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Evaluation Synthesis Report

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Foreword

This Evaluation Synthesis Report summarises findings generated from the work of UNEP's Evaluation Office over the last biennium (2012–13). The Evaluation Office reports directly to the Executive Director. Its biennial programme of evaluations including its focus, selection of programmes and projects for evaluation, methodology and reporting on findings and results are undertaken with complete independence. Senior Management regularly engages with the Evaluation Office on its findings and recommendations which become part of the quarterly performance dialogue between the Executive Office and Senior Managers in UNEP.

It is pleasing to see that more strategic evaluations have been completed than in previous biennia. These have included strategic evaluations of; the Medium Term Strategy, two Thematic Sub-programmes, a UNEP Country Programme, a review of the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Convention's 'synergies decision', a review of the Mediterranean Action Plan, and a gender review. They have highlighted significant programmatic results and provided useful inputs into management decision-making in the organisation.

The report also highlights the performance trends across a large number of UNEP projects that were also evaluated during the period. A positive picture of UNEP's short and medium-term overall project performance was evident. Nearly two thirds of the projects evaluated in 2012–2013 were rated as 'Satisfactory' or better and only 5% of the projects were rated within the 'unsatisfactory' range.

However, the report suggests there is no room for complacency. The lasting, longer-term effects for quite a large number of projects are somewhat uncertain. This leads to the conclusion that UNEP project designs need to place greater emphasis on the processes leading from outputs to outcomes; more robust strategies to sustain those outcomes and the benefits that can stem from them are needed.

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

During the 2012–13 biennium the Evaluation Office was, itself, the subject of several positive independent performance assessments conducted by UNEG/OECD-DAC, OIOS and The Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF. These assessments have enhanced the credibility of the function and bolster the confidence that the organisation can place in its findings.

In the 2014–15 biennium we look forward to further evaluative findings that can provide valuable insights to design, implementation and management challenges at organisation, programme and project levels.

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UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP
Executive Director

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AHJWG	Ad Hoc Joint Working Group
BSP	Bali Strategic Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCSP	Climate Change Sub-Programme
CEAP	Community Environmental Action Plan
CEIT	Countries with Economies in Transition
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COP	Conference of Parties
CSS	Corporate Services Section
D&C SP	Disasters and Conflicts Sub-Programme
DCPI	Division of Communications and Public Information
DELC	Division Environmental Law and Conventions
DEPI	Division Environmental Policy Implementation
DEWA	Division of Early Warning and Assessment
DRC	Division Regional Cooperation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTIE	Division of Technology Industry and Economics
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EF	Environment Fund
EGSP	Environmental Governance Sub-Programme
EMSP	Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme
EO	Evaluation Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GCI	Global Customs Initiative
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environmental Outlook
GePA	Gender Plan of Action
HS	Highly Satisfactory
HU	Highly Unsatisfactory
HSHWSP	Hazardous Substances and Hazardous Waste Sub-Programme
IMDIS	Integrated Monitoring & Documentation Information System
IMIS	Integrated management Information System
IEG	International Environmental Governance
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
IRP	International Resource Panel
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MEA	Multi-lateral Environmental Agreement

MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEDPOL	Mediterranean Pollution Monitoring and Research Programme
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MS	Moderately Satisfactory
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTF	Multilateral Trust Fund
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
MU	Moderately Unsatisfactory
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OfO	Office of Operations
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PCDMB	Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch
PCEA	Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment
PF	Programme Frameworks
PIMS	Project Information Management System
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PoW	Programme of Work
PPR	Project Performance Review
QAS	Quality Assurance Section
RACs	Regional Activity Centres
RBM	Results-Based Management
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
RESP	Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme
RO	Regional Office
ROtI	Review of Outcomes to Impact
RSPs	Regional Seas Programmes
S	Satisfactory
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDTU	Staff Development and Training Unit (of UNON)
SP	Sub-Programme
SPC	Sub-Programme Coordinator
TOC	Theory of Change
U	Unsatisfactory
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNON	United Nations Office in Nairobi
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Executive summary

1. This report is based on evaluations conducted in the 2012–2013 biennium and utilizes information drawn from; the Mid-term Evaluation of the Medium Term Strategy 2010–2013, two sub-programme evaluations one country programme review (Sudan), a review of the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Convention's 'synergies decision', a review of the Mediterranean Action Plan, and a gender review. The report also presents a new analysis of project performance across forty eight in-depth project evaluations conducted during the biennium and spanning the UNEP PoW and GEF portfolios.

2. The evaluation synthesis report also contains review of the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations and chapters on internal/external assessments of the UNEP evaluation function, and other activities undertaken by the Evaluation Office to support organisational goals.

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Medium Term Strategy

3. The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010–2013 was conducted between June 2012 and January 2013. The evaluation focused on four key aspects, namely (i) the strategic relevance of the MTS; (ii) the progress made by UNEP in achieving the anticipated MTS outcomes and impacts; (iii) the business processes, systems and structures; and (iv) the human resources and financial mechanisms associated with the delivery of the MTS.

4. The evaluation assessed the **relevance** of the MTS to UNEP's Vision and Mandate. It found that the MTS is aligned with the UNEP mandate, and complies with major GC decisions. The MTS is also consistent with UNEP's technological support/capacity building mandate as set out in detail in the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP). Stakeholders identified UNEP's convening power as its most important comparative advantage which enables the organisation to mobilize political will. UNEP capitalised on its convening power for MEA negotiations and the formation of scientific panels, such as the IPCC and IRP.

5. The thematic areas of the MTS are consistent with current and emerging environmental priorities identified such as biodiversity, water, climate change, harmful substances and international environmental governance. The MTS is also closely aligned with the GEF priorities, with MDG7 Target (A) on sustainable development and reversing loss in environmental resources, and Target (B) on reducing biodiversity loss.

6. The evaluation found that UNEP's impact needs to be felt at national level if it is to deliver key components of its Sub-Programmess, namely to promote capacity building, to implement pilot projects and to provide long-term country-level support. The evaluation also emphasized the importance of increasingly working with partners to ensure a greater impact of MTS activities, to catalyse action and to ensure successful interventions at the regional and national levels.

7.	The MTS is well aligned with the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and recognises the "need to engage even deeper with MEA secretariats in coherently addressing substantive environmental issues, as appropriate". UNEP is providing relevant services to MEAs using its convening power for MEA preparations and negotiations, supporting scientific networks (e.g. IPCC, IRP) and promoting strategic partnerships. It is, however, observed that linkages between the MTS and the CMS and CITES MEAs that are anchored within UNEP need to be given more prominence in the MTS Sub-programmes. Building on UNEP's convening power; the MTS should also focus more on system wide approaches to convergence and cooperation on MEAs. This is particularly relevant for the EG SP.

8.	The assessment of **effectiveness** focused on the achievement of immediate outcomes – the level of results realistically achievable after an implementation period of two years. The assessment of **impact** focused on the likelihood of UNEP interventions bringing about a fundamental and durable change in the conditions of people and their environment. UNEP had achieved positive results during the 10–11 biennium in all six Sub-programmes, with positive indications on projects already having contributed to the development and adoption of improved policies and practices. UNEP's efforts to generate scientific knowledge, provide policy advice and convene stakeholders to catalyse international action seem to have been particularly effective. Further details by sub-programme are summarised in the main text of this report and available in the full evaluation report from the Evaluation Office website[1].

9.	The evaluation assessed UNEP's **business processes systems and structures**. Projects represent the principal mechanism for delivering on the EAs defined in the MTS. The chief mechanism for aligning the existing portfolio with the new EAs and PoW Outputs and for identifying new project initiatives, were the Programme Frameworks (PFs). However, the PFs suffered from lack of comprehensive and coherent causal logic between the EAs and PoW outputs and the projects that would achieve them. UNEP has made efforts to strengthen its programme management systems, in particular through the development of a revised and expanded Programme Manual. At the divisional level, divisional work plans represent a potentially important but under-utilised element of UNEP's programme management systems.

10.	**Monitoring** of progress made in achieving the Expected Accomplishments is achieved through the Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) which are under constant improvement. The evaluation concluded that they had two significant weaknesses; firstly, the reporting of achievements at the outcome level relied on weak EA indicators, which in turn were linked to overly ambitious EAs. Secondly, the way in which the PPRs used the PIMS "traffic light" system to aggregate project output milestone information to the EA level is, in the view of the evaluation, inappropriate. Greater use of outcome milestones in project and PF planning is required in order that future PPRs better represent progress towards the EA level.

11.	Introduction of the 'matrix approach' was designed to provide a new framework for MTS delivery that cut across the traditional divisional 'silos'. However, the evaluation found that the current management approach did not provide clear lines of **authority and accountability**; the matrix implies that UNEP staff have dual reporting lines; to their divisional/ branch/ unit head for day-to-day implementation, and for SPC for programmatic aspects. In practice the dual reporting lines were not established, leading to the situation where SPCs have significant accountability for the SP delivery but no actual authority. A number of adjustments have

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1	http://www.unep.org/eou/Portals/52/Reports/UNEP%20MID-TERM%20EVAL.2010–2013.pdf

been made to simplify and clarify the accountability arrangements, but further modifications are still needed.

12.   **Regional Offices** have a vital role to play in the delivery of the MTS and PoW, especially with regard the regional and country level priorities identified in the Bali Strategic Plan. The role of ROs in programme delivery during the period under evaluation was largely one of providing support services to the divisions, such as liaison activities and assisting in establishing national and regional contacts. Whilst UNEP has made significant progress in building the "one UNEP" approach and in coordinating and supporting coherent implementation of the SPs at the regional and national levels, there is still room for improvement in communication and collaboration between divisions and regional offices, and enabling the ROs to be more directly involved in the MTS planning process.

13.   There was no significant change in the way **staff resources** were managed. Staff continued to be recruited in Divisions, reporting lines and the locus of authority firmly reside with the Division Director. However, staff are able to work on SPs which cut across several Divisions in a matrix system. This resulted in increased cooperation and coordination among Divisions to some extent, but the "One UNEP" culture is still largely absent and the matrix system is still perceived to be tied up with Divisional leadership.

14.   The MTS aims to be a credible platform for **resource mobilization** around its objectives and strategic/programmatic frameworks. Parallel with drafting of the MTS, UNEP moved to a federated Resource Mobilization (RM) framework, which the Evaluation perceives as a good basis for UNEP to assure both coherence and flexibility in its fundraising efforts. UNEP's reliance on extra budgetary resources, including GEF funds, is well acknowledged but not an issue of concern for all SPs. However, staff working on environmental assessments and other normative work reported to have experienced problems reaching out to donors. The inadequacy and unpredictability of resources was often mentioned in UNEP documents as one of the major risks for implementation of the MTS.

15.   The **allocation of** EF non-post **resources** by Sub-programmes broadly follows the distribution of EF-posts. Trust Funds and Earmarked Resources are instead allotted on the basis of the corporate agreements signed with donors and of strategic considerations such as the ability of some SPs to attract more extra-budgetary resources than others. Allocation of all UNEP resources first goes to the Sub-programmes before the divisions participating in the Sub-programmes. However, contrary to expectations the SPs are not perceived as the ultimate driving factors in the distribution of resources. UNEP resource management is still centred on Divisions. Although the SPCs work across the Divisional structures they do not hold any authority over human and financial resources, which constrained the SPC's influence on allocation decisions to pursue alignment with Sub-programme priorities.

16.   The evaluation issued a number of recommendations and management prepared a formal response to them. Implementation will be formally assessed.

Disasters and Conflict Subprogramme Evaluation

17.   Between September 2011 and August 2012, the UNEP Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of UNEP's Disasters and Conflicts Sub-programme (D&C SP) covering the period 2006–2011. The goal of UNEP's D&C SP is to improve environmental governance and management for disaster risk reduction (DRR), better environmental emergency response, conflict prevention and peace building, and environmental recovery in supported

countries. The evaluation aimed to assess the strategic relevance and performance of the SP to determine results achieved and analyse the factors and processes affecting SP performance across its four main intervention areas: post-crisis environmental assessments, post-crisis environmental recovery, environmental cooperation for peace building and DRR. To obtain a coherent picture of the SP the evaluation was done at three complementary levels: intervention area, country and overall SP.

18. The evaluation found that the D&C SP is highly relevant. It is well aligned with UNEP's mandate as expressed in several UN General Assembly and UNEP Governing Council documents. Its objectives and interventions are fully justified by increasing global and country needs. The overall strategic focus of the SP is clear with its four key areas of work. UNEP has a clear comparative advantage to contribute to the SP objectives and deliver in this four areas through the accumulation of significant experience and expertise in post-crisis environmental assessments, industrial emergency preparedness, strategic environmental coordination and support at the country level and so on, but also due to UNEP's central role in the UN system to deal with the environment, UNEP's convening power and UNEP's access to the scientific research community, high-level decision makers in Governments and international organisations.

19. Further details summarizing the performance of the Subprogramme and the recommendations made by the evaluation are presented in the main body of the report below.

Environmental Governance Subprogramme Evaluation

20. This evaluation covered the work within the EG Sub-programme from its inception in 2010 through to the end of 2012. Much of the work assessed as part of the evaluation, however, had its origins before the 2010–2013 MTS period, and the evaluation looked at performance from the 2006–07 biennium onwards. The evaluation aimed to assess the strategic relevance and performance of the SP to determine results achieved and analyse the factors and processes affecting SP performance.

21. The Sub-programme's relevance to organizational mandates and the needs of member States is clear and has been highlighted at the Global Ministerial Environmental Forum and consultative processes of the UN General Assembly. The Expected Accomplishments (EAs) support core UNEP functions that are established by Governing Council. The Environmental Governance Sub-programme (EGSP) supports a core dimension of UNEP's work that cuts across all Divisions and has inherent links to the governance dimensions of other Sub-programmes.

22. UNEP's vision for environmental governance needs to be reflected in a focused strategy (rather than an exhaustive list of mandates) that can guide the Sub-programme. UNEP has recognized comparative advantages that support its role as a global player in environmental governance and International Environmental Governance in particular. It's vision for environmental governance and associated country level outcomes, a lucid recognition of MEA fragmentation, duplication and other related problems in the current IEG, as well as a renewed sustainability perspective, are good starting points for defining a robust, post-Rio+20, UNEP strategy for environmental governance. Successful assessments, a part of the Sub-programme only until the end of the 2010–13 MTS period, focus on well-defined problems, analyze the socio-economic implications, and identify actions to address problems. Similarly, an effective strategy needs to start with clear identification of problems and an outline of the strategic change approaches needed to address them. *The evaluation recommended*

that the Sub-programme agree on and adopt a formal definition for "environmental governance" that can underpin future strategy development. The EG Sub-programme strategy needs to be improved and reflect the Rio +20 outcome and specify its intervention strategies at national regional and global levels.

23.   As a transitional measure in moving from the 'old' Divisional Sub-programmes to the thematic Sub-programmes, it was agreed that, if a project/activity fell into more than one thematic area, it would be included under the EGSP. In addition to thematic work of direct relevance to environmental governance, the EG SP included corporate functions that lacked a strong and direct linkage to the results framework defined for EG Sub-programme. This led to a common perception among UNEP staff that the Environmental Governance SP had been used as a 'parking lot' for activities or functions that did not readily fit in other Sub-programmes. Prominent examples include 'corporate' work in communication (DCPI) and the regional representation function and implementation support at the regional level (DRC) both of which benefit the entire organisation.

24.   While there are considerable difficulties in comprehensively assessing EGSP performance the evaluation notes important progress towards the four Expected Accomplishments that are attributable to specific initiatives. <u>Efforts made through the EG Sub-programme had a marked influence on the global agenda for Rio +20.</u> This achievement was facilitated by a clear engagement strategy, a wise use of environmental review outputs, dedicated persistence of the UNEP DELC IEG team. These advances are considered examples of positive programmatic performance as they are the result of strategically assembling outputs of various divisions and working effectively within the formal and informal processes. Overall, the DELC/IEG work in this area has contributed to a strengthening of UNEPs role in IEG. This positive influence on the Rio+20 agenda is the cumulative result of shared analysis and advocacy on long standing gaps noted by UNEP. There were also significant advances in harmonizing international environmental agreements on chemicals and bringing emergent issues - black carbon, the green economy, short-lived climate forces- SLCFs, environment and human rights among others - to the attention of the international community. Environmental priorities are being integrated into UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and country programme budgets in an increasing number of cases.

25.   There were successful efforts to integrate environmental legislation at the regional and country levels, and incorporate environmental priorities into national development policies. Capacity building activities are strengthening the environmental awareness and enforcement capabilities of judicial systems in Africa and elsewhere. The publication of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-5) was designed to exert greater influence on policymaking than previous versions, following changes in preparation processes, presentation, methods and the approach to engage intended users.

26.   The evaluation highlighted a number of design issues and management difficulties that are summarised in the main report below.

Analysis of Project Performance and Lessons Learnt 2012–13

27.   In the 2012–2013 biennium, the Evaluation Office completed 48 in-depth evaluations as of November 2013. All projects were assessed against standard evaluation criteria. These criteria are grouped into three main categories: (1) <u>Attainment of objectives and planned results</u>, (2) <u>Sustainability and catalytic role</u>, and (3) <u>Factors and processes affecting attainment of project results.</u> This report presents a detailed discussion of performance trends and highlights a number of salient lessons that, if utilized, can enhance project level performance.

28. The overall project performance ratings against the evaluation criteria for projects evaluated in 2012–2013 are shown in Figure 1. In terms of overall project performance, 62% of the projects in 2012–2013 were rated 'Satisfactory' (S) or higher (a 2% increase from the previous biennium), whereas only 5% of the projects fell within the 'unsatisfactory' range (Moderately Unsatisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) – an improvement from the previous biennium which saw 11% of projects rated in that range.

Figure 1: Analysis of Overall UNEP Project Performance evaluated in the Biennium 2012–2013
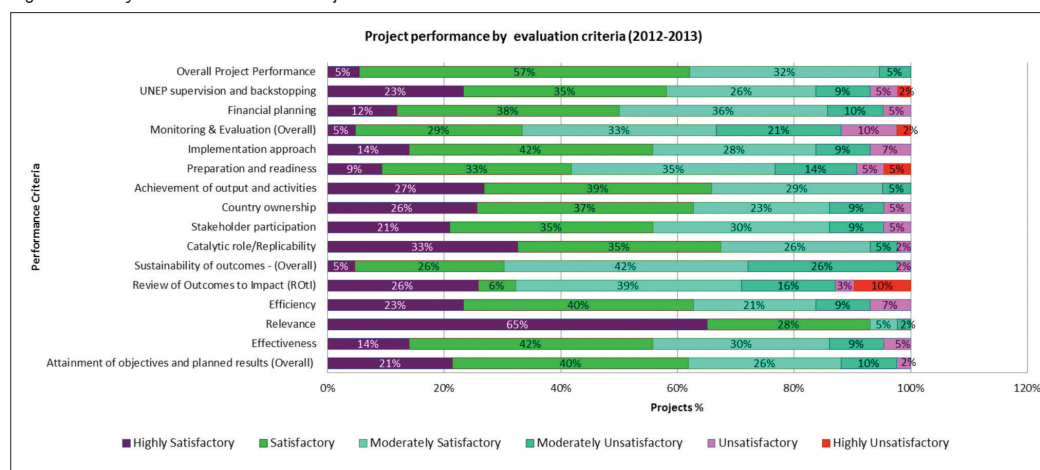
29. Project **relevance** to UNEP objectives and country needs scored high in a majority of the projects evaluated, with 93% of the projects obtaining a rating of S or higher (compared to 89% in 2010–2011). The **achievement of outputs and activities** was rated S or better for 66% of projects and 68% have a good chance (S or higher) for **replication and/or scaling-up** of project results. A majority of the projects evaluated have also been successful in their overall **attainment of objectives and results** (61% rated as S or better), and **efficiency** (63% achieving S or better) - an improvement from the last biennium where only 56% and 57% of projects, respectively, were awarded the same ratings for these criteria. **Country ownership and driven-ness** have usually been a strong factor affecting project performance with 64% of the projects evaluated achieving a rating of Satisfactory or better.

30. While this presents an overall positive picture of UNEP's short and medium-term performance across the projects evaluated, the lasting, longer-term results for quite a large number of projects are somewhat uncertain. Indeed, for 29% of the projects evaluated, the **likelihood of impact achievement** was in the unsatisfactory range. **Sustainability** of project outcomes was rated Moderately Unlikely (MU) or lower for 28% of the projects assessed. For these two closely related criteria, there is a significant apparent increase in the proportion of projects rated MU or lower, up from 16% and 13% respectively in 2010–2011. However, it should also be noted that during the 2012–2013 biennium, the Evaluation Office increased the consistency and rigour with which these criteria are assessed. The systematic use of Theory of Change analyses coupled with the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach, in effect introduced a higher required standard of evidence to receive performance ratings in the satisfactory range. The appropriate conclusion is that project performance against these criteria has likely been sub-optimal for some time, with recent performance levels perhaps reflecting longer term trends that can now more readily be discerned. *This means that project designs need to place greater emphasis on the processes leading from outputs to outcomes and develop robust strategies that aim to sustain those outcomes and the benefits that can stem from them.*

31. Other key observations stemming from 'meta' analysis of project level performance include:
    - Managers should pay particular attention to **project preparation and readiness.** *There is room for improvement in project designs and, especially, in their translation through inception processes into implementation.*
    - **Project monitoring** is a common weak point. Too often monitoring is viewed as an 'add-on' administrative requirement. Monitoring should be regarded as an integral part of project implementation and management processes - the part of the project that generates the information to allow project managers to make effective management decisions. *The availability of relevant and up-to-date information on project progress will foster the focus on results- and enhance adaptive management approaches during project implementation.*
    - **Efficiency -** Projects that were awarded good ratings for this criterion often shared some common features, including: a high level of commitment by the participating government(s) responsible for project execution; above-average dedication of the local stakeholders and executing personnel; adaptive capacity within the project teams responding to changing circumstances and in providing continuous technical and management support. A high level of transparency in the management of financial resources, skills, competencies and prior experience in management of international projects, coupled with good knowledge and organization contracting processes for project partners.
    - There is a need to **improve financial data at project level**. Overall, a lack of readily available financial data was a recurring limitation in the conduct of evaluations, financial data often being unavailable in a form that would facilitate evidence-based assessments on projects' financial management.

Review of Gender Mainstreaming

32. The UNEP Executive Director requested the Evaluation Office to conduct a review of gender mainstreaming efforts in UNEP from 2006 to 2011, to critically assess UNEP's progress in ensuring gender equality at the organizational level, as well as in mainstreaming gender throughout UNEP activities, promoting equality among women and men in terms of access to and control over environmental resources. The review took place during the first half of 2012 at a time when major reforms were being implemented within UNEP through its Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010–2013.

33. The review found that UNEP has committed itself to the promotion of gender mainstreaming by implementing the corporate Gender Plan of Action (GePA). While it proposed a comprehensive accountability framework, the GePA missed a solid rationale and clear vision statement, and was not results-based. The review *recommended that "UNEP should develop a corporate Gender Policy and new Gender Action Plan by the end of 2012 including a clear vision statement, a results-based gender mainstreaming framework and operational and institutional priorities linked to UNEP's MTS objectives".*

34. UNEP has nonetheless made significant efforts to mainstream gender into the core business processes of the organization. The UNEP Executive Director, Heads of Division and the recruitment review panel including the senior gender advisor have played a positive role in achieving good progress in gender balance of staff. The review highlighted a number of weaknesses, including a lack of resources available for gender mainstreaming and *recommended inter alia "to strengthen the institutional set-up for gender mainstreaming, and to secure adequate financial resources for gender mainstreaming by allocating specific core resources and pursuing a strong resource mobilization strategy for gender".*

35.   The review found that gender perspectives had not been systematically integrated into corporate and thematic policies, and that that gender analysis was generally inadequate during the project design stage.

Sudan Country Programme Evaluation

36.   The independent UNEP Sudan Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) was requested by DFID and undertaken by the UNEP Evaluation Office from November 2012 to February 2013. It encompassed all UNEP activities in the Republic of Sudan (excluding South Sudan) over a seven-year period from mid-2005. UNEP's strategic focus in Sudan has been on environment policy, environmental mainstreaming, forestry, integrated water resource management (IWRM), community environment management, and livelihoods. In 2007, following the production of a comprehensive Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment (PCEA, 2007), a country office was established in Khartoum to provide assistance to the Government, civil society and other UN agencies to tackle Sudan's environmental challenges.

37.   The evaluation had the dual objective of providing a basis for accountability on past performance and inspiring future UNEP programming in Sudan, it provided evidence-based insights on the positioning of UNEP in Sudan, its strategic partnerships, and the performance and results of the portfolio as a whole. The key findings on the relevance of the CPE, the results it has yielded and the key factors that affected its performance are summarized in this report.

Review of the Chemicals Conventions' 'Synergies Decision'

38.   Initial discussions on the synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BC, RC and SC respectively) and chemicals management in general began within the UNEP Governing Council in 2002. In recognising the legal autonomy of each convention, the Parties decided to prepare recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination. Later in 2010, the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conference of Parties (ExCOPs) to each of these conventions further adopted an "omnibus decision" on the following thematic areas: (i) Joint activities; (ii) Joint managerial functions; (iii) Joint services; (iv) Synchronisation of budget cycles; (v) Joint audits; and (vi) <u>Review arrangements</u>. Parties, stakeholders and the secretariats were called upon to undertake cooperative and coordinated activities to implement the "synergies decisions" at all levels, and to establish the joint services on a permanent basis.

39.   In 2011, a joint executive head function (Executive Secretary) was established, with a mandate granted by the Parties to direct the modification and organization of the three secretariats into a single combined Secretariat. Cross-cutting and joint activities were acknowledged in the following areas: (i) Technical assistance; (ii) Scientific and technical activities; (iii) Regional centres; (iv) Clearing-house mechanism; (v) Public awareness, outreach and publications; (vi) Reporting; and (vii) Overall management.

40.   Section VI of the "omnibus decisions" entitled « Review arrangements » contained a resolution by the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to review how far the arrangements adopted pursuant to the "synergies decisions" have contributed towards the goals of the conventions. The "omnibus decisions" then provided for two tracks to be followed in undertaking this review: one by the joint Secretariat, and the other an independent review by the Executive Director of UNEP in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through their evaluation offices. Consequently,

two review reports were prepared for consideration at the second simultaneous ExCOPs meeting held in Geneva, 28 April–10 May 2013.

41. The evaluation offices of UNEP and FAO conducted the review with the objectives of examining: (a) the extent to which processes for enhancing cooperation and coordination have taken into account global concerns and responded to the specific needs of developing countries and Countries with Economies in Transition (CEITs); (b) the extent to which actions taken to enhance coordination and cooperation have helped to (i) strengthen the implementation of the three Conventions at the national, regional and global levels; (ii) promote coherent policy guidance; and (iii) enhance efficiency in the provision of support to Parties with a view to reducing the administrative burden and maximizing the effective and efficient use of resources at all levels; and (c) whether enhanced coordination and cooperation among the three Conventions has contributed to the achievement of their ultimate common objectives i.e. the protection of human health and the environment for the promotion of sustainable development.

42. At the ExCOPs in Geneva (2013) the review report by UNEP/FAO was presented. The COPs subsequently adopted a decision inviting the Executive Secretary Parties, UNEP, FAO and other stakeholders to implement the recommendations set out in the reports prepared by both the Secretariat and the evaluation offices of UNEP and FAO the decision further determines that an independent review of the synergies arrangements is undertaken to assess the implementation of the joint activities/managerial functions/services at all levels, and a report be presented for consideration by the COPs at their meetings scheduled for 2017.

43. The review found that progress has been made at the Secretariat level where systems are being put in place to ensure sustainability of synergistic actions through organizational restructuring and harmonisation of core functions. Notably, the three UNEP administered secretariats have been successfully merged into one organization based on a matrix management structure and underpinned with Standard Operating Procedures to systematize procedures.

44. At Party level the review found many barriers to sustainability and only moderate progress had been made on establishing inter-ministerial committees to ensure cooperation and coordination.

45. At regional level, the Regional Centres (ReCs) of BC and SC and the Regional Offices (ROs) of UNEP and FAO have yet to become significantly involved in the synergies process in terms of assisting Parties.

46. At global level the secretariats' involvement with the Global Customs Initiative (GCI) showed potential for cooperation with Conventions, international organizations and national customs to reduce illegal trade in hazardous and banned chemicals, and wastes; however, only trade issues are being addressed and tangible outcomes have yet to be identified. A summary of the findings and conclusions are presented in more detail in this report.

Functional review of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) System

47. At the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention in Paris, France, on 8–10 February 2012, Contracting Parties called on the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to undertake a functional review of the UNEP MAP Components. In response, UNEP commissioned Dalberg Global Development Advisors to carry out a review. The Evaluation Office served on the advisory committee, assisted with the provision of quality assurance, and provided contractual and oversight services for the review.

48. The objectives of the extended functional review were to: Improve the overall performance and operational efficiencies of UNEP MAP by providing an operational tool to adapt the MAP to the Contracting Parties' substantive and managerial demands and by, inter alia, rebalancing the ratio between staffing and activities considering all available resources including the Multilateral Trust Fund (MTF); Redress gaps and misalignments in unit responsibilities, job descriptions, reporting lines, and overall performance; Apply best practices from other RSPs, notably their institutional frameworks and governance arrangements;

49. The review noted that UNEP MAP has played an instrumental role in controlling pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. It has been key in elevating environmental issues on the political agenda, encouraging the adoption of environmental legislation and regulations, and providing assistance for capacity-building in environmental protection in the region.

50. One of UNEP MAP's most important comparative advantages however is the fact that it is the only environmental governance framework for states in the Mediterranean region. The Barcelona Convention and its protocols embed the MAP system in a framework of legally binding commitments that are very carefully calibrated and tailored to the unique community of interests in the region. The review produced the following main findings – explained in greater detail later in this report:

51. **Delivery capacity needs to be strengthened** - While some activities are recognized for their contribution to the Barcelona Convention, the system as a whole is perceived as lacking the capacity to deliver.

52. **Unclear business model** - At the core of UNEP/MAP's weaknesses is an unclear business model. The day-to-day challenges faced by the entire MAP system are due in a large part to the lack of clarity regarding the fundamental model, which should underpin the system.

53. **Lack of cohesiveness within the system** — The unclear business model has undermined cohesion within the system. The system is currently characterized by a high degree of fragmentation between the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, MSSD, the regional action plans, GEF projects, EU- funded projects (that do not always align with MAP priorities), and a growing number of RAC-led country-specific projects that draw away from UNEP MAP's specific mandate for regional action. Efforts are needed to ensure greater cohesiveness and cooperation among the constellation of MAP actors.

54. **Regional Activity Centre coordination and cooperation remains a key challenge** - There are significant efficiency gains that can be achieved with improved coordination and synergies between the RACs.

Compliance with evaluation recommendations

55. Between 2008 and 2013, the Evaluation Office has completed a combined total of 134 project/sub-programme evaluations. These evaluations resulted in 759 recommendations. Eighty-four (63 per cent) were evaluations of GEF funded projects, 47 (35 per cent) of non-GEF funded projects while 3 were organization-wide evaluations. Of the 759 recommendations issued, 475 (63 per cent) were issued from the evaluations of GEF funded projects, 222 (29 per cent) from non-GEF projects and 62 (8 per cent) from organization-wide strategic evaluations.

56. Overall, two hundred and twenty eight (30%) of the recommendations were fully implemented. This is an improvement from the 21% rate in the 2006–2011 period, reported in the last biennium. Ninety-eight (13%) recommendations were partially implemented, and no further action was required for one hundred and twenty nine (17%) recommendations - either because they were rejected with adequate justifications, or because they were outside of UNEP's purview. 119 (16%) recommendations were not implemented (not compliant) and 185 are still open and yet to be implemented. This report provides a detailed analysis of recommendation compliance patterns by year and by the UNEP Divisions responsible for their implementation.

Performance of the UNEP Evaluation Office and evaluation quality

57. The performance of the Evaluation Office was assessed positively by a number of different independent external assessments including:
   • The **United Nations Evaluation Group Peer Review**, (March 2012) which concluded "UNEP follows the UNEG Norms and Standards in evaluation. The evaluation function is independent, well established and evaluation has, in recent years, been growing in importance. The Evaluation Office is a professionally managed function".
   • **The OIOS Evaluation Scorecard of UNEP Evaluation Office**, (December 2013) which concluded ""*UNEP has a robust evaluation function, with strong staff competencies, good procedures and adequate resources. It has achieved strong independence, with direct reporting of the head of evaluation to the Executive Director.*"
   • **GEF Independent Evaluation Office assessment of the quality of UNEP Evaluation Reports.** The most recent GEF Annual Performance Report (May 2013) highlights the consistently high performance that has been attained by the UNEP Evaluation Office. Across the entire period for which the quality of GEF evaluations has been formally assessed (since 2004), UNEP has achieved a higher proportion of evaluation reports rated as 'satisfactory' or above for quality than any other GEF implementing agency.

I. Introduction

A. Evaluation Office

58. The mandate for conducting, coordinating and overseeing evaluation in UNEP is vested in the Evaluation Office. This mandate covers all programmes and projects of the Environment Fund, related trust funds, earmarked contributions and projects implemented by UNEP under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Office undertakes a variety of evaluations and management studies, in accordance with the requirements of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP, and in conformity with the Norms and Standards for evaluation of the United Nations system.

59. The activities of the Evaluation Office include high level strategic evaluations of UNEP's Medium Term Strategy and thematic subprogrammes, formative evaluations of the UNEP Programme of Work, in-depth project evaluations, portfolio evaluations, cross-cutting thematic evaluations and management studies. The Office provides technical backstopping to project and programme managers undertaking project reviews, when requested, and closely follows-up on the implementation of all accepted evaluation recommendations. The Office prepares Special Studies designed to improve evaluation planning and management processes and procedures. Guidelines, formal requirements and practical advice in planning for evaluations have been specified in detail in the UNEP Programme Manual and are further elaborated in the UNEP Evaluation Manual which can be found on the UNEP Evaluation Web site at: www.unep.org/eou.

60. All UNEP projects, regardless of their funding source, are subject to evaluation. Evaluation of projects takes three main forms:
    a. Higher level strategic evaluations: UNEP Medium Term Strategy and thematic sub-programmes. The Evaluation Office aims to complete an evaluation of each thematic sub-programme once during the four-year cycle of the Medium Term Strategy.
    b. Mid-term and Terminal project or portfolio evaluations conducted as desk or in-depth studies;
    c. Impact and influence studies, although relatively few have been completed to date.

B. Mandate and mission

61. This evaluation synthesis report has been prepared as part of the mission of the UNEP Evaluation Office *to promote the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function and evaluation across UNEP and to promote the visibility and advocate the importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability.*

62. The mandate for undertaking evaluations has been stated in various General Assembly resolutions and UNEP Governing Council (now UNEA of UNEP) decisions. The Governing Council has recognized the importance of evaluation as an integral part of the

programme planning cycle, while retaining its independence, and has requested the Executive Director to continue to refine evaluation methodologies in collaboration with Governments (Governing Council decisions 75 IV, 6/13, 13/1 and 14/1) and partners within the United Nations system. In its decision 19/29, the Council also requested the Executive Director to strengthen the UNEP oversight function. According to the Secretary General's bulletin on programme planning, monitoring and implementation (ST/SGB/2000/8), which consolidates the General Assembly decisions on the evaluation function, the purpose of the evaluation function is to facilitate the review of results achieved from programme implementation, examine the validity of programme orientation and determine whether there is need to change the direction of different programmes.

C. Scope and objectives of the Synthesis Report

63. This report is prepared as an inter-sessional document of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP and also serves as part of the input of UNEP to the Secretary-General's report on evaluation to the General Assembly. The report provides stakeholders such as Governments, UNEP senior management and UNEP partners with an evaluative assessment of UNEP's programme and project performance in the 2012–2013 biennium. The main objective of the report is to help UNEP reflect on its programme performance through evaluative evidence and lessons from programme and project design and implementation.

64. The report is based on evaluations conducted in the 2012–2013 biennium and utilizes information drawn from the Mid-term Evaluation of the Medium Term Strategy 2010–2013, two sub-programme evaluations one country programme review (Sudan), a review of the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Convention's 'synergies decision', a review of the Mediterranean Action Plan, a gender review and 48 in-depth project evaluations spanning the UNEP PoW and GEF portfolios. The evaluation synthesis report also contains a review of the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations, presents external assessments of the performance of the UNEP evaluation function, and other activities undertaken by the Evaluation Office to support organisational goals.

D. Method

Analytical approach

65. The Evaluation Office conducts all evaluations in consultation with the relevant programme and project managers to ensure that, while United Nations and UNEP evaluation standards are followed, the views and concerns of the respective programmes and projects are adequately and fairly reflected. The same approach has been used in the preparation of this report and issues and questions that arose from the reviews and consultations have been further discussed with relevant divisions and circulated to all divisions in the form of a draft report.

66. The analysis and conclusions contained in the report are based on:
    a. Review and 'meta-analysis' of all evaluation reports prepared during the biennium;
    b. Review of implementation plans and management responses to the recommendations of the evaluation reports over the period 2002–2013;
    c. Discussions with UNEP staff on subjects related to partnership framework agreements, implementation of evaluation recommendations. More detail on methods, and standard

evaluation criteria are provided in the section below entitled "Analysis of Project Performance and Lessons Learnt 2012–13".

Evaluation parameters

67.   The report is based on a review and assessment of the key evaluation criteria that are consistently assessed in all UNEP performance evaluations. The criteria are explained in detail in the chapter presenting project performance from evaluations completed during the biennium.

Standard Evaluation Parameters

a) Relevance
b) Achievement of Objectives and Results
c) Sustainability of Project Outcomes
   • Financial Sustainability
   • Social Political Sustainability
   • Institutional Framework and Governance
   • Environmental Sustainability
d) Country Ownership, Replicability and Catalytic Role of Projects
e) Achievement of Outputs and Activities
f) Factors Influencing Project Performance
   • Preparedness and Project Design
   • Financial Planning and Management
   • Project Management and Implementation Approach.
   • Stakeholders Involvement.
g) Monitoring and Evaluation

II. Key findings from strategic evaluations

68.   Summary findings from major evaluations undertaken during the biennium are presented below.

A.   Mid Term Evaluation of the Medium Term Strategy)

69.   The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010–2013 was conducted between June 2012 and January 2013 in order to assess the extent to which the MTS had been successful in re-orienting UNEP's programme to address key global environmental challenges, and in guiding the associated institutional reform process designed to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation in programme delivery. The evaluation thus aimed to address two key questions; the "what", i.e. looking at the MTS' impact on the actual programmes that UNEP is delivering, and the "how", i.e. looking at the MTS' influence on the mechanisms used to deliver the programme.

70.   The evaluation focused on four key aspects, namely (i) the strategic relevance of the MTS; (ii) the progress made by UNEP in achieving the anticipated MTS outcomes and impacts; (iii) the business processes, systems and structures; and (iv) the human resources and financial mechanisms associated with the delivery of the MTS.

Relevance

71.   This section focuses on the overall relevance of the strategic intent of the MTS. It presents a brief summary on relevance of the MTS, its consistency with UNEP's vision and mandate and expected accomplishments and some of the challenges hindering its accomplishment.

UNEP's Vision and Mandate

72.   UNEP's vision is "*to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment*". This vision remains the same for the medium-term.

73.   UNEP's mandate, on the other hand, has over the years been influenced by a number of key resolutions and decisions such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)[2], the Cartagena Package[3], and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building[4] (BSP), among others, all making additional strategic demands on UNEP. The additional resolutions

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2   *A/56/326.Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration: Report of the Secretary-General, Annex*
3   *Decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002 on international environmental governance and its appendix, known together as the "Cartagena package"*
4   *UNEP Governing Council decision 23/1 of February 2005*

and decisions are to enable UNEP to address emerging global environmental challenges more effectively.

74.   The five main elements of UNEP's mandate are:
- Keeping the world environmental situation under review;
- Catalysing and promoting international cooperation and action;
- Providing policy advice and early warning information, based upon sound science and assessments;
- Facilitating the development, implementation and evolution of norms and standards and developing coherent inter-linkages among international environmental conventions;
- Strengthening technology support and capacity in line with country needs and priorities.

75.   Each of the MTS Sub-programmes, through Expected Accomplishments (EAs), outputs and/or activities, contributes towards achieving one or more of the five key elements of UNEP's mandate, in part because the mandate is so broad that it can accommodate the diverse nature of the MTS Sub-programme objectives, EAs and PoW Outputs. Given that the UNEP mandate is derived from the major GC decisions and the MTS is aligned with the UNEP mandate, the MTS therefore complies with major GC decisions. The MTS is also consistent with UNEP's technological support/capacity building mandate as set out in detail in the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP), despite implementation challenges associated with it.

UNEP's Comparative Advantage

76.   UNEP's comparative advantages, as listed in the MTS 2010–2013, are:
- UNEP provides a high-level environment policy forum within the United Nations system and participates in numerous inter-agency boards, partnerships and other mechanisms;
- UNEP promotes inter-disciplinary approaches to address environmental issues, including the inter-linkages between environmental change, development and human well-being;
- UNEP has extensive experience in working with scientific and technical communities and at the science-policy interface, including providing integrated environmental assessments to facilitate priority setting and decision-making;
- UNEP also has longstanding linkages and networks to Governments and their environment ministries, United Nations entities, regional environmental bodies, key international environmental institutions, the broad scientific community, civil society and private sector through hosting several multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) secretariats, and as an implementing agency for the GEF; and
- UNEP linkages, networks and partnerships give it a unique convening power for addressing the full range of environmental issues.

77.   Stakeholders identified UNEP's most important comparative advantages as: (i) its convening power which enables the organisation to mobilize political will; (ii) its scientific assessments which help identify emerging issues and provide a sound science-policy interface; and (iii) its considerable track record in environmental issues. However, the convening power was specifically considered as the organisation's greatest asset and UNEP capitalised on this for MEA negotiations and the formation of scientific panels, such as the IPCC and IRP. However, the MTE of the MTS recommended UNEP should further develop its niche areas, so as to avoid duplication with other organisations working in similar areas.

Global, Regional and National Priorities

78.　The six thematic priority areas of the MTS are consistent with the existing global environmental challenges identified in the GEO4, the GEF focal areas and MDG7. However, the link between environment and development is weak and cross-cutting issues, especially gender and poverty are poorly reflected in the MTS.

79.　The thematic areas of the MTS are consistent with the current and emerging environmental priorities identified such as biodiversity, water, climate change, harmful substances and international environmental governance. The MTS is also closely aligned with the GEF priorities as determined by its six focal areas, including biodiversity and ecosystem management initiatives carried out through the EMSP, climate change (mitigation and adaptation) and sustainable forest management and REDD+ initiatives through the CCSP and chemical related initiatives through the HSHWSP. With regard to the MDGs, the MTS addresses MDG7 Target (A) on sustainable development and reversing loss in environmental resources through CCSP and RESP, and Target (B) on reducing biodiversity loss through EMSP and CCSP.

80.　The evaluation found that UNEP's impact needs to be felt at national level if UNEP is to deliver key components of its SPs, namely to promote capacity building, to implement pilot projects and to provide long-term country-level support. The MTE also emphasized the importance of increasingly working with partners to ensure a greater impact of MTS activities, to catalyse action and to ensure successful interventions at the regional and national levels. The CCSP, DCSP, EGSP, EMSP and HSHWSP have one or more EAs and/or PoW outputs that aim at national-level interventions and key projects under the SPs have regional and/or national focus. Direct country involvement is, however, subject to the type of intervention, as in the case of the DCSP which has country programmes for instance, in DR Congo, Sudan and Afghanistan. The key country programmes are intended "to ground-truth and demonstrate the concepts and tools UNEP is promoting; and to provide long-term, intensive country-level support to influence policies and institutions".

81.　Moreover, since UNEP possesses expertise and technical capacity that other UN agencies do not have, it should better use these assets to strengthen partnerships with other UN agencies and bilaterals, so that these agencies can solicit UNEP expertise and advice, and in return provide UNEP with a wider reach and add weight to UNEP's messages at country level.

Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs)

82.　The MTS is well aligned with the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and recognises the "need to engage even deeper with multilateral environmental agreement secretariats in coherently addressing substantive environmental issues, as appropriate". UNEP through various programme activities is providing relevant services to MEAs through exercising its convening power for MEA preparations and negotiations, supporting scientific networks (e.g. IPCC, IRC) and promoting strategic partnerships. It is however observed that linkages between the MTS and the CMS and CITES MEAs that are anchored within UNEP need to be given more prominence in the MTS Sub-programmes. Building on UNEP's convening power; the MTS should also focus more on system wide approaches to convergence and cooperation on MEAs. The recommendation proposed in the UNEP EO's Evaluation of the EGSP of the need for a focused strategy on Environmental Governance would help to address, among other things, the problem of MEA fragmentation and duplication, and guide the implementation of MEAs at global, national and regional level.

Effectiveness and impact

Effectiveness

83.   The assessment of effectiveness focused on the achievement of immediate outcomes – the level of results realistically achievable after an implementation period of two years, and progress towards intermediate states – the transitional conditions between outcomes and impacts that must be achieved in order to deliver the intended impacts. The assessment of impact, on the other hand, focused on the likelihood of UNEP interventions bringing about a fundamental and durable change in the conditions of people and their environment.

84.   Drawing conclusions about UNEP's effectiveness was challenging due to a weak results framework against which to assess performance, patchy evidence on outcome achievement due to missing evaluative data, and inability of the evaluation to gather sufficient information on the quality and use of outputs leading to outcomes. However, the evaluation was able to draw some cautious findings on effectiveness. UNEP had achieved positive results during the 10/11 biennium in all six Sub-programmes, with positive indications on projects already having contributed to the development and adoption of improved policies and practices. UNEP's efforts to generate scientific knowledge, provide policy advice and convene stakeholders to catalyse international action seem to have been particularly effective.

85.   UNEP, under the **Climate Change Sub-programme** has built and strengthened capacities to conduct adaptation planning and measures in numerous countries and across a range of stakeholders and in some instances, the enhanced capacity has contributed to adaptation planning and preventive actions being incorporated into national development planning and policy processes. UNEP's support has also enhanced capacities to take sound decisions regarding low carbon and clean energy sources and technology alternatives, as well as helped to mobilize funding for clean energy projects. Together they have contributed to countries making sound policy, technology and investment choices.

86.   The **Disasters and Conflicts Sub-programme** has raised awareness and understanding on environment-conflict and –disaster linkages among decision makers. This has influenced strategies and planning in the affected countries, as well as influenced policy making and regulatory frameworks to move towards more sustainable environmental management. Several post-disaster countries integrated environmental needs and priorities into recovery plans or even developed environmental recovery strategies with UNEP's support. UNEP has also contributed to strengthening of environmental institutions in countries where UNEP has a longer-term country presence.

87.   The **Ecosystem Management Sub-programme** has developed and tested specific ecosystem management and assessment tools and methodologies for different ecosystems in order to make the case for incorporating an ecosystem approach into national planning. UNEP has also assisted governments to implement these tools and methodologies, to develop biodiversity assessment indicators within the framework of CBD global biodiversity indicators, and has developed and tested tools and methodologies for integrated marine and coastal management in several pilot areas. UNEP has also supported the establishment of specific marine protected areas. The EMSP has promoted mainstreaming of ecosystem management approaches into development and economic planning through building capacity and supporting the creation of an enabling environment of stakeholders to integrate economics into biodiversity conservation and to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystems into economics. UNEP has also aimed to provide policymakers with credible and independent scientific information on status and valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Despite the strong progress at the output and immediate outcome level, the EMSP has faced challenges in achieving the EAs, particularly in regards to gaining buy-in, and adoption and mainstreaming of ecosystem management approaches at the national level.

88.   The most important contribution of the **Environmental Governance Sub-programme** has been bringing emergent legal and policy issues to the attention of states and inter-governmental organizations, leading to initiatives addressing human rights and the environment, country negotiation capacities for MEAs, training of the judicial sector, and national compliance/enforcement of environmental legislation and international environmental agreements. With UNEP support, numerous governments have drafted policy and legislative proposals and even taken measures to develop new legislation, strengthen existing laws and incorporate environmental aspects to sector laws. Moreover, UNEP has contributed to the work of UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and has bolstered environmental components of Delivering as One programmes and UNDAFs. The EGSP has also contributed towards improving UN system coherence, however UNEP could have better engaged in the UN inter-agency coordination mechanism. UNEP has also been instrumental in the design and set-up of MEAs, including updating assessments and indicators, providing technical advice and capacity building for MEA implementation, and assisting secretariats to prepare meeting agendas, ensuring that the key issues identified by UNEP are reflected in MEA work programmes. However, more could have been done in terms of progress towards synergies in MEA policy and practice, and facilitation of MEAs implementation.

89.   The **Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste Sub-programme** has contributed towards enhancing the capacity of states to manage chemicals and hazardous waste through e.g. producing and disseminating training materials, tools and methodologies, and guidance documents. The HSHWSP also helped facilitate access to funding for country-level chemicals management and contributed to the introduction and strengthening of country-level policies, strategies and infrastructure for managing harmful chemicals and hazardous waste in an environmentally sound manner in several countries. UNEP has also improved stakeholders' knowledge as regards harmful substances and hazardous waste and made an important contribution to the evolution and implementation of policy and control systems for harmful substances of global concern, such as mercury and lead. Moreover, UNEP efforts have contributed towards strengthening the chemicals and waste MEAs, such as improving monitoring of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

90.   Through the **Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production Sub-programme** UNEP has strengthened scientific knowledge base in the area of Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production (RE-SCP) for example through UNEP's International Resource Panel. The RESP has influenced policy formulation and decision-taking, for example facilitated the adoption of regional RE-SCP strategies, development of national RE-SCP Action Plans and mainstreaming of RE-SCP in national development plans in several countries. The Green Economy – work stream has played an important role in advancing the international and national political agendas on resource efficiency and three countries receiving UNEP's green economy advisory services have included green economy in their development plans. The RESP has enhanced awareness among the private sector to increase resource-efficient investment even though evidence was not sufficient to ascertain the extent to which business has invested in resource-efficient production methods. The same goes for changing consumer attitudes to towards sustainable lifestyles; UNEP has provided advisory services to pilot countries, some countries have started insertion of sustainability criteria into procurement processes, but insufficient evidence was available of consumer choice favouring more resource-efficient products.

91.   The MTE of the MTS was not able to assess the extent to which UNEP has effectively mainstreamed gender, due to lack of gender equality targets in its MTS 2010–2013, its PoW 2010/2011 and programme progress reporting. However, the evaluation positively noted the management measures taken to enhance results-based management for gender equality in the design and implementation of the MTS 2014–2017 and PoW 2014/2015.

Impact prospects

92.   The MTE of MTS assessed conditions and factors that have the potential to influence transformation of immediate outcomes to intermediate states, and further contribute to long-term environmental impacts. The evaluation differentiated between external factors that UNEP can attempt to influence (impact drivers) and those out of the reach of UNEP (assumptions).

93.   The key **assumptions** outside UNEP's control were identified as stable political and security situation; adequate human resources in government agencies and international organizations; and economic competitiveness of renewable energy. Political instability might reduce the likelihood of UNEP achieving long lasting changes particularly in post-crisis countries where the D&C SP operates. Deterioration of security situation sets limits to where UNEP teams and partners can continue to operate without putting persons in danger and political instability may result in the removal of people with whom UNEP has developed a trust relationship. Adequate level of human resources is required to translate enhanced capacities to effective change, however staff numbers in supported countries, particularly in locations supported by the DCSP, are usually insufficient, and turnover of staff is, in general, high. An important assumption for the CCSP and RESE in particular is that renewable energy is economically competitive. However, the price of renewable energy remains volatile thus influencing the uptake of green technologies.

94.   The key **impact drivers** were identified as countries allocate sustainable funding; partnerships and networks leverage UNEP's work; broader public is aware of environmental issues; governments agree on a legally binding response to climate change; governments adopt the 10YFP on SCP; and that governments embrace the green economy concept. UNEP has contributed to the identified key impact drivers.

95.   Long-term financing is required in order for countries to address environmental issues, but mobilization of domestic financial resources is often weak since environment is not considered as a priority concern, particularly in countries affected by disasters and conflicts. Moreover, accessing international funds is generally challenging. UNEP has been engaging with the private sector to attract additional investments and financial flows by facilitating the introduction and by building countries' capacities to access financing sources. UNEP has also recognized the important role of partnerships and networks in taking UNEP's work forward, and has engaged with other UN entities, international institutions, government ministries beyond the environmental sector, academia, civil society and the private sector. The level, to which partnerships are successful in driving impact of UNEP's work, varies among the SPs.

96.   Public outreach is an important driver, which besides increasing confidence in UNEP and changing individual attitudes and behaviour, will help to maintain a minimum level of pressure on government agendas and the private sector. To contribute towards this driver, communication and outreach are part of UNEP SPs, particularly in the CCSP and RESP. Governments embracing the green economy concept is a driver that particularly the RESP has been instrumental in contributing to through evolving and mainstreaming the concept in international and national policy making.

97.   A particular driver for the CCSP is that governments agree on a legally binding response to climate change. Therefore UNEP is closely following and actively participating in the climate change negotiations, which outcomes will have key implications on the national uptake of UNEP's work on climate change mitigation. A particular driver for the RESP is that, thanks to UNEP's work, governments adopted the 10YFP on SCP, which is the only inter-governmental framework for resource efficiency.

Business processes, systems & structures

Programme planning, project portfolio and the MTS

98.   Projects represent the principal mechanism for delivering on the EAs defined in the Medium Term Strategy. The MTS and the PoWs were developed in the context of an already well-established and substantial UNEP project portfolio and the chief mechanism for aligning the existing portfolio with the new EAs and PoW Outputs and for identifying new project initiatives, were the Programme Frameworks (PFs). However, the PFs have not lived up to their expected role in strengthening RBM in the implementation of the MTS for several reasons, the crucial one being lack of identification of comprehensive and coherent causal logic between the EAs and PoW outputs and the projects that would achieve them. Each Sub-programme adopted a somewhat different approach in structuring the PFs and their Project Concepts, where some Concepts were formulated as umbrella projects, or project areas, while other concepts were more akin to individual projects in their own right. Some on-going projects did not ideally align with the approved PF concepts, in which case they were loosely slotted into the PF or continued outside of the results framework and of the Results-Based monitoring system. The Programme Frameworks were also found to be unable to exhibit the adaptability that is ideally required for effective results-based planning based on lessons learned and evolving circumstances.

Programme management

99.   UNEP has been making efforts to strengthen its programme management systems, in particular through the development of a revised and expanded Programme Manual. Revising the Manual began in 2009, but was only released in 2012, meaning that in the meantime there was no robust framework in place for programme management. However, on the other hand, the manual incorporates many of the lessons learnt in implementing the revised programme process. At the divisional level, divisional work plans represent a potentially important but underutilised element of UNEP's programme management systems.

Programme monitoring and reporting

100.   Monitoring of the MTS and the PoW is carried out at two main levels; monitoring of progress made in achieving the MTS's EAs, and monitoring of actual delivery of the PoW and project outputs. The third level of programme performance monitoring is impact, addressed as part of ex-post evaluations. There are also two parallel monitoring systems in operation, the UN-wide IMDIS and UNEP's own PIMS. Whereas IMDIS is focused in monitoring performance at the output level, and is therefore increasingly anachronistic as a results-based management tool as far as UNEP's present results framework is concerned, PIMS now plays a central role within UNEP in monitoring and reporting of progress in project implementation, by recording and analysing information concerning progress towards PoW Outputs and the achievement of project milestones.

101. The Programme Performance Reports (PPRs) are under constant improvement, but the MTE of the MTS concluded that they still have two significant weaknesses; firstly, the reporting of achievements at the outcome level relies on weak EA indicators, which in turn are linked to overly ambitious EAs. Secondly, the way in which the PPRs use the PIMS "traffic light" system to aggregate project output milestone information to the EA level is in the view of the MTE of the MTS inappropriate. The revised UNEP Programme Manual has established a good foundation for enhancing both outcome and output level indicators, and when combined with more realistic EAs, it should be possible to develop more realistic EA indicators.

102. Currently monitoring and reporting on the contributions of the divisions seems to be almost entirely aligned to the project delivery mechanism. As a result, a significant proportion of UNEP's work, because it is not "projectised" is not being subjected to an appropriate process of management oversight and approval.

Accountability and authority

103. Introduction of the 'matrix approach' was designed to provide a new framework for allocating accountability and authority for MTS delivery that cut across the traditional divisional 'silos'. However, the evaluation found that the current management approach is not providing clear lines of authority and accountability; the matrix management implies that UNEP staff have dual reporting lines; to their divisional/ branch/unit head for day-to-day implementation, and for SPC for programmatic aspects. In practice the dual reporting lines have not been established, leading to the situation where SPC have significant accountability for the SP delivery but no actual authority to enable the coordination and facilitation of the SP. A number of adjustments have been made to simplify and clarify the accountability arrangements, but further modifications are still needed.

UNEP's strategic presence and the role of the Regional Offices

104. Regional Offices have a vital role to play in the delivery of the MTS and PoWs, especially with regard the regional and country level priorities identified in the Bali Strategic Plan. The current role of ROs in programme delivery is largely one of providing support services to the divisions, such as liaison activities and assisting in establishing national and regional contacts. Whilst UNEP has made significant progress in building the "one UNEP" approach and in coordinating and supporting coherent implementation of the SPs at the regional and national levels, there is still room for improvement in communication and collaboration between divisions and regional offices, and enabling the ROs to be more directly involved in the MTS planning process.

Human Resource management and Resource Mobilisation

105. In line with UNEP's aim to "build a high-quality, multi-skilled and mobile workforce that is efficient, competent, and possesses the highest degree of integrity", the MTS identified human resource management and resource mobilization as two critical institutional mechanisms to be put in place to achieve UNEP's objectives. The move to the new programmatic framework has been accompanied by organizational restructuring of financial management and administration; The Corporate Services Section (CSS), the Quality Assurance Section (QAS) and the Resource Mobilization Section (RMS) have been the backbone of UNEP management and administration for the implementation of the MTS.

106. With few exceptions, UNEP has delivered its PoW with the human resources already available. DTIE, DRC and DEPI represent each about 20% of UNEP staff, followed by DEWA (9%), DELC (7%) and DCPI (4%). The OfO was strengthened in 2009 by increasing the staff from 37 to 63 mainly through the transfer of finance and administration functions from UNON to UNEP CSS. However, since then the OfO staff base has been reduced to 56. Strengthening of UNEP's presence in the regions has mainly occurred through the set-up of various Liaison Offices.

107. Geographical representation and gender balance form important considerations in human resource recruitment. Unlike gender balance where the recruitment is fairly on course with women representing 59% of entire UNEP workforce (and 55% of Professional staff at P1–P3 level and a significant increase of over 6% at Director level since 2010), balanced geographical representation is weak. UNEP has a workforce from 117 countries of which the majority of the professionals are from the United States of America, Kenya and the United Kingdom. There are also limited opportunities within UNEP for career progression. In the period 2008–2012, the number of staff promoted had steadily fallen, each year from 70 to 33.

108. There has not been any significant shift in the way staff resources are managed. Staff continues to be recruited in Divisions and reporting lines and the locus of authority firmly reside with the Division Director. However, staff are able to work on SPs which cut across several Divisions in a matrix system. UNEP staff generally divide their time between two or more, SPs except staff in DTIE and DELC who generally work for the implementation of one SP only. The allocation of human resources across SPs has been in some cases artificial, often following budgetary criteria and partly suffered from the tendency of Divisions to include their staff within the SP they lead. The MTS matrix structure has increased cooperation and coordination among Divisions to some extent, but the "One UNEP" culture is still largely absent and the matrix system is still perceived to be too much tied up with Division leadership. The rivalry among Divisions, low trust between OfO and Divisions and the perceived poor management capacities of some high-level ranked staff are seriously affecting the morale of UNEP staff.

109. Staff capacity development has not been regular due to limited resources and appeared to be of less priority to the MTS development and implementation process despite the strong support this had from the Executive Office. A Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) was established to draft a Training and Learning Strategy for UNEP and its administered MEAs, but when the SIT was dismantled in early 2010, no dedicated staff was appointed to carry the task forward and the Strategy remained as a draft. Despite this shortcoming there were few training events in RBM by QAS/Evaluation Office in 2011–12 that contributed to the implementation of the MTS and staff attended several training courses by UNON SDTU.

Resource mobilization, allocation and management

110. The MTS aims to be 'a credible platform for mobilising resources' around its objectives and strategic/programmatic frameworks. Parallel with drafting of the MTS, UNEP moved to a federated Resource Mobilization (RM) framework, which the Evaluation perceives as a good basis for UNEP to assure both coherence and flexibility in its fundraising efforts. Overall UNEP staff members have been flexible in adapting to the new model, by looking for co-financiers and partners, but also in some cases stretching their capacities to the limit. The Policy Guidelines on Resource Mobilisation also highlight the need to stabilize and broaden the resource base for the MTS implementation and adopting a programme based approach

in line with the thematic priorities of the MTS. The need to raise funds to implement the MTS and moving away from the pair tied contributions – donor driven programmes was also realized by the staff as a critical area for the implementation of the MTS.

111. UNEP suffered a reduction in financial resources of USD 21 million in 2010–2011, after an increase throughout 2006–2009. The considerable reduction in financial support from Italy and Spain was only partially compensated by the increase of contributions by Germany, USA, Sweden and Finland. Despite the intention to increase voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund in order for UNEP to deliver normative work and policy advice, among others, the EF resource base decreased by 9%. Differences exist between Sub-programmes in their ability to secure funding. While CCSP has been able to raise more than what it estimated, HSHWSP, DCSP and especially EGSP have suffered a significant resource gap. Reasons might include overly ambitious project designs, ineffective fundraising efforts or delays in the receipt of funds. The constrained budgetary situation is likely to have affected UNEP's effectiveness, especially in regards to implementation of activities at a country level.

112. UNEP's reliance on extra budgetary resources, including GEF funds, is well acknowledged but not an issue of concern for all SPs. The HSHW and CC SPs considered Extra-Budgetary funds to 2010–2011 as sufficient. However, staff working on environmental assessments and other normative work reported to have experienced problems reaching out to donors. Some SPs and Divisions proved to be more proactive in search for funds than others. For example DCSP was the only SP to develop a Resource Mobilisation Strategy. The inadequacy and unpredictability of resources (due to the financial crisis, the difficulty to attract long term funding, etc.) is often mentioned in UNEP documents as one of the major risks for implementation of the MTS. Identified mitigation strategies include the development of multi-stakeholder fundraising strategies, close cooperation with in-country partners, early sensitization of donors, and enhanced awareness of the importance of normative work.

113. The allocation of EF non-post resources by SP follows the distribution of EF-posts. Trust Funds and Earmarked Resources are instead allotted on the basis of the corporate agreements signed with donors and of strategic considerations such as the ability of some SPs to attract more extra-budgetary resources than others. PoW budget estimates for 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 did not present considerable differences in the resources allocated among SPs. Allocation of all UNEP resources first goes to the Sub-programmes before the divisions participating in the Sub-programmes. However, contrary to expectations, this new funding logic was not able by itself to overcome contrasts by Divisions and the SPs are not perceived as the ultimate driving factors in the distribution of resources.

114. The analysis of resources by Divisions in the last four biennia (2006–2013) shows that divisions such as DTIE, DRC and DEPI have benefited more from the move to the new framework in terms of resources allocated, whereas DEWA, DELC and DCPI have lost ground. This relates to the Lead role that DTIE and DEPI play for 5 out of 6 SPs. The power to decide on the allocation of resources within SPs ultimately rests with the Lead Division Director. In addition, the SP Lead Divisions and SP Coordinators have no means of monitoring the use of funds by divisions other than their own once the resources are distributed among Divisions and overall there is lack of information about the allocation of resources within a SP.

116. UNEP resource management is still centred on Divisions. Although the SPCs work across the Divisional structures they do not hold any authority over human and financial resources, which constrained the SPC's influence on allocation decisions to pursue alignment with Sub-

programme priorities. UNEP's financial statements are audited by the UN Board of Auditors every two years, and OIOS conducts audits at regional and project level. The MOPAN review provided evidence that audit recommendations are followed up by UNEP's management. Overall, donors are urging UNEP to enhance its 'value for money mind-set', as little evidence has been found on UNEP controlling administrative costs and achieving economy on purchased inputs.

116.   The evaluation issued a number of recommendations and management prepared a formal response to them. Implementation will be formally assessed.

B.   Disasters and Conflict Sub-programme Evaluation

117.   Between September 2011 and August 2012, the UNEP Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of UNEP's Disasters and Conflicts Sub-programme (D&C SP) covering the period 2006–2011. The goal of UNEP's D&C SP is to improve environmental governance and management for disaster risk reduction (DRR), better environmental emergency response, conflict prevention and peace building, and environmental recovery in supported countries. The evaluation aimed to assess the strategic relevance and performance of the SP to determine results achieved and analyse the factors and processes affecting SP performance across its four main intervention areas: post-crisis environmental assessments, post-crisis environmental recovery, environmental cooperation for peace building and DRR. To obtain a coherent picture of the SP the evaluation was done at three complementary levels: intervention area, country and overall SP.

118.   The evaluation found that the D&C SP is highly relevant. It is well aligned with UNEP's mandate as expressed in several UN General Assembly and UNEP Governing Council documents. Its objectives and interventions are fully justified by increasing global and country needs. The overall strategic focus of the SP is clear with its four key areas of work. UNEP has a clear comparative advantage to contribute to the SP objectives and deliver in this four areas through the accumulation of significant experience and expertise in post-crisis environmental assessments, industrial emergency preparedness, strategic environmental coordination and support at the country level and so on, but also due to UNEP's central role in the UN system to deal with the environment, UNEP's convening power and UNEP's access to the scientific research community, high-level decision makers in Governments and international organisations.

119.   UNEP's niche is well defined in post-conflict countries, providing environmental information, strategic and planning advice and institutional support, but this is not always the case in countries supported with DRR or with environmental recovery after natural disasters, where UNEP's specific role is sometimes unclear with risks of duplication of efforts or gaps in country support. *The evaluation recommended that UNEP should better specify its niche in country-level DRR and post-disaster recovery work vis-à-vis other UN agencies and INGOs with often larger implementation resources and firmer long-term commitment at the country level.* The DRR component in the D&C SP is rather small compared to DRR-related work in UNEP as a whole, in particular in the Climate Change Sub-programme. Even though the DRR team from the D&C SP has made efforts to link up with the other sub-programmes, it has no formal UNEP-wide coordination role in the area of DRR and the connection between the D&C SP's eco-system management for DRR work on the one hand and other DRR-related work in UNEP such as Climate Change Adaptation work, on the other, remains weak. *The evaluation recommended to "formally assign a UNEP-wide coordination role to the DRR team within the D&C SP, which should*

share information with the rest of UNEP on what UNEP is doing in the field of DRR, make efforts to create a more collaborative culture between units involved in DRR-related activities across the organization; and seek stronger collaboration between the promotion of environmental management approaches to DRR (Eco-DRR) and climate change adaptation work".

120.   The predominant intervention strategy of the D&C SP is a needs-based, country-level approach that is used in post-crisis countries, where assessments, emergency response and recovery assistance must be tailored to the specific country context. This approach is rather unique in UNEP as an organisation, where most interventions are normative in nature and managed from UNEP headquarters or regional offices with very specific short-term support provided at the country level. UNEP's support and longer-term presence in post-conflict countries (but also some disaster-prone countries such as Haiti) is fully justified because of the erosion in those countries of not only the environment but also the environmental policy and institutional frameworks and international connection to the multilateral environmental agreements. Yet, the concept of "country programme" is not well understood nor broadly accepted in UNEP in terms of how it is defined, what the different operating modalities can be, which conditions or criteria would justify the creation of a country programme, who should be leading it under what circumstances etc.

121.   The second intervention strategy is a more supply-driven approach, much more common in UNEP as a whole, where approaches, concepts and tools - that have been tested and demonstrated on the ground by UNEP or others - are disseminated at the global or regional level. This is the main intervention approach of the preventive and preparedness work of the SP. The evaluation concludes that both intervention strategies are appropriate to meet the diverse SP objectives, but linkages between the global/regional preventive work and the country-level recovery work are not fully exploited leading to some missed opportunities in terms of knowledge exchange and mobilization of partnerships. Also, insufficient attention is sometimes given at the country level to building strategic partnerships to promote dissemination and up-scaling of local pilots.

122.   In terms of geographic targeting, the SP is global in scope in the areas of advocacy and training towards governments and international organisations, but, according to UNEP strategic documents, country assistance would be granted primarily to those countries that are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards or conflict with a strong environmental dimension. This is largely true for the peace-building and post-crisis recovery work. However, targeting of DRR and industrial accident preparedness work (APELL) has been biased towards middle-income countries rather than the poorest or most vulnerable countries, because committed public agencies and capable technical institutions are considered a pre-requisite for successfully introducing UNEP's approaches and tools. In-depth environmental assessments and longer-term recovery support by PCDMB teams was provided following major disasters and conflicts, but funding availability sometimes limited the extent of UNEP's support. With its current resource base, UNEP cannot be everywhere. However, UNEP does not have formal criteria to select countries where more in-depth and longer-term intervention is justified and therefore the impression is created that "UNEP goes where the funding is", i.e. that country choice is driven by donor interests rather than country needs or the UNEP mandate. The evaluation recommended that "UNEP should define clear criteria for selecting vulnerable or post-crisis countries where more in-depth and/or long-term UNEP support and involvement is justified, differentiated for each intervention area of the SP."

123. On the basis of a reconstructed Theory of Change of the SP, six immediate outcomes were identified corresponding to different dimensions of country capacity for environmental management and emergency preparedness. However, across the D&C SP evaluative evidence on the achievement of these outcomes and higher level results is weak. Demonstrating achievements at the outcome and impact level and being fully transparent on success and failure alike are necessary to stimulate internal learning, help to improve branding of UNEP's D&C SP and support fund raising efforts. The evaluation recommended that "monitoring across the SP should keep better track of effectiveness, i.e. progress on achievement of outcomes, and would therefore require robust baseline information, SMART indicators, and adequate budget provisions".

124. The immediate outcomes that the SP aims to achieve are improvements in the different dimensions of capacity of countries vulnerable to disasters and conflicts, so that environmental management and governance can be improved in the medium term. The D&C SP has been effective in enhancing access to environmental information and increasing understanding of the links between the environment on the one hand, and conflicts and disasters on the other, through high-quality environmental assessments and numerous high-level communications and publications. In some cases, however, funding constraints have limited the timely follow-up that could be given to assessments, awareness raising or training events, reducing the likelihood that recommendations have been implemented or that approaches and tools have been widely and sustainably transferred. Also, environmental assessment skills have rarely been transferred to partners.

125. The SP has also been successful in supporting the integration of environmental concerns in DRR and recovery plans, strategies, and policies, on which much of the country-level support has been focused. As a result of UNEP's support, several disaster-affected countries have better integrated environmental needs and priorities into recovery plans and, in a few cases, prepared stand-alone environmental recovery strategies. Also, in post-conflict programme countries, UNEP has in some instances supported government agencies directly with the development or up-dating of general and sector-specific environmental strategies and plans. UNEP post-crisis assessments and occasional field research on more specific themes are likely to have influenced policy making towards more sustainable environmental management. In a few post-conflict countries, UNEP has also provided direct policy advice, in particular on how to integrate assessment and field research recommendations in environmental policy. Real influence on policy and institutional processes could be demonstrated in those countries where UNEP had a longer term presence such as Afghanistan, Sudan and Sierra Leone.

126. Whether the SP's capacity building outcomes can really lead to changes in environmental management and governance depends on the extent to which key external factors and conditions are present. The SP has significantly contributed to a number of key drivers (external factors that UNEP can influence) needed to help translate enhanced country capacities into improved environmental governance and management, and, ultimately, into reduced vulnerability to disasters and conflicts at a large scale. Integration of environmental considerations into UN and other international organisations is considered one of the most crucial outcome drivers because these organisations often provide support to countries that goes well beyond technical assistance and training, and play a major role in replicating and up-scaling UNEP concepts and tools. The SP has been effective in global advocacy to bring environment to the fore in DRR, recovery and peacebuilding interventions of UN and other international organisations, even though efforts towards the humanitarian community

have been less consistent. At the country level mainstreaming of the environment in UN and other international players was also often successful, but highly dependent on the supportiveness of individuals in key agencies, and much more challenging in the case of humanitarian organisations due to a lack of resources and support from humanitarian agencies' headquarters.

127. UNEP has made a significant contribution to relationships between actors e.g. through the APELL programme or during environmental diplomacy efforts, but participation by non-governmental stakeholders at country level could be stronger. This participation is an important outcome driver because non-governmental stakeholders need to feel responsible to change their own behaviour and at the same time hold their governments accountable for improving environmental governance and management. In some countries UNEP is promoting this participation by involving civil society in training, field activities, community-based environmental planning etc., but learning from these experiences and experiences of others is not systematic. On the other hand, UNEP should rethink its role in promoting community participation in environmental planning and management which currently does not make full use of UNEP's comparative advantages at the country level.

128. There are also a number of assumptions (contextual factors and conditions outside UNEP's influence) that affect the achievement of longer term outcomes and impact such as political stability in the countries where the D&C SP operates, or the availability of adequate resources (human and financial) in countries. The evaluation found that these assumptions quite often do not hold true, and that, therefore, there is a moderate to high risk that immediate outcomes (enhanced country capacity) achieved by UNEP will not lead to significant behavioural change (improved governance and management) or impacts (reduced vulnerability to conflicts and disasters) further up the causal pathways. For instance, political instability can easily (re-) occur and result in that people with whom UNEP has developed a trust relationship are removed from key decision making positions.

129. As regards sustainability of results achieved with UNEP's support, the evaluation found that the main factor in favour is strong government ownership. Indeed, government agencies have in most cases been the direct beneficiaries of UNEP's support, or, at least, been directly involved in UNEP interventions. However, environmental governance in many supported countries remains fragile and continued support will be needed for an unforeseeable time. The main obstacle to sustainability of results achieved up to now is the absence of long-term financing for addressing environmental issues in most fragile states where the SP operates because of their weak financial resource base and the low priority given to environmental concerns in public budget allocations.

130. There are several internal factors that have contributed to the overall satisfactory delivery of outputs and short-term immediate outcomes in supported countries. SP staff were found competent in their field and internal management arrangements seem to work well. Most projects have an appropriate and coherent intervention strategy. Partnerships with international organisations at the global and regional level, and with government agencies at the country level have played a major role in achieving, consolidating and replicating results. The evaluation recommended, however, that UNEP should develop stronger operational partnerships at country level with key UN agencies to enhance catalytic effects in-country. Broad-based and longer-term partnerships with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders should also be fostered for sustainability and to provide a safety net for UNEP to cope better with potential staff turn-over in government and political instability. The SP has also been overall very successful in mobilizing extra-budgetary funding sources and

disposes over an exemplary resource mobilization strategy that, if implemented, should ensure future funding for most project activities.

131. On the other hand, there are a number of factors that have led to missed opportunities, have negatively affected performance, or have put the future performance and sustainability of achievements at risk. Project design quality has improved since the PoW 2010–2011 but is still uneven with generally a lack of detail and consistency in the presentation of project management and supervision arrangements, roles of collaborating units within UNEP and of external partners, connections between projects, and how gender issues would be addressed. Most projects have also no explicit exit strategy, and hand-over modalities to ensure continuity are seldom clear. The evaluation therefore recommended that "country operations should always have a clear exit strategy with explicit criteria and appropriate modalities for hand-over of management to country stakeholders (other UN agencies, Government, civil society etc.) and/or other UNEP SPs and units, Regional Offices in particular, after the crisis has receded".

132. Project supervision arrangements are often inappropriate. Because teams are small, management and supervision functions are often fulfilled by the same persons, and most projects have no Steering Committee to provide adequate strategic oversight and guidance. Due to this, there is a risk of management issues going undetected for a long time and opportunities for mutual support and learning between teams in the SP are lost. Country programme management arrangements have been developed on a case-by-case basis and are not always optimal e.g. in terms of delegation of authority from Geneva and Nairobi to the country-level managers. Administrative procedures in UNEP are not well adapted for field-based operations and have led to many delays, frustrations and, occasionally staff insecurity despite many efforts by managers to find solutions. The evaluation recommended that "administrative arrangements and procedures for field-level operations should be thoroughly reviewed, adapted and more standardized, including stronger delegation of authority to the country level and the possibility to fast-track administrative and operational requests when needed".

133. The ratio of core funding over extra-budgetary funding for the D&C SP is the lowest among all UNEP sub-programmes. This is contradictory to UNEP's global mandate and poses several challenges: essential non-project activities such as SP coordination, resource mobilization, project design and knowledge management need to be largely funded by project budgets; many staff are contract insecure; and the SP cannot quickly launch environmental assessments or recovery operations without first securing donor support etc. On the other hand, it is important to consider the success of the D&C SP to mobilize extra-budgetary funding when thinking about handing over certain interventions to other sub-programmes in UNEP who might not have built the same credibility and trust relationships with donors interested in funding environment-related interventions in post-crisis countries. The evaluation strongly recommended that contract "security of staff is improved in the SP and that staffing requirements of all functional units are fully met. UNEP should allocate more core resources to the D&C SP but the SP should also continue its efforts to mobilize extra-budgetary resources".

134. The evaluation found that collaboration with the rest of UNEP could be much stronger, despite several efforts by D&C SP teams to engage with other sub-programmes, and therefore many opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange within UNEP are missed. This weak internal collaboration is not unique for the D&C SP and is caused by several factors such as the difficulties to pool resources across divisions, the lack of an incentives system to promote in-house collaboration, and, above all, a lack of staff time

dedicated to knowledge exchange and mutual support. The evaluation recommended that "the Post-conflict and Disaster Management Branch, as the main implementer of the D&C SP, should rely more on other UNEP units with a high level of expertise in specific fields, and that other UNEP units could learn more from PCDMB experiences with more intensive or longer-term country operations. Cohesion and team work within the D&C Sub-programme itself should also be improved. The Regional Offices could also play a much stronger role in project design and implementation and the evaluation recommended that a joint planning and implementation arrangement is put in place between functional units (PCDMB and others) and the Regional Offices, and that the operational capacity, funding and delegated authority of ROs is improved".

C. Environmental Governance

135. This evaluation covered the work within the EG Sub-programme from its inception in 2010 through to the end of 2012. Much of the work assessed as part of the evaluation, however, had its origins before the 2010–2013 MTS period, and the evaluation looked at performance from the 2006–07 biennium onwards. The evaluation aimed to assess the strategic relevance and performance of the SP to determine results achieved and analyse the factors and processes affecting SP performance.

136. Environmental governance (EG) as defined in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme Draft Strategy (2008), encompasses "…*the process and institutions that guide and restrain the collective action of Governments, organizations, major groups and civil society to address collective environmental issues at all levels, from local to national, sub-regional, regional and global.*" The Sub-programme's relevance to organizational mandates and the needs of member States is clear and has been highlighted at the Global Ministerial Environmental Forum and consultative processes of the UN General Assembly. The Expected Accomplishments (EAs) support core UNEP functions that are established by Governing Council Decision 19/1 and endorsed by UN General Assembly Resolution 19/2. In this respect, the Environmental Governance Sub-programme (EGSP) supports a core dimension of UNEP's work that cuts across all Divisions and has inherent links to the governance dimensions of other Sub-programmes.

Vision and understanding of Environmental Governance

137. Among UNEP's most meaningful results are to influence and catalyse national and local level action. Countries, being the key governance units of the world, are a main hub of governance activity, but also key to progress in dealing with global and regional environmental challenges. This is reflected in the stated goals and objectives of the Sub-programme. While the vision and mandated space of UNEP is broad, the UNEP mandate/role vis-a-vis country support remains unclear. The central role of countries is part of the UNEP vision, yet it is not clearly outlined and reflected in the UNEP Sub-programme design and implementation arrangements. This reflects both an evolving mandate and changing perceptions of priority that are moving towards greater country-level engagement as evidenced in the Rio +20 outcome document where UNEP's mandate in this regard was re-enforced. Global and regional level actions are critical, but, in many respects, only a means towards 'on the ground' impact from country level actions. Clear acknowledgement of the following distinction will be important for future strategic planning of UNEP's work on Environmental Governance:
  • *Environmental Governance:* concept, policy and practice: comprising legal and regulatory frameworks; institutions and institutional mechanisms; data, information and knowledge sharing systems at the country, regional and global level to address agreed environmental priorities.

- *International Environmental Governance (IEG):* the international environment regime (including UNEP and MEAs) within an international governance system. How the UN system is set up and organized to work towards environmental sustainability.

138. UNEP's vision for environmental governance needs to be reflected in a focused strategy (rather than an exhaustive list of mandates) that can guide the Sub-programme. UNEP has recognized comparative advantages that support its role as a global player in environmental governance and IEG in particular. It's vision for environmental governance and associated country level outcomes, a lucid recognition of MEA fragmentation, duplication and other related problems in the current IEG, as well as a renewed sustainability perspective, are good starting points for defining a robust, post-Rio+20, UNEP strategy for environmental governance. Successful assessments, a part of the Sub-programme only until the end of the 2010–13 MTS period, focus on well-defined problems, analyze the socio-economic implications, and identify actions to address problems. Similarly, an effective strategy needs to start with clear identification of problems and an outline of the strategic change approaches needed to address them.

139. *The evaluation recommended that the Sub-programme agree on and adopt a formal definition for "environmental governance" that can underpin future strategy development. The EG Sub-programme strategy needs to be improved and reflect the Rio +20 outcome and specify its intervention strategies at national regional and global levels. The strategy must be driven by external realities, should have a clear problem focus and should articulate UNEP's strategic niche and unique identity. The development of a new strategy should be undertaken in consultative manner with a process designed to foster staff ownership.*

Sub-programme structure and design

140. The EG Strategy provides a quite detailed narrative on the focus on UNEP's activities under each Expected Accomplishment and lists key intervention areas corresponding to PoW Outputs. However, the causal logic linking activities, PoW Outputs and EAs in the 2010–11 and 2012–13 Planning documents is only loosely discussed. The Expected Accomplishments do not provide a fully coherent results framework for the Sub-programme.

141. Expected Accomplishments are ambitious and are pitched beyond UNEP's direct control. They are not 'immediate outcomes' as per the UN Secretariat definition and 'out of reach' of UNEP working alone. The gap between UNEP's contribution and the high level defined for expected accomplishments limits the utility of the EG subprogram results framework for both monitoring and evaluation of UNEP's performance. There is an inherent assumption embedded in the results framework indicators regarding environmental agreements that 'more is better' without reference to quality and substantive targeted results. This logic runs against a key observation, well understood and acknowledged within DELC and promoted to external audiences, that chaotic proliferation of environmental agreements and institutional arrangements has created obstacles to implementation with, among other issues, multiple reporting required of countries.

142. EA(A) seeks synergistic improvements within the UN System processes, and within and among MEAs. Expected Accomplishments should capture sets of closely related outcomes. Since the substantive work to achieve "improvements in UN system processes" is likely quite distinct from the work needed to achieve "synergistic improvements within and among MEAs", future EAs for the EG Sub-programme might better split this single EA into two: one promoting synergies and coherence within the UN system, and the other among MEAs. EA(D) about "improved access to sound science" is a general approach that is better

integrated across all UNEP interventions, rather than setting this as an outcome that is restricted to the EG Sub-programme, although the work encompassed by EA(D) moves to the new Sub-programme on 'environment under review' in the 2014–17 MTS period.

143. The next major opportunity to re-articulate Expected Accomplishments and to present a revised results framework for the EG Sub-programme will be for the 2018–21 MTS period. Due to the rather lengthy preparation/approvals processes, this will require that concrete proposals are in-hand by early 2015. *The evaluation recommended that before the end of 2014 the Sub-programme develop a new results framework (EAs and PoW outputs) that builds on a revised strategy and better reflects the intended causality of UNEP work for the 2018–21 MTS.*

Corporate service functions within a thematic results framework - undermining results-based planning

144. As a transitional measure in moving from the 'old' Divisional Sub-programmes to the thematic Sub-programmes, it was agreed that, if a project/activity fell into more than one thematic area, it would be included under the EGSP. In addition to thematic work of direct relevance to environmental governance, the EG SP included corporate functions that lacked a strong and direct linkage to the results framework defined for EG Sub-programme. This led to a common perception among UNEP staff that the Environmental Governance SP had been used as a 'parking lot' for activities or functions that did not readily fit in other Sub-programmes. Prominent examples include 'corporate' work in communication (DCPI) and the regional representation function and implementation support at the regional level (DRC) both of which benefit the entire organisation. DRC's work was included for the most part under EA(C) given its relations to UN country offices, yet this represented a small portion of its actual range of activity.

145. Projects are a useful modality to plan discrete problem-focused interventions that are intended to deliver against higher level programmatic results. It is relatively straightforward to plan and manage "corporate support activities" in a project modality, however designing such projects to fit within the results framework of an existing thematically-oriented Sub-programme is not possible in meaningful way. The results that stem from such support activities do not relate specifically to the outcomes specified in the environmental governance Sub-programme. The current arrangements create accountability gaps for the significant portions of UNEP's work that are not captured under the thematic results frameworks of the PoW. This also affects the visibility of such corporate work both in terms of reporting performance and as a clear locus for resource allocations. The evaluation believes that cross-cutting corporate support services should not 'reside' within thematic Sub-programmes.

146. In addition, a tendency persists for Divisions to frame or 'classify' projects under certain EAs more because they are managed by that same Division than because of there are causal linkages inherent to the intervention that link to the EA. *The evaluation recommended development a 'corporate' communication project with a clear results framework as part of the Programme of Work perhaps with its costs spread across existing Sub-programmes. Developing a results framework for the work of major groups and stakeholders, with a view to incorporating this into a revised results framework for the Sub-programme including 'Regional Representation' work (and monitoring of country priorities) under Executive Direction and Management.*

Unapproved projects

147. The requirement to present all substantive interventions in the PoW in project form is a major step forward in programme planning for UNEP. Previously, a large proportion of

UNEP's work was presented only in 'costed workplans'. Whilst costed workplans afforded considerable flexibility, they lacked sufficient documentation to promote meaningful accountability. For example, there was often no analogue to the 'project document' detailing what would be done and what results would be expected, making credible evaluation of the effectiveness/efficiency of costed workplans difficult, if not impossible.

148.   Within the EG Programme Frameworks A and B, three projects for the 2010–13 MTS period-all managed by DELC - did not receive formal approval by the Project Review Committee: This means that <u>five out of the six PoW Outputs defined under EA(A), and four out of the five PoW Outputs under EA(B) of this Sub-programme, lacked a formally approved project document</u>. This raises accountability issues. Whilst the evaluation is not suggesting any impropriety in the use of UNEP resources, it is likely that considerable resources were being expended "outside" of the project modality that is used for the rest of the PoW - presumably in a 'costed workplan' modality. Work that proceeds outside the project modality has a number of negative consequences for the systematic tracking of progress, reporting of results at project, EA and SP levels and evaluation of results.

Clarifying Subprogramme linkage and promoting project synergy

149.   Simply because UNEP has a Subprogramme entitled 'Environmental Governance' does not mean that all governance-related work should reside within it. For example within the HS & HW Sub-programme, the support to drafting an MEA on mercury, although not formally a part of the EGSP, was substantively supported by it. Such linkages, however, can lead to a lack of clarity on how to approach environmental governance in operational terms, as reflected by discussions between DELC, DEWA and DTIE over the lead role in black carbon activities. It can also lead to 'double counting' in reporting, where each Sub-programme reports the same achievement. There is a clear need to better define roles and responsibilities for governance work where it overlaps with other thematically focused SPs (CC, EM, HS&HW, D&C and RE).

Planning and accountability myths: – 'normative work is different'

150.   A large proportion of the work of the EG Sub-programme is of a 'normative'[5] nature. Several key stakeholders consulted during the evaluation process espoused a view that "normative work" is somehow different to other more 'direct' forms of intervention and, as such, it is (a) difficult to 'projectise' and (b) cannot be captured in results frameworks. By contrast, the Evaluation Office argue that any outcome stemming from a UNEP intervention is, by definition, a change in an individual's, an organisation's or a system's behaviour and is not fully within the control of UNEP. Nevertheless, staff can be held accountable for undertaking all feasible activities necessary to maximize the likelihood that an outcome will be achieved. These observations hold true regardless of the type of outcome that is sought, and therefore whether an intervention is deemed to be 'normative' or not. Normative work can readily be organized in projects and the immediate outcomes of such work can be captured in results frameworks.

151.   It is clear that UNEP staff need to receive more training and support in project design, results planning and "Theory of Change" approaches in order that staff become familiar with this

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5   *"Normative work in the United Nations is the support to the development of norms and standards in conventions, declarations, regulatory frameworks, agreements, guidelines, codes of practice and other standard setting instruments, at global, regional and national level. Normative work may also include support to the implementation of these instruments at the policy level, i.e. their integration into legislation, policies and development plans. (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2012)*

approach and be able to apply it to normative contexts. *The evaluation therefore recommended that RBM training for UNEP all professional staff be mandatory and that the Quality Assurance Section be further strengthened to increase their capacity to conduct such training and to review project proposals and programme frameworks that are now required to present Theories of Change.*

Improving regional perspectives in programmatic design

152.   Regional perspectives were not sufficiently considered in the design of sub-programmes and PoW priorities, which were driven by UNEP Headquarters. This is a systemic constraint that is not limited to the EGSP. The articulation of regional priorities has been inconsistent and either lacking or poorly reflected in planning documents. However, the evaluation notes that regional offices are being increasingly engaged in HQ planning processes and welcomes this development.

Performance overview

153.   A <u>very</u> brief overview is presented here. The EG Sub-programme evaluation focuses on the work defined in the 2010–13 MTS. Many of the initiatives that feature in the current Subprogramme began prior to the introduction of the thematic planning and management arrangements in 2010. While there are considerable difficulties in comprehensively assessing EGSP performance as a sub-programme on the basis of the available information, the Evaluation notes important progress towards the four Expected Accomplishments that are attributable to specific initiatives.

154.   <u>Efforts made through the EG Sub-programme had a marked influence on the global agenda for Rio +20.</u> This achievement was facilitated by a clear engagement strategy, a wise use of environmental review outputs, dedicated persistence of the UNEP DELC IEG team[6]. These advances are considered examples of positive programmatic performance as they are the result of strategically assembling outputs of various divisions and working effectively within the formal and informal processes. Overall, the DELC/IEG work in this area has contributed to a strengthening of UNEPs role in IEG. This positive influence on the Rio+20 agenda is the cumulative result of shared analysis and advocacy on long standing gaps noted by UNEP. There were also significant advances in harmonizing international environmental agreements on chemicals and bringing emergent issues - black carbon, the green economy, short-lived climate forces- SLCFs, environment and human rights among others - to the attention of the international community. Environmental priorities are being integrated into UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and country programme budgets in an increasing number of cases.

155.   There were successful efforts to integrate environmental legislation at the regional and country levels, and incorporate environmental priorities into national development policies. Capacity building activities are strengthening the environmental awareness and enforcement capabilities of judicial systems in Africa and elsewhere. The publication of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-5) was designed to exert greater influence on policymaking than previous versions, following changes in preparation processes, presentation, methods and the approach to engage intended users.

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6   *The evaluation also notes the good preliminary work of the IEG interdivisional working group*

Processes and Issues Affecting Sub-Programme Performance

Implementation and management processes

156. There is the general perception that communications are gradually improving between Divisions. However, <u>management at the level of the Sub-programme</u> is rather disjointed and has struggled to meet the needs of a SP that is inherently complex and has suffered from limited cohesiveness. The Lead Division, SP Coordinator and supporting staff have limited influence over performance of the entire Sub-programme and accountabilities are unclear. Basic management practices such as periodic group meetings, internal reviews, work plan revisions or forward planning exercises were, up to the end of 2012, <u>generally lacking at Sub-programme level</u>. The channels linking DELC as Lead Division to the Coordinating Divisions that are responsible for EA implementation were not well established. Above all, the absence clear assignations of responsibility/operational guidelines <u>that work at the Sub-programme level</u> were a significant deficiency that affected the coherence of EGSP management. The situation contrasts markedly with Sub-programmes that were established in alignment with pre-existing management structures.

Organization and Management

157. The problems that arose from the EGSP's structural arrangements were reflected in the difficulty of the Lead Division to assume a true coordinating role for the Sub-programme. The lack of coherence of the full scope of activities that fell within the EG results framework led to a situation where the Lead Division faced considerable challenges in retaining an overview of the collective performance or delivery of the Sub-programme; a difficulty that was, in turn, experienced by the Quality Assurance Section in organizational level monitoring processes.

Regional issues

158. Regional Offices provide administrative, logistical and, increasingly, programme support in addition to their political liaison and representational function. However, the bulk of regional office "brokerage work" receives little recognition in the PoW or budgets, hence becoming a "hidden corporate function".

Human and Financial Resources

159. The Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) does not allow break down of individual staff time among SPs. A single staff member's time was wholly allocated to a single sub-programme in the financial system. Since staff time is often a large proportion of total resources and many staff work across SPs, the true allocation of resources by sub-programme cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy. The Divisional allocations among UNEP sub-programmes and within the EG SP do not necessarily reflect the actual work that they are performing. For example, while almost all of DEWA's work for the 2010–2013 fell within the Environmental Governance EA (D), up to 50% of staff time is included under other sub-programmes. In turn, many representation and coordination activities undertaken by DRC through its Regional Offices' network (serving the entire PoW) were, for the most part, budgeted in terms of staff time within the EGSP.

160. The Evaluation could not find any evidence of monitoring of allocations and expenditures by EAs or PoW outputs, making it impossible to use such allocations as a proxy for assessing SP priorities, and to assess progress in POW implementation against trends in expenditure.

The evaluation recommended sub-programme workplans should be routinely triangulated with Divisional workplans.

Monitoring and reporting

161. Reporting responsibility for the Sub-programme during the reporting period rested with the SP Coordinator, who had the challenge of putting together progress information from different Divisions. Since the SP Coordinator had no responsibility for, or authority over, work done in other Divisions he had to accept the both the timing, and to a large extent the quality, of the reporting information provided. Overall, the reporting system in place up to the end of 2012 did not fully reflect the work for which UNEP was accountable because of a number of inter-related factors. IMDIS and PPRs are acknowledged to have particular limitations in the amount of information that can be captured in them, which force staff to be selective in choosing which activities to include when reporting. This ad hoc selectivity, where a different set of activities may be reflected from one reporting period to the next, adds to inconsistencies in reporting progress.

162. In summary, the thematic sub-programme modality remains a "work in progress" for the Environmental Governance.

D.   Review of Gender Mainstreaming in UNEP

163. The UNEP Executive Director requested the Evaluation Office to conduct a review of gender mainstreaming efforts in UNEP from 2006 to 2011, to critically assess UNEP's progress in ensuring gender equality at the organizational level, as well as in mainstreaming gender throughout UNEP activities, promoting equality among women and men in terms of access to and control over environmental resources. The review employed three building blocks to establish credible findings and conclusions and to enable the development of practical recommendations for future gender mainstreaming activities in UNEP. These consisted of i) a desk review; ii) an online perception survey for UNEP staff and partners; and iii) interviews with UNEP key staff at different levels.

164. The review took place during the first half of 2012 at a time when major reforms were being implemented within UNEP through its Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2010–2013. The strategy seeks to continue its commitment to promoting gender equality and equity within the environmental sector. It has institutionalized gender responsiveness as one of the key institutional mechanisms to ensure effectiveness of the delivery of UNEP sub-programmes. Gender mainstreaming in UNEP is guided by the Gender Plan of Action (GePA) 2006–2010, which was developed to operationalize the Governing Council Decision 23/11 on Gender Equality in the field of Environment. Although more than one year had elapsed since its expected expiration, the GePA remained in operation and continued to guide gender mainstreaming efforts in UNEP at the time of review.

165. The review found that UNEP has committed itself to the promotion of gender mainstreaming by implementing the corporate GePA which was highly relevant to UNEP's work, given UNEP's focus on promoting sustainable development and the irreducible links between gender, environment and sustainable development. While it proposed a comprehensive accountability framework, the GePA missed a solid rationale and clear vision statement, and was not results-based. The review recommended that "UNEP should develop a corporate Gender Policy and new Gender Action Plan by the end of 2012 including a clear vision

statement, a results-based gender mainstreaming framework and operational and institutional priorities linked to UNEP's MTS objectives. The corporate Gender Action Plan should complement UNEP strategic planning documents and its implementation should be monitored together with the UNEP Programmes of Work".

166. UNEP has nonetheless made significant efforts to mainstream gender into the core business processes of the organization. The UNEP Executive Director, Heads of Division and the recruitment review panel including the senior gender advisor have played a positive role in achieving good progress in gender balance of staff. UNEP has achieved a higher women representation in staffing at 58% female and 42% male but increasing the proportion of female staff in more senior management positions (P5 and D1) remained a challenge, partly due to still insufficient attention for supporting career enhancement and life and work balance of staff.

167. On the other hand, the low level of resource allocation from core funds and external funds mobilization for gender mainstreaming, inadequate staffing of the gender team, low awareness levels of staff regarding the GePA, insufficient commitment by management and staff to promote meaningful gender mainstreaming into operations, and inadequate mechanisms for monitoring results indicated that gender mainstreaming in UNEP at the organisational level was still far from optimal. The review recommended *inter alia* "to strengthen the institutional set-up for gender mainstreaming, and to secure adequate financial resources for gender mainstreaming by allocating specific core resources and pursuing a strong resource mobilization strategy for gender".

168. UNEP has consistently worked with partners, including UN agencies at interagency level and the results of these collaborative efforts and alliances in various thematic areas on gender were significant e.g. in terms of joint publications and events on gender and the environment. The review recommended, however, that "the framework for engagement of partners on gender and environmental issues should be better defined so that UNEP's role in partnerships for gender mainstreaming at UN interagency-level and with other corporate partners is better understood".

169. Mechanisms for gender mainstreaming have been put in place in some of the core areas of UNEPs work such as the screening of publications and project designs for making appropriate reference to gender, using clear sets of criteria. However, these mechanisms were not yet robust enough to ensure full compliance and a meaningful integration of gender perspectives into policies and programmatic areas. The review found that gender perspectives had not been systematically integrated into corporate and thematic policies, mainly due to inadequate policy review mechanisms and limited engagement of the senior gender advisor in the policy development process. It also found that gender analysis was generally inadequate during the project design stage, in part due to insufficient know-how of programme staff. There did not seem to be a lack of knowledge products and technical guidance documents for gender analysis focused on specific themes per se, but rather an insufficient effort to make this thematic guidance widely known and accessible to programme staff. UNEP did also not proactively utilize training opportunities created through inter-agency mechanisms and the efforts of partners. The review therefore recommended "to build programme staff member's capacity to undertake gender analysis through training and coaching, and to strengthen knowledge management in the area of gender to learn better from experience and build on existing successes".

170.   The review also considered that UNEP did not go far enough in integrating gender specific interventions into programmes and projects to promote more equitable access to natural resources and more equal participation in environmental decision making among men and women. UNEP would also need to adequately monitor its interventions to be able to demonstrate its contributions to the promotion of gender equality in the environment sector. The review therefore recommended that "the UNEP monitoring policy and guidance should require monitoring of and reporting on progress of gender mainstreaming using gender specific indicators for each sub-programme and intervention".

E.   Sudan Country Programme Evaluation

Evaluation Focus

171.   The independent UNEP Sudan Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) was requested by DFID and undertaken by the UNEP Evaluation Office from November 2012 to February 2013. It encompassed all UNEP activities in the Republic of Sudan (excluding South Sudan) over a seven-year period from mid-2005. With the dual objective of providing a basis for accountability on past performance and inspiring future UNEP programming in Sudan, the CPE provided evidence-based insights on the positioning of UNEP in Sudan, its strategic partnerships, and the performance and results of the portfolio as a whole.

172.   UNEP's strategic focus in Sudan has been on environment policy, environmental mainstreaming, forestry, integrated water resource management (IWRM), community environment management, and livelihoods. In 2007, following the production of a comprehensive Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment (PCEA, 2007), a country office was established in Khartoum to provide assistance to the Government, civil society and other UN agencies to tackle Sudan's environmental challenges. Subsequently three projects were undertaken from 2007–2009 – the Darfur Integrated Water Resource Management Project, the Darfur Aid and the Environment Project, and the Darfur Timber and Energy Project. From July 2009 to June 2013, an expanded and more integrated single project – the Sudan Integrated Environment Project (SIEP) – built on the experience of previous years while establishing environmental governance as a key objective.

173.   There are four main themes to the SIEP: (i) Climate change and forestry; (ii) Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM); (iii) Livelihoods, particularly of pastoralists; and (iv) Community-based Natural Resource Management. The programme was supported by demonstration projects intended to showcase solutions to local environmental management issues and at the same time build capacity and encourage partners to take over activities once UNEP support would end.

Key Findings

Relevance

174.   The 'storyline' of UNEP in Sudan is essentially one of building on the major impetus provided by the PCEA in 2007. The PCEA highlighted the mutually reinforcing dynamics between conflict and environmental degradation, thus launching the central premise for UNEP's work in Sudan: a strong evidence-based advocacy on environmental issues both within national policy and also with the UN Agencies and other organisations who have been heavily involved with rehabilitation and recovery in the aftermath of the 2005 Comprehensive

Peace Agreement. Environmental governance in Sudan is characterised by: (i) poor inter-ministerial coordination and a lack of common vision; (ii) likewise between government and customary institutions; and (iii) legislative and institutional pluralism at state and federal levels. The entry point for UNEP has to some extent been opportunistic: to concentrate on those areas of governance where the greatest impact can be achieved. Hence it has worked on policy dialogue, advocacy, exchange visits, training and providing some basic resources for key government departments, notably in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Development (MEFPD), the Ministry of Water Resources and Electricity (MWRE), the Forestry National Corporation (FNC) and the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources (HCNER).

175.   The three projects of Phase 1 (2007–09) did not add up to a 'strategy' as such since they were a loose configuration of projects selected by a very limited donor base. Their actual impact in the context of one of the most traumatic periods in Darfur's history was circumscribed by resource constraints and security, and therefore was quite localised. With the SIEP as the sole vehicle of UNEP's support since 2009 more coherence was achieved. The evaluation judged that, strategically, it was appropriate to limit activities to the four main themes of the SIEP even though government stakeholders repeatedly told the evaluation of other areas where UNEP could work – alternative energy, oil, mining, urban water supplies and waste management.

176.   However, UNEP has yet to engage fully in the 'big debates' over rapidly expanding peri-urban settlements (protracted IDP presence) and the radical shifting patterns of rural population in Sudan as a whole. The attendant plethora of 'durable solution' projects emanating from international organizations suggests a more concerted effort by UNEP to advise upon - and monitor - the environmental impact of aid and engage more substantively on population issues. To address this, *the evaluation recommended that a UNEP Environmental Advisor should be assigned to OCHA in Sudan with a view to (i) increasing the monitoring of environmental markers ascribed to participating UN agencies, particularly those in which environment is a central component, (ii) developing a realistic and independent monitoring system that can be used by agencies themselves, along with a public reporting system, and (iii) developing global methods and guidelines that can be used in similar situations elsewhere in the world.*

Results

177.   **Environmental governance.** UNEP has exceeded most of the planned logframe milestones set for the SIEP in this component. The evaluation recognised UNEP's catalytic role in shaping and promoting policy dialogue, noting that, among other things, exchange visits to east Africa (Kenya and Tanzania) and South Africa were an important impetus. One outcome was the way in which IWRM is becoming embedded in national policy, with the elevated status of the Groundwater and Wadis Department within the MWRE. Another is the on-going development of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) at both federal and state levels of government; this has been particularly useful in pushing the climate change agenda and should result in Sudan being able to access funding from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. However, the evaluation was unable to determine whether these advances translate into a more efficient execution of government policy as such. Without a baseline level of efficiency from which to start – and lacking a thorough institutional analysis beyond the impressions given by project participants – we can only note the capacity and financial constraints at state level in particular.

178.   There has been a lack of cohesion between the various elements of the SIEP, in particular an elusive connection between upstream and downstream activities. To avoid project

fragmentation, the evaluation recommended that UNEP in its next SIEP phase would promote integrated NRM projects that capitalize on the accumulative benefits of infrastructure (dams, etc.), forestry, policy work (IWRM master plans, CC) and community initiatives (CEAPs) in the same catchment area. The forthcoming EU funded Wadi El Ku catchment project is expected to provide a model for a more integrated portfolio with greater potential for multiplying results across several thematic interventions.

179. **Mainstreaming within the UN system.** The evaluation found a crucial link between UNEP's influence and actual demonstration projects on the ground. For example, UNEP's partnership with FAO on the Darfur Timber and Energy project (completed March 2010) has led to a subsequent joint Strategic Framework for Natural Resource Management in Darfur drafted with FAO, with a focus on livelihoods, soil protection and deforestation. The collaboration with UNICEF in monitoring ground water in IDP camps in Darfur has also been a clear success. Furthermore, within the UN country team, UNEP has had a high level of influence, notably on the UN and partners Work Plan for Darfur for both 2011 and 2012, the UN planning document "Darfur – Beyond Emergency Relief" and the current UNDAF. In 2011, UNEP was able to introduce a pilot environment 'marker' for projects registered in Sudan and vet them against a set of basic environmental good practice principles. The method used here has been picked up elsewhere in the world. However, as with most 'guidelines', the marker is a self-assessment tool, not very comprehensive or thorough, and there is no monitoring of compliance (hence, no sanctions for non-compliance).

180. The wider concern was that despite the quality of UNEP's written outputs, the knowledge, momentum and promise of these documents could be lost unless matched by deliverable results on the ground. UNEP had neither the financial nor staff resources to participate fully in the numerous inter-agency technical working groups in Darfur; UNEP's influence was therefore often 'passive'. Also, UNEP's lack of status in not having an accredited representative in Sudan has become a more pressing issue as its profile rose.

181. **Community-based natural resource management.** UNEP has used the Community Environmental Action Plan (CEAP) model to engage local communities in planning natural resource management initiatives, fund small projects in recipient villages and also to bring together pastoralists and farmers in designing interventions of mutual benefit to both groups. Included in the model is a demonstration of REDD+ work. While progress in implementing the pilot CEAPs has been slow, an inevitable consequence of working in a highly fragile social environment where building trust takes time compounded by access and security constraints, government agencies have recently indicated an interest in scaling-up the model in Darfur. Despite this potential multiplier effect, the evaluation found a significant disconnect between the high transaction costs and intensive capacity building at the local partner and community levels, the relatively small-scale outputs of CEAPs, and the upstream policy that these are supposed to influence regarding community involvement in local natural resources management. The management of field projects is not UNEP's key area of competence. Moreover, although the link with higher policy and advocacy is theoretically ascertained, it is only tenuous in practice and would depend on a significant scaling up of CEAPs to reach the desired impact on NRM management 'at scale'. *The evaluation therefore recommended that UNEP should no longer be directly responsible for the CEAP process, which would be more appropriately implemented by an operational agency. UNEP's role should be to advocate community-driven NRM at policy level.*

182. **Pastoralism and livelihoods.** The acclaimed research and literature on livelihoods and pastoralism makes this component of UNEP's work one of the most readily recognized. The

baseline research publications produced in close collaboration with Tufts University (as well as IIED and SOS Sahel) have been extremely useful in raising the level of debate over land use, natural resources and pastoralist livelihoods in Darfur. The strategy has been to build the capacity of pastoralist leaders, professionals and other stakeholders to influence decision making; to improve monitoring and analysis of markets and trade in Darfur in order to better understand how conflicts affect livelihoods; and to identify pastoralist-related policy gaps through a comprehensive policy review. The participatory approach has been particularly influential to the thinking and approaches now adopted by the international community and certain sections of the government.

183.   To date, however, the project represents only a cautious beginning in the process of influencing government policy; and, indeed, in shifting the parameters of conflict-related arguments over land usage in Darfur. Despite the high quality of knowledge materials produced by UNEP, these have yet to be effectively communicated beyond the relatively small coterie of UNEP partners. There are no capacity building activities targeted to, for example, the media, the private sector or educational institutions. An effective advocacy strategy might also take up issues such as land tenure, communal grazing rights and customary laws, and a more direct engagement with pastoralists. The evaluation recommended that UNEP should further develop and implement a dissemination strategy to raise political and public awareness with specified targets and outputs, including the use of media outlets, logos at project sites, public opening ceremonies, etc.

Likelihood of sustainability and impact

184.   UNEP's intervention logic was that attitudinal change from the top down and from the bottom up would reach a 'critical mass' when it translated into policy change and permanent practice in natural resource management. Tracing a pathway of change from capacity development, consultation and research to tangible changes in policy (and, by extension, improvements in peoples' lives) is a challenge. Unlike the relationships being developed between service actors (within Government and between Government and non-government actors) there is no monitoring information available from UNEP on progress made in enhancing trust relationships between service actors and communities. The war has debilitated the prospects and impetus for even medium-term planning and has also heightened levels of distrust between communities and local government.

185.   With respect to financial resources, a measure of policy commitment and sustainability will be the leveraging of environmental funds from federal and state budgets. UNEP's mantra has been that these are government-owned activities supported by UNEP. Ownership should then be demonstrated and reinforced with government strategy and budget lines assigned to sustaining these activities. *The evaluation therefore recommended that within the next SIEP project cycle, UNEP should incorporate a clear request and commitment from Government of Sudan partners towards co-funding of selected projects.*

186.   UNEP's brokering of new resources from the international community has been notable, though this has taken place within a shrinking pool of potential donors. The financial climate and opportunities for new funding in Sudan will remain limited in the absence of a durable peace agreement in Darfur. In relation to this, raising the ability (and expectations) of communities to seek funds directly rests on an assumption that the private sector will be able to respond to demands for inputs and environmental infrastructure and technology. This is far from realities at present.

187. Although UNEP has undertaken risk assessment, its actual outreach is (like all actors in Sudan) constrained by security and access. A reduction in local conflict over NRM emanating from the above intervention logic made two assumptions: first, that non-environmental drivers of recovery and development would improve; second, that other non-environmental drivers of conflict would not increase. These were assumptions that remained largely unfulfilled over the evaluation period, and obviously beyond UNEP's control. Indeed, the continuing volatile situation in Darfur (and in many other areas of Sudan, not least the border areas with South Sudan) presents major challenges to the scaling up of the programme. In addition to the agreed indicators within a project logframe, there should be a regularly updated broader analysis that takes into account risk assessment, conflict analysis and a review of how the assumptions and 'drivers' of change are impacting upon the core activities of the programme. *The evaluation recommended that a comprehensive programme theory of change should be developed for the next programme cycle, along with indicators and a means of reporting on the pathways of change. These should include not only those factors influenced by UNEP, but also exogenous factors (drivers and assumptions) that are likely to impact upon the programme.*

Factors affecting performance

188. **Country presence.** The current representation of UNEP in Sudan is insufficient not only for the kind of sustained advocacy, advice and support built over the last 5 years, but also for the entry-level political engagement that this entails.

189. **Continuity.** UNEP Sudan was, and still is, a project-funded office, entirely dependent on funding from a limited number of donors. Nevertheless, a satisfactory degree of continuity and coherence was afforded up to now by building relationships in government through a small number of ministries and departments while retaining the same senior UNEP staff in-situ across the years.

190. **Country programme administration.** There is a disjuncture in UNEP between the desire to engage more fully in fragile states and the institutional architecture available to do so. The evaluation was concerned by UNEP's inefficient administrative and management arrangements in relation to its own management structures. The quadrangular jurisdiction between UNEP HQ in Nairobi, the Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch in Geneva, UNDP Khartoum and the UNEP country office is at best inefficient and, in some cases, directly obstructive to the programme. It has resulted in some long delays in procurement and financial disbursement, and associated reputational damage. Administrative arrangements and procedures for a country-level programme should include flexible and appropriate human and financial procurement procedures, including a stronger delegation of authority to the country level and the possibility to fast-track administrative and operational requests when needed.

191. **Monitoring and evaluation**. UNEP's intervention logic suggests that 'influence' and associated outcomes need to be measured more comprehensively. The SIEP logframe does not capture the internal dynamics of how precisely UNEP's influence translates to policy change. The recent UNEP review of environmental governance in Sudan has helped to map out what these governance institutions are and the relationship between them. What is needed now is a more concerted effort to explain (a) how these institutions function internally; (b) how policy decisions are made; (c) how such policy is used at federal and state levels; and (d) the extent to which UNEP attribution/contribution towards policy change can be asserted. More robust monitoring and evaluation methods should be developed for measuring the contribution that UNEP has made on institutional development. As well as

policy changes, these should include indicators on influence, attitude change, replication, management development and financial commitments.

F.   Review of the Chemical Conventions' 'Synergies Decision'

Review of the arrangements adopted pursuant to the "synergies decisions" on cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Background

192.   Initial discussions on the synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BC, RC and SC respectively) and chemicals management in general began within the UNEP Governing Council in 2002 following the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). In recognising the legal autonomy of each convention, the Parties decided to establish an Ad Hoc Joint Working Group (AHJWG) to prepare recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination[7] and requested the preparation of a supplementary report exploring the specific areas in which cooperation and coordination at the programmatic level would be to the mutual advantage of the three Conventions. The recommendations of the AHJWG, adopted in 2009, resulted in the first synergistic decisions on cooperation and coordination[8] at national, regional and global levels, constituting the backbone and formal start of the synergies process by the three conventions.

193.   Later in 2010, the simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conference of Parties (ExCOPs) to each of these conventions further adopted an "omnibus decision"[9] on the following thematic areas: (i) Joint activities; (ii) Joint managerial functions; (iii) Joint services; (iv) Synchronisation of budget cycles; (v) Joint audits; and (vi) Review arrangements. Parties, stakeholders and the secretariats were called upon to undertake cooperative and coordinated activities to implement the "synergies decisions" at all levels, and to establish the joint services on a permanent basis. In 2011, a joint executive head function (Executive Secretary) was established, with a mandate granted by the Parties to direct the modification and organization of the three secretariats into a single combined Secretariat[10.] Cross-cutting and joint activities were acknowledged in the following areas: (i) Technical assistance; (ii) Scientific and technical activities; (iii) Regional centres; (iv) Clearing-house mechanism; (v) Public awareness, outreach and publications; (vi) Reporting; and (vii) Overall management.

194.   Section VI of the "omnibus decisions" entitled « Review arrangements » contained a resolution by the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to review at their respective meetings in 2013, how far the arrangements adopted pursuant to the "synergies decisions" have contributed towards the goals of the conventions. The "omnibus decisions" then provided for two tracks to be followed in undertaking this review: one by the joint Secretariat, and the other an independent review by the Executive Director of UNEP in consultation with the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) through their evaluation units. Consequently, two review reports were prepared for consideration at the second simultaneous ExCOPs meeting held in Geneva, 28 April–10 May 2013.

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7   *Decision SC-2/15 (May 2006); Decision RC-3/8 (October 2006); Decision BC-VIII/8 (December 2006).*
8   *Decision BC-IX/10 (June 2008); Decision RC-4/11 (October 2008); Decision SC-4/34 (May 2009).*
9   *Decisions BC.Ex-1/1, RC.Ex-1/1 and SC.Ex-1/1 (February 2010).*
10 *Basel and Stockholm Conventions are UNEP entities and the Rotterdam Secretariat is split between UNEP and FAO. The combined Secretariat applied to UNEP administered Secretariats only.*

Objectives, Scope and Methodology

195.   The evaluation offices of UNEP and FAO conducted the review with the objectives of examining: (a) the extent to which processes for enhancing cooperation and coordination have taken into account global concerns and responded to the specific needs of developing countries and Countries with Economies in Transition (CEITs); (b) the extent to which actions taken to enhance coordination and cooperation have helped to (i) strengthen the implementation of the three Conventions at the national, regional and global levels; (ii) promote coherent policy guidance; and (iii) enhance efficiency in the provision of support to Parties with a view to reducing the administrative burden and maximizing the effective and efficient use of resources at all levels; and (c) whether enhanced coordination and cooperation among the three Conventions has contributed to the achievement of their ultimate common objectives i.e. the protection of human health and the environment for the promotion of sustainable development.

196.   The scope of the review was both retrospective and prospective, taking account of the overall past and present efforts by the Secretariats of the Conventions, Parties and other stakeholders, whilst also considering the planned actions insofar as possible. It was limited to the period since 2009 when the "synergies decisions" came into effect, up to and including ongoing actions and changes underway in 2012, with an end date of August 31, 2012.

197.   The review, initiated in March 2012, was undertaken by two independent consultants under the overall responsibility and guidance of the evaluation offices of both UNEP and FAO. The review was structured around key evaluation criteria of 'Relevance', 'Effectiveness', 'Efficiency' and 'Sustainability', and its methodological approach involved desk-based studies, field work, interviews, and electronic surveys. The final report was completed in February 2013 through a comprehensive evaluation process that also benefitted from external analyses by various stakeholders including the Secretariat, Parties and non-Parties to the conventions, UNEP, FAO, and an expert Advisory Panel.

198.   At the ExCOPs in Geneva (2013) the review report by UNEP/FAO was presented in plenary and later discussed within a contact group session. The COPs subsequently adopted a decision[11] inviting the Executive Secretary Parties, UNEP, FAO and other stakeholders to implement the recommendations set out in the reports prepared by both the Secretariat[12] and the evaluation offices of UNEP and FAO[13]; the decision further determines that an independent review of the synergies arrangements is undertaken to assess the implementation of the joint activities/managerial functions/services at all levels, and a report be presented for consideration by the COPs at their meetings scheduled for 2017.

Key Findings from the Review

199.   The review found that progress has been made at the Secretariat level where systems are being put in place to ensure sustainability of synergistic actions through organizational restructuring and harmonisation of core functions. Notably, the three UNEP administered secretariats have been successfully merged into one organization based on a matrix management structure and underpinned with Standard Operating Procedures to systematize procedures.

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11 *This constitutes the Management Response to the review report, adopted by the COPs as decision BC.Ex-2/1, RC.Ex-2/1 and SC.Ex-2/1)*

12 *UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/INF/6.*

13 *UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/EXCOPS.2/INF/5.*

200. At Party level the review found many barriers to sustainability and only moderate progress had been made on establishing inter-ministerial committees to ensure cooperation and coordination. Some of the sampled countries such as Brazil and Uruguay however indicated that such efforts started several years prior to the "synergies decisions" process and therefore there is an emerging body of experience which can be drawn on and serve as an inspiration to other Parties.

201. At regional level, the Regional Centres (ReCs) of BC and SC and the Regional Offices (ROs) of UNEP and FAO have yet to become significantly involved in the synergies process in terms of assisting Parties. Other UN agencies and the World Bank are also yet to become actively involved in supporting the synergies process.

202. At global level the secretariats' involvement with the Global Customs Initiative (GCI) showed potential for cooperation with Conventions, international organizations and national customs to reduce illegal trade in hazardous and banned chemicals, and wastes; however, only trade issues are being addressed and tangible outcomes have yet to be identified.

203. The following present the main conclusions and recommendations of the review report:

Assessment on Relevance

The focus of this assessment was on the extent to which "synergies decisions" and actions are: (a) congruent with the broader international context; (b) consistent with the COP decisions; (c) responsive to the needs of all Parties to the Conventions, particularly developing countries and CEITs; (d) relevant to reducing administrative burden and maximizing use of resources.

Conclusion	Recommendation
The relevance of the "synergies decisions" and resultant processes have been strong at the Secretariat level and moderate to weak at the regional and national (Parties) levels. Reducing costs and administrative burden was identified as being more relevant to international (Secretariat) and global level than at regional or national levels. The most relevant aspects of synergies to Parties were identified as: improving the level of services provided to Parties by the Secretariat; facilitating implementation of the Conventions (through inter alia awareness raising, regulations, technical assistance, scientific support, data collection and monitoring); reducing duplication and overlaps; and streamlining reporting and planning.	The Secretariat should continue to promote active participation of Parties and other stakeholders (namely ReCs, UNEP and FAO ROs, other international agencies, private sector, civil society and the part of the RC Secretariat based at FAO in Rome) and increase their ownership of the process. To this end, the Secretariat and the Parties should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in the design of the programme of work for the next biennium (2014–2015). The extensive FAO and UNEP experience in the field and its knowledge of chemicals should be acknowledged and enhanced through a more active involvement in future synergies work-programme design and implementation.

Effectiveness and Impact Assessment

This focused on the extent to which synergies process and activities had: (a) strengthened implementation of the three Conventions at national, regional and global level; (b) promoted and enhanced cooperation and collaboration among the Conventions at the Secretariat level; and (c) contributed to the achievement of the common objectives of the Conventions - protecting human health and environment for the promotion of sustainable development.

Conclusion	Recommendations
The creation of a single Secretariat has put in place the organizational conditions for improved policy coherence. Progress on putting in place systems and structures for enhancing cooperation and coordination at the Secretariat level has been strong since mid-2011. At national-level some Parties have put in place mechanisms for cooperation and coordination however this has yet to lead to observable improvements in implementation. It was also reported that awareness of the chemicals Conventions themselves remains low within developing country governments, which acts against effective action to achieve outcomes that would enable movement towards impact.	COPs should continue to support the Secretariat implementation of the organizational reforms and synergies. Parties should continue to further develop and streamline their cooperation and coordination mechanisms to improve management of chemicals and wastes, and to share information between relevant Ministries.

Assessment on Efficiency
This assessment focused on the extent to which synergies process and activities have: (a) been cost-effective; (b) been timely; (c) reduced administrative burden in the Conventions secretariats, Parties and other stakeholders, and contributed to maximizing the efficient use of resources at all levels; (d) led to improved efficiency and implementation of the Conventions' activities at national level.

Conclusion	**Recommendation**
It was premature to determine whether the actions taken pursuant to the "synergies decisions" have reduced the administrative burden and contributed to maximizing the efficient use of resources at all levels. The "synergies decisions" have been under implementation for a short period of time and precise outcomes and indicators have not been sufficiently defined by the COPs.	Priority should be given to the implementation of the synergies work programme bearing in mind that resources saved from the restructuring should all be moved towards improvement of efficiency and implementation of the Conventions at the National level.
The Secretariat has indeed increased the level of transparency and accountability however the re-structuring and lack of funding is reported to have delayed implementation of the "synergies decisions".	Taking into account the national needs to be addressed in the promotion of cooperation and coordination between the three Conventions, the following activities taken pursuant to the "synergies decisions" can contribute to improved efficiency: (i) training of relevant personnel in meeting obligations under the Conventions; (ii) public education and awareness-raising through dissemination of information materials and development of environmental education programmes; and (iii) the development of environmental information systems.
The extent to which actions taken to forge synergies have been cost-effective is yet to be demonstrated; the Secretariat however estimates cost savings between $2,281,532 and $2,552,498 for the biennium 2012–201, but without a clear baseline against which this amount can be compared the finding is tentative.	

Sustainability Assessment
This assessment took into account the likelihood for sustainability to be achieved, based on documentary evidence and interview data, by evaluating the factors (impact drivers and assumptions) that need to be in place at the Secretariat, national, regional and through to global level.

Conclusion	**Recommendation**
At the Secretariat level most of the internal (secretariat) factors for sustainability are in place or are in the process of being put into place. Cooperation between new modalities for cooperation (or integration) of the UNEP and FAO managed Secretariats have yet to be defined.	The COP(s) should support the new structure and take an appropriate decision to ensure cooperation between the UNEP and FAO managed Secretariats.
At national and regional level, factors for sustainability appear to be significantly weaker in terms of legislation and capacities. Parties seem to be committed to improving their national coordination and cooperation, but legislative, awareness and financial barriers inter alia are preventing movement towards sustainability.	The removal of capacity, financing and knowledge barriers at the national level calls for solutions from the Parties and should be based on partnership with the private sector and civil society, with appropriate international support through broad-based catalytic financing for the Conventions (e.g., expansion of the mandate of the GEF or through other means).

Concluding Remarks

204. The synergies process is not a time-finite event but a continuing process with economic and implementation benefits, not driven solely by a concern for the environment. The Rio+20 decisions on the 'Green Economy' has generated opportunities for the synergies approach, encouraging extensive regional cooperation in discussion of problems and sharing of good practices, and fostering coherence in the environmental and development agenda.

205. A cooperative and coordinated approach among the BC, RC and SC and, as appropriate, to related instruments should be applied when addressing the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes at all levels in order to strengthen implementation, enhance policy coherence, maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of resources and avoid unnecessary duplication.

F. Functional review of the Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) System

206. At the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention in Paris, France, on 8–10 February 2012, Contracting Parties called on the UNEP/MAP Secretariat to undertake

a functional review of the UNEP MAP Components. In response, UNEP commissioned Dalberg Global Development Advisors to carry out a review. The Evaluation Office served on the advisory committee, assisted with the provision of quality assurance, and provided contractual and oversight services for the review. The key recommendations and the findings were derived from:

- Missions carried out to the six MAP Regional Activity Centres (RACs);
- Results from the questionnaires sent to UNEP MAP focal points;
- Insights generated from interviews with Bureau members, RSP directors, key stakeholders and UN officials;
- Results from the benchmarking of selected Regional Seas Programmes (RSPs); and
- Feedback from the review contact group, from regular communication as well as a full day meeting on December 7, 2012 in Brussels, Belgium.

207.   The objectives of the extended functional review were to:
- Improve the overall performance and operational efficiencies of UNEP MAP by providing an operational tool to adapt the MAP to the Contracting Parties' substantive and managerial demands and by, inter alia, rebalancing the ratio between staffing and activities considering all available resources including the Multilateral Trust Fund (MTF);
- Redress gaps and misalignments in unit responsibilities, job descriptions, reporting lines, and overall performance;
- Apply best practices from other RSPs, notably their institutional frameworks and governance arrangements;
- Build upon the credibility and positive image of the Components thus contributing to the overall public standing, legitimacy, and credibility of MAP; and
- Build on the important work of other previous MAP evaluations.

208.   It is important to emphasize that the review was an extension of the functional review carried out in 2010. The 2010 review focused primarily on the two units administered by UNEP i.e. MAP Coordinating Unit (CU) and Mediterranean Pollution Monitoring and Research Programme (MEDPOL).

Important accomplishments to date

209.   UNEP MAP has played an instrumental role in controlling pollution of the Mediterranean Sea. It has been key in elevating environmental issues on the political agenda, encouraging the adoption of environmental legislation and regulations, and providing assistance for capacity-building in environmental protection in the region.

210.   One of UNEP MAP's most important comparative advantages however is the fact that it is the only environmental governance framework for states in the Mediterranean region. As such, it is highly regarded as an important forum for the equitable participation by the Mediterranean countries. The Barcelona Convention and its protocols embed the MAP system in a framework of legally binding commitments that are very carefully calibrated and tailored to the unique community of interests in the region.

Key challenges for UNEP MAP

211.   However, despite the efforts of UNEP MAP over the last 35 years, the Mediterranean environment has continued to deteriorate. This is due largely to the fact that development activities have not adhered to the principles of sustainable development. Indeed, the continuing unsustainable use of natural resources combined with the worsening political instability of

certain parts of the region, urgently require a strengthened MAP. This is particularly relevant for the Regional Activity Centres (RACs), which have underpinned MAP with a diverse array of substantive expertise.

212. The RACs continue to operate on the basis of highly individual agendas. This often leads to intense competition between the Multilateral Trust Fund (MTF) and external resources, not to mention duplication of activities, which could otherwise be better synergized. MAP has provided a strong and efficient framework for regional cooperation in the marine environment and sustainable development. The functional review presented an important opportunity to revisit existing structures in order to adapt MAP to present-day challenges and to add fresh impetus to the efforts of Mediterranean countries so they may achieve their common goals of sustainable resource management.

Summary of key findings

213. **Delivery capacity needs to be strengthened** - While some activities are recognized for their contribution to the Barcelona Convention, the system as a whole is perceived as lacking the capacity to deliver. The worsening ecological decline of the Mediterranean points to the need for MAP to improve the operationalization of the key priorities outlined in the Five-year Programme of Work (PoW) and to deepen its work on those issues that have not been sufficiently addressed in the last five years.

214. **Unclear business model** - At the core of UNEP/MAP's weaknesses is an unclear business model. The day-to-day challenges faced by the entire MAP system are due in a large part to the lack of clarity regarding the fundamental model, which should underpin the system. The system is currently operating a mix of four different business models:
    • **Secretariat to the Convention**, including monitoring, evaluation, compliance and basic support (tools and methodologies) to countries for the implementation of the Protocols. This part of the work should be funded by the MTF;
    • **Implementer of the Protocols,** including technical assistance to countries for the purpose of implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. This is at the request of countries and should be funded by MTF with co-funding from donor governments;
    • **Project manager for sustainable development of the Mediterranean,** including projects that do not directly contribute to the implementation of the Protocols. These are projects that are funded externally and do not receive in-kind or cash contribution from MTF;
    • **Think tank on sustainable development of the Mediterranean,** including research on topics of interest for sustainable development. This includes studies that do not directly contribute to the implementation of the protocols.

215. **Lack of cohesiveness within the system** - The unclear business model has undermined cohesion within the system. The system is currently characterized by a high degree of fragmentation between the Barcelona Convention, its Protocols, MSSD, the regional action plans, GEF projects, EU- funded projects (that do not always align with MAP priorities), not to mention a growing number of RAC-led country-specific projects that draw away from UNEP MAP's specific mandate for regional action. The system will continue to weaken unless efforts are made to ensure greater cohesiveness and cooperation among the constellation of MAP actors.

216. **Regional Activity Centre coordination and cooperation remains a key challenge** - There are significant efficiency gains that can be achieved with improved coordination and

synergies between the RACs. However, the RACs continue to operate on the basis of highly individual agendas. This often leads to intense competition of both Multilateral Trust Fund and external resources, not to mention duplication of activities, which could otherwise be better synergized. As well, the RACs do not have the same legal status, rules and regulations, or compensation levels. The difficulties posed by these differences were first noted in the 2007 Governance Paper and continue to be a source of frustration.

217. **The importance of articulating strategic priorities**- UNEP/MAP is about to embark on a new five-year planning process in a period of resource constraints. Therefore, it is particularly important that balance be struck between strengthening its focus on current priority areas to ensure full implementation and allowing enough flexibility to address new and emerging issues. Indeed, the activities that ensure the highest protection of the marine environment and the coastal region of the Mediterranean Sea should be better prioritized on the basis of existing legal obligations of the Contracting Parties in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols. Contracting Parties should be encouraged to prioritize implementation of the commitments of the Barcelona Convention, its protocols, and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development within their national sustainable development strategies. The Ecosystem Approach (ECAP) provides a new conceptual framework within which UNEP MAP can enhance the integration of these core priority areas.

218. **The importance of building synergies with external partners** - Since UNEP MAP was established over 30 years ago, the institutional landscape in the region has changed considerably. There are countless new bodies and mechanisms that deal with the Mediterranean and its environmental challenges, such as the Union for the Mediterranean the EU Horizon 2020, the Strategic Partnership for the Large Marine Ecosystem, the EU Maritime Spatial Planning Initiative, the Mediterranean component of the EU Water Initiative, and the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean. Against this complex institutional landscape, it will be important to find ways to improve synergies and strengthen cooperation with all of the regional bodies, MAP components, governments, and civil society.

Solutions for a sustainable MAP System

219. The extended functional review highlighted many areas where improvements can be made to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the system. Recognizing that many of these issues are, in fact, symptoms of a more fundamental issue i.e. the absence of a clear and consistent business model, this report focuses on precisely that question. The underlying vision for the UNEP MAP system is that of an organization that invests its resources where it achieves the most impact and is flexible to respond to changes in priorities.

220. There are three potential paths for the UNEP MAP system to sustainability. The terms of reference of the review specifically asked for one path, that of increased efficiency. The review team identified two additional options that focus on more fundamental changes to the system:

- **Model 1: Cost reduction** – Focuses on reducing costs to achieve financial sustainability of the system given the current funding reality.
- **Model 2: Scalable system** – Introduces concept of core and scalable activities allocated through different processes.
- **Model 3: Fund manager** – Severs direct ties between UNEP MAP and the RACs and introduces fund manager/grantee relationship.

221.　The following table provides an overview of the options toward sustainability and their advantages and disadvantages.

Table 1: High level overview of key advantages and disadvantages of the options

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1: COST REDUCTION Confirms ties to the RACs and focuses on reducing costs to achieve sustainability	• Changes concentrated in few areas of the system • Change to existing procedures and processes is limited	• Remains difficult to move funding with performance and priorities • Potential need to revisit and undertake a further cost-cutting exercise if the funding situation changes
Option 2: SCALABLE SYSTEM Introduces concept of core and scalable activities allocated through different processes	• Facilitates moving funding with performance and priorities • Makes the system more flexible to go to scale and reduce when needed • Allows a 'lighter' planning process for part of the funding	• May create instability in the system if implemented to fast
Option 3: FUND MANAGER Severs direct ties between UNEP MAP and the RACs and introduces fund manager/grantee relationship	• Makes the system more flexible to go to scale and contract when needed • Optimal ability to respond to changes due to centralized strategic planning and programme design	• Requires significantly more programmatic capacity in CU • Less footprint of the system in the region • Control over implementation becomes transactional relationship

222.　The most important criterion for a sustainable MAP system is flexibility to respond to the changing needs and priorities for the Mediterranean. Considering the financial crisis and its implications on bilateral aid, the option will also have to be able to deal with abrupt changes in funding.

223.　The recommended option going forward for the MAP system is option 2. A scalable system will allow the Contracting Parties to distinguish between that which is minimally required to maintain the Barcelona Convention and its protocols and that which is scalable and can follow the availability of funding. The risk of instability of the system due to a change to this option can be easily managed by an implementation in multiple steps.

224.　The review provided a detailed implementation plan with actions proposed for: **the immediate future** (i.e. actions that are not subject to and can be undertaken prior to a decision by the Contracting Parties); **the post decision stage 1** (i.e. actions that should be taken in the first year after the decision by the Contracting Parties. At the end of stage 1, the Coordinating Unit will produce a progress report and self-evaluation; **the post decision stage 2** (pending successful completion of stage 1, actions that should be taken in the second year after the decision of the Contracting Parties should be taken). At the end of stage 2, the Contracting Parties will oversee an independent evaluation of the changes.

III. Analysis of Project Performance and Lessons Learnt 2012–13

A.   Overview

225.   In the 2012–2013 biennium, the Evaluation Office completed 48 in-depth evaluations as of November 2013 (43 project-level evaluations, 2 sub-programme evaluations and 3 special studies), and initiated another 15 evaluations to be completed in 2014 (full list in Annex 2). These evaluations cover projects and programmes to UNEP's programme of work across the following thematic areas: (i) Environmental Governance; (ii) Ecosystem Management; (iii) Resource Efficiency; (iv) Climate Change; (v) Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste; and (vi) Disasters and Conflicts.

Table 2: Breakdown of in-depth evaluations by type and sub-programme (2012–2013)

Evaluation Type	Environmental Governance	Ecosystem Management	Resource Efficiency	Climate Change	Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste	Disasters and Conflicts	Other	TOTALS
Mid Term Evaluations (MTE)	0	2	2	0 (2)	0	0	N/A	4 (2)
Terminal Evaluations (TE)	8 (1)	20 (3)	4 (2)	4 (3)	3 (1)	0	N/A	39 (10)
Sub-Programme Evaluations and Special Studies	1	0 (1)	0	0 (1)	0	1	3 (1)	5 (3)
TOTALS	9 (1)	22 (4)	6 (2)	4 (6)	3 (1)	1	3 (1)	48 (15)

Note: The figures in brackets indicate the number of on-going evaluations as of November 2013.

226.   In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[14] and the Evaluation Manual[15], these evaluations are undertaken to: (i) provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned, among UNEP and its partners.

227.   This chapter provides a summary of the overall performance of projects that have been evaluated in the biennium 2012–2013 (not including sub-programme-level evaluations and special studies). Projects are assessed against a set of standard criteria rated on a six-point scale as presented in Table 3. Project performance on each criterion is discussed in greater detail in this chapter. Where possible, the assessment of performance provides information from evaluations completed in the previous biennium (2010–2012) as a basis for comparison. In addition, numerous lessons emerging from project evaluations are presented here to highlight recurring and pertinent issues.

Table 3: Evaluation criteria rating scale

Criteria	Rating	Abbrev.		Criteria	Rating	Abbrev.
Overall project performance; attainment of objectives and planned results; achievement of outputs; relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; replication & up-scaling; all factors and processes affecting attainment of project results	Highly Satisfactory	HS	**Satisfactory range**	Likelihood of Impact achievement; Sustainability	Highly Likely	HL
	Satisfactory	S			Likely	L
	Moderately Satisfactory	MS			Moderately Likely	ML
	Moderately Unsatisfactory	MU	**Unsatisfactory range**		Moderately Unlikely	MU
	Unsatisfactory	U			Unlikely	U
	Highly Unsatisfactory	HU			Highly Unlikely	HU

228.   The standard evaluation criteria are grouped into three main categories: (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and likelihood of impact; (2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and ecological factors affecting sustainability (i.e. continuance) of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling; and (3) Factors and processes affecting attainment of project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and adaptive management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/ driven-ness, financial management, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation. A fourth category Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes is assessed but not formally rated. The rating system and evaluation quality control processes are consistent with those used for GEF projects and therefore the rating schemes applied by UNDP and the World Bank. Annual independent assessment of UNEP's GEF project evaluations by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office ensures that ratings are fully benchmarked against those of UNDP and the World Bank (see the later section on UNEP Evaluation Office performance)..

229.   The overall project performance ratings against key evaluation criteria for projects evaluated in 2012–2013 are shown in Figure 1**Error! Reference source not found.**. In terms of overall project performance, 62% of the projects in 2012–2013 were rated S or higher (a 2% increase from the previous biennium), whereas only 5% of the projects fell within the unsatisfactory range (MU to HU) - an improvement from the previous biennium which saw 11% of projects rated in that range.

230.   Project **relevance** to UNEP objectives and country needs scored high in a majority of the projects evaluated in 2012–2013, with 93% of the projects obtaining a rating of S or higher (compared to 89% in 2010–2011). The **achievement of outputs and activities** was rated S or better for 66% of projects and 68% have a good chance (S or higher) for **replication and/or scaling-up** of project results. A majority of the projects evaluated have also been successful in their overall **attainment of objectives and results** (61% rated as S or better), and **efficiency** (63% achieving S or better) - an improvement from the last biennium where only 56% and 57% of projects, respectively, were awarded the same ratings for these criteria. **Country ownership and driven-ness** have usually been a strong factor affecting project performance with 64% of the projects evaluated achieving a rating of S or better.

Figure 1: Analysis of Overall Project Performance in the Biennium 2012–2013

231. While this presents an overall positive picture of UNEP's short and medium-term performance across the projects evaluated, the lasting, longer-term results for quite a large number of projects are somewhat uncertain. Indeed, for 29% of the projects evaluated, the **likelihood of impact achievement** was in the unsatisfactory range. **Sustainability** of project outcomes was rated Moderately Unlikely (MU) or lower for 28% of the projects assessed. For these two closely related criteria, there is a significant apparent increase in the proportion of projects rated MU or lower, up from 16% and 13% respectively in 2010–2011. However, it should also be noted that during the 2012–13 biennium, the Evaluation Office increased the consistency and rigour with which these criteria are assessed. The systematic use of Theory of Change analyses coupled with the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach, in effect introduced a higher required standard of evidence to receive performance ratings in the satisfactory range. The appropriate conclusion is that project performance against these criteria has likely been sub-optimal for some time, with recent performance levels perhaps reflecting longer term trends that can now more readily be discerned. *This means that project designs need to place greater emphasis on the processes leading from outputs to outcomes and develop robust strategies that aim to sustain those outcomes and the benefits that can stem from them.*

232. Some factors that affect project performance were problematic for quite a large proportion of projects: **Project preparation and readiness** was rated in the unsatisfactory range for 28% of the projects evaluated, *indicating room for improvement in project design and its translation through inception processes into implementation.* **Project monitoring and evaluation** (M&E) was rated MU or lower for 32% of the projects evaluated this past biennium, raising concerns about the focus on results-based and adaptive management approaches in project design and implementation.

B. Achievement of Objectives and Planned Results

Relevance

233. The evaluations assessed whether a project's objectives and implementation strategies, at the time of design, were: consistent with sub-regional environmental issues and needs; UNEP mandate and policies; needs of stakeholders (including governments, partner organisations and other UN agencies); and (in the case of GEF-funded projects) the relevant GEF focal area(s) strategic priorities and operational programmes. Figure 2 shows the assessment

of project Relevance over the period 2010–2013 and Figure 3 shows performance in this criterion by Sub-Programme over the same period. There has been a small improvement in the percentage of projects achieving a rating of S or higher for 'Relevance', with 94% of projects achieving this in 2013, up from 89% in 2010. Just one project evaluated over the period 2010–2013 was rated in the unsatisfactory range for relevance. Over the same period, the highest ratings for relevance were mostly given to projects related to Ecosystems Management, Resource Efficiency and Harmful Substances.

Figure 2: Assessment of Project Relevance (2010–2013)
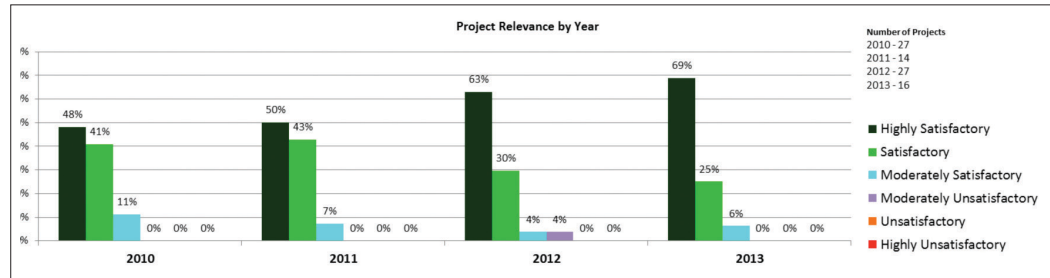
Figure 3: Assessment of Project Relevance by Sub-Programme (2010–2013)
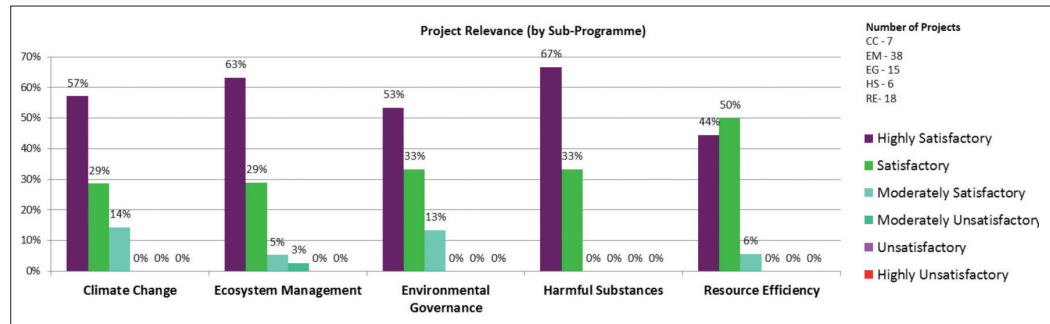
234. Successful projects were based on the assessment of the participating countries' and local partners' needs, and which were closely connected to existing international conventions as well as national policies and legislation. One such example is in the project *"Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWCAM)"*[16] where success (the overall performance was rated as HS) was substantially linked to the project's relevance to national and regional needs. All project stakeholders and executing partners in the region were very much aware of the fundamental relevance of sustainable environmental services from watersheds and coastal areas that the project was trying to promote. This shared recognition was at the basis of the commitment that brought about the project's remarkable accomplishments.

> **Lesson # 1.** *Project relevance is enhanced when institutional arrangements are built around existing networks and collaborative processes, and when as a result, most of the project's activities are compatible with (and supportive of) institutional mandates and goals. This is critical to the project's insertion at the country level and to ensuring coherence with on-going processes. It also reflects on the performance, commitment and sense of ownership displayed by national partner institutions, and in the co-financing contributions that can be leveraged. (TE, Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea)[17].*

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16 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/6030-05-01 GFL/2324-2731-4834 Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWCAM), May 2012.*

17 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-GEF project GFL/QGL-2328-2760-4880 "Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea – GEF 1248, February 2013.*

> **Lesson # 2.** *Stakeholder-determined priorities, a common framework of good practice guidance, and provision for peer-sharing of experiences, are among the ingredients which help in enhancing project Relevance. Right from the onset, it is necessary to interact with the appropriate government agencies/ representatives to ensure that the proposed project interventions and objectives are demand-driven and that policy makers are taken on board.[18]*
>
> **Lesson # 3.** *Projects represent the principal mechanism for delivering on the Expected Accomplishments defined in the UNEP MTS, and as such they are a crucial dimension of the achievement of results-based management. Strengthening the process of aligning projects portfolio with the MTS results framework enhances delivery of the desired higher-level Results.[19]*

Effectiveness

235.   Effectiveness is the extent to which direct outcomes were achieved. The assessment approach required articulation of the Theory of Change (ToC) (or Programme Theory) for the project which depicts the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) through outcomes (capacity and behavioural changes resulting from the use of outputs) towards impact (longer term changes in environmental benefits and living conditions), the external factors affecting outcome and impact achievement, and the roles of key stakeholders in the change processes at different results levels.

236.   As shown in Figure 4 below, the percentage of evaluated projects achieving a rating of S or better for effectiveness was 56% over 2012–2013. At programme level, 100% of projects focusing on Harmful Substances received a performance rating in the satisfactory range over the entire MTS period, with half of these rated as HS for achieving their objectives. However, a quite significant proportion of projects under Environmental Governance and Climate Change were rated in the unsatisfactory range against this parameter over the same period (20% and 28% respectively). Two projects evaluated in the 2012–13 biennium were awarded a U rating for effectiveness (one project in 2012 due to significant delays in disbursement of funds and major implementation arrangements[20], and one in 2013 on account of design issues with one of the decision-making tools employed in the project[21]). There were no projects evaluated that were part of the D&C Sub-programme. Figure 4 and Figure 5 include GEF projects, in the latter figure GEF projects have been categorised by UNEP sub-programme.

Figure 4: Assessment of Project Effectiveness (2010–2013)

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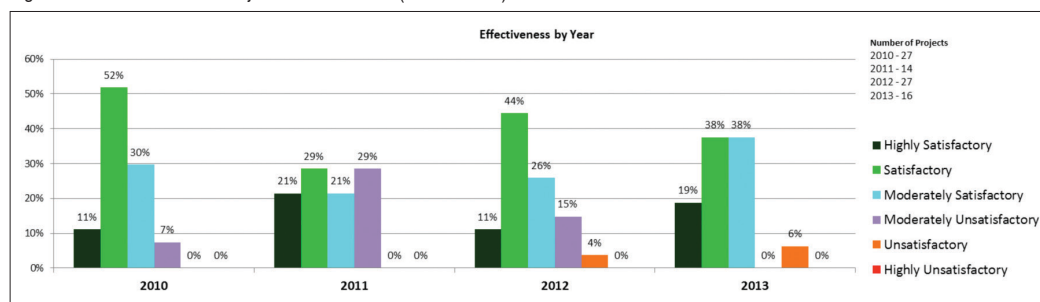
18 *A ggeneral lesson abstracted from various evaluation reports.*
19 *Mid-Term Evaluation of UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (2010–2013), February 2013.*
20 *Mid-Term Evaluation of project GF/4010-07-06 (4987) GFL/2328-2732-4987 "Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land-Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (COAST)", April 2012.*
21 *Terminal Evaluation of the Project CC/3010-09-07 (4A56) "Economic Analysis of Adaptation Options", September 2013.*

Figure 5: Assessment of Project Effectiveness by Sub-Programme (2010–2013)
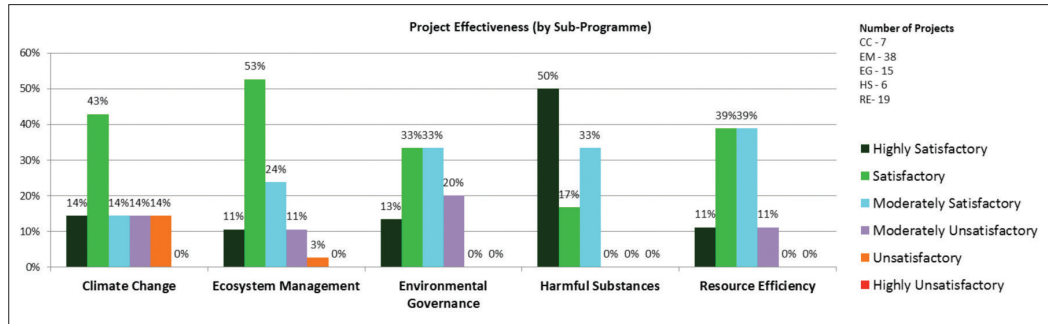
237.   Most of the projects rated HS for effectiveness had realistic objectives, a strong strategic direction right from the initial phase, with clear strategies and mechanisms for monitoring, successful implementation approaches and adaptive management, as well as a predisposition towards lesson learning and replication. An example of this is the project "*Carbon Benefits Project: Modelling, Measurement and Monitoring*"[22] where success in the achievement of outputs and anticipated outcomes was partly attributed to the active participation and engagement of host countries in securing their feedback on the project design through a Scientific Steering Committee, strengthening local stakeholder capacity and awareness, simplifying procedures and monitoring guidelines to render them operationally relevant for the needs of non-experts in carbon uptake methods and tools, delivering lessons (both substantive and process oriented) that can be replicated in other similar initiatives, and showing high relevance to GEF and UNEP policies. It should be noted however, that for this project – and several other highly effective projects, objectives tended to be pitched at a low level.

238.   An examination of some of the projects that scored poorly on effectiveness shows that they tended to lack clarity in project strategy and/or logical framework, experienced project delays, and had sub-optimal financial administration and disbursement processes.

> **Lesson # 4.** *The achievement of project goals and objectives should not be left to chance. Ongoing communication among all partners involved in project implementation is crucial, especially when it involves many partners in multiple countries and sites, and when their respective outputs are to contribute to one overall deliverable. There must be a common understanding among all concerned about the expectations and the modalities for achieving them.[23]*
>
> **Lesson # 5.** *Projects aiming at supporting policy and planning, which are well embedded within nationally-driven, well-resourced, larger programmes will often show a higher rate of success. Efforts to achieve any sort of policy change in a country, should be inscribed in longer-term projects or programmes that engage the appropriate level of stakeholders and policy makers in a continuous dialogue.[24]*

Likelihood of Impact

239.   To assess the **likelihood of impact**, UNEP project evaluations use the Review of Outcomes towards Impact (ROtI) approach. Starting from the Theory of Change of the project and

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22 *Terminal Evaluation of project "Sustainable Forest Management: Carbon Benefits Project: Modelling, Measurement and Monitoring", September 2013.*

23 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project "Coastal Resilience to Climate Change: Developing a Generalizable Method for Assessing Vulnerability and Adaptation of Mangroves and Associated Ecosystems", June 2013.*

24 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-06-17 (4956) Integrating Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change into Sustainable Development Policy Planning and Implementation in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACCESSA), August 2012.*

the effectiveness assessment, the ROtI method is used to assess the extent to which a project is likely to contribute to the achievement of further changes ('Intermediary States'), ultimately leading to the desired impact. The ROtI assessment examines the extent to which the necessary drivers (external factors within the influence of the project) are present and assumptions (external factors beyond the influence of the project) are proven valid; and assesses the current capacity and motivation of stakeholders to follow through on what is needed to achieve impact. While it is generally appreciated that progress towards the intended global environmental benefits (impact) is often only discernible in the longer term and will not necessarily be realized during the project's lifetime, completing the ROtI analysis makes it possible to determine the likelihood of a project making a demonstrable contribution towards impact.

240. It is therefore likely that more recent evaluative assessments of the likelihood of impact achievement better represent the longer-term trends in project performance for this criterion.

241. Figure 6 shows an apparent decline in the likelihood of impact achievement over the two most recent biennia, with 70% of projects rated in the satisfactory range in 2013, down from 90% for the same range in 2011. This observation may be attributed to the fact that by 2012, the Evaluation Office was systematically applying Theory of Change and ROtI methods in project evaluations, which improved the objectivity of the assessment of the likelihood of impact. It is therefore likely that more recent evaluative assessments of the likelihood of impact achievement better represent the longer-term trends in project performance for this criterion.

Figure 6: ROtI Assessment by Year (2010–2013)
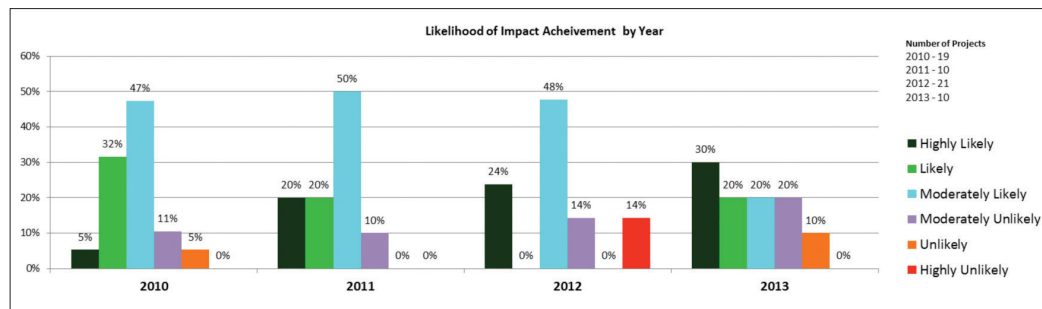
242. Over the period 2010–2013, depending on the sub-programme, Figure 7 shows how the proportion of projects considered moderately to highly unlikely to achieve impact varied between 20% and 28% (without considering the Harmful Substances Sub-programme[25]). Less than half of the GEF (34%) and Non-GEF (39%) projects evaluated were rated 'Highly Likely' to 'Likely' to achieve Impact.

243. Successful projects integrated measures that were designed to move project outcomes towards intermediate states by incorporating their activities into on-going and/or planned projects and programmes of the relevant government(s), NGOs, bilateral donors, regional and international organisations, among others. A good example of likelihood of impact achievement is in the project "*Coastal Resilience to Climate Change: Developing a Generalizable Method for Assessing Vulnerability and Adaptation of Mangroves and Associated Ecosystems*"[26]. The

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25 *In the Harmful Substances Sub-programme the likelihood of impact was rated only for one project.*
26 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project "Coastal Resilience to Climate Change: Developing a Generalizable Method for Assessing Vulnerability and Adaptation of Mangroves and Associated Ecosystems, June 2013.*

Figure 7: Likelihood of Impact Assessment by Sub-Programme (2010–2013)
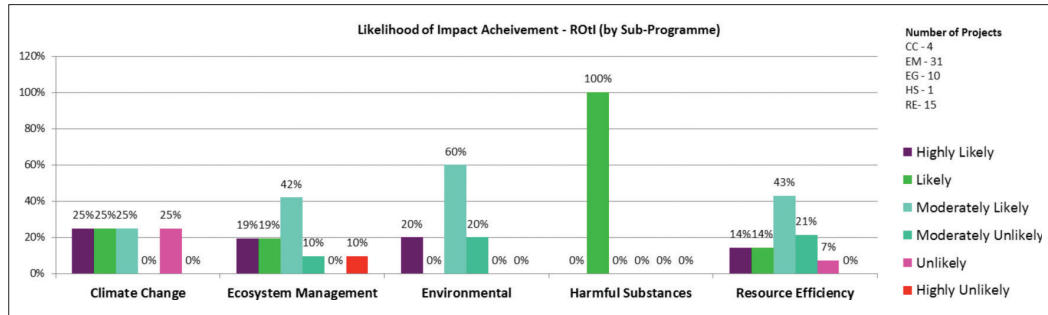
project team succeeded in building considerable capacity and awareness among a wide cross-section of stakeholders at all levels within the project countries and beyond by producing guidelines for vulnerability assessment and adaptation of mangrove ecosystems that were not previously available. Momentum towards impact achievement was evident from the measures that were designed to move project outcomes towards intermediate states as these guidelines were designed to feed into on-going and planned projects and programmes (a continuous process) for climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation in the post-project period.

Efficiency

244. An assessment is made to determine project efficiency in terms of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of execution to bring a project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and time frame. Special attention is given to efforts by the project teams to build upon pre-existing resources and complementarities with other initiatives to increase project efficiency.

245. For this criterion, there has been a gradual increase in the percentage of projects rated S or above between 2010 and 2013 as shown in

246. Figure **8** (from 52% in 2010 up to 69% in 2013), and a corresponding reduction in projects achieving ratings within the unsatisfactory range.

Figure 8: Assessment of Project Efficiency by Year (2010–2013)
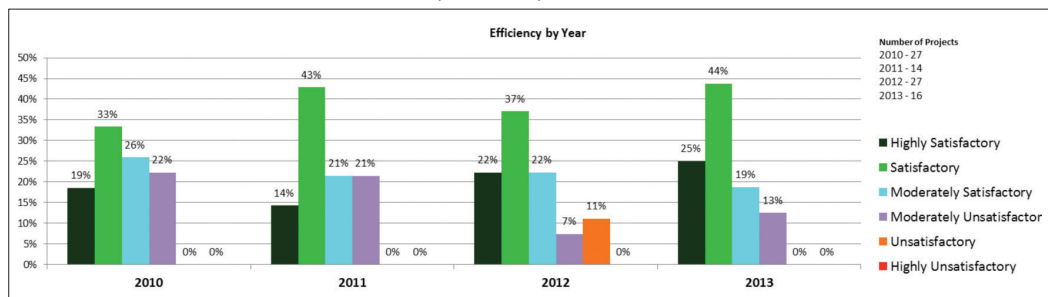
247. At Sub-programme level, the best performance for the efficiency dimension was by projects under Harmful Substances and Ecosystems Management, achieving ratings of S or better in 100% and 63% of projects respectively (See

248. Projects that were awarded ratings in the satisfactory range for this criterion shared some common features, including: a high level of commitment by the participating government(s) responsible for project execution; above-average dedication of the local stakeholders and

executing personnel; adaptive capacity within the project teams responding to changing circumstances and in providing continuous technical and management support. A high level of transparency in the management of financial resources, skills, competencies and prior experience in management of international projects, good knowledge and organization of bidding procedures and contracting processes for project partners.

249. Figure 9). Non-GEF projects had a higher percentage of projects achieving a rating of S or better for efficiency (75% Non-GEF projects, and 51% GEF projects).

250. Projects that were awarded ratings in the satisfactory range for this criterion shared some common features, including: a high level of commitment by the participating government(s) responsible for project execution; above-average dedication of the local stakeholders and executing personnel; adaptive capacity within the project teams responding to changing circumstances and in providing continuous technical and management support. A high level of transparency in the management of financial resources, skills, competencies and prior experience in management of international projects, good knowledge and organization of bidding procedures and contracting processes for project partners.

Figure 9: Assessment of Project Efficiency by sub-Programme (2010–2013)
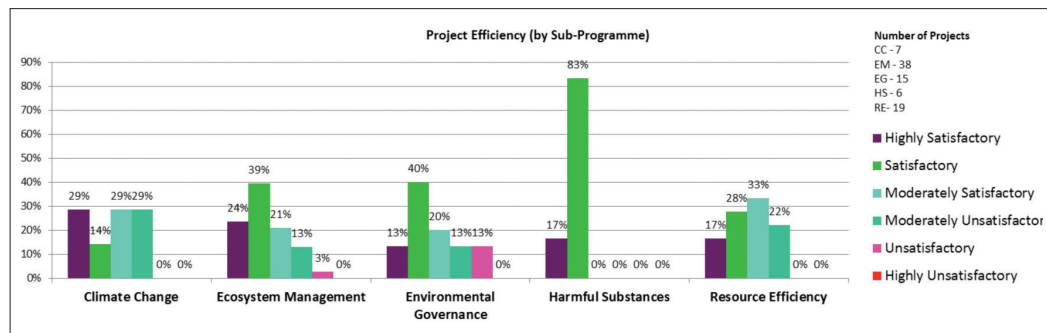
251. Efficiency was mostly affected by factors causing either cost or time overruns such as: poor project design with many unclear objectives and activities, and/or over-ambitious objectives that were difficult to achieve under existing conditions; capacity constraints; over-reliance on international consultants (whose cost is generally higher than that of national consultants); non-compliance with reporting mechanisms leading to delays in payment disbursements; high staff turn-over within the partner institutions; changes in co-financing arrangements; and lack of funding for project activities that are central to the project's goal.

> *Lesson # 6. Build upon well-established existing structures. Implementing project activities through existing institutional structures that are directly engaged in the activities comprising the project intervention, and/or are well anchored within long-term policy discussions at the regional or country level is very important where only limited financial resources are available. It enables the project to leverage organizational support and political processes that are already in motion. (MTE, Global Market Transformation for Efficient Lighting)[27]*
>
> *Lesson # 7. A sub-regional network of centres of excellence can be extremely effective to deliver capacity-building and technical backstopping to global processes. Such a network should bring together institutions that already have a sub-regional (or regional) scope and experience in the relevant subject or process.[28]*

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27 *Mid-Term Evaluation of the project (3457) Global Market Transformation for Efficient Lighting Project (en.lighten initiative), 2013.*
28 *Mid-Term Evaluation of project "Building a Sustainable National Marine Protected Area Network - The Bahamas, September 2012.*

C.   Sustainability and Catalytic Role of Projects

**Sustainability of Project Outcomes**

252.   Sustainability in this context is defined as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the project funding and assistance ends. Four dimensions that may affect sustainability were considered, namely: i) Financial; ii) Socio-political; iii) Institutional framework and governance; and iv) Environmental.

253.   The trend in projects' likelihood to sustain intended outcomes, as indicated by evaluations completed between 2010 and 2013, is shown in Figure 10 below. Overall, 2013 saw the greatest percentage of projects rated Highly Likely (HL) to sustain project outcomes (13%), yet also had the greatest percentage of projects with outcomes unlikely to be sustained (38% rated MU). There is an increase in the percentage of projects being rated in the 'unlikely' range for 'sustainability of project outcomes' over the four years. Even though this could, at least partially, be attributed to the rigour with which project sustainability is being assessed using the Theory of Change and ROtI approach, it nevertheless indicates that the sustainability project outcomes will require renewed attention in future.

Figure 10: Overall Assessment of Sustainability of Project Outcomes by Year
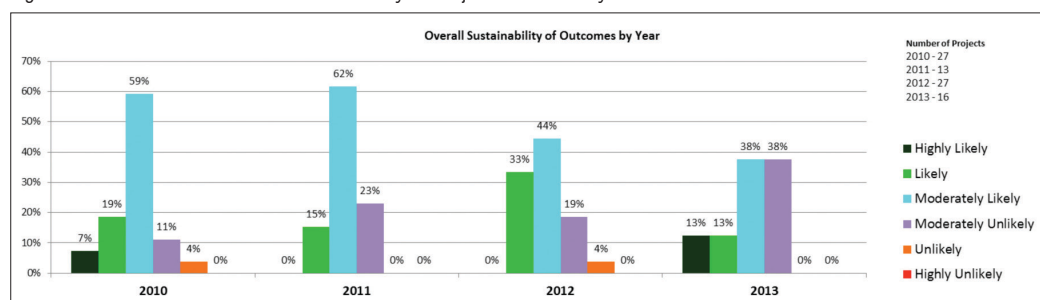
254.   As shown in Figure 11, in the 2012–2013 biennium, about 91% of the evaluated projects were rated between HL and ML to be institutionally sustainable. Fewer projects achieved the same performance in socio-political and financial sustainability of project outcomes, with about 79% and 73% of projects respectively. Environmental sustainability of projects ranked highest with 97% of the projects rated considered sustainable under this parameter.

Figure 11: Assessment of Sustainability Aspects (2012–2013)
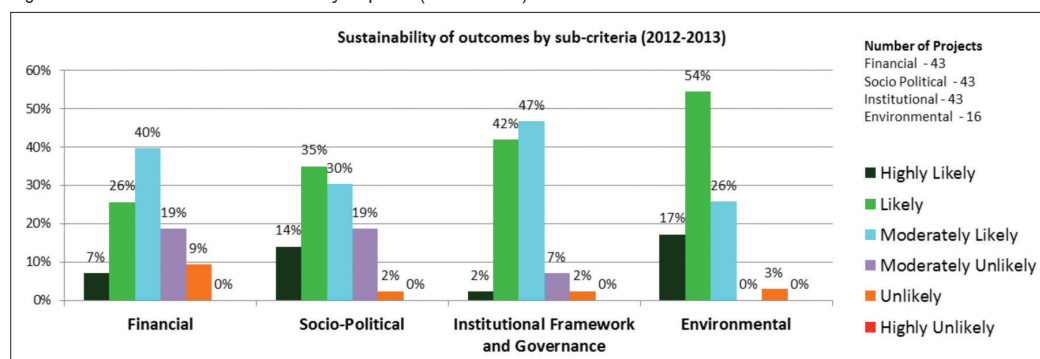
255.   A look at project sustainability by sub-programme (see Figure 12) shows that of the projects that were evaluated between 2010–2013, up to 50% of those that had focus on 'Harmful Substances and Hazardous Wastes' were rated L or HL to sustain their planned outcomes, whereas projects on 'Climate Change' had the lowest number (14%) in the same performance range.

Figure 12: Assessment of Sustainability by Sub-Programme (2010–2013)
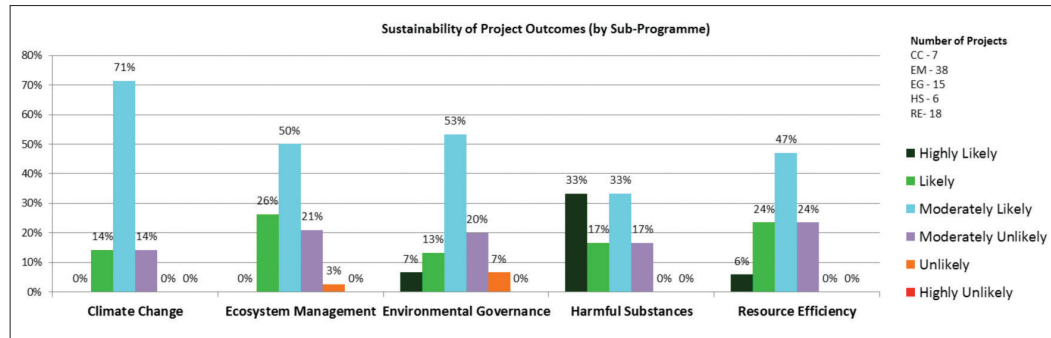
Financial Sustainability

256.	This criterion requires an assessment of the extent to which project outcomes and eventual impact are dependent on continued financial support. Findings for 2012–13 were very similar to those of the previous biennium (2010–2011), projects considered most likely to be financially sustainable had sufficient, continuing resources allocated (e.g. by governments, development partners, donors, programmes, etc.) to continue the dissemination of project outputs (services, products, tools, structures, etc.) and follow-up activities even after the project closure, or the longevity of outcomes was not dependent on the continued availability of financial resources (e.g. a change in the provisions of a pre-existing regulatory framework).

257.	The greatest success was achieved in projects whose outputs were demand-driven and their development followed specified needs. For example, in the project "*Participatory Planning and Implementation in the Management of Shantou Intertidal Wetland (China)*"[29], continued funding to support project outcomes is considered likely because they have practical and utilitarian values (e.g. silvo-aquaculture to protect shorelines), yet it remains to be seen whether this kind of financial support can be mobilised to address supposedly unpopular issues (e.g. conservation of salt marsh areas) which do not readily attract funding support.

258.	It was also apparent that financial sustainability is closely linked to political goodwill at national level as well as among donor countries, as this helps to increase the likelihood of stable and predictable funding. That being said, an overly ambitious implementation plans and lack of means to implement them impedes the financial sustainability of project outcomes, even in the presence of such goodwill.

> *Lesson # 8. The establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms require a favourable economic, fiscal and political environment. More direct and early involvement of economic and financial ministries as well as national legislative bodies in the project design and its implementation activities could strengthen sustainability of the project and help to reach its policy objectives.[30]*
>
> *Lesson # 9. A financial analysis - including a clear indication of what national and regional finance resources are, what would be the donor commitment, and what the various gaps might be – is of utmost importance to financial sustainability of an initiative. An important aspect of financial sustainability lies in what might be loosely termed the 'development cycle', i.e. whether funds from donors will target*

29	*Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-07-03 (4985) Participatory Planning and Implementation in the Management of Shantou Intertidal Wetland, Guangdong, China, March 2012.*

30	*Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GF/1030-04-02 (4773) ECORA - An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic, September 2012.*

> *projects (with tight financial controls), or programmes (with loser financial control seeding ceding greater responsibility to national institutions), or move into budget support (where accountability is wholly the responsibility of national governments and there is a tacit acceptance that finance - not governance - is the barrier to achieving development goals).[31]*
>
> ***Lesson # 10.*** *Failure to establish a project exit strategy creates false expectations among some Stakeholders that the project benefits and [financial] support will continue, and this may affect the reputation of the donor agencies and other contributing entities.[32]*

Socio-Political Sustainability

259. Socio-Political sustainability considers the extent to which project outcomes and progress towards impacts are dependent on; commitment and actions of the stakeholders, the level of ownership required to guarantee that outcomes are sustained, and the adequacy of public and stakeholder awareness, interest and incentives in support of the long term objectives. Projects that were rated positively for this parameter included those that sufficiently involved key stakeholders in decision-making processes, gave them a substantial forum to discuss their concerns, and were able to increase "buy-in" from key players. A clear example was in the GEF project: *"Greening the Tea Industry in East Africa (GTIEA)"* where from a socio-political viewpoint the degree of consciousness of stakeholders about the advantages (reduced costs, reduced negative environmental impact, improved reliability) increased as a result of the efforts of the project teams to enhance their awareness, commitment and incentives.

> ***Lesson # 11.*** *Socio-political sustainability is enhanced where the key partners are selected from within a sector in which synergies with the project activities exist, so as to ensure that they make an adequate partner for the project.[33]*
>
> ***Lesson # 12.*** *Greater civil society involvement in projects enhances the prospects of socio-political sustainability of project outcomes - although this is hinged upon the nature of participation. By failing to interact with grassroots and community-based groups and initiatives, projects may miss an opportunity to provide these groups with a "seat at the table" where they might have a tangible Impact on holding decision-makers to account, and on safeguarding sustainability.**

Institutional Framework and Governance

260. Assessments against this criterion gauge the likelihood that project outcomes will be sustained by the existing institutional and legal frameworks, policies, governing structures and processes. The evaluations reveal that the selection of national and international partners with complementary experiences and functions was a critical factor in boosting institutional sustainability. Projects with a higher likelihood of success against this criterion implemented activities through existing institutional structures that were well anchored within long-term policy at the regional or country levels and/or had high-level visibility.

261. Another factor contributing to institutional sustainability is evident in projects that generated "social capital" through the collaborations and network connections generated, and where

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31 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-05-12 (4865) Support to The Implementation of the Regional Environmental Action Plan in Central Asia (REAP), September 2012.

32 Terminal Evaluation of the Project GF/1030-05-03 (4900) "Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Páramo in the Northern and Central Andes" GFL-2328-2714-4900, June 2012.

33 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/2328-2721-4981 Greening the Tea Industry in East Africa (GTIEA), 2013.

there were good prospects for institutional embedding and skills transfer to soften the effect when people retire or leave for other fields of work. In the project "*Building National Capacities for Biodiversity Indicators and Reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa*"[34], participants in every project country formed national teams or task forces to take forward the work, and at least some of these have continued as fora for exchange of experience and mutual support.

> **Lesson # 13.** *Institutional relationships are critical to the success or failure of any project which is operating at a systemic scale, and particularly so in transitional environments. A project inevitably has to react to the various changes over its lifetime, rather than steering the process. It is important at project onset, to evaluate the capacities of institutions, the dynamic nature of the relationships between various players, and how they interact with other key stakeholders.*[35]
>
> **Lesson # 14.** *Succession-planning - the selection of project partners who will commit and who will be in pivotal positions to make a sustained difference "back home", is crucial for sustaining project outcomes post-project. Selecting and building [capacity of] the right partners and individuals for project implementation is fundamental for building long term relationships and internalization of results.*[36]
>
> **Lesson # 15.** *When working with governmental organizations and particularly when their project support seems not to be fully ensured, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be made to strengthen the relation between the project team and the respective national administrations. Based on such MoU, the transfer of results from the project to the governmental level would be eased.*[37]

Environmental Sustainability

262.   Environmental sustainability assesses those environmental factors, either external to the project or caused by the project that could undermine the future flow of project outcomes. This aspect of sustainability is most relevant when there are direct actions 'on the ground' however it is often an aspect that is less well explored because the processes to attain the higher level results are often not at the level of 'on the ground' interventions.

263.   In the biennium 2012–2013, about 97% of the projects evaluated were rated between HL and ML not to face or cause environmental threats to the sustainability of outcomes. Most environmental threats to sustainability of project benefits do not emanate from the projects themselves but from external factors such as socio-economic activities and patterns of global development. For instance, global climate change caused by human activity constitutes an environmental threat to the sustainability of benefits from numerous biodiversity projects. At the same time, the important role that ecosystems can play in reducing the effects of climate change should receive more attention from governments and local communities. A case in point is in the project "*Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Páramo in the Northern and Central Andes*"[38] - more people now understand that the Páramo is an important defence mechanism against the droughts and floods that afflict the Andean region and people insist that their governments do more to stop harmful actions in order to protect their water source.; this notwithstanding,

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34   *Terminal Evaluation of project ROA-2648-1571-2611 Building National Capacities for Biodiversity Indicators and Reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa, April 2012.*

35   *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-05-12 (4865) Support to The Implementation of the Regional Environmental Action Plan in Central Asia (REAP), September 2012.*

36   *Lesson derived from various evaluation reports*

37   *Terminal Evaluation of project CP/4040-09-02 (3743) - Enhancing for Renewable Energy Technology Deployment in Brazil, China and South Africa (EIRET), March 2012.*

38   *Terminal Evaluation of the Project GF/1030-05-03 (4900) "Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Páramo in the Northern and Central Andes" GFL-2328-2714-4900, June 2012.*

threats to the Páramo ecosystem continue to exist due to uncontrolled mining expansion, invasive agriculture, public and private infrastructure projects, indiscriminate burning, over grazing and poaching, with disastrous results for the biodiversity of the area.

D.   Catalytic Role and Replication

264.   The Catalytic Role of UNEP is embodied in its approach of creating an enabling environment and investing in innovative pilot activities which show how new approaches can work. Replication here is defined as an effect of an intervention from which experiences can be repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas, or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). Project evaluations assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication and/or the extent to which actual replication or up scaling has already occurred (or is likely to occur in the near future).

265.   Of the projects that were evaluated against this criterion, an average of 92% were rated in the satisfactory range for their catalytic role and replication of lessons and experiences (see Figure 13). At programme level, Climate Change had the highest percentage of projects achieving an S or better rating against this criterion (83%), while Resource Efficiency had the lowest percentage of projects (50%) in the same range (see Figure 14).

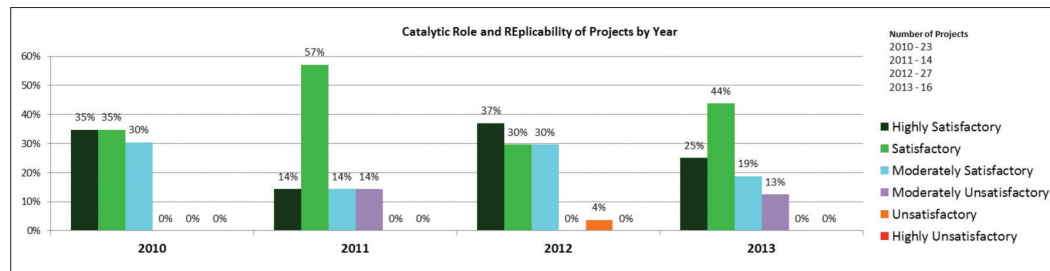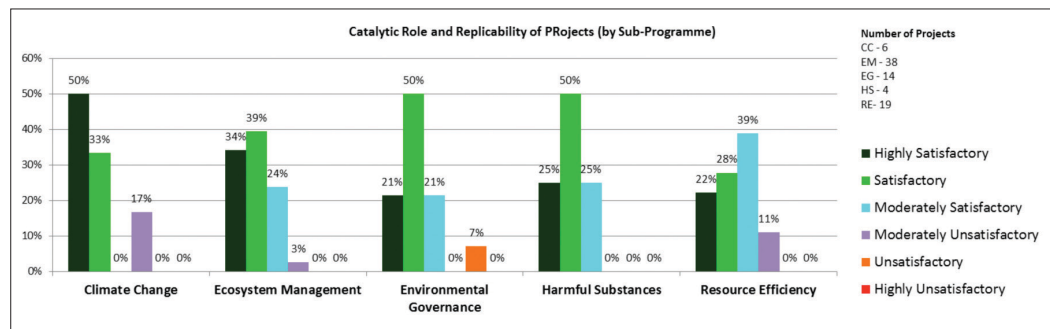Figure 13: Assessment of catalytic role and replication by year

Figure 14: Assessment of replication and catalytic role of projects in the Sub-Programmes (2010–2013)

266.   There have been a number of lessons and experiences coming out of projects that can inform similar interventions in other countries and geographic areas. Projects that scored highly for their catalytic role included those that created "champions" through representatives of public or private institutions, or individuals at the local level, and who continue to be committed and enthusiastic about progressing project outcomes. Projects that performed relatively well in this parameter also created incentives/disincentives (social, economic, market based, competencies, etc.) to change stakeholder behaviour and practices by linking project outputs and outcomes to economic and regulatory instruments.

267. Project replication was often enhanced by experience-exchange and horizontal learning (peer-to-peer learning) between projects and countries. New and innovative technologies and approaches that were show-cased through demonstration projects or pilot studies, allowed for incremental build-up of interest, knowledge and skills. In some projects, south-south cooperation was also found to be an important factor in influencing project replicability. In the project *"Enhancing for Renewable Energy Technology Deployment in Brazil, China and South Africa (EIRET)"*[39] for example, there was insufficient south-south cooperation resulting in missed opportunities for information exchange as it became apparent that South Africa could potentially have learned something from the Chinese experience. Unfortunately such cooperation was not established within the project and this may have further contributed to the project's poor ratings in 'stakeholder participation', 'country ownership' and overall 'sustainability of project outcomes'.

> **Lesson # 16.** *Influencing decisions does not just depend on producing convincing science and economics - it is also about access, influence and relationships. Project documents need to clearly communicate the project logic. The link between the project activities and the (long term) desired Impact may not be obvious to all stakeholders, but the rationale for the project should at least be understood by those involved in its implementation.[40] The inclusion of stakeholders in the planning phase and the use of the Theory of Change at the design and planning phase of projects will not only help clarify the project intervention logic, but will also enhance its uptake and replicability.*
>
> **Lesson # 17.** *While the demonstration of local benefits of a certain policy approach is an extremely useful tool to promote rapid uptake, the national policy-making processes, cycles and durations should not be ignored. In many contexts, the demonstration of local benefits is in fact insufficient to effectively drive the policy process.[41]*
>
> **Lesson # 18.** *The design of project implementation strategies needs to consider cultural and socioeconomic variables, in order to ensure relevance with different national and sub-national contexts. A diversity of demonstration sites with asymmetrical implementation processes between countries enables the project to validate practices suited to different socioeconomic and environmental contexts, and strengthens the project's demonstration value and replication potential.[42]*

E.   Factors Affecting Project Performance

Preparedness and Project Design

268. The evaluations assessed whether project documents were clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation, if objectives and components were well formulated and feasible within the allocated timeframe and resources. The assessment also determined whether the capacities of executing institutions and counterparts were properly considered, whether partnership arrangements were properly identified, and if management arrangements, roles and responsibilities were suitably determined prior to project implementation.

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39 *Terminal Evaluation of project CP/4040-09-02 (3743) - Enhancing for Renewable Energy Technology Deployment in Brazil, China and South Africa (EIRET), March 2012.*
40 *Lesson derived from various evaluation reports.*
41 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-06-17 (4956) Integrating Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change into Sustainable Development Policy Planning and Implementation in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACCESSA) GEF ID 2752, August 2012.*
42 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-GEF project GFL/QGL-2328-2760-4880 "Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea – GEF 1248, February 2013.*

Figure 15: Assessment of Preparedness and Project Design (2010–2013)
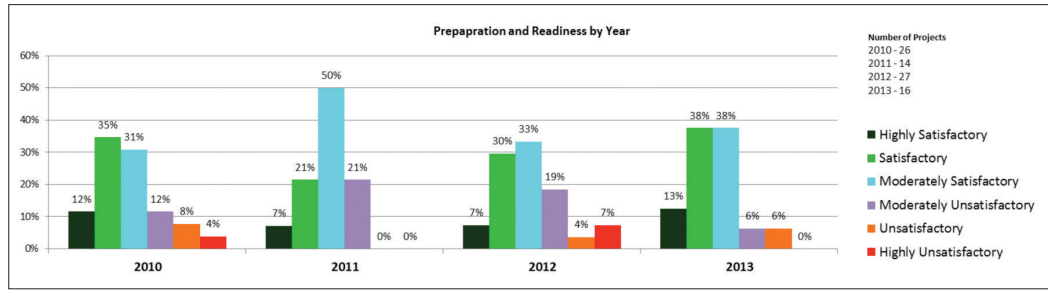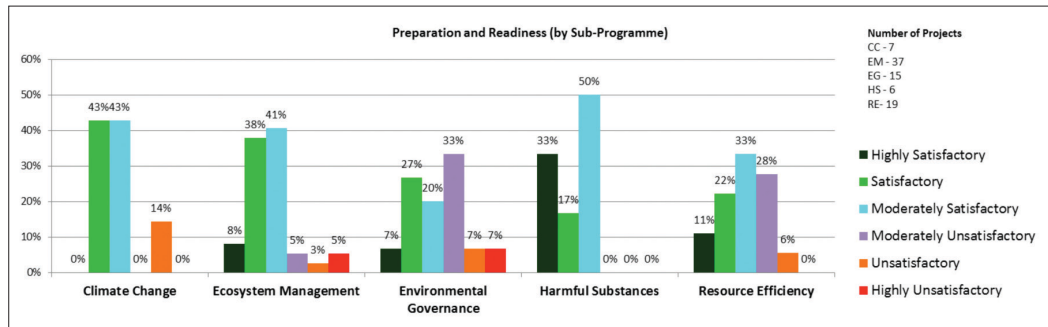

Figure 16: Assessment of Preparedness and Project Design by Sub-Programme

269. As shown in Figure 15, the proportion of project rated S or better for preparation and readiness has varied between 28 and 51% indicating that there is still a lot of room for improving project design quality. By sub-programme (see Figure 16), we see projects under Harmful Substances and Ecosystems Management having the highest percentage of projects achieving a rating of S or higher (50% and 46% respectively), whereas those under Environmental Governance are the least in this range (34% of projects). Design and preparation in GEF projects was found to be only slightly better with 43% achieving a rating of S or greater and only 23% being rated as MU or below as compared to Non-GEF projects with 37% and 25% respectively.

270. The collated evaluation data on project performance shows that most of the projects that scored U or lower in project design and preparation, also scored poorly in the following parameters: 'Implementation Approach', 'Overall Monitoring & Evaluation', and 'Likelihood of Impact Achievement' (with most achieving MU-U in these categories). In some projects, and especially pilot demonstration activities, insufficient stakeholder participation in project design resulted in implementation issues later on. Projects that performed poorly in this criterion often had flaws in their log frames and included complex and/or inadequate management arrangements, which were not properly identified or addressed during the proposal review phase.

271. A good example where an extensive process of consultation and input gathering was the foundation of the project design was in the project "*In-Situ Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives through Enhanced Information Management and Field Application*"[43] which adopted a multi-level decision-making approach, from activity - to country - to international level. This 'funnel' structure created many opportunities for fine-tuning and aligning activities, and enhancing their integration. By contrast, the design of the project *"Development of Strategic Market Intervention Approach for Grid-Connected Solar Energy Technologies (EMPower)"*[44] was rated U

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43 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/1020-04-01 (4757) In-Situ Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives through Enhanced Information Management and Field Application, 2013.*

44 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/4040-04-10 (4767)Development of Strategic Market Intervention Approach for Grid-Connected Solar Energy Technologies (EMPower), January 2013.*

primarily because it failed to involve key stakeholders during project formulation. Had this been done, it would have promoted partnership with those stakeholders who were really keen to participate in the project and provide co-financing. It would also have ensured the development of a project design that was more realistic and with achievable outcomes.

272. Overall, factors that influenced better performance in project design and preparedness included: clear aims set within an understandable framework, with good indicators that people can easily use to measure project success (or failure); clear articulation of objectives, activities and results chain; marrying regional priority needs with UNEP's strategic priorities; ensuring project interventions are well-suited to address unique country-level barriers; carefully considering capacities of executing institutions and counterparts; setting realistic targets and timeframes for project implementation; clearly spelt out roles and responsibilities of partners; carefully planning the project components and the means to achieve objectives; logical linkages between pilot activities and project components; and integrating methods/ tools that facilitate scaling up of successful approaches.

Lesson # 19. *A badly designed project leads to operational problems during implementation. Projects with many and unclear objectives and activities are unlikely to deliver well; projects need to be clear and not spread themselves too thinly.[45]*

Lesson # 20. *Good project design needs to be complemented with sufficient time for effective implementation and sufficient funding.[46]*

Lesson # 21. *Social, institutional, economic or environmental feasibility studies can save time and money for projects when these are conducted in the design phase. These studies contribute significantly to formulating appropriate project methodologies and implementation strategies, and in the selection of suitable partner institutions, pilot sites and best practices to be promoted.[47]*

Lesson # 22. *Involve all potential stakeholders in the development of the project's logical framework to increase 'buy-in' and to ensure it is achievable. Initiatives based on stakeholder requests that take into account real (not perceived) national capacities and constraints, are more likely to be successful.[48]*

Lesson # 23. *For projects relying heavily on new partners for execution, it is crucial to conduct a thorough assessment of their capacities to determine adequacy, and to help ensure that realistic expectations for the project are set and that the right type of assistance is provided.[49]*

Lesson # 24. *Strong project design is key to ensuring that projects are realistic, appropriately structured and that the right support (both technical and administrative) is provided. Careful attention should be paid to the capacity of institutions expected to implement the project to help ensure that realistic expectations for the project are set and the right type of assistance provided. Some countries, such as those emerging from conflicts, inevitably need more support than others and pilot countries should be selected only if sufficient support can be provided to ensure the work is followed through.[50]*

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45 *Mid-Term Evaluation of project GF/4010-07-06 (4987) GFL/2328-2732-4987 "Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land-Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (COAST)", April 2012.*
46 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/1030-03-04 (4684) Removing Barriers to Invasive Plant Management in Africa (CABI-ICRAF) (RBIPMA), August 2012.*
47 *Terminal Evaluation of the Project GF/1030-05-03 (4900) "Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Páramo in the Northern and Central Andes" GFL-2328-2714-4900, June 2012.*
48 *Lesson derived from various evaluation reports.*
49 *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-06-17 (4956) Integrating Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change into Sustainable Development Policy Planning and Implementation in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACCESSA), August 2012.*
50 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDA Project ROA-5060-1570-687. Strengthening National Institutional Capacities for Mainstreaming Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) into National Poverty Reduction Strategies, April 2012.*

Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management

273.   To assess this criterion, the evaluations considered the following: approach to project implementation; management frameworks; 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.

274.   The percentage of projects that were rated S or better has increased between the 2010–2011 and the 2012–2013 biennia from 47% to 56%, with 100% of the projects evaluated in 2013 achieving a rating within the satisfactory range (HS-MS) for their implementation approach and adaptation to changing conditions and unexpected setbacks (see Figure 17). The largest proportion of projects that were in the satisfactory range for this criterion belonged to the Harmful Substances (100%) and Ecosystems Management (87%) Sub-programmes (see Figure 18).

Figure 17: Assessment of Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management (2010–2013)
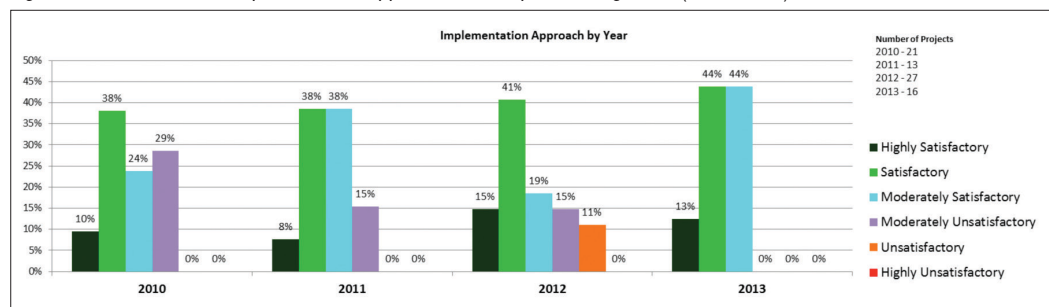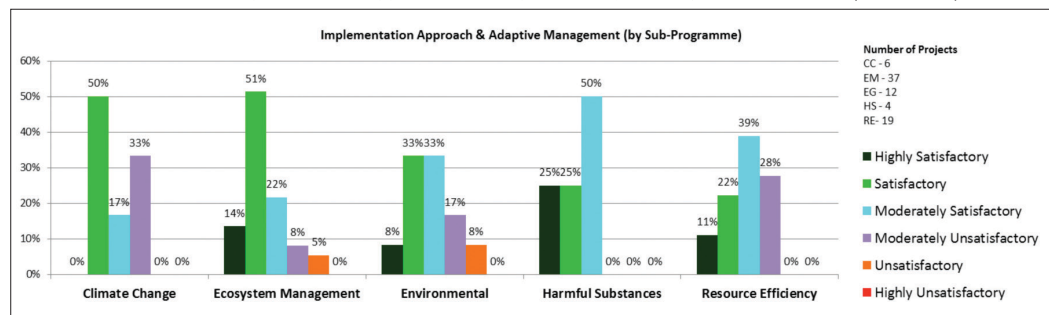

Figure 18: Assessment of Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management by Sub-Programme (2010–2013)

275.   Recurring factors in projects performing well against this criterion included: a well-conceived project strategy that clearly articulates the approach to addressing the technical, institutional and systemic issues the project is likely to face; good working relationships, cooperation and interaction between project teams and partners; clearly defined Terms of Reference on the management roles, responsibilities and coordination among the project teams, Steering Committees, Technical Advisory Groups, and other stakeholders; capacity in the participating institutions to manage complex implementation arrangements - especially in the case of multi-country or regional projects; and flexibility to adapt activities and tools within the project framework in response to lessons learned and/or stakeholder feedback. Where Steering Committee meetings were frequent and well attended, this also provided an opportunity to review work progress and make timely interventions and modifications to projects, particularly in situations where urgent decisions were required.

> ***Lesson # 25.*** *Although a significant amount of time is required during the inception phase for various preparatory activities, excessively long inception periods can adversely impact project performance, as many factors necessary for success can change during this time, for example, priorities of stakeholders, availability of persons involved in project design, co-financing arrangements, loss of institutional memory, etc.[51]*
>
> ***Lesson # 26.*** *Regular/ frequent meetings of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and full participation by all the members should be fostered right from the start of the project; and although PSC meetings can be particularly expensive, dedicated resources to support travel costs for participants need to be integrated into project budgets to facilitate such participation.[52]*

### UNEP Supervision and Backstopping

276.   This criterion requires an assessment of UNEP's role in supervising project implementation and providing quality and timely technical and administrative support to projects (in terms of administration and support to the achievement of outputs and outcomes), as well as advising on project modifications when needed. Figure 19 shows that the proportion of projects rated in the satisfactory zone for UNEP supervision and backstopping varied between 79% and 94%, with about 12% of projects evaluated over the whole period rated in the unsatisfactory zone.

Figure 19: Assessment of UNEP supervision and Backstopping (2010–2013)
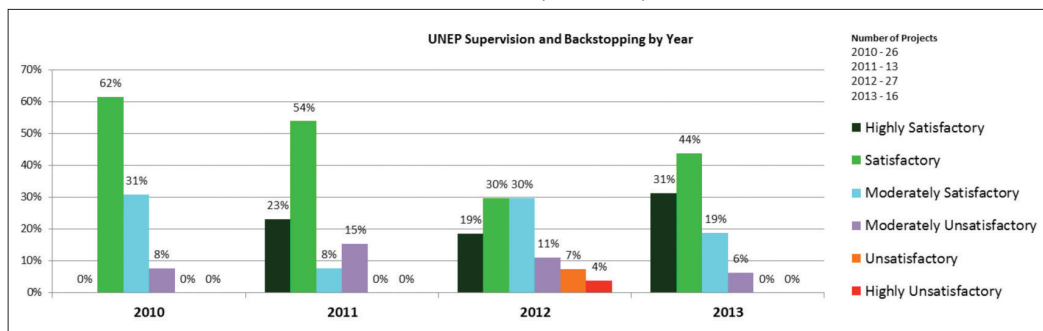
277.   The proportion of GEF-funded projects rated S or better for UNEP supervision and backstopping was higher than the proportion of non-GEF-funded projects (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Comparison between of UNEP supervision and Backstopping for GEF and Non-GEF Projects (2010–2013)
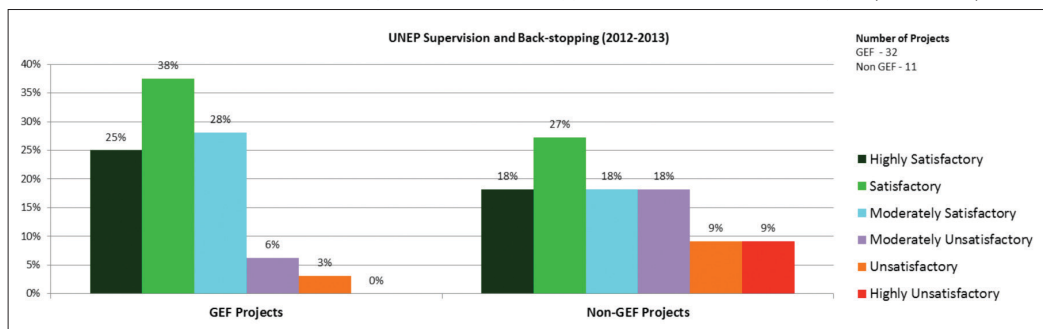
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51 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project "Coastal Resilience to Climate Change: Developing a Generalizable Method for Assessing Vulnerability and Adaptation of Mangroves and Associated Ecosystems", June 2013.*

52 *Lesson derived from various evaluation reports.*

278. Projects that rated highly for this criterion were mostly reported to have benefitted from UNEP Project Managers/Task Managers who were flexible, supportive, knowledgeable of local needs and conditions, responsive to partner/country needs, had good relationships with the executing agencies, and were generally timely and efficient in their communication including providing technical feedback on reports. Continuity of Project/Task Managers was also found to be a factor contributing to the quality of UNEP supervision and backstopping especially where the Manager was involved in a project right from the project design stage.

279. In a few cases, projects appear to have suffered from a failure in project management and supervision on the part of UNEP, particularly in instances where UNEP was not closely involved beyond the development of the project document (aside from minor coordination, liaison and/or participation in meetings/workshops). In some cases projects did not receive the necessary technical and strategic guidance due to poor communication between UNEP and the executing team. A case in point is in the project "*Strengthening National and Institutional Capacities for Mainstreaming Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) into National Poverty Reduction Strategies*"[53]. UNEP was not closely involved beyond the development of the project document, no feedback was provided on quarterly and annual reports submitted by the project team, and there was no technical review of any of the project outputs. The project documents were not shared with the South Sudan government and UNEP did not follow up on the lack of reporting and liaison with Government staff, resulting in failure by the project teams to receive the necessary technical and strategic guidance.

280. In sharp contrast, the project *"Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Water birds in Asia"*[54] benefitted from highly satisfactory support from UNEP. The consecutive Task Managers were actively involved in PSC meetings and had at least weekly contact (phone/Skype) with the Project Director. Interviewees reported that the Task Managers responded quickly to provide guidance, as well as honest and constructive criticism. The Task Managers and Fund Management Officers were also reported to be heavily involved in the review and approval of work plans and budgets, review of progress and performance against such work plans, and completion of the Logframe Tracking Form. The project's overall performance benefited as a direct result of the high level of backstopping by UNEP.

> *Lesson # 27. Given that UNEP has few country project offices, it make sense to link with existing national/regional programmes, which can be closely monitored in-country by partner organizations (e.g. UNDP). In countries where there is a UNEP country project office, this is not necessarily sufficient to ensure good project management, and it is important that effective backstopping is provided by the Regional Offices of UNEP.[55]*
>
> *Lesson # 28. Task Managers provide more value to projects when they build their capacity on the project's thematic topics, including becoming conversant with the cultural, political and economic situations in project countries, as well as Results-Based Management Approach, modern techniques in project design, monitoring and evaluation, and where applicable project-specific tools.[56]*

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53 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDA project ROA-5060-1570-6875 Strengthening National Institutional Capacities for Mainstreaming Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) into National Poverty Reduction Strategies, April 2012.*

54 *Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/6030-03-01 (4627) Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia, February 2012.*

55 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDA project ROA-5060-1570-6875 Strengthening National Institutional Capacities for Mainstreaming Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) into National Poverty Reduction Strategies, April 2012.*

56 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project GF/3010-05-04 (4842) "Strengthening the Network of Training Centers for Protected Area Management through Demonstration of a Tested Approach" Zapovednics, October 2012*

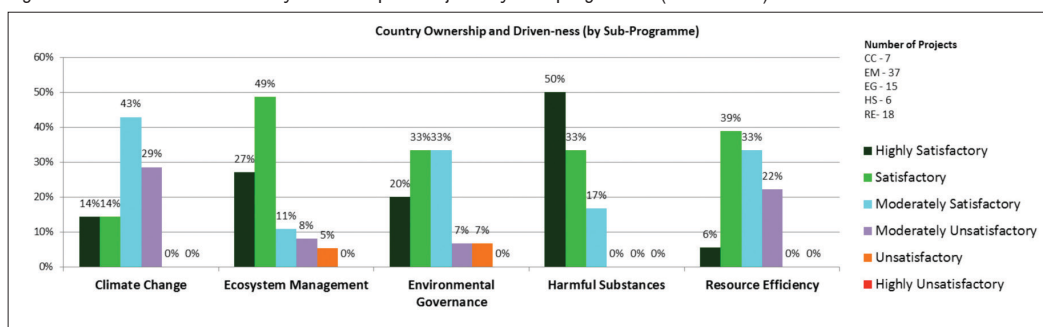**Country Ownership and Driven-ness**

281.   For this criterion, evaluations assessed country ownership in terms of how well governments assumed responsibility for projects and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various contact institutions in the countries involved, and the timeliness of provision of counter-part funding to project activities. The assessment also looked at how conducive the political and institutional framework of the participating countries were to project performance, in particular, the extent of political goodwill in national/sub-regional agreements, the participation of communities and non-governmental organisations, and their responsiveness to UNEP supervision and guidance.

282.   Over the two biennia about 63% of projects assessed achieved a rating of S or higher for country ownership and driven-ness (see Figure 21). However, about 16% of the projects were rated in the unsatisfactory range, indicating that still more can be done on this important factor.

Figure 21: Assessment of Country Owner-ship and Driven-ness in 2010–2013
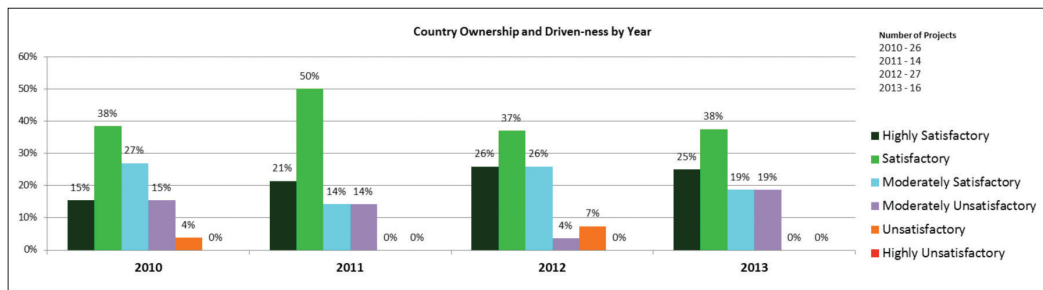
283.   At sub-programme level, the proportion of projects that received high ratings for country ownership over the period from 2010–2013 was highest under the Harmful Substances and Eco-system Management Sub-programmes with 83% and 76% of projects rated S or higher, respectively. The Climate Change and Resource Efficiency Sub-programmes counted the highest percentage of projects obtaining ratings in the unsatisfactory range against this criterion with 29% and 22% of projects, respectively (See Figure 22).

Figure 22: Assessment of Country Ownership of Projects by Sub-programme (2010–2013)

284.   The collated data shows that projects that performed well against the criterion 'country ownership and driven-ness' also experienced a good performance in the criteria 'overall sustainability of outcomes' and 'project catalytic role and replicability'.

285.   Country ownership of projects was strongest where most of the activities were demand-driven and well aligned with country priorities, government policies and processes. A strong feeling of ownership of project achievements is also evident where the activities included capacity

building and where "champions" were identified to propagate project outcomes post-project. Most projects that were successful in fostering government ownership and commitment had an implementation approach that created enabling conditions for national ownership right from the onset and which was based on stakeholder consultations. This was reinforced by key responsibilities being assigned to national coordination units and partner institutions. Where there was inadequate consultation during project planning, or national Focal Points were by-passed during execution of project activities, this often resulted in limited assimilation of projects at national level. Ultimately, a low sense of project ownership often manifests itself in the extent of co-financing that is leveraged as well as in the overall project performance.

286.   Projects' ability to broker public-private partnerships between government, private sector, civil society, research and academic institutions, influences ownership. An example of this is in the project "*Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea*"[57] where national partners perceived the project as a resource that supported their core mandates and goals, eliciting commitment and institutional cooperation that would have been more difficult to achieve outside the project framework. Project design and implementation arrangements were based on stakeholder consultations held during the project development phase, and institutional arrangements were built around existing networks and collaborative processes. The project also established National Coordination Committees as decision-making bodies that played an active role in developing project work plans and budgets in response changes in country situations.

Lesson # 29. The maintenance of project ownership requires effective communication and accurate and up-to date dissemination of information about the objectives, achievements and challenges of the project. It is importance to fully gain stakeholder support and commitment, at government, civil society and community levels through active and accurate communication and information dissemination. Without this commitment, the project sustainability can be jeopardized due to lack of ownership and co-financing.[58]

Lesson # 30. Ownership is improved when demonstration projects and other interventions are designed by implementing partner institutions, with minimal external consultancy support. In such cases, project formulation processes though time-consuming, strengthen institutional capacity and ownership, improving the likelihood of sustainability beyond the project term.[59]

Lesson # 31. Transboundary projects requiring the participation and commitment of several governments and national institutions benefit from a strategy that allows the stakeholders to work together in a participatory and flexible way to enhance their ownership and maintain synergies.[60]

Lesson # 32. Learning-by-doing capacity building and demonstration approaches result in greater ownership and impact; this can be achieved through involving staff (e.g. field extension officers, local government staff, etc.) in direct implementation and as a result the increased capacity can be translated into day-to-day work with a stronger sense of ownership.[61]

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57 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-GEF project GFL/QGL-2328-2760-4880 "Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea – GEF 1248, February 2013.*
58 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GF/1030-04-02 (4773) ECORA - An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic GEF ID 413, September 2012.*
59 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-GEF project GFL/QGL-2328-2760-4880 "Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea – GEF 1248, February 2013.*
60 *Terminal Evaluation of project NFL-5066-2668-2632-220100 Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation Initiative, 2013.*
61 *Terminal Evaluation of project CP/4040-08-06 Climate Change and Development Adapting by Reducing Vulnerability (CC DARE), April 2013.*

> **Lesson # 33.** *A single prescriptive approach to multi-country projects does not in practice succeed in fully achieving set objectives; an additional emphasis on understanding and addressing country level variations is critical to enhance country-level ownership of the project. Such country level variations and interests have to be properly captured in the project design and implementation, and strategies should be developed accordingly to enhance country ownership and driven-ness.[62]*

Stakeholder Participation and Public Awareness

287.   The evaluations assessed stakeholder involvement by examining consultation processes, information dissemination efforts, and stakeholder participation in the actual execution of project activities. Success in stakeholder involvement was influenced by the identification of lead partners (during the project design phase) based on a number of criteria including: presence in on-going programmes in the relevant countries/regions; relevance of mandate, goals and on-going programmes/activities; experience in the project sites; technical/ scientific capabilities; and availability of relevant data and information. An effective mix of partners enables valuable contributions towards different project aspects and enhances the achievement of outcomes.

Of the projects evaluated in the biennium 2012–2013 (refer to Annex 1), 56% were rated 'Satisfactory' or higher for their performance in stakeholder involvement, including information dissemination, consultation and active engagement between stakeholders in project decision-making and activities. As shown in Figure 23 below, over 90% of the projects under each sub-programme (with the exception of Resource Efficiency) achieved ratings in the satisfactory range. The proportion of projects rated MS is much higher for GEF-funded projects but the proportion of projects in the unsatisfactory range is larger for non-GEF-funded projects (see Figure 24)

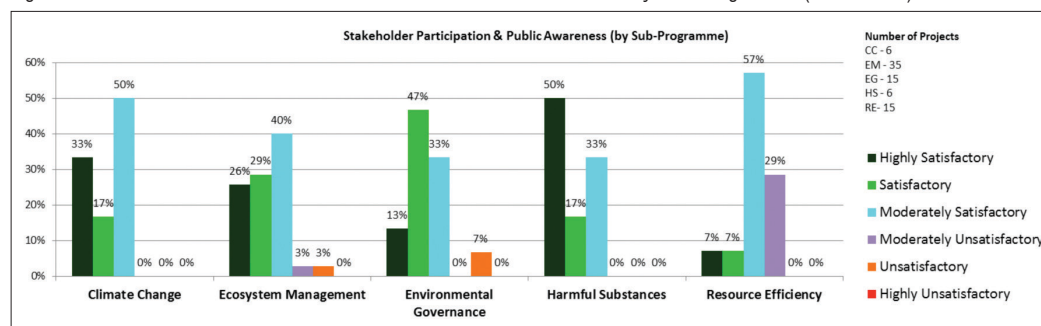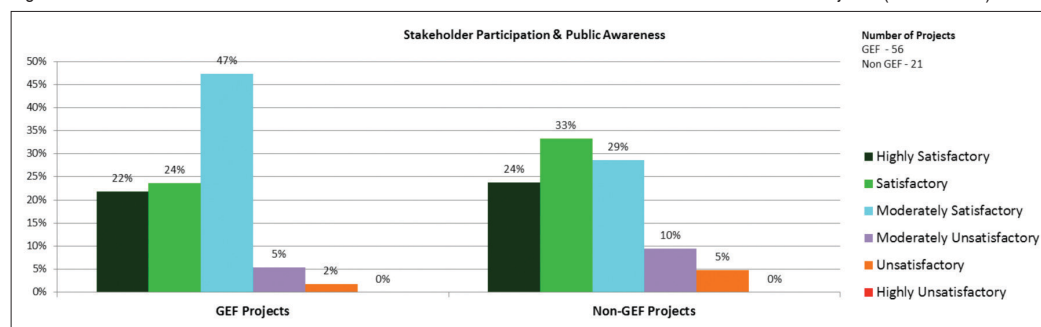Figure 23: Assessment of Stakeholder Involvement and Public Awareness by Sub-Programme (2010–2013)

Figure 24: Assessment of Stakeholder Involvement and Public Awareness in GEF and Non-GEF Projects (2010–2013)

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62 *Terminal Evaluation of project NFL-5066-2668-2632-220100 Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation Initiative, 2013.*

288. Although countries differed in the extent to which stakeholders were involved in various projects, the most successful instances of stakeholder participation (projects rated HS for this criterion) tended to have a large variety of institutions and community groups involved directly in the project activities. The Project Document identified and outlined the engagement of a wide range of target groups including public involvement, stakeholder identification and support, and linkages with other projects.

289. Projects that conducted fact-finding missions and inception workshops to engage a wide range of stakeholders at the conceptualisation and inception phases generated greater awareness and interest in the respective project interventions. During implementation different mechanisms were utilized by projects to ensure adequate involvement of stakeholders, including: participatory meetings and workshops, webinars, websites and other IT platforms, training sessions, field demonstrations, field monitoring and sampling, print and electronic media including illustrated comics and cartoons, participatory analyses and discussions, extension services, and informal discussions with community members.

290. Some of the barriers to stakeholder involvement identified included: failure to integrate a clear strategy for stakeholder identification and involvement at project design phase; engaging a rather narrow group of stakeholders; failure to connect with community-based and civil society organisations in a meaningful way; project teams communicating to stakeholders in a unidirectional way - as opposed to promoting a two-way flow of information; low demand for project outputs due to their discordancy with immediate country needs; low baseline awareness on the project intervention benefits; low capacity (technical, financial, institutional, regulatory, etc.) to allow for active participation by stakeholders; failure by projects teams to prioritise communication and information dissemination activities; and failure to adopt different mechanisms for reaching out to diverse categories of stakeholders.

> *Lesson # 34.* *Broad stakeholder participation and consultation processes applied at the national level - though cumbersome - pay off in terms of project relevance and coherence with national needs and priorities.[63]*
>
> *Lesson # 35.* *Identifying 'champions' among the different groups of stakeholders not only contributes to successful project implementation but also facilitates progress towards the desired Impact in the post-project period.[64]*
>
> *Lesson # 36.* *Engagement with local/indigenous communities at pilot sites is a complex process that can benefit from project collaboration with civil society organizations already present in the area, or with relevant experience. It also requires a strong presence and time commitment in order to build relationships and trust, and to be successful in explaining new and multifaceted issues.[65]*
>
> *Lesson # 37.* *Public awareness products and methods with a wider reach (such as showing films, disseminating illustrated booklets and brochures, cooperation with extension officers, local NGOs and local authorities, etc.) produce quicker impact than specific scientific papers published in peer-reviewed journals and/or scientific monographs.[66]*

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63 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-GEF project GFL/QGL-2328-2760-4880 "Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea – GEF 1248, February 2013.*
64 *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project "Coastal Resilience to Climate Change: Developing a Generalizable Method for Assessing Vulnerability and Adaptation of Mangroves and Associated Ecosystems", June 2013.*
65 *Mid-Term Evaluation of the project GFL/2328-2780-4B34 Pro Eco Serv (Project for Ecosystem Services) GEF Id. 3807 By Ms. Camille Bann (Consultant), August 2013.*
66 *Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/1030-02-05 (4517) Conservation and Sustainable Management of Below Ground Biodiversity, Phase II, July 2013.*

Financial Planning and Management

291.   Evaluations assessed the quality and effectiveness of the planning and control of financial resources. This includes the consideration of: variances in project budget and expenditures; the extent of co-financing/leveraged resources and their effect on project performance; disbursement issues; timeliness of financial reporting; variances between budgeted amounts and actual expenditures; and the effectiveness of administrative processes.

292.   Financial management and reporting are essential elements of good and effective project management. However, only half the projects evaluated in the biennium 2012–2013 were rated S or better (see Figure 22). A comparison of performance between GEF and non-GEF-funded projects for this criterion shows a larger proportion of projects with high quality financial planning and management among the UNEP/GEF projects.

293.   Figure 26 shows that the highest percentage of projects rated S or above belonged to the Harmful Substances Sub-programme (83%), while the lowest proportion of projects performing well on this criterion belonged to the Resource Efficiency Sub-programme, with just 41% achieving a rating of S or above and up to 30% of projects rated MU or below for financial planning and management.

294.   While a significant number of projects did experience varying levels of delay in the disbursement of funds, projects that were rated HS or S for this criterion generally applied appropriate standards of due diligence; financial reports were adequate, transparent, submitted on time and in the required formats; budgets were well-designed; progress reports were accompanied by financial status updates; and procurement was done according to accepted standards. Co-financing was more successful where funding was need-driven and proportionate to the country's capacity to co-finance. Other factors that favoured financial planning and management included the assimilation of formal agreements based on standard UNEP/GEF financial procedures and the capacity of the project teams to observe the guidelines in these agreements.

Figure 25: Assessment of Project Performance in Financial Planning and Management (GEF and Non-GEF Projects)
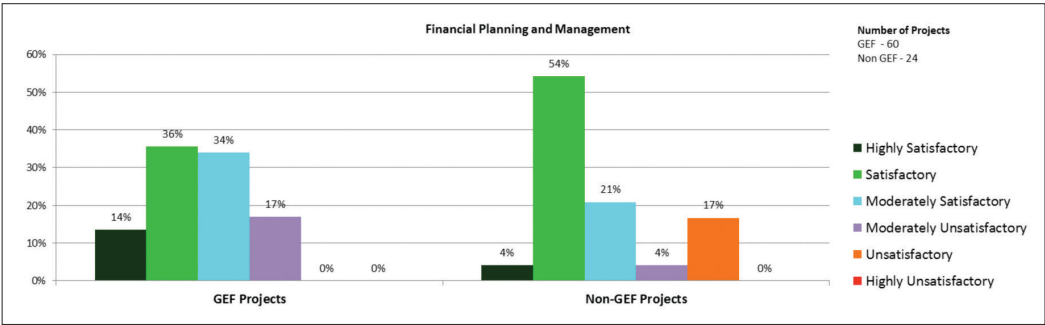
295.   Projects that scored poorly in this parameter tended not to routinely apply standard operating procedures as evidenced by the challenges often faced by evaluators in obtaining current financial reports for review.

296.   In the case of the project *"Combatting Living Resource Depletion and Coastal Area Degradation in the Guinea Current LME Through Ecosystem-Based Regional Actions (GCLME)"*[67] major challenges

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67 *Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/6030-04-12 (4809) Combatting Living Resource Depletion and Coastal Area Degradation in the Guinea Current LME Through Ecosystem-Based Regional Actions, November 2012.*

Figure 26: Assessment of Financial Planning by Sub-Programme
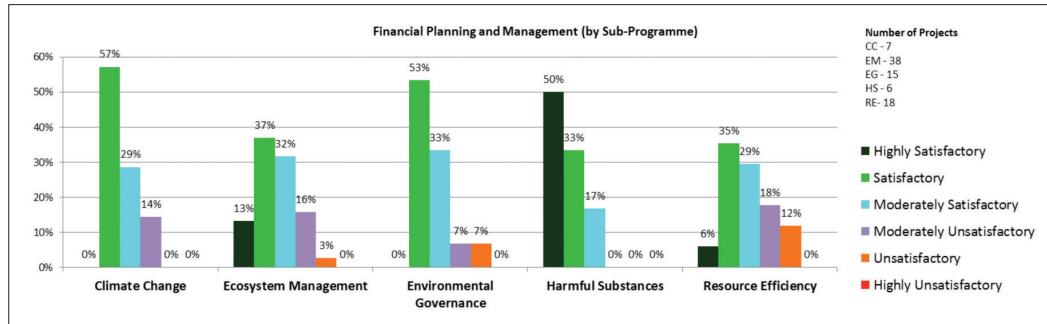
in financial management were reported including: irregular procurement transactions; inappropriate use of project resources for non-official/personal purposes; lack of disclosure of familial relationships during recruitment; and weak reporting on finances. When this was brought to light after the first few years of project implementation, appropriate action (involving OIOS) was taken by the executing agency (UNIDO) to eliminate the possibility of any further irregularities. Other common challenges faced by projects in financial management have included delays in project payments that at times strained relationships amongst project partners; fluctuations in local exchange rates to the US Dollar; and increasing inflation following project approval necessitating revisions to the original budget in some countries.

297. Some of the difficulties in mobilizing co-finance identified through the evaluations included: a lack of visibility of the project at national and ministerial level; lengthy delays between project approval and project start; lack of direct funding from projects to help leverage co-financing; difficulties in mobilizing co-finance at the start and close of the project due to budget cycles; shortfalls in resources; and inadequate in-kind contributions from national institutions.

298. Complications in finding an interface between different financing systems in multi-agency projects also presented a challenge as was the case in the projects *"Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land-Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (COAST)"*[68] and *"Combatting Living Resource Depletion and Coastal Area Degradation in the Guinea Current LME Through Ecosystem-Based Regional Actions (GCLME)"*[69] where UNEP was the GEF implementing agency and UNIDO executed the projects; a number of inconveniences and delays arose from differences in financial reporting formats and systems.

299. Overall, lack of readily available financial data was a recurring limitation in the conduct of evaluations, financial data often being unavailable in a form that would facilitate evidence-based assessments on projects' financial management.

> **Lesson # 38.** *Problems associated with mobilising co-finance are minimised by maintaining dialogue between focal points and future partners regarding programming of co-finance, and by systematically tracking contributions so that any issues can be identified and managed at an early stage.**
>
> **Lesson # 39.** *Letters of commitment on co-financing from the participating Government(s) and other project partners need to be renewed at the inception phase especially when there is an extended period (e.g. more than two years) between approval and the effective start of project implementation'.†*

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68 † *Mid-Term Evaluation of project GF/4010-07-06 (4987) GFL/2328-2732-4987 "Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land-Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (short title: COAST)" April 2012.*

69 * *Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/6030-04-12 (4809) Combatting Living Resource Depletion and Coastal Area Degradation in the Guinea Current LME Through Ecosystem-Based Regional Actions, (GCLME)November 2012.*

> ***Lesson # 40.*** *Budgets need to be based on reality and not optimism; during the development of the project budget it is important to work with national Focal Points to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the nature of funding available for staff remuneration in order to manage expectations from the outset of the project and, where appropriate, in order to be in harmony with other development partners' practices.†*
>
> ***Lesson # 41.*** *Working with local/indigenous communities on new and complex issues is challenging and requires a strong presence and time commitment in order to build relationships and trust. Such considerations should be reflected in budget allocations at the design stage even where budgets are limited.[70]*

Monitoring and Evaluation

300.   The evaluations assessed the quality of the design, budgeting and implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems of projects. Monitoring was time and again found to be one of the weaker aspects of project design, with about 36% of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range over the period 2010–2013, even though there appears to be a gradual improvement over the last four years, with 73% of projects evaluated in 2013 rated MS or better, up from 55% of projects in 2010 (see Figure 27).

Figure 27: Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation by Year (2010–2013)
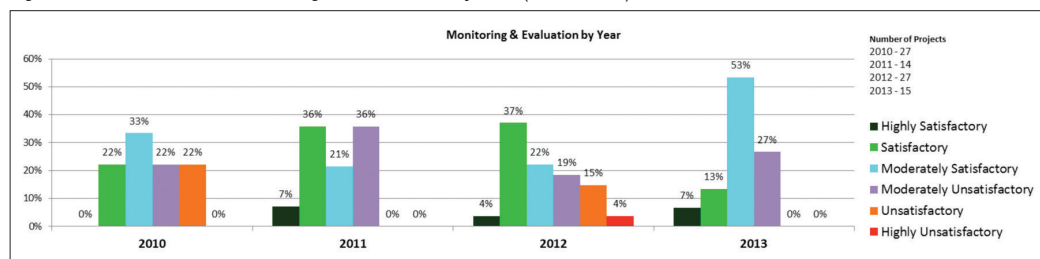
301.   Among the M&E sub-criteria, the weakest was 'M&E Design' with only 26% of projects evaluated in 2012–2013 achieving a rating of S or higher, and up to 41% of projects assessed being in the unsatisfactory range (MU to HU). The sub-criteria 'M&E Implementation' and 'M&E Budgeting and Funding' were rated S or higher in 36% and 39% of the projects evaluated in 2012–2013 respectively (refer to Figure 28).

Figure 28: Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Criteria (2012–2013)
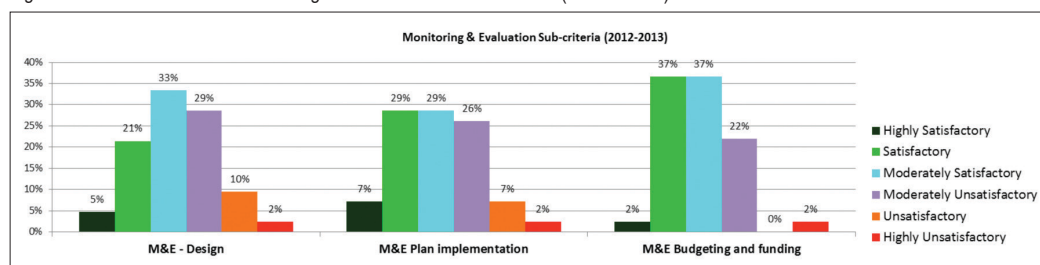
302.   As shown in Figure 29 below, GEF-funded projects more frequently performed better against the overall M&E criterion, with 34% of projects awarded a rating of S or better as compared to non-GEF-funded projects of which 25% achieved a similar rating. However, the percentage of projects in the unsatisfactory range (MU-HU) was the almost same for

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70 *Mid-Term Evaluation of the project GFL/2328-2780-4B34 Pro Eco Serv (Project for Ecosystem Services) GEF Id. 3807, August 2013.*

both GEF and Non-GEF projects with 37% and 38% respectively. This may be due to the requirement for GEF projects to submit a costed M&E plan as part of the documentation for project approval.

Figure 29: Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in GEF and Non-GEF Projects (2012–2013)
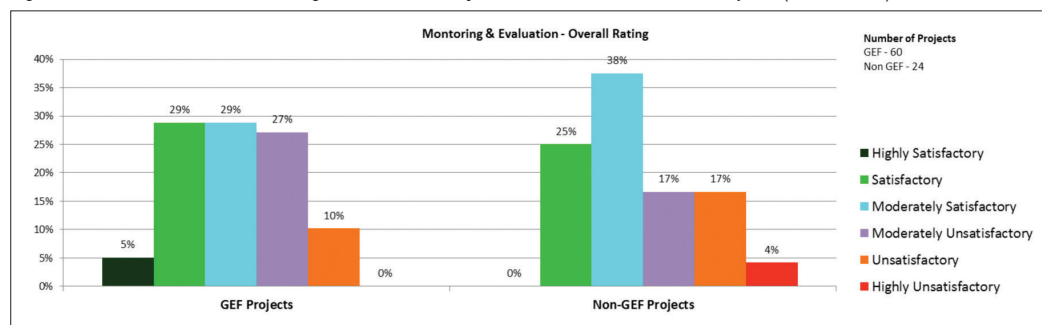
303.   Good M&E systems were overall appropriate and comprehensive; had sufficiently SMART[71] indicators for each expected outcome, with adequate baseline information for tracking milestones; offered sufficient plans and tools for effective monitoring and means of verifying indicators; included detailed roles of its constituent parts, committees, individuals and/or organizations, as well as the various oversight activities, reports and schedules; and allocated sufficient funds for the purpose of project monitoring and evaluation. Such was the case in the project *"Global Market Transformation for Efficient Lighting Project"*[72] which obtained a HS rating in each of the M&E sub-criteria assessed.

304.   In other cases, project documents did not include a detailed monitoring plan and monitoring provisions were not as well developed as the other aspects of project design. A common oversight in project documents was the absence of sufficient, discrete budget lines for monitoring activities and external evaluations (sometimes even where these were scheduled in the work plan), resulting in project monitoring and evaluation being undertaken with limited resources. In some projects the M&E design focused mainly on outputs rather than on outcomes, and in so doing failed to give a comprehensive operational direction; the performance indicators, although useful to measure separate outputs, were sometimes found to be fragmented and not conducive to effective outcome-oriented (i.e. results-based) management.

305.   In the project *"Enhancing Renewable Energy Technology Deployment in Brazil, China and South Africa (EIRET)"*[73] for example, certain problems might have been avoided if more rigorous monitoring had been in place. The demand for more South-South cooperation for instance, could have been identified and adequately addressed through better monitoring. This may have revealed implementation difficulties and measures for improvement could have been taken during project implementation.

306.   An analysis of the projects that were awarded ratings in the unsatisfactory range (MU-HU) in overall M&E shows that they generally also performed poorly against the following evaluation criteria: project design, overall sustainability of project outcomes, efficiency and likelihood of

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71 *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound*
72 *Mid-Term Evaluation of the project GFL-2328-2720-4FE1 Global Market Transformation for Efficient Lighting Project (en.lighten initiative). GEF Id 3457, 2013.*
73 *Terminal Evaluation of project CP/4040-09-02 (3743) - Enhancing for Renewable Energy Technology Deployment in Brazil, China and South Africa (EIRET), March 2012.*

impact achievement. This is indicates that a robust M&E system with "SMART" objectives and indicators can play an important role in fostering Results Based Management and in promoting sustainability.

307.   Despite the aforementioned shortcomings in the M&E systems of a majority of the projects assessed, internal monitoring mechanisms usually included periodic reports to Project Steering Committees, in the form of as Progress Reports, financial expenditure reports, Project Implementation Reviews (PIR), as well as mission reports and workshop reports.

> *Lesson # 42. Establishing a direct link between monitoring and evaluation elements such as planning, systematization exercises, and the periodic, midterm and final evaluations helps in the analysis of project data as a continuous reflection by project personnel on results generated by the M&E system is necessary to correct problems before they become too complicated to manage.[74]*
>
> *Lesson # 43. It is essential to collect baseline information related to all planned project outcomes and to include a formative evaluation into the M&E budget.[75]*
>
> *Lesson # 44. Monitoring and evaluation can take several forms, however it is essential that provisions are made for projects to also obtain feedback , not just on project performance but also on the extent to which stakeholders (and where feasible the wider public too) are receiving "the message" and how that message is making a difference in their lives.[76]*
>
> *Lesson # 45. Projects that are small in size but involve worldwide stakeholders require a certain rigour in ensuring that they are executed as planned, following closely the activities outlined in the logical framework and work plans. Apart from those involved in project management, it is beneficial to have the project reviewed by experts who are not involved in its day-to-day execution but serve as catalysts to enhance the execution process by monitoring progress and advising, when necessary, on implementation problems and/or desirable modifications necessary in the work plan.[77]*
>
> *Lesson # 46. Targets are useful instruments in development planning and management generally, but they must be applied wisely or they may divert attention from more essential development objectives. Example, a simple target such as the percentage of territory under protected area status in a complex biodiversity conservation project for instance, can be somewhat misleading because it can distract attention from more relevant qualitative objectives.[78]*

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74   *Terminal Evaluation of the Project GF/1030-05-03 (4900) "Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Páramo in the Northern and Central Andes" GFL-2328-2714-4900, June 2012.*

75   *Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project GF/3010-05-04 (4842) "Strengthening the Network of Training Centers for Protected Area Management through Demonstration of a Tested Approach" Zapovednics, October 2012.*

76   *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/6030-05-01 GFL/2324-2731-4834 Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWCAM), May 2012.*

77   *Terminal Evaluation of project GF/4040-04-10 (4767) Development of Strategic Market Intervention Approach for Grid-Connected Solar Energy Technologies (EMPower), January 2013.*

78   *Mid-Term Evaluation of project (3729) Building a Sustainable   National Marine Protected Area Network - The Bahamas, September 2012.*

IV. Compliance with evaluation recommendations

A.   Summary of the recommendation compliance procedure

308.   Following the completion of an evaluation, an implementation plan in response to the recommendations must be prepared. The responsible officer has one month to submit the proposed implementation plan from the date of receipt of the final evaluation report from the Evaluation Office.

309.   The implementation plan should specify the following: whether a recommendation has been accepted, how the recommendation will be implemented, who is responsible for its implementation, the date by which the implementation of the recommendation is expected to be completed, and what actions have already been taken (if any). When a recommendation is rejected by the project/programme management, an explanation must be provided as to why the recommendation cannot be implemented and, where appropriate, an alternative course of action should be specified.

310.   If an implementation plan has not been received by the Evaluation Office within one month, this is recorded as <u>not compliant</u> in the Evaluation Office database (see below). After the implementation plan has been completed, the Evaluation Office will follow-up with the substantive office on the status of implementation of the recommendations at six month intervals. The Evaluation Office reports on the levels of compliance to the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director. This is done in September and March every year.

311.   At each assessment point, the progress in the implementation of the recommendations, as recorded by the responsible staff in updates to the implementation plan, is assessed. On the basis of the evidence provided in the implementation plan progress updates, recommendations are deemed to be:
  •   Fully implemented (compliant),
  •   Partially implemented (partially compliant),
  •   Not implemented (not compliant).
  •   No further action required (if events overtake what is planned)

312.   When a recommendation has been fully implemented, it will be recorded as such and 'closed' - no further follow-up is required. All other recommendations will remain 'open'. At the third assessment point (i.e. 18 months after the first assessment point), all recommendations will automatically be recorded as 'closed'. The status of implementation of the recommendation will also be reviewed and recorded at this time and no further changes will be made. If the Evaluation Office does not receive an updated implementation plan prior to the compliance assessment process, any remaining recommendations are 'closed' with the level of compliance recorded in the previous assessment. Any recommendations from mid-term evaluations that were not fully implemented after three assessment points will be considered in the terminal evaluation of the project/programme and incorporated into the terms of reference.

B.   Overview of compliance with Sub-programme and project evaluations 2008–2013

Cumulative Compliance Status (2008–2013)

313.   Between 2008 and 2013, the Evaluation Office has completed a combined total of 134 projects/ sub-programme evaluations. These evaluations resulted in 759 recommendations. Eighty-four (63 per cent) were evaluations of GEF funded projects, 47 (35 per cent) of non-GEF funded projects while 3 were organization-wide evaluations. Of the 759 recommendations issued, 475 (63 per cent) were issued from the evaluations of GEF funded projects, 222 (29 per cent) from non-GEF projects and 62 (8 per cent) from organization-wide strategic evaluations. Figure 30 below shows the distribution of evaluation recommendations issued with regards to GEF, Non-GEF and organization-wide recommendations.

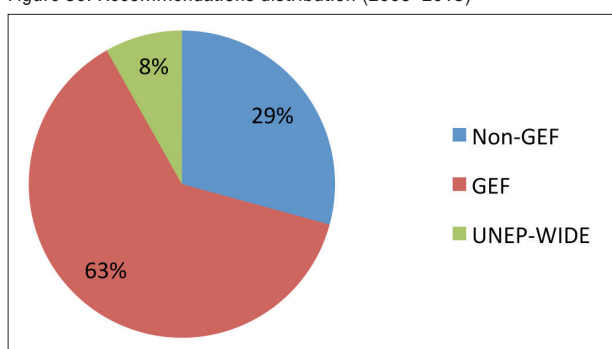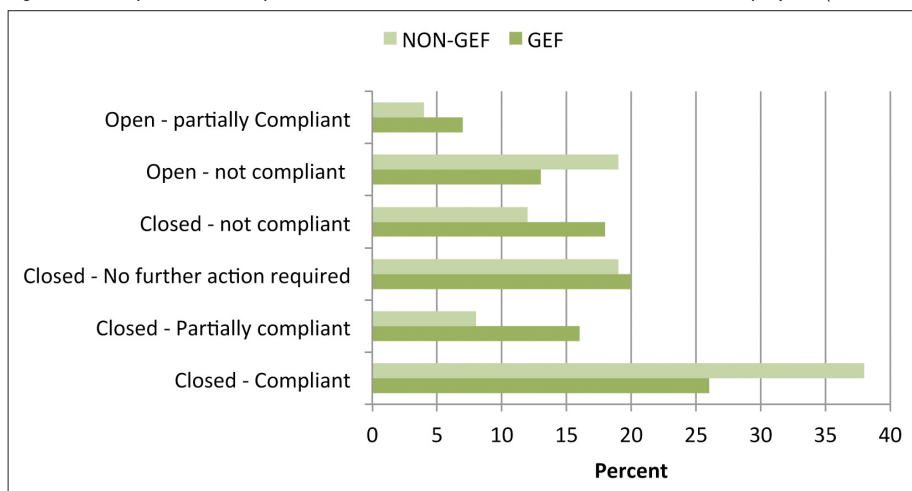Figure 30: Recommendations distribution (2008–2013)

Figure 31: Comparison of compliance status between GEF-Funded and NON-GEF funded projects (2008–2013)

314.   Overall, two hundred and twenty eight (30%) of the recommendations were fully implemented. This is an improvement from the 21% rate in the 2006–2011 period, reported in the last biennium. Ninety-eight (13%) recommendations were partially compliant and no further action was required for one hundred and twenty nine (17%) recommendations, either because they were rejected with adequate justifications, or because they were outside of UNEP's purview. 119 (16%) recommendations were not implemented (not compliant) and 185 are still open and yet to be implemented. The figure 32 below shows the total number of recommendations issued in a year and their status of implementation.

Figure 32: Status of evaluation recommendations by year of issuance (2008–2013).
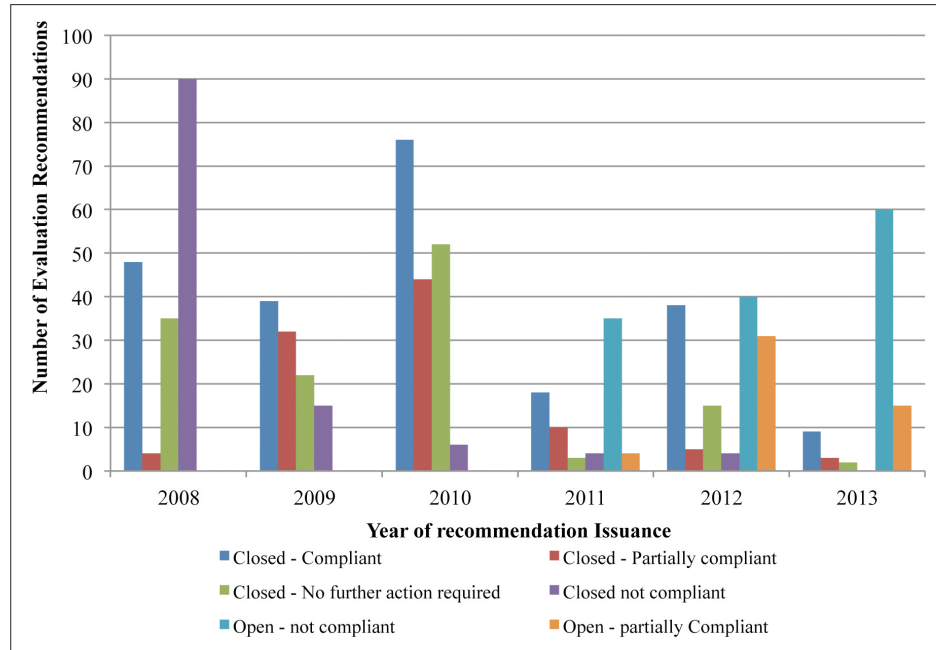
Biennium Compliance Status (2012–2013)

315. In the biennium 2012–2013 (up to November 2013), a combined total of 48 projects, sub-programmes and corporate evaluations were completed. Eight of the 48 evaluations did not result in recommendations.

316. Forty-three (43) recommendation implementation plans were sent to UNEP substantive offices. These included 3 implementation plans for projects carried forward from the previous biennium as they were completed after the cut-off date of September 2011 for the 2010–2011 Biennium Synthesis report and 40 implementation plans for projects, sub-programmes and special studies completed in 2012–2013 biennium. Thirty (70%) implementation plans were completed and returned to the Evaluation Office while 13 (30%) failed to complete an implementation plan in the prescribed time. Tabl4 below shows implementation plans of evaluation recommmendations issued by divisions.

Table 4. Implementation Plans of Evaluation Recommendations Issued (2012–2013)

Division	No. sent	No. returned	No. not returned
DELC	1	1	0
DEPI	25	20	5
DEWA	2	2	0
DRC	3	2	1
DTIE	9	5	4
UNEP-WIDE	3	0	3
Total	43	30	13

317. Two hundred and seventy (270) recommendations were issued in the biennium. Responses were received for 142 recommendations; 107 (75%) of the recommendations were accepted, 21 (15%) were rejected and 14 (9%) were partially accepted. Evaluation Office reviews reasons

for which recommendations have been rejected and determines whether the recommendation is closed with no further action required or Evaluation Office provides suggestions on how the recommendation could be implemented either partially or fully. Responses for 128 (47%) recommendations had not been received as of November 2013. These were mainly from the evaluations completed in the last three months of the reporting period.

Figure 33: Acceptance of evaluation recommendations
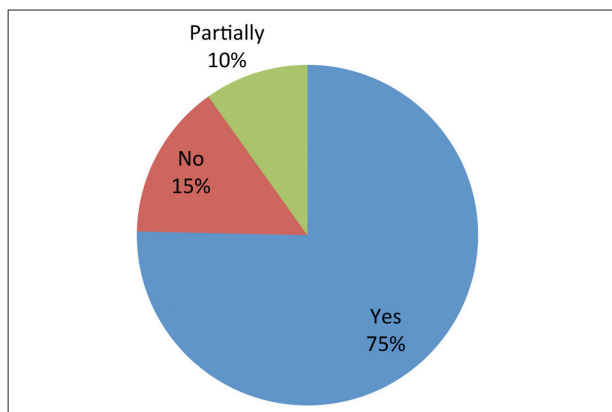
318. Forty-five (32%) out of 142 recommendations received from the UNEP substantive offices were fully implemented (compliant) while 12 (8%) were partially implemented. Eighteen (13%) of the recommendations were closed with 'no further action required' and eight (6%) were closed as not compliant. Fifty-nine (42%) were open and not compliant or partially compliant.

Figure 34: Biennium 2012–2013 implementation status
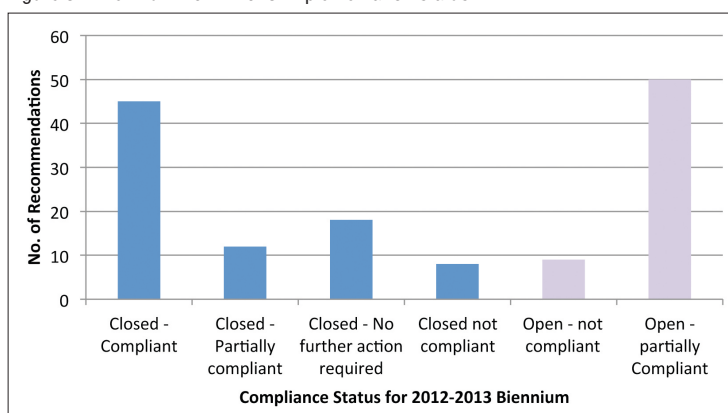
319. Overall, recommendations compliance (i.e. in terms of programme/project/project managers completing the required implementations) for the biennium improved from 27% of the previous biennium to 32%. Implementation plans for evaluation recommendations for all the evaluations completed were sent to UNEP substantive offices. A management response rate of 75% was recorded. This response rate need to improve.

Compliance Status by Divisions

320. The graphs below show compliance status of evaluation recommendations issued between 2008 and 2013 by division. The compliance over time for these recommendations is shown in annual cohorts, according to the year in which they were issued. No bars for a given year

(for example DEWA in 2009 and 2011) means that no recommendations were issued in that year as no evaluations were conducted in that division. The compliance status for DGEF was not included in the analysis following the restructuring of the division in 2010. These are included under the divisions in which they are implemented. In general the graphs show that two Divisions, DTIE and DEPI, have been the most active in terms of the number of evaluations conducted and in their responses to evaluation recommendations. In general, compliance rates have shown improvement. However