

Final Report

Support to Regional and Sub-Regional Ministerial Forums for Policy Exchange and Priority Setting on Key Environmental Issues/Environmental Governance (41-P3 and 433-1)



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List of acronyms & abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Meaning
AIMS	Atlantic, Indian, Mediterranean and South China Sea
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BPOA	Barbados Programme of Action
BSP	Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and capacity building
CAMRE	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment
CAN	Andean Community
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCAD	Central American Commission on Environment and Development
CELAC	Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean
COP	Conference of Parties
DCPI	Division Communication and Public Information
DELC	Division of Environmental Law and Conventions
DEPI	Division Environmental Policy Implementation
DEWA	Division of Early Warning and Assessment
DPC	Donor Partnerships and Contributions Unit
EAC	East African Community
EC	European Commission
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EEA	European Environment Agency
EfE	Environment for Europe Process
EHMB	European Environment and Health Ministerial Board
EHP	European Environment and Health Process
EHTF	European Environment and Health Task Force
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ICSD	Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development of Central Asia
IMDIS	Integrated Management and Documentation Information System
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JCEDAR	Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LAS	League of Arab States
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MCED	Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
MTS	Medium-term Strategy
MSI	Mauritius Strategy for Implementation
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NPCA	NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency
PIMS	Project Information Management System

POW	Programme of Work
QAS	Quality Assurance Section
RCM	Regional Consultations Meeting
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
ROA	Regional Office for Africa
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ROE	Regional Office for Europe
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
RONA	Regional Office for North America
ROWA	Regional Office for West Asia
RSO	Regional Support Office
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEPD	Sub-regional Environmental Policy Dialogue
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SSA	Special Service Agreement
SSFAs	Small Scale Funding Agreement
STC	Specialized Technical Committee
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP
UNECA	United Nations European Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations European Commission for Europe
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

About the Project

The current Project under evaluation is entitled “Support to regional and sub-regional Ministerial Forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues/environmental governance”. The objective of this Project was, and continues to be, the promotion of increased coherence in the international decision-making processes related to the environment and sustainable development of the six regions. Through the Project, UNEP worked to support the achievement of regional consensus on environmental priorities and the establishment of linkages between regional agendas and global environmental processes.

This Project contributed to the expected accomplishment of increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, as reflected in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme of UNEP’s Programme of Work.

The first phase of this Project was coordinated by the Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC) under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme, in cooperation with all of UNEP’s regional offices, as well as UNEP Divisions, DTIE, DEWA, DEPI and DELC. After the dissolution of the DRC in October 2013, the remainder of the first and current second phase of the Project has been led by the Regional Support Office (RSO). Key Project partners were the secretariats of the Ministerial Forums and regional and sub-regional organisations.

The Project was revised in 2012 so that UNEP could continue to provide inputs to Member States’ deliberations on key environmental issues, especially in the preparatory and follow-up processes related to Rio+20. This revision was also undertaken to ensure the alignment of the Project with the Programme of Work (PoW) 2012-2013 biennium.

Scope and subject of the evaluation

The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and its partners.

Since this evaluation also serves as a mid-term review of the second phase of the Project, which is currently ongoing, the results are intended to assist UNEP in adapting the second phase of the Project to the key lessons learned in the first phase.

The primary evaluation questions included the following:

- Has the Project achieved its overall objective to promote increased coherence in international environmental decision-making processes?
- Has the Project contributed to an increase in the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in national and regional development plans?
- Have Project activities facilitated consensus-building by Governments in the regions/sub-regions on priority environmental issues and coordinated the necessary follow-up actions?
- Have key global environmental processes been incorporated in regional environmental agendas as a result of Project activities?
- Has the Project facilitated the reflection of regional priorities in global processes?
- Are Project resources, and the resource mobilisation strategy, adequate to ensure the achievement of Project outputs and outcomes?

- What are the lessons from the first phase of the Project that are relevant for the implementation of the second phase? How can UNEP enhance its support to the Ministerial Forums?
- How if at all, should the Ministerial Forums evolve once the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are adopted in 2015?

Strategic relevance

Relevance to UNEP mandate and policies

It is important to emphasise that the Project was designed to build on UNEP's core mandate to convene Regional Ministerial Forums, and more specifically, to enhance UNEP's regional presence, as called for in Paragraph 88(g) of the Rio+20 Outcome Document.

The Project directly contributes to expected accomplishments relating to coherence and mainstreaming under the Sub-programme on Environmental Governance in UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2010-2013, notably EA (a): "The United Nations system demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements"; and EA (c): "National development processes and United Nations common country programming processes increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in their implementation". In the second phase, UNEP's engagement with regional and sub-regional Ministerial Forums has been anchored in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2017.

The strategic relevance of the Project to UNEP's mandate is further established by the fact that regional priorities articulated by the Ministerial Forums have been integrated into the planning processes for UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2018-2021.

Consistency with regional and global priorities

A key aim of the Project has been to give a voice to the regions. In both the first and second phases of the Project, the Project's objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with regional environmental needs. This was particularly the case because the fundamental objective of the Ministerial Forums has been to provide opportunities for Member States to define and advance their regional environmental priorities in order to guide UNEP's overall strategic direction. The Regional Ministerial Environment Forums have also helped to stimulate political and policy dialogues to identify priorities at regional, sub-regional and inter-regional levels. Since these Forums act as platforms for preparing and building common positions for, *inter alia*, the United Nations Environment Assembly, they have helped to promote deeper levels of cooperation within the regions. In turn, this cooperation has helped to elevate the regional voice in global processes.¹

Realism of project objectives

The objectives for both phases of the Project were realistic because they were designed specifically to uphold UNEP's existing mandate to increase its regional presence and to improve

¹ The forums have deliberated and reached consensus on key environment and sustainable development issues, such as potential themes and topics for the first UNEA i.e. sustainable development goals and post-2015 development agenda, sustainable consumption and production, green economy, sustainable development of small island states, chemicals and waste, among others.

the coherence of decision-making. UNEP's responsibility to enhance the capacity of Member States in international decision-making processes is an explicit component of UNEP's mandate and work. Despite the realism of Project objectives as explained above, it should be noted that the Project objectives were impacted by resource constraints, with a budget shortfall of almost 3 million USD.

Effectiveness

There are several examples of the effectiveness of Phase 1 of the Project. These are established with regard to each of the three outcomes in the reconstructed Theory of Change. First, with regard to the achievement of regional consensus, it is clear that many of the Ministerial Forums have contributed thereto. This is evidenced by the actual agreed outcomes that have been adopted by the different Regional Forums, notably the regional action plans and the agreed-upon priorities for global processes such as UNEA.

Second, regarding the reflection of global priorities in regional agendas, all of the Regional Ministerial Forums have addressed global processes such as the SDGs, the Rio+20 process, and UNEA. These global processes have provided the regions with overarching policy frameworks, which have helped the Forums in shaping and informing regional agendas. UNEP has played an instrumental role in helping Member States and the Forums themselves to understand the relevance and importance of these global processes for environmental policy-making at the regional and national levels.

Third, in terms of the reflection of regional priorities in global policy, the Ministerial Forums have created platforms that enable Member States to identify their priorities for key global processes and to consolidate those priorities into common regional positions. Where the Forums have been able to produce common positions, the articulation of these common positions has enabled the Forums to influence global processes (i.e. Rio+20, SDGs, UNEA, the Green Economy, UNFCCC, and UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) planning process for 2018-2021).

Whilst it is difficult at this stage of the Project to attribute direct impacts of the Ministerial Forums in global processes, it is clear that without the Project, there would be few opportunities for the regions to forge common positions. The collective regional voice has strengthened the impact of those Member States who might otherwise have less influence in global processes.

In addition, the measures designed to move the Project towards intermediate states have also been successful, albeit to varying degrees. Again, like the outcomes, the intermediate results are intangible and difficult to measure.

The first intermediate result relates to greater environmental mainstreaming at the national level, which in turn, can help to increase policy coherence at the regional level. At this point, it is too early to assess the extent to which national governments have increased mainstreaming efforts as a result of the Project. This will be further examined in Phase 2 of the Project.

What is clear, however, is that increased mainstreaming will require continued support by UNEP. UNEP can provide concrete mainstreaming tools to national governments and can help them in replicating mainstreaming best practices from other regions. In this regard, the Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) has achieved good mainstreaming results from intensive engagement at the country level. In this light, there could be a potential for this Project to help promote the uptake of the suite of PEI mainstreaming tools that have been developed. Interestingly this Project employs a top-down approach for environmental mainstreaming, providing guidance to national governments. By contrast, the UNDAF/PEI employs a bottom-up

approach. Therefore there is considerable potential to be explored in terms of how to connect these two processes.

The second intermediate result relates to greater policy coherence between the regions and a reduced gap between regional and global environmental policy agendas. As regards the increased coherence between the regions, there is evidence that the regions are becoming increasingly aligned by virtue of the fact that all of the Ministerial Forums are addressing key global processes such as the SDGs, preparation for UNEA, and Rio+20 follow-up. On the other hand, there are some important differences in terms of the robustness and strength of the Regional Forums. Some appear to be stronger and more effective than others for a number of reasons, such as political stability within the region, the institutional arrangements of the Forum itself and the availability of resources.

The third intermediate result relates to increased ownership and implementation of global processes by the regions. It is important to recall that one of the key objectives of the Project is to enhance the ownership and capacity of governments to apply the outcomes of the Regional Forums into national decision-making. Where Regional Forums have been successful in implementing global priorities, this has facilitated environmental mainstreaming at national levels. This has enabled the Forums to facilitate the increased ownership by national governments of global environmental priorities.

The likelihood of the three Intermediate Results (i.e. greater coherence at national and regional levels; greater coherence between the regions; and increased ownership of global processes by the regions) contributing to more significant changes-- that is, changes beyond those already implemented at the post-Intermediate Results stage-- depends on several factors.

First, the geopolitical context of the region is very important. In some cases, such as West Asia, the larger context makes it very difficult for the Regional Forum to mobilise consensus on environmental priorities since ministerial attention is occupied by peace and security threats. Second, the level of engagement of UNEP has been critical to ensuring the success of the Ministerial Forums, both in grasping the relevance of global processes and in translating those processes into regional action plans.

There is a medium likelihood of impact at the medium stage, given the progress made during the first phase and the first part of the second phase of the Project. However, the challenges and constraints related to resources, capacity, and political will for environmental mainstreaming must be addressed in the second phase in order to ensure that project results are sustained in the longer term.

Sustainability

Several factors have affected the project's sustainability. As regards socio-political sustainability, varied levels of socio-political stability in the different regions have contributed to different levels of Ministerial Forum success. UNEP must be ready and willing to adapt to different regional contexts, which may impact the extent to which environmental priorities can be advanced on political agendas.

As regards financial sustainability, whilst UNEP support is intentionally low in order to compel project teams to mobilise external sources, it has been difficult in this case for the RSO to fundraise for the Project. This is perhaps largely due to the fact that, because its activities seem so central to UNEP's core mandate, Member States do not see it as a strong candidate for extra-budgetary or earmarked project funding. Member State contributions are an important source of funding considering the resource constraints within UNEP. However, more must be done to

galvanise such Member State support (such as raising the profile of the Ministerial Forums), and Member State funding must be augmented by funding from other extra-budgetary sources.

As regards institutional sustainability, the institutional frameworks supporting the Project are overall robust. UNEP's Regional Offices are engaged with many of the Ministerial Forums, in terms of funding support, and the provision of secretariat services and expertise. However, the Regional Offices are faced with time and human resource constraints and this affects their ability to engage more deeply with the Ministerial Forums.

Catalytic role and replication

The Project has been catalytic in changing behaviour as well as galvanising institutional and policy change. The Ministerial Forums have catalysed an important behavioural change on the part of national governments, which sometimes have been willing to change their own positions in order to ensure consensus at the regional level. In certain regions, the Ministerial Forums have increased regional coherence and enabled the regions to present a unified front in global forums. Without the Ministerial Forums, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the regions to forge unified priorities.

Similarly, the Ministerial Forums have prompted Member States and other regional stakeholders to work together, both in terms of resource mobilisation and policy-making. Increased cooperation leads to a greater chance of replicability. As well, the Project has created incentives for national governments to work together in order to save on resources. Countries are starting to recognise that they will ultimately have a far greater impact in global processes if they speak through a unified regional voice.

In terms of policy changes, the Project has contributed to some policy changes and has begun to catalyse policy alignment efforts, notably by national governments in their environmental mainstreaming efforts. For example, several African countries such as Kenya, have implemented climate change legislation.

Beyond this, it is unclear where national governments have implemented policy changes as a result of the Project. This is precisely the type of gap that Phase 2 can help to fill, notably the extent to which the outputs of the Regional Forums have actually been implemented at the regional and national levels.

It should be emphasised that the adoption of the SDGs provides an additional opportunity for national governments to deepen policy alignment and institutional coherence. The Ministerial Forums could provide additional capacity building support in this regard, especially since they will be expected to play an important role in the monitoring of SDG implementation.

Efficiency

Where UNEP partnered with regional institutions, the Project team succeeded in reducing costs. At the same time, convened into central platforms, Member States were able to reduce their own operating costs. Phase 2 builds directly on the work accomplished in Phase 1 and this helps make Phase 2 more cost-effective. The further promotion collaboration especially with further strengthening of engagement through the Regional Offices and other regional institutions is key to achieving cost efficiencies.

Factors affecting project performance:

Overall, the factors affecting performance were effectively controlled by the project. However, the factor that most greatly affected performance was the unpredictability of resource flows.

Table 1: Summary of Evaluation Ratings

Criterion	Overall Rating
A. Strategic relevance	HS
B. Achievement of outputs	S
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results	S
1. Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed TOC	S
2. Likelihood of impact using ROtI approach	ML
3. Achievement of formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document.	MS
D. Sustainability and replication	L
1. Socio-political sustainability	ML
2. Financial resources	ML
3. Institutional framework	HL
4. Environmental sustainability	L
5. Catalytic role and replication	S
E. Efficiency	S
F. Factors affecting project performance	S
1. Preparation and readiness	S
2. Project implementation and management	S
3. Stakeholders participation, cooperation and partnerships	HS
4. Communication and public awareness	S
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	HS
6. Financial planning and management	MS
7. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping	S
8. Monitoring and evaluation	S
i. M&E design	S
ii. M&E plan implementation	S
Overall project rating	S

1 INTRODUCTION

1. The current Project under evaluation is entitled “Support to regional and sub-regional Ministerial Forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues/environmental governance”. It is important to emphasise that this evaluation includes the terminal evaluation of the first phase of the Project as well as the mid-term evaluation for the second phase.
2. Since 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – the leading global environmental authority – has been supporting international platforms to facilitate policy debate, negotiations and decision-making.
3. The objective of this Project is to promote increased coherence in those international decision-making processes related to the environment and sustainable development of the six regions: Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; North America and West Asia; in addition to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
4. The Project provided support for the convening of Ministerial Environmental Forums in order to facilitate consensus-building and decision-making at regional, sub-regional and global levels. Both phases of the Project have had three main components: enhancing regional consensus, linking global processes to regional agendas, and increasing the reflection of regional priorities in global policy processes, such as the UNEA, the SDGs, Rio+20, and UNEP’s Programme of Work.
5. The Regional Ministerial Environmental Forums have contributed to increased coherence by: serving as consensus-building platforms; supporting the linkages between regional and global environmental agendas; providing opportunities for Member States to draw attention to their environmental priorities; and identifying opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation.
6. All of these Project benefits have contributed to the expected accomplishment of increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, as reflected in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme of UNEP’s Programme of Work. (PIMS, 2015)²
7. The first phase of this Project was coordinated by the Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC) under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme, in cooperation with all of UNEP’s regional offices, DTIE, DEWA, DEPI and DELC. However, due to the dissolution of the DRC, in October 2013 the remainder of the first and now second phase of the Project was led by the Regional Support Office (RSO). Key Project partners were the secretariats of Ministerial Forums and regional and sub-regional organisations.

² United Nations Environment Programme 2015, “Project Summary”, *Project 41-P3 (01061): (41-P3) –Support to regional and sub-regional ministerial forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues/Environmental Governance*. Available from: Programme Information and Management System (PIMS): http://projects.unep.org/pimsdb/plomino_documents/9e989b112708463d321cf2310fca7c61/OpenDocument?openwithform=frmProjectNavigation&partName=.overview.general. [25 November 2015]

8. The Project was revised in 2012 so that UNEP could continue to provide key inputs to Member States' deliberations on key environmental issues, especially in the preparatory and follow-up processes related to Rio+20. This revision was also undertaken to ensure the alignment of the Project with the Programme of Work (PoW) 2012-2013 biennium. (41-P3 Document Supplement Annex, page 2).

1.1 Subject and scope of the evaluation

9. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and its partners.
10. Since this evaluation also serves as a mid-term review of the second phase of the Project, which is currently ongoing, the results are intended to assist UNEP in adapting the second phase of the Project to the key lessons learned in the first phase.
11. The first phase was developed in response to UNEP's key mandates to increase coherence in decision-making and to enhance environmental mainstreaming at the country level. This first phase was also developed in response to the request for increased support for the convening of ministerial and other Environmental Forums in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia regions, as well as SIDS. (TORs MinFor 2015 p1-2).
12. The second phase started in August 2014 and will continue until December 2017. The objective of the second phase remains the same but will aim to go further by filling the gaps of the first phase. These include: assessing the extent to which the outputs of the Regional Forums have resulted in action in the regions and by UNEP and its partners; identifying how best to support South-South Cooperation; and facilitating the sharing of lessons learned and best practices. (TORs MinFor p2)
13. Since the Project has never been evaluated, this evaluation will serve as both the terminal evaluation of Phase 1 of the Project and as the mid-term evaluation for Phase 2.

1.2. Evaluation objectives

14. This combined evaluation will assess Project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and it will determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the Project, including their sustainability.
15. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and its partners.
16. Since this evaluation also serves as a mid-term review of the current Project, the results will assist UNEP in re-examining the relevance of the Project design and implementation approach the sustainability of the Project and identify lessons learnt. The evaluation will also provide recommendations, which will assist the Regional Support Office in revising the new project document, if necessary, in order to incorporate the findings of the evaluation.

1.3 Evaluation approach and methodology

17. This was an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders were kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Qualitative evaluation methods were used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. The consultant maintained close communication with the project team throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to ensure their ownership of the evaluation findings.

18. The findings of the evaluation was based on the following sources:

a) A desk review of:

- Relevant background documentation including Project design documents; Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;
- Project outputs e.g. forum outcomes, action plans, declarations, etc.;
- Reports to the former UNEP Governing Council and the new universal membership UN Environment Assembly, and their respective decisions and/or resolutions;
- Relevant websites, e.g. AMCEN and LAC Ministers' Forum;

b) Interviews with:

- Project management team;
- UNEP Fund Management Officer;
- Project partners, including heads of Regional Forums' secretariats, representatives of environmental ministries, relevant UNEP divisions and regional offices, CPR members, representatives of major groups and stakeholders and
- Relevant resource persons.

1.4 Main evaluation criteria and questions

19. In addition, the evaluation has focused on the following key questions, which are based on the Project's intended outcome and results. They have been revised by the evaluator in consultation with the project team.

- a) Has the Project achieved its overall objective to promote increased coherence in international environmental decision-making processes?
- b) Has the Project contributed to an increase in the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in national and regional development plans?
- c) Have Project activities facilitated consensus-building by Governments in the regions/sub-regions on priority environmental issues and coordinated the necessary follow-up actions?

- d) Have key global environmental processes been incorporated in the regional environmental agenda as a result of Project activities?
- e) Have the outputs of the regional/sub-regional been reflected in key global environmental processes as in paragraph 88(g)?
- f) Are Project resources and the resource mobilisation strategy adequate to ensure the achievement of Project outputs and outcomes?
- g) What are the key results of Project activities? And to what extent are the regional outputs reflected in national policy?
- h) To what extent have the project and Regional Forums contributed or are contributing to the UNEP strategic regional presence as mandated in the Rio +20 outcome document (para 88g)?
- i) What are the lessons from the first phase of the Project that are relevant for the implementation of the second phase? How can UNEP enhance its support to the Ministerial Forums?
- j) How if at all, should the Ministerial Forums evolve once the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are implemented in 2015 (considering the integrated nature of the post-2015 agenda, the need for mechanisms to monitor their implementation at the national level, and the evolving role of the United Nations Environment Assembly)?
- k) How successful are current Project indicators in measuring Project outcomes and impact?
- l) Why do some Forums appear to be stronger and to generate more robust outcomes than others?
- m) Are Ministerial Forums well placed to strengthen synergies and input to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and its subsidiary bodies, including the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives?

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Project objective and components

- 20.** The objective of this Project was to promote increased coherence in the international decision-making processes related to the environment and sustainable development of the regions through support to the convening of Ministerial and other Environmental Forums in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and West Asia regions and to SIDS.
- 21.** The Forums provide valuable opportunities for Member States to draw attention to national, regional, inter-regional and global environmental challenges and priorities, and their linkages with sustainable development; to discuss and review emerging issues; to identify opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation; to monitor implementation of follow-up actions/decisions.
- 22.** In essence, the Regional Environmental Forums define the environment agenda in each region and act as platforms for preparations and construction of common positions for the UNEA and other global processes. Regional Ministerial Environmental Forums also guide UNEP's overall strategic future direction by incorporating regional environmental needs and priorities into the preparation and implementation of the Medium-term Strategy (MTS) and, subsequently, the POW.
- 23.** The first phase of this project, initiated in 2010, involved the convening of Ministerial and other Environmental Forums in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific and West Asia regions as well as SIDS.
- 24.** The Project had the following three components:
 - (i) Facilitation of consensus-building by Governments on priority environmental issues in the regions/SIDS/LDCs, and coordinate , follow up action;
 - (ii) Incorporation of key global environmental processes into regional/SIDS/LDCs environmental agendas; and
 - (iii) Promotion of regional environmental inputs in key global environmental processes.
- 25.** Whilst the fundamental objective of the first phase of the Project remained the same, the second phase of the Project aims to go further by filling the gaps that the previous phase did not consider. These gaps include the assessment of the extent to which the decisions and commitments from Regional Forums have been implemented.
- 26.** The outcomes of the Ministerial Forums have been designed to inform UNEP's planning for future Programmes of Work and Medium Term Strategies, providing the bottom-up inputs into these processes and ensuring that the main concerns of all regions are prioritized and responded to in UNEP's Programme of Work (POW).

27. Furthermore, the outcomes will feed into the discussions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and contribute to its own outcomes.

2.2 Context

28. Whilst the project started in 2010, in reality, UNEP has been creating and supporting international platforms to facilitate policy debate, negotiations and decision-making since its own inception in 1972. The project responds to overarching UNEP's core mandate in this regard and more specifically, to expected accomplishments under the Sub-programme on Environmental Governance in UNEP's Medium-Term Strategies for 2010-2013 and for 2014-2017.³

29. The importance of the Regional Ministerial Forums to promote increased coherence in international environmental decision-making processes was affirmed by the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and more recently in the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP.⁴

Phase 1 successes

30. UNEP supported many of the Regional Ministerial Environmental Forums and facilitated effective policy exchange and priority-setting in all of the regions.⁵ Numerous regional action plans and strategies have been developed, as noted in the 2014 Project Document. Overall, the Regional Forums have contributed to enhanced coherence in international decision-making processes by:

- Serving as platforms for consensus-building and decision-making processes at regional, sub-regional and inter-regional levels;
- Supporting the establishment of linkages between the regional and global environmental agendas;
- Creating opportunities for Member States to draw attention to national, regional, inter-regional and global environmental challenges, priorities and the linkage with sustainable development;
- Serving as platforms for the discussion and review of emerging issues, and identification of opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation;

³ For 2010-2013: The UN system, respecting the mandates of other entities, progressively achieves synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decisions making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements.

For 2014-2017: Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability into national and regional development policies and plans.

United Nations Environment Programme 2007, *Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013: Environment for Development*. Available from: <<http://www.unep.org/PDF/FinalMTSGCSS-X-8.pdf>>. [2 November 2015]. United Nations Environment Programme 2015, *Medium-term Strategy 2014-2017*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/pdf/MTS_2014-2017_Final.pdf>. [2 November 2015]

⁴ United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2012, 66/288: The future we want*. Available from: <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/10/PDF/N1147610.pdf?OpenElement>>. [2 November 2015].

⁵ Steiner, A 11 April 2014, "Report on the implementation of decision 27/2: contributions by the regional ministerial environment forums", in *First Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Items 5 and 6 of the provisional agenda*, UNEP/EA.1/2/Add.2. Available from: UNEA Working Documents: http://www.unep.org/unea/working_documents.asp. [25 November 2015]

- Creating opportunities for Member States to prepare and build common regional and sub-regional positions for, inter alia, the United Nations Environment Assembly;⁶
- Guiding UNEP's overall strategic future direction by incorporating regional environmental priorities into the preparation and implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and the Programme of Work (POW).

Phase 1 challenges and constraints

31. Notwithstanding the overall Project successes, several challenges and constraints were identified. Some of them were beyond the scope of the first phase of the Project, however if UNEP can address them in the second phase, the longer-term success of the Regional Environmental Forums will be greatly enhanced.

Challenges to be addressed in Phase 2

32. As noted in the 2014 project document, the aim of the second phase will be to:

- Fill gaps that phase 1 could not address;
- Facilitate the sharing of information, lessons learnt and best practices between the regions;
- Facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of the Regional Forums in order to identify critical success factors.

33. These factors have been addressed throughout this evaluation. Section 4.2 provides a set of detailed recommendations to assist UNEP in addressing the constraints and challenges and in enhancing its support to the Regional Forums in the second phase.

Important developments in the project context

34. Since the project was launched in 2010, there have been several important developments that relate to the overall project context.

35. As regards the first meta-development, during the 2010-2011 biennia, the preparations for Rio+20 dominated the agendas and work of the Ministerial Forums. This is reflected by the number of Ministerial Forums that were convened whose focus related directly to the two main themes of Rio+20, notably the institutional framework for sustainable development and the Green Economy for sustainable development and poverty eradication. Indeed the Ministerial Forums capitalised on these platforms to forge consensus positions, which underpinned the international preparatory meetings for Rio+20.

⁶ In this regard, the Forums have deliberated and reached consensus on key environment and sustainable development issues, such as potential themes and topics for the first UNEA (i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 development agenda), sustainable consumption and production, the Green Economy, sustainable development of small island states, chemicals and waste among others.

- 36.** As regards the second development, during the 2012-2013 biennia, the overall context for the Ministerial Forums changed insofar as the platforms focused on Rio+20 follow-up activities. As well, the platforms addressed the key environmental issues within the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. Indeed, many of the Regional Forums produced common positions for the implementation of the UN development agenda beyond 2015. Their positions also fed into the main vehicle for the SDGs, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, decisions arising from the Regional Forums were incorporated into the UNEP Governing Council/GMEF and ultimately into the development of the UNEP Strategic Framework, including the Medium-Term Strategy and the Programme of Work.
- 37.** As regards the third development, with the establishment of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA), UNEP enhanced its support to the Forums to facilitate policy dialogue and environmental priority-setting, so as to feed consensus positions into UNEA.
- 38.** As regards the fourth development, with the adoption of the SDGs in September 2015, the focus both for UNEA and specifically for the Regional Forums will shift to the promotion and monitoring of SDG implementation. Since the SDGs will be accompanied by targets and indicators focused on measurable outcomes, there will be an important need to ensure robust monitoring and accountability processes. The Forums have already committed themselves to SDG implementation and accountability process. However, innovation will be needed not only in terms of what is being monitored and reported, but also in how information is actually used in decision-making and implementation.
- 39.** In conclusion, as noted in the Project Document for Phase 2, the foundation of the second phase of the Project will remain for years, because it is so integral to UNEP's mandate as an intergovernmental organisation. In this regard, the Project will continue to promote the integration of environmental sustainability into the development processes whilst assisting the Forums to contribute to global processes. However, the particular importance of this new phase is for the Project to fill the gaps of the previous phase by assessing the extent to which the outputs of the Regional Forums have actually been implemented at the regional and national levels.

2.3 Target areas/groups

- 40.** The Regional Forums supported by this Project include:⁷

Africa

- 41.** The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), which is regarded by some as a sub-committee of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC)⁸ of the African Union

⁷ UNEP 2015, *Environmental Governance: Regional Forums*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/UNEPsWork/Multilevelsupport/tabid/420/Default.aspx>. [25 November 2015]

established in line with the AU Summit's Sirte Declaration of February 2004. UNEP serves as the Secretariat for AMCEN.⁹

42. The African Inter-Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, for which UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO) jointly provide a Secretariat.¹⁰

Asia and the Pacific

43. The Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, which met for the first time in May 2015. It is open to all 41 Member States under the purview of UNEP's Regional Office for Asia Pacific. In the wake of Rio+20, this Forum replaced the Sub-regional Environmental Policy Dialogue (SEPD), which was a UNEP-led initiative pioneered in 2003 that drew from the five sub-regions to provide consolidated Asia-Pacific views on global environment issues. UNEP serves as the Secretariat.¹¹

Europe

44. The Environment for Europe (EfE) process, which is the only pan-European Ministerial Environmental Forum. UNEP provides technical inputs into the EfE while its Secretariat is provided by the UN European Commission for Europe (UNECE).¹²
45. The Pan European Biodiversity Platform, to which UNEP intends to provide secretariat services.¹³
46. The Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD), which is the body in charge of coordinating regional cooperation on environmental and sustainable development in Central Asia.¹⁴
47. The European Environment and Health Ministerial Process (EHP) is a unique platform that brings together European health and environment ministers. Their goal is to set clear-cut targets to reduce the adverse impacts of environmental hazards to the health and well-being of people and the environment.¹⁵

⁸ It is not completely agreed that AMCEN is a sub-committee of the STC

⁹ UNEP 2015, *The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/roa/InformationMaterial/Events/15thAMCENSession/tabid/794089/Default.aspx>. [25 November 2015]

¹⁰ UNEP 2010, *The Second Inter-Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment in Africa*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/roa/hesa/Events/2ndInterMinisterialConference/tabid/6011/Default.aspx>. [25 November 2015]

¹¹ UNEP 2015, *First forum of Ministers & Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/roap/InformationMaterials/Events/ForumofMinistersEnvironmentAuthorities/tabid/1059916/Default.aspx>. [25 November 2015]

¹² UNECE 2015, *Environment for Europe Process*. Available from: <http://www.unece.org/env/efe/welcome.html>. [25 November 2015]

¹³ Lucas, T 2014, "UNEP to provide the Secretariat for the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform", *UNEP in Europe Newsletter*, no. 6. Available from: http://unepineurope.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=144:unep-to-provide-the-secretariat-for-the-pan-european-biodiversity-platform&catid=72:un-environment-assembly. [25 November 2015]

¹⁴ Alexeeva N 2015, "UNEP launches new presence in Central Asia by featuring in high-level ICSD meeting", *UNEP in Europe Newsletter*, no. 6. Available from: http://unepineurope.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=324:unep-launches-new-presence-in-central-asia-by-featuring-in-high-level-icsd-meeting&catid=90:unep-on-the-ground. [25 November 2015]

¹⁵ WHO Regional Office for Europe, *European Environment and Health Ministerial Process*. Available from: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/pages/european-environment-and-health-process-ehp>. [25 November 2015]

Latin America and the Caribbean

48. The Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean is the region's most representative political gathering on environmental policies and responses. UNEP holds the Secretariat and is also a member of the Forum's Interagency Technical Committee.¹⁶

North America

49. North America was not included in the first phase of the Project. Moving forward, the Regional Office of North America (RONA)¹⁷ will identify key issues and constituents of interest to UNEP and the North American region. Relevant information will be exchanged through targeted multi-stakeholder dialogues. Issues focused on will include those associated with the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Ten-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10 YFP).

