fund were re-negotiated by the Division Directors to avoid disruption of the existing resource allocation patterns. Resource allocation principles, criteria and priorities are not described in the PoW (or in any of the other main planning documents). In addition, the PoWs do not clarify the mechanisms in place to ensure a transparent prioritization of extra-budgetary funding even though this was a recognized weakness from the previous MTS period. Within sub-programmes, there is no prioritization of outputs or EAs.
208. **Recommendation 5:** The PoWs should provide more clarity on the principles, criteria and priorities of resource allocation to sub-programmes and among divisions and offices in UNEP. The resource allocation process for Regular Budget, Environment Fund and Earmarked Contributions should be more transparent across the organisation.

Substantive findings and recommendations – Programme Framework documents

209. The evaluation very much supports UNEP's decision to undertake more detailed planning efforts at the Programme Framework level. This level of detailed planning has been emphasised and strengthened since the last formative evaluation. The bulk of the planning effort for the PFs in the MTS 2014-2017 preceded the appointment of the current Sub-Programme Coordinators. Whilst this evaluation makes a number of suggestions to strengthen the Programme Frameworks, the Evaluation Office remains convinced that this level of planning combined with the new roles of SPCs and the PSPT has the potential to form an effective link between longer term strategic planning and the operational 'building blocks' of UNEP's substantive work – the projects.
210. The final, approved PF documents had been abridged and were missing much of the content proposed in the initial guidelines prepared by QAS. There is no comprehensive problem analysis to justify the strategic focus and the type of support (outputs) UNEP intends to provide in the PF documents. Each PF document presents a narrative of a theory of change for the sub-programme describing how UNEP PoW Outputs are expected to contribute to outcomes, and how these outcomes are expected to lead to impact on the environment and human well-being, passing through one or more intermediate states. While the cause-to-effect logic of those ToCs is usually sound, the narratives are often quite hard to follow, especially as these are rarely accompanied by a diagram depicting the main causal pathways. Most ToC narratives present the most important external factors (drivers and assumptions) affecting change along the causal pathways. However, PF documents do not present how drivers will be promoted or how risks will be managed.

211. PF documents list numerous partners but remain unclear on who the strategically most important partners are and how UNEP intends to engage with them. PF documents also mention the main target groups of the sub-programme, but their roles, or how and why they would be affected by changes promoted by the sub-programme, are not explained. ToC narratives are very vague about the stakeholders that can affect, or can be affected by, changes along the causal pathways.
212. There was good consultation with the regions during the development of the PFs but regional priorities are not mentioned in the final approved PF documents, with the exception of the Environment under Review Sub-Programme. The PFs do not address the issue of coherence of projects at the regional level as promised in the MTS. The PF documents also lack a specific strategy or criteria for regional or country targeting of interventions.
213. **Recommendation 6:** The PFs should capture the ongoing strategic thinking of the sub-programme through an up-to-date description of context and robust problem and stakeholder analyses to underpin the strategy of the sub-programme presented in a clear theory of change. PFs should reflect changing external realities, regional priorities, new opportunities/issues, and progress in implementation. More precisely:
- a. PF documents should present a thorough problem analysis, explaining the causes and consequences of the key problems that the sub-programmes are expected to address. This problem and contextual analysis should be frequently updated in light of the evolving global and regional situation.
 - b. PF documents should systematically present a detailed ToC narrative supported by an accompanying diagram to enhance clarity. They should also present how drivers will be promoted and a credible risk management strategy for the most important assumptions with a moderate to high likelihood of proving false.
 - c. PF documents should provide more clarity on the roles of key stakeholders in the sub-programme and how and why they would be affected by changes promoted by the sub-programme. The ToC narratives should also be clearer about the stakeholders that can affect, or can be affected by, changes along the causal pathways.
 - d. The PFs should indicate regional priorities for the sub-programme and also propose a specific strategy or criteria for regional or country targeting of interventions.
214. PF documents recognize the importance of strategic partnerships to disseminate norms, tools and technologies. Several PFs propose projects that include pilots or that will be implemented in only a sample of countries, so that up-scaling becomes essential to achieve large scale impact. In most cases, an explanation is provided on how pilots will be up-scaled and what kind of regional or global process they intend to support. However, there is still much room for strengthening awareness-raising, knowledge transfer and up-scaling strategies in PF documents. On the other hand, financial sustainability of results, which is closely linked to up-scaling, is not explicitly addressed in PF documents though some sub-programmes foresee specific projects to develop financing mechanisms, which are expected to enhance the financial sustainability and up-scaling of results achieved by other projects in the sub-programme.
215. **Recommendation 7:** PF documents should present the sub-programme's knowledge management and up-scaling strategy, which can be part of every individual project and/or conceived at the level of sub-programme components or the sub-programme as a whole. It is important to emphasize the sub-programme-wide or component-wide role of those projects that have technology transfer, knowledge management or up-scaling as their main objective, because they are essential to increase the scale of outcomes and impact within the sub-programme. Sustainability of results also needs to be explicitly addressed in PF documents as part of the sub-programme logic, in particular recognizing those projects that aim at developing financing mechanisms to support the continuation of project results beyond UNEP's interventions.
216. PF documents present the overall project portfolio in a table, indicating the responsible division and the project manager in charge of the project, but they do not present a management and coordination structure either at the sub-programme level or at the project concept level. Neither do they articulate sub-programme-wide roles and responsibilities of UNEP divisions, branches and units. With only one exception (Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme), PF documents also do not describe an overall steering mechanism for the sub-programme.

217. **Recommendation 8:** PF documents should present the steering or coordination mechanism at the sub-programme level and articulate sub-programme-wide roles and responsibilities of UNEP divisions, branches and units, and Regional Offices.
218. The PF documents present a budget estimate (but no human resources estimate) for the overall portfolio for four years, indicating different sources of funding. However, they do not propose a credible resource mobilization strategy for their sub-programme. **Recommendation 9:** PF documents should provide a robust resource mobilisation strategy for the sub-programme.
219. None of the PF documents currently presents a gender dimension to the sub-programme. **Recommendation 10:** PF documents should strengthen gender analysis and integration of gender considerations in sub-programme planning. More guidance seems to be necessary for the integration of meaningful gender components into PF documents.
220. The level of integration of the GEF portfolio in the PF documents is rather limited. In most cases, a simple list is provided in the annex of the PF document, with no other mention of the GEF portfolio within the document, for instance under the Programme Framework Logic where reference is made only to the “regular” projects. **Recommendation 11:** For the GEF portfolio to be fully integrated in the sub-programmes, it needs to be justified within the sub-programme-wide problem analysis and be integrated in the sub-programme theory of change presented in the PF documents.

Substantive findings and recommendations – Project Concepts and Project Documents

221. Project concepts in Programme Framework documents often provide insufficient information to judge the strategic merit of the project in the broader strategic context of the sub-programme. This is especially true for new areas of work where the track record and strategic relevance of the intervention have yet to be established.
222. **Recommendation 12:** Project concepts should provide sufficient information to justify the strategic merit of the project in the broader strategic context of the sub-programme. For this, they would require an adequate project description, including the project outcome(s) and outputs, key drivers and assumptions, contribution to EA(s) and delivery of PoW outputs and linkages with other projects. Projects should be linked to one main EA and not to a single PoW Output – it is indeed extremely rare that a project would deliver one service or product only.
223. Many project concepts do not indicate the countries in which the project will be implemented. If they do, the choice of countries is rarely explained. Due to special attention by PRC, recent ProDocs identify the regional and country dimension of the project better and provide a clearer description of the expected role of Regional Offices, but still remain unclear on what and how resources will be channelled to the Regional Offices. Participating countries are often unconfirmed and sometimes even unknown, which adds a considerable amount of uncertainty to the project. Many critical aspects of project design, e.g. stakeholder and partnership analysis, sustainability, scale-up and replication strategy, safeguards etc. will remain general descriptions and lack accuracy if the location of the project is unknown.
224. **Recommendation 13:** While project concepts might keep open the selection of countries in which the project will be implemented, they still need to indicate clear selection criteria. At the Project Document stage, however, participating countries need to be confirmed before PRC approval and the ProDocs need to be fully tailored to the specificities of the selected countries. In rare cases, e.g. in the Disasters and Conflicts Sub-Programme where crises can often not be predicted, it might be acceptable that country identification is done during project inception or implementation, but clear criteria for selection of countries should be presented in the ProDoc. ProDocs should also be clearer on the role of Regional Offices in the project.
225. ProDocs have much improved in the way they present the project context and often contain a convincing problem analysis. The use of ToC in ProDocs to explain the project logic has also improved and become more consistent since the requirement was introduced. However, most ProDocs limit themselves to presenting general groups of project partners and describe at a theoretical level how they fit into the project. In most ProDocs, identification of other project stakeholders is incomplete and stakeholder analysis is weak.
226. **Recommendation 14:** ProDocs should include a stakeholder analysis indicating how each of the most important stakeholders (individuals or groups) are expected/likely to affect, or to be affected

by, the project and explain how this would happen in connection to the theory of change of the project. A thorough analysis of partners (i.e. the stakeholders with whom the project will establish a formal collaborative relationship) should be conducted before project submission to PRC. This would include an analysis (e.g. SWOT) of potential partners, followed by consultations, discussions on objectives, an agreement on priorities and, eventually, on the legal instruments with future partners. The ProDoc should present a table showing the confirmed partners and summarize their roles and responsibilities, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. They should also provide sufficient detail on specific legal agreements foreseen for the project and draft agreements should be shared with the PRC as part of the project approval package.

227. Only a small minority of ProDocs describe how the project will mobilize resources during implementation, although there are signs of improvement in recent project documents. In ProDocs the detailed budget table is often neglected. Budget tables follow different templates and often show deficiencies which are rarely picked up by PRC. The latest template does not show the estimated total cost for each project output.
228. **Recommendation 15:** ProDocs should provide more detail on the resource mobilisation strategy of the project. The budget template in ProDocs should show resource distribution over divisions and regional offices and also show how unsecured funding is expected to be allocated between project outputs. A finance staff member should always be included in the PRC to review the coherence and feasibility of project budgets and their compliance with UNEP financial rules and regulations.
229. Most ProDocs have a gender section and it is clear from the PRC reports that this chapter is given importance. However, this chapter often suffers from an over-generalized treatment and tends to present an overview of gender aspects relevant to the projects rather than detailing an analysis complemented by a strategy. At times, the gender goals proclaimed sound rather unconvincing, especially because gender-related activities are usually not to be found in the work plan or the detailed budget of the project.
230. **Recommendation 16:** ProDocs should strengthen gender analysis and integration of gender considerations in project planning. More guidance seems to be necessary for the integration of meaningful gender components into projects; global and regional projects in particular.
231. Most ProDocs do not present a credible knowledge management and up-scaling strategy. Sharing of project information, lessons learnt and best practice reports among UNEP offices and Secretariats through online platforms is the most common knowledge management approach proposed in ProDocs. These cover the first part of the knowledge management process definition of capturing, developing, and sharing knowledge but don't include the important aspects of storing, effectively using and maintaining knowledge.
232. Only a minority of ProDocs propose a mechanism to secure funding to maintain the benefits from the project's outcomes beyond the end date and few ProDocs include activities - and indicators - to advise stakeholders on how to apply for funding from other sources, to engage the private sector or on how to use returns, e.g. project revenues for financial sustainability.
233. **Recommendation 17:** ProDocs should always present a credible knowledge management and up-scaling strategy, and also explain how knowledge management and up-scaling will be continued after project completion. ProDocs also need to propose credible mechanisms to secure funding to sustain results after the projects' end date.
234. During the period 2010-2014, the ProDoc template has been continuously revised with several improvements, but still has a number of weaknesses that need to be addressed. While efforts to streamline UNEP templates with donor templates have been made, it is not always clear to project developers on what is needed for PRC in the case of projects that are being funded by entities that have their own templates.
235. **Recommendation 18:** The ProDoc template should be modified as follows: project justification, problem analysis and problem relevance should be presented together to avoid repetition; relevance and implementation arrangements should be presented separately; and the resource mobilisation strategy should be presented separately from the project sustainability and replicability section. It is also good practice to present the main steps of the project design process in an annex, including which stakeholders were consulted and how, locations visited, internal peer

reviewers and all other information that would show the efforts made to ensure sufficient research, analysis and consultations during the project design process. Lastly, there is a need for enhanced clarity and guidance to project developers on what is needed for PRC in the case of projects that are being funded by entities that have their own templates.

Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme Evaluation

Introduction

236. The UNEP Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of UNEP's Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme (EMSP), focused on the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013 and covering the period 2008-2013, between June 2013 and August 2014. The evaluation aimed to assess the strategic relevance and overall performance of the EMSP and to analyse the factors and processes that have affected its delivery according to standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability).
237. A number of previous evaluations have assessed either the whole or elements of the EMSP in recent years. The current evaluation verified many of the organisational-level issues identified in these evaluations. Many of these institutional-level issues (structural, operational and management) have been resolved or were being addressed during the period covered by the evaluation. As a result, the evaluation focused on the level of achievement of the Expected Accomplishments (EAs) at the sub-programme level and on broader strategic issues, with the aim to encourage greater longer-term strategic thinking about ecosystem management (EM), and on issues of particular relevance for the implementation of the new EMSP framework (for 2014-2017) and design of the next MTS. The scale of the recommendations provided in this evaluation covers all of the key factors which have affected the EMSP during the 2010-2013 MTS period, even if they are related to broader organizational structures and processes and not only the EMSP in specific. However, if not resolved, these factors are likely to affect the future cycles of the EMSP.
238. The Evaluation Report is based largely on the main findings from ten case studies and a portfolio review, supplemented by information gathered from an extensive set of interviews and a review of key documents.

Aim and description of the EMSP

239. UNEP defines ecosystem management as 'an approach to natural resource management that focuses on sustaining ecosystems to meet both ecological and human needs in the future', which is based on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)'s definition of the Ecosystem Approach and forms the framework for the EMSP. The EMSP is centred on: i) the functioning and resilience of the ecosystems that provide ecosystem services and ii) equitable access to these services.
240. According to the MTS 2010-2013, the objective of the EMSP is that '*countries utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being*'. There is no clear statement of the intended environmental (or social) impact and end point of the EMSP, rather the aim is that countries adopt an ecosystem approach. There were three expected accomplishments for the 2010-2011 period. These were slightly revised for the 2012-2013 biennium to read as:
 - EA (a) - Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes;
 - EA (b) - Countries and regions have the capacity to utilize and apply ecosystem management tools;
 - EA (c) - Strengthened capacity of countries and regions to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services.
241. There were 16 associated PoW outputs in the 2010-2011 biennium, which were reduced to 10 for the 2012-2013 biennium. The later outputs were significantly revised and are less specific, more strategic and better aligned under the EAs.
242. The Programme of Work (PoW) 2012-2013 indicates that the EMSP's intervention strategy was to:
 - i) influence planning and assistance frameworks at the regional and national levels so that they incorporate a cross-sectoral, integrated approach focusing on ecosystem services, including incorporation of the value of ecosystem services into development planning systems to guide investment decisions; and
 - ii) build the capacities of regional, sub-regional, national and local

entities to assess ecosystem degradation, in order to slow down or reverse this trend while managing ecosystems for resilience. Emphasis was to be placed on equity issues and it is noted that the work would build on existing ecosystem programmes and involve cooperation with other initiatives. A global outreach project to 'make the case' for ecosystem management and support national and trans-boundary dialogue was considered a critical element of the overall sub-programme strategy.

Evaluation findings

Strategic relevance and mandate

243. The evaluation found that UNEP's involvement in ecosystem management is justified by the global context and growing national priorities. There is a recognised need for increased capacity to tackle the management and restoration of ecosystem services and the mainstreaming of the ecosystem approach into development and economic policy areas, while ecosystem services assessments, particularly ecosystem valuation studies and natural capital accounting, are proving increasingly important in helping to prioritize investment in environmental interventions as part of development and financial assistance frameworks.
244. The overall aims of the EMSP have been relevant and aligned to global and country needs. The EMSP is also well aligned with UNEP's mandate as expressed in several UN General Assembly Resolutions and Reports, UNEP Governing Council Decisions and UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2010.
245. The EMSP has been relevant to the decisions and requests of the biodiversity-related MEAs and provided support for intergovernmental processes, particularly the Regional Seas Programme and Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), as well as helping to address UN priorities for attainment of MDGs (MDG 7 - ensure environmental sustainability). The EMSP reflects the CBD call for countries to adopt the ecosystem approach and supports implementation of the updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Contributions to these processes and programmes are often overlooked or underrated in project documents and thus also under-reported.
246. UNEP's comparative advantage in the area of ecosystem management is clear at the global and regional levels, but less so at the local levels due to its limited country presence. Many other organisations are also active in the field of ecosystem management, some with large and well-established work programmes whereas the evaluation found UNEP's visibility within the ecosystem management community to be, in general, low and its distinctive niche not clear. Consequently, there is a risk of overlap and duplication of efforts with other organisations, including other UN agencies. **Recommendation 1:** In future EMSP planning documents UNEP should better specify and promote its role and niche in ecosystem management particularly in relation to, and following consultation with, other UN agencies and international NGOs with a greater focus on global- and regional- level interventions, where UNEP has a comparative advantage and can be seen as a leader in the implementation of the ecosystem approach.
247. Specific criteria were to be applied to the selection of countries (and ecosystems) to be targeted for interventions under the EMSP, with a focus on countries with high biodiversity, high water stress, and recurrent food shortages, as well as those with trans-boundary ecosystems (mountain, forest, river basins, and coastal/marine ecosystems) which would comprise much of the 'regional dimension' of the EMSP. In addition, UNEP was to focus its activities on a limited number of countries requesting its support (emphasis on least developed countries and small island developing states) to achieve more tangible results and greater impact, rather than spreading effort too thinly, particularly where there was clear potential for results and transfer of knowledge or to build synergies with other UNEP sub-programmes, UN agencies and other partners, or where opportunities existed to build on past work.
248. The EMSP's awareness raising and mainstreaming activities, and most of its development of tools and methods and other capacity building initiatives, have been essentially global in scope during the MTS 2010-2013 and it is not clear whether, or to what extent, the above selection criteria were applied. There is limited documentation on the selection of, or choice between, countries (or how

other criteria were applied). Indeed, for a number of projects, implementation had already started and countries and regions had been selected at the beginning of the 2010-2011 biennium, suggesting that, at least initially, the geographic focus (and direction) of the EMSP was guided by legacy projects more than country needs. **Recommendation 2:** The EMSP should specify guiding criteria for country selection (set out in the Programme Framework), with the rationale for country selection presented in project proposals and assessed and documented for all projects by the Project Review Committee (PRC) during the project review process (see recommendations 3 and 9 below). UNEP needs to ensure that local level activities strategically support normative work at the global and regional level. A country profile database which includes information on country priorities, support requests, past and present support would also greatly aid country selection decisions.

Theory of Change

249. The EMSP did not have a well-articulated Theory of Change (ToC). Attempts to reconstruct a ToC based on the EAs and PoW outputs revealed an overall lack of coherence within the sub-programme, including: EAs that were cumulative and/or sequential in nature; little causal connection between the PoW outputs and the EAs (meaning performance at output level is not a good indicator for EA level); poorly articulated linkage between individual project activities and outputs and project outcomes (expressed as EAs or PoW outputs); and strategies to accomplish the different EAs were often similar and many projects potentially contribute to multiple EAs or PoW outputs. At a practical level this meant that EAs were frequently characterised as ‘accommodating’. In addition, the EAs were formulated at overly ambitious results levels that were largely beyond UNEP’s capability to deliver and were not appropriate to monitor UNEP’s progress over the course of PoW implementation, or for the purposes of tracking whether UNEP is reaching its global and country goals. On the other hand the broad nature of the EAs offered a degree of flexibility to accommodate emerging issues.
250. The EMSP results framework did not provide an adequate basis for focussing the work delivered under the EMSP, or for Results-Based Management (RBM). This is reflected in the limited correspondence between the designed EMSP portfolio described in the 2010-2011 Programme Framework and its 2012-2013 extension and the actual project portfolio and associated difficulties to fully align resources and personnel behind agreed outputs.
251. An underlying difficulty in framing the EMSP is that it is built around a set of approaches, grouped together under the broad concept of ecosystem management. Rather than addressing a specific environmental challenge ecosystem management is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Indeed, a significant amount of the work UNEP undertakes through its other sub-programmes is also based on, and promotes, the ecosystem approach, even if this is not explicitly stated. However, although the structural weaknesses of the EMSP are well recognised by UNEP staff, and some interviewees questioned whether ‘ecosystem management’ should be treated as a tool/approach to be integrated into other UNEP sub-programmes rather than a separate sub-programme in itself, ecosystem management is relevant to UNEP’s mandate. UNEP has a comparative advantage in the area with a long history of, and identifiable expertise in, ecosystem management.

Effectiveness

Achievement of Expected Accomplishments

252. The lack of coherence and other weaknesses of the sub-programme logic, combined with poorly formulated EA indicators, a general lack of baselines at both the sub-programme and project levels, and limited/inaccurate information presented in the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and the Project Performance Reviews (PPR), made it difficult to assess contributions to the EAs and to evaluate the performance of the sub-programme; there are recognised weaknesses in the reporting and assessment systems and consequently direct comparison of performance across sub-programmes (or even between projects) is questionable.
253. Nevertheless, based on the best available evidence, UNEP appears to have achieved the targets it set for the indicators associated with delivery of EA(a) and EA(b) during the MTS 2010-2013,

although this depends on the interpretation of the indicator⁷⁴. Progress on delivery of the EA(c) is more difficult to gauge and debatable. However, if contributions by individual EMSP projects to all the EAs are considered (as is the case for the final PPR of the 2012-2013 biennium), and not just restricted to the EA they are associated with in PIMS, then all three EAs can be judged to have achieved their targets.

Achievement of Immediate Outcomes

254. The evaluation reconstructed a ToC for the sub-programme which identified four Immediate Outcomes (IOs) which correspond to different dimensions of national, regional and global capacity for ecosystem management that can be improved in the short to medium term and that are at the level of results UNEP can be realistically expected to attain after an implementation period of two to four years. However, given the limitations on availability of data at outcome level the emphasis of the evaluation's analysis was on assessment of delivery of the services and deliverables from the EMSP that have contributed to, and form the foundations of, these outcomes.
255. Much of UNEP's work under the EMSP has been focused on developing, adapting and testing a wide range of tools and methodologies that can be used to assess, value, restore and manage ecosystem services and biodiversity at multiple scales (IO1 - Strengthened ecosystem management tools and methodologies). The EMSP also developed and tested a suite of practical approaches on the valuation of ecosystem services and natural capital accounting and demonstrated (through pilot projects) their integration into policy and investment frameworks (IO2 - Ecosystem services valuation and natural capital approaches developed and promoted). UNEP has also improved the technical knowledge base on ecosystem management through assessments and championed the development of knowledge networks, such as the Sub-Global Assessment Network, and information exchange systems to support policy formulation and decision-making on ecosystem management (IO3- Improved technical knowledge and information systems for policy formulation and decision-making on ecosystem management). Of particular note has been UNEP's support for the establishment of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which will play a key role in strengthening the use of science in policy making, through acting as a knowledge platform linking sources of independent, credible (evidence-based) information on the status and value of biodiversity and ecosystem services to policy/decision-makers, and which represents a key deliverable for UNEP during the MTS 2010-2013.
256. Much appreciated assistance has been provided to countries and stakeholder groups to utilise the various tools and approaches through targeted capacity building (workshops and other training events, outreach guidelines, 'how to' manuals, handbooks, etc.) and field projects to demonstrate how these tools and approaches can be used in practice. Capacity building efforts have often been extended through partner initiatives, such as through the Regional Seas Programme and the Global Protected Areas (GPA) Programme. Several key publications have resulted from EMSP activities, including the widely praised Inclusive Wealth Report (2012), Green Economy in a Blue World Technical Report (2012) and various reports from The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) project and the *'UNEP Policy Series on Ecosystem Management'* publications available on the UNEP website.
257. However, the sub-programme has lacked a coherent capacity-needs analysis that sets out where, and which, specific tools and methodologies were required. Rather, the impression is of a mixed portfolio of initiatives that lacks overall coherence and integration and which results from the continuation of work initiated in biennia prior to the 2010-2013 period. In addition, while the EMSP's results relating to natural capital accounting are considered innovative and UNEP is gaining a reputation as a leader in this emerging area, many of the EMSP's 'tools and approaches', such as management plans for protected areas, while valuable to those communities directly involved, are not particularly innovative. **Recommendation 3:** UNEP should undertake a country baseline assessment in relation to ecosystem assessment, valuation and management tools and approaches with identification of criteria, to help better guide the strategy for the EMSP in future.
258. It is not clear to what extent the various tools and approaches have been adopted and integrated into institutional (both government and non-government) practices and this has not been

⁷⁴ Specifically, whether EMSP project activities in a country can be counted as national results even if the associated activities only occur at the local/site level. This is the interpretation of successful 'country activity' presented in the PPRs.

systematically measured and reported on. Also, despite the clear successes, there is little sense of a coherent/integrated set of UNEP tools and approaches promoted for ecosystem assessment, valuation, management and restoration developed through the EMSP, and no strong 'UNEP identity' or UNEP 'body of work' to this capacity building component of the sub-programme. In addition, consolidation and better promotion of the various tools already developed and piloted for different ecosystems, highlighting the relationships and similarities between them, and their presentation in a more user-friendly and accessible manner would add substantial value at the programme level. Consequently, there is a clear need for a sub-programme level lessons learning exercise to capture and analyse the experiences of the design, development, implementation and effectiveness of the various tools and approaches which have developed and promoted by the EMSP to date. **Recommendation 4:** UNEP should review, publish and make more readily available its experience on the development, piloting and implementation of ecosystem assessment, valuation, management and restoration tools across a range of ecosystem types. This should be wider than the EMSP, including a review of ecosystem management in other sub-programmes. The review should be used as a basis for developing a set of effective practical tools and approaches (a 'UNEP Ecosystem Assessment and Management Toolkit' or 'How to Undertake Ecosystem Management Manual') for use by in-country practitioners, with a review of their effectiveness based on the best scientific evidence. EMSP results and the toolkit could be promoted through a web-based, approach – an 'EM-wiki' – to provide an interactive and evolving learning and sharing platform with a 'menu' of tools and applications that can be used for ecosystem management and natural capital accounting. Such a Toolkit and EM-wiki platform would help to strengthen UNEP's position as a leader in the field of ecosystem management.

259. Insufficient effort has been made to measure and document or report on whether, and to what extent, 'awareness and understanding' has been achieved and whether the EMSP has significantly helped change public attitudes, values and behaviours towards biodiversity and ecosystem services. The evaluation found some evidence of successes, notably in relation to mainstreaming ecosystem management into development policy and planning. However, it is not clear how effective the means and approaches employed in communicating the key messages and information on the EMSP have been in bringing about behavioural change. To this end, an independent evaluation of UNEP's communications work to track and assess the use and impact of the UNEP's communications, outreach and advocacy work is being considered. This should provide evidence of the utility and effectiveness of UNEP's communications work and provide lessons for the design of future communication and outreach initiatives at project, sub-programme and corporate levels.
260. Communications is a core, cross-cutting and cross-divisional activity that is integral to delivering on the EMSP and runs through all its projects. This would have been more effective if it had been organized at the sub-programme level and applied across all EMSP projects with a coherent set of messages and standard materials. Projects which had their own independent and well-resourced communication plans with high internal capacity to address communication needs have been the most successful in getting their messages across, whilst those which invested little achieved less. Elsewhere communications were sometimes hindered by an attitude that communication was 'technically easy' and did not require specialist input. **Recommendation 5:** Communication should be treated more strategically across all EMSP projects. UNEP should ensure that communication and outreach activities are integrated into each project from the project design stage with a dedicated budget line for such activities. The role of the Division of Communications and Public Information should be clearly documented in project documents/supplements and each project should have a specific communication strategy. A role for SPCs should be to identify opportunities for collaborative communication activities across the project portfolio both within and beyond the EMSP.

Attainment of higher level results and likelihood of impacts

261. There is some evidence that UNEP's interventions have contributed to medium-term outcomes (MTO) identified in the reconstructed ToC that can contribute to attainment of intermediate states and expected impact.
262. Based on evidence from project work carried out at the national and site levels, particularly through local interventions in Africa and Latin America, the EMSP does appear to have strengthened national institutional capacity to develop and execute plans and projects to address ecosystem degradation and manage ecosystem services more sustainably (MTO1 - National

institutions able to address ecosystem degradation and manage ecosystem services sustainably). However, it remains uncertain how relevant and comprehensive sustainable capacity development by the EMSP has been, and whether it was properly targeted at the most appropriate groups/individuals given the lack of any specific capacity development plan for the EMSP or individual projects. UNEP Regional Offices had particular concerns about the need for national capacity to be built on long-term relationships and better coherence of UNEP's ecosystem management work at country level, although this would necessitate greater in-country presence and increased investment of staff and resources at the regional office level.

263. Successful mainstreaming of ecosystem management into policy and planning at the national level is necessarily a long-term process and often beyond UNEP's comparative advantage and resources, given the lack of direct presence in most countries, limited resources in UNEP ROs and UNEP's short-term planning processes. However, there is evidence of improved enabling conditions (institutional, legal and policy) for integrating an ecosystem approach into development, economic and financial planning and decision-making frameworks (MTO2). The EMSP has helped countries to identify ecosystem management needs and supported the formulation of national policies, strategies and plans that integrate ecosystem management approaches into environment, development and economic and financial sectors. UNEP has also helped strengthen existing sector-specific regulatory frameworks, with good results from several projects. However, the evaluation found that linkages between the site-level ecosystem management and restoration work and the global/regional normative work were not fully exploited in some cases leading to some missed opportunities in terms of influencing policy, knowledge exchange and mobilization of global partnerships. Opportunities for UNEP to add value have been lost where project efforts at local level have not been explicitly linked to strategic objectives (such as piloting or demonstrating tools and methodologies to inform policy).
264. UNEP has had some notable success with incorporating the value of ecosystem services into economic, financial planning and investment decision-making, including work with a number of leading global financial institutions to develop methods to integrate ecosystem services into their global and national strategies and operations, and development and promotion of the Natural Capital Declaration. UNEP assessments and reports addressing the value of ecosystem services and natural capital are considered to have considerable potential to improve national economic and development strategies and policies. UNEP's work in this area, notably through the high profile TEEB project, is considered to have made the benefits of ecosystems more visible to economics and helped encourage countries to move towards a green economy.
265. EMSP project design and country selection were not well aligned with some key national or country focussed processes – for instance, mainstreaming of EMSP projects into the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative was reported to be generally weak. **Recommendation 6:** The EMSP should develop stronger linkages with key national processes and opportunities, particularly those looking to mainstream environment into development, poverty reduction or financial sector policy (project designs should include specific activities and project budgets should provide earmarked resources to support such mainstreaming where appropriate). The Regional Offices should have a key role in this process in close collaboration with the SPC. UNEP could provide targeted inputs, such as ecosystem management tools and approaches, and policy guidance directly into existing or planned mainstreaming interventions being led by other partners (rather than creating new mainstreaming structures and processes itself).
266. Although not well defined in EMSP project documentation, the ultimate anticipated environmental and social impact can be stated as 'functional and resilient ecosystems that provide ecosystem services sustainably with an equitable sharing of the benefits and costs of protecting ecosystem services among society'. Evidence of EMSP contributions to such high level impacts is very limited to date, although this is not surprising as reversal in ecosystem degradation and improved ecosystem resilience are very unlikely to be delivered at any significant scale over UNEP's 4-year MTS period. Nevertheless, there have been a few encouraging signs of success at a local scale including restoration efforts in Mau Forest and along the Tana River in Kenya, at Lake Faguibine in Mali and through the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) and Lifeweb projects.
267. With regard to 'enhancing human well-being', there has been little direct monitoring within the sub-programme and it is difficult to assess. There is some evidence of improvements in human

well-being (economic, social, health status) but it is mostly at local level and there are questions over the sustainability of these results. Promotion of the green economy through EMSP activities can also be seen as relevant for enhancing well-being although, again, this has not been adequately documented by any EMSP projects.

268. There is little evidence to show that gender issues have been addressed to any significant extent within the EMSP, although some projects have made an effort to encourage the participation of women in project activities. The evaluation's findings are in line with the conclusions of previous evaluations and reviews and reiterate the need for specific attention to be paid to this issue within UNEP. Specific treatment of equity issues has been a further weakness within the EMSP and represents a similar lost opportunity to engage key audiences. The principal activity set to address this issue under the EMSP was to be a set of actions dealing with support for the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. However, the Protocol was still not in force by the end of 2013, so there have been limited opportunities to deliver planned EMSP activities in the 2010-2013 period.
269. UNEP's global normative work, such as work of the TEEB project and the marine programme within the EMSP, is considered to have greater potential for long-term results and impact than activities at a local level as the former plays to UNEP's mandate and comparative strengths, such as its significant convening power to help move processes such as IPBES forward. However, although UNEP does not have a strong presence in most countries and there has been criticism of some local projects that have added little value, UNEP's experience at national and local level (often in collaboration with partners) brings credibility to its normative work and anchors it in real world situations. Part of UNEP's added value lies in its ability to link work on ecosystem management at these differing levels. Consequently, UNEP needs to ensure that local level activities strategically support global and regional level interventions, through a pilot and demonstration approach, and not as interventions for their own sake.
270. A coherent sub-programme logic and framework with clear selection criteria for choice of projects would help better define and limit the EMSP to areas where it can be most effective and have most impact. However, several project managers suggested that many projects will need to be continued in order to achieve intended impacts and will need additional support, particularly with regard to policy level activities.

Efficiency

271. Systematic efforts across the sub-programme to make cost- or time-saving measures relevant to project design and/or implementation were not apparent. However, UNEP project teams often make use of established systems, efforts and synergies, such as reliance on well-established national or local partners for field activities. Many of the case studies had their roots in earlier biennia and built on successful experience or lessons learnt from prior projects or represent a scaling up of earlier successful activities. Another factor responsible for the effectiveness and efficiency of the more successful EMSP projects has been the development and cultivation of strong partnerships since partners often have a better knowledge and understanding of the local situation than UNEP. Efficiency has been affected by significant delays to some EMSP projects for a variety of external and internal reasons, which have inevitably meant higher staff and administrative costs.

Sustainability

272. Prospects for sustainability of EMSP results are mixed. National government agencies are in many cases the primary beneficiaries of UNEP's support and frequently the key executing partner. Consequently, national government ownership is usually high, which supports sustainability. Many of the EMSP's outputs are policy guidelines, briefings, handbooks and other documents for use by governments and other decision-makers. A certain degree of 'sustainability' can therefore be said to have been achieved once these have been adopted or mainstreamed into relevant policies, plans and legislation (although their implementation is up to governments or partners and outside of UNEP's direct control). Furthermore, many of the tools developed or assessments undertaken by the EMSP projects have been captured in reports and publications that are available for download to other institutions involved in capacity development for ecosystem management, which supports the sustainability and replication of project results. While some projects have had specific strategies to disseminate technical outputs, in other instances it is unclear who should promote these knowledge products.

273. Prospects for institutional sustainability have also been supported by the EMSP's development, support and promotion of various knowledge networks to encourage information exchange, peer learning and the transfer of experience on ecosystem management and restoration, such as the Sub-Global Assessment (SGA) network and the IPBES.
274. However, several factors work against the EMSP's sustainability prospects. The lack of an overall EMSP strategy to ensure a coherent approach to capacity development has reduced the likelihood of institutional sustainability. In addition, sustainability is not considered to any significant extent in EMSP project documents which generally lack an 'exit strategy', and hand-over modalities to ensure continuity are usually unclear. Indeed, some projects in the portfolio are essentially 'rolling projects' with often a significant external demand (and expectation) for UNEP to continue a project if it has been successful. UNEP needs to manage these expectations and to avoid creating (UNEP) dependency. Also, a number of project managers felt that sustainability is compromised because planning periods are generally too short – it is very difficult to achieve institutional sustainability for ecosystem management in two to four years especially given the time required for project inception and the usually limited funding available at the start of the programme cycle. In addition, further resource mobilisation is often seriously impacted by the short planning cycle. Projects need to be designed with realistic timelines and not just to fit within UN planning cycles.
275. In addition, UNEP's support has quite often been narrowly focused on one or a small number of government and non-government institutions and frequently depends on a relatively small number of key personnel within these institutions. This may pose a risk to sustainability if the institution loses political support in the country, is restructured, or if key staff are transferred or leave. Even in the countries where UNEP has already provided intensive support, awareness and capacity for ecosystem management remains fragile and may need further strengthening for a considerable time to come. It is clear from the case studies that at least some EMSP projects will need continued investment and commitment from UNEP or partners for some years for project results to become sustainable, although it is often unclear how this would be achieved or who should be responsible (again a reflection of the lack of an exit strategy). Civil conflict and political instability has also compromised the institutional sustainability of some elements of some projects within the EMSP. A longer-term, more comprehensive and strategic approach to capacity building is needed and prospects for sustainability of capacity building activities would be enhanced if they were set in a clear framework for UNEP's EMSP work in regions and countries. **Recommendation 7:** The EMSP should target a broader range of longer-term strategically important government and non-government institutions partners/participants in its projects to reduce dependency on just a small number of individuals. The EMSP could, for example, consider longer-term training/capacity development efforts to minimise the risk arising from loss of key individuals. Regional Offices should be much more involved in partner/participant consultations as they have a long-term perspective on capacity building efforts.
276. Sustainability of inputs by communities and civil society also remains a concern, partly because UNEP does not have a strong presence at the local level and local partner organisations usually have their own delivery and sustainability challenges. Also, judging from the case studies, some EMSP projects did not implement the governance structures envisaged in project documents (such as project steering committees), which has sometimes jeopardised the prospects for sustainability, particularly of local results, although there were exceptions, notably the TEEB. The lack of specific funding for stakeholder involvement at the project development phase also undermines ownership, and ultimately sustainability, and needs to be addressed by UNEP (see recommendation 12 below).
277. The Regional Offices play an important role in ensuring the sustainability of projects through monitoring, supporting resource mobilisation and follow-up, and there is a clear need for them to become more engaged during design and implementation of the sub-programme. ROs could play an increased role in ensuring that EMSP projects become better embedded in national and regional frameworks. The recent organisational changes to strengthen UNEP's regional focus will result in increased resources and personnel at the RO level which should help address these issues, although this increased support to facilitate sustainability efforts needs to be made explicit.

Replication, up-scaling and catalysis

278. Replication and up-scaling of UNEP's direct results is essential to drive change at a larger scale, beyond the relatively few partner countries and demonstration sites of the EMSP. Unfortunately, most EMSP projects examined did not have an explicit, coherent strategy for replication and up-

scaling of results for the 2010-2013 period and these aspects were usually only briefly mentioned in project documents. Also, there was no overall replication strategy or approved communications plan for the sub-programme as a whole, which could have been another source of added value at sub-programme level. Although there are some encouraging signs of further interest, there is no evidence that replication to other countries has taken place to any significant extent. Despite the lack of a coherent, well-articulated strategy, the technical deliverables and demonstration activities under EA(b) combined with enabling work under EA(a) and EA(c) do provide a sound foundation (or strategy) for scaling up the EMSP results (less so replication). The EMSP has also played a catalytic role by assisting some countries to accede to key multilateral environmental agreements, notably the Nagoya Protocol (in collaboration with the Environmental Governance Sub-Programme) and supporting countries to fulfil their obligations under various conventions, particularly CBD commitments, although this has been limited.

279. The evaluation generally found little evidence of the deliberate use of EMSP products by other partners (government agencies, civil society, international organisations etc.) beyond expressions of interest and the uptake of some opportunities and routes for replication and up-scaling through partners and internal UNEP links, such as a limited involvement with the dissemination of EMSP project results by the Division of Environmental Policy and Implementation's (DEPI) Environmental Education and Training Unit. Surprisingly, there was little evidence of uptake of EMSP results by other UN agencies despite formal collaborative technical agreements/partnerships with some other UN agencies working on ecosystem management and the ecosystem approach, e.g. UNDP, UNESCO and FAO and some UN agency interviewees were largely unaware of the EMSP or its results. Global Environment Fund (GEF) projects, whilst responding to GEF priorities, could build on UNEP work and assist in scaling up and replicating initiatives developed with non-GEF resources. The complementarity of GEF supported work to the UNEP and EMSP planning process should always be considered at the early stages of concept development. **Recommendation 8:** UNEP should: i) develop stronger operational partnerships with other key UN agencies and consider establishing a 'community of practice' on ecosystem management among the UN agencies involved with biodiversity and ecosystem services (perhaps also involving other key partners) to support replication and catalysis (this could be promoted through the UNEP-chaired UN Environmental Management Group); ii) promote greater linkages between future pilot and demonstration work and larger projects, such as GEF projects, or established processes, such as the Regional Seas Programme, as this would help promote replication; and iii) strengthen working relationships with networks associated with other UNEP sub-programmes which employ ecosystem-based approaches, such as the climate change adaptation and REDD+ networks under the Climate Change Sub-Programme notably with regard to the development and promotion of learning products.
280. Part of the reason for the lack of emphasis on replication and catalysis is that projects are not well designed to keep track of these and there are often no specific activities to promote replication/catalysis (there is a general lack of milestones and indicators to measure up-take, replication and catalysis). Replication often takes place after a project has ended so would need to be measured at the sub-programme level with resources established to track this. Indeed, replication and catalysis may be occurring more frequently than measured, but as they are not being properly tracked, it is impossible to determine to what extent, unless a project is particularly visible or the project manager is active in follow-up. **Recommendation 9:** UNEP should ensure that a sub-programme-level replication strategy is developed and that all projects have a clear replication strategy/framework, with funding and responsibilities for monitoring replication/catalysis clearly identified in their project document and reported on in PIMS. The EMSP could consider conducting a survey of the current use of EMSP products and services, particularly by other UN agencies, as baseline information for such a strategy.
281. The shortcomings in UNEP's approach to replication have been recognized and, according to some interviewees, UNEP is now encouraging projects to give more attention to replication and up-scaling with increasing pressure for project managers to build them into their work.

282. The full evaluation report⁷⁵ covers, in considerable depth, the major factors that have affected the performance of the sub-programme and presents several full case-studies of important initiatives within the sub-programme.

Climate Change Sub-Programme Evaluation

Introduction

283. The Climate Change Sub-Programme (CCSP) evaluation was undertaken largely in the 2012-13 biennium, although the evaluation process suffered some delays and was completed in the 2014-15 biennium. Thus the synthesis presented here is more representative of the 2012-13 period than of the current situation.
284. Climate change is considered by many to be the major, current environmental and human development challenge facing the globe. UNEP has been working on climate change-related issues for more than twenty years and, since 2009, UNEP has had a dedicated climate change sub-programme (CCSP). According to the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2010-2013, UNEP's CCSP objective is 'to strengthen the ability of countries to integrate climate change responses into national development processes'. UNEP is expected to support countries and institutions to meet the challenges of climate change by promoting ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation, up-scaling the use of clean and renewable energy and technologies and capitalizing on the opportunities of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. UNEP is also working to improve awareness and understanding of the climate change science for policy decision-making. As such, the UNEP CCSP is organized around four components: Adaptation; Mitigation; REDD+ and Science and Outreach.
285. The Lead Division for the CCSP is the Division for Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE). DTIE, through its Energy Branch, is accountable for delivering all PoW Outputs under the mitigation component. The Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), through its Climate Change Adaptation and Terrestrial Ecosystems Branch, manages the majority of projects under the Adaptation and REDD+ components. The Division for Early Warning and Assessments (DEWA) is accountable for the delivery of certain outputs mainly related to assessments and assessment capacity building under the Science and Outreach component. In addition, UNEP Regional Offices manage a number of sub-regional and country-level adaptation and mitigation projects; the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELIC) provides support to climate change negotiators and a climate-neutral UN; and the Division of Communications and Public Information (DCPI) is accountable for delivering a series of outputs related to awareness-raising, outreach and education.
286. The evaluation of the UNEP CCSP was conducted by the UNEP Evaluation Office in line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, the Evaluation Office Work Plan for 2012-2013 and in consultation with the relevant UNEP Divisions. The evaluation of this sub-programme aimed at assessing the relevance and overall performance of UNEP work related to climate change in the last three biennia (from 2008 to 2013) according to standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact).
287. The evaluation was conducted at five interconnected levels of analysis (UNEP corporate, sub-programme, component, country and project level) and focussed on three related areas of focus (strategic relevance, performance and factors affecting performance).
288. In order to obtain a coherent picture of how the UNEP CCSP intends to achieve its objectives, the evaluation reconstructed a Theory of Change (ToC) of the sub-programme. This is a logical model derived directly from the Programmes of Work (PoW) and strategic and design documents. The ToC shows the causal relationship between outputs, intended outcomes and expected impacts of the sub-programme. The ToC also highlights impact drivers and assumptions, which are important external factors affecting change at different levels of the causal pathways. Forming a ToC of the CCSP helped the evaluation team to understand the intervention strategy, derive meaningful

⁷⁵ <http://www.unep.org/eou/Portals/52/SPE%20Ecosystem%20Management%20.pdf>

evaluation questions and provide a logical basis for assessing strategic relevance and progress made in achieving outcomes and impacts.

289. The evaluation had several limitations, including: a lack of written monitoring and evaluation information in particular regarding effectiveness, sustainability, replication and efficiency of interventions; a limited number of country visits; long delays incurred during data collection and the review of interim evaluation products; and inadequate evaluation of the Science and Outreach component which was considered through the other components as a cross-cutting theme.

Evaluation findings

290. This section presents a summary of the main findings and recommendations of the evaluations. Only the most important recommendations are presented and some recommendations have been abridged.

Strategic relevance

291. UNEP's climate change work is strongly supported by UNEP mandates and decisions by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. It is considered highly relevant to the recommendations of the IPCC and UNFCCC objectives, and key areas of cooperation have been agreed with the UNFCCC Secretariat in a joint work programme including strategic communications and support to international negotiations.
292. UNEP has several comparative advantages that make it fit to engage on climate change issues, especially at the global level, such as: a broad environmental perspective and expertise in linking climate change to other environment and development issues in an integrated manner; a global environmental mandate; and scientific expertise supported by a wide network of scientific institutions and collaborating centres.
293. Although its primary role and mandate is at a global level, the UNEP climate change objectives are largely centred at the country level, aimed toward assisting (developing) countries to integrate climate change into national development planning processes. Combining the promotion of cooperation at global and regional levels with the provision of policy, institutional and technology support at the country level, the CCSP seeks to be relevant to both global and country-level needs. The CCSP strategy largely focuses on achievements at the country level, but is also informed by the need to remain relevant to global agreements and the need to devise, test and standardize tools and methodologies for specific environmental challenges with global applicability.
294. During the biennium 2008/09, UNEP's climate change initiatives were dispersed across different divisions/sub-programmes. From 2010 onwards the biennial UNEP Programmes of Work (PoWs) were arranged along thematic sub-programmes, including one for climate change, which cut across divisions. The creation of a specific sub-programme on climate change helped define more specific objectives for UNEP's work, tightened the Expected Accomplishments (immediate outcomes stemming from UNEP's work) around clear cut components and enabled a clearer causal mapping of results from outputs through to higher levels of accomplishment.
295. Projects are UNEP's main intervention modality and are delivered through a variety of outputs (products and services) in the form of technical assistance, policy advice, workshops and trainings, assessments and other publications spanning the science-policy boundaries etc. UNEP's work is largely normative and focuses on supporting the uptake of scientific information and best practices in policies, strategies and their implementation. Interventions of a more operational nature are usually limited to developing, testing and demonstrating tools and approaches in a restricted geographical area, that are expected to be scaled up at the national level through much larger, national programmes often supported by other development agencies.
296. Many of UNEP's deliverables are pitched at the global level but are well known at the country level. Some of UNEP's well-publicised publications are the *'Emissions Gap Reports'*, the *'Black Carbon Report'*, and also flagship publications covering climate change as part of a wider range of topics such as the *'Global Environmental Outlook'*. Also particularly strong are some of its regional and/or global platforms for technology transfer and adaptation for policy and research.
297. UNEP's effective collaborative partnerships utilize the relative contributions of UN-Agencies and also engage dedicated and/or strategic government counterparts in country. For example, the

Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) collaborates across various government actors, including powerful Finance Ministries, and the UN-REDD Programme engages UNDP, UNEP and FAO. However, the evaluation found that, in comparison to some other UN Agencies, UNEP struggles to fully embrace operating under One UN at the country level. The track record of relevance to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is inconsistent and is highly dependent on the individuals in regional offices and relationship with relevant government and UN counterparts (see recommendation 9).

298. The CCSP is dominated by global and national level initiatives, with regional engagement and the role of the Regional Offices somewhat unclear in between these two scales of effort. The addition of regional outputs is a good start, but the regional delivery mechanisms are muted in the CCSP and the artificial breakdown of the sub-regions (Africa, West Asia, etc.) does not serve the purpose of aligning UNEP's strategy with some key ongoing collaborative efforts and initiatives based on trade and/or economics. For instance, in expanding the use of better technologies one has to consider the underlying markets and trade patterns, which are often an ill-match for the political boundaries of the UNEP Regions. While regional presence has increased over the period considered by the evaluation, Regional Offices and regional collaborative efforts are chronically under-resourced and a lack of country presence exacerbates communication and increases transaction costs, leading to frequent administrative delays.
299. The scope and scale of UNEP interventions appear to be determined primarily by the UNFCCC and its funding mechanisms, along with support from other major donors, as well as existing partnerships or relationships in countries and regions. UNEP's criteria for identifying and designing interventions are therefore shaped primarily by UNFCCC priorities and/or the partner countries' policies and objectives and are not necessarily directed at areas of greatest climatic stresses. There does not appear to be a clear approach on engagement with particular countries, nor a coherent strategy for identifying potential new partner countries, nor a great attention for possible synergies at the regional level. Countries are targeted by donors and aid agencies under their respective strategies and programmes of work (ADB, World Bank, EU, bilaterals, etc.), and, therefore, even though requests come from the countries or regional offices, funding is only made available through a process of coordination between countries, UNEP and the respective donors. UNEP also seems cautious to work in countries or regions where it does not have a high potential to showcase positive results and/or have high visibility. This is mostly true for interventions meant to test and demonstrate approaches as part of larger regional or global programmes.
300. **Recommendation 1:** UNEP should establish component-specific criteria for geographic targeting of interventions so that engagement is not only a factor of available funding, existing relationships, country demand and likelihood of (local) success at the time of planning, but also a matter of relative value-added, scalability and the likelihood of replication. The selection of which projects to undertake in what locations should be balanced between donors' priorities and a set of robust criteria defined by UNEP according to its strategic priorities and its comparative advantages, providing UNEP with a stronger basis on which to negotiate with donors regarding country selection.

Effectiveness

301. Over the period 2010-2013, based on reporting in the UNEP Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) and UNEP's Programme Information and Management System (PIMS), achievement of Expected Accomplishment (EA) indicator targets exceeded expectations across most of the sub-programme. Overall, survey responses and interviews with UNEP staff and national partners viewed UNEP as becoming more effective by being more focused and strategic under the CCSP over the course of the period considered by the evaluation.
302. This section assesses UNEP's contribution to the three direct outcomes expected from the CCSP. These outcomes regard country capacity in relation to: 1) access to information, tools and technologies; 2) policies and regulatory frameworks; and 3) climate change finance.

Direct outcome 1: Improved access of partner countries to appropriate adaptation, mitigation and REDD+ information, approaches, measures and technologies

303. *Adaptation.* UNEP implemented three large umbrella projects that offered a 'comprehensive package' approach ranging from vulnerability assessments, through adaptation capacity building and demonstration projects, to supporting governments in adaptation policy setting, planning and

implementation. UNEP's Vulnerability and Impacts Assessments (VIAs) and training and adaptation knowledge products have been in high demand over the period considered by the evaluation and were well received by partner countries. UNEP has promoted South-South cooperation for knowledge exchange and information sharing on adaptation. Platforms such as the Regional Gateway for Technology Transfer and Climate Change Action (REGATTA) in Latin America act as hubs for linking southern centres of excellence working on adaptation-related activities. Because of the complex and relatively new technical concepts and challenges that adaptation presents, hands-on support activities which connect actors with information (thematic workshops, specific trainings, active knowledge exchange events etc.) are essential complements to more passive approaches to making knowledge available such as publications and websites. Piloting is a key strategy to in-country capacity development to implement Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) actions. UNEP relies heavily on in-country partners to pilot EbA practices on the ground and then seeks to up-scale the EbA pilots through UN agencies (FAO and UNDP) and other partnerships.

304. *Mitigation.* UNEP's technical studies, such as the 'Emissions Gap Reports', as well as national Technology Needs Assessments, are in high demand and have been well received by the international community and partner countries. These important analyses continue to inform climate change negotiations and new climate initiatives with mitigation components. UNEP appears to have been very successful in establishing knowledge networks on energy and climate change mitigation in several parts of the world. They create good opportunities for information exchange, comparative analyses and mutual learning. Regarding technology transfer, efforts made by UNEP in terms of capacity building, awareness raising, production of proven scientific material and publications, have enabled countries to have access to, and use, cleaner, more efficient and renewable energy technologies. Piloting at the country level has been an important intervention strategy. At the UNFCCC Conference of Parties 18 (COP 18) in Doha held at the end of 2012, UNEP was chosen to host and manage the Climate Technology Centre and Networks, created by the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun, in collaboration with UNIDO and 11 leading technical organizations from both developing and developed countries.
305. *REDD+.* UNEP's role in the UN-REDD Programme is to provide normative guidance in areas related to green economic development, safeguards and the realisation of multiple benefits from avoided deforestation. By the end of 2013, the UN-REDD Programme has grown to include 51 registered partner countries – covering almost 60 percent of the world's tropical forest. UNEP has met and exceeded targets for assessing land-use change, biodiversity, forest loss, carbon stocks and multiple benefits over the period considered by the evaluation. UNEP has also contributed to establishing a useable knowledge base on the multiple benefits of REDD+. Knowledge products on a wide array of elements of REDD+, from multiple ecosystem benefits to REDD+ as a potential for a green economy transition, have been prepared and disseminated and lessons on multiple benefits and ecosystem services have been shared in a variety of fora.

Direct outcome 2: Improved enabling policies and regulatory frameworks for adaptation, mitigation and REDD+ in partner countries

306. *Adaptation.* UNEP has successfully supported numerous vulnerability assessments and technical studies across key sectors in partner countries that helped shape adaptation strategies and policies. Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Reviews in several countries, supported by the UNEP-UNDP Poverty and Environment Initiative, were also particularly well-received by partner countries and have been heavily utilized for talking points for political actors and decision-makers. UNEP also provided assistance to the development of National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs), and has moved beyond broad plans into new specific arenas to inform governments and policies under the EbA approach, such as toward coastal ecosystems, urban settings and the agricultural sector. Through participation on Joint Programmes with UNDP and FAO at the country level, UNEP has also been relatively successful in encouraging and influencing climate change adaptation policies and strategies in a few countries.
307. *Mitigation.* Most UNEP mitigation projects in the evaluation portfolio include some policy dimension. UNEP's interventions have influenced several countries in making sound mitigation policy choices such as on the adoption of improved policies and practices regarding solar-based technologies, but since UNEP's projects typically target groups of countries, results under similar types of efforts are often heterogeneous, depending on country specificities and not all have generated policy-related changes. UNEP has also established public-private partnerships to phase

out inefficient energy technologies such as incandescent light bulbs through the GEF-funded Enlighten Initiative and inefficient/highly polluting motor vehicles through the Global Fuel Economy Initiative and the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles.

308. *REDD+*. UNEP has made progress toward demonstrating the long-term feasibility of a REDD+ mechanism at the national and global levels by supporting scientifically informed policies and strong governance on land-use and forestry. UNEP's assistance on assessments for mapping land-use change, biodiversity and forest stock; carbon benefits tools and legal and regulatory improvements are all key inputs to devising and implementing effective sustainable forest management plans. As of December 2013, four countries (out of a target of six) had completed national strategies for terrestrial carbon emission mitigation that account for the multiple ecosystem benefits and development goals. UNEP also worked with three countries to develop and implement safeguards, covering conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, transparent and effective national forest governance structures, as well as protecting the knowledge and rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. UNEP's visibility on REDD+ policy input is somewhat limited, however, as UNDP's role as the lead agency on governance systems surrounding REDD+ tends to dominate.

Direct outcome 3: Increased partner country capacity and potential to leverage and secure climate financing

309. *Adaptation*. Partner country interviewees expressed increased confidence and capability to secure financing for adaptation over the period considered by the evaluation. UNEP has supported over a dozen countries to develop adaptation projects under GEF's Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and to bolster their capacity to access financing from the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), Adaptation Fund, MDG Fund and other funding sources. With financing secured, implementation of NAPA priorities has started to address the vulnerability of ecosystems. Under the Microfinance for EbA Project, partnerships were developed with six Microfinance Institutions in two Latin-American countries and investment decision-making processes were created for financing EbA actions by small-scale farmers. Privately financed investments have begun to flow.
310. *Mitigation*. UNEP has continued to develop and test different options to increase available climate financing under five broad areas: public financing; innovative financing; end-user finance; carbon finance and finance networks. Initiatives are numerous and varied, and by the end of 2013 about US\$ 432 million of national investment had been recorded by UNEP, by far exceeding the cumulative target of US\$ 300 million for the MTS period. This should be seen in a broader context where the overall market demand for carbon offsets and related investments in climate change mitigation programmes and projects has been declining steadily since 2013.
311. *REDD+*. Under the PoW 2010/11, the target of US\$ 25 million for funding 'land-use, land-use change and forestry projects, with emphasis on carbon sequestration as a result of UNEP interventions' was significantly exceeded with around USD \$150 million mobilized in partnership with FAO and UNDP within the UN-REDD Programme. By the end of 2013, the UN-REDD Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) had received over US\$ 215 million. UNEP has helped form the basis for regulating incentives, establishing rights and climate financing options at the national level. However, mainstreaming the use of safeguards across stakeholders requires strong regional and in-country partnerships outside of direct government/ministerial entry points. As REDD+ work expands and more countries express a desire to work with UNEP on these topics, UNEP will need to further bolster its regional presence and/or expand the depth or reach of its strategic partnerships.

Sustainability, replication and up-scaling

312. Sustainability plans are not systematically incorporated into UNEP CCSP projects and project-planning documents typically fail to outline hand-over strategies, or address risks and mitigation measures for factors affecting sustainability. On-going and pre-existing projects and programmes strongly shape current interventions, but in many cases the sustainability lessons drawn from these interventions are not explicitly stated and brought forward into current activities. Such design flaws can reduce the chances of attaining continuing benefits, replication and up scaling.
313. Even though projects often set up demonstrations of approaches or measures in a few countries that are expected to be replicated somehow in a larger number of countries, replication or up-scaling strategies, let alone resources for up-scaling, are rarely foreseen within the project design.

However, some projects have specific outputs intended to promote dissemination of best practices and lessons learned eg. through climate change knowledge networks supported by UNEP. Capacity building of national and regional stakeholders is also a relatively common means for enabling replication. Despite these design shortcomings, there are several examples of projects where replication and up-scaling are happening.

314. UNEP's role in supporting countries with communication is not prominent in the results framework even though it is a key aspect of the relationship with UNFCCC. Both science and outreach are major elements in all CCSP PF documents, but strategic communications, (a CCSP component and output and also part of the UNFCCC joint work programme) and awareness raising, (an area of 'distinctiveness') are not well defined and supported in CCSP implementation. Interviewees across UNEP staff and in-country stakeholders have both voiced concern over the lack of resources devoted to communication, dissemination, translation of reports, memos and publications into local languages to help ensure the materials reach intended audiences.
315. **Recommendation 2:** In order to further leverage the sub-programme's work, UNEP should strengthen its strategic partnerships and adequately resource its efforts to support the uptake of UNEP assessments and guidance, promote active South-South cooperation and enable replication of best practices. Project designers, the Sub-Programme Coordinator and the Project Review Committee should ensure that communication and dissemination plans and budgets are built into project design and that pilot/demonstration projects incorporate replication and up-scaling strategies based on partnerships and strong communication elements.

Impact drivers and assumptions

316. While direct outcomes of UNEP's work, confined to enhanced country capacities to respond to climate change, are expected to result directly from UNEP outputs, actual large-scale changes in ecosystem management practices and adoption of energy technologies will depend on more than UNEP's direct outcomes alone. Several factors and conditions external to UNEP's sub-programme also need to be in place. For these 'intermediate states' then to further lead to impact on greenhouse gas concentrations and resilience of ecosystems, even more external drivers and assumptions need to be present. There is very little analysis and reporting on these external factors and conditions by UNEP and by ignoring these in sub-programme planning and implementation, opportunities are missed to redirect and better focus interventions on achieving sustainable outcomes and impact. Although assumptions are commonly listed in project document logframes as risks, corresponding mitigation strategies are not systematically proposed or utilized and those that are employed are not recorded for purposes of learning or accountability. There is typically no risk management process or system in place for UNEP projects. The evaluation identified, among others, the following drivers and assumptions:
- Effectiveness of international climate change processes, in particular the UNFCCC;
 - Approaches, measures and technologies promoted by UNEP are leveraged by partners and networks;
 - Stakeholder buy-in and ownership of sub-programme outputs and outcomes;
 - Government commitment, also beyond the direct project partners;
 - Good coordination on policies and actions among ministries and sectors;
 - Availability of sufficient human and financial resources in government agencies to execute policies and strategies, and enforce laws and regulations;
 - Sufficient incentives for the private sector and other key actors to invest and change practices;
 - National and regional economic and political stability; and
 - Clarity on the climate finance future including an adequate carbon price.
317. Though the evaluation provides some analysis on these external factors, in particular on UNEP's efforts to ensure their presence, insufficient information was available to the evaluation team to draw firm conclusions on sub-programme impact. Continued efforts from UNEP are required to support impact drivers such as: the UNFCCC process and other international climate change processes; strategic partnerships and networks including with the private sector; and government and other key stakeholder engagement, also during project planning and design. UNEP also needs to more systematically plan and manage risks, such as weaknesses in partner capacity, political instability and market fluctuations.

Internal factors affecting performance

318. *Programme Design and Results Framework.* The two most recent PoWs were developed by DTIE through a consultative approach across all divisions involved in climate change and also solicited input from regional and country offices. This process was thorough but time-consuming and UNEP staff were generally favourable to this new way to deliberate on their collective vision of the CCSP. There were some fundamental flaws in the structure and intended logical connections within the CCSP results framework for 2010/11. These include the lack of causality from outputs to EAs, a lack of appropriate performance indicators and insufficient targets and indicators. The revised 2012/13 EAs have shown progress in terms of bringing clarity to intended results and helping UNEP staff to communicate, both internally and externally, the relative value-added or niche of the CCSP. The changes provide some precision and realism to otherwise very ambitious objectives with a wide scope of work and variety of actors involved. On the down side, UNEP does not appear to have a vision in terms of harmonizing efforts under the climate change components to look for synergies and reduce duplication of efforts. There are clear theoretical ties between science and outreach, REDD+, mitigation and adaptation, but these are not systematically addressed in UNEP's long-term strategy. As a result, collaboration across divisions remains largely informal and ad hoc (see recommendation 7).
319. *Project Design.* Many projects under the period considered by the evaluation contained design flaws and about one third were still not aligned with the current results framework. This is partly attributable to a lack of funds to design projects, resulting in a perpetual pattern of borrowing from existing projects to develop new ones. Despite these challenges and gaps, project documents were generally of higher quality under the PoW 2012/13 in comparison with the previous PoW. These noticeable improvements were due in part to better conditions (less time constraints and better guidance), but also the advent of a new project design template for the 2012/13 PoW and an enhanced PRC process. This evaluation desk-reviewed about one-third of the portfolio, using a representative balance of components and geographic range. The main strengths and weaknesses of project design under the CCSP are similar to those identified throughout UNEP (see summary of the Formative Evaluation of the MTS 2014-2017).
320. **Recommendation 3:** Climate change project design and revisions should be improved on several aspects. They should: i) be better resourced; ii) involve stakeholders at the country level; iii) systematically present a theory of change; iv) give greater emphasis to impact drivers and assumptions in support of risk management and sustainability plans; and v) present a more thorough stakeholder analysis.
321. *Organization and Management.* UNEP's ambitions sometimes seem to exceed its ability and means to manage and coordinate efforts. The dual modality of normative and field activities may be a lot to ask of UNEP's considerably limited country-based resources. In order to support the geographically dispersed efforts, when the CCSP was first launched, Regional Climate Change Coordinators were placed in each of the Regional Offices. However, some Regional Offices have been without a Regional CC Coordinator for quite some time and project staff have had to step in for CCSP coordination. UNEP's lack of on-the-ground presence is partly mitigated by its partnerships and close communications with government counterparts.
322. The barriers to internal coherence and cooperation appear to revolve around two issues: budget and authority. DTIE as the Lead Division makes the final budgetary decisions. There is a strong perception that DTIE abused its budget control to acquire a relatively larger amount of Environment Fund financing for its projects. The evaluation was unable to find evidence that this was really the case but this perception of unfairness creates mistrust and disincentives for collaboration. In addition, even though it is the CCSP Coordinating Division, DTIE has no authority over PoW outputs other than mitigation [EA(b) and EA(c)] which makes overall coordination of the sub-programme very difficult from DTIE's perspective. The transition to an inter-divisional matrix structure for the climate change sub-programme was a good step towards collaboration in theory, but in practice it did not seem to create the communication channels and coordination mechanisms to capitalize on synergies and identify and capitalize on opportunities between divisions. Most staff seem quite indifferent to the (lack of) changes it brought in their particular area of work and many felt strongly that the process was insufficiently supported.
323. *Human resources.* UNEP staff are generally regarded by implementing partners and field visit country interviewees as highly qualified and technically skilled. UNEP staff competence and good

reputation is exemplified by the extensive network of partnership arrangements and trust placed in UNEP staff at the individual and organizational levels. There is nevertheless some concern over striking an appropriate balance in staff skillsets between more specialized or technical backgrounds and managerial capabilities. RBM training has been provided to all Programme Officers since 2012 and staff indicate it has helped them better understand (and shape) the PoW and MTS but it appears that RBM concepts have not yet been fully embraced. Some managers and staff see RBM as an external imposition rather than a management approach that supports meeting their key deliverables.

324. Administrative recruitment procedures are very cumbersome and slow and they generate huge delays in recruitment that impact project and sub-programme performance. The CCSP as a whole is chronically stifled by staff shortages, largely due to vacancies that remain open due to the slow recruitment process. As many global programmes reach periods of expansion, so too will technical assistance demands increase as new countries begin implementation. Staff shortages mean UNEP cannot be in regular attendance at key political meetings and is sometimes unable to embrace important opportunities to strategize or form collaborative relationships with new partners. Also, the lack of staff funded by reliable sources (both extra-budgetary funding and Environment Fund funding) appear unreliable, which has meant relatively high rates of fluctuation of team sizes and turnover in some units, many of which have lost more than half their original number since 2010. These dramatic changes also impede the retention of institutional knowledge.
325. **Recommendation 4:** An internal administrative review should be conducted across the CCSP to determine the causes of common administrative and procedural delays that have negative impacts on project and programme performance (both as an additional burden on project managers and as a potential cost to UNEP). Those issues that can be addressed by the divisions and project managers should be identified and prioritized for corrective actions. Some issues can only be addressed at the UNEP corporate level or even outside of UNEP, such as by UNON, and will require senior management involvement.
326. *Financial resources.* Accurate information on funding of the CCSP could not be obtained by the evaluation team. The financial management system used by UNEP (the UN-wide Integrated Management Information System - IMIS) does not lend itself to straightforward extraction and summarizing of financial information at the sub-programme, EA or PoW output levels. UNEP's PIMS has the capacity to record project-level financial information, which can be aggregated to the EA and sub-programme level, but is not updated regularly. According to PIMS and data provided by UNEP Fund Management Officers, the total approved budget (this is the estimated cost at design) for UNEP's CCSP across all components over the period 2008 – 2012 was approximately \$270 million, with a total programmed amount (that is the funding that could be mobilized) of about \$90 million (data as of April 2013) i.e. one third of the approved budget.
327. Rough estimates indicate that, for the portfolio considered by the evaluation, DTIE was responsible for approximately 40 per cent of the planned financial volume of CCSP work but 61% of the programmed (mobilised) volume. DEPI is responsible for 45% of the planned funding, but only 36% of the programmed funding. Other divisions, mainly DEWA and DCPI, shared the remainder. Both DTIE and DEPI have a substantial proportion of their funding from earmarked sources (slightly above 90%). Besides the GEF, the main donors for the CCSP are Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Spain and Italy. Environment Fund (non-earmarked) resources are generally allocated to staff salaries, office rent, IT and communication charges, some mission travel and other 'core' costs, as well as post-project activities. The increasing proportion of extra-budgetary funding has meant that project managers and teams have become dependent on raising funds for the continuation of projects underway. Securing funding from external donors is time intensive and does not typically guarantee continuity (e.g. donors can end funding at any time) and furthermore those projects that are fully-funded from external sources (e.g. GEF) do not currently require reporting to the Sub-Programme Coordinator under the PoW. However, the relatively small amount of EF funding can also be unpredictable, as EF funds are only gradually released as donors make their contributions to UNEP. Often this means a sudden allocation of additional EF cash late in the year with a requirement to spend it quickly.
328. In many cases project funding was not (fully) secured when implementation began and capacity to mobilize adequate funding for projects is a major concern, in particular for adaptation projects. In some cases, funding constraints made it impossible to conduct the planned field demonstrations

and to provide follow-up after training courses. The prevalence of unsecured funds forced managers to take a phased implementation approach where activities would start at a smaller scale, while further funding was being mobilized. Underfunded projects can lead to higher than anticipated delays and were sometimes absorbed into a larger project that also didn't manage to secure large parts of its funding. For mitigation projects, unsecured funds also remain an issue even if they did not cause major blockages recently, with the exception of projects with several phases for which funds were not available in advance. Generally, this led to delays before the next phase could start causing a loss of momentum and increasing the risk that gains achieved in the preceding phases would be lost.

329. **Recommendation 5:** The CCSP would benefit from its own resource mobilisation strategy that would include: a summary of current funding sources across sub-programme components; profiles of existing and potential donors; guidelines for managers on how to approach donors (in a coordinated manner); and a mechanism to keep track of resource mobilisation successes and failures and amounts mobilised per donor. The strategy would be prepared and implemented in coordination with the Donor Partnerships and Contributions unit.
330. *UNEP Internal Cooperation.* Although the matrix structure for the creation of sub-programmes has been useful for solidifying UNEP's strategy and delivery mechanisms in climate change, there is little evidence it has strengthened divisional linkages and almost no indication that it has improved connections between sub-programmes. While there are multiple opportunities, collaboration between the various components of the CCSP is limited so far. Adaptation and mitigation are essentially complementary approaches to the climate change challenge, but there is little evidence of cooperation between UNEP's adaptation and mitigation components. It would appear that UNEP is more at ease when reaching outward for partnering than when looking in. The two main reasons for the lack of collaboration between components (and also between CCSP components and other sub-programmes in UNEP) seem to be the lack of incentives for staff in different units to work together and the complexities of managing financial resources across divisions. Collaboration between CCSP components and other sub-programmes in UNEP does exist, for instance between CC adaptation and Ecosystem Management, but there are some opportunities that could be much further developed, such as CC adaptation and disaster risk reduction under the Disasters and Conflicts Sub-Programme, or CC mitigation and Resource Efficiency.
331. There have been numerous instances of cross-divisional collaboration driven by informal relationships. However, despite good intentions, there is little evidence of effective formal collaboration between UNEP divisions related to the CCSP. An exceptional success story of internal collaboration at the global level is UNEP's participation in various formal meetings of the UNFCCC, where UNEP staff have increasingly attended as one team, with more coherent common messages and backed by influential publications such as the *'Emissions Gap Reports'*.
332. **Recommendation 6:** A sub-programme-wide reflection is needed to explore ways to better exploit opportunities for strategic collaboration between CC components, divisions and other sub-programmes in order to capture value-added of combined efforts and reduce duplication of efforts. After opportunities have been agreed upon, incentives need to be put in place to promote on-going collaboration between teams; senior managers should actively support putting ideas to action.
333. At the country level, even though some efforts are made at the beginning of a new engagement to map all related activities, both national and international, to examine possible synergies and risk of overlap, overall, UNEP-supported interventions are often fragmented. This has to do with the fact that UNEP interventions are usually components or pilots of different projects, managed by different staff at the local level, in Regional Offices and UNEP Nairobi. These projects have not been designed in a way that would promote collaboration at the national level. This often translates into missed opportunities that would increase the likelihood of impact of UNEP's interventions. The actual role of the Regional Offices ranges from providing in-country contacts and liaison and assisting in country and national partners' selection to country-level project development and implementation; a set of responsibilities generally beyond formally recognized expectations. Regional Offices face a significant shortage of technical and non-technical staff and for this reason direct relationships are often maintained, and become strongest, between the Division and country counterparts. This further diminishes UNEP's already low regional/local presence and country-level coordination and underutilizes the regional and country knowledge in the ROs.

334. **Recommendation 7:** UNEP Branches and Regional Offices should enhance their collaboration during project design and implementation to ensure that UNEP's climate change activities are regionally relevant and appropriate. This would ensure that synergies between projects and between sub-programmes at the regional level are capitalised upon and would also reduce duplication of effort and lack of coordination at the country and regional levels. UNEP should also further develop modalities for collaboration with emerging regional partners and programmes, whether economic, social or environmental, in order to ensure that the focus of UNEP's work has potential for scale-up and replication and remains relevant to needs. Adequate resources need to be set aside to strengthen both the Regional Offices and relevant regional cooperation.

External partnerships

335. The UNEP climate change strategy explicitly notes the significance of partnerships to drive the work. These partnerships are important both for global efforts, such as the preparation of annual global reports that help establish and track norms and progress in achieving them, as for efforts at the regional and country level.
336. Since UNEP is a non-resident agency, it must rely on operating through partners at the country level, with collaboration between Regional Offices and other units in UNEP. Cooperation with government and other local partners is necessary because the country projects/pilots serve the double purpose of developing and testing concepts and tools, but also to build country capacity and ownership in using them to promote in-country replication. Local partners also often bring complementary technical skills, as is the case for the global/regional partners. UNEP's closest country-level relationships are usually government counterparts or UNDP, though sometimes UNEP might operate through another development agency, national institution, etc. Over the last few years, more and more partnership requests have been coming in from a variety of stakeholders and developing these relationships is time-consuming.
337. Partnerships are often formed on the basis of available funding (or donor preferences) or building on previous/on-going efforts and relationships. There does not appear to be any guidance or strategy within the CCSP for establishing partnerships, even when those partnerships have implications for sustainability, country ownership and/or likelihood of reaching impacts; nor a system for tracking the relative effectiveness and lessons learned in partnering.
338. Despite this, UNEP has been successful in developing partnerships for adaptation and has a strong reputation for bringing highly competent technical support into projects and engaging a wide variety of stakeholders. Being a relatively small 'player' on the mitigation scene, in terms of human and financial resources capacities; not being a resident agency in the countries where it operates; and because mitigation cuts across ministries and involves many different stakeholder groups, cooperation and partnerships are critical to the successful implementation of UNEP's interventions. At country level, UNEP is increasingly building strong partnerships beyond traditional partners (e.g. Ministries of Environment). UNEP has been able to establish numerous partnerships with external players, such as the UNFCCC, UNDP and the IPCC.
339. As the 'principal body within the UN in the field of environment', UNEP should theoretically be a consistent signatory of the UNDAF in every country in which UNEP is working. However, without being a resident agency, it is sometimes complicated for UNEP to be fully involved in the preparation of the document and/or to regularly attend the meetings. Regional offices make efforts to follow-up on the UNDAF preparation process but, due to limited resources, they cannot participate in the UNDAF preparation of all the countries pertaining to the region and very often the UNEP programming cycle does not match with that of the UNDAF. In some countries, UNEP has completely independent interventions that are not even mentioned in the UNDAF document of the country and uses its own channels of communication with the government. This is to be expected at times when UNEP's work is ahead of the UNDAF process in areas where UNEP is framing issues or conceptualizing responses that are not yet mainstreamed.
340. **Recommendation 8:** UNEP Divisions involved in the CCSP should pursue both the 'One UNEP' and 'One UN' approaches, especially at the country level, in order to promote joint efforts toward increasing the likelihood of project success in reaching deliverables and outcomes, while avoiding the duplication of projects. Stronger connections and coherence should be sought between UNEP activities at the country level and how this will happen should be demonstrated in the Programme Framework and project design documents. Project teams should also be encouraged to utilize UN resources at the country level to the fullest extent.

341. *Monitoring & Evaluation.* Progress has been made in the last four years to implement Results-Based Management (RBM) under the MTS. PIMS is certainly being used more for M&E under the PoW2012/13, with records of progress at six-month milestones. For more recent projects more monitoring information is available in PIMS, though still quite basic and often with a positive reporting bias. Nevertheless, over the course of the period considered by the evaluation there is a general lack of progress reporting and evaluations. Publicly available outputs (assessments, guidelines etc.) can be found online, but information on their utility and use is non-existent. Most donors require at least annual submission of substantive and financial reports associated with the funds that they have provided, but reports to donors are not systematically archived either in PIMS or in any other shared database. A lack of leadership on the significance of M&E in some units where senior managers do not believe in its usefulness, along with a resistance to change, has meant that the burden of improved systems and use of systems has fallen on a few individuals. PIMS is still not considered a user-friendly system, with few incentives to use it for management decision making.
342. An independent external evaluation is required by UNEP EO for all projects over US\$ 0.5 million. However, it is the responsibility of the respective division to request the evaluation to the Evaluation Office and the cost of evaluation is expected to be borne by the project. Many projects have not been evaluated, either because their evaluation was not requested or because no adequate evaluation budget was built in the project budget or both. Even when sufficient funding was foreseen in the ProDocs budget, the real amount available for evaluation was often compressed due to insufficient project resources. GEF-funded projects fared much better, as GEF rules regarding reporting and evaluation have been much more strictly applied in UNEP.
343. **Recommendation 9:** CC projects should be allocated adequate resources (human and financial) for results-based monitoring and providing up-to-date information on the delivery of outputs, efficiency and progress towards outcomes so that timely adjustments can be made during implementation. Budgets set aside for evaluation in project budgets should be adequate and under control of the Evaluation Office of UNEP and should not be 'compressed' when the overall funding ratio of the project is lower than expected. More regular and detailed record-keeping is necessary for the full implementation of RBM at all levels of the sub-programme and it is also the foundation for current and forthcoming evaluative processes as well as being critical to transparent and accurate reporting to UNEP's governing bodies.

Chemicals and Waste Sub-Programme Evaluation

Introduction

344. The evaluation of UNEP's Chemicals and Waste Sub-Programme (CWSP) was undertaken in 2014/15 and aimed to assess the relevance and overall performance of UNEP's work related to chemicals and waste from the Programme of Work (PoW) 2010-2011 onwards according to standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact). The evaluation had a dual purpose: providing a basis for accountability on sub-programme performance and drawing lessons from experience for programme improvement. The evaluation considered whether, in the period under review, UNEP was able to contribute significantly to minimizing the impact of harmful substances and hazardous waste on the environment and human beings. In particular, the evaluation assessed to what extent UNEP managed to: i) promote compliance of countries with international regimes on addressing chemical and hazardous waste-related issues and ii) discourage the production and use of harmful chemicals.
345. The evaluation examined UNEP's Chemicals and Waste (C&W) strategy and its delivery performance across its three main areas: i) support to C&W Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); ii) chemicals policy, scientific and technical support; and iii) waste policy, scientific and technical support. The evaluation also examined the effectiveness of management arrangements among UNEP Divisions for effective delivery of the Expected Accomplishments (EAs) and PoW Outputs defined for the sub-programme. Partnerships with other UN bodies, Inter-Governmental Organizations and institutions (including MEAs), regional bodies, national governments, NGOs, scientific and environmental centres and private sector organizations were also reviewed.

Evaluation findings and recommendations

Strategic relevance

346. The sub-programme is relevant to global agreements such as the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Agenda 21 and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), where the 2020 goal of producing and using chemicals in ways that lead to the minimization of significant effects on human health and the environment was established in article 23 of the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD.
347. UNEP Governing Council approvals of the Medium-Term Strategies (UNEP/GC.25/12, UNEP/GC.26/13 and GC.27/9) as well as approvals of subsequent programmes, in and of themselves, are evidence of consistency with UNEP and member state priorities. The sub-programme is consistent with UNEP's technological support and capacity building mandate as set out in the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP), especially at the PoW Output level. Technological support and capacity building interventions include the development of various tools and methodologies for the sound management of C&W and strengthening environmental law institutions and judicial systems (particularly in the context of MEAs). The objectives of the sub-programme are also aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 7 & 8 to ensure environmental sustainability and develop global partnership for development etc. The new themes being developed in the area of Health and Environment seem consistent with GC requests and global concerns about linkages between Health and Environment.
348. With the exception of the Mercury Convention, which was under development over the period of the 2010-2013 Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), this evaluation found that there is a perception of weak cooperation and collaboration between the sub-programme and the other C&W MEAs (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions). There is room to strengthen cooperation with the MEAs so that UNEP's efforts can better support the implementation of MEAs at global, national and regional level.
349. **Recommendation 1:** Linkages between the sub-programme and the chemicals conventions that are anchored within UNEP need to be given more prominence. Building on UNEP's convening power, the sub-programme should also focus more on system-wide approaches to convergence and cooperation on MEAs.

Effectiveness

350. The sub-programme achieved positive results during the two biennia spanning 2010-13, in spite of challenges related to funding and the many changes in leadership of the Chemicals Branch and the International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) as well as several changes in the Sub-Programme Coordinator. There are positive indications that interventions have already contributed to the development/adoption of improved policies and practices. The sub-programme's efforts to: generate scientific knowledge; provide policy advice; develop approaches and methods; mainstream C&W into national development policies and convene stakeholders to catalyse international action on mercury; and generally on the sound management of C&W, seem to have been particularly effective. Described below are but a few of the sub-programme's accomplishments organised against five direct outcomes derived from a Theory of Change of the sub-programme reconstructed for the purpose of this Evaluation⁷⁶.

Direct outcome 1: Enhanced national awareness and information for environmentally sound production, management and use of chemicals and waste

351. The sub-programme has been largely successful in providing information and raising national awareness for the production and use of C&W in an environmentally sound manner. As a means of providing access to early warning information on emerging C&W issues, UNEP's Global Chemicals Outlook (GCO) report, which was prepared during the period under review, recognized the importance of chemicals to sustainable development. The report, which attracted wide media interest and received attention and support at International Conference on Chemical Management

⁷⁶The Evaluation reconstructed a Theory of Change of the Sub-programme based on the results statements in the different planning documents (MTS, PoW and Programme Framework Documents) and discussion with Sub-programme staff. More details on this can be found in the Inception Report and Main Report of this evaluation.

(ICCM 3) was used to establish the rationale for sound chemicals' management and formed the basis for many government interventions.

352. **Recommendation 2:** The sub-programme should invest more in outreach and communication. Effective support from, and collaboration with, DCPI are required to promote the sub-programme's outreach efforts.

Direct outcome 2: Enhanced national policy and strategic frameworks for environmentally sound production, management and use of chemicals and waste

353. The building of national, legal and institutional capacity to enable governments to integrate the sound management of chemicals into national development strategies contributes to EA(a). Integrating the sound management of chemicals into sustainable development strategies involves integration in development assistance programmes, including UNDAF processes, and mobilizing resources to implement activities that lower chemical risks. The UNDP-UNEP Partnership Initiative implemented activities to mainstream the sound management of chemicals into national development processes. The successful outcomes in developing national legislation and regulations in line with international treaties need to be further up-scaled and replicated. *'The Cost of Inaction Report'* is an effort to produce a more complete global picture on the costs of inaction on sound chemicals management. The report was very well received and there was agreement to use the findings to develop some case studies in which the data will be used for global extrapolation of the cost of inaction. Both outputs of the reports were to be included in the *'Global Chemicals Outlook'*.

Direct outcome 3: Enhanced national technical and methodological know-how for environmentally sound production, management and use of chemicals and waste

354. The sub-programme has developed, and continues to refine, risk assessment tools to assist governments, industry and civil society organizations to address priority concerns in the management of C&W. From the first biennium of the 2010-13 MTS period to the present, up to 80 countries have been addressing chemicals issues as a result of UNEP risk assessment information and tools. In the area of waste, by the end of the first biennium of the 2010-13 MTS, a draft Compendium of Technologies on: i) destruction of hazardous waste arising from healthcare facilities and ii) treatment and destruction of waste oils had been developed. The compendium covered data on waste oil generation and healthcare waste generation. Also, a step-by-step methodology for the assessment of waste oil generation and healthcare waste generation was elaborated. Generic and specific technologies for the destruction of waste oils and healthcare waste were also compiled. In 2014, the sub-programme has worked with governments, civil society groups and businesses to address priority waste issues using tools and innovative methods primarily on biomass waste generated from agricultural activities.

Direct outcome 4: Enhanced national institutions and infrastructure for environmentally sound production, management and use of chemicals and waste

355. The sub-programme undertook activities to combat environmental crime involving harmful substances and hazardous waste particularly in the Asia Pacific and West Asia. The objective was to strengthen the law enforcement response to, inter alia, ozone depleting substances (ODS), harmful substances and hazardous waste. In this respect this project directly concerns the Basel Convention which criminalizes illegal traffic in hazardous waste and the Montreal Protocol for ODS. A range of partners, including MEA secretariats, are involved.

Direct outcome 5: Coherent international information, policy and action for environmentally sound production, management and use of chemicals and waste

356. There has been an increase in the number of industries and industry associations engaging with UNEP. The broad stakeholder engagement in The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) continues to catalyse work towards sound chemicals management in industry. Negotiation towards a global legally-binding treaty on mercury was completed over the period covered by this evaluation. The UNEP Secretariat has facilitated this, other inter-sessional work and regional consultations requested at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee

(INC4)⁷⁷. In enhancing cooperation with the C&W MEAs, the Chemicals Branch now has responsibility for coordinating the Global Alliance for alternatives to DDT⁷⁸ and the PCB⁷⁹ Elimination Network with the aim of facilitating the achievement of state obligations set out in the Stockholm Convention, including through the implementation of the GEF co-financed project portfolio.

357. At the end of 2013, the number of Parties that ratified the existing chemicals conventions is as follows: Minamata (128); Basel Convention (180); Ban Amendment (76); Rotterdam Convention (154); Stockholm Convention (179); and the Montreal Protocol (197) for a total of 786 Parties. While ratifications of the already existing chemicals conventions grew, it is not clear how this is attributable to the efforts of the sub-programme as opposed to the work of the Secretariats to the Conventions. These effects might be drivers for the increased application of tools and methodologies for measurement etc. as opposed to direct results of the sub-programme.

Efficiency

358. The sub-programme built on tools and methodologies developed in previous biennia. For example, awareness-raising activities for countries to take decisions to minimize the risk of lead and cadmium continues to be a key element for the successful implementation of the Partnership for Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV), Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (GAELP) and the support provided to governments and industry. This partnership predated the biennia covered by this evaluation. Also, the sub-programme's efforts to develop capacities of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to manage chemicals and waste in Cleaner Production Centres (CPC) in the application of UNEP's Responsible Production approach for Chemical Hazards Management in SMEs were based on methods developed as part of UNEP's earlier work on promoting safer production through responsible production and disaster risk management systems (APELL⁸⁰). There are numerous examples of the use of UNEP tools and methods in the discussion of effectiveness in this report.
359. The extensive use of partnerships contributed to both effectiveness and efficiency. In general, efficiencies are either built into project design or have been realised through the application of pilot projects prior to roll-out of a project to a wider stakeholder group and the customisation of training programmes. The use of existing networks, that is a stepwise approach, emphasised linkages to enable better implementation of existing MEAs. The close involvement of Regional Offices, in some cases, increased efficiency as project implementation benefited from their better regional knowledge, contacts and experience.
360. Inefficiencies involved slow project start-up for a variety of reasons including: lateness in project approvals; administrative delays in access to systems; efficiency challenges in the level of support that professional officers have access to within the Chemicals Branch, (that can lead to professionals having to undertake some of the administrative work themselves); delays in organising travel; and insufficient funds. Underlying some of these challenges may also be staff shortages, which might have been offset through, for example, increased cooperation with Regional Offices or more effective use of partnerships. Funds may also be less of a limiting factor where resources can be amplified through the increased use of partnership.

Sustainability

361. *Socio-political sustainability.* An essential component of socio-political sustainability relates to ownership by state and non-state actors. The CWSP is focused on creating awareness and building capacity at the national level. Ownership, awareness and capacity built within government agencies are likely to continue in the long term. This evaluation observed that the sub-programme's interventions are quite narrowly focused on a few institutions and reached just a limited number of national staff. This limited reach could pose a risk to sustainability should the trained capacity move to other assignments within the bureaucracy as is often the case.

⁷⁷The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on Mercury

⁷⁸dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane

⁷⁹polychlorinated biphenyl

⁸⁰Awareness and Preparedness of Emergencies at Local Level

362. *Financial sustainability.* The availability of financial resources is assumed as a requirement to transform policy, plans, regulations and skills into action. The availability of funds continues to be a constraint in carrying out capacity building activities and has resulted in diminished capacity to implement activities under the Expected Accomplishment. The delivery of technical support activities through partnerships and synergy with partner projects promotes outreach to priority sectors. UNEP has continued its successful partnership with the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), leveraging funds and in-kind expertise. Also, the participation in the Health and Environment Strategic Alliance, in particular, of the African Development Bank and UNFCCC provides an opportunity to leverage funding from these institutions and their funding mechanisms to expand the country level mainstreaming work. The development of a GEF project proposal for financing of the African regional programme on sound management of chemicals under the Health and Environment Strategic Alliance, for example, takes advantage of validation by the two development institutions. Mainstreaming of the sound management of chemicals into national development strategies is closely related to UNDAF processes and should take advantage of resources available within UNDAF and national government sources to further strengthen mainstreaming efforts.
363. *Institutional framework.* The building of national, legal and institutional capacity to enable governments to integrate the sound management of chemicals into national development strategies contributes to the effort to enhance national policy and strategic frameworks for environmentally sound production, management and use of C&W. Mainstreaming the sound management of chemicals into sustainable development strategies involves integration in development assistance programmes including UNDAF processes and mobilizing resources to implement activities that lower chemical risks.
364. *Environmental sustainability.* The WSSD goal that, by 2020, chemicals should be produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on human health and the environment is an environmental objective in and of itself. While the production of chemicals is an environmental risk factor, support to governments in meeting their obligations under the relevant multilateral environmental agreements as well as projects funded by the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund (QSP TF) under SAICM that mainstream the sound management of chemicals into national development processes are aimed at mitigating this risk. Indeed, all the sub-programme activities to create awareness, develop tools and methods and build capacity are aimed at mitigating the risk to human health and the environment of the production and use of chemicals.

Likelihood of impact

365. As designed, the CWSP is expected to assist countries to transition to sound management of C&W, which is an intermediate state towards minimizing environmental and health impacts of C&W. The sub-programme also sought to promote coherent international information, policy and action for the environmentally-sound production, management and use of C&W. The success of the sub-programme in supporting countries to reach the desired transition to sound management of C&W (the intermediate state towards impact) depended, to a very large degree, on the extent to which the various dimensions of national capacity have been developed, coupled with the presence of drivers and valid assumptions being made during sub-programme design. As is the case in most of UNEP's activities, the degree to which the stated direct outcomes can be achieved in the targeted countries with the associated changes in state, corporate and individual behaviours determines how progress is being made towards impact.
366. A number of the projects and programme areas within the sub-programme have been undertaken over longer time scales than the MTS. Expectations of impact on MEA implementation through MEA-related projects are quite high. In this context, the areas of work dealing with the Minamata Convention, waste destruction technologies and the project on combatting environmental crime have global application with a high probability of impact over time, provided sustained action to ensure implementation on the ground is maintained. Continuing work to support convention secretariats and governments to ratify the existing and new treaties which imposes obligations on governments will go a long way to promote the sound management of C&W at the national level.
367. It is more problematic to assess the likelihood of impact for reporting SAICM initiatives, due partly to their more diffuse relationship with MEAs, having been less specifically targeted as a whole to them. The ability to measure the success of these initiatives may be hampered by the difficulty of

differentiating them from the MEAs' own efforts to implement reporting mechanism obligations for which a methodology is required.

368. Impact can be enhanced by promoting strategies for up-scaling through partnerships that were put in place from the start of any project, especially partnerships within the UN system. Such planned partnerships are a priority for further improving delivery. While the measurement of impact poses evident challenges within the short-term it would seem that, taken together, strengthened institutional capacity and continuing working on the mainstreaming of the sound management of chemicals into national development processes will produce sustainable impact in the longer-term.

Factors affecting sub-programme performance

369. A review of sub-programme documents and staff interviews reveal that the sub-programme results framework has not been based on issues and problem identification and analysis. In addition, there seems to be a lack of understanding among some staff on the thinking behind the sub-programme design and how their projects and interventions fit within the sub-programme architecture and, for that matter, within the UNEP PoW.
370. **Recommendation 3:** On the basis of the *'Global Chemicals Outlook'* and the upcoming *'Global Waste Management Outlook'*, the sub-programme should take the opportunity to define its work based on sound issues and problem analysis.
371. In general, the sub-programme emphasizes the importance of working with UNEP's partners for the successful implementation of sub-programme activities. The CWSP possesses expertise and technical capacity that other UN agencies do not. It should use these assets to strengthen partnerships particularly among UN agencies and bilateral organizations, so that these agencies can solicit UNEP expertise and advice and, in return, provide UNEP with a wider reach and add weight to UNEP's messages at the country level.
372. **Recommendation 4:** The Chemicals Branch, using the UNEP Partnership Policy (2011) as its basis, should develop its own strategy to address partnership issues and also to gauge the success, relevance and the impact of partnerships.
373. Synergy and collaboration between the Chemicals and other DTIE Branches and UNEP divisions has been limited and takes place more on an ad hoc basis. There is a lack of effective coordination and collaboration within the Branch and this is symptomatic of how it works generally within UNEP. While recognizing that the work is substantially driven by global initiatives, it is a key part of the delivery of UNEP's PoW.
374. **Recommendation 5:** The sub-programme should be better integrated by ensuring that the Programme Framework document is the place for identifying cross-connections and presenting rigorous problem/issue analysis into DTIE and UNEP.
375. UNEP's network of Regional Offices has a crucial role to play in the delivery of the CWSP especially with regards to the regional and country level priorities. While the 2012 Mid-Term Evaluation of the MTS notes a general improvement in the ROs role in programme planning in UNEP, the engagement of the regions is primarily based on the efforts and initiatives of individual project managers.
376. **Recommendation 6:** The sub-programme should further strengthen the role of the Regional Offices by ensuring that the regions are involved in a more meaningful way in the design of the sub-programme through better engagement and through increased consideration of regional priorities. This would facilitate better design of projects to respond to regional needs and priorities and establish regional synergies in the delivery of the sub-programme.
377. The evaluation identified a high turnover of the sub-programme leadership. There has, however, been a relatively low turnover rate of professional and general service staff and a minimal increase in absolute staff numbers over the last two biennia. Staff appear to be competent, knowledgeable and enthusiastic; good energy and collegiality seems to exist within the Branch. However, there are a large number of unfilled vacancies and even if filled, it would seem that the 'critical mass' of staff required to deliver the sub-programme objectives would not be reached.
378. During the period of this evaluation, the CWSP was implemented through a portfolio of 17 UNEP projects with a planned budget of US\$ 99.74 million and an estimated programmed budget of US\$ 95.10 million. There are an additional 14 GEF projects with an estimated budget of US\$ 98 million.

The sub-programme has consistently identified the availability of funds to be a constraint in carrying out its capacity building activities.

379. **Recommendation 7:** The CWSP should develop a coherent resource mobilization strategy with the aim of supporting key activities that support the delivery of the sub-programme objectives.
380. Independent evaluative evidence for the projects in the CWSP portfolio is very scarce. This evaluation notes that as a programme that had operated independently for many years prior to its current status as a sub-programme, a substantial effort is required to change the monitoring and evaluation culture in the Branch.
381. **Recommendation 8:** The Quality Assurance Section, in collaboration with the Evaluation Office, should organize a week long training session in the Branch on the requirements and importance of monitoring, reporting and evaluation. In addition, the Director of the Chemicals Branch should ensure that monitoring, reporting and evaluation are included in the individual work plans of the relevant project managers and effectively monitor them.

Global Environmental Outlook 5 (GEO-5)

Introduction

382. Between February and October 2014, the UNEP Evaluation Office conducted an independent evaluation of the GEO-5 project to provide a basis for accountability towards the UNEP Governing Council (GC), donors and other stakeholders and to draw lessons for future GEOs and similar large-scale environmental assessments. The evaluation used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis adopting a largely participatory approach in the process. Specifically, four information gathering approaches were used: administrative data review; electronic surveys with i) the GEO-5 core team and regional focal points and ii) with authors and reviewers contributing to the assessment; interviews (including face-to-face, Skype and personal interviews); and an extensive review of documents relevant to the project and evaluation of Global Environmental Assessments (GEA)s.
383. GEO-5 was timed to launch in June 2012 in time for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20). The GEO-5 effort was successful in satisfying the request of the GC. In the judgment of the evaluation, it contributed to the Rio+20 Conference and the discussions on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and it enhanced the stature of UNEP. GEO-5 pursued an approach that is considered best practice by the literature on global environmental assessments, providing good prospects for use of the assessment by strongly engaging key decision makers and stakeholders in the assessment process. The GEO-5 assessment achieved a high level of credibility while being completed in time for consideration at the Rio+20 conference and benefitting from strong communication efforts. These elements were deemed critical to the success of the GEO-5 effort at the global level.
384. The evaluation considered the GEO-5 project's performance guided by seven criteria: i) strategic relevance; ii) achievement of outputs; iii) effectiveness: attainment of objectives and planned results; iv) sustainability and replication; v) efficiency; and vi) factors and processes affecting project performance. Evaluation findings for each of these criteria are summarized as follows:

Evaluation findings and recommendations

Strategic relevance

385. UNEP is mandated to be the voice for the environment within the United Nations system. This status was reaffirmed in paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 Conference Outcome Document *'The Future We Want'*. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment⁸¹. The GEO-5 project was in line with at least two of the five areas of UNEP's mandate in the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for 2010-2013: a)

⁸¹ UNEP website - <http://www.unep.org/Documents.multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=43&ArticleID=3301&l=en>

keeping the world environmental situation under review; and (c) providing policy advice and early warning information, based upon sound science and assessments⁸². The GEO-5 project also directly responded to a UNEP Governing Council Decision (25/2) requesting UNEP to provide a global assessment of the state of the environment. The project was presented as a concept under one of the 2010-2011 Programme Frameworks of the Environmental Governance Sub-Programme. The GEO-5 process was also designed to follow relevant guidelines articulated in UNEP's Science Strategy, international best practices for conducting Integrated Environmental Assessments, and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building.

Achievement of outputs

386. GEO-5 applied contemporary good knowledge about promoting the use and influence of GEAs. Use and influence have been shown to be associated with levels of engagement among decision makers and those key stakeholder organizations with domain experts, in a social knowledge process leading up to and following the reports. This is the main driver of use of GEAs and is determined by six key attributes of the knowledge process portrayed in the Theory of Change of the GEO-5 project.
387. These key attributes are that decision makers and key stakeholders regard the assessment process and products as: i) credible, ii) legitimate, iii) addressing salient issues and questions, iv) timely i.e. the assessment is available when there are openings for use in decisions, and v) there is sufficient capacity to use and apply the assessment knowledge. In addition, the assessment findings need to be vi) adequately communicated and disseminated. These six attributes result from how the assessment process is undertaken and are formative in the use of the assessment in global and national and (sub-) regional policies and environmental decisions. The outputs of the GEO-5 project were geared explicitly towards achieving these key attributes of the GEO-5 assessment process and products.
388. *Credibility.* Credibility understood as using appropriate sources and methods and exploring alternative explanations was a primary focus of GEO-5. Procedures to foster credibility were developed and implemented by the Chapters with oversight provided by the Chapter Coordinators and reviewed twice by the GEO-5 Science and Policy Advisory Board, whose reviews were both positive and sources of advice to GEO-5. GEO-5 contributors had the capacity to undertake the assessment and authors and reviewers all judged that, overall, their credibility standards were met. The evaluation judged that credibility was achieved at a highly satisfactory level.
389. *Legitimacy.* GEO-5 prioritized legitimacy from the perspective of global uses of the assessment targeting Rio+20 as a launching venue. This was a strategic decision that appears to have been successful; GEO-5 contributor areas of expertise matched the global priorities and the group collectively covered a considerable breadth of disciplines, despite some shortcomings in the capacity of contributors. UNEP is regarded as a fully legitimate convener for a global environmental assessment which contributes to the legitimacy of GEOs. However, GEO-5 showed mixed performance on issues of gender: while it had a strong female presence amongst contributors at all levels and on the GEO-5 team, the substantive representation of gender issues in the assessment was muted. Also the assessment process did not include the diversity of interests and stakeholders that was implied by the GC Decision and requested by the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation and the majority of contributors were drawn from countries with a high level of development. These observations are somewhat mitigated by considering that interests contributing to GEO-5 were more appropriate for the context of global decisions and that GEO-5 fared better than the *'Fifth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change'* and the *'Millennium Ecosystem Assessment'* when comparing the development level of contributors' countries of origin. Overall, for its strategic global pursuit, legitimacy of GEO-5 can be considered satisfactory.
390. *Salience.* For GEO-5 salience was synonymous with policy relevance. The primary objective of the GEO-5 project was 'to conduct a global integrated environmental assessment that is legitimate, scientifically credible and results in policy relevant options that help inform decision-making at multiple scales'. GEO-5 proved to be salient for global uses aligning constructively with the global discussions on sustainable development and the new sustainable development goals. It was less salient for national/(sub-)regional scales of use, which was understandable given the high priority

⁸² UNEP MTS (2010-2013), paragraph 15

of intended use at global levels. However, national and sub-regional and even sub-national are the scales where mitigation and adaptation decisions are made that are most closely linked to behavioural change and environmental impacts. GEO-5 took a top-down approach to policy, starting from globally agreed environmental goals which suited the global priorities of the assessment. Policy guidance was assembled in regional Chapters for GEO-5. However, the 'region' is still too high a scale for usable policy options or useful policy guidance because of the variability in environmental and development settings and differences in the range, intensity and nature of factors that enable or discourage policy. In the view of the evaluation, achieving salience at lower levels, including for countries, was important but would have required a much stronger bottom-up approach. The evaluation criteria of salience was rated as 'Satisfactory' for GEO-5.

391. The general approach for GEAs still applies, and indeed GEO-5 has validated the effectiveness of that model, but in the future it will be important to increase the weight of legitimacy and salience relative to credibility by ensuring that key interests are part of the assessment process including gender, sustainable development and the full range of UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders⁸³. The logistical issues will be challenging, but with contemporary technology and boundary spanning approaches⁸⁴ the next GEO could achieve a high level of salience and legitimacy for all affected interests and still be regarded as credible by them and other key stakeholders. It is also necessary to provide new ways to undertake some of the challenging data [collection and verification] issues for an assessment, in particular to think about, and assess, the credibility of data in new ways beyond the use of peer-reviewed literature. Standards need to be developed that ensure sufficient credibility but allow data from multiple sources, many of which will not be peer-reviewed, to usefully inform policy options at much smaller scales. This is an urgent undertaking because the voices of the most vulnerable groups, such as women and less developed nations, and also of those who most affect the environment, such as private entrepreneurs and local authorities, are unlikely to be heard in the scientific information that is currently admitted to GEAs.
392. *Capacity building.* Adequate capacity both for contributing to, and for making use of, an assessment is critical to allow stakeholders to make full use of an assessment process and findings. The GC directed GEO-5 to provide capacity building for developing countries and this was re-emphasized in the Statement by the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation. The Project Document explicitly planned for capacity building through training modules, regional trainings and the Fellowship Programme, but also expected capacity building to occur through participation in the GEO-5 process. Except for the Fellowship Programme, which successfully engaged at least 20 young scientists from across the world and different disciplines, capacity building efforts during GEO-5 were very limited due to time and budget constraints. While it is entirely likely that the capacity of participants was enhanced through the cross-disciplinary undertaking to produce the chapters, developing countries were less represented among the Chapter contributors. Overall capacity building by GEO-5 was rated as 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'.
393. *Timeliness.* GEO-5 was completed in time to be launched before the Rio+20 Earth Summit in June 2012 and governments were given the opportunity to comment on draft versions of the report as early as June 2011. Negotiation and endorsement of the Summary for Policy Makers was concluded by the end of January 2012. Two side-products of the GEO-5 were also pitched at, and prepared well before, the Summit (the booklets '*Keeping Track of our Changing Environment: From Rio to Rio+20*' and '*Measuring Progress: Environmental Goals & Gaps*') and were widely disseminated through the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives, at UN Headquarters and meetings leading up to the Summit. Considering that GEO-5 was initiated March 2010 this constituted highly satisfactory performance on timeliness.
394. *Communications.* Communication and dissemination was primarily targeted at global and national governments and was very well planned and implemented using multiple media to reach a variety of audiences. Communications were rated as 'Highly Satisfactory'.

⁸³ <http://www.unep.org/civil-society/MajorGroups/tabid/52184/Default.aspx>

⁸⁴ Clark, WC, Tomich, TP, Noordwijk, Mv, Guston, D, Delia, C, Dickson, NM & McNie, E 2011, 'Boundary work for sustainable development: natural resource management at the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)'.

Attainment of project objectives and results

395. The evaluation judged the level of attainment of project objectives and results as ‘Satisfactory’. The priority for GEO-5 was to contribute to the global level deliberations at Rio+20 and the SDGs. In this it succeeded. GEO-5 was well received and the status of both the GEO and UNEP was advanced. More importantly, the status of the environment was enhanced in these sustainable development deliberations. While the evaluation was not able to trace a direct line between GEO-5 and the decisions, there is a strong and wide-spread perception by GEO-5 stakeholders and plentiful supporting information that provide confidence that GEO-5 did contribute positively to the discussions and decisions.
396. At lower scales such as at national levels the evaluation found several instances where use of the assessment knowledge or methods is already occurring, as one of many elements contributing to environmental and policy decisions.

Sustainability and replication

397. Supported by the mention of GEO in the Rio+20 Outcome Document and the consecutive United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/213, UNEP has already managed to secure UN Regular Budget funding for roughly 20% of the total estimated cost of future GEOs. This contributes significantly to the financial sustainability of the GEO flagship in UNEP and is a considerable improvement over GEO-5. GEO-5 demonstrated the ability of UNEP to deliver a credible GEO that successfully achieved the priority contributions to global environmental policy and decisions in a relatively rapid timeframe and with constrained budgets. However, this placed considerable strain on DEWA staff and managers and is not perceived as a sustainable approach.
398. A GEO is a large and growing, (both in scope and complexity) investment that, over time, needs to be considered against the stream of benefits. Some benefits do not appear to diminish even as the GEO becomes dated, for instance older GEOs are still frequently downloaded and referenced. However, as environmental and sustainable development issues are pushed to the fore through the SDGs among other fora and initiatives, the need for GEO approaches that are applicable across widely-differing scales and temporal periods will increase. It is difficult to envision how this could be sustained with the current approach to GEO with a large effort every few years to provide an assessment. Options such as updating state and trends of the environment periodically and as needed, could better integrate GEO into regular work and budget cycles and provide a structure to respond to emerging priorities and issues in a more timely manner. This includes newly emerging topics, newly emerging geographies of importance, or important emerging decision opportunities. This new setting can significantly alter how GEOs are used at different scales.
399. The rating of ‘Moderately Likely’ for sustainability reflects the strong internal and external political support and a more secure budget for future GEOs, but also the need to adapt the overall approach of conducting GEOs to better meet environmental information and analysis requirements at widely differing scales and temporal periods. Future GEOs need to match the changing profile of environmental issues in recognition of the connectivity of sustainable development and the environment and in light of increased technical capacities for data management, analysis and dissemination.

Efficiency

400. GEO-5 was successful in meeting the challenging 27 month timeline from start to launch. The evaluation has been unable to determine the exact actual costs of GEO-5; they are expected to be somewhat higher than the revised budget of US\$6 million and in line with comparable global assessments. GEO-5 was designed to rely on existing relationships and partnerships between UNEP and academic, research and governmental organisations and individuals. Overall, efficiency of the project was rated ‘Satisfactory’.

Overall assessment

401. Overall, the evaluation found GEO-5 to have been a success and understands the challenges GEO-5 faced in achieving aspects judged less successful. Considering the high strategic relevance of the project, its satisfactory delivery of outputs and successful achievement of global use and its satisfactory efficiency, but also its limited contribution to capacity for use of the assessment at national and (sub-)regional scales, the evaluation rated the GEO-5 project overall as ‘Satisfactory’.

Recommendations

402. The evaluation made five recommendations for future GEOs:

Recommendation 1: The utility of future GEOs will be enhanced by reaching lower scales and addressing the interests of stakeholders who are directly affected by/affecting environmental change.

Recommendation 2: With the shifting needs and new challenges of GEAs, appropriate planning and management will be critically important to develop and implement a plausible outcome-based approach and use that to monitor progress and identify improvements and problems. The next GEOs will need to be much more adaptive than the previous ones and the likelihood of success will be affected by the quality of planning, resourcing and on results focused management.

Recommendation 3: Future GEOs should continue to address policy but using improved approaches and resulting in information that is relevant at different scales and for major issues

Recommendation 4: Directed efforts to build the capacity of key stakeholders to take an active part in the joint knowledge production process and to make the best possible use of GEO information and analyses are required at smaller scale points of use.

Recommendation 5: Future GEOs should secure adequate staff and financial resources before the project is initiated and put in place more rigorous financial management and oversight systems.

Joint Evaluation of the UN-REDD Programme – Summary

Introduction - The UN-REDD Programme

403. The concept of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (or REDD) to help stabilise atmospheric CO₂ concentrations was formally endorsed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP) in Bali, in 2007. Several months later, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) was launched as a joint effort of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of developing countries to reduce forest-related emissions and eventually participate in a performance-based payment mechanism in order to achieve so-called 'REDD+ readiness'.
404. Drawing on lessons learned from early experimentation in nine country pilots during a quick start phase, the programme formalised its approach with a five-year strategy (2011-2015), designed to 'promote the elaboration and implementation of National REDD+ Strategies to achieve REDD+ readiness, including the transformation of land use and sustainable forest management and performance-based payments.'⁸⁵ To this end, two complementary sets of interventions are used:
- National Programmes (NP), which provide comprehensive technical assistance to countries with the aim of preparing and implementing national REDD+ strategies or action plans; and
 - Support to National Action – Global Programme (SNA-GP), which provides on-demand targeted technical assistance, including normative and standardised approaches to REDD+.
405. As of April 2014, the programme includes 51 registered partner countries of which 18 receive National Programme support and 29 have accessed SNA-GP support. In 2013, the programme also began coordinating Tier II investments (direct bilateral REDD+ investments) on behalf of the Norwegian government with Vietnam and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
406. The programme is structured around the core competencies of the three UN partner agencies that aim to "Deliver as One". It is governed by a Policy Board, consisting of representatives from nine NP

⁸⁵ *The UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015*, p. 6

countries, donors, civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organisations and the three UN partner agencies. Representatives from related initiatives, such as the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and collaborating agencies, are invited to participate as observers. Programme management is assured by: i) the Strategic Group (SG), which oversees inter-agency coordination; ii) the Management Group (MG), which is primarily responsible for the delivery and management of the overall programme; iii) the Secretariat, which oversees coordination, communications, knowledge management functions, the delivery of SNA-GP, and the preparation/delivery of PB sessions; and iv) the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office, which acts as the administrative agent of the UN-REDD Programme fund. As of December 2013, slightly more than US\$ 215 million had been received from Norway (the founding and largest REDD+ donor to date), the European Union, Denmark, Spain, Japan and Luxemburg (by order of contribution).

The Evaluation

407. The external evaluation of the UN-REDD Programme was requested at the 9th UN-REDD Policy Board meeting in 2012. It was conducted by an independent team of consultants and managed by a joint Evaluation Management Group (EMG), consisting of the evaluation offices of the three participating UN agencies. The UNEP Evaluation Office took a leading role in managing the evaluation.
408. The purpose of the evaluation was to:
- Provide evidence of results achieved to meet accountability requirements;
 - Promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the Policy Board, participating UN organisations, member countries and other partners; and
 - Inform the revision of the UN-REDD Programme Strategy beyond 2015.
409. To this end, the evaluation assessed programme performance, including the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, sustainability of results and the likelihood of impact. It covered the programme's entire range of activities and geographic scope, from June 2008 to the end of 2013.
410. Though independent, the evaluation was conducted as a highly consultative and transparent process with several opportunities for evaluation stakeholders to discuss the evaluation questions, approach, findings and recommendations. The evaluation relied on mixed methods of data collection and analysis including an in-depth desk review, key informant interviews, an on-line survey and country visits. The likelihood of sustainability and impact were assessed using a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) of the programme with particular attention for the rapidly evolving context. The ToC was developed by the Evaluation Team and discussed with programme proponents during the inception phase.
411. The UN-REDD Programme is a complex endeavour, composed of two inter-linked sets of interventions, acting at multiple levels and involving a broad range of stakeholders. In carrying out this evaluation, the Evaluation Team met with a number of limitations related to data collection, data analysis and logistics. In all cases, efforts were made to ensure reliability and broad validity of data collected – either through complementary literature review or interviews.

Key findings

Strategic relevance

412. The UN-REDD Programme is a relevant response to UNFCCC negotiations and the emerging REDD+ agenda, but uncertainty over the future of REDD+ financing and slower-than-expected progress on most aspects of the proposed mechanism are creating new challenges. While UN-REDD appears to be adapting to these, there is as yet no emerging consensus on what an alternative scenario for REDD+ might entail.
413. Valued for its integrated approach to sustainable resource use, the UN-REDD Programme is largely consistent with country needs and priorities, as expressed in relevant forestry, environment and climate adaptation and mitigation policies, plans and sector frameworks. However, the programme

is primarily driven by the UN agencies and the requirements of the mechanism (in alignment with the phased approach to REDD+), as opposed to the challenges that country partners are facing.

414. UN-REDD enjoys strong buy-in from host ministries downward (environment or forestry departments), but country ownership remains weak overall, with limited involvement from policy-makers, non-forest-related ministries and the private sector. The programme's emphasis on safeguards and the need for the free, prior and informed consent of forest-dependent populations has created more sustained support amongst civil society and indigenous peoples' organisations, though effective participation in local decision-making fora and contentious issues such as tenure and benefit distribution remain unresolved challenges.
415. Thanks to its normative and technical contributions and responsiveness to country demands, the programme's comparative advantage is becoming progressively clearer in the global REDD+ arena. While coordination with other initiatives is steadily increasing at the national level, the co-occurrence of two multilateral readiness programmes (FCPF and UN-REDD) with limited joint programming and implementation efforts points to a strong potential for further efficiency gains. The adoption of a common definition for REDD+ readiness and its implications would be a step in the right direction.
416. While UN-REDD has the potential to become a fundamental game changer, there appears to be a growing disconnect between the evolution of the programme and the way resources are allocated on the one hand, and the evolving context on the other. Compounded by the absence of a clear theory of change that weakens the programme's ability to ensure that it is doing the right things to achieve its intended results, UN-REDD's focus on a post-2012 scenario is no longer aligned with ongoing UNFCCC negotiations, the evolving nature of REDD+ and the needs of country partners in particular.
417. Based on these considerations, the evaluation rated the strategic relevance of the programme as 'Satisfactory'.

Effectiveness

418. Overall, the UN-REDD Programme is effective in terms of producing key outputs and progress towards outcomes is improving. Specifically, notable achievements are being made in terms of forest monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV), stakeholder engagement and the development of national REDD+ governance systems. With regards to outcomes, the programme is credited with raising awareness on the critical importance of forests and the need for stakeholder engagement and having provided forest-dependent communities with a unique platform to voice their rights, needs and concerns.
419. While contributing to the expansion of the sustainable development paradigm and the development of country capacities in a number of areas (most notably in MRV), achieving and sustaining outcome-level results is an ongoing challenge. Countries participating in National Programmes are not progressing as planned. The time, effort and resources needed to achieve REDD+ readiness were greatly under-estimated. Though countries differ considerably in terms of their initial capacity and ability to achieve stated objectives, all face considerable challenges and none of the reviewed countries have so far achieved satisfactory ratings in all outcome areas.
420. The challenges that participating countries face include the inherently complex nature of the REDD+ agenda and the unrealised expectation that financial incentives would help drive change. In essence, instead of building on the capacities and motivation of in-country stakeholders to ensure the maintenance of forest resource systems, the performance-based architecture of REDD+ has made progress dependent on the continuation of technical and financial support coming from abroad.
421. Hence, the evaluation rated the delivery of outputs as 'Moderately Satisfactory' and programme effectiveness as 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'.

Efficiency

422. At the global level, the programme relies on a transparent open-access framework – the Multi-Partner Trust Fund – to report on the use and distribution of funds across the three UN partner agencies. While the Fund is managed in accordance with applicable Policy Board decisions on joint annual workplans and budgets for SNA-GP and NP activities, how resources are then allocated and used by each UN agency partner is less clear. Individual agency workplans and budgetary

allocations are not shared and although strict guidelines are used to ensure accountable and transparent use of funds, each agency uses distinct accounting and contracting rules that inevitably lead to increased inefficiencies.

423. The distribution of resources across the programme is not linked to a clearly articulated strategy. While NP budgets are developed by countries with the support of programme staff, there are no clear strategic guidelines for the development of these budgets and the rationale for investing the bulk of available resources in SNA-GP is likewise unspecified. Available evidence suggests that UN agency partners face strong incentives to promote activities that favour their interests, as well as in-house capacities in lieu of local solutions.
424. UN-REDD does not rely on an integrated management system to track and monitor the use of available resources and quality of programme results, making it difficult to undertake more complex analyses and decide how best to allocate available resources to achieve objectives.
425. Though inter-agency coordination is perceived to be improving, with increasing evidence of joint planning efforts in the regions, the challenges to joint programming and implementation remain considerable, especially at the country level. Despite clear intentions to deliver as one, the three UN partners continue to rely on distinct planning, implementation and accounting requirements that tend to increase transaction costs and reduce delivery effectiveness.
426. The complexity of the UN-REDD governance structure is generally considered essential for maintaining trust amongst UN partner agencies and across the programme's diverse range of constituencies, but it also creates high transaction costs, delays in implementation and administrative redundancies. The programme's overlapping structures make it difficult to track the rationale for decisions and establish linkages between proposed interventions and programmatic objectives.
427. Based on this, the evaluation rated programme efficiency as 'Unsatisfactory'.

Impact

428. As currently designed, the likelihood of broader development impact (i.e., emission reductions) largely lies beyond the programme's reach. To achieve emission reductions and implement solutions that will address the underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, the programme posits that partner countries that graduate from the readiness phase will be able to secure long-term financial support from either market or non-market sources. The future of such financing is unclear and the road to REDD+ readiness and implementation faces important challenges.
429. The UN-REDD Programme is helping to create enabling conditions for collective action at the country level. It remains too early to tell what effects the programme will have in terms of reduced deforestation, sustainable forest resource use and improved socio-economic conditions. While it is assumed that the key drivers of deforestation will be more effectively addressed during the implementation phase, evidence drawn from both past and present efforts to achieve sustainable outcomes suggests that this may not be the best approach.
430. The UN-REDD Programme has contributed to the development of more inclusive and transparent forms of stakeholder engagement, as well as some policy and regulatory reforms. Changes in the rules that condition the use, management and governance of forests at national and sub-national levels will take longer to achieve and require higher levels of commitment.
431. The evaluation therefore rated the likelihood of impact as 'Moderately Unlikely'.

Sustainability

432. In a context of growing uncertainty over the future of REDD+ financing the extent to which partner countries will be able to sustain activities once programme interventions end is unclear. This places the sustainability of programme results at risk.
433. The programme is helping countries to develop comprehensive REDD+ strategies. The capacities needed to support and sustain such efforts are proving more difficult to develop. Among other things, staff turnover, the leakage of trained resources and incidences of capacity substitution by international consultants have been observed to affect the ability of participating countries to manage their own affairs.

434. The lack of inter-sectoral buy-in and country ownership also places limitations on the sustainability of programme results at the national level.
435. Overall, the evaluation rated sustainability as 'Unlikely'.

Cross-cutting issues

436. The importance of, and need for, gender mainstreaming in UN-REDD is reflected in most policy and programmatic documents and guidelines, but the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities at the country level is not taking place in a cohesive and systematic way throughout the programme. Attention to integrating gender concerns, especially at the local level, will be important if the programme is to better address all the drivers of deforestation.
437. The programme provides an enabling platform for indigenous peoples' and civil society organisations to influence global discussions on REDD+. The ability of forest-dependent populations to influence REDD+ processes has so far proven to be more limited at the country level, and non-indigenous communities are not well represented in the programme, overall. The recognition of land and resource rights, clear benefit distribution mechanisms and the monitoring and enforcement of safeguards remain contentious issues.
438. Institutional uptake and mainstreaming of newly acquired capacities constitute important challenges for most countries, with noted difficulties in terms of mainstreaming knowledge and tools into existing national institutions.
439. The UN-REDD Programme has been a strong voice in the prioritisation of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) principles and the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights in the implementation of UNFCCC safeguards, especially in decision-making fora. Programme contributions to social and environmental safeguards are helping to raise awareness at national and global levels, but it remains a challenge to put such principles into practice, notably due to the high number of safeguards and the lack of clear guidance on how to implement, monitor and enforce these.
440. Through its work on anti-corruption and participatory governance assessment, the UN-REDD programme is helping to establish more robust standards for REDD+ governance.

Factors affecting performance

441. *Programme design and structure.* The performance of the UN-REDD Programme is affected by its ambitious nature and corresponding absence of a clear and explicit theory of change. This places limitations on the ability of the programme to develop a coherent strategy for achieving results, set priorities, efficiently allocate resources, adaptively manage implementation and develop sufficiently robust design principles for achieving sustainable outcomes in different social-ecological environments.
442. Though countries are successfully engaging in REDD-related processes, the sustainability of programme results and their appropriation by the partner countries crucially depend upon the maintenance of dedicated international structures (i.e. financial and technical assistance). Overreliance on the promise of REDD+ financing exposes UN-REDD to potential risks and hinders the resilience of programme results.
443. The drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are being identified in the readiness phase, but the programme has so far paid inadequate attention to these concerns and viable strategies to overcome such challenges are not forthcoming. Though theoretical contributions are being produced, progress in terms of actionable solutions is slow and few countries have drawn a clear path for tackling the drivers of deforestation once concrete REDD+ support becomes available.
444. *Cooperation and partnerships.* The convening authority, legitimacy and credibility of the three UN agencies are seen as key programme strengths. By successfully forging partnerships and mutually beneficial cooperation with key development partners (e.g. FCPF) and REDD+ initiatives or implementing bodies more broadly, the programme's efforts are helping to strengthen its comparative advantage and value-added at all levels of interaction. Many of these relationships are being initiated through informal channels, especially at the country level. Formal collaboration is strongest at the global and regional levels
445. *Programme Organisation and Management.* Management and coordination functions have improved over time, but the ability of the different administrative bodies to meaningfully contribute to the objectives of the programme is affected by: overlapping roles and responsibilities

between the Management Group, Strategy Group and Secretariat; insufficient decision-making autonomy; and close attention to inter-agency equity, as opposed to strategy. This leads to a duplication of efforts, slows down decision-making processes and raises transaction costs.

446. *Human and Financial Resources Administration.* Resource allocations are broadly consistent with programmatic objectives and priorities and rigorously managed and monitored by the three partner agencies. However, the process used is neither openly accessible nor clear from a strategic point of view. The absence of a joint accountability and reporting mechanism by the three partner agencies and general oversight capacity by the Policy Board make it difficult to track the relative efficiency, effectiveness and soundness of programme investments.
447. *Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation.* The programme monitors progress and reports on the achievement of outputs and a results-based framework, linked to the programme's management cycle, is currently being developed. Linkages between outputs and the achievement of expected outcomes are not always clear. The purpose and intended results of the programme will need to be clarified before the benefits of a results-based approach are realised, including the relationship between NP and SNA-GP components.

Conclusions

448. The global urgency to reduce emissions from deforestation is undisputed and the UN-REDD Programme is a relevant response to the requirements of the REDD+ mechanism, in alignment with UNFCCC requirements. However, contrary to initial assumptions, REDD+ has so far proven to be more complex and far more difficult to implement than what early proponents had envisioned.
449. While the programme is a relevant response to the requirements of the REDD+ agenda and what participating countries need to be compliant with the proposed mechanism, it only partially addresses the challenges that countries face in order to reduce emissions from deforestation. For the most part, the focus is on the technical requirements of the phased approach to REDD+, not on developing tangible solutions to address the resource dilemmas country partners face.
450. The global context has changed considerably since REDD+ was first introduced. The implicit theory and assumptions that guided the creation and development of the UN-REDD Programme no longer appear to hold. While the programme generates a wide range of residual benefits, the achievement of emission reductions remains heavily tied to the outcome of future UNFCCC discussions and the continued availability of REDD+ financing. In a dynamic and unpredictable world, this places limitations on the programme's resilience vis-à-vis unforeseen developments.
451. The programme is effective in achieving output-level results in most, if not all, of the areas wherein it operates. However, achieving system-wide change is a long-term process. Though some work areas are more developed than others, the changes that the programme aims to initiate are substantial. Given the incremental nature of policy and institutional change in sovereign political-economic systems, the expectation that countries would be able to comply with the exacting requirements of the programme within a three- to five-year cycle was overambitious.
452. Pursuit of the REDD+ agenda and UN involvement in the delivery of such a mechanism have helped to bring global attention to the fundamental importance of forests for the achievement of a sustainable future. UN partner agencies send a powerful signal that forests are critical for the future. While success is harder to achieve than expected, the absence of UN involvement in the delivery of such an ideal would likely have limited the political appeal and legitimacy of the REDD+ framework.
453. In the current context of economic austerity and subdued interest in supporting global public goods, efforts to increase (let alone sustain) results will remain a challenge. Unless UN-REDD works to include key players and develop alternative pathways that limit country dependency on continuous REDD+ financing and external technical assistance, the ability of any country to sustain results will be limited.
454. Despite the myriad challenges that the UN-REDD Programme is facing – which are the same across all REDD+ processes – it has nevertheless managed to establish important precedents that are worth acknowledging. The litmus test will come when the programme either succeeds or fails to

heed the warnings contained in this evaluation and adopts a more resilient framework for achieving emission reductions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Policy Board should re-examine the overall purpose and strategic objectives of UN-REDD, to address both the significant challenges that REDD+ faces and the dynamic context within which it operates. This should include a focus on more flexible and country-driven solutions to achieving emission reductions; the need to address the underlying factors that condition land use and land cover change; and the development of a more resilient and therefore less resource-dependent programme.

Recommendation 2: In consultation with country partners and other stakeholders, the UN-REDD Management Group should develop a robust ToC that explains what the programme aims to accomplish and how it will achieve such ends (i.e., link theory to action).

Recommendation 3: UN partner agencies should further their collaboration with the WB's FCPF with a view to operate as 'one programme', such that redundancies are eliminated, standards and approaches are harmonised and joint delivery opportunities (based on core agency competencies) are explored.

Recommendation 4: UN partner agencies should work with partner countries to strengthen country ownership over all aspects of national REDD+ efforts, including the development of a more bottom-up approach.

Recommendation 5: As part of the revision to the programme's strategy, UN partner agencies and participating countries should place greater emphasis on integrated cross-sectoral approaches to REDD+ and should advocate for higher-level political support and capacity building across national government entities.

Recommendation 6: UN partner agencies and country partners should initiate joint actions to address the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, by tackling issues and engaging relevant stakeholders (especially the private sector) early in the REDD+ readiness phase.

Recommendation 7: The Policy Board should make resource rights a priority area for programme interventions, building on existing tenure-related efforts at the national, regional, and global levels. To this end, the programme should support country efforts to clarify the land and resource rights of forest-dependent populations, including carbon rights and the related distribution of benefits.

Recommendation 8: Responsible units within the UN partner agencies, with the support of partner countries, should continue efforts to streamline social and environmental safeguards for REDD+, especially with regards to benefit sharing mechanisms, and support country efforts to provide information on how safeguards are addressed and respected.

Recommendation 9: Responsible units within the UN partner agencies, with the support of partner countries, should intensify efforts to mainstream gender equity across the programme, providing sufficient resources and relevant training to ensure a more comprehensive and systematic approach.

Recommendation 10: Country partners and UN partner agencies should strive to ensure fair and verifiable representation of civil society, indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent populations in NP decision-making. Greater efforts should notably be placed on the inclusion of appointed civil society leaders and constituencies that represent all forest-dependent communities.

Recommendation 11: The Policy Board and UN partner agencies should revise and simplify the UN-REDD governance structure to reduce overlap, strengthen the strategic and substantive functions of the PB, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Management Group and Secretariat.

Recommendation 12: The UN-REDD Secretariat should continue efforts to develop and implement results-based planning, monitoring and reporting tools across the breadth of the programme, to draw lessons from ongoing implementation efforts, support adaptive management needs and report achievements to both internal and external audiences.

IV. Compliance with Evaluation Recommendations

Summary of UNEP's Recommendation Compliance Procedure

455. Following the completion of an evaluation a response to the evaluation recommendations, in the form of an implementation plan, must be prepared. The responsible officer has one month to submit the proposed implementation plan from the date of receipt of the final evaluation report from the Evaluation Office.
456. The implementation plan should specify the following: whether a recommendation has been accepted; how the recommendation will be implemented; who is responsible for its implementation; the date by which the implementation of the recommendation is expected to be completed; and what actions have already been taken (if any). If a recommendation is rejected by the project/programme management, an explanation must be provided as to why the recommendation cannot be implemented and, where appropriate, an alternative course of action should be specified to address the issue(s) raised in the recommendation.
457. If an implementation plan has not been received by the Evaluation Office within one month, this is recorded as not compliant. After the implementation plan has been completed, the Evaluation Office will follow-up with the substantive office on the status of implementation of the recommendations at six month intervals. The Evaluation Office reports on the levels of compliance to the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director. This is done in September and March every year.
458. At each assessment point, the progress in the implementation of the recommendations, as recorded by the responsible staff in updates to the implementation plan, is assessed. On the basis of the evidence provided in the implementation plan progress updates, recommendations are deemed to be:
- Fully implemented (compliant);
 - Partially implemented (partially compliant);
 - Not implemented (not compliant); and
 - No further action required (if events overtake what is planned).
459. When a recommendation has been fully implemented it will be recorded as such and 'closed' - no further follow-up is required. All other recommendations will remain 'open'. At the third assessment point (i.e. 18 months after the first assessment point), all recommendations will automatically be recorded as 'closed'. The status of implementation of the recommendation will also be reviewed and recorded at this time and no further changes will be made. If the Evaluation Office does not receive an updated implementation plan prior to the compliance assessment process, any remaining recommendations are 'closed' with the level of compliance recorded in the previous assessment. Any recommendations from mid-term evaluations that were not fully implemented after three assessment points will be considered in the terminal evaluation of the project / programme and incorporated into the terms of reference.

Overview of Compliance with Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations

Biennium compliance status (2014-2015)

Implementation plans

460. In the biennium 2014-2015, 42 Implementation Plans⁸⁶ for evaluation recommendations were sent to UNEP substantive offices.⁸⁷ 83% were completed and returned to Evaluation Office while 19%

⁸⁶ Whereas portfolio projects will include several country-level evaluations conducted within the same period, only one joint Recommendation Implementation Plan is compiled and submitted for compliance.

failed to complete an implementation plan in the prescribed time. Table 7 below shows implementation plans issued to the divisions responsible.

Table 7: Implementation Plans of Evaluation Recommendations Issued (2014 – 2015)

| Division | Number sent | Number returned | Number not returned |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| DEPI | 28 | 21 | 7 |
| DTIE | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| DELC | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| DEWA | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| DRC/RSO | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| DCPI | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 42 | 35 | 7 |

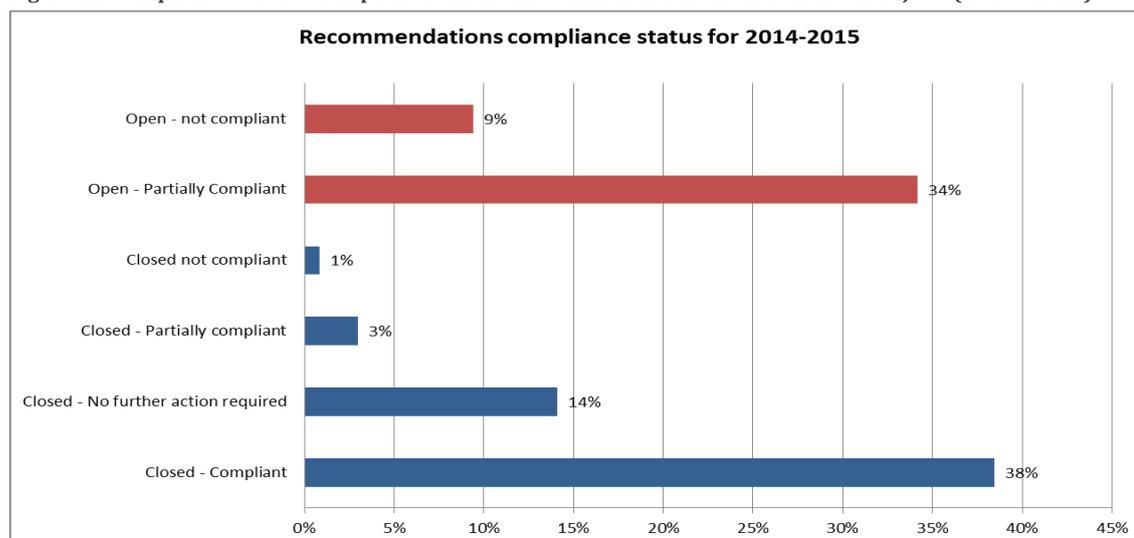
Recommendation Acceptance (2014-2015)

461. A total of 276 recommendations were issued in the 2014-2015 biennium with an 85% response rate as at November 2015 (n=234). Responses not received were mainly from evaluations that had only recently been completed. Out of the 234 recommendations responses, 86% were accepted, 8% were rejected and 5% were partially accepted as illustrated in figure 41 below. Reasons provided for non-acceptance included: lack of funds, no follow-up project phase, or recommendations being beyond UNEP's mandate/scope of operations.
462. The Evaluation Office then reviewed reasons for which recommendations have been rejected and determines whether the recommendation should be closed with no further action required. Alternatively, suggestions were given on how the recommendation could be implemented.

Recommendation Compliance (2014-2015)

463. An overall improvement in compliance was recorded in the 2014-2015 biennium with an 86% response rate up from 70% in the 2012-2013. 38% of the 234 recommendations responses from UNEP substantive offices were fully implemented (closed compliant), while 3% were closed partially compliant. 14% were closed with no further action required, and 1% closed as not compliant. 44% were still open and were either in progress (n=80) or not compliant (n=22) as shown in Figure 41.

Figure 41: Compliance Status for Implementation of Recommendations from Evaluated Projects (2014 – 2015)⁸⁸



⁸⁷ Some evaluation reports do not result in Recommendations, rather in 'Lessons Learned'. This could occur where it is not possible to formulate actionable proposals because there is no follow-on phase/project to implement them.

⁸⁸ Note: By definition, 'open' recommendations have yet to reach their implementation deadline.

Cumulative compliance status (2011-2015)

464. The Evaluation Office has completed a combined total of 117 project, sub-programme and corporate evaluations between the years 2011 and 2015. The evaluations resulted in 696 recommendations as shown in Table 8 below.

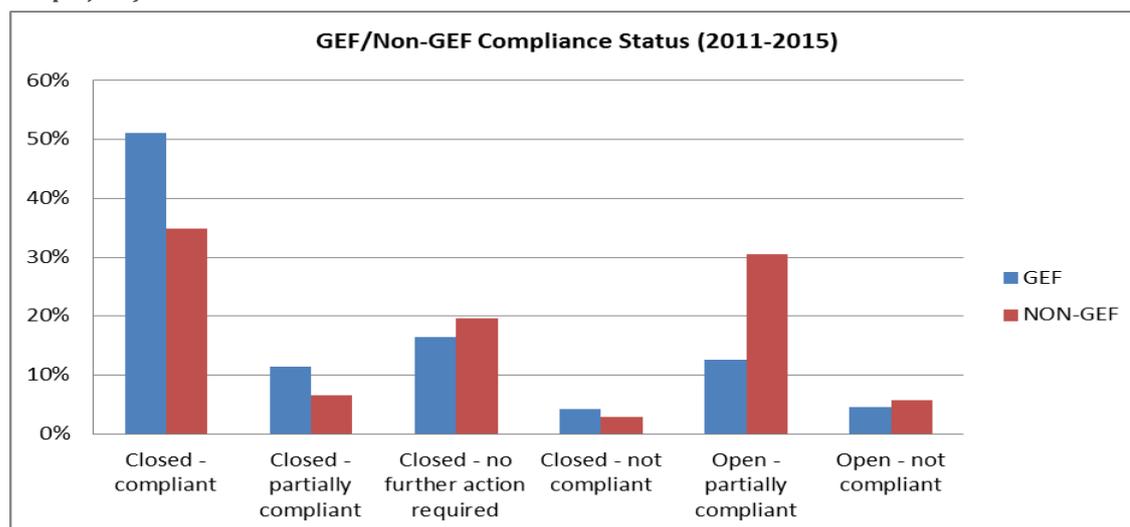
Table 8: Evaluations by Category (2011 - 2015)

| Evaluation Category | Number of evaluations | Total recommendations |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Sub-Programmes / Programmes | 7 | 91 |
| Corporate evaluations | 5 | 47 |
| Project evaluations | 105 | 558 |
| Evaluations completed and finalised | 117 | 696 |

Project evaluations recommendations

465. 105 evaluations were completed and finalized in 2011-2015. 76% out of the evaluated projects were GEF funded while 26% were non-GEF funded. Out of the 105 projects, 558 recommendations were issued of which 85 projects provided a management response resulting in 473 recommendations. 70% of these recommendations emanated from GEF funded projects and 30% from non-GEF funded projects. Figure 42 below shows a comparison of implementation status between GEF funded and non-GEF funded projects.

Figure 42: Comparison of Compliance Status for Accepted Evaluation Recommendations 2011-2015 (GEF and non-GEF projects)



466. Overall, 219 (46%) of recommendations were fully implemented. Forty seven (10%) were partially compliant, no further action was required for 82 (16%) of the recommendations either because they were rejected with adequate justification or because they were outside the purview of UNEP, 18 (4%) recommendations were not implemented while 107 are still open (yet to reach their deadlines) and are yet to be implemented.

467.

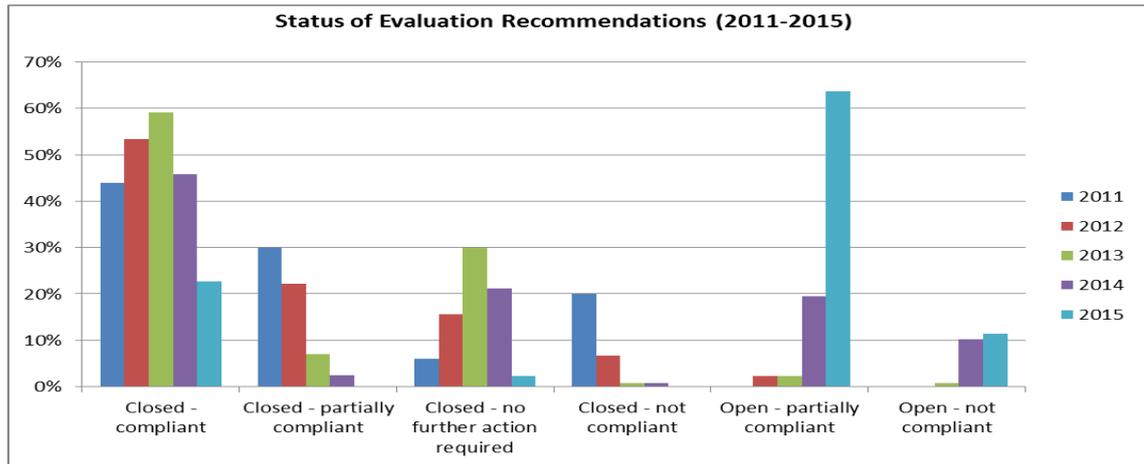
468.

469.

470. Figure 43 below shows the total number of recommendations issued per year since 2011 and their compliance status. The time limits for recommendation implementation mean that 'open' recommendations can only occur in the 2014 and 2015 cohorts. It can be seen that the total number of recommendations issued has increased, due to the higher number of evaluations being

completed per annum. It also shows that proportion of recommendations that are closed as either 'not compliant' or 'partially compliant' have steadily declined over the period.

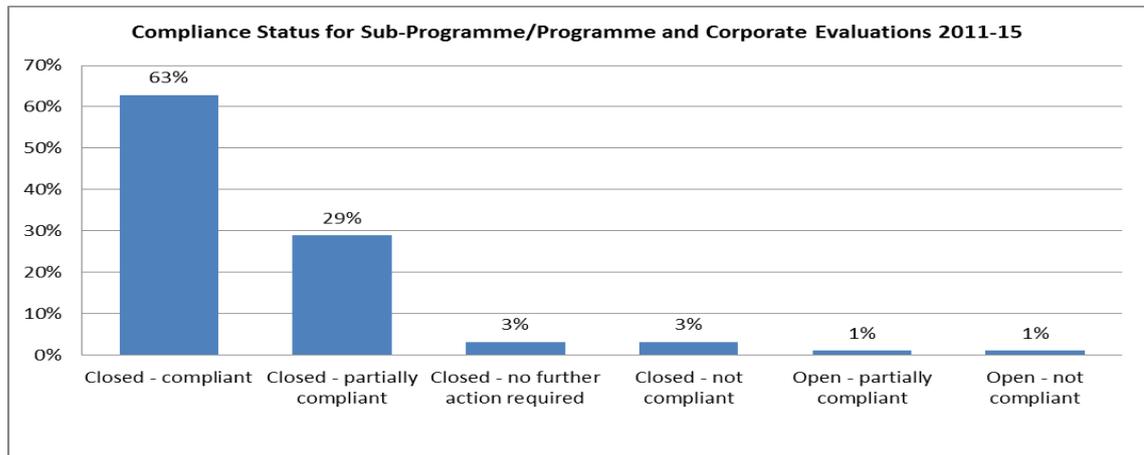
Figure 43: Status of Evaluation Recommendations (2011-2015)



Sub-programme/programme and corporate evaluations

471. Ninety seven (97) recommendations were issued from sub-programme,/programme and corporate evaluations in the period 2011-2015. 63% were closed compliant and 29% were closed partially compliant as shown in Figure 44 below.

Figure 44: Compliance Status for Sub-Programme/Programme and Corporate Evaluations 2011-15



Compliance status by division (2011 - 2015)

472. One hundred and five (105) project evaluations were completed between 2011 and 2015. Project evaluations under the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) and the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) accounted for the vast majority of evaluations (comprising 64% and 25% evaluations respectively) as detailed in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Projects Evaluated and Completed by Division (2011 – 2015)⁸⁹

| Division | No. of evaluations | No. of recommendations | No. of recommendations with project management response | Compliance rate (%) |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| DEPI | 67 | 351 | 284 | 81 |
| DTIE | 26 | 108 | 102 | 94 |
| DELC | 3 | 32 | 32 | 100 |
| DEWA | 4 | 34 | 34 | 100 |
| DRC | 5 | 33 | 33 | 100* |
| Overall | 105 | 558 | 473 | 85 |

V. Performance of the UNEP Evaluation Office and Evaluation Quality

473. Who evaluates the evaluators? This section provides a number of sources of evidence to address this question and the broader performance of UNEP's evaluation function. Independent external assessments of the performance of UNEP's evaluation function are an essential unpinning to its accountability and have played a significant role in enhancing the credibility of the Evaluation Office both within and outside the organisation. Trends in internal and external assessment of the quality of UNEP evaluation reports are also presented.

The OIOS Evaluation Scorecard of UNEP Evaluation Office

474. The need for evaluation to contribute to, and improve, results is clearly recognised by the General Assembly. For this to occur some common institutional arrangements for evaluation functions are needed, including sufficient resources, management support and buy-in, competent staff, independence and adequate processes for evaluation planning, conduct and follow-up.

475. The Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations Secretariat (OIOS) conducted an assessment of evaluation capacity and practice for every entity in the Secretariat using information to reflect the status for the 2012-2013 biennium. The 'evaluation scorecards' include an independent evaluation conducted by the Inspection and Evaluation Division in OIOS based on 19 indicators of evaluation practice. The indicators used are based on the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and supported by Member States in General Assembly resolution 67/226.

476. UNEP was assessed as being fully compliant for 16 of the 19 assessment criteria. Areas for improvement include inclusions of Human Rights issues in the Evaluation Policy and in Evaluation Reports. Whilst human rights issues have now been more comprehensively included in a revised draft evaluation policy and in evaluation processes, they were not yet evident in evaluation reports sampled for the 2012-13 biennium. The extent to which evaluation reports are reviewed by an intergovernmental body and/or head of entity was another area for improvement although the indicator may need adjusting as it currently requires such review for all evaluations whereas UNEP believes that subsidiarity principles should apply and only high level evaluations should be formally reviewed in this way.

477. The OIOS report also noted that the Evaluation Office has enhanced its evaluation terms of reference, increased the balance in types of project level evaluations, has collated evidence on use of evaluation in high level decision-making and strategic planning and noted that Evaluation Office staff have published peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters on evaluation.

JIU Evaluation Maturity Matrix

478. In 2014, the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN completed a system-wide study⁹⁰ of the evolution, development and advancement of the evaluation function in the United Nations system. The report made a number of recommendations to enhance evaluation within the UN systems and provided an

⁸⁹ Note: Some responses were received after closing deadline (30 November 2015) and therefore compliance status for those recommendations is not reflected in the data analysis

⁹⁰ https://www.unju.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2014_6_English.pdf

assessment of the performance of the UNEP evaluation function against a comprehensive assessment rubric. UNEP's evaluation function was assessed as being at the high end of the evaluation functions in the 'average' range. Since the time of data collection, in 2013, the Evaluation Office has enhanced many of the assessed attributes.

Table 11: Level of Development of the Evaluation Function by Size of the Organizations' Overall Annual Budgets and the Location of the Central Evaluation Function

| | Small | | Medium | | Large | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|
| | Organization | Grade | Organization | Grade | Organization | Grade |
| Stand alone | UNODC | 5.2 | ILO | 6.7 | WFP | 6.7 |
| | UNIDO | 6.4 | UNEP | 5.8 | UNDP | 7.1 |
| | UN Women | 6.4 | UNFPA | 6 | UNICEF | 6.3 |
| | UN-Habitat | 4.2 | | | FAO | 5.9 |
| Co-located/ with management | ITC | 4.9 | UNAIDS | 5.3 | UNHCR | 3.8 |
| | UNCTAD | 4.4 | | | | |
| Co-located with oversight/audit | IMO | 3.7 | UNESCO | 6.1 | UN-OIOS | 6.2 |
| | WMO | 3.5 | UNRWA | 3.4 | WHO | 4.7 |
| | ICAO | 3.9 | WIPO | 5.2 | | |
| | | | IAEA | 5.9 | | |
| | 3.0-4.9 = Below average and low | | 5.0-6.0 = Average | | 6.1 - 8.0 = Above average and high | |

GEF Independent Evaluation Office Assessment of the Quality of UNEP Evaluation Reports

479. Each year the GEF Independent Evaluation Office assesses the performance of GEF Implementing Agencies against a number of performance measures. This is reported in the GEF Annual Performance Report. Several of the performance measures cover important aspects of the performance of UNEP's Evaluation Office, benchmarked against the performance of the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group and UNDP's Evaluation Office. In April 2015, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office published its Annual Performance Report 2014 (APR). For example, 97% of the UNEP Terminal Evaluations submitted between 2011 and 2014 were rated by the GEF Evaluation Office as 'Moderately Satisfactory' or better for quality compared to 88% and *1% for the World Bank and UNDP respectively.

Table 12: GEF Independent Evaluation Office's Analysis of the Quality of GEF Project Evaluation Reports (2007-2014): Prepared by the GEF Implementing Agencies (World Bank, UNDP and UNEP)⁹¹. Percentage of evaluation reports rated 'Moderately Satisfactory' or better for quality.

⁹¹ Table reproduced from page 54 (para 108) of the 2014 GEF Annual Performance Review - available from the following link. https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/GEF%20IEO%20-%20APR%202014%20Unedited%20Full%20Report_0.pdf

| GEF Agency | | Year of Terminal Evaluation | | |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 2007-2010 | 2011-2014 | 2007-2014 |
| UNDP | # rated TEs | 110 | 205 | 315 |
| | % rated ≥MS | 87% | 81% | 83% |
| UNEP | # rated TEs | 42 | 39 | 81 |
| | % rated ≥MS | 90% | 97% | 94% |
| WB | # rated TEs | 110 | 90 | 200 |
| | % rated ≥MS | 86% | 88% | 87% |
| Other | # rated TEs | 7 | 23 | 30 |
| | % rated ≥MS | 71% | 83% | 80% |
| All Agencies | # rated TEs | 269 | 357 | 626 |
| | % rated ≥MS | 87% | 85% | 86% |

United Nations Evaluation Group - Professional Peer Review⁹²

480. Current best practice for evaluation functions within the United Nations advocates for independent professional peer reviews. UNEP Evaluation Office was the subject of a professional peer review with the findings being finalized and presented to the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives and formally released by UNEG in March 2012⁹³. The peer review was conducted in line with the UNEG Framework for Professional Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN Organizations, also approved by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Evaluation Network.
481. In line with the framework, the peer review applied three core criteria that need to be satisfied for evaluation functions and products to be considered of high quality, i.e., independence, credibility and utility. The peer review panel consisted of: The Director, Evaluation Group, UNIDO, (Chair); the Special Evaluator for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium; and the Senior Evaluation Adviser, Evaluation Office, United Nations Development Programme. The following text has been extracted from the full report.
482. Overall conclusion of the Peer Panel: UNEP follows the UNEG Norms and Standards in evaluation. The evaluation function is independent, well established and evaluation has, in recent years, been growing in importance. The Evaluation Office is a professionally managed function and, although human resources seem insufficient to deal with the high demand for its services and to carry out mandatory project as well as strategic evaluations, the peer review panel recognizes the efforts made in the last few years to strengthen the office. The fact that the Executive Director is using evaluation compliance statistics in performance assessment of division directors is a good indicator of the perceived independence, credibility and of actual usage.
483. The next UNEG Peer Review for the evaluation function of UNEP is scheduled for 2017.

UN SWAP Gender

484. In Resolution E/2014/L.12 the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) requests the United Nations system, including its agencies, funds and programmes, within their respective organizational mandates, to continue working collaboratively to enhance and accelerate gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system, including by fully implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). UN entities are expected to meet all UN-SWAP performance standards by 2017, with an extended timeframe to 2019 for those entities with a mainly technical focus.
485. Within the UN-SWAP framework, as of 2014, evaluation offices of UN entities need to comply with the annual reporting process against the CEB⁹⁴-endorsed UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI). The UNEP Evaluation Office scored the evaluation reports for the 2014 reporting period in-house. The scoring methodology was tested in cooperation with the UNEP Gender Unit and guidance was sought in order to avoid subjectivity in the assessment and ensure a calibration

⁹² <http://www.oecd.org/derec/50194754.pdf>

⁹³ <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1163>

⁹⁴ Chief Executives Board for Coordination

of the scores. Most of the evaluation reports assessed did not include specific gender analysis as indeed the project themselves did not capture gender as an issue. The rating of the EPI for UNEP was 2, as assessed in-house and validated by UN-Women. This corresponds to 'missing requirements' on the following scale:

- not applicable
- missing requirements
- approaches requirements
- meets requirements
- exceeds requirements

486. During 2014, one UN entity exceeded requirements, 22 met the requirements, 19 approached the requirements, 4 missed the requirements and 16 reported that the UN-SWAP framework is not applicable to their work.

487. As a result of this exercise, the Evaluation Office identified the following actions:

- The need to integrate Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) principles under each evaluation criteria in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group Guidance. The evaluation ToRs template used to produce the 2014 evaluation reports required to consider GEEW principles under the section 'Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes', not under each criterion.
- The need to integrate GEEW principles in the project design, implementation and monitoring, and absence of gender analysis. The reports showed that if the project design phase did not consciously mainstream GEEW, it was more likely to be missed out in the TOR for project evaluation. None of the logframes had indicators to monitor GEEW.
- The lack of GEEW expertise among evaluators and the limited available guidance. UNEP evaluators tend to be experts in one area of environmental work and in evaluation methodology. A challenge is to include more evaluators with social and GEEW skills in the UNEP roster of evaluators. Additionally, there is a need to provide guidance to evaluators on the GEEW requirements in the context of UNEP evaluations. This is especially important as most evaluation budgets do not allow the recruitment of more than one expert.
- The limited gender expertise of evaluation managers. In order to ensure that evaluations are designed to include GEEW principles, evaluation managers need to receive training and guidance.

Annex 1. List of Project Evaluations included within the 2014-2015 Evaluation Synthesis Report

Cooperate Evaluations

1. Formative Evaluation of the UNEP 2014-2017 Medium Term Strategy
2. Outcome Evaluation of Barcelona Convention UNEP/MAP Five Year Programme of Work 2010-2014
3. Sub-Programme Evaluation on Chemicals and Waste
4. Sub-Programme Evaluation on Climate Change
5. Sub-Programme Evaluation on Ecosystem Management
6. UN-REDD Programme Evaluation

Project Evaluations

1. Mid-Term Evaluation of project GFL/2328-2721-4A54 Global Solar Water Heating Market Transformation and Strengthening Initiative (GSWH project)
2. Mid-Term Evaluation of the project Greening the Cocoa Industry GEF Id No. 4070
3. Mid-Term Evaluation of the Regional Project for Implementing Biosafety Frameworks in the Caribbean Sub-Region (4C20/GEF Id 2967/3735)
4. Mid-term Evaluation of the UNEP- DHI Centre for Water and Environment
5. Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2720-4B65 (3755) "Phasing Out Incandescent Lamps Through Lighting Market Transformation in Vietnam"
6. Portfolio Evaluation of the UNDAF Project – Integrating Environmental Sustainability in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks and UN Common Country Programming Process"
7. Terminal Evaluation of project "Assessments and Guidelines for Sustainable Liquid Biofuels Production in Developing Countries Report 2012-2013 (A Targeted Research Project) GEF Id. 3224
8. Terminal Evaluation of project GF/2328-2720-4B17 (3948) Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Major Sporting Events, FIFA 2010 and the implementation of the national greening programme in liaison with 2010 FIFA LOC
9. Terminal Evaluation of project GFL/232802720-4960 Bus Rapid Transit and Pedestrian Improvements in Jakarta GEF ID No. 2954
10. Terminal Evaluation of the Caribbean Biological Corridor
11. Terminal Evaluation of the Project "Adapting to Climate Change Induced Water Stress in the Nile River Basin"
12. Terminal Evaluation of the Project "Communities of Conservation: Safeguarding the World's Most Threatened Species (Andes Region)" - GFL: 2328-2713-4B20
13. Terminal Evaluation of the Project GFL/2328-2712-4A87 on "Promoting Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) and Related Sustainable Financing Schemes in the Danube Basin"
14. Terminal Evaluation of the project Supporting the Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) (four MSPs: Pacific (3663), West Africa (3674), South and East Africa (3673), LAC (3778)
15. Terminal Evaluation of the Project: "Building a Sustainable National Protected Area Network – The Bahamas"
16. Terminal Evaluation of the Project: "Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change by Establishing Early warning and disaster preparedness systems and support for integrated watershed management in flood prone areas (Rwanda LDCF)"
17. Terminal Evaluation of the Project: "Strengthening of the Gambia's Climate Change Early Warning Systems"

18. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project Demonstration of Sustainable Management of Coral Reef Resources in the Coastal Waters of Ninh Hai District, Ninh Thuan Province, Viet Nam (GEF ID. 3187)
19. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project "Knowledge Management on Environment and Climate Change" The knowledge management component of the Environment and Climate Change window of the MDG-Achievement Fund
20. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project "Management Project on the Implementation of the Joint Programmes for Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F)"
21. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project "Fifth Global Environmental Outlook: Integrated Environmental Assessment (Project 44-P1)"
22. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project CB/5023-04-82 (3477) "Best Practices of Sub-Regional Cooperation: Partnership for the Support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions"
23. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project CP/5023-09-01(3A82) on "(Interim) Secretariat Services to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea"
24. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project CPL/5070-3640-1111 (0384) on "Global Environmental Monitoring Systems Water Programme"
25. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project CPL/5070-3640-1111 "African Rural Energy Enterprise Development Phase II"
26. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project QGL-2328-2712-4B16 on "Regional Support to Caribbean Challenge"
27. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project SFL-2792-2B65-1131 "Integrated Coastal Management with Special Emphasis on the Sustainable Management of Mangrove Forests in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua"
28. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Continued Institutional Strengthening Support for CEITs to meet the obligations of the Montreal Protocol", Id No. 3185
29. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project "Development of a Mechanism to Strengthen the Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol in Guatemala"
30. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Partnering for Natural Resource Management – Conservation Council of Nations (CCN)", GEF Id 4527
31. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Renewable Energy Based Electricity Generation for Isolated Mini-Grids In Zambia ID No. 1358
32. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project entitled "Reducing Risks to the Sustainable Management of the North Western Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS)"
33. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328/2714/4A92 "Facilitation on Financing for Biodiversity -Based Business and Support of Market Development Activities in the Andean Region"
34. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2712-4B60 (3183) "Mainstreaming the Conservation of Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity of the Sub-Watershed Scale in Chiapas, Mexico
35. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2713-4B56 "Facilitating Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs)", GEF Id no. 4235
36. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2721-4837 "Generation and Delivery of Renewable Energy Based Modern Energy Services; the Case of Isla de la Juventud" GEF Id No. 1361
37. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2731-4A23 (3343) "Enhancing the Use of Science in International Waters Projects to Improve Project Results"

38. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2732-4987 (2129) “Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (COAST)”
39. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project GFL/2328-2740-4995 (3183) “Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean”
40. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project GFL/2328-2760-4A60 (3346) on “Malaria Decision Support Tool: Evaluating Health, Social and Environmental Impact and Policy Trade-Off
41. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project GFL/2328-2770-4823 “Sustainable Management of Inland Wetlands in Southern Africa: A Livelihoods and Ecosystems Approach”
42. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL/2328-2770-4C38 (00745) on “A Global Initiative on Landscapes for People, Food and Nature”
43. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Costa Rica (4B61/GEF Id 3629)
44. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Tanzania (4951/GEF ID 3012)
45. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Mauritius (4952/GEF ID 2822)
46. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Tunisia (4953/GEF Id 2648)
47. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Bhutan (4B22/GEF Id 3850)
48. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Lao PDR (4A85/ GEF Id 3642)
49. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Mongolia (4B95/ GEF Id 4010)
50. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project The GLOBE Legislator Forest Initiative, Id 4543
51. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDP/GEF Project “Implementing Sustainable Water Resources and Wastewater Management in Pacific Island Countries” (GFL-2328-2731-4A51/GF/6030-09-03)
52. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Angola
53. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Bahrain
54. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Cote d'Ivoire
55. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - D.R. Congo
56. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Madagascar
57. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Mauritania
58. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Mauritius
59. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Moldova
60. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Mongolia
61. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Rwanda
62. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Senegal
63. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - South Africa
64. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Turkmenistan
65. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Uzbekistan
66. Terminal Evaluation of the UNFCCC National Communication Programme - Viet Nam