West Asia

50. The Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE)¹⁸ and its programming arm, the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR)¹⁹. UNEP is part of the Joint Secretariat, alongside the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia²⁰ (ESCWA) and the League of Arab States (LAS)²¹.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

51. The Project supports the three SIDS groupings-- Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS-- through the regional processes. The Project also supports SIDS directly, particularly in the run-up to major SIDS-related international processes like the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.²²

¹⁶ United Nations Environment Programme 16 March 2014, *Latin American and Caribbean Ministerial Forum Approves Decisions to Advance Sustainable Development in Region*. Available from:

<<http://www.unep.org/NewsCentre/default.aspx?ArticleID=10750&DocumentID=2764>>. [25 November 2015]

Note: UNEP is also a member of Forum's Interagency Technical Committee

¹⁷ United Nations Environment Programme 2015, *UNEP Regional Office for North America*. Available from:

<<http://www.rona.unep.org/>>. [25 November 2015]

¹⁸ United Nations Environment Programme 2013, *Events Details: Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/ecalendar/contents/details_view.asp?EventID=2449>. [25 November 2015]

¹⁹ United Nations Environment Programme 2015, *Environmental Governance: Regional Forums*. Available from:

<<http://www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/UNEPsWork/Multilevelsupport/tabid/420/Default.aspx>>. [25 November 2015]

²⁰ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia 2015, *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia*, Available from: <<http://www.escwa.un.org/>>. [25 November 2015]

²¹ UNEP 2015, *Environmental Governance: Regional Forums*.

²² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2014, *SIDS Action Platform*. Available from:

<<http://www.sids2014.org/>>. [25 November 2015]

2.4 Milestones in Project Design and Implementation

52. The following table captures the key milestones that were achieved in relation to each of the project' three outputs. These were drawn from the relevant project documents.

Table 2 Project Milestones

PROJECT MILESTONES	Expected Milestone Delivery Date:
OUTPUT 1: Achievement of regional consensus on environment and development priorities	
M1: Consensus achieved on 1 regional environmental issue (West Asia)	December 2010
M2: Regional Forums of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment convened in 5 regions	December 2010
M3: An action plan, strategy or policy addressing regional environmental issues completed in 4 regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, West Asia)	June 2011
M4: Ministerial fora convened/supported in three regions (Africa, LAC, Europe, SIDS)	October 2011
M5: Action plan updated/policy endorsed in two regions (LAC, SIDS)	December 2011
M6: Gender perspectives fully integrated into policies and frameworks developed through regional processes in 5 regions	December 2011
OUTPUT 2: Key global environmental processes/issues incorporated in the regional environmental agenda	
M1: 1 global environmental issue/process endorsed at regional environmental fora (1 region)	December 2010
M2: 2 global environmental issues/processes endorsed at regional environmental fora (2 regions)	June 2011
M3: 3 global environmental issues/processes endorsed at regional environmental fora (3 regions)	December 2011
OUTPUT 3: Regional inputs reflected in key global environmental processes	
M1: Incorporation of decisions arising from regional ministerial fora discussions into GC26 documentation	December 2010
M2: Survey of GC26 participating delegations completed	June 2011
M3: Incorporation of decisions arising from regional ministerial fora discussions and SIDS meeting into GC27 documentation	December 2011

2.5 Implementation Arrangements

53. Phase 1 of the Project was coordinated and led by UNEP's Division for Regional Cooperation. Overall oversight and coordination of the Project was to be provided by the Project Manager located in DRC at UNEP Headquarters. In October 2013, the DRC was dissolved and

succeeded by the Regional Support Office (RSO). RSO continued to maintain oversight for the remainder of the first phase.

- 54.** Phase 2 of the Project is coordinated and led by the RSO under the supervision of the RSO Programme Officer and supported by the Fund Management Officer. The designated implementing officers (RO Programme Officers) located in the Regional Offices are responsible for implementation of regional activities. Implementation of the regional activities of the project rest upon the Regional Director (RD), Deputy Regional Director (DRD), Regional Coordinator of Environmental Governance, and other programme officers. In LAC, the DRD is the Secretary of the Forum. The Regional Coordinator for Environmental Law is the reporting officer.

2.6 Project Financing

- 55.** Budget allocation is a perennial problem with most UNEP projects. For this project the planned project at approval was USD 4,044,270. However the total expenditures reported for the first phase were USD 2,549,380, representing a considerable difference between planned budget and actual expenditures. It should also be noted that the project budget was shared between the RSO and UNEP's regional offices. However only 75% of funding was available at the beginning of the project. This meant that the Regional Offices had to make tough decisions regarding how to prioritise limited resources. A related problem was that it was always difficult to predict when resources would become available. The sporadic nature of resource flows made financial planning very difficult. In some cases, resources were disbursed so late that the Project team was expected to spend them within unreasonably short time frames. As always, predictable and reliable resource flows are essential for the effective execution of project activities.

- 56.** The Project budget at the start of the Project is presented below in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Budget 2010

Duration and Cost

Project Commencing: (10/2010)	Project Completing: (12/2011)		Total duration in Months: (15)	
Cost to:	US\$ pre 2010-11	US\$ 2010-11	US post 2010-11	US\$ Total
Environment Fund				
Other Contribution (list the contributors)				
For the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PELBDS): Norway and Switzerland		274,000		274,000
Trust fund for the Environmental Training Network of LAC		150,000		150,000
<i>Subtotal</i>				
In-kind Contribution from Countries. List for each Country separately				
In-kind Contribution from the Partner(s). List for each Partner separately				
Unsecured		3,155,000		3,155,000
Sub-total		3,579,000		3,579,000
Programme Support Costs (13%)		465,270		465,270
Grand Total		4,044,270		4,044,270

57. Table 4 shows the budget presented at the first revision in 2012.

Table 4 - Budget 2012

Project Commencing: (10/2010)	Project Completing: (12/2013)	Total duration in Months: (39)		
		US\$ 2010-11	US\$ 2012-13	US\$ Total
Budget				
<u>Secured</u>				
For PELBDS – Norway and Switzerland		274,000	440,000	714,000
Trust fund for the Environment Training Network of LAC		150,000	356,994	506,994
Norway		248,000	517,200	765,200
Sweden		132,522	169,042	301,564
AMCEN			677,032	677,032
<u>Sub-total</u>		804,522	2,160,268	2,964,790
<u>Unsecured</u>		0	807,597	807,597
<u>Sub-total</u>				
Programme Support Cost (8% and 13% as appropriate)		64,362	207,521	271,883
Total		868,884	3,175,386	4,044,270

58. Table 5 shows the budget at the time of the second revision in January 2014. This was a no-cost extension.

Table 5 - Budget January 2014

Project Commencing: (10/2010)	Project Completing: (06/2014)	Total duration in Months: (44)			
		2010- 2011	2012 - 2013	2014	Total
For PELBDS – Norway and Switzerland		274,000	219,933	220,067	714,000
Trust fund for the Environment Training Network of LAC		150,000	77,086	279,908	506,994
Norway		248,000	104,644	412,556	765,200
Sweden		132,522	26,673	142,369	301,564
AMCEN		-	122,538	554,494	677,032
Sub-total		804,522	550,874	1,409,394	2,964,790
Unsecured		-	-	807,597	807,597
Sub-total		804,522	550,874	2,416,991	3,772,387
Programme Support Cost (8% and 13% as appropriate)		64,362	38,519	169,002	271,883
Total		868,884	589,393	2,585,993	4,044,270

2.7 Project Partners

59. Key Project partners were the secretariats of Ministerial Forums and regional and sub-regional organisations.
60. Where UNEP does not solely provide the secretariat of a Ministerial Forum, it partners with entities that perform this function, individually or jointly, to operationalise and develop projects and programmes for the implementation of the Forums. These included the secretariats of the four sub-regional Ministerial Forums in Asia and the Pacific; UNECE; the Council of Europe; JCEDAR; the Technical Secretariat of the League of Arab States; and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and ESCWA.
61. In the case of SIDS, the main partner was the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which represents all global SIDS and functions as an ad hoc lobbying and negotiating voice for SIDS within the United Nations system.
62. The Project engaged with organizations that either have a direct mandate on environmental matters, or whose activities have an impact on the environment through a broader agenda (e.g. political, trade, or development). Examples include: the African Union; the NPCA; the Indian Ocean Commission; the five sub-Regional Economic Communities in Africa; the European Commission (EC); the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe; the European Environment Agency (EEA); the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC); the ECO Forum; the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM); Comision Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo (CCAD); Mercado Comun del Sur (MERCOSUR); the Andean Community (CAN); the Organization of American States (OAS); the Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC); the General Secretariat of the Iberoamerican Summit (SEGIB); the Inter-American Development Bank; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

2.8 Changes in design during implementation

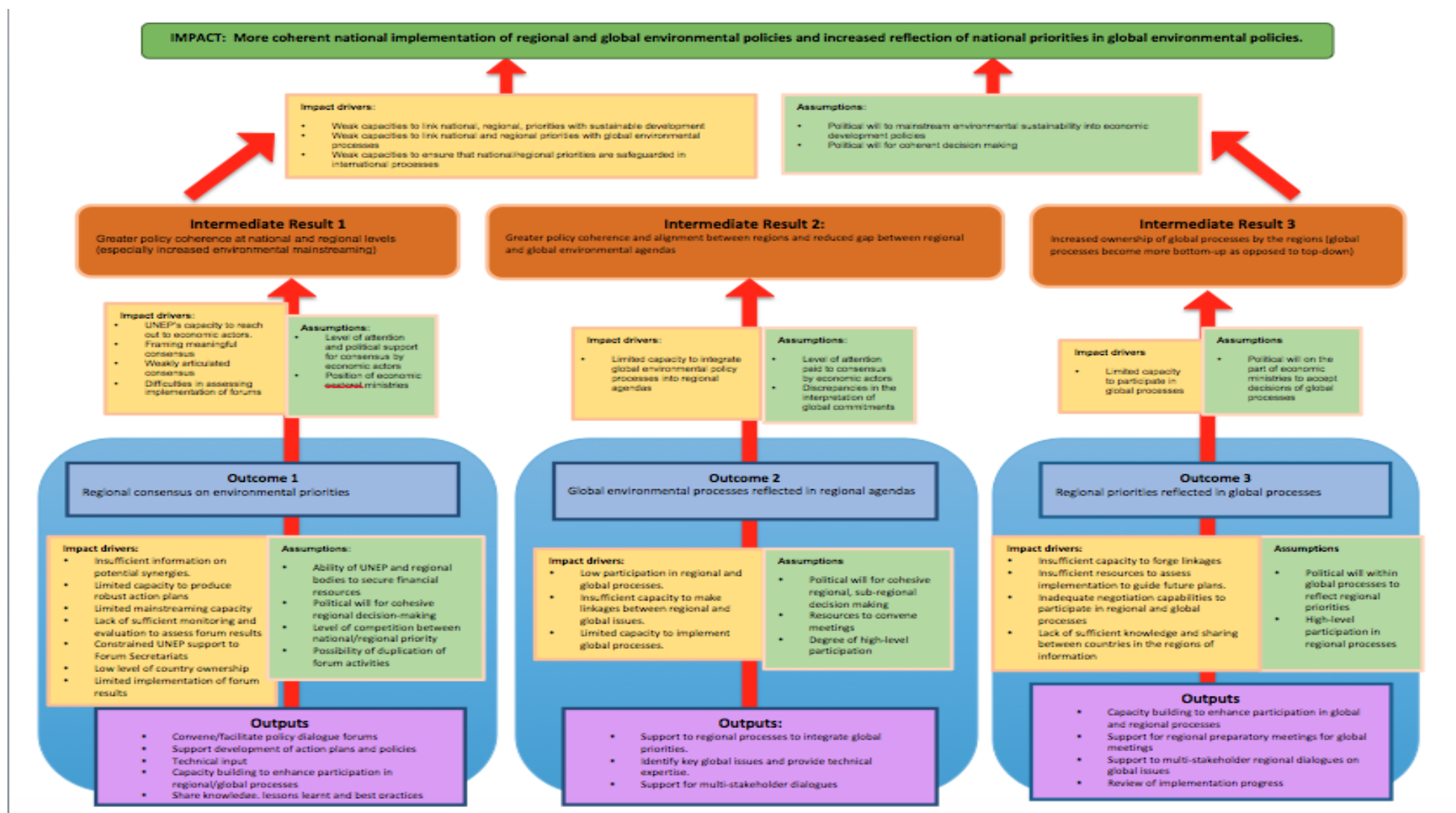
63. There were no significant changes in design during implementation.

2.9 Reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC) of the Project

- 64.** All UNEP evaluations use the Theory of Change (TOC) to assess the intervention logic of the project and to determine whether all external factors that might affect project outcomes, impact, and sustainability are considered. Most projects currently evaluated were designed when TOCs were not required in the project document. This is why evaluation teams must reconstruct the TOC of the project during the inception phase to ensure that it provides a clear framework for the evaluation. This approach helps to highlight design limitations and to identify where impact drivers and assumptions have been overcome in order for the intended impact to be achieved.
- 65.** The first step in reconstructing the Theory of Change is to identify the Project's intended impact. The Project objective was to ensure the increased coherence in international decision-making. The stated Project objective is a combination of the Project's intended impact and the intermediate results. Building on this logic, the evaluation team has defined the intended impact of this Project as "increased vertical and horizontal coherence in international decision-making". Vertical coherence relates to the synergies and coordination in multi-tiered governance systems (i.e. between the global, regional, national, sub-national, local levels of governance). Horizontal coherence relates to the synergies and coordination across policy domains (for example, between economics and environment or between environment and human rights).
- 66.** The second step involves identifying the Project's outputs and outcomes. The Project outcomes and outputs that are included in the Theory of Change (Figure 1) have been distilled from the project logical framework that was contained in the 2014 Project Document. The original logical framework is contained in Table 14. It is important to note that the logical framework presents a single aggregate outcome statement, which does explicitly link to the Project's three outputs. Whilst this was consistent with QAS guidelines for the design of UNEP projects at approval, the approach is not consistent with UNEP's Evaluation Office guidelines for articulating the intended causality in project evaluations.
- 67.** The lack of project components as a means to organise related outputs, makes it difficult to understand the causal pathway(s) from Project outputs (i.e. the goods and services delivered by the Project) to the immediate outcomes (outcomes being changes resulting from the use of Project outputs) and the further changes required in the pathways that lead towards impact.
- 68.** In light of the foregoing, the evaluation team has reconstructed the Theory of Change by framing 'new' outcomes, under which the original Project outputs have been re-organised.
- 69.** By framing these linkages between outcomes and outputs, the evaluation team has been able to ascertain the intervention logic of the Project. Ultimately, this has assisted the team in evaluating whether the Project has succeeded in delivering the intended impact. The reconstructed ToC has enabled the evaluation team to assess the merits of the Project

design and inform judgements on the overall effectiveness of Project implementation. The Reconstructed Theory of Change is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Reconstructed Theory of Change



3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

3.1 Strategic relevance

3.1.1 Alignment with UNEP's strategy, policies and mandate

UNEP Medium-Term Strategy

- 58.** The Project activities have been designed to help guide UNEP's overall strategic future direction by incorporating regional priorities into the planning processes for the Medium-Term Strategy and the Programme of Work. Furthermore, the outcomes of the Ministerial Forums feed into the discussions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and contribute to the assembly's outcomes. The outcomes of the Regional Forums have also contributed to the UNDAFs for those key countries that have developed the latter.
- 59.** It is important to recall that Paragraph 15 of Decision 27/2 of UNEP's Governing Council, in its first universal session in 2014, stresses the "importance of the Regional Ministerial Environment Forums for which the United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] serves as the secretariat, and invites those Forums to contribute, as appropriate, to the work of the governing body". Whilst the Project started in 2010, in fact, UNEP has been creating and supporting international platforms to facilitate policy debate, negotiations and decision-making since its own inception in 1972.
- 60.** The first phase of the Project was designed to build on UNEP's core mandate to convene these regional platforms and more specifically, to contribute to expected accomplishments relating to coherence and mainstreaming under the Sub-programme on Environmental Governance in UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2010-2013, notably EA (a): "The United Nations system demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements"; and EA (c): "National development processes and United Nations common country programming processes increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in their implementation."
- 61.** In the second phase, UNEP's engagement with regional and sub-regional Ministerial Forums was anchored in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2017. The key related accomplishments are EA 1: "The UN system, respecting the mandates of other entities, progressively achieves synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements"; and EA 3: "Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability into national and regional development policies and plans."
- 62.** In the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2014-2017, Regional Forums served as important platforms for the identification of regional priorities, which have been factored into UNEP's overall strategic future direction. The priorities fed into the design of

the MTS and the subsequent development of the Programme of Work for 2014–2015 and were incorporated into relevant sub-programmes.²³

63. As well, as noted in the 2014 Project Document, this Project aligns closely with the “Integrating environmental sustainability in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and UN common country programming processes”. The latter is being implemented in the five regions to promote synergies, integrate delivery and ensure that the two processes inform each other for a coordinated outcome.²⁴
64. The outcomes of the Regional Forums will also inform UNEP's planning for future Programmes of Work and Medium Term Strategies, providing the bottom-up inputs into these processes and ensuring that the main concerns of all regions are prioritized and responded to in UNEP's Programme of Work (POW).

Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)

65. The Project is aligned with all of the key objectives of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, especially capacity building for the following:
- Implementation of UNEP Governing Council priorities
 - Participation in the development of coherent international environmental policy
 - Compliance with international agreements
 - Achievement of internationally agreed-upon environmental goals
 - Integration of gender-mainstreaming
 - Integration of transparency and accountability

Gender balance

66. As part of UNEP's overall approach and commitment to the Gender Plan of Action, gender considerations were incorporated in many of the Regional Forums. For example, in Africa, the Regional Forum for African Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment was scheduled back-to-back with inter-sessional consultations of AMCEN and an AMCEN gender policy is being developed with the support of UNEP. Similarly, UNEP supported the development of Regional Forums of Women Ministers and Leaders for Environment for Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia.
67. The Project also supported the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment (NWMLE) launch of the “Global Framework of Action” that addresses issues related to gender, women, environment and sustainable development.
68. More work can always be done, especially since there are ample best practices on gender mainstreaming, which could be relevant for the regions. The Regional Forums could play an

²³ United Nations Environment Programme 2014, *UNEP Programme of Work 2014-2017*. Available from: PIMS Website: http://projects.unep.org/pimsdb/plomino_documents/9e989b112708463d321cf2310fca7c61/OpenDocument?openwithform=frmProjectNavigation&partName=overview.linkage_a_pow

²⁴ As noted in the 2014 Project Document, the second phase of the Project will work closely with the “Integrating environmental sustainability in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and UN common country programming processes”. This process is being implemented in the five regions to promote synergies, integrate delivery and ensure that the two processes inform each other to ensure coordinated outcomes.

important role in identifying opportunities for the integration of gender considerations into the SDGs.

South-South cooperation

- 69.** The Ministerial Forums have created numerous opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation.
- 70.** The Forums have provided valuable platforms and opportunities for Member States to identify and increase opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation, especially through the sharing of best practices on environmental protection and management. Member States shared lessons and best practices in the management of the environment.
- 71.** A key aspect of the Project has been communication and the sharing of knowledge. Therefore, the Project has clearly promoted and, in turn, benefited from this exchange between developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The Forums provide the opportunity for countries to discuss lessons learned at the national level, and to highlight specific policies, initiatives or projects, which they have individually undertaken, and which could be replicated elsewhere. This accentuates how the Project has helped to facilitate increased communication and sharing of knowledge and expertise between countries.

Examples of South-South cooperation

- 72.** In the pan-European region, which is characterised by economic, social and political diversity, the Project has facilitated a continuous process of exchange of experience and learning, which in turn is helping to create a deeper sense of solidarity in the pan-European region. It is clear that countries with economies in transition have also benefitted from the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge.
- 73.** During AMCEN 15 in Cairo, held in March 2015, a side event to launch the “China-Africa Cooperation Programme: Enhancing the Role of Ecosystem Management in Climate Change Adaptation” Report took place. The event showcased the major achievements and successes of this liaison as a significant example of South-South cooperation through capacity building, technology transfer and information exchange.
- 74.** China’s engagement with AMCEN, along with ICSD, the Carpathian Convention and the Tehran Convention, are examples of South-South cooperation within this Project. Additionally, countries within the regions use the Forums as an opportunity to further network and strengthen bilateral cooperation. The EU has been engaged in some of the Forums and has also been attending AMCEN meetings, for example. This proves that they are also trying to follow this process. By building linkages and cooperation into EU policies and programmes, they are thus demonstrating triangular cooperation facilitated by the Project. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the establishment of networks of experts in LAC priority areas have allowed the exchange of experiences, knowledge and information. These networks have focused on capacity-building activities, experience-sharing and technical assistance, mostly on the basis of South-South cooperation, with the support of the Interagency Technical Committee.

Human rights-based approach (HRBA)

75. The human rights-based approach to environmental protection has been clearly articulated at the regional level, where the linkages between human rights and the environment have been recognized in binding agreements (i.e. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, UNECE's Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice). Member States need to understand how deepening the human and environment linkages can assist them in achieving both sustainable development and access goals. The Ministerial Forums can support Member States to deepen their efforts to develop and implement a rights-based approach to environmental policy. In this regard, UNEP could apply knowledge generated from its ongoing project with OHCHR, "Human Rights and the Environment: Good Practices", which has identified good practices in the integration of human rights and environmental protection.

3.1.2 Relevance to global, regional and national environmental concerns

76. The primary aim of the Project has been to give a voice to the regions. In both the first and second phases of the Project, the Project's objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with regional environmental needs. This was because the fundamental objective of the Ministerial Forums was to provide opportunities for Member States to define their regional environmental agendas and to guide UNEP's overall strategic direction by articulating and emphasising the regional priorities, which they wanted UNEP to consider in its global policy-making.

77. The Project's relevance to global and regional concerns is reflected in the nature of three Project outcomes, namely: (i) the development of regional consensus on priority issues; (ii) the reflection of global processes into regional agendas; and (iii) the reflection of regional priorities into global processes.

78. The Regional Ministerial Environment Forums have helped to stimulate political and policy dialogues to identify priorities at regional, sub-regional and inter-regional levels. They have also supported the establishment of linkages between the regional and global environmental agendas. These Forums also discuss and review emerging issues, and identify opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation. In all cases, the Forums decide for themselves the priorities to be addressed.

79. Since these Forums act as platforms for preparing and building common positions for, inter alia, the United Nations Environment Assembly, they have helped to promote deeper levels of cooperation within the regions. In turn, this has helped to elevate the regional voice in global processes.²⁵ For example, decisions arising from the Regional Forums on the Green Economy, international environmental governance, chemicals management, mercury, and climate change, were all incorporated into the discussions of UNEP's 26th Governing Council.

80. At the same time, via the Forums, key global processes related to climate change, biodiversity, chemicals, the Green Economy, and SPAC, have been incorporated in the regional environmental agendas of Europe, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean (PIMS June 2014).

²⁵ The Forums have deliberated and reached consensus on key environment and sustainable development issues, such as, potential themes and topics for the first UNEA (i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda), sustainable consumption and production, the Green Economy, sustainable development of small island states, chemicals and waste among others.

3.1.3 Realism of Project objectives

Evidence of realism of Project objectives

- 81.** As explained above, the objective of the first phase of the Project was to promote increased coherence in the international decision-making processes related to the environment and sustainable development of the regions. This was to be achieved by supporting the convening of Ministerial and other Environmental Forums in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia regions, as well as the SIDS.
- 82.** The promotion of policy coherence has been a longstanding goal of UNEP, ever since the 1992 Earth Summit, which called for a more integrated approach to policy making between environment and development spheres.
- 83.** It should be noted that despite budgetary constraints the overarching ambition of increased coherence was realistic because the nature of the work is so integral to UNEP's core mandate.
- 84.** The objectives for the first phase of the project were also realistic because the project was designed to specifically uphold UNEP's mandate to increase its regional presence and to improve the coherence of decision-making. The task of enhancing the capacity of Member States in international decision processes is an explicit component of UNEP's mandate and work, thereby reinforcing the realism of the project's overall objective.
- 85.** It should be recalled that UNEP has been supporting Regional Forums since 1972. This work has been an integral part of UNEP's mission as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda.
- 86.** Of equal importance is the fact that in 2012, Rio+20 specifically mandated UNEP to strengthen its regional presence in order to assist countries in the implementation of their national environmental policies. Paragraph 88 of the Outcome Document entitled "The Future We Want" states that UNEP should "strengthen its regional presence, in order to assist countries, upon request, in the implementation of their national environmental policies, collaborating closely with other relevant entities of the United Nations system".
- 87.** There is no question that the Forums have enabled UNEP to strengthen its regional presence. Through that presence, Member States have been encouraged and empowered to communicate their regional and sub-regional priorities to UNEP. This is further evidence of the relevance of the Project's objective.
- 88.** Furthermore, the Project objectives are deemed to be realistic, considering the Project's three categories of outputs (i.e. inter-sectoral dialogues; partnerships; and inter-governmental policy dialogues) and the extensive range of supporting activities, for which UNEP has proven expertise and competencies.
- 89.** It should be noted that Phase 2 of this Project builds on the previous biennia 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, which successfully provided similar support to the regions and produced important outcomes. Phase 2 aims to go further than the previous Project and fill the gaps that the prior phase was not able to address. It will facilitate sharing of information, lesson learning and best practices between regions; and facilitate sufficient monitoring and evaluation in order to assess the implementation of decisions/action plans/strategies arising

from the Forums. This will enable UNEP to understand what has and has not worked and to determine how best to design future interventions.

The overall rating for Project relevance is Highly Satisfactory.

3.2 Achievement of outputs

Table 6: Summary of the Project's performance in producing programmed outputs

- 90.** In the Reconstructed Theory of Change, there were three categories of outputs: the first category of outputs involved the convening of policy dialogue forums, the support for the development of action plans, capacity building and the exchange of best practices. As noted in the Reconstructed Theory of Change this category of outputs was designed to achieve the outcome of "regional consensus on environmental priorities". As noted in the Project's self-reporting on the PIMS website, a wide range of activities were undertaken ranging from UNEP's support for the development of regional strategies and for the convening of the Ministerial Forums themselves.
- 91.** The second category of outputs involved support to regional processes to integrate global priorities, the provision of technical expertise to identify the linkages between global issues and regional priorities as well as support for the multi-stakeholder dialogues. These outputs were designed to achieve the outcome of increased reflection of global environmental priorities in regional agendas. The activities that were noted in the PIMS self reporting indicated that UNEP had supported the development of the draft African Regional Strategy on gender mainstreaming and the environment, as well as having prepared several background policy papers for the Asia Pacific Forum, and AMCEN.
- 92.** The third category of outputs involved support for regional preparatory meetings in advance of global processes as well as capacity building to enhance participation in global and regional processes. These outputs were designed to achieve the outcome of increased reflection of regional priorities in global and regional processes. The activities that led to the achievement of output 3 involved capacity building sessions in four regions on a wide range of topics as well as the convening of the Asia-Pacific roundtable on environmental rule of law, as well as the convening important meetings in the Arab region.

Outputs	Status of the project at evaluation
Expert services and technical inputs provided to feed the process of regional/SIDS/LDC environmental debate and consensus building on key global environmental processes/issues	<p>As of December 2014: UNEP has supported the development of the draft Africa regional strategy on gender mainstreaming and environment. The draft has been prepared and is undergoing a consultative process with the African Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment (AFWMLE) before being submitted to AMCEN. It was supposed to have been submitted in September 2014 during 15th session of AMCEN but the session was cancelled due to the Ebola outbreak.</p> <p>As of Dec 2013 UNEP provides support to the Caribbean SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Meeting on SIDS. UNEP made a number of presentations, including, inter alia, on the United Nations Environmental Assembly of UNEP (UNEA), 10 Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production. UNEP prepared a number of background documents in support of the meeting. The Outcome Document resulting from the meeting is entitled "Kingston Outcome of the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.</p>

	<p>As of June 2015: UNEP provided support to AMCEN, which led to the Cairo Declaration, identifying a wide range of priorities for the continent e.g. climate change, natural resources management, illegal trade in wildlife and the integration of the inclusive Green Economy; and to the first Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, which agreed on (as per the Chair's Summary): the need to step up action to tackle major environmental challenges e.g. climate change, resource-intensive growth and health impacts of pollution. The Forum made recommendations for consideration at UNEA-2 and provided input to the MTS; to the Caribbean Implementation Meeting on Decision 5 (on SIDS) of the XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment for LAC, developed concrete recommendations to advance building synergies with the Samoa Pathway; to the Environment and Health Ministerial Board (EHMB), Europe in the preparation of the Mid-term Review and future directions for the EHP.</p>
Support to regional and sub-regional Ministerial Forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues / Environmental Governance	<p>By 2014: UNEP has supported the development of the draft Africa regional strategy on gender mainstreaming on environment. The draft has been prepared and is undergoing a consultative process with the African Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment (AFWMLE) before being submitted to AMCEN. It was supposed to have been submitted in September 2014 during 15th session of AMCEN but the session was cancelled due to the Ebola outbreak.</p> <p>By June 2015: UNEP has developed 5 policy background papers to support the first environmental ministers forum of Asia and Pacific - The role of the environment in delivering on the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda in Asia Pacific; Environment Outlook and Pathways for Asia Pacific; Environment and Health Linkages in Asia Pacific; Implementation of resolutions of the UNEA of UNEP and Future Priorities for Asia Pacific ; Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Environmental Rule of Law for Sustainable Development in Support to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. 3 policy background papers were developed by UNEP to support the 15th. Session of AMCEN - Enhancing the implementation and effectiveness of environmental law in Africa; Operationalization of the specialized technical committees of the African Union and its implications for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment; Managing Africa's natural capital for sustainable development and poverty reduction.</p> <p>For the XIX Meeting of the LAC ministerial forum, UNEP prepared background documents on the issues to be discussed, including a report on the follow-up of the decisions of the Forum and an assessment of the governance of the Forum in order to increase its political influence, among other themes.</p>
Provide capacity building sessions/meetings and promote knowledge sharing to feed key global environmental processes with regional/SIDS/LDC inputs	<p>As of December 2014: 9 capacity building sessions to promote knowledge sharing have been carried out in four regions, Africa, Europe, North America and west Asia on topics ranging from Climate Change, Biodiversity, green economy, desertification and health and environment as well as on UNEA resolutions and outcomes.</p> <p>In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, network of experts on ILAC priority areas has been established and have been promoting online meetings, which have allowed the exchange of experiences, knowledge and information. These networks have focused on capacity building activities, experiences sharing and technical assistance, mostly on the basis of South-South cooperation, with the support of the Interagency Technical Committee.</p> <p>As of June, 2015: An Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Environmental Rule of Law for Sustainable Development in Support to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, was organized on 20 May 2015. The meeting identified the following as key priorities in strengthening legislation, enforcement and compliance: stock-taking of existing legislations in the region to support SDG implementation, strengthen national legislative and regulatory measures, strengthen capacity of courts and tribunals, build and share expertise in legislative and institutional development in the region and beyond back to back with the First Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific. In west Asia, an Arab Council of Ministers Responsible for Meteorology and Climate was established also established was the Arab Climate Outlook</p>

Forum and Capacity development Forum on Meteorology and Climate. These were established during the meeting of the Arab Meteorology Permanent Committee April 2015.

The overall rating on the achievement of outputs is Satisfactory.

3.3 Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results

3.3.1 Achievement of the direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed TOC

- 93.** In this section, the three direct outcomes (that were reconstructed in the Theory of Change) are assessed in terms of their overall levels of achievement. It should be noted that the three immediate outcomes that were identified in the reconstructed ToC relate directly to the three outputs that were named in the original logframe. Even though there was only one outcome in the original design as set out in the project documents and in accordance with QAS guidelines for project design, the evaluation team has reconstructed the Theory of Change in accordance with methodology, terminology and guidance established by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The team articulated an outcome for each of the three outputs.
- 94.** For each of the three outcomes, the evaluation team has identified the achievements and the challenges. These have been synthesised from the numerous interviews with key stakeholders during the evaluation process.

Immediate Outcome 1 – Regional consensus achieved on environmental priorities

Overview of Outcome 1 achievements as derived from the evaluation interviews

- 95.** Regional Environmental Ministerial and other Environmental Forums have facilitated effective policy exchange and development and priority setting in all regions (including SIDS) of key environmental and developmental issues/processes.
- 96.** For the most part, the Ministerial Forums have certainly contributed to the building of regional consensus. This is evidenced by the actual consensus that has been achieved in the outcomes of the different Regional Forums, not to mention the regional action plans agreed at these Forums which addressed a wide range of topics such as the Green Economy, renewable energy, international environmental governance, climate change, institutional framework for sustainable development, SCP, waste management, Rio+20 follow-up actions and UNEA.²⁶ As well, the high level and wide scope of participation has been significant and has ensured that the consensus reflects a wide range of views.
- 97.** It is clear that in most cases, without UNEP's support and expertise, it would have been more difficult for the Forums to generate regional consensus. This is because UNEP contributes important information, assessments and scientific findings into these processes. Since UNEP acts as the secretariat for the majority of the Regional Forums, they were well positioned to assist Member States in understanding the global context of their regional discussions.

²⁶ United Nations Environment Programme 2015, Available from: PIMS Website: http://projects.unep.org/pimsdb/plomino_documents/9e989b112708463d321cf2310fca7c61/OpenDocument?openwithform=frmProjectNavigation&partName=.monitoring.outcomes.28899f010025a773c204224fa691604a.28899f010025a773c204224fa691604a-description. [25 November 2015]

- 98.** The evolution of UNEP into a universal body in recent years has been an important step politically. As a result, the Regional Forums will increase in political importance within UNEA. Their role will be essential to ensure that UNEA is capable of producing meaningful outcomes, which reflect buy-in from the regions. With the first UNEA in 2014, it was clear that the Member States benefitted from the Regional Forums beforehand. They provided a venue for reaching a common understanding of regional concerns and priorities before participating in global negotiation processes, where the complex political dynamics often prevent coherent outcomes. UNEP's RSO continued to provide important assistance to all the Regional Forums as they prepared for UNEA-2 in May 2016.
- 99.** It should be noted that the 'projectisation' of UNEP's work with the Ministerial Forums and the placing of this Project under the ambit of the Regional Support Office has been a positive factor that has helped the Project to achieve Outcome 1. Prior to the start of the first phase of this Project (i.e. 2010), there were several disparate regional processes on-going. Whilst UNEP was providing support to them, their support activities were disconnected. The unified Project approach has provided an integrated framework within which UNEP now supports the Regional Forums. This approach has also helped UNEP to enhance its regional presence.

Challenges with Outcome 1 as derived from the evaluation interviews

- Limited availability of human and financial resources, in particular where regional or sub-regional Forums are dependent on funding or secretariat services from UNEP;
- The difficulty of mobilising national and regional non-state actors in the Regional Forums;
- The ability of UNEP's Regional Offices to position themselves as "honest brokers" between the regional and global policy processes;
- Insufficient information on potential synergies at the national and regional levels;
- Limited capacity to produce robust action plans at the regional level;
- Limited environmental mainstreaming capacity at both national and regional levels;
- Lack of sufficient monitoring and evaluation to assess the results of the Regional Forums;
- Competing national/regional priorities;
- Duplication of forum activities in certain regions.

Region-specific evidence for Outcome 1

African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN)

- 100.** AMCEN is a relatively old forum, had its 15th regular meeting in March 2015. As such, it has provided an excellent model structure, which was replicated by the newest Regional Forum recently established for the Asia Pacific region.
- 101.** AMCEN has played a critical role in building consensus within the African region and providing a voice for the region in global environmental negotiations.
- 102.** Specifically, AMCEN facilitated the formulation of common positions and consensus statements on important issues such as climate change, Rio+20 and the Post-2015

Development Agenda.²⁷ It has been extremely active in the UNFCCC negotiations. Indeed, the regional consensus that AMCEN has produced on climate change (as reflected in the Gaborone Declaration on Climate Change and Africa's Development²⁸) is an important example of a solid and coherent regional consensus, through which AMCEN's Member States have spoken with one voice on one of the most important global issues.

103. It is also interesting to note that AMCEN Forums typically produce a negotiated text, a process that requires a considerable amount of consultation with Member States. However, with a forum as old as this one, the process of negotiation becomes easier. There are established relationships between Member States, who themselves have considerable negotiation experience. By contrast, as noted below, the Asia Pacific Regional Forum chose not to produce a negotiated text, but rather a chair's summary, which has proven to be just as effective in capturing the regional consensus that was achieved.

104. The support provided by ROA as Secretariat of AMCEN has not been limited to simply organizing meetings and preparing support documents. Over the years, a partnership among Member States has developed and ROA has helped to narrow the gap between regional and global environmental agendas. UNEP support activities have also ensured effective implementation of AMCEN decisions and other regional priorities.

Council of Arab Ministers Responsible For the Environment (CAMRE)

105. As with AMCEN, the strategic partnership between UNEP and CAMRE also extends back many years, in this case to the mid-1980s. Despite the very important geopolitical issues that have dominated the region, environmental concerns have become increasingly well-recognised. This has paved the way for CAMRE to work more efficiently and effectively in forming regional consensus. The recently amended memorandum of understanding signed between UNEP and the League of Arab States (LAS) demonstrates the high level of commitment from LAS to work with UNEP in the region.

106. CAMRE has to a large extent been successful in forging regional consensus, considering the marked divergence of views between the 22 countries. Key examples of where CAMRE has produced regional consensus are the Arab Environment Outlook, the Arab Atlas, and the national environmental assessments, which were undertaken in response to the Environmental Performance Index.

107. Arab countries usually attend MEA negotiations with a unified position and organized coordination process. However, their ability to forge consensus positions depends on the issues in question. For example, consensus is more difficult to achieve on issues like climate change, which is characterised by highly divergent views at the national level.

108. The Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Montreal Protocol are two important examples where CAMRE has succeeded in articulating a strong regional consensus. With the help of UNEP's Regional Office in West Asia, CAMRE was also able to generate extremely well prepared inputs for UNEA-1. Together with ROWA, they organized a high-level meeting

²⁷ AMCEN 31 January 2014, *COMMON AFRICAN POSITION (CAP) ON THE POST – 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA*. Available from: <[http://www.unep.org/roa/Portals/137/AMCEN-15-REF-9-Common%20African%20Position%20\(CAP\)%20ON%20THE%20pOST-2015%20Development.pdf](http://www.unep.org/roa/Portals/137/AMCEN-15-REF-9-Common%20African%20Position%20(CAP)%20ON%20THE%20pOST-2015%20Development.pdf)>. [25 November 2015]

²⁸ AMCEN 18 October 2013, *Gaborone Declaration on climate change and Africa's development*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Amcen_Events/5th_ss/Docs/K1353541%20-%20Gaborone%20Declaration%20by%20the%205th%20Special%20session%20of%20AMCEN%20-%20Final%2022102013%20EN.pdf>. [25 November 2015]

for decision-makers to review the agenda. With the assistance of ROWA colleagues, CAMRE Member States were able to identify those issues upon which they could have the greatest strategic impact.

- 109.** Efforts of the LAS to include environmental sustainability in the decisions of the Social and Economic Summit of the Arab Leaders is another example of the Project's impact in catalysing integrated decision-making. This needs to be supported by UNEP providing its services to chart an integrated decision-making approach for the League. UNEP and ESCWA are currently preparing the Sustainable Development Report, which will provide insights on the mainstreaming mechanisms and systems that must be implemented at the regional and national levels.
- 110.** Two other important high-level forums were organized by UNEP for the Arab States region. The first was to discuss the Accountability Framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs where a mapping of international approaches has been considered and a regional mechanism proposed. The second High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development for the Arab States has also considered the institutional framework to implement the SDGs and Post 2015 agenda. The development of a regional mechanism, coordinated by ESCWA, was requested to ensure regional monitoring. Despite the evidence of these accomplishments, the decreasing flexibility in UNEP's budget to provide support to the Forums has naturally presented problems for CAMRE. This has been exacerbated by the closing of UNEP's Regional Liaison Office in Cairo.
- 111.** However, overall UNEP has played an important role in helping to forge regional consensus. Between 40-60% of the CAMRE decisions cite UNEP and emphasise the important role that it plays in helping to broker consensus, especially through the provision of substantive expertise. Through its work with CAMRE UNEP has maintained a stronger regional presence and has opened the path for UNEP to engage more strategically with Member States in the region. For example, when signing the new agreement with the League of Arab States, several countries expressed interest in having bilateral partnerships with UNEP.

Asia Pacific

- 112.** The Project has also facilitated the development of regional consensus on environmental priorities in Asia Pacific, with the first Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific having been convened on 19-20 May 2015.²⁹ Organised in direct response to the decision of Rio+20 to strengthen UNEP's regional presence, the 2015 Forum provided an important opportunity for ministers and high-level representatives from Asia and the Pacific to come together to develop solutions to some of their most pressing sustainability challenges. It is clear that if this Project had not existed, the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities could not have taken place.
- 113.** As for the development of regional consensus on important environmental priorities, the Chair's Summary³⁰ is important evidence of where and how the region was able to express regional consensus on common priorities for issues such as: climate resilience; air quality;

²⁹ The Forum was held back-to-back with the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development that was organised by ECSCAP from 21-22 May 2015.

³⁰ United Nations Environment Programme 22 May 2015, "Chair's Summary", in *1st Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific*, UNEP/APEnvForum/5. Available from: http://www.unep.org/roap/Portals/96/forumdocuments/Chair's%20summary_22%20May%202015.pdf. [25 November 2015]

decoupling; biodiversity; chemicals and waste; and the SDGs. As a result of the Forum of Ministers, Member States were able to identify common issues of concern and formulate priority actions. In the meantime, the Chair's Summary has been submitted to both the CPR and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

- 114.** The Asia Pacific Forum is an important example of the consensus-building role that the Ministerial Forums elsewhere are also playing. They provide a space for countries to define their common priorities for decisions and resolutions that will be taken up at UNEA-2 in 2016, and also to articulate regional priorities for UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2018-2021.

Europe

- 115.** The Project has facilitated the development of regional consensus within Europe on environmental priorities through two important processes. First, the regional consensus established by the European Environment and Health Project (EHP) is reflected by consensus priorities set by the EHP ministerial board. 53 countries have agreed on the current direction that must be followed in terms of environment and health along with the key priorities to be addressed. The EHP's focus on the synergies between environment and health has exposed UNEP to a whole new set of issues that are becoming increasingly important in its own Programme of Work. UNEP's increased focus on the linkage between health and the environment is reflected in the theme that has been chosen for UNEA-2, namely "Healthy Environment, Healthy People".

- 116.** Second, the Environment for Europe (EfE) process is a partnership of Member States within the UNECE region, along with UN organisations represented in the region, regional environmental centres, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and major groups. The EfE process and its Ministerial Conferences provide a high-level platform for the forging of consensus on key priorities. At its last Ministerial Conference in Astana on 21-23 September 2011, environment ministers confirmed their "commitment to improve environmental protection and to promote sustainable development in the UNECE region." They also "reaffirmed the important value of the EfE process as a unique pan-European forum for tackling environmental challenges and promoting broad horizontal environmental cooperation among countries in Europe, North America, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and as a pillar of sustainable development in the UNECE region for 20 years."³¹

- 117.** The next UNECE ministerial conference in Baku will focus on air pollution and the Green Economy. Synergies are thus being created between the EHP and EfE processes.

- 118.** With the EfE process as the main platform for the Regional Ministerial Forum in the pan-European region, UNEP is in a unique situation whereby the regional ministerial process is being led not by UNEP, but rather, by the UNECE. Thus, there is less scope for what UNEP can do to help shape the policy agenda. That said, the scope of cooperation between UNEP and the UNECE is growing, as reflected by the recent MOU with the UNECE regarding cooperation in the pan-European region.

³¹ UNECE 29 September 2011, 7th "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Astana concludes on Governments' commitment to take the lead in transition to green economy. Available from: <<http://www.unece.org/info/media/presscurrent-press-h/environment/2011/7th-environment-for-europe-ministerial-conference-in-astana-concludes-on-governments-commitment-to-take-the-lead-in-transition-to-green-economy/7th-environment-for-europe-ministerial-conference-in-astana-concludes-on-governments-commitment-to-take-the-lead-in-transition-to-green-economy.html>>. [26 November 2015]

- 119.** Nevertheless, the Project has definitely helped the cause of forging regional consensus. The preparatory work for Rio+20, the post-summit work, and the preparation for UNEA-1 were all undertaken through these two regional processes.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American Regional Forum of Ministers of Environment that was recently held in March 2014 (Los Cabos, Mexico) also helped to enable the development of regional consensus on environmental priorities. A negotiated text was produced and supported by a political declaration. Without the Project, LAC Member States would not have been able to forge this level of regional consensus or indeed negotiate through one voice at international negotiations. The Latin American Forum held 20 meetings so far and it is a major political gathering. The project was instrumental for the consolidation and strengthening of the Forum and enabled it to adopt decisions on key issues, including the creation of regional cooperative frameworks and platforms on key issues. The XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (March 2014) adopted a Declaration and nine Decisions, with the overall goal of strengthening the Forum's regional work and consolidating its position as a leading mechanism for policy and political dialogue and cooperation in the region. The Presidency of the Forum, Mexico, established a mechanism for information exchange, for countries to share experiences and lessons learned on environmental issues, and promote South-South cooperation. The XIX Meeting decided to undertake the update of the ILAC (Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development, 2002). The updated ILAC was adopted at the XX Meeting of the Forum. During the same period the Roadmap of the regional strategy on SCP was developed, and the regional cooperation Programme on climate change elaboration was developed and reviewed in the light of the results of the COP21, and ended in the adoption of a regional platform at the XX Meeting of the Forum.

The LAC Forum of Ministers of Environment has promoted actions at national and regional level to address environmental challenges of the region. Likewise, it has supported the mobilisation of resources for cooperation, including South-South cooperation, aimed at strengthening the capacities of environmental authorities, institutions and other stakeholders to promote the integration of environmental sustainability into policies and programmes. Some examples of the accomplishments, which provide the foundations for a new phase of the ILAC, include the following:

- Progress on the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in development and sectoral planning and programming at the national level and strengthening of the institutional capacity on environment at the subregional, national and local levels.
- The establishment of networks of experts on ILAC priority areas, which have allowed the exchange of experiences, knowledge and information. These networks have focused on capacity building activities, experiences sharing and technical assistance, mostly on the basis of South-South cooperation, with the support of the Interagency Technical Committee.
- The positioning of the interests and priorities of the region in international political fora and negotiations. This includes the joint contributions, according to the countries' interests, to the development of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, reflected in the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity; the regional meetings of climate change negotiators to share views, identify and discuss elements of convergence with regard to the international negotiations; the regional contribution to the adoption of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) in Rio+20; and, the region's leadership in the negotiations of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, among others.

- The progress made in the development, adoption and implementation of a framework of ILAC indicators, which has contributed to the development and consolidation of the National Environmental Information Systems in some countries of the region, becoming one of the focal areas for cooperation, transfer of technologies and improvement of capacities. The results obtained will support the implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Sustainable Development Goals' indicators to be agreed in 2016.
- South-South cooperation activities promoted through the implementation of joint projects at the regional and sub-regional levels, and the development of technical studies and evaluations for informed decision-making on environmental policies, such as assessments on the environmental situation at regional, sub-regional or local levels, and others on emerging and priority issues for the region.

Immediate Outcome 2 – Global environmental processes reflected in regional agendas

Overview of Outcome 2 achievements as derived from the evaluation interviews

- 120.** Key global environmental processes related to the Rio+20 process, UNEA-1, the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the SDGs, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, GEO, the 10-year Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production, and the CBD Protocol on ABS, among others, have been addressed and endorsed in many of the Regional Ministerial Forums. These global processes have helped to shape regional agendas by providing the overarching policy framework within which regional agendas have been developed.
- 121.** The Forums have contributed towards the integration of global processes in both the regions and the sub-regions through strategic and implementation measures and tools, as well as partnerships with key sectors outside of the environment realm, not to mention, coordinated actions with UNEP's regional offices.
- 122.** The Green Economy agenda is a good example of how the Project has enabled the reflection of global processes in regional agendas. UNEP officials have played important roles in informing Member States about the importance of the Green Economy pathway for their own economic development objectives. This was especially the case with the Asia Pacific and AMCEN Forums. In addition, the policy dialogue at the Forum of Ministers of LAC helped to find common ground and dissipate some countries' misunderstandings around the concept of green economy.
- 123.** UNEP has also been playing an important role with the Ministerial Forums to help the Ministerial Forums to translate UNEA outcomes into concrete regional action plans.

Challenges with Outcome 2 as derived from the evaluation interviews

- Insufficient capacity on the part of governments to make linkages between regional and global issues;
- Limited capacity on the part of governments to implement global processes;
- Lack of political will for cohesive regional and sub-regional decision making;
- Lack of resources to convene meetings;

Region-specific evidence for Outcome 2

AMCEN

- 124.** Through AMCEN, UNEP has supported Member States in Africa in deepening their understanding of the relevance of global policy tracks related to such issues as desertification, climate change, the Green Economy, chemicals management, sustainable consumption and production. At the 15th session of AMCEN on 6 March 2015 in Cairo, African ministers responded to UNEA-1 decisions on the illegal trade in wildlife by adopting common strategy to address the drivers of the demand and supply of illegal trade in wildlife in Africa. Similarly, ministers acknowledged that the SDGs offer an opportunity for the continued transition towards a Green Economy.³²
- 125.** Equally important is the role that UNEP has played in supporting AMCEN in developing common African positions on the afore-mentioned issues. UNEP has also supported AMCEN in developing their common positions for UNEA.
- 126.** UNEP also supported AMCEN in developing its regional flagship programmes (clustered in five thematic areas that include: the Green Economy, sustainable consumption and production, integrated environmental assessment, energy, and sustainable land management plus related cross-cutting areas) as a means to contribute to the effective implementation of the outcomes Rio+20 in Africa. So far, draft concept notes for the respective flagship programmes and a draft regional flagship framework document for the regional flagship programmes have been developed. However, the measures needed to support national-level implementation have not yet been developed.

CAMRE

- 127.** The key role that the Project played in this region was to assist countries in understanding the relevance of global processes to the concerns and priorities of Member States, and to identify how national implementation should be geared accordingly. This was particularly the case with UNEA and Rio+20 processes, and to a lesser extent with the MEA follow-up.
- 128.** In relation to UNEA and Rio+20 processes, the national focal points are from non-environmental authorities. As such there is very little information sharing. Therefore, it is important that UNEP/ROWA continues to play a role to support Member States in implementation efforts. The Project has also helped to ensure horizontal coherence at the national level.
- 129.** It should be noted that CAMRE gave UNEP/ROWA and ESCWA the mandate to lead on the Rio+20 follow-up and the Post-2015 process. This enabled ROWA to support Member States at relevant meetings in order to provide information and technical support to CAMRE.
- 130.** The Green Economy is another important example of how the Project strengthened the relationship between the global and regional agendas. In the beginning of the debate, there was considerable resistance by Member States to the concept, especially in light of the misperception that the Green Economy would necessarily entail the end of oil production. ROWA played a critical role to explain both the economic benefits that could accrue from the Green Economy transition, and equally how financial systems will need to change.

³² IISD 2015, *News: AMCEN Declaration Urges Action on Climate Change, Illegal Wildlife Trade, Green Economy*. Available from: <http://africasd.iisd.org/news/amcen-declaration-urges-action-on-climate-change-illegal-wildlife-trade-green-economy/>. [26 November 2015]

- 131.** A final example of how global processes have been reflected in regional agendas relates to the SDGs. Within the League of Arab States, the Council of Ministers of Social Development has taken important decisions to assume ownership of the SDG process.

Asia Pacific

- 132.** In the Asia Pacific region, global processes related to the SDGs, UNEA and UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2018-2021 have been reflected in the regional agenda.
- 133.** As regards the SDGs, the May 2015 meeting of the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific highlighted the importance of: mainstreaming the SDGs into national planning processes; ensuring that the environmental dimension of the SDGs is also reflected in national plans and policies; ensuring national ownership of indicators; strong institutional arrangements; and stakeholder engagement.³³
- 134.** Regarding UNEA, the Forum reviewed regional and country-specific follow-up to UNEA-1 and highlighted the main issues and priorities for UNEA-2 and UNEP's MTS for 2018-2021. These issues include: climate resilience; decoupling; biodiversity; chemicals and waste; integrated approaches to environment and health; and the use of the SDGs to scale up environmental action.³⁴

Europe

- 135.** ROE has also helped to ensure that global processes are reflected in regional agendas. The work for Rio+20, the post-summit work, and the preparation for UNEA have all been addressed through the EfE process. This has ensured the exchange of information and the active engagement of Member States.

Latin America and the Caribbean

- 136.** UNEP/LAC has also helped to promote the incorporation of the key global environmental issues and processes into the regional and national agendas. Specifically, UNEP's Environmental Training Network (TN) in LAC promotes the incorporation of the key global environmental issues and processes in the agendas of the higher education institutions. The outputs differ by country, but are very important for the region as a whole. ILAC has played a positive role in promoting the incorporation of key global environmental issues and processes into regional and national agenda.
- 137.** Under the proactive leadership of Mexico, as Presidency of the Forum, there was substantive progress in consolidating the role of the forum as main political regional gathering and vehicle for cooperation, as well as in the implementation of the thematic decisions. Mexico also established a mechanism for information exchange, for countries to share experiences and lessons learned on environmental issues, and promote South-South cooperation. During this reporting period, the elaboration of the Document UNEP/LAC—

³³ UNEP 2015, *1st Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific*. Available from:

<http://www.unep.org/roap/Portals/96/forumdocuments/Annotated_Agenda_Ministerial_Forum.pdf>. [26 November 2015]

³⁴ UNEP 2015, "Chair's Summary", in *1st Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific*. Available from:

<http://www.unep.org/roap/Portals/96/forumdocuments/Chair's%20summary_22%20May%202015.pdf>. [26 November 2015]

IC.12015/3. Rev2 Progress in the implementation of Decisions of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, the outcomes of the Meeting for review of the ILAC (Mexico, 5-6 October) and the discussions at the Intersessional meeting of the Forum (Mexico, 17-19 November), show that the Forum consolidated its political role and achieved a level of maturity by the increasing engagement and “appropriation” of countries in the region.

- 138.** Engagement with the region’s permanent representatives to UNEP has increased and enhanced greater coordination and ability to promote the vision and priorities of the region in the UNEA. In implementing thematic decisions, the forum has a results-oriented approach, and there is a positive assessment of achievements and products from the ad hoc working groups/networks coordinated by leading countries and facilitated by UNEP. The upcoming presidency of the Forum, Colombia, is committed to build on the results achieved during the Mexican presidency, towards increasing the relevance of the forum and its contributions both to national environmental policies in LAC countries and to the international development agenda.

Immediate Outcome 3 – Regional priorities are reflected in global processes

Overview of Outcome 3 achievements as derived from the evaluation interviews

- 139.** The Ministerial Forums have created platforms that enable Member States to identify their priorities for key global processes and to consolidate those views into a common regional position. Where the Forums have been able to produce common positions, they have been better equipped to influence global processes. This has helped to bridge the gap that has divided global, regional and national governance processes, and is thus an important step in increasing policy coherence.
- 140.** Decisions arising from Regional Forums on such topics as the Green Economy and the 10YFP for SCP were reflected in key global environmental processes such as the GC/GMEF and UNEA. The Ministerial Forums have also provided a platform for the building of common positions related to the implementation of the SDGs. Even the UN Secretary-General has called upon the regional processes to take responsibility in monitoring and reviewing post-2015 implementation.³⁵
- 141.** This is similarly the case with UNEA. Because of the high level of participation and the tangible results that have been produced by the Ministerial Forums, it is becoming clear that they are well-placed to feed substantive input to UNEA and its Committee for Permanent Representatives (CPR). The Ministerial Forums are well-placed to strengthen synergies and input to UNEA through their regional deliberations and discussions of the regional actions to respond to global environmental challenges. The integration of the outcomes of Ministerial Forums into UNEA will help to strengthen the legitimacy, credibility and regional ownership of the outcomes of UNEA resolutions. This will in turn enhance UNEA’s ability to influence other UN bodies, such as UNGA, ECOSOC and HLPF.
- 142.** Another example of how the Project has enabled regional voices to be reflected is UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) planning process for 2018-2021. Each of UNEP’s

³⁵ Internal Communication from Secretary General, 2014

Regional Offices has transmitted regional priorities into this process, and in many cases, the priorities had already been identified at Regional Ministerial Forums. While developing the MTS, UNEP has acknowledged the outcomes of the Ministerial Forums as important sources of input for both the MTS process, especially the preparation of the 'programme frameworks' for each of the thematic Sub-programmes and for the forthcoming GEO-6.

Challenges as derived from the evaluation interviews

- Human resource capacity of UNEP Regional Offices to explain the implications of global processes for regional agendas and to identify the appropriate entry points for the Regional Forums to convey their outcomes;
- Frequent cabinet shuffles and the departure of government officials leads to loss of continuity. This means having to build capacities of new officials more often.
- Limited resources prevent UNEP from connecting the Ministerial Forums;
- Insufficient resources to assess implementation to guide future plans;
- Inadequate negotiation capabilities to participate in regional and global processes;
- Lack of sufficient knowledge on the part of governments and limited opportunities for information-sharing;
- Limited political will within global processes to reflect regional priorities;
- Limited high-level participation in regional processes.

Evidence from the regions

AMCEN

143. AMCEN has not only provided a unique opportunity for Africa to develop a common environmental agenda, it has also helped to influence and shape the outcomes of UNEA and the SDG process. Regional consultations under the coordination of AMCEN have been held with the aim of effectively contributing to UNEA. For example, during the 5th special session of AMCEN, held in Gaborone in October 2013, AMCEN mandated the African group of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP to prepare and promote a common strategy for Africa's engagement with UNEA. The decision also called upon African countries to ensure and promote the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, major groups and the private sector, with the aim of achieving wider consultations, effective engagement and transparency in the work of UNEA.³⁶

144. AMCEN has also mobilised the support of important multilateral, bilateral and international organisations and agencies behind Africa's environmental and sustainable development priorities, which have been promoted in global processes such as Rio+20, the SDGs and UNEA.

CAMRE

145. The Project played an important role in providing MEA support and capacity building to Member States in the region. The Project provided a platform for the exchange of MEA

³⁶ AMCEN 2013, *Gaborone Declaration on climate change and Africa's development*. Available from: <http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/Amcen_Events/5th_ss/Docs/K1353541%20-%20Gaborone%20Declaration%20by%20the%205th%20Special%20session%20of%20AMCEN%20-%20Final%2022102013%20EN.pdf>. [26 November 2015]

knowledge across the region and as a result, Arab positions have been more coherently formulated and better reflected in global processes.

146. During the last Governing Council of UNEP and the first UNEA, the region of West Asia was well-prepared with a proposed outcome document that was endorsed by CAMRE. This was due to the concerted efforts between LAS and ROWA to convene preparatory meetings, draft UNEA resolutions and identify priority areas. Arab countries also held daily meetings during the whole period of UNEA to discuss the decisions of the day and to examine how they could influence those decisions. However, the issue of resources may affect the continuation of this work. More dedicated and regular resources are needed to enable Arab governments to prepare in advance of the next meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

147. Another example is the influence of the Arab region on the Green Economy agenda. The region has been vocal in opposing the Green Economy because of their perception that it would necessarily entail the phasing out and elimination of fossil fuels completely. As a result of their position, the global definition of the Green Economy has been amended to appreciate the efforts of oil-producing countries in resource efficiency and diversifying energy sources and has departed from the call for the complete elimination of carbon-based energy sources.

Asia Pacific

148. Member State interviewees indicated that regional priorities were reflected in global policy-making. However, they did not elaborate on exactly how and where.

Europe

149. European priorities are successfully being reflected in certain global processes. For example, the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board have transmitted common positions on health and climate change to the UN climate negotiations and to the COPs of the chemicals MEAs.

150. ROE is well positioned to help the EHP influence the forthcoming UNEA, especially because the latter is planning to address the linkages between environmental and human health. One of the challenges that ROE is addressing is how to ensure that the ministers involved in the EHP process actually engage in UNEA, so as to ensure linkages between those two processes. UNEP/ROE has also collaborated with the WHO and other stakeholders to develop implementation approaches for the overarching health goal in the SDGs and its nine associated targets.

151. Equally, UNEP has strengthened its cooperation with UNECE, reinforcing their joint capacity to help Member States implement and monitor the SDGs by applying the methodology of the Environmental Performance Reviews. UNEP/ROE will be playing an important role in this regard and experience gleaned from the EPR approach will be instrumental for other regions.

152. The Aarhus Convention is a further example of how the Environment for Europe ministerial process has positively influenced global processes. Countries around the world are now taking steps to ratify the Aarhus Convention and the Latin American region is preparing to launch a negotiation process to adopt an equivalent convention for their region.

Simultaneously, work that is being undertaken at the national level as a result of UNEP's Bali Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters has been influenced by the Aarhus Convention and is thus evidence of how this region's priorities are reflected in global processes.

- 153.** Moreover, the overall strengthening of UNEP, both in advance of, during and post Rio+20, along with the confirmation for regular budget funding, was positively influenced by EU and other European Member States. The input of the region has also been important for the SDG process. In this regard, there is potential for the Environment for Europe process to make important contributions to the next UNEA on the challenge and opportunity of mainstreaming environmental considerations into the SDGs. However, the EfE process should endeavour to mobilise engagement from other ministries, considering that environment ministries have not taken the lead in the negotiation of the SDGs. This will be particularly important in the context of identifying and implementing the environmental dimensions of the SDGs.

SIDS

- 154.** A good example of how the Project has enabled the reflection of regional priorities in global processes is the SIDS forum/conference. The Third International Conference on SIDS (4 September 2014) adopted the SAMOA Pathway, in which SIDS Member States "reaffirmed that small island developing States remained 'a special case' for climate change and sustainable development due to their unique and particular vulnerabilities."³⁷ On 14 November 2015, the SAMOA Pathway was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly.³⁸

The overall rating for the achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed Theory of Change is Satisfactory.

3.3.2 Likelihood of impact using the Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) approach

- 155.** The ROtI approach is used to assess the likelihood of impact by determining outcomes achieved by the Project and the progress made towards the 'intermediate states' at the time of the evaluation. The assessment of the Project's progress towards achieving its intended impacts is presented in Table 11.
- 156.** The assessment of the likelihood of impact involves the examination of the following four elements:
- The extent to which the Project outcomes have to date contributed to changes in behaviour;
 - The extent to which the Project is likely to contribute to changes in behaviour in the future;

³⁷ United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases 4 September 2014, *Reaffirming Commitment to Small Island Developing States, Global Leaders Adopt Historic Text in Samoa Pledging Action on Sustainable Development*. Available from: <<http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/dev3112.doc.htm>>. [26 November 2015]

³⁸ IISD 2014, *News: UNGA Adopts Resolution on Samoa Pathway*. Available from: <<http://sids-l.iisd.org/news/unga-adopts-resolution-on-samoa-pathway/>>. [26 November 2015]; United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases 2014, *General Assembly Unanimously Adopts Text Endorsing Small Island Developing States' 'Pathway' to Sustainable Growth, Disaster Risk Reduction*. Available from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ga11585.doc.htm>>. [26 November 2015]

- The likelihood of all the aforementioned changes contributing to even greater and more significant changes;
- Overall likelihood of achieving impact.

3.3.2.a The extent to which the Project outcomes have to date contributed to changes in behaviour

157. The behavioural changes that are described in this section are framed in terms of the Project's three intermediate results, which are essential preconditions for the achievement of the Project's impact ("More coherent national implementation of regional and global environmental policies and increased reflection of national priorities in global environmental policies").³⁹

Intermediate Result 1: Greater policy coherence at national and regional levels (especially increased environmental mainstreaming)

158. There are two behavioural changes reflected in this intermediate result. The first relates to increased environmental mainstreaming at the national level, and the second relates to increased policy coherence at the regional level. Whilst it is too early for the second phase of the Project to definitively assess the achievement of these intermediate results, there is enough evidence to suggest that the desired behavioural change with Intermediate Result 1 is beginning to manifest.

159. As regards the first dimension, for example, AMCEN has provided a platform for capacity building to support African countries in their environmental mainstreaming efforts at the national level. According to UNEP officials, this has helped to ensure that national agendas are increasingly aligned with regional mainstreaming approaches, especially in relation to Green Economy efforts.

160. In Asia Pacific, the Forum has emphasised the importance of elevating environmental priorities into UNDAF and the Green Economy national processes. There is no concrete evidence of governments elevating environmental priorities and this is certainly an important objective for Phase 2 of this project. One Member State interviewee indicated that post-conflict countries and countries with transitional economies need further elaboration on mainstreaming environmental sustainability.

161. In Europe, the EHP has had a big impact both horizontally and vertically, particularly through the way in which ministers of health and environment have collaborated. This in turn has catalysed a more integrated approach in environment and health policy-making at the national level.

162. The Ministerial Forum in Latin America and the Caribbean has supported integrated environmental assessments such as GEO LAC, whose findings have influenced national and regional policies, including the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability. The Forum has also adopted several strategies and action plans, to influence national and regional

³⁹ UNEP 2015, *Monitoring outcomes*. Available from: PIMS Website: http://projects.unep.org/pimsdb/plomino_documents/9e989b112708463d321cf2310fca7c61/OpenDocument?openwithform=frmProjectNavigation&partName=.monitoring.outcomes.28899f010025a773c204224fa691604a.28899f010025a773c204224fa691604a-description. [26 November 2015]

policies and programmes including: ILAC, the SCP regional strategy, and the Regional Plan of Action on Atmospheric Pollution.

163. Notwithstanding these developments, it is clear that more work must be done to assess the implementation of the outcomes of Regional Forums at the national level. The second phase of the Project will deepen insights about the challenges and constraints faced by national governments in the implementation of regional and global priorities and will assess how best UNEP could support their efforts. This will be especially important in the context of the SDGs. The Ministerial Forums have an important role to play in highlighting best practices in SDG implementation and in providing concrete support to national governments to enhance their SDG implementation efforts.

164. As regards the second dimension (i.e. increased regional coherence), as explained in the section describing the effectiveness of the Project's Outcome 1, the fact that Ministerial Forums are succeeding in adopting consensus outcomes is helping to build greater coherence within each region. This is reflected concretely by the regional action plans that have been adopted by the Ministerial Forums, which have defined clear priorities at the regional level. Increased coherence at the regional level is also reflected by the concrete positions that have been adopted by the Regional Forums and transmitted to global processes such as the UNFCCC negotiations, Rio+20, UNEA, and the SDGs. Equally important is the fact that the participation in the Ministerial Forums is growing, thus reflecting an increased credibility and legitimacy of the Ministerial Forums as the authoritative bodies to develop regional policy on environmental matters.

Intermediate Result 2: Greater policy coherence and alignment *between regions* and *reduced gap* between regional and global environmental agendas

165. There are two behavioural changes associated with Intermediate Result 2. The first relates to increased coherence between the regions and the second dimension relates to increased coherence (or reduced incoherence/gaps) between the regional and global environmental policy agendas.

166. As regards the increased coherence between the regions, there is evidence that the regions are becoming increasingly aligned by virtue of the fact that all of the Ministerial Forums are addressing key global processes such as the SDGs, preparation for UNEA, and Rio+20 follow-up. On the other hand, there are some important differences in terms of the robustness and strength of the Regional Forums. Some appear to be stronger and more effective than others, for a number of reasons.

167. First, the degree of political stability within the region affects the impact of the Ministerial Forum, and in some cases, where there is instability, it is more difficult to generate meaningful consensus on environmental priorities. However, where countries can truly recognise themselves as belonging to the region, as is the case with AMCEN, the Regional Forums are more likely to generate coherent outcomes.

168. Second, robustness of the Forums will depend on the institutional arrangements and the extent to which UNEP is able to provide technical support. This is evident for example with CAMRE, where UNEP has limited engagement opportunities. In some cases, this has meant that the Forum produces outcomes that may be less aligned with global priorities.

169. Third, the longevity of the Ministerial Forums themselves has influenced their robustness. For example, the EHP, which has been in place for more than 25 years, has

developed a solid basis for inter-ministerial cooperation. This is equally the case with the Europe for Environment process and the other older forums such as AMCEN, which have proven their ability to forge regional consensus and to influence both global and national policy-making processes. Similarly, the LAC Forum of Ministers that has been in place for more than 30 years and has consolidated as one of the main platforms for high-level policy dialogue and regional cooperation among the Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and between the ministers of environment and ministers responsible of sectoral areas.

- 170.** Fourth, the availability of resources naturally affects their robustness. It is clear that resource availability varies from region to region and this affects the ability of Ministerial Forums to support the participation of Ministers from less developed countries within the region.
- 171.** As regards the second behavioural change related to this Intermediate Result, notably the reduction of the gap between regional and global processes, it is clear that most of the Forums have consistently addressed global environmental processes related to the Rio+20 process, UNEA-1, the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the SDGs, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, GEO, Climate Change. Air quality the 10-Year Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production, and the CBD Protocol on ABS. These global processes have helped to shape development of regional environmental policies. Increased alignment in this regard has helped to bridge the gap between global and regional policy-making.
- 172.** The Aarhus Convention is an excellent example of how the gap between regional and global policy has been closed. Originally adopted as a UNECE convention, the Aarhus Convention has inspired countries around the world to either ratify the Convention or, in the case of the Latin American and Caribbean region, to launch a negotiation process to adopt an equivalent convention for the region. Simultaneously, work that is being undertaken at the national level as a result of UNEP's Bali Guidelines (for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) has been influenced by the Aarhus Convention and is thus evidence of how this region's policy approaches have been reflected in global processes.

Intermediate Result 3: Increased ownership and implementation of global processes by the regions

- 173.** The behavioural change reflected in this intermediate result is the increased ownership by the Regional Forums of key global processes. Increased ownership means improved implementation because of the perception of relevance, credibility and legitimacy of global processes. It is important to recall that one of the key objectives of the Project is to enhance the ownership and capacity of governments to apply the outcomes of the Regional Forums into national decision-making. Indeed, where Regional Forums have been successful in implementing global priorities, this sends an important signal to Member States about the value of global processes for national decision-making.
- 174.** Increased ownership has also been enhanced by UNEP's increased presence in the regions. Indeed, in many cases, UNEP's contributions have been highly valued. In particular, UNEP's convening power has enabled the Regional Forums to attract the participation of Member States and to increase cooperation and collaborative approaches at the regional level. As well, UNEP has helped to explain the importance and relevance of global processes to the regions, and hopefully this will help to facilitate the mainstreaming of global priorities

by national governments. On the question of the influence of global processes on national government policy making, this is certainly an area that requires further investigation. However, it is clear that just the requirement of ratification of global environmental agreements requires national implementing legislation. This in itself would provide evidence that governments are being influenced by global priorities. For those Ministerial Forums that are administered by UNEP, it is clear that without this Project, it is unlikely that the Ministerial Forums would be convened, and this in turn would mean that the regions would be less able to own and implement global processes. Without the ownership prompted by the Forums, there would be less vertical coherence in international decision-making.

3.3.2. b The extent to which the Project is likely to contribute to changes in behaviour in the future

175. The aforementioned intermediate results/states are not only dependent on the success of the outcomes, but also on the extent to which the Project was able to overcome the impact drivers and assumptions. Both the drivers and assumptions affect the extent to which the Project is likely to contribute to changes to behaviour in the future, and to achieve the Project's overall objective, which is to enhance coherence in international decision-making.

Table 7: Impact drivers and assumptions for the Project's three intermediate results

	Intermediate Result 1 Greater policy coherence at national and regional levels	Intermediate Result 2 Greater policy coherence and alignment between regions and reduced gap between regional and global environmental agendas	Intermediate Result 3 Increased ownership and implementation of global processes by the regions
Impact Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNEP's capacity to reach out to economic actors. ▪ Ability to frame meaningful consensus. ▪ Challenges in assessing implementation of forums. ▪ Identifying making inputs and influencing key processes in national planning e.g. UNDAFs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity to integrate global environmental policy processes into regional agendas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity to participate in global processes.
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of attention and political support for consensus by economic actors. ▪ Engagement of economic sectoral ministries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of attention paid to consensus by economic actors. ▪ Discrepancies in the interpretation of global commitments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will on the part of economic ministries to accept decisions of global processes.

Table 8. Impact drivers and assumptions for Intermediate Result 1

<p>Intermediate Result 1</p> <p>Greater policy coherence at national and regional levels (especially increased environmental mainstreaming)</p> <p>Impact Drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNEP's capacity to reach out to economic actors ▪ Ability to frame meaningful consensus. ▪ Challenges in assessing implementation of forums. ▪ Lack of resources to convene meetings ▪ Lack of monitoring of the national implementation of decisions arising from the Regional Forums ▪ Active communication of key messages to influence national planning ▪ Difficulties measuring the outcomes of the regional meetings <p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of attention and political support for consensus by economic actors. ▪ Engagement of economic sectoral ministries. ▪ Competing national and regional priorities
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176. This intermediate result relates to increased environmental mainstreaming at the national level and increased policy coherence at the regional level. As noted in Section 3.3.2.a, there is emerging evidence, albeit still fairly weak, to suggest that the desired behavioural change with Intermediate Result 1 is beginning to manifest. However, the extent to which mainstreaming is possible relates to the capacity and political will of national governments to integrate environmental concerns in national policy making, as well as the capacity of UNEP to provide the necessary support. In this Project, it is clear that without the Ministerial Forums, national governments would have less motivation and inclination for environmental mainstreaming. It should be emphasised that the results of all the recent Ministerial Forums reflect a clear consensus regarding shared priorities and concerns, which means that the impact driver related to the challenge of framing meaningful consensus is being addressed.

177. The challenge of assessing the actual results of the Forums is now being addressed in the second phase of the Project and is recognized by UNEP as an important impact driver to be dealt with. As regards the assumption related to the attention paid by economic sectoral ministries to environmental policy concerns, it is clear that environmental priorities continue to rank low on government agendas in most of the regions. However, the existence of the Ministerial Forums has helped to elevate the profile of environmental concerns within the regions, notwithstanding the difficulties of elevating environmental issues in those regions that are characterised either by conflict or other challenges that may dominate the political agendas. In the second phase of the Project, it will be important for UNEP to support the Ministerial Forums in finding new and innovative ways to engage economic actors. The project should also reach out to the PEI, which has endeavoured to engage with ministers of planning and finance in mainstreaming environmental issues.

Table 9. Impact drivers and assumptions for Intermediate Result 2

<p>Intermediate Result 2</p> <p>Greater policy coherence and alignment between regions and reduced gap between regional and global environmental agendas</p> <p>Impact Drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity to integrate global environmental policy processes into regional agendas ▪ Geo-political factors that take precedence over environmental priorities <p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of attention paid to consensus by economic actors. ▪ Discrepancies in the interpretation of global commitments.
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178. Intermediate Result 2 addresses the coherence between the regions and the coherence between regional and global policy agendas. As noted in Section 3.3.2.a, there is evidence that the regions are in fact becoming more aligned by virtue of the fact that the Ministerial Forums are increasingly addressing global priorities. The evidence that most of the Ministerial Forums are concentrating on global priorities such as Rio+20, the SDGs, and UNEA reinforces the fact that this important impact driver is being addressed, and in many cases, overcome.

179. It should be noted as well that the alignment of the Ministerial Forums with global processes is helping to increase alignment between regions. However, the regions continue to vary in terms of their robustness and their effectiveness because of geopolitical factors, institutional arrangements, longevity and resource availability.

Table 10. Impact drivers and assumptions for Intermediate Result 3

<p>Intermediate Result 3 Increased ownership of global processes by the regions</p> <p>Impact Drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited capacity to participate in global processes <p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political will on the part of economic ministries to accept decisions of global processes

180. The behavioural change reflected in this Intermediate Result is the increased ownership by Regional Forums of key global processes. One of the key impact drivers is the strategic presence of UNEP in the regions. Where UNEP either administers the Ministerial Forums or provides expert advice, it is clear that the regions have developed a deeper appreciation of the relevance of global processes to their respective regions. UNEA is a good example of a global process around which the regions are developing a greater sense of ownership. This is

reflected in the extent to which UNEA figures prominently on the agendas of the Ministerial Forums, and in the time they have devoted to identifying follow-up actions to UNEA-1 and framing new priorities to be addressed by UNEA-2.

3.3.2.c The likelihood of all the aforementioned changes contributing to even greater and more significant changes

- 181.** The likelihood of the three Intermediate Results (i.e. greater coherence at national and regional levels; greater coherence between the regions; and increased ownership of global processes by the regions) contributing to more significant changes (i.e. changes beyond those already implemented at the post-Intermediate Results stage) depends on several factors. First, the geopolitical context of the region is a significant factor. In some cases, such as West Asia, the complex backdrop makes it difficult for the Regional Forum to mobilise consensus on environmental priorities where the attention of governments might be occupied by more imminent challenges.
- 182.** Second, the level of engagement of UNEP has been critical to ensuring the success of the Ministerial Forums, both in grasping the relevance of global processes and in translating those processes into regional action plans.

3.3.2.d Overall likelihood of achieving impact

Overview regarding the likelihood of impact at the Phase 2 mid-point

- 183.** In the reconstructed Theory of Change, the impact is defined as “More coherent national implementation of regional and global environmental policies and increased reflection of national priorities in global environmental policies.”
- 184.** At this stage in Phase 2 of the project, there is insufficient evidence regarding both the extent of national implementation and the degree to which national priorities are reflected in global policies. However, since Phase 2 has been designed to address these issues, it is assumed that the terminal evaluation of Phase 2 will generate the necessary evidence to make that determination.
- 185.** What can be asserted at this phase, however, is that there is increased coherence at the regional level. This is evidenced by the number of Regional Forums that have produced common positions and regional action plans. Without the Project, the regions would not have been able to convene Member States to articulate their regional priorities and to collectively advance their common regional voice in global processes.
- 186.** The growing number of Member States participating in the Regional Ministerial Forums strongly indicates that Member States find the Forums valuable. As Member States understand the greater impact that their common positions can have in global processes, their buy-in and ownership will naturally increase. If that trend continues, it is logical to presume that Member States will increase their efforts to implement regional and global policies at the national level. If UNEP can mobilise the necessary resources, or leverage other actors to support national implementation efforts, there is a medium likelihood that the impact will start to be achieved after the end of the second phase.
- 187.** It should be reiterated that the success of the Ministerial Forums in contributing to increased implementation depends on several factors that are within UNEP’s control, such as

the availability of financial and human resources and cooperation with other partners in the region, including other UN agencies.

- 188.** However, there are many factors that are beyond UNEP's control, such as the diversity within a given region, the actual number of Member States within the region, or the extent to which the region is dominated by conflict, poverty, or economic growth challenges. All these factors play a critical role in determining the success of the Regional Forums in addressing emerging environmental issues. The second phase should assess how best UNEP can work with the Ministerial Forums to address and overcome these factors.

Table 11: Overall Likelihood of Achieving Impact

Outputs	Outcomes	Rating (D – A)	Intermediate states	Rating (D – A)	Impact	Rating (+)	Overall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expert services and technical inputs provided to feed the process of consensus building in the Regional Forums Support to regional and sub-regional Ministerial Forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues/environmental governance Provide capacity building sessions/meetings and promote knowledge-sharing to feed key global environmental processes with regional/SIDS/LDC inputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional consensus on environmental priorities (Outcome 1) Global environmental processes are reflected in regional agendas (Outcome 2) Regional priorities are reflected in global processes (Outcome 3) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great policy coherence at national and regional levels – especially environmental mainstreaming (Intermediate Result 1) Greater policy coherence and alignment between regions and reduced gap between regional and global environmental agendas. (Intermediate Result 2) Increased ownership of global processes by the regions (global processes become more bottom up as opposed to top-down) (Intermediate Result 3) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More coherent national implementation of regional and global environmental policies and increased reflection of national priorities in global environmental policies. National uptake is essential in order to yield environmental benefits. 		
	Justification for rating:	B	Justification for rating:	C	Justification for rating:	+	BC
	<p>The achievement of project outputs was established in Section 3.2. It is clear that the results stemming from the outputs, notably the outcomes, were also achieved with considerable success. These are clearly established with regard to each of the three outcomes in the reconstructed Theory of Change. First, with regard to the achievement of regional consensus, it is clear that many of the Ministerial Forums have contributed thereto.</p>		<p>The measures designed to move the Project towards intermediate states have also been successful, albeit to varying degrees. Like the outcomes, the intermediate results are intangible and difficult to measure.</p> <p>The first intermediate result relates to greater environmental mainstreaming at the national level, which in turn, can help to increase policy coherence at the regional level. At this point, it is too early to assess the extent to which national governments have increased mainstreaming efforts as a result of the Project. This is the key missing link for forward linkage to the implementation part of the objective. The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results yet.</p> <p>The challenge of implementation at national levels will be further examined in Phase 2 of the Project. What is clear, however, is that</p>		<p>At this stage in Phase 2 of the project, there is insufficient evidence regarding both the extent of national implementation and the degree to which national priorities are reflected in global policies.</p> <p>However, since Phase 2 has been designed to address these issues, it is assumed that the terminal evaluation of Phase 2 will generate the necessary evidence to make that determination.</p> <p>What can be asserted at this phase is that many of the drivers and assumptions have been overcome. This is evidenced by the increased coherence at the regional level. This is evidenced by the number of Regional</p>		

<p>Second, regarding the reflection of global priorities in regional agendas, all of the Regional Ministerial Forums have addressed global processes such as the SDGs, the Rio+20 process, and UNEA.</p> <p>Third, in terms of the reflection of regional priorities in global policy, the Ministerial Forums have created a platform that enables Member States to identify their priorities for key global processes and to consolidate those priorities into common regional positions.</p> <p>Whilst it is difficult to find concrete evidence of the direct influence of Ministerial Forums in global processes, it is clear that without the Project, there would be few opportunities for the regions to forge common positions. The collective regional voice has strengthened the voice of those Member States who might otherwise have less impact in global processes.</p>		<p>increased mainstreaming will require continued support by UNEP.</p> <p>The second intermediate result relates to greater policy coherence between the regions and a reduced gap between regional and global environmental policy agendas. As regards the increased coherence between the regions, there is evidence that the regions are becoming increasingly aligned by virtue of the fact that all of the Ministerial Forums are addressing key global processes such as the SDGs, preparation for UNEA, and Rio+20 follow-up.</p> <p>The third intermediate result relates to increased ownership and implementation of global processes by the regions. It is important to recall that one of the key objectives of the Project is to enhance the ownership and capacity of governments to apply the outcomes of the Regional Forums into national decision-making. Where Regional Forums have been successful in implementing global priorities, this has facilitated environmental mainstreaming at national levels, meaning that the forums can enable increased ownership by national governments of global environmental priorities.</p> <p>The likelihood of the three Intermediate Results (i.e. greater coherence at national and regional levels; greater coherence between the regions; and increased ownership of global processes by the regions) contributing to more significant changes-- that is, changes beyond those already implemented at the post-Intermediate is significant.</p>		<p>Forums that have produced common positions and regional action plans.</p> <p>Without the Project, the regions would not have been able to convene Member States to articulate their regional priorities and to collectively advance their common regional voice in global processes.</p> <p>The growing number of Member States participating in the Regional Ministerial Forums strongly indicates that Member States find the Forums valuable. As Member States understand the greater impact that their common positions can have in global processes, their buy-in and ownership will naturally increase. If that trend continues, it is logical to presume that Member States will increase their efforts to implement regional and global policies at the national level. If UNEP can mobilise the necessary resources to support national implementation efforts, there is a medium likelihood that the impact will start to be achieved after the end of the second phase.</p>	
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Rating scale for outcomes and progress towards 'intermediate states'

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project's intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

189. Thus a project will end up with a two letter rating e.g. AB, CD, BB etc. In addition the rating is given a '+' notation if there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project. The possible rating permutations are then translated onto the usual six point rating scale used in all UNEP project evaluations in the following way.

The Table below shows how the ratings for ‘achievement of outcomes’ and ‘progress towards intermediate states translate to ratings for the ‘Overall likelihood of impact achievement’ on a six point scale.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

190. The aggregate rating is “BC”. The Project is therefore rated as “Moderately Likely” to achieve the expected impact.

3.3.3 Achievement of the formal Project objectives as presented in the Project Document

191. There is ample evidence that the Project has achieved important goals and objectives. First, many of the Ministerial Forums have contributed to the building of regional consensus and in some cases contributed to the establishment of regional programmes/initiatives reflecting the regional priorities. This is evidenced by the actual agreed outcomes that have been achieved by the different Regional Forums, notably the regional action plans and the agreed priorities for global processes such as UNEA.

192. Second, the Regional Forums are now systematically addressing global priorities, specifically relating to the SDGs, UNEA, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and Rio+20. These global processes have provided the regions with overarching policy frameworks, which in turn, have helped them to develop regional policy frameworks of their own.

193. Third, the voice of the regions has been strengthened and reflected more systematically in global processes. Ministerial Forums have created a platform that enables Member States to identify their priorities for key global processes and to consolidate those views into common regional positions. Where the Forums have been able to produce common positions, they have been better equipped to influence global processes (i.e. Open Working Group on SDGs, UNEP GC/GMEF, UNEA, Green Economy, 10YFP on SCP). Equally relevant is UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) planning process for 2018-2021, where it is clear that regional priorities are being increasingly reflected and helping to guide UNEP’s overall future strategic direction.

194. All of the regions have affirmed the value of UNEP’s role, either in terms of its secretariat support, or through the providing of policy expertise. UNEP has helped the Ministerial Forums to understand the relevance of global processes for their regional agendas. Equally, UNEP has assisted the Ministerial Forums in their environmental priority setting and has supported them in identifying how best they can influence global processes, especially the UNEA. As a result of these efforts, UNEP is increasing its strategic presence in the regions.

195. Despite the overall achievement with the goals and objectives in Phase 1, there are important lessons for Phase 2 to ensure continued success. First, UNEP has a continued role to play in explaining the mutually reinforcing values of environmental protection and sustained economic growth together with peace and security. Secondly, financial constraints have been problematic. In many cases, it is not just the amount but also the process for

allocating resources, which has hampered project results. Thirdly, the Regional Offices have played a very important role in supporting the Ministerial Forums and they must be adequately resourced to continue doing so. Fourthly, Member States are clearly committed to a high level of ownership of the process, as evidenced by their participation in the Forums. However, drilling down to the level of Member States engagement has not been possible. Because few Member States responded to the evaluation team's request for feedback, it is impossible at this point to assess the level of country level ownership of the forums. This is clearly a key challenge to be addressed in the second phase. The overall rating for the achievement of Project goals and objectives is rated as 'moderately satisfactory' since the evidence base for the influence on national processes that lead to policy implementations is rather limited.

The overall rating for the achievement of Project goals and objectives is Moderately Satisfactory.

3.4 Sustainability

The overall rating for Project sustainability is Likely.

3.4.1 Socio-political sustainability

- 196.** The larger political factors that the Project is meant to address include the incoherence in environmental decision-making and the weak capacities to link national, regional, inter-regional priorities with sustainable development and to connect these priorities with global processes. The Project addresses the specific factors that underpin these weaknesses.
- 197.** However, one of the political factors that has and will continue to influence the sustenance of Project results and progress towards impacts is the degree of acceptance of the consensus outcomes of the regional platforms by the economic and sectoral ministries.
- 198.** In addition, the regions that were covered by this Project have experienced differing degrees of disruption or influence by social and political factors. These factors have affected the sustenance of Project results and progress towards impacts. However, the increased willingness of ministers to engage at regional levels and to forge meaningful regional consensus is evidence of the extent to which the Project is addressing, and in some cases overcoming, these factors.
- 199.** It is important to emphasise that in several of the regions, socio-political factors were outside the control of the Project. Therefore, the Project must be adaptable to constantly-evolving socio-political situations. UNEP should continue to work closely with the regions in order to understand changing priorities and adapt project design accordingly.

West Asia

- 200.** Increased political conflict in the region has drawn attention away from environmental challenges. Political divides have also affected the ability of CAMRE's decision-making processes to produce substantive outputs. On several occasions, ROWA had to postpone dealing with environmental concerns (such as sand and dust storms) because of the on-going conflict in the region.

Europe

- 201.** In Europe, certain socio-political factors have been relevant to the sustenance of Project results. For example, one of Europe's security concerns, the Russia-Ukraine conflict directly affected the Environment for Europe process, where at times, environmental agenda items were displaced by discussions of the conflict.
- 202.** Moreover, there is a complex interplay between EU Member States and other European countries in the pan-European region. This too is an important socio-political factor that should be addressed.

The rating for socio-political sustainability is Moderately Likely.

3.4.2 Sustainability of financial resources

- 203.** Financial resources have proven to be the major challenge throughout the first and the beginning of the second phases of the Project. Despite best efforts to fundraise, the full amounts originally identified in the project document budget have not been secured. This naturally affects the ability of the Project to deliver on all the activities and outputs always have to be cut. However, with a renewed mandate for Regional Forums to monitor the post-2015 process, it will be even more important for sufficient resources to be mobilized in the Project's second phase. The administrative challenges associated with UNEP's budget allocation processes have also affected the Project since monies are not always disbursed in a timely manner. The continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project are highly dependant on continued financial support.
- 204.** It will be hard for RSO to mobilise the full amount identified for the second Phase. This is why partnerships, for example with UNECE, are so important. It is hoped that as the value of Regional Forums becomes more recognised, it will be easier to mobilise resources from key donor governments. The Regional Forums could be used as resource mobilisation platforms.
- 205.** The Regional Forums are requesting more resources, both for the purpose of working on additional regional processes and also to enable the mainstreaming of an environmental approach on national and regional levels. Despite this, many current projects that have been approved as part of the UNEP PoW receive minimal funding so as to encourage the search for alternative sources of funding. The likelihood that adequate financial resources will become available to implement the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project depends on the internal decision-making processes towards allocation, especially those involving the Environment Fund.
- 206.** The key point is that a project such as this one, which relates to every single one of UNEP's sub-programmes, should be covered under UNEP's core mandate. But the reality is that there are never sufficient resources, therefore UNEP mobilises extra budgetary resources to supplement project funding.
- 207.** However, the reality is that it is very difficult for UNEP to approach external donors to mobilise supplemental budgetary resources, when all project funding should ideally be carried out as part of UNEP's core mandate and corporate functions. Many donors are hesitant to provide funds for something that should fall under UNEP's core mandate. Therefore, these additional funds should instead be captured as operational costs.
- 208.** As a consequence, regions have sought alternative means of leveraging resources. An effective substitute came from contributions of Member States, be they to UNEP funds (for example, from Brazil or China), to regional offices (as witnessed by Fiji, Cote d'Ivoire, Jamaica

and Uruguay) or for certain projects such as the Energy Efficiency Centre in Bahrain and the Green Economy work in UAE. For certain projects such as the ETN, funding was limited yet sufficient to achieve the intended goals. This, however, cannot be taken as an indication that minimal funding is sufficient since the ROs can always achieve more with additional resources.

- 209.** The expectations and needs probably always will exceed the availability of resources, which will force UNEP and the regional offices to explore the range of possibilities for alternative funding—for instance, through the private sector or by forming other partnerships, with actors like the regional development banks.
- 210.** It is unclear at this point whether adequate financial resources will become available to implement Phase 2 despite the fact that the second phase for the project has been approved. There are of course financial risks that may jeopardise the sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact of Phase 2. Since several of the project activities are financed by the Environment Fund or by country contributions, if the level of the fund diminishes or if country contributions are reduced, then quite naturally this will have implications.

The rating for financial sustainability is Moderately Likely.

3.4.3 Sustainability of institutional frameworks

- 211.** The continuation of Project results and the eventual impact of the Project depend in varying degrees on the institutional framework of the Forums themselves, the regional offices who administer them, the level of expertise provided by UNEP and the level of engagement and cooperation between Member States. Robustness also depends on the funds available to the region through country-contributed trust funds.
- 212.** Acknowledgement of the Forums in international processes such as UNEA and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development has also been important to demonstrate the value and robustness of the Forums.
- 213.** The UNEP Executive Director has expressed his commitment to all of the Regional Forums, having attended the last sessions of the AMCEN, LAC, Asia Pacific and CAMRE Ministerial Forums.

UNEP Regional Support Office (RSO) and UNEP Regional Offices

- 214.** RSO and UNEP Regional Offices bring UNEP's services closer to countries and regions. The increased allocation from the regular budget to their work has enabled them to recruit more staff and this has contributed to the sustainability of its own institutional framework.
- 215.** Whilst the institutional framework of UNEP's RSO is robust, the UNEP Regional Offices do need to be strengthened in terms of their role with the Ministerial Forums. Part of the problem stems from the fact that each Regional Office is not just responsible for the Ministerial Forum, but many other projects as well. This creates natural human resource pressures. UNEP is in the process of strengthening different human and financial resource needs of the different offices. As well, the delegation of authority to the Regional Offices has increased, which means that regional directors can sign off on projects. This has sped up administrative processes significantly.

AFRICA

- 216.** UNEP/ROA is the secretariat for AMCEN. For the most part, AMCEN is robust in institutional terms, because ROA is very committed to providing the secretariat support; ROA's regional director and staff devote considerable time and energy to supporting AMCEN.
- 217.** AMCEN's financial sustainability does however pose challenges. AMCEN has endeavoured to convince Member States to contribute to a trust fund to cover the forum's operating costs. However, this has proven difficult because African environmental ministries are poorly resourced.
- 218.** It is advisable to have a predictable and regular budget and this can only be achieved by covering finances from the regular budget or the Environment Fund. This project is currently under the sub-programme on environmental governance, and resources are thinly spread across a wide range of initiatives and processes.

WEST ASIA

- 219.** The big issue relates to the way that CAMRE is structured and how it is run. Decisions that arise from CAMRE date back decades due to the fact that nothing is closed or removed from the books. This means that issues are revisited due to the constant change in personnel, who do not have any institutional memory.
- 220.** Due to the fact that UNEP does not administer the CAMRE Secretariat, ROWA has little influence in terms of redefining its structure, as it is internal to the LAS. ROWA hold a joint Secretariat with ESCWA in terms of the programming arm, but not the institutional set-up side.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- 221.** The robustness of LAC's main forum, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment, also depends in part on UNEP. UNEP serves as the region's Secretariat, and has made considerable efforts to draw upon existing governmental partnerships in order to create synergy between regional and global goals. Institutionally, the forum is also assisted by the members of its Inter-Agency Technical Committee (comprised of UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, IDB, and ECLAC) for timely project coordination and financing.

EUROPE

- 222.** The processes and structure currently in place have been built on many years of experience, thus rendering them robust and solid. Nonetheless, the robustness of ROE is dependent on greater flow of resources. Although the office has committed considerable human capital and still continues to deliver, results would be significantly aided by a greater influx of resources.
- 223.** In Europe, whilst UNEP does not provide secretariat services to the EfE process it does provide secretariat services to the recently-established Pan-European Biodiversity Platform, as requested in the UNEA-1. This is proof that countries do require UNEP's assistance in providing these services. UNEP's convening power is systematically recognised. Additionally, UNEP provides expert advice to the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development in Central Asia and the EfE process with UNECE.

The rating for institutional sustainability is Highly Likely.

3.4.4 Environmental sustainability

224. Environmental factors have not explicitly influenced the first or second phases of the Project. That said, severe natural disasters can always lead to a change in priorities for the Ministerial Forums, whether is it worsened air quality in Asia Pacific, the outbreak of the Ebola virus in Africa, or the worsened human health impacts stemming from last summer's heat wave in Europe. In the case of LAC, the adoption and implementation of ILAC since 2002, has promoted the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The rating for environmental sustainability is Likely.

3.4.5 Catalytic Role and Replication

Behavioural changes

225. Countries are starting to see the benefits from the Project, such as a collective dialogue and consensus building. They also recognize the importance of UNEP's assistance as Secretariat of the Forum as well as understanding the political relevance of the Forum. There is a clear advantage in unifying states within a region under one powerful voice with coherent priorities and a joint agenda rather than as many individual countries. They are better able to identify common priorities through the Forums, which have made them more prone to conquering regional issues together. Ultimately, this has changed the way Member States think and act when it comes to presenting their environmental issues. Furthermore, countries have also started realising that is more cost-efficient to work together. Since resource availability is always the major challenge in any UNEP project, the ability of collaboration to save resources is clearly a compelling case for continuing to support the Ministerial Forums. The Ministerial Forums have also catalysed an important behavioural change on the part of national governments, which may have to change their positions in order to ensure consensus at the regional level.

LAC

226. In LAC, governments have built and agreed on common priorities and the way forward. They have promoted more integration and balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development, which in the case of LAC region is reflected in the common agenda, ILAC. In the XIX Meeting of the LAC Forum, Ministers agreed to review the ILAC to consider the results of the post-2015 development agenda. The recently updated ILAC (March 2016) considers the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

227. The extent to which behavioural changes have occurred will often depend on the individual country itself, and the value it places on environmental priorities. Equally important is the extent to which UNEP has been able to inform governments of the benefits of engagement. Of course, behavioural changes are long-term processes. Hopefully the role that the Ministerial Forums will play in the implementation of SDGs will provide longer-term opportunities for continuing to catalyse behavioural change.

West Asia

- 228.** The Project catalysed some indirect behavioural changes. However, the Project was not the direct cause of the changes in the region. There are other UNEP projects in the region, which can be said to have a greater impact than the Project in engaging relevant actors. That said, the Project is certainly helping to elevate the importance of integrated decision-making.

Europe

- 229.** In Europe, the EHP has directly catalysed behavioural changes by virtue of sensitizing environment ministers of the health dimensions of environmental issues in the regions. This is evidenced by the fact that UNECE's environmental performance reviews now have a health chapter and by the fact that many European governments are now integrating EHP components in their development and health agendas. The EHP has also helped to increase public awareness about the health implications of climate change.
- 230.** Another example of behavioural change is the extent to which the Project has succeeded in convincing national governments of the importance of the Green Economy and water challenges, two key UNEP priorities. This is reflected in the growing number of European countries that have implemented national Green Economy strategies.

Latin America and the Caribbean

- 231.** At UNEA-1, the LAC group successfully advanced their priorities, which had been recently prepared by LAC Ministers at their Ministerial Forum. The process that they went through in order to articulate those priorities influenced the positions of LAC governments. Governments in the region promote collaboration and have been able to define a set of common priorities that are reflected in the ILAC and in the decisions adopted in every meeting of the Forum.

Incentives

- 232.** The Project has created incentives for national governments to work together in order to save on resources. Countries are starting to recognise that they will ultimately have far greater impact in regional and global processes if they speak through a unified regional voice. Equally, the fact that regional agendas are being addressed and reflected in the decisions of global forums such as UNEA has also incentivised governments to participate in Regional Forums.
- 233.** Furthermore, the Project has provided capacity building in terms of sharing good practices and providing guidance on environmental mainstreaming approaches. UNEP understands that mainstreaming will not happen by the efforts of environmental authorities alone, but requires the interaction between many different actors within government. Therefore, the Project has incentivised inter-ministerial dialogue through UNEP's efforts to demonstrate the value of whole-of-government approaches to environmental mainstreaming.

Institutional changes

- 234.** The way in which the Project has catalysed direct institutional change is reflected in a very clear example, the establishment of a new regional institution in Asia Pacific, notably the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, which replaced the Sub-regional Environmental Policy Dialogue.
- 235.** Indirect institutional changes might also be reflected in the fact that the Project has stimulated an increase in national governments participating in the Regional Forums. Whether this has been the result of some institutional change at the national level cannot be determined definitively at this point. However, this is a topic of inquiry that the second phase should definitely address.

Policy Changes

- 236.** In terms of the global policy changes that were catalysed as a result of the Ministerial Forums, it should be noted that decisions arising from the Regional Forums on issues related to the Green Economy, air quality, implementation of Para 88 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document, IPBES, 10YFP on SCP were all incorporated into the discussions of GC27/GMEF, UNEA. As well, the outcomes of the Regional Forum are feeding into respective UNDAFs of those countries that are planning their formulation. For countries without UNDAF, these outcomes are informing their national development planning and strategies.
- 237.** As a result of the Ministerial Forums, policy changes were catalysed at the regional level, as reflected by the 17 regional action plans/strategies. These addressed a range of issues including: Green Economy, renewable energy, air pollution, climate change, international environmental governance, institutional framework for sustainable development, SCP, waste management, and Rio+20 follow-up actions.
- 238.** In a June 2014 memorandum to the Regional Economic Commissions, the UN Secretary General requested Regional entities to convene jointly with DESA, regional meetings to discuss regional views on accountability that would feed into a monitoring framework for the implementations of the SDG agenda.⁴⁰

Africa

- 239.** In September 2012, the 14th Session of the Africa Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) adopted the Arusha Declaration. The declaration approved regional flagship programmes geared towards poverty reduction and sustainable livelihood in Africa as a follow-up to the Rio+20 outcome. The flagship programmes include Green Economy; Sustainable Land Management; Desertification, Biodiversity and Ecosystems-based Adaptation; Sustainable Consumption and Production; Sustainable Energy Development; Integrated Environmental Assessment for Sustainable Development Planning; etc.

West Asia

- 240.** In April 2012, the Special Session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) discussed and finalized the Arab position to Rio+20 discussions.

⁴⁰ Ban, KM 13 June 2014, Subject: Regional Accountability, Internal Communication from the UN Secretary General to the Regional Support Offices.

Asia Pacific

- 241.** In October 2011, UNEP supported the Asia and the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for UNCSD and adopted the meeting's report.
- 242.** In September-October 2011, UNEP supported the 6th Session of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, which adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (2010) and the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (2011-2015).

Europe

- 243.** In July 2010, the Pan-European High Level Conference on Biodiversity adopted the 'Gabala Declaration,' related to the CBD.
- 244.** In June 2011, the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe adopted a strengthened policy framework for sustainable forest management and agreed to commence negotiations on a legally binding agreement on European forests.
- 245.** The EHP catalysed integrated policy-making on environment and health issues. This was first reflected in the extent to which European Environment and Health Ministers managed to come together to collectively address the environment and health agenda. This process transmitted important findings to the UNEA, which last year addressed environment and health linkages.

Latin America and the Caribbean

- 246.** In February 2012, the 18th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment adopted the Quito Declaration, which committed governments to formulating a regional environmental agenda and transmitting important messages to Rio+20, as well as forging common positions on climate, technology transfer, etc. In March 2014, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to engage constructively to achieve a successful outcome regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process and incorporate the regional development priorities in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, respecting the particular circumstances and capacities of each country. They also agreed to undertake the update of the ILAC, considering the results of ongoing regional initiatives and negotiation of the SDGs.

SIDS

- 247.** In September 2011, the Project supported the SIDS preparatory process for Rio+20. This process culminated in a document presented at the Rio+20 conference, which highlighted SIDS' unique perspectives, priorities and concerns.
- 248.** Between July and August 2013, UNEP supported three SIDS regional preparatory meetings for the Third International Conference on SIDS (that took place in September 2014). The outcome documents of the three meetings identified gaps and constraints in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS (MSI); and recommended the way forward on strengthening implementation frameworks and detailing approaches for sustainable development of SIDS.

Other

- 249.** In June 2012, the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment (NWMLE) launched the “Global Framework of Action” beyond Rio+20 on gender, women, environment and sustainable development.

Catalytic Financing

- 250.** As noted in the 2014 Project Document, the second phase of the Project will be funded from: “a variety of sources including the Environment Fund and the Regular Budget. Extra-budget funding is expected from historical donors like Norway and Sweden, new donors like China, and existing trust funds such as the AMCEN Trust Fund, which is contributing US\$1,530,000. The Environmental Training Network of Latin America and the Caribbean is contributing US\$ 280,000 to implement its activities as per decisions in the context of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC. Resource mobilization activities for the unsecured apportion of the project budget will be developed mainly by the Regional Offices with the guidance, support and collaboration of the Project manager, relevant Sub-programme Coordinator and the Donor Partnerships and Contributions section (DPC)”.

Champions to Catalyse Change

- 251.** The Project has empowered the regions to strengthen their common voice in global processes. Without the Project, many of the regions would not have had the opportunity to identify common priorities and forge consensus, which in turn, would have meant less opportunity to influence global processes. UNEP RSO and the Regional Offices have also played important roles in supporting the regions with their substantive expertise, upon which regional common positions were often based.
- 252.** The Regional Forums also provided an important platform through which UNEP has enhanced its strategic presence in the regions. Through the Forums, UNEP has been able to showcase its services, knowledge and expertise.
- 253.** Within the region of Europe, the EHP Board is an example of how the Project has enabled institutions to catalyse change. The Board has produced valuable joint outputs. It also laid the groundwork for the creation of integrated processes, which could both prompt other ministers to form similar relationships and serve as easily-replicable examples. UNEP ROE’s work with the Green Economy has also supported integrated approaches by bringing together ministers from different sectors to address how to implement the Green Economy at the national level. As well, recently in Azerbaijan, ROE convened eight ministers together to discuss the integrated approach to the implementation of SDGs. This workshop has been replicated in two other pilot countries, with a focus on identifying the first steps in the planning process.
- 254.** In West Asia, ROWA’s technical and policy support has contributed directly to MEA task forces in the regions, which are some of the strongest actors in this region. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Forum has consolidated as one of the most relevant spaces for political and policy dialogue to establish and identify the regional priorities.

Replication

- 255.** The Project did take steps to promote replication of key activities. A good example of this would be the establishment of the Asia-Pacific forum, which was designed drawing on the successful examples of other Ministerial Forums.
- 256.** The first phase of the Project has now been reinforced by the second phase with continued support to the regions to strengthen the facilitating of policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues. Because of the differing needs of the six regions, the support being provided (whether it will be provision of information, materials, tools, expertise, training sessions etc.) will be tailored to address the specificities of each region. As noted in the 2014 Project Document, UNEP will build on its convening power and policy expertise to support governments during the initial stages of regional dialogues and collaboration on environmental issues.

The Project's catalytic role and replication is rated as Satisfactory.

3.5. Efficiency

3.5.1 Cost efficiencies

- 257.** The main cost or time saving measure that ensured Phase One's successful conclusion was the fact that RSO worked closely with the Regional Offices, who took the lead in supporting the Regional Forums where UNEP administers them directly. Where the Regional Offices were able to partner with other institutions in the region, this created important cost efficiencies. Partnership is the key to increased cost efficiency against the backdrop of perennial resource constraints. The Project also augmented cost efficiency in the work of the main stakeholders, i.e. the Member States. Without the Forums, they would never have been able to come together to dialogue and reach consensus on region-specific issues and priorities, or to coordinate follow-up actions. The Project has created enormous cost efficiencies for individual countries that would not have been able to collaborate otherwise.
- 258.** The main cost efficiency anticipated for Phase 2 of the Project is the fact that it builds directly on progress made during Phase 1.

3.5.2 Timeliness

- 259.** The only delays related to the allocation of budgetary resources, which is a perennial problem within UNEP and which most certainly affected project execution. It should be emphasised that this is a factor entirely outside the control of the RSO. Despite the financial constraints that were imposed as a result of dysfunctional allocation processes, RSO executed Project activities to the best of their abilities.

The overall rating for efficiency is Satisfactory.

3.6. Factors affecting performance

The overall rating for factors affecting performance is Satisfactory.

3.6.1 Preparation and readiness

- 260.** Overall, the project stakeholders (i.e. governments and major groups) were adequately identified. Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 were designed to engage primarily with governments, including regional and sub-regional inter-governmental organisations. These are the primary actors responsible for decision-making and the key focus around which Project activities were developed.
- 261.** In both phases the objectives have been realistic because they relate integrally to UNEP's core mission and mandate. It should be noted that Phase 2 of this Project builds on the previous biennia 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, which successfully provided similar support to the regions and produced important outcomes. Phase 2 aims to go further than the previous projects and fill the gaps that prior phases did not sufficiently look at. It will facilitate the sharing of information, lessons learnt and best practices between regions. Similarly, it will facilitate sufficient monitoring and evaluation so as to assess implementation of decisions/action plans/strategies coming from the Forums. Thereby, it will help to establish what has and has not worked, and thus also inform future actions.
- 262.** Capacities of the executing agencies were naturally considered since the Project was originally coordinated and led by UNEP's Division for Regional Cooperation, and later on by the Regional Support Office.
- 263.** As stated in the Inception Report that was prepared in advance of this evaluation, the Project Documents for both phases of the Project were clear and sufficiently realistic to enable efficient implementation. There were no major shortcomings, except some confusion regarding the identification of only one outcome. However, the Project team was following QAS guidelines, which differ from UNEP's Evaluation Office guidelines with regards to the framing of outputs and outcomes.
- 264.** As regards the partnership arrangements, the primary partners in this Project were the governments who participated in the Regional Ministerial Forums, as well as the Secretariats of the Ministerial Forums (i.e. UNECE, Council of Europe JCEDAR, the Technical Secretariat of the League of Arab States, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and ESCWA). For the other Ministerial Forums, UNEP acts as secretariat through the Regional Offices.
- 265.** Counterpart resources were identified, although there was a large discrepancy between the original budget and the actual allocation of Project resources for Phase 1.
- 266.** Despite the realism of Project objectives as explained above, it should be noted that the Project design was less realistic when measured against the availability of resources. There was a budget shortfall of almost 3 million USD, and this impacted this UNEP project in its ability to deliver on its partnership commitments, among other responsibilities. It should be emphasised that even though the Project is officially anchored in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme, the reality is that the Regional Forums inform and enable all UNEP sub-programmes. This broader scope and application should be considered when allocating financial resources.
- 267.** The Project design was also less realistic when evaluated against the level of ambition and the time constraints related to decision-making processes on the ground. For example, according to ROWA colleagues, many of ROWA's important milestones in terms of forging agreements were overly ambitious because of the many rounds of consultations required

before CAMRE can actually make a decision. An important lesson is that, when dealing with regions that are characterised by a high degree of socio-political complexity and diversity, more time should be factored into work plans.

- 268.** The realism of the objectives is also questioned by those UNEP officials who believe that results-based management should be more strictly applied. One important point that should be emphasised here is that it is desirable to have ambitious long-term objectives; this is what drives, motivates and inspires key actors, as long as the immediate outcomes are feasible. However, it is very difficult for governance projects such as this where Project results, such as the facilitation of regional consensus, are not as tangible or measurable as with other UNEP projects. This factor could be said to complicate the assessment of the realism of Project objectives.
- 269.** This is an internal challenge, which justifies why the Project's work should be considered a core function within UNEP's mandate and be covered by the core financial resources.
- 270.** As regards lessons learnt from other projects, it is clear that Phase 1 built on UNEP's long-term experience supporting Ministerial Forums. Before the first phase of the Project, UNEP's support to the various Ministerial Forums was not carried out in a systematic manner. The projectisation of these activities unified all of these efforts under the ambit of the DRC, and then later on, the RSO. There is no doubt that lessons learned from previous years have influenced the Project design of the first phase. Certainly, as regards the design of the second phase, RSO has been very clear that the objective of the second phase is to fill the gaps of the first phase and to undertake a deeper analysis of the challenges faced by Member States in implementing the decisions of the Ministerial Forums.

Overall, the Project preparation and readiness was rated as Satisfactory.

3.6.2 Project implementation and management

- 271.** The Project was coordinated and led by UNEP's Regional Support Office (RSO), under the supervision of the RSO Programme Officer. Oversight and coordination of the Project was provided by the Project Manager, located in RSO and supported by the focal point in each Regional Office plus the Fund Management Officer for administrative and financial issues. The designated implementing officers (RO Programme Officers) located in the Regional Offices were responsible for coordinating the implementation of the activities in the regions.
- 272.** Overall, this decentralised approach has worked well especially considering the good working relationship between RSO colleagues and the UNEP Regional Offices' focal points. This is also reflected in the scope of important Project responsibilities that have been given to the Regional Offices for implementation, according to the specificities of their respective regions. Regional Offices work on the ground and interact regularly with countries, with which close ties are being developed. The Regional Offices are better-positioned to sustain these direct ties with the countries and to channel their feedback to HQ. RSO has provided the support to connect and coordinate the Regional Offices, especially through the provision of technical support and policy advice, as well as the sharing of lessons learned from other Ministerial Forums. Overall, the Project's networked approach underpins its overall success and should be considered for other UNEP projects.
- 273.** Several interviewees have raised the issue regarding the delegations of authority. UNEP's capacity for adaptability and flexibility to respond to evolving issues as they manifest

in the regions is hampered by the fact that the Regional Offices do not have delegated authority

The Project's performance in implementation and management is rated as Satisfactory.

3.6.3 Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships

274. The Project team recognised the critical importance of stakeholder engagement in the Project. The Project aligns closely with two stakeholder-oriented UNEP projects: one, conducted under UNEP's Environmental Governance Sub-programme, entitled "Stakeholder engagement and participation in environmental agenda setting and decision-making"; and another, under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme, entitled "Support to Major Groups and Stakeholders for enhanced access and utilization of environmental information and knowledge".

275. To ensure the inclusion of stakeholders in the Forums, Regional Consultation Meetings (RCMs) were held before each Regional Ministerial Forum. In addition to discussing global topics such as UNEA, the Project expanded the agendas of the RCMs to include preparatory discussion for the Ministerial Forums. RCM participants then selected stakeholder representatives to attend the Ministerial Forums. It should be noted that even if RCMs were coordinated back to back to some of the Forum's meetings, there is still work that must be done to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the dialogue with Environment Ministers. In addition, because of limited resources, stakeholder participation is very limited.

276. During the Project, UNEP partnered with two key groups: Forum Secretariats, where UNEP did not hold the Secretariat itself; and regional and sub-regional organisations. Secretariat partnerships included the secretariats of AOSIS, the Council of Europe, UNECE, ESCWA, JCEDAR, the Technical Secretariat of LAS, and the secretariats of the four sub-regional Asia Pacific forums. Organisational partners included the African Union; the NPCA; the Indian Ocean Commission; the five sub-RECs in Africa; the European Commission (EC); the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe; the European Environment Agency (EEA); the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC); the ECO Forum; CARICOM; CCAD; MERCOSUR; the Andean Community (CAN); the Organization of American States (OAS); the Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC); the General Secretariat of the Iberoamerican Summit (SEGIB); the Inter-American Development Bank; ECLAC; and SPREP. UNEP partnered with organisations that either had direct mandates on environmental issues or addressed these issues through broader agendas.

Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships is rated Satisfactory.

3.6.4 Communication and public awareness

277. UNEP's Division of Communication and Public Information (DCPI) has been consulted and has provided support to the Regional Offices through the development of public awareness-raising materials. Examples include the materials developed in preparation for Rio +20 and all of the policy background papers that were developed in preparation for the various Regional Forums. It should be noted that Regional Offices like ROA do have Information Officers who link up with DCPI and provide the necessary support related to awareness raising.

The Project's performance in ensuring communication and public awareness is rated Satisfactory.

3.6.5 Country ownership and driven-ness

- 278.** The fundamental objective of this Project has been to increase the level of ownership of regions in their policy-making processes. The level of ownership by the main national stakeholders (i.e. the Member States) is reflected by the high level of participation by Environment Ministers at the Forums themselves. As such, the level of ownership has been sufficient to allow the Project results to be sustained.
- 279.** AMCEN and the Asia Pacific Forum are two good examples of increased ownership and willingness among Member States to unify their messages. Countries understand that if they do not cooperate and discuss their shared problems (such as air quality in Asia Pacific), then the whole region will be affected. They are seeing the value of working together and this is positively affecting the overall level of country ownership.
- 280.** This is equally the case with country driven-ness, since the Ministerial Forums set agendas for themselves. The Ministerial Forums are completely driven by Member States, and so their commitment to continue their involvement is essential and thus far, very high. Member States also appreciate the support that has been provided by UNEP, recognizing that the Ministerial Forums would not be possible without UNEP's neutral engagement, not to mention its convening power that has brought countries together to explore new forms of collaboration.
- 281.** There is, however, a constant change of personalities within environment ministries and this sometimes affects the level of ownership. This is why the outreach efforts of UNEP's Regional Offices are so important, since they are closest to the government actors on the ground and can help to sustain institutional memory.

Country ownership and driven-ness is rated Highly Satisfactory.

3.6.6 Financial planning and management

- 282.** Budget allocation is a perennial problem with most UNEP projects. For this Project, the planned budget at approval for the first phase was USD 4,044,270. However, the total expenditures reported for the first phase were USD 2,549,380, representing a considerable difference between planned and actual budgets. As for the second phase, the planned budget at approval was USD 6,768,835. At this stage, the total expenditures reported for the second phase (recognising that this project has not yet been financially closed) total USD 709,702. The second phase will be completed in 2016.
- 283.** It should also be noted that the Project budget was shared between RSO and the Regional Offices. However, only 75% of funding was available at the beginning of the Project. This meant that the Regional Offices had to make tough decisions regarding how to prioritise limited resources. A related problem was that it was always difficult to predict when resources would become available. The sporadic nature of resource flows made financial planning very difficult. In some cases, resources were disbursed so late that the Project team was expected to spend them within unreasonably short time frames. As always, predictable and reliable resource flows are essential for the effective execution of project activities.

- 284.** This Project has not required any staff recruitment. Under this Project, existing UNEP staff (such as regional directors, deputies and programme officers) were used, thereby obviating the need for long and complicated recruitment processes. No procurement was undertaken for this project.
- 285.** It does appear that the Project leveraged some additional resources after the start of Phase 1. There are extra-budgetary finances and linkages to other projects that UNEP is conducting, along with leveraged country contributions; this shows that the Project is not just reliant on support from UNEP funds.

Co-financing

- 286.** The first phase of the Project was funded by the Environment Fund; the Governments of Norway and Sweden (specifically for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy); and the Trust Fund for the Environmental Training Network of LAC. In-kind contributions were also provided by several countries.
- 287.** The second phase of the Project will be funded by a variety of sources, including the Environment Fund and the Regular Budget. Extra-budgetary funding is expected from historical donors like Norway and Sweden, new donors like China, and existing trust funds such as the AMCEN Trust Fund, which is contributing USD 1,530,000. As well, it is expected that the Environmental Training Network of Latin America and the Caribbean will contribute USD 120,000 to implement its activities. Resource mobilization activities for the unsecured portion of the Project budget will be developed mainly by the Regional Offices with the guidance, support and collaboration of the Project manager, relevant Sub-programme Coordinator and the Donor Partnerships and Contributions section (DPC).

Project financial planning and management is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

3.6.7 Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping

- 288.** Project supervision plans, inputs and processes were adequate. UNEP's system for the reporting of Project results is fairly robust. However, there were technical difficulties with the reporting system, which meant that there were some delays in reflecting the reported results. Efforts have been made to address this problem, but as yet, it remains unresolved.
- 289.** It should be noted that this Project is large in scope, covering all of UNEP's regions. This meant that a larger number of actors were involved in the delivery of Project activities. For the most part, they have succeeded in providing the necessary inputs to the Forums, notably policy expertise, documentation, and assistance to countries in articulating common priorities.
- 290.** On the whole, backstopping works well. The Project team works closely with the regional focal points and whenever they need assistance from HQ, RSO assists them on all of their key tasks supporting the Regional Forums.
- 291.** The key challenge has been the lack of resources, which has meant that not all activities that were originally planned have been executed.
- 292.** In terms of the emphasis given to outcome monitoring, less was done in the first phase. However, in the second phase, the Project team has made provisions for assessing whether

the commitment from the Forums has been implemented. Thus, more work will be done in this regard.

Overall UNEP supervision and backstopping were Satisfactory.

3.6.8 Monitoring and evaluation

M&E design

- 293.** The Project Document provided very detailed Project Milestones, as well as a delivery plan that clearly helped to foster management towards outcomes and higher-level objectives. The monitoring plan contained data sources, data collection methods and frequency. There was baseline information in relation to key performance indices. A specific target accompanied each baseline.
- 294.** The organisational arrangements for Project level progress monitoring were specified. In accordance with UNEP's procedures, Project monitoring was conducted periodically through a six-monthly review through the PIMS and IMDIS monitoring and reporting systems. In close collaboration with the Project Manager, the designated implementing officer for each region and component submitted a six-monthly progress report to RSO/HQ and a report in PIMS with a copy to QAS.
- 295.** Overall, the monitoring plan was highly detailed, providing indicators, baselines targets, variables, data sources, data collection methods, frequency, budget and responsible officers.
- 296.** The logical framework contained time-bound indicators and means of verification that were SMART. As well, SMART indicators were included in the monitoring plan.
- 297.** The means of verification were reasonable and appropriate, consisting of policy documents, surveys, and policy dialogue reports. Assumptions were not identified.

The M&E design is rated as Satisfactory.

M&E plan implementation

- 298.** In accordance with UNEP's procedures, Project monitoring was conducted periodically through a six-monthly review process, which utilised both the PIMS and IMDIS monitoring and reporting systems. In close collaboration with the Project Manager, the designated implementing officer for each region and component was required to submit both a six-monthly progress report to RSO/HQ and a report in PIMS with a copy to QAS.
- 299.** The designated implementing officers for each region, located in the Regional Offices (DELC legal officers plus other assigned officers where there is no DELC Legal Officer) were responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Project. The Project Manager in RSO provided budgetary and programmatic oversight at the global level, the latter through the completion of key milestones.

The M&E plan implementation is rated as Satisfactory

4 CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

4.1.1 Achievements and shortcomings

Phase 1 Achievements

- 300.** There are several achievements that can be related to Phase 1 of the Project. First, many of the Ministerial Forums have contributed to the building of regional consensus. This is evidenced by the actual agreed outcomes that have been achieved by the different Regional Forums, notably the regional action plans and the agreed priorities for global processes such as UNEA. Where the Forums have enabled Member States to draw attention to national, regional, inter-regional and global environmental challenges, priorities and the linkage with sustainable development, this has facilitated the forging of shared views.
- 301.** Similarly, the Regional Forums are addressing both regional and global priorities, specifically relating to the SDGs, UNEA, climate change, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and Rio+20. These global processes have provided the regions with overarching policy frameworks, which have helped them to inform regional agendas. They are responding to these priorities by addressing them in their regional action plans and strategies.
- 302.** Third, the voice of the regions has been strengthened and reflected more systematically in global processes. Ministerial Forums have created a platform that enables Member States to identify their priorities for key global processes and to consolidate those views into a common regional position. Where the Forums have been able to produce common positions, they have been better equipped to influence global processes (i.e. Open Working Group on SDGs, UNEP GC/GMEF, UNEA, Green Economy, 10YFP on SCP). Equally relevant is UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) planning process for 2018-2021, where it is clear that regional priorities are being increasingly reflected and helping to guide UNEP's overall future strategic direction.
- 303.** All of the regions have affirmed the value of UNEP's role, either in terms of its secretariat support, or through the providing of technical and policy expertise. UNEP has helped the Ministerial Forums to understand the relevance of global processes for their regional agendas. Equally, UNEP has assisted the Ministerial Forums in their environmental priority setting and has supported them in identifying how best they can influence global processes, especially the UNEA. As a result of these efforts, UNEP is increasing its strategic presence in the regions.

Phase 1 Challenges

- 304.** Despite the overall project successes, there have been several implementation challenges in the first phase, which should be addressed in the second phase. First, varied levels of socio-political disruption in the different regions led to different levels of Project progress. For instance, in West Asia, conflict and political divides has made it more difficult for CAMRE to forge meaningful and cohesive outputs relative to other Regional Ministerial Forums. The dominance of socio-political issues sometimes results in the side-lining of environmental issues and here, UNEP has an important role to play in demonstrating the role that conflict plays in environmental degradation and demonstrating the opportunities to address environmental concerns in post-recovery and peace-building phases.

- 305.** Second, it has not been possible to assess the extent of individual government ownership of the respective Ministerial Forums because of the limited response of Member States to the evaluation team's request for feedback. This will be an important challenge for Phase 2 to address. The Forums appear to be committed in forging consensus and transmitting that consensus to the global level and in that regard, the Forums demonstrate a high level of ownership of the process. However, drilling down to the level of Member States engagement has not been possible.
- 306.** Third, the availability of finances has also affected project results. Despite best efforts to fundraise, the full amounts originally identified in the project document budget are rarely secured. This naturally affects the ability of the Project to deliver on all the activities and outputs always have to be cut. However, with a renewed mandate for Regional Forums to monitor the post-2015 process, it will be even more important for sufficient resources to be mobilized.
- 307.** Fourth, whilst the institutional frameworks supporting the Project are robust, UNEP's Regional Offices are often overloaded with other work. This means that in some cases they cannot engage as fully as they would like with the Ministerial Forums. That said, the Regional Offices have placed high priority on the Regional Forums.
- 308.** Fifth, the existence of a global summit such as Rio+20 was an important rallying point for the Ministerial Forums. Now that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs have been adopted, there are no global summits planned for a while. Whether UNEA will be a sufficient rallying point remains to be seen and here UNEP will have to demonstrate its political importance to the regions and convince regions that their voice will be essential to the long-lasting legitimacy and credibility of UNEA.
- 309.** Sixth, it is clear that some Forums appear to be stronger than others. Where the Forums have been less successful, key factors relate to longevity of the Forum, duplication of other similar bodies in the region, the level of political diversity within the region, resource constraints and the role played by UNEP, either as secretariat or provider of policy expertise.
- 310.** Seventh, as with most process-related projects, it is difficult to precisely measure intangible project results such as 'coherence'. Anecdotal evidence provides important insights, but only if sources can be fully triangulated. Despite outreach with all the relevant actors, notably representatives of UNEP, the Member States and Major Groups, very few member states responded. Future project designs should attempt to define more precisely what is meant by such coherence and develop a range of performance indicators that might better capture it.

4.1.2 Overall assessment

- 311.** Countries are starting to see the benefits from the Project, such as a collective dialogue and consensus building. There is a clear advantage in unifying states within a region under one powerful voice with coherent priorities and a joint agenda rather than as many individual countries. Ultimately, this has changed the way Member States think and act when it comes to dealing with their environmental challenges.
- 312.** The approach of Ministerial Forums is proving to be effective in galvanizing Member States at the regional level. Member States are recognizing the value of the Ministerial Forums to enable them to forge common positions, which in turn, is enabling the voice of the regions to be heard and reflected in global processes.

313. Since the SDGs will be accompanied by targets and indicators focused on measurable outcomes, there will be an important need for the Ministerial Forums to help ensure robust monitoring and accountability. Innovation will be needed in terms of what is being monitored and reported, but also in terms of how information is actually used in decision-making.

314. In this section, the fundamental evaluation questions are answered briefly. More detail is elaborated in the matrix below which identifies the main findings, lessons learned and key recommendations.

Table 12: Answers to fundamental evaluation questions

Fundamental evaluation question	Experience with Phase 1 and the first part of Phase 2
(a) Has the Project achieved its overall objective to promote increased coherence in international environmental decision-making processes?	The Project has enabled Ministerial Forums to transmit their views to global processes and vice versa. This is the important step in generating coherence in decision-making. However, the building of coherence is a long-term process. Since there are many other efforts in place to improve overall coherence, it will be difficult to precisely attribute the results of this Project.
(b) Has the project contributed to an increase in the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in national and regional development plans?	There is emerging anecdotal and empirical evidence in the increase in environmental mainstreaming at the national level. However this will be an important focus for Phase 2, namely to deepen understanding of how and where national governments are succeeding to mainstream, and whether their mainstreaming efforts are indeed resulting, at least in part, from the Project. What is clear is the key role that UNEP has to play in helping Member States understand the value of environmental mainstreaming, both in terms of how mainstreaming enables Member States to meet important global and regional environmental commitments. Increased implementation leads to increased coherence.
(c) Have project activities facilitated consensus building by Governments in the regions/sub-regions on priority environmental issues and coordinated the necessary follow-up actions?	Regional consensus has definitely been facilitated as a result of the Project. This is concretely evidenced by the existence of over 15 regional action plans that have resulted from the Project activities. Similarly, each of the Ministerial Forums has transmitted their clearly defined regional priorities for global processes such as UNEA. As regards the necessary follow-up, this will definitely be an important factor for Phase 2 to address.
(d) Have key global environmental processes been incorporated in the regional environmental agenda as a result of project activities?	Most of the Regional Forums have addressed key global processes such as Rio+20, UNEP GC (now UNEA), SDGs, and UNEP's Medium-term Strategy. Thanks to UNEP's support, the Forums are beginning to understand the value of these global processes and the role they can play in helping to frame regional agendas.
(e) Have the outputs of the regional/sub-regional been reflected in key global	In many cases, the decisions arising from the Regional Forums such as the Green Economy, IBPES, and 10YFP on SCP were incorporated into the discussions of global processes such as UNEP GC27/GMEF and UNEA-1. Most

environmental processes as a result of project activities? And to what extent are the regional outputs reflected in national policy?	of the Regional Forums transmitted important messages to Rio+20, however Phase 2 will have to deepen analysis of exactly where and how regional priorities were reflected in global processes. This is similarly the case with the reflection of regional outputs in national policy.
(f) To what extent have the Project and Regional Forums contributed or are contributing to the UNEP strategic regional presence as mandated in the Rio+20 outcome document (para 88g)?	It is clear that the Ministerial Forums have contributed to the enhancement of UNEP's strategic presence in the regions. UNEP's role either as secretariat or provider of policy expertise is valued by the regions, which also recognise UNEP's credibility as an honest broker.
(g) Are project resources and the resource mobilisation strategy adequate to ensure the achievement of project outputs and outcomes?	This is a perennial problem. Despite best efforts to fundraise, the full amounts originally identified in the project document budget were not secured. This naturally affects the ability of the Project to deliver on all the activities and outputs always have to be cut. However, with a renewed mandate for Regional Forums to monitor the post-2015 process, it will be even more important for sufficient resources to be mobilized in the Project's second phase.
(h) Why do some Forums appear to be stronger and to generate more robust outcomes than others?	The relative strength of the Ministerial Forums depends on so many factors: knowledge and understanding of regional issues; availability of information materials, tools and analyses for policy making; lack of resources to convene meetings; the degree of political will for cohesive regional, sub-regional decision making; capacity to make linkages between regional and global issues.
(i) How, if at all, should the Ministerial Forums evolve once the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are adopted/ approved in 2015?	Considering the integrated nature of the post-2015 agenda, the Forums have an important role to play in supporting governments in developing more robust integrated approaches to decision-making. Similarly, the Forums could play a much-needed role in the monitoring of SDG implementation at the national and regional levels.
(j) Are Ministerial Forums well placed to strengthen synergies and input to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)?	The Project has demonstrated the significant value of the Ministerial Forums in transmitting regional input to UNEA. Without the Project, it is clear that the regions would not have a platform upon which to articulate their regional priorities. UNEA's legitimacy as the global environmental authority depends in large part on the extent to which the regions can see their voices reflected in the deliberations and outcomes of UNEA.
(k) What are the key lessons from the first phase of the project that are relevant for	As noted above, the success of the Ministerial Forum platform depends on several factors that are within UNEP's control, such as the availability of policy

<p>the implementation of the second phase? How can UNEP enhance its support to the Ministerial Forums?</p>	<p>expertise to support the Forums in articulating their regional voice, and the provision of strategic advice to assist the Forums in deciding where and how to influence global processes.</p> <p>However, there are many factors that are beyond UNEP's control, such as the diversity within a given region, the actual number of Member States within the region, or the extent to which the region is dominated by either conflict or poverty or economic growth. All these factors play a critical role in determining the success of the Regional Forums in identifying shared environmental priorities and the second phase should assess how best UNEP can work with the Ministerial Forums to address these external factors.</p>
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4.1.3 Lessons learned and recommendations for Phase 2

Table 13: Overview of lessons learned and recommendations

Key area of analysis	Findings	Observations	Recommendations
Project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were a few minor shortcomings in the project design as reflected in the two project documents. Of particular importance was the over-ambitious budget. The availability of financing has been a significant constraint for the Project, despite the efforts of the Project team to mobilise external funding for activities that should perhaps be financed under the Regular Budget, because they are so integral to UNEP's core mandate. On a methodological note, both project documents confuse outcomes and outputs and do not establish causal pathways between the outcomes (which are clustered together in one matrix cell) and the outputs. It should be emphasised however that the Project team followed QAS guidelines for project design, which in some cases differ with those of UNEP's Evaluation Office. In terms of the likelihood that stated outcomes could be achieved, it is important to stress that for both the 2010 and 2014 projects, there are many factors which are outside the control of the Project and which affect the potential achievement of project results. For example, countries with new democracies or with overriding economic growth goals take much longer to implement the outcomes of the Regional Forums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is considerable confusion when mapping outcomes and outputs at the design phase. QAS guidelines for project design do not align in certain cases with UNEP's Evaluation Office guidelines for project evaluation and this causes confusion for the evaluation process. Specifically QAS guidelines only require one outcome for the entire project whereas UNEP's evaluation office requires that outcomes be defined for each output pathways. In new project designs, QAS will require a robust ToC. Where there is a preponderance of factors beyond the control of a project, assessing and measuring direct attribution of project activities with the anticipated outcome will be difficult. The challenge of measuring attribution is best met by strengthening UNEP's efforts to assess implementation of Project activities at the sub-regional level. The more that UNEP drills down into sub-regions, the more it will be able to attribute greater policy coherence to the success of its activities. Similarly, the 2-year project period was too short a timeframe to be able to accurately measure the impact of the Regional Forums. 	<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>There are many external factors that affect the ability of national governments to implement the outcomes of the Regional Forums. Therefore the project team should consider adopting longer timelines for subsequent project phases to ensure sufficient opportunities for both national governments and the Regional Forums to ensure implementation. This is especially important considering that the regional cycles of the Ministerial Forums have been longer than the actual project term of Phase 1.</p>

<p>Strategic relevance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding the relevance of the project to global and regional environmental concerns, the voice of the regions has been strengthened and reflected more systematically in global processes. Similarly, the Regional Forums are addressing global priorities, specifically relating to the SDGs, UNEA, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and Rio+20. They are responding to these global priorities by addressing them in their regional action plans. The objectives for both phases of the Project were realistic because they were designed specifically to uphold UNEP's mandate to increase its regional presence and to improve the coherence of decision-making. UNEP's responsibility to enhance the capacity of Member States in international decision-making processes is an explicit component of UNEP's mandate and work. Without the Project, UNEP would not have been able to increase its strategic presence in the regions nor would it have been able to work so directly with Member States to enhance their capacity to participate in global processes. The Project has helped to elevate the legitimacy and credibility of UNEP in the regions. By providing secretariat support (and/or providing policy expertise) to the Forums, UNEP has been able to increase its strategic presence in the regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approach of Ministerial Forums is proving to be effective in galvanizing Member States at the regional level. Member States are recognizing the value of the Ministerial Forums to enable them to forge common positions, which in turn, is enabling the voice of the regions to be heard and reflected in global processes. Since the SDGs will be accompanied by targets and indicators focused on measurable outcomes, there will be an important need for the Ministerial Forums to help ensure robust monitoring and accountability. Innovation will be needed in terms of what is being monitored and reported, but also in terms of how information is actually used in decision-making and implementation. UNEP's ability to increase its strategic presence depends on its ability to engage in the Ministerial Forum processes, either by providing secretariat support or policy advice. 	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Now that the SDGs have been adopted, the Regional Forums should increase their focus on monitoring the implementation of the SDGs at regional / national levels. The project team should provide technical support to the regions to assist them in using the new SDG indicators that have been prepared by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators. The Forums should continue to serve as a platform for the sharing of best practices, and in this case, the implementation of SDGs will be an important focus.</p> <p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>The Project team should assist the Ministerial Forums in identifying the environmental dimensions of the SDGs. This will be important to ensure the Regional Forums to support national governments in framing their specific environmental priorities as they relate to each of the SDGs.</p>
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<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>Outcome 1- Regional consensus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the Ministerial Forums have contributed to the building of regional consensus. This is evidenced by the actual agreed outcomes that have been achieved by the different Regional Forums, notably the regional action plans and the agreed priorities for global processes such as UNEA. 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNEP's support and expertise is essential for the Ministerial Forums to produce meaningful consensus at the regional level. In order for the regional voice to have impact at the global level, it must be grounded in the most authoritative science and policy expertise. In this regard, UNEP is the well-placed actor to service the Forums. Member States are committed to their Regional Forums, and expect their policy decisions not only to influence the global environmental agenda, but also generate adequate resources for effective national implementation. The endorsement of outcomes such as the chair's summary provides an important resource that the Ministerial Forums can transmit to the global processes as evidence of their common views. The importance, and often the challenges, in achieving synergies at the regional level suggest other modalities for enhancing cooperation may be needed. For example, some forums produce negotiated outcomes whilst others do not. In Latin America, for example, there is a negotiated outcome that is discussed over two days. However, this negotiation process would not be viable in Asia Pacific due to the high number of countries in the region. Regional Ministerial Forums should continue to forge close relations with other regional institutions. UNEP should take the lead in assessing where and how regional priorities identified in the Regional Forums align with the priorities identified by other institutions in the region. On the basis of shared priorities, UNEP can then begin to forge new relationships. UNEP's collaboration with other institutions in Europe is an extremely positive example, 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The Project Team should enhance its efforts to support the Ministerial Forums so that they effectively contribute to UNEA and other key global processes. The Regional Forums are the most important platforms that can identify the strategic entry point for the regions in the context of UNEA preparations. The Project Team should continue to assist the Regional Forums to understand how they should deepen their impact in UNEA, and where and how they could best engage in preparatory processes. For Africa there is now a common strategy for Africa's engagement in UNEA.</p> <p>Recommendation 4a</p> <p>The Project Team should explore options with the Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders to improve and strengthen the relationship between the Regional Forums and UNEA and the CPR. Another area of collaboration between the Project Team and the Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders would be to emphasise the importance of CPR representatives aligning more closely with their own regional constituencies so that they act as advocates at the global level and ensure more intergovernmental policy coordination. This recommendation builds on the Secretariats role in facilitating these exchanges. For Africa, CPR members are now</p>
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	<p>which should be replicated.</p>	<p>participating in AMCEN meetings</p> <p>Recommendation 5 The Project Team should explore the development of partnerships with actors in each region to create new capacity building at the national level to support governments in the implementation of the results or the priorities agreed by the Ministerial Forums. Capacity building should support governments in developing integrated policy frameworks that ensure greater horizontal coherence as well. Because of the increasingly inter-connected nature of decision-making, UNEP has an important role to play to explain the added value of integrated decision-making to national governments. If government ministries begin to understand the value of integrated decision-making, this will increase the likelihood of ministries working together. UNEP should showcase good practices in this regard.</p> <p>Outcome 2 Recommendation 6 The Project Team should deepen its efforts to help the Regional Forums to adjust their agendas in-line with global priorities. This should not be a top-down approach, but a two-way approach where regional priorities are also reflected in the global processes. This is essential to ensure greater alignment, which in turn can increase coherence between global and regional scales</p>
	<p>Outcome 2- Global priorities reflected in regional agendas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global processes are being addressed by Regional Ministerial Forums, including the SDGs, the Rio+20 process, and UNEA. These global processes have provided the regions with overarching policy frameworks, which have helped them to inform regional agendas. The UN Secretary-General has called upon the regional processes to take responsibility in monitoring and reviewing post-2015 implementation. 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regions are willing to tackle global environmental processes, and Ministerial Forums provide a useful means through which regions and Member States can engage with them. In fact, regional consensus and agenda building may depend in part on the existence of meaningful global processes, which can then serve as the backbone for regional policymaking. In order for the Regional Forums to better reflect global priorities, the regions will need enhanced capacity building and increased resource flows.

	<p>Outcome 3- Regional priorities reflected in global policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial Forums have created a platform that enables Member States to identify their priorities for key global processes and to consolidate those views into a common regional position. Where the Forums have been able to produce common positions, they have been better equipped to influence global processes (i.e. SDGs, UNEA, Green Economy, 10YFP on SCP). Equally relevant is UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) planning process for 2018-2021, where it is clear that regional priorities are being increasingly reflected. 	<p>Outcome 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional priorities must be framed coherently if they are to successfully influence global processes. Because of the high level of participation and the tangible results that have been produced by the Ministerial Forums, they are well placed to feed substantive input to UNEA. They are helping to fill the gap that has in the past divided global, regional and national governance processes. The increased influence of the Regional Forums in UNEA will help to strengthen the legitimacy, credibility and regional ownership of the outcomes of UNEA in the eyes of the regions and Member States. This will in turn enhance UNEA's ability to influence other UN bodies such as the bodies such as UNGA, ECOSOC and HLPF. The success of the SDG agenda on a global scale will be shaped by the degree of implementation in the regions. The Ministerial Forums are well placed to facilitate SDG implementation in the regions. However, the Regional Forums will have to broaden their focus to include all three pillars of sustainable development. Linkages and communication between Regional Forums and global processes such as UNEA could be strengthened. 	<p>of policy-making. The Project Team should continue to bring lessons learned from the different regions to demonstrate how global processes have helped to frame coherent regional agendas.</p> <p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>The Project Team should devote resources in the Second Phase of the Project to assessing concretely where and how regional priorities are being reflected in global processes. The Project Team should highlight concrete examples where global processes reflected specific regional policy priorities. This is particularly important in building the case for attribution.</p> <p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>The Project Team should liaise with UNEP's Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders to explore concrete ideas to ensure that the Ministerial Forums enable the broader participation of stakeholders in the Forum meetings.</p> <p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>The UNEP Secretariat should organise a session within UNEA that brings together the chairs of the Ministerial Forums to share experiences. This will help to highlight the role of the Ministerial Forums and will help to build linkages between the different Forums.</p>
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<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>Socio-political sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied levels of socio-political disruption in the different regions led to different levels of Project progress. For instance, in West Asia, conflict and political divides made it more difficult for CAMRE to forge meaningful and cohesive outputs than it was for other Regional Ministerial Forums to do so. The dominance of socio-political issues resulted in the sidelining of environmental issues in all regions. <p>Financial sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The availability of finances has affected the Project's sustainability. RSO funding estimates are often inconclusive and funding does not always materialise at predicted moments. Additionally, while UNEP support is intentionally low in order to compel project teams to mobilise external sources, it has been difficult in this case to fundraise since the Project's funding should technically come from the Regular Budget because these activities fall within UNEP's core mandate. <p>Institutional sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the institutional frameworks supporting the Project are robust. UNEP's Regional Offices are very involved with many of the Ministerial Forums, in terms of funding, secretariat services, and expertise. However, Regional Offices are somewhat overloaded with projects, some of which do not even pertain to their own region. This 	<p>Socio-political sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-political conflict can negatively influence the forging of regional consensus, and thus Project success. UNEP must be ready and willing to adapt to different regional contexts and to different environmental prioritisation as a result of these conflicts. Only through adaptability will UNEP and the Ministerial Forums be able to maintain regional relevancy, and continuously forge productive consensus in all regions on environmental topics. <p>Financial sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member State contributions are an important source of funding considering the resource constraints within UNEP. However, more must be done to galvanise such Member State support (such as raising the profile of the Ministerial Forums), and funding from other sources must augment Member State funding. The RSO is best able to mobilise resources when it partners with other UN organisations, such as UNECE. Another key lesson learnt from the first phase of the Project is resource management. If more resources were available, more could be done. Greater opportunities must therefore be provided in terms of resource mobilisation. <p>Institutional sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional sustainability of the Ministerial Forums depends on the willingness of Member States to cooperate with each other and engage in Ministerial Forums. In those regions where consensus is more difficult, it is important to engage with national governments early enough to start building the basis for the development of regional consensus. This means 	<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>The Project Team should assist the Ministerial Forums in their future work on the SDGs. This could take the form of guidance notes on the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into each of the SDGs.</p> <p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>Considering the important role of Regional Forums, and also the need to enhance UNEP's regional presence, the UNEP Secretariat should ensure that sufficient predictable resources are made available to the Regional Offices to enable them to continue their important work in support of the Regional Forums. UNEP needs to increase support for the Regional Offices, since they are working on the front lines on a shoestring budget. Since the Regional Forums are conducted in partnerships with UNEP Regional Offices, UNEP should ensure the necessary level of resources to enable them to play that role and to increase its strategic presence.</p> <p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>UNEP's Regional Offices should explore new partnerships with other UN organisations in the different regions. This will help to lighten the institutional load of the Regional Offices in the provision of UNEP's secretariat services to the Ministerial Forums, open up possible new funding sources, and enhance their ability to support environmental mainstreaming at the national level.</p>
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	<p>affects their ability to fully engage with the Ministerial Forums. There is still room to improve the rapport between Regional Offices and Ministerial Forums.</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least explicitly, Project sustainability has not been influenced by environmental factors. There is little attention to implicit influences. 	<p>ensuring that governments are well prepared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong UNEP involvement in Ministerial Forums—through secretariat services, funding, and expertise—facilitates productiveness and institutional memory of the Forums’ regional processes. Increased delegation of authority to UNEP’s Regional Offices allows regional directors to sign off on projects, which facilitates rapid progress and bolsters the relationship between the Regional Offices and the Ministerial Forums. <p>Environmental Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While sustainability has not faced any major environmental threats, Project leaders should be aware of implicit threats—like air quality or heat waves—when developing the second phase of the Project. 	<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>To ensure that Regional Ministerial Forums have a solid foundation upon which to build consensus, UNEP’s Regional Offices should work more directly with national governments in regions where consensus is more difficult. UNEP presence is very important in helping to build consensus on a range of environmental priorities. UNEP should improve its engagement with Ministerial Forums in regions where it does not directly provide secretariat services, perhaps through increasing the extent to which they offer policy expertise.</p>
Replication	<p>Behavioural changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministerial Forums have also catalysed an important behavioural change on the part of national governments, which sometimes have had to change their own positions in order to ensure consensus at the regional level. In certain regions, the Regional Ministerial Forums have increased regional coherence and enabled the regions to present a unified front in global forums. <p>Institutional changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SDGs provide governments with opportunities to start the process of realigning 	<p>Behavioural changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visibility of regional agendas in global processes such as UNEA prompts Member States and other regional stakeholders to work together, both in terms of resource mobilisation and policy-making. Increased cooperation leads to a greater chance of replicability. The extent to which behavioural changes have occurred will often depend on the individual country itself, and the value it places on environmental priorities. Equally important is the extent to which UNEP has been able to inform governments of the benefits of engagement. Of course, behavioural changes are long-term processes. <p>Institutional changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foundation of the second phase of the Project will continue to be valid for years to 	

	<p>institutional frameworks.</p> <p>Incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project has created incentives for national governments to work together order to save on resources. Countries are starting to recognise that they will ultimately have far greater impact in global processes if they speak through a unified regional voice. <p>Policy changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of policy changes, whilst the Project did not catalyse changes per se, it has catalysed a shift in thinking about the need for greater policy alignment. <p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-stakeholder partnerships are also instrumental in delivering the SDGs. The current fragmented approach to environmental decision-making must be improved, especially with regard to the engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders. Within UNEP, there is a need for greater alignment between the MGS Branch, the RSO, and the SGB. 	<p>come because the objective of the project is so integral to UNEP's overall mandate to increase its strategic presence in the regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, the particular importance of this new phase is for the Project to fill the gaps of the previous phase by assessing the extent to which the outputs of the Regional Forums have actually been implemented at the regional and national levels. Finally, increased capacity enhancement within the region and also integrated at national levels will help the implementation of the second phase of the Project (focused on gaps in national implementation of regional processes). 	
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNEP partnered with regional institutions in some regions, which lowered UNEP's overall costs. At the same time, convened by the Forums in one central platform, Member States were able to greatly reduce their own costs. Phase 2 builds directly on the work already accomplished in Phase 1. This will contribute to the improved efficiency of Phase 2. 	<p>Partnership and collaboration are key to achieving cost efficiencies. In those regions where it has not yet done so, UNEP should establish partnerships with other regional institutions. This will help to broaden the scope of support that it can provide to the Ministerial Forums. It will also help to reduce costs.</p>	
Factors affecting Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The factor that most greatly affected performance was the unpredictability of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNEP's budget allocation process is a major factor that undermines the effectiveness of important projects such as 	<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>The UNEP Secretariat should take concrete steps to resolve the</p>

	resource flows. This hindered the execution of Project activities and greatly complicated the work of the Regional Offices.	this one.	problems with its budget allocation and financial disbursement processes, which lead to untenable delays and complications.
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5 ANNEXES

Annex I. Terms of reference for the evaluation

An abridged version of the Terms of Reference is presented here.

TERMS OF REFERENCE⁴¹

Evaluation of the UNEP project

Projects 41-P3 and 433-1 “Support to regional and sub-regional ministerial forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues/environmental governance”.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project General Information⁴²

Table1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID:	41-P3 433-1	IMIS number:	3B16 2M15
Sub-programme:	Environmental Governance	Expected Accomplishment(s):	For 2010 – 2011 and 2012 - 2013 4.1 The UN system, respecting the mandates of other entities, progressively achieves synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements. For 2014 – 2015 4.3 Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability into national and regional development policies and plans.
UNEP approval date:	First phase: October 2010 Second phase: August 2014	PoW Output(s):	416 in 2010 – 2011 416 in 2012 – 2013 433 in 2014 – 2015 433 in 2016 - 2017 ⁴³
Expected Start Date:	1.10.2010	Actual start date:	18.10.2010
Planned completion date:	First phase: 30.5.14 Second phase: Dec 2017	Actual completion date of first phase: 30.5.14	First phase: completed Second phase: ongoing

⁴¹ TOR template version of Sep-13

⁴³ Support provided for effective policy exchange and policy dialogue on environment and development issues through regional and subregional ministerial and other intergovernmental and multistakeholder forums and mechanisms.

Planned project budget at approval for first phase:	4,044,270	Total expenditures reported for first phase.	2,549,380
Planned project budget at approval for second phase	6,768,835	Total expenditures reported for second phase	709,702 disbursed but actual expenditures not yet available
First Disbursement:		Date of financial closure:	Not yet financially closed
No. of revisions:	2	Date of last revision of first phase: Date of approval of second phase:	January 2014 August 2014
Evaluation (joint terminal evaluation of first phase and mid-term evaluation of second phase) (actual date):	March 2015		

Project rationale

1. In its resolution of 2997 of 15 December 1972, the UN General Assembly established UNEP as the principal body of the UN in the field of the environment. In its resolution 63/220 of December 2008, the General Assembly further reaffirmed 'the role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority and principal body within the UN system in the field of environment. As such, UNEP is well positioned to provide key inputs to Member States' deliberations on key environmental issues, and since 1972 has been providing platforms to facilitate policy debate, negotiations and decision making. Further support for UNEP's role came at the Rio + 20 conference, at which world leaders committed (GA resolution 66/288 of July 2012) to strengthening and upgrading UNEP, including making its membership universal, and strengthening its strategic regional presence. The 58-member Governing Council was subsequently succeeded by the universal membership UN Environment Assembly. The first UNEA in June 2014 highlighted that regional and sub-regional forums form a critical part of global governance on environmental sustainability, and their contribution in terms of facilitating consensus and action would add significant value to the UNEA.
2. The specific vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) were considered by the General Assembly through its convening of the First Global Conference on the Sustainable Developments of SIDS (Barbados 1994) where the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) was adopted. In 2005, the Mauritius International Meeting to review the implementation of the BPOA was convened and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the BPOA was adopted. The relevant agencies of the UN system were requested to mainstream the Mauritius strategy in their work programmes. In September 2014, the Third International Conference on SIDS took place in Samoa and adopted the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa Pathway), which calls upon the UN system to provide support to ensure that UN entities take fully into account the issues of SIDS and include support for those States and the development of their capacities in their programmes.
3. This first phase of this project, initiated in 2010, undertook to respond to some of the mandates highlighted above, and requests at regional, sub-regional, and inter-regional levels by supporting the convening of ministerial and other environmental forums in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia regions as well as SIDS.
4. In addition, the project planned to carry out activities at sub-regional level with a view to engaging a broader set of stakeholders in the development arena (such as Regional Economic communities), provide capacity building support where needed and responding to established agreements and existing requests for support.
5. In 2014, a new phase of the project was designed. This new phase aims to build on the considerable achievements of the first phase (described in detail in the project document pp 10-13. But

while the fundamental objective of the project remains the same, the new phase of the project aimed to go further by filling the gaps that the previous phase did not look at such as assessing to what extent the decisions and commitments from regional forums have resulted in action in the regions and by UNEP and its partners, and supporting an increase in South-South Cooperation, lesson learning and sharing of best practices.

Project objectives and components

6. The goal of the first phase of the project was to **‘promote increased coherence in the international decision making processes related to the environment’** (through support to the convening of ministerial and environmental forums in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia regions.)

7. This goal related to the following UNEP expected accomplishments:

For 2010-2011 and 2012-2013:

4.1 The UN system, respecting the mandates of other entities, progressively achieves synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decisions making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements.

For 2014 – 2015:

Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability into national and regional development policies and plans.

8. The objective of the second phase remains the same, with an additional comment that this objective will contribute to the higher level result that ‘environmental sustainability is mainstreamed in national and regional development policies and plans as a result of UNEP’s assistance.’

9. This objective contributes to Subprogramme 4: Environmental Governance. Expected Accomplishment (c) “Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans” Output 3: Support provided for effective policy exchange and political dialogue on environmental issues through sub-regional and regional ministerial and other governmental and multi-stakeholder forums and mechanisms.

10. This was to be done by working towards the three key outcomes. These and the associated project outputs (components in phase 2) are summarised in the table below.

Table 2 Project Outcomes and Outputs

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	
Outcome (phase 1): Effective policy exchange and development and priority setting by countries are supported through regional ministerial and other environmental forums	Outcome (phase 2): Regional intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder forums strengthened to facilitate consensus building and shared knowledge on environment and development issues	Indicators: Number of common environmental policies agreed upon in ministerial forums that are under implementation through UNEP’s assistance (phase 1). Increase in number of policies and plans from sub-regional and regional forums that incorporate the principles of environmental sustainability as a result of UNEP support (phase 2).
Outputs (Phase 1)	Components (Phase 2)	Related Project Outputs/activities (additional phase 2 activities in <i>italics</i>)

1. Consensus achieved on key region/SIDs specific environmental and developmental priorities and relevant strategies and programmes developed.	1. Facilitate consensus building by Governments on priority environmental issues in the regions/interregional (SIDS, LDCs) and coordinate required follow up actions.	UNEP support to convening of environmental forums. UNEP support to identification of concerns to be addressed in these forums UNEP support to development of strategies towards implementing decisions. Sharing best practices and lessons learned. Assistance to drafting of action plans.
2. Key global environmental processes/issues incorporated in the regional environmental agenda.	2. Incorporate key global environmental processes into regional/interregional (SIDS, LDCs) environmental agendas.	Preparation of technical reports to support meetings. Sharing knowledge and information. Convening of sub regional meetings. Close coordination with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on agenda setting and technical discussions.
3. Regional inputs reflected in key global environmental processes.	3. Ensure that regional /interregional (SIDS, LDCs) environmental inputs are reflected in key global environmental processes.	Channel regional inputs into key global environmental processes. Organisation of capacity building sessions where needed. Coordination of regional inputs to IEG and Rio+20 preparations.

11. The project would engage primarily with two main stakeholder groups:-

- 1) Governments which are responsible for making and implementing policy decisions that can contribute to sustainable development in their respective regions.
- 2) Civil society groups and the private sector, which play a critical role in advocating for action by governments and decision makers on regional environmental and development issues.

12 The project was committed to promote a gender and poverty alleviation focus in its meetings. This was to be done both through encouraging the participation of women in forums and also by providing and promoting gender analysis resources and support to policies that promote gender responsive management of natural resources.

13 The project causality is summarised in the Theory of Change and Log Framework in the Project document.

Executing Arrangements

14. The first phase of the project was coordinated and led by UNEP's Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC). Overall oversight and coordination of the project was to be provided by the Project manager located in DRC at UNEP Headquarters. DRC was dissolved and succeeded by the Regional Support Office (RSO) in October 2013. RSO continued to have oversight of the first and second phase of the project.

15. With respect to the regional and sub-regional forums, the designated implementing officers, located in the regional offices, were responsible for the implementation of the activities. These officers were to provide 5 monthly progress reports to include monitoring information on indicators and milestones for their respective regions.

16. Depending on the agenda of the forums, the regional offices were to draw on expertise from substantive divisions.
17. Regional offices were to use SSFAs and SSA agreements to work with partner organisations.
18. In order to engage with civil society groups and the private sector, the project was to establish linkages to the project 'Engaging Major groups and stakeholders for policy dialogue' which was also developed in the same year under the Environmental Governance programme.
19. Key project partners were secretariats of ministerial forums and regional and sub-regional organisations.
20. To increase efficiency the project was to coordinate its activities with existing political and development cooperation mechanisms.
21. The second phase of the project has a similar executing arrangement, and is overseen by the Regional Support Office. Details of implementation arrangements and an organogram can be found in the project document pp 30-34.

Project Cost and Financing

21. The project budget at the start of the project is shown below (table 2)

Table 2 – Budget 2010 (from project document)

Duration and Cost

Project Commencing: (10/2010)	Project Completing: (12/2011)			Total duration in Months: (15)
Cost to:	US\$ pre 2010-11	US\$ 2010-11	US post 2010-11	US\$ Total
Environment Fund				
Other Contribution (list the contributors)				
For the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PELBDS): Norway and Switzerland		274,000		274,000
Trust fund for the Environmental Training Network of LAC		150,000		150,000
<i>Subtotal</i>				
In-kind Contribution from Countries. List for each Country separately				
In-kind Contribution from the Partner(s). List for each Partner separately				
Unsecured		3,155,000		3,155,000
Sub-total		3,579,000		3,579,000
Programme Support Costs (13%)		465,270		465,270
Grand Total		4,044,270		4,044,270

Table 3 shows the budget presented at the first revision (2012)

Table 3 – Budget 2012

Project Commencing: (10/2010)	Project Completing: (12/2013)	Total duration in Months: (39)		
		US\$ 2010-11	US\$ 2012-13	US\$ Total
Budget				
<u>Secured</u>				
For PELBDS – Norway and Switzerland		274,000	440,000	714,000
Trust fund for the Environment Training Network of LAC		150,000	356,994	506,994
Norway		248,000	517,200	765,200
Sweden		132,522	169,042	301,564
AMCEN			677,032	677,032
<u>Sub-total</u>		804,522	2,160,268	2,964,790
<u>Unsecured</u>				
		0	807,597	807,597
<u>Sub-total</u>				
Programme Support Cost (8% and 13% as appropriate)		64,362	207,521	271,883
Total		868,884	3,175,386	4,044,270

Table 4 shows the budget at the time of the second revision (January 2014). This was a no cost extension.

Table 4 – Budget January 2014

Project Commencing: (10/2010)	Project Completing: (06/2014)	Total duration in Months: (44)			
		2010- 2011	2012 - 2013	2014	Total
For PELBDS – Norway and Switzerland		274,000	219,933	220,067	714,000
Trust fund for the Environment Training Network of LAC		150,000	77,086	279,908	506,994
Norway		248,000	104,644	412,556	765,200
Sweden		132,522	26,673	142,369	301,564
AMCEN			122,538	554,494	677,032
<u>Sub-total</u>		804,522	550,874	1,609,394	2,964,790
<u>Unsecured</u>					
				807,597	807,597
<u>Sub-total</u>		804,522	550,874	2,416,991	3,772,387
Programme Support Cost (8% and 13% as appropriate)		64,362	38,519	169,002	271,883
Total		868,884	589,393	2,585,993	4,044,270

22. The budget for the second phase of the project can be found in the project document pp8, and a resource mobilisation strategy is described on p24.

Implementation Issues

23. The first phase of the project has resulted in considerable achievements (described in detail in the project document).

24. Some challenges in project implementation in the first phase included:-

- Country ownership: is sometimes lacking, particularly in the case where UNEP acts as the secretariat.
- Maintaining momentum of forums: due to lack of continuity in membership, or insufficient links between country representatives attending regional and global meetings.
- Duplication of activities: by new regional forums which are not affiliated with the project.
- Resource mobilisation: it is often difficult to access the budget, which means that project activities and outputs must be cut.
- Difficulties measuring the outcomes of the project outputs and activities.
- Aligning the project cycle to the cycle of key international events.

- Some forums appear to be stronger and generate more positive outcomes than others. The project would like to better understand the reasons, and plans to do more to document best practice and share lessons in the next stage.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

25. As this project has never been evaluated, this evaluation serves both as an early Mid-Term Evaluation for Phase 2 and as a Terminal Evaluation of the first phase. It will assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and its partners. This evaluation also serve as a mid-term review of the current project to assess progress so far, re-examine the relevance of the project design and implementation approach, the sustainability of the project, make recommendations on corrective actions, and identify lessons learnt. As recommended by the PRC process held prior to this project approval, the project document should be revised to integrate the findings of the evaluation

26. The evaluation will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project's intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the consultant liaising with RSO as appropriate:

- (a) Has the Project achieved its overall objective to promote increased coherence in international environmental decision-making processes?
- (b) Has the project contributed to an increase in mainstreaming environmental sustainability in national and regional development plans?
- (c) Have project activities facilitated consensus-building by Governments in the regions/sub-regions on priority environmental issues and coordinated the necessary follow-up actions?
- (d) Have key global environmental processes been incorporated in the regional environmental agenda as a result of project activities?
- (e) Have the outputs of the regional/sub-regional forums been reflected in key global environmental processes as a result of project activities? And to what extent are the regional outputs reflected in national policy?
- (f) To what extent have the project and regional forums contributed or are contributing to the UNEP strategic regional presence as mandated in the Rio +20 outcome document (para 88g)?
- (g) Are project resources and the resource mobilisation strategy adequate to ensure the achievement of project outputs and outcomes?
- (h) What are the key lessons from the first phase of the project that are relevant for the implementation of the second phase? How can UNEP enhance its support to the ministerial forums?
- (i) How if at all, should the ministerial forums evolve once the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are implemented in 2015 (considering the integrated nature of the post-2015 agenda, the need for mechanisms to monitor their implementation at the national level, and the evolving role of the United Nations Environment Assembly)?
- (j) How successful are current project indicators in measuring project outcomes and impact?
- (k) Why some forums appear to be stronger and to generate more positive outcomes than others?

- (l) Are ministerial forums well placed to strengthen synergies and input to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and its subsidiary bodies, including the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives?

Overall Approach and Methods

27. The Evaluation of the Project will be conducted by an independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office in consultation with the UNEP Project Manager in RSO and the Environmental Governance Sub-programme Coordinator, the Regional Environmental Governance Coordinators and the Regional Directors, as appropriate.

28. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant maintains close communication with the project team throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their ownership of the evaluation findings.

29. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

- (a) A **desk review** of:
- Relevant background documentation, – should include PRC report, Project design documents; Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
 - Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;
 - Project outputs e.g. forum outcomes, action plans, declarations, etc.
 - Reports to the former UNEP Governing Council and the new universal membership UN Environment Assembly, and their respective decisions and/or resolutions;
 - Relevant websites, eg AMCEN and LAC Ministers' forum;
- (b) **Interviews (individual or in group) with:**
- Project management/implementation team (HQs and ROs)
 - Regional Directors
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer;
 - Project partners, including members of participating organisations, Ministries of Environment and national focal points (UNEP divisions and regional offices, CPR members, Major groups and stakeholders project team, Secretariat of Governing Bodies.
 - Relevant resource persons, for example, the UNEP senior gender advisor.
- (c) **Other data collection tools**

Key Evaluation principles

30. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

31. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to **a minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in six categories: (1) Strategic Relevance; (2) Attainment of objectives and planned result, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, effectiveness and likelihood of impact; (3) Sustainability and replication; (4) Efficiency; (5) Factors and processes affecting project performance, including preparation and readiness, implementation and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, financial planning and management, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation; and (6) Complementarity with the UNEP MTS and POW [strategies and programmes]. The evaluation consultant can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

32. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP MTS and POW strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 3 provides guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

33. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, the evaluator should consider the difference between *what has happened with and what would have happened without the project*. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases, this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

34. Particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “Why?” question should be at the front of the consultant’s minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultant needs to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category F – see below). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultant to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere review of “where things stand” at the time of evaluation.

35. A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons.

36. Communicating evaluation results. Once the consultant) has obtained evaluation results, the evaluation office will share the findings and lessons with the Project implementation team. Evaluation results will also be communicated to key stakeholders in a brief and concise manner that encapsulates the evaluation exercise in its entirety, after the comments made by the Project implementation team have been addressed. There may however be several intended audiences, each with different interests and preferences regarding the report. The Evaluation Manager in consultation with the Project Manager will plan with the consultant) what audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include a webinar, and/or conference calls with relevant stakeholders.

Evaluation criteria

Strategic relevance

37. The evaluation will assess, in retrospect, whether the project’s objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with global, regional and national environmental issues and needs.

38. The evaluation will also assess the project’s relevance in regards UNEP’s mandate and alignment with UNEP’s policies and strategies at the time of project approval. UNEP’s Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP’s programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP’s thematic priorities, known as Subprogrammes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes of the SPs, also known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs). The evaluation will assess whether the project makes a tangible contribution to any of the EAs specified in the Medium Term Strategy. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described.

39. The evaluation should assess the project’s alignment with UNEP’s policies and strategies. The evaluation should provide a brief narrative of the following:

2. *Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*⁴⁴. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
3. *Alignment with other relevant mandates including Governing Council and UNEA decisions and resolutions.*
4. *Gender balance.* Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to decision making processes; Appreciate whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting differential impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment.
5. *South-South Cooperation.* This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

40. Based on an analysis of project stakeholders, the evaluation should assess the relevance of the project to key stakeholder groups.

Achievement of Outputs

41. The evaluation will assess, for each component, the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and milestones as presented in Table 2 above, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness.

42. Briefly explain the reasons behind the success (or failure) of the project in achieving its different outputs and meeting expected quality standards, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project results).

43. Have key stakeholders been appropriately involved in producing the programmed outputs?

Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

44. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project's objectives were effectively achieved or are expected to be achieved.

45. The ToC of a project depicts 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 benefits and living conditions). The ToC will also depict any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called 'intermediate states'. The ToC further defines the external factors that influence change along the major pathways, whether one result can lead to the next. These external factors are either drivers (when the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (when the project has no control). It also clearly identifies the main stakeholders involved in the change processes.

46. The evaluation will reconstruct the **Theory of Change (ToC)** of the project based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. The consultant will be expected to discuss the reconstructed TOC with the stakeholders during evaluation missions and/or interviews in order to ascertain the causal pathways identified and the validity of impact drivers and assumptions described in the TOC. This exercise will also enable the consultant to solve some of the key evaluation questions and make adjustments to the TOC as would be found appropriate.

47. The assessment of effectiveness will be structured in three sub-sections:

- (a) Evaluation of the **achievement of outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC**. These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs
- (b) Assessment of the **likelihood of impact** using a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach⁴⁵. The evaluation will assess to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute, to [intermediate states], and the likelihood of

⁴⁴ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

⁴⁵ Guidance material on Theory of Change and the ROtI approach is available from the Evaluation Office.

those changes in turn to lead to benefits derived from the environment and human well-being.

- (c) Evaluation of the **achievement of the formal project overall objective, overall purpose, goals and component outcomes** using the project's own results statements as presented in the Project Document. This sub-section will refer back where applicable to the preceding sub-sections (a) and (b) to avoid repetition in the report. To measure achievement, the evaluation will use as much as appropriate the indicators for achievement proposed in the Logical Framework (Logframe) of the project, adding other relevant indicators as appropriate. Briefly explain what factors affected the project's success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F.
- (d) The evaluation should disaggregate outcomes and impacts for the key project stakeholders.

Sustainability and replication

48. Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the project but that may condition the sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. The reconstructed ToC will assist in the evaluation of sustainability, as the drivers and assumptions required to achieve higher-level results are often similar to the factors affecting sustainability of these changes.

49. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

- (a) *Socio-political sustainability.* Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and other key stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to sustain the project activity?
- (b) *Financial resources.* To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on financial resources? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources⁴⁶ are or will become available to use capacities built by the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?
- (c) *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results.
- (d) *Environmental sustainability.* Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits? Are there any foreseeable negative environmental impacts that may occur as the project results are being up-scaled?

Catalytic role

50. 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. UNEP also aims to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national,

⁴⁶ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the national budget, public and private sectors, development assistance etc.

regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project has:

- (a) *catalyzed behavioural changes* in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of capacities developed;
- (b) provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
- (c) contributed to *institutional changes*, for instance institutional uptake of project-demonstrated integrated environmental assessment approaches;
- (d) contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
- (e) contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Governments, private sector, donors etc.;
- (f) created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyze change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

Efficiency

51. The evaluation will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. It will describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project as far as possible in achieving its results within its (severely constrained) secured budget and (extended) time. It will also analyse how delays, if any, have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the project will be compared with that of other similar interventions. Evaluations/reviews of other large assessments may provide some comparative information on efficiency.

52. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the project team to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency. For instance, the evaluation will consider how well other information sources (on global and regional environmental status and trends, and on the costs and benefits of different policy options) accessible to the different target audiences have been tapped, and how the project ensured the complementarity of its process and products to other assessment processes and information sources, to avoid duplication of efforts? Was there sufficient information about the assessment capacity of collaborating institutions and experts and about other capacity building initiatives, to limit and target training and technical support to what was really needed, avoiding duplication?

Factors and processes affecting project performance

53. **Preparation and readiness.** This criterion focusses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders⁴⁷ adequately identified and were they sufficiently involved in project development and ground truthing e.g of proposed time frame and budget? Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.?

54. **Project implementation and management.** This includes an analysis of implementation approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project's adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

⁴⁷ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or 'stake' in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

- (a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project milestones, outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
- (b) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.
- (c) Assess the role and performance of the teams and working groups established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.
- (d) Identify operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project tried to overcome these problems.

55. Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships. The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation with other UNEP projects and programmes, external stakeholders and partners. The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing both project partners and target users (such as [list]) of project products. The TOC and stakeholder analysis should assist the evaluators in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathways from activities to achievement of outputs, outcomes and intermediate states towards impact. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination to and between stakeholders, (2) consultation with and between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- (a) the approach(es) and mechanisms used to identify and engage stakeholders (within and outside UNEP) in project design and at critical stages of project implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities?
- (b) How was the overall collaboration between different functional units of UNEP involved in the project? What coordination mechanisms were in place? Were the incentives for internal collaboration in UNEP adequate?
- (c) Is the level of involvement of the Regional, Liaison and Out-posted Offices in project design, planning, decision-making and implementation of activities appropriate?
- (d) Has the project made full use of opportunities for collaboration with other projects and programmes including opportunities not mentioned in the Project Document⁴⁸? Have complementarities been sought, synergies been optimized and duplications avoided?
- (e) What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during design and implementation of the project? This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report.
- (f) To what extent has the project been able to take up opportunities for joint activities, pooling of resources and mutual learning with other organizations and networks? In particular, how useful are partnership mechanisms and initiatives such as [insert relevant examples] to build stronger coherence and collaboration between participating organisations?
- (g) How did the relationship between the project and the collaborating partners (institutions and individual experts) develop? Which benefits stemmed from their involvement for project performance, for UNEP and for the stakeholders and partners themselves? Do the results of the project (strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements etc.) promote participation of stakeholders, including users, in environmental decision making?

56. Communication and public awareness. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project to communicate the project's objective, progress, outcomes and lessons. This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report. Did the project identify and make use of

⁴⁸ [If the ProDoc mentions any opportunities for collaboration with other projects and programmes, present these here in the footnote]

existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders? Did the project provide feedback channels?

57. Country ownership and driven-ness. The evaluation will assess the degree and effectiveness of involvement of government agencies in the project, in particular those involved in project execution and those participating members of the bureaus, thematic groups and specific initiatives under the project

- (a) To what extent have Governments assumed responsibility for the project and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various public institutions involved in the project?
- (b) How and how well did the project stimulate country and region ownership of project outputs and outcomes?
- (c) [Any other project-specific questions]

58. Financial planning and management. Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. The assessment will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:

- (a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;
- (b) Assess other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;
- (c) Present the extent to which co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval (see Table 1). Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 4).
- (d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.

59. Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken UNEP to prevent such irregularities in the future. Determine whether the measures taken were adequate.

60. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping. The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make.

61. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision, guidance and technical support provided by the different supervising/supporting bodies including:

- (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- (b) The realism and candour of project reporting and the emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- (c) How well did the different guidance and backstopping bodies play their role and how well did the guidance and backstopping mechanisms work? What were the strengths in guidance and backstopping and what were the limiting factors?

62. Monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation will include an assessment of 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 in the project document. The evaluation will

assess how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

- (a) *M&E Design.* The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
- Arrangements for monitoring: Did the project have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives? Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the time frame for various M&E activities specified? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate?
 - How well was the project logical framework (original and possible updates) designed as a planning and monitoring instrument?
 - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
 - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable? For instance, was there adequate baseline information on pre-existing accessible information on global and regional environmental status and trends, and on the costs and benefits of different policy options for the different target audiences? Was there sufficient information about the assessment capacity of collaborating institutions and experts etc. to determine their training and technical support needs?
 - To what extent did the project engage key stakeholders in the design and implementation of monitoring? Which stakeholders (from groups identified in the inception report) were involved? If any stakeholders were excluded, what was the reason for this?
 - Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
 - Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.
- (b) *M&E Plan Implementation.* The evaluation will verify that:
- the M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
 - Half-yearly Progress & Financial Reports were complete and accurate;
 - the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

Annex II. Project Logical Framework

Table 14: Project Logical Framework

1. Project Outcome = Expected Accomplishment or PoW Output	Indicators ² (include baseline and targets)	Means of Verification	
Effective policy exchange and development and priority setting by countries are supported through regional ministerial and other environmental forums (4 forums)	Number of common environmental policies agreed upon in ministerial forums that are under implementation through UNEP's assistance Target: 5	Meeting reports identifying common environmental issues at regional ministerial fora Decision documents from the regional ministerial meetings Review of Regional portfolio of activities to assess the implementation of policies agreed upon in the ministerial fora	
2. Project Outputs:	Indicators	Means of Verification	PoW-EA Output ²
1. Consensus achieved and policies developed on key region/SIDS-specific environmental and developmental priorities	Number of Regional/SIDS issues for which an action plan is elaborated as an outcome of the regional fora and is under implementation with UNEP's assistance Target: 6 Number of gender responsive policies resulting from regional and sub-regional gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans developed and approved by Regional Ministerial forums Target: 5	Ministerial Declarations, Chairs' summaries, Conference conclusions/recommendations, Meeting reports Review of Regional portfolio of activities to assess the implementation of action plans elaborated in the ministerial fora	#4A6
2. Key global environmental processes/issues incorporated in the regional environmental agenda	Number of global processes/issues endorsed at regional/SIDS environmental agenda-setting fora with assistance from UNEP Target: 6	Ministerial Declarations, Chairs' summaries, Conference conclusions/recommendations, Meeting reports	#4A6
3. Regional inputs reflected in key global environmental processes	Percentage of participating delegations at GC/GMEF expressing satisfaction with the uptake of regional/SIDS ministerial forum decisions during GCIGMEF discussions Target: 75%	Declarations and Reports of GC/GMEF Survey of GC/GMEF participating delegations	#4A6

Annex III. List of Interviewees

Table 15: Terminal Evaluation list of interviewees:

UNEP		
Alexandra Karekaho	Programme Officer in DRC	alexandra.karekaho@unep.org
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Haddijatou Jallow and Abdul Salim	Sierra Leone	
Ministerial representative	Afghanistan	
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Annex V. Biography of the Consultant

Johannah Bernstein

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER

Johannah Bernstein's entire professional life has been devoted to the cause of multilateral environmental diplomacy and advocacy. She is an Oxford-educated international environmental lawyer (combined with a B.A. in Human Ecology) and has over 20 years of professional experience advising UN organisations, national governments, the private sector and international non-governmental organisations on a wide spectrum of global sustainability challenges. Johannah has an exceptional command of the United Nations system, combined with her unique knowledge of global sustainability issues and the political dynamics of multilateral environmental diplomacy processes.

Her work started first as director of the Canadian coalition of NGOs involved in the 1992 Earth Summit. From 1992 to 1999, Johannah developed advocacy campaigns for prominent international NGOs for most of the global summits of the 1990s and the United Nations negotiations on climate change, biodiversity, and desertification, environmental justice, human development, global governance reform and the Millennium Development Goals.

EU policy work

Since 1999, Johannah has been running her own international environmental law practice from Brussels, Montreal and Geneva. During her ten years in Brussels, Johannah provided environmental law and policy advice to the European Commission (facilitating stakeholder consultations on the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the External Dimensions Strategy, EU preparations for the World Summit for Sustainable Development), Members of the European Parliament (advising on issues related to corporate social responsibility, greening EU foreign policy, personal emissions trading,); European environmental NGOs (WWF-EPO, Friends of the Earth EU, Institute for Environmental Security, GLOBE EU); as well as supporting the governments of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and The Netherlands in promoting their environmental priorities during their respective EU Presidencies.

Policy advice to international organisations

In the last three years, Johannah has re-focused her work on international sustainability policy issues with many of the Geneva-based United Nations agencies and international organisations, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (assisting in design and facilitation of the World Mountain Forum, preparation of sustainable mountain development strategy; production of videos on mountain ecosystem conservation; leading team-building retreats for UNEP's Regional Office for Europe; leading staff retreat on Delivering as One programme); the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (participation in four-person first ever external evaluation; legal advice for pre-negotiations on sustainable housing convention; participation as governance expert in Environmental Performance Review mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and analysis of member state governance innovations); the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (drafting the first ever environmental security strategy); the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (development of e-learning courses on green diplomacy and on environmental governance); the World Conservation Union (capacity building and support for IUCN policy review); the MAVA Foundation (strategic analysis of reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy); the International Institute for Sustainable Development (facilitation of high-level roundtable on UNEP reform, analysis of environmental security challenges in the Democratic Republic of Congo); the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency

(production of videos on sustainable mountain development); the Stockholm Environment Institute (drafting manifesto signed by 22 Nobel Laureates at the third Nobel Symposium convened by the Stockholm Environment Institute).

Private sector work

In addition to Johannah's policy work, she is working increasingly with the private sector, providing strategic advice to start-up and growth-stage clean tech, renewable energy and agro-forestry companies.

University teaching, negotiation training and facilitation

In addition, since 1992, Johannah has been a visiting lecturer on international law, global governance and environmental diplomacy at several universities in Europe and North America, including Columbia University (Biosphere 2 Earth Semester), the University of California at Santa Barbara (Bren School of Environmental Management), Duke University, McGill University, University of Geneva (Masters in International Affairs), the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, University of Kent (Brussels School of International Studies), and Joensuu University (Finland). Johannah has also developed and led UN environmental negotiation training programmes around the world for UNEP, UNITAR, WWF, LEAD International, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, IUCN, the Heinrich Boell Foundation and Environment Canada. She has trained over 300 environmental negotiators in the past twenty years.

As well, over the past years, Johannah has chaired and facilitated numerous conferences, expert dialogues and roundtables on a wide range of global sustainability issues for organisations such as UNEP, IUCN, the Tällberg Foundation, European Commission, WWF EU, International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Worldwatch Institute, Dutch Foreign Ministry, Swedish Environment Ministry, Danish Foreign Ministry, the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Verbier Green Pioneering Summit.

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Annex VI. Project Design Quality Matrix

Table 16. Project Design Quality Matrix

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
Relevance			
Are the intended results likely to contribute to UNEPs Expected Accomplishments and programmatic objectives?	<p>The 2010 project contributes to the expected accomplishment “4.1. <i>The United Nations system, respecting the mandates of other entities, progressively achieves synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multi-lateral environmental agreements</i>”</p> <p>The 2014 project contributes to the implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Programme of Work 2012-2014) Sub-programme 4- Environmental Governance, in particular the following expected accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The UN system progressively achieves synergies and coherence. • (Programme of Work 2014-2015) Sub-programme 4- Environmental Governance, in particular the following expected accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The UN system and MEA regimes demonstrate more coherence and synergy. c) Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans. Output 3 support provided for effective policy exchange 	<p>Project Document (2010) Page 2</p> <p>Project Document (2014) Page</p>	Highly Satisfactory

Questions		Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
		and political dialogue on environmental issues through sub regional and regional ministerial and other forums.		
Does the project form a coherent part of a UNEP-approved programme framework?		<p>The project forms a coherent part of sub-programme 4 “Environmental Governance”</p> <p>This project functions and capitalizes on UNEP’s convening power at regional, sub-regional and international levels. Paragraph 15 of Decision 27/2 of the universal session of the UNEP Governing Council of February 2013 stressed the importance of the regional ministerial environment forums and invited these forums to contribute, as appropriate, to the work of the governing body of UNEP and feed into the discussions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and other global processes.</p>	Project document 2014 page 12-13	
Is there complementarity with other UNEP projects, planned and ongoing, including those implemented under the GEF?		<p>The first phase of the project has been designed to respond to UNEP’s mandate to provide international platforms to facilitate policy debate, negotiations and decision-making.</p> <p>As regards the second phase, the project builds on similar projects of the previous biennia 2010-2013 (which resulted in 17 regional action plans and strategies that address a wide range of global sustainability issues). The outcomes of the regional forum feed into the UNDAFs of those countries that are planning their formulation. The outcomes will also inform UNEPs planning for future Programmes of Work and Medium Term Strategies. The outcomes will also feed into the United Nations Environmental Assembly.</p>	<p>Page 4, Document 2010</p> <p>Project Document 2014 page 13-16</p>	Highly satisfactory
Are the project’s	i) Sub-regional environmental	The project is designed to increase coherence in international decision	Page 6, Project	Highly

Questions		Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
objectives and implementation strategies consistent with:	issues and needs?	<p>making by supporting the strengthening of ministerial forums in the six regions. These platforms have provided opportunities for Member States to define their regional environmental agendas and to guide UNEP's overall strategic direction by incorporating.</p> <p>The regional ministerial environment forums also serve as platforms for decision-making and consensus-building and are critical for political and policy dialogues to identify, establish, and bolster priorities at regional, sub-regional and inter-regional levels. They support the establishment of linkages between the regional and global environmental agendas.</p>	<p>Document 2010</p> <p>Page 17, Project Document 2014</p>	Satisfactory
	ii) The UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation?	The project objective (which is to improve coherence in international decision making) relates directly to UNEPs programme of work as noted above. The project activities have been designed to guide UNEPs overall strategic future direction by incorporating regional priorities into the Medium Term Strategy and the Programme of Work. Furthermore, the outcomes will feed into the discussions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and contribute to its own outcomes.	<p>Page 8 Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 16, Project Document 2014</p>	Highly Satisfactory
	iii) The relevant GEF focal areas, strategic priorities and operational programme(s)? (if appropriate)	Not applicable, since it was not a GEF funded project		NA
	iv) Stakeholder priorities and needs?	<p>The project has been designed to engage with the following groups of stakeholders:</p> <p>i) Governments including regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organisations which are responsible for making and implementing policy decisions</p>	<p>Pate 9, Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 16, Project Document</p>	Highly Satisfactory

Questions		Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
		<p>that can contribute to sustainable development in their respective regions; and</p> <p>ii) Major Groups and Stakeholders, including civil society groups, the private sector and regional non-governmental organisations, who play a critical role in advocating for action by governments and decision makers on regional and sub-regional environment and development issues.</p> <p>The project has been designed to provide opportunities for Member States to draw attention to national, regional, inter-regional and global environmental challenges and priorities, and their linkages with sustainable development; to discuss and review emerging issues; to identify opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation; to monitor implementation of follow-up actions/decisions.</p>	2014	
Overall Rating for Relevance		Highly Satisfactory for Phase 1 and Phase 2		
Intended Results and Causality				
Are the objectives realistic?		<p>The objectives for Phase 1 and 2 are similar [to promote coherence in international decision making]. In both phases the objectives have been realistic because they relate integrally to UNEP's core mission and mandate. One of UNEP's core mandates has been to promote the coherent implementation of environmental sustainability. This responsibility has been reaffirmed most recently by the 2013 UNEP Governing council.</p> <p>As well, UNEP's responsibility to enhance the capacity of Member States in international decision processes is part of UNEP's core mandate. Support to member</p>	<p>Page 7 Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 12-14, Project Document 2014</p>	Highly Satisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	<p>countries is an explicit component of UNEP's mandate and work. Indeed UNEP has been supporting regional forums since 1972.</p> <p>Furthermore, the project objectives are deemed to be realistic, considering the project's three categories of outputs (i.e. inter-sectoral dialogues; partnerships; and inter-governmental policy dialogues) and the extensive range of supporting activities, on the basis of the preliminary review of the project document. These are the type of activities, around which UNEP has proven expertise and competencies.</p> <p>It should be noted that Phase 2 of this project builds on the previous biennia 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, which successfully provided similar support to the regions and produced important outcomes. Phase 2 aims to go further than the previous projects and fill the gaps that prior phases did not sufficiently look at and will therefore facilitate sharing of information, lessons learnt and best practices between regions; facilitate sufficient monitoring and evaluation so as to assess implementation of decisions/action plans/strategies coming from the forums to establish what has and has not worked and thus also inform future actions.</p>		
<p>Are the causal pathways from project outputs [goods and services] through outcomes [changes in stakeholder behaviour] towards impacts clearly and convincingly described? Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change or intervention logic for the project?</p>	<p>No. First, there is no Theory of Change contained in the first project document. The first project document also confuses the Component, output and activity terms.</p> <p>The second project document does contain a theory of change; however it is lacking references to</p>	<p>Page 13 Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 36. Project Document 2014</p>	Unsatisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	impact drivers and assumptions. It should also be noted that the theory of change confuses outcomes with outputs.		
<p>Is the timeframe realistic?</p> <p>What is the likelihood that the anticipated project outcomes can be achieved within the stated duration of the project?</p>	<p>The project timeframe for the first project was initially 15 months, but was later extended to It was later extended for six months as a bridge to enable implementation of activities pending finalisation of the new project document related to the 2014-2015 POW output 424. The second phase of this projects runs from 2014 to the end of 2017. This time frame appears to be realistic and is confirmed by the achievement of all the key milestones, as reflected in the log frame contained in the project document for phase 2.</p> <p>Another error in the log frame is the fact that it only identifies one project outcome for the entire log frame, as opposed to identifying one outcome per component, as per standard log frame practice. The project outcome is: “Effective regional policies on environment and development issues are made through regional intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder forums, consultations and mechanisms”</p> <p>Determining the likelihood that this outcome can be achieved can only be confirmed once the evaluation team assesses the likelihood that project outputs will lead to the anticipated project outcome. The formal evaluation will include interviews with a wide range of</p>	<p>Page 36-39, Project Document 2014</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory</p>

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	<p>stakeholders to determine the effectiveness of the regional policies.</p> <p>In terms of the likelihood that the above-noted outcome can be achieved, it is important to stress that there are so many factors, which are outside the control of this project and which affect the potential achievement of this outcome. For example, the enhancement of State capacity to implement environmental obligations may be facilitated by a visionary and proactive Environment Minister, who yields considerable power within the Cabinet. Or, it could be affected by the capacity building efforts of other international organisations. Equally, the outcome could be affected by a powerful legislature committed to the adoption of strong environmental laws, which in turn, would enhance the implementation capacity of States.</p> <p>The foregoing suggests that assessing/measuring of direct attribution of project activities with the anticipated outcome will be difficult. In some cases, the implementation capacity of States could be strengthened within a 24 month period. But in other cases, it will take considerably longer if the State is a newer democracy whose legislative branch is not experienced in environmental law-making. Or for that matter, if a State's overriding priorities are economic growth at all costs, then it will be unlikely that implementation capacity for environmental capacities can be achieved within the project life.</p> <p>It should also be noted that this project relates to the following expected accomplishment in the UNEP PoW "Countries increasingly</p>		

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans”		
Are the activities designed within the project likely to produce their intended results?	Both project documents identify outputs, which consist of very concrete, time-bound activities, which were supported by a detailed delivery plan. The 2014 project document contains a project risk analysis and risk management strategies and safe guards, which provide assurance that the project activities may produce their intended results.	Page 20 and 23-28 Project Document, 2010 Page 35-39, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are activities appropriate to produce outputs?	The project document for phase 2 contains a very basic Theory of Change, which confuses outputs with outcomes and activities with outputs. However the activities that are described in the narrative section are clearly appropriate to produce the desired outputs.	Pages 17-24/37-39 Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are activities appropriate to drive change along the intended causal pathway(s)?	Yes, however the detailed delivery plan and workplan provide a clearer understanding of how the activities drive change.	Page 23-28, Project Document 2010 Page 45- Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders clearly described for each key causal pathway?	No		Unsatisfactory
Overall Rating for Intended Results and Causality	Highly Satisfactory both Phase 1 and Phase 2		
Efficiency			
Are any cost- or time-saving measures proposed to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and timeframe?	The cost-effectiveness of this Project is that it will bring together countries in one forum of Ministers and their advisors, in the respective regions, to collectively dialogue and reach consensus on regional specific issues and priorities. coordinate follow up	Discuss 2010 with Alexandra Pages 27 Project Document, 2014	Highly satisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	actions, network, identify opportunities for collaboration and facilitate linkages between regional agendas and the global environment processes. All of which in addition to providing varied sets of expertise and perspectives as well as financial support, will be more comprehensive and strategic, while reducing transaction costs, both for countries in the regions and UNEP.		
Does the project intend to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?	Phase 2 of the Project builds on projects of the previous biennia 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, which successfully provided similar support to the regions and produced important outcomes. UNEP supported numerous regional environment forums and facilitated effective policy exchange and development and priority setting in all regions including SIDS of key environmental and developmental issues/processes	Page 10, Project Document 2014	Highly satisfactory
Overall Rating for Efficiency	Highly Satisfactory for Phase 2 Need to discuss Phase 1 with Alexandra		
Sustainability/ Replication and Catalytic Effect			
Does the project design present a strategy / approach to sustaining outcomes / benefits?	<p>The 2010 Project Document does not contain a project sustainability strategy per se. but it does outline several critical success factors or conditions that must be met in or for the project to be successful. For example: interest and involvement of Member States; timely availability of resources; engagement by UNEP staff</p> <p>The 2014 Project Document contains a “Project Sustainability Strategy” The sustainability of the second phase of the project is expected to be achieved through the focus on institutional development- by providing</p>	Page 12, Project Document 2010 Page 27, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	<p>governments and other actors with the resources needed to facilitate policy dialogue and consensus building. The objective is to equip governments to take ownership of the process and to follow up on activities independent of external support.</p> <p>In addition, the Project Document 2014 adds time-bound milestone delivery dates, which together with the mandated half-yearly progress reports will help to ensure a strategy and approach to sustaining outcomes.</p>		
Does the design identify the social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts?	<p>Both project documents identify the risk factors in the form of a project risk analysis.</p> <p>As well, the larger political factors that the Project is meant to address include the incoherence in environmental decision-making and the weak capacities to link national, regional, inter-regional priorities with sustainable development and to connect these priorities with global processes. The project design in both project documents addresses the specific factors that underpin these weaknesses.</p> <p>However, one of the political factors that has and will continue to influence the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts is the degree of acceptance of the consensus outcomes of the regional platforms by the economic and sector-specific ministries. This is a factor that could have been highlighted more definitively in both project documents.</p>	<p>Page 15, Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 10 and 32, Project Document 2014</p>	Highly Satisfactory
Does the design foresee sufficient	Every aspect of the project design	Page 12,	Satisfactory for Phase 1

Questions		Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
activities to promote government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives in order to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?		<p>in both phases is geared towards enhancing the capacities of the key project beneficiaries (i.e. national governments and regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organisations) to implement the policies that have been agreed upon by the environment ministerial forums.</p> <p>However, as noted in the Project Document 2014, the first phase of the project did not actually examine the extent to which national governments implemented the outputs of the regional environment ministerial forums. This is a stated objective of phase 2.</p>	<p>Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 12 Project document, 2014</p>	Highly Satisfactory for Phase 2.
If funding is required to sustain project outcomes and benefits, does the design propose adequate measures / mechanisms to secure this funding?		<p>Since this project forms part of the core business of UNEP, it is assumed that sufficient funding will be mobilised accordingly to sustain project outcomes.</p>	N/A	
Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?		<p>The project has been funded by several donor governments. The primary risk is that the continuing global economic downturn will affect the donor countries, which will in turn, affect the capacity of these donors to continue to provide financing to follow up projects.</p>	Relevant for both	
Does the project design adequately describe the institutional frameworks, governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustain project results?		<p>Institutional and governance structures were not described in the 2010 Project Document</p> <p>Institutional and governance structures are well described in the project document. See section below on project management.</p>	<p>Page 31, Project Document 2014</p>	Highly Satisfactory
Does the project design identify environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits?		N/A		N/A
Does the project design foresee	i) Technologies and approaches show-cased by the	<p>This project did not include any demonstration projects per se. However, as a general comment,</p>	Relevant for both project	N/A

Questions		Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
adequate measures to catalyze behavioural changes in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of (e.g.):	demonstration projects;	most, if not all project activities in both project documents were designed to catalyse behavioural change. The regional environmental ministerial forums were designed to forge consensus at the regional level and to enhance the capacities of governments and regional and sub-regional intergovernmental bodies to advance regional priorities within global processes and to ensure that global processes were reflected in regional decision-making processes.	documents	
	ii) strategic programmes and plans developed	<p>In the 2010 Project Document, it is not clear whether project activities were meant to feed into UNEP Governing Council processes. They were however meant to feed into global policy making processes such as UNFCCC, CBD COPs and CSD and Rio+20.</p> <p>In the 2014 Project Document, the project design provided for the opportunity for the regional environmental priorities and decisions to feed into UNEP's MTS and subsequent development of the Programme of Work.</p> <p>As well, as a result of the regional environmental forums, 17 action plans/strategies addressing a wide range of sustainability challenges were developed. Additionally, the outcomes of the regional forums fed into the discussions of the United Nations Environment Assembly and contributed to its outcomes. In the second phase of the project, the regional forums will play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs.</p>	<p>Page 8, Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 9, Project Document 2014</p>	Highly Satisfactory
	iii) assessment, monitoring and management	The second phase of the project will go further than the previous projects and fill the gaps that prior	Page 12, Project Document	Highly Satisfactory

Questions		Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	systems established at a national and sub-regional level	phases did not address sufficiently. The second phase will facilitate sufficient monitoring and evaluation to assess implementation of forum decisions/action plans/strategies order to establish what has and has not worked and to inform future actions.	2014	
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to institutional changes?		Both project documents provided for the the primary institutional change in the form of the strengthening of an important regional institution, namely the regional ministerial environment forums, which serve as platforms for decision-making and consensus-building and are critical for political and policy dialogues to identify, establish, and bolster priorities at regional, sub-regional and inter-regional levels.	Page 7, Project Document 2010 Page 15, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to policy changes (on paper and in implementation of policy)?		Each of the project's three components were designed to contribute to policy changes. The expected outcome under Component 1 consisted of new action plans/strategies and policies developed on key regional priorities. The expected outcome under Component 2 consisted of regional policies reflecting global environmental processes. The expected outcomes of Component 3 consisted of a narrowed gap between regional and global environmental policies. In addition, another type of policy change that was foreseen by the project consisted of the regional ministerial forums guiding UNEP's overall strategic future direction by incorporating regional environmental needs and priorities into the preparation and implementation of the Medium-term Strategy (MTS) and, subsequently, the POW.	Page 16, 19 and 21 of the Project document	Highly Satisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to sustain follow-on financing (catalytic financing) from Governments, the GEF or other donors?	Since the project is so firmly embedded in UNEP’s core mandate, it is highly likely that phase 2 will contribute to sustained financing from Member States and other donors.	The evaluation team has not yet been provided with the full budget	
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to create opportunities for particular individuals or institutions (“champions”) to catalyse change (without which the project would not achieve all of its results)?	Both phase 1 and 2 of the Project have been designed with the intention of strengthening the capacity of regional environmental forums to catalyse change (in terms of enhancing the coherence between regional and global priorities and processes, providing opportunities for Member States to raise awareness about their priorities and to contribute to UNEA and other global processes including the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.	Page 10, Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are the planned activities likely to generate the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders necessary to allow for the project results to be sustained?	The planned activities have been designed to enhance the ownership of the main stakeholders, notably the national governments and the regional and sub-regional intergovernmental processes.	Page 10, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Overall Rating for Sustainability/ Replication and Catalytic Effect	Highly Satisfactory for both phases		
Risk Identification and Social Safeguards			
Are critical risks appropriately addressed?	Both Project Documents 2010 and 2014 adequately address risks such as: inability to secure funding; lack of sufficient expertise; lack of political engagement; inadequate gender mainstreaming; weak secretariat capacity to support forums, member states do not act on forum outputs The risk matrix adequately addresses the description of the risk, the degree of severity and likelihood and possible risk management strategy and safeguards.	Page 15, Project Document 2015 Page 32-34, Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are assumptions properly specified as factors affecting achievement of	Assumptions are not identified		Unsatisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
project results that are beyond the control of the project?			
Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of projects identified?	N/A		Unsatisfactory
Overall Rating for Risk Identification and Social Safeguards	Satisfactory for Phase 1 and Phase 2		
Governance and Supervision Arrangements			
Is the project governance model comprehensive, clear and appropriate?	The project governance model is embedded in the description of the implementation arrangements	Page 29, Project Document 2010 Page 29-31 Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined?	Phase 2 outlines the roles and responsibilities clearly in the implementation structure diagram	Page 31 Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are supervision / oversight arrangements clear and appropriate?	See questions below in Management and Execution Arrangements	Page 24 Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are the Roles and Responsibilities of Internal and External partners specified?	See questions below in Management and Execution Arrangements	Page 24 Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Overall Rating for Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Highly Satisfactory for Phase 2/ Satisfactory for Phase 1		
Management, Execution and Partnership Arrangements			
Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed?	The project partners consist of governments (including regional and sub-regional inter-governmental organisations) and major groups and stakeholders, including civil society groups, the private sector. UNEP has engaged with both of these categories of project partners since its inception in 1972.	Page 9, Project Document ,2010 Page 24 Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	Therefore it is assumed that the capacities of the partners were fully understood by UNEP and adequately assessed during project design.		
Are the execution arrangements clear?	<p>Phase 1 of the Project was coordinated and led by UNEP Division for Regional Cooperation. Overall oversight and coordination of the project was to be provided by the Project Manager located in DRC at UNEP Headquarters. In October 2013, the DRC was dissolved and succeeded by the Regional Support Office. RSO continued to maintain oversight for the rest of the first phase.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the Project will be coordinated and led by RSO under the supervision of the RSO Programme Officer.</p> <p>Overall oversight and coordination of the Project will be provided by the Project Manager, located in RSO and supported by the Fund Management Officer. The designated implementing officers (RO Programme Officers) located in the Regional Offices will be responsible for implementation of regional activities.</p>	Page 29 Project Document, 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are the roles and responsibilities of internal and external partners properly specified?	The roles and responsibilities of the internal partners are clearly defined in the implementation structure diagram. The explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the external partners (ie the Secretariats of the Ministerial Forums and regional and sub-regional intergovernmental organisations) is embedded in the description of the three project	<p>Page 10, Project Document 2010</p> <p>Page 30 and pages 16-22 Project Document, 2014</p>	Highly Satisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	components		
Overall Rating for Management, Execution and Partnership Arrangements	Highly Satisfactory for Phase 2 Satisfactory for Phase 1		
Are there any obvious deficiencies in the budgets / financial planning?	<p>TBD. The 2014 project document contains a budget summary that covers the period until the December 2017 termination of the project. Budget deficiencies can only be determined once the evaluation commences.</p> <p>It should be noted that the budget increased by almost 2.5 million USD from phase 1 to 2.</p>	Page 8 Project Document 2014	N/A
Is the resource utilization cost effective? Is the project viable in respect of resource mobilization potential?	<p>The Project Document states that the “cost effectiveness of this Project is that it will bring together countries in one forum of Ministers and their advisors in the respective regions, to collectively dialogue..... All of which in addition to providing varied sets of expertise and perspectives as well as financial support, will be more comprehensive and strategic, while reducing transaction costs, both for countries in the region and for UNEP>”</p> <p>As well, to increase efficiency, the project was to coordinate its activities with existing political and development cooperation mechanisms.</p>	Page 27, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Are the financial and administrative arrangements including flows of funds clearly described?	<p>It is not possible to answer this question from just the budget summary.</p> <p>The Project Document 2014 states that “The will be funded from a variety of sources including the Environment Fund and the Regular Budget. Extra-budget funding is expected from historical donors like Norway and Sweden, new donors like China, and existing trust funds such as the AMCEN Trust Fund which is contributing US\$1,530,000. The Environmental Training Network of Latin America</p>	Page 23, Project Document 2014	TBD

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
	and the Caribbean is contributing US\$ 280,000 to implement its activities as per decisions in the context of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC and its related Working Group on Education for Sustainable Development. Resource mobilization activities for the unsecured apportion of the project budget will be developed mainly by the Regional Offices with the guidance, support and collaboration of the Project manager, relevant Sub-programme Coordinator and the Donor Partnerships and Contributions section (DPC).		
Overall Rating for Financial Planning and Budgeting	TBD		
Monitoring			
<p>How was the project monitored: In accordance with UNEP's procedures, project monitoring will be conducted periodically through a six-monthly review including through the PIMS and IMDIS monitoring and reporting systems. In close collaboration with the Project Manager, the designated implementing officer for each region and component has been required to submit a six-monthly progress report to RSO/HQ and report in PIMS with a copy to QAS.</p> <p>For phase 1, the designated implementing officer for each project output located in the Regional Office for Regional Foru, and in DEPI for SIDS forums, will be responsible for monitoring and implementation of this project. The Project Manager in DRC?H! will provide budgetary and programmatic oversight.</p> <p>For Phase 2, the designated implementing officer for each region, located in the Regional Offices (DELC legal officers plus other assigned officers where there is no DELC Legal Officer) are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Project. The Project Manager in RSO will provide budgetary and programmatic oversight at global level, the latter through the completion of key milestones. (Reference— Page 41-42 Project Document 2014) – Rating Highly Satisfactory</p>			
Does the logical framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture the key elements 	The logical framework in the original Project Document did not	Page 18 Project Page 13, Project Document,	Moderately Satisfactory

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
<p>of the Theory of Change for the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have 'SMART' indicators for outcomes and objectives? • Have appropriate 'means of verification'? • Identify assumptions in an adequate manner? 	<p>capture the key elements of the Theory of Change. It only contained indicators and means of verification but did not include impact drivers or assumptions. The indicators were SMART and the means of verification were appropriate.</p> <p>In Phase 2, the logical framework does contain time-bound indicators and means of verification that are SMART. As well, SMART indicators have been included in the monitoring plan. In the logframe, the indicators are linked only to the outputs but not the outcomes. There is only one overall outcome identified for the whole logframe. The outputs are not tied to specific outcomes. The means of verification are reasonable and appropriate, consisting of policy documents, surveys, policy dialogue reports. Assumptions were not identified.</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>Page 39 and 42-43 Project Document 2014</p>	
<p>Are the milestones and performance indicators appropriate and sufficient to foster management towards outcomes and higher-level objectives?</p>	<p>Yes, the Phase 2 Project Document provide very detailed project milestones, as well as a delivery plan that is clearly helpful to foster management towards outcomes and higher-level objectives.</p>	<p>Pages 40-42/45-55 Project Document 2014</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory</p>
<p>Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?</p>	<p>None in Phase 1 but Yes in Phase 2 Project documents</p>	<p>See above</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory</p>
<p>Has the method for the baseline data collection been explained?</p>	<p>For Phase 2, no explanation was given however it is clear why baseline data is chosen. The monitoring plan contains data sources, data collection methods and frequency.</p>	<p>Page 40-42 Project Document 2014</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory</p>
<p>Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outcomes and are targets based on a reasoned estimate of baseline?</p>	<p>In Phase 2 each baseline is accompanied by a specific target.</p>	<p>Page 18-19 Project Document</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory</p>
<p>Has the time frame for monitoring activities been specified?</p>	<p>No in the 2010 Project Document but Yes in the 2014 Project Document</p>	<p>Page 40-42 Project Document</p>	<p>Highly Satisfactory</p>

Questions	Evaluation Comments	Project Reference	Rating
		2014	
Are the organisational arrangements for project level progress monitoring clearly specified?	Yes. In accordance with UNEP’s procedures, project monitoring will be conducted periodically through a six-monthly review including through the PIMS and IMDIS monitoring and reporting systems. In close collaboration with the Project Manager, the designated implementing officer for each region and component will submit a six-monthly progress report to RSO/HQ and report in PIMS with a copy to QAS.	Pate 40, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress in implementation against outputs and outcomes?	No in the 2010 Project Document but Yes in the 2014 Project Document	Page 40, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Overall, is the approach to monitoring progress and performance within the project adequate?	The 2014 monitoring plan is highly detailed, providing indicators, baselines targets, variables, data sources, data collection methods, frequency, budget and responsible officers.	Page 40-42 Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Overall Rating for Monitoring	Highly Satisfactory for Phase 2 Satisfactory for Phase 1		
Evaluation			
Is there an adequate plan for evaluation?	Yes, the Project Document provides for the project to be evaluated according to UNEP standard procedures.	Page 18, Project Document 2010 Page 55, Project Document 2014	Highly Satisfactory
Has the time frame for evaluation activities been specified?	No in both project documents		Unsatisfactory
Is there an explicit budget provision for the terminal evaluation?	No, however the budget was identified at the start of the evaluation.		Satisfactory
Is the budget sufficient?	Yes		Highly Satisfactory
Overall Rating for Evaluation	Satisfactory for both phases		

UNEP Evaluation Report Quality Assessment

Evaluation Report Title:

Terminal Evaluation Ministerial Forums

All UNEP evaluation reports are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of both the draft and final evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

Substantive report quality criteria	UNEP EO Comments	Draft Report Rating	Final Report Rating
A. Strategic relevance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of strategic relevance of the intervention?	Draft report: This is dealt with in depth. Final report: as above	5	5
B. Achievement of outputs: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of outputs delivered by the intervention (including their quality)?	Draft report: Output level description has gaps from some regions. Final report: more information on outputs has been introduced.	3	4
C. Presentation Theory of Change: Is the Theory of Change of the intervention clearly presented? Are causal pathways logical and complete (including drivers, assumptions and key actors)?	Draft report: ToC is put together at a 'big picture' level, i.e. it is quite generic and 'everything links to everything else'. However, this version highlighted useful distinctions in intervention pathways highlighted drivers and assumptions and achieved some stakeholder buy-in. Final report: as above	4	4
D. Effectiveness - Attainment of project objectives and results: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the achievement of the relevant outcomes and project objectives?	Draft report: fully described Final report: As above	5	5
E. Sustainability and replication: Does the report present a well-reasoned and evidence-based assessment of sustainability of outcomes and replication / catalytic effects?	Draft report: Dealt with adequately Final report:	5	5
F. Efficiency: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency?	Draft report: efficiency analysis is rather limited. No financial data presented. Final report: Only limited financial data available – not possible to link expenditure to progress. Therefore effectiveness is only discussed in a light manner	2	3
G. Factors affecting project performance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of all factors affecting project performance? In particular, does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used; and an assessment of the quality of the project M&E	Draft report: Financial information of any sort was lacking. Final report: The treatment of financial issues remains a weak element in this evaluation report. (Though not the fault of the	3	3

system and its use for project management?	evaluator)		
H. Quality and utility of the recommendations: Are recommendations based on explicit evaluation findings? Do recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented?	Draft report: there is a lot of overlap between Lessons and Recommendations. Final report: At final stage Good recommendations.	3	4
I. Quality and utility of the lessons: Are lessons based on explicit evaluation findings? Do they suggest prescriptive action? Do they specify in which contexts they are applicable?	Draft report: as above Final report: as above	3	4
J. Structure and clarity of the report: Does the report structure follow EO guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included?	Draft report: OK Final report:	4	5
K. Evaluation methods and information sources: Are evaluation methods and information sources clearly described? Are data collection methods, the triangulation / verification approach, details of stakeholder consultations provided? Are the limitations of evaluation methods and information sources described?	Draft report: Description of methods and sampling approaches is very limited Final report: Details of stakeholder consultations included, and consultations were extensive. Rationale behind the selection of informants is lacking.	2	3
L. Quality of writing: Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)	Draft report: The report is well-written Final report: as above	5	5
M. Report formatting: Does the report follow EO guidelines using headings, numbered paragraphs etc.	Draft report: yes, follows guidelines Final report: as above	5	5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		4.00	4.50

Rating system for quality of evaluation reports

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1

The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

2. Checklist of compliance with UNEP EO's normal operating procedures for the evaluation process

Compliance issue	Yes	No
1. Were the TORs shared with the implementing and executing agencies for comment prior to finalization?	x	
2. Was the budget for the evaluation agreed and approved by the UNEP Evaluation Office?	x	
3. Was the final selection of the preferred evaluator or evaluators made by the UNEP Evaluation Office?	x	
4. Were possible conflicts of interest of the selected evaluator(s) appraised? (Evaluators should not have participated substantively during project preparation and/or implementation and should have no conflict of interest with any proposed follow-up phases)	x	
5. Was an inception report delivered before commencing any travel in connection with the evaluation?	x	
6. Were formal written comments on the inception report prepared by the UNEP Evaluation Office and shared with the consultant?	x	
7. If a terminal evaluation; was it initiated within the period six months before or after project completion? If a mid-term evaluation; was the mid-term evaluation initiated within a six month period prior to the project/programmes's mid-point?		x
8. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly to EO by the evaluator?	x	
9. Did UNEP Evaluation Office check the quality of the draft report, including EO peer review, prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comment?	x	
10. Did UNEP Evaluation Office disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the draft report to key stakeholders to solicit formal comments?	x	
11. Did UNEP Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of the draft evaluation report?	x	
12. Were formal written stakeholder comments sent directly to the UNEP Evaluation Office?	x	
13. Were all collated stakeholder comments and the UNEP Evaluation Office guidance to the evaluator shared with all evaluation stakeholders?	x	
14. Did UNEP Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of the final report?	x	
15. Was an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations prepared?		

Comments in relation to any non-compliant issues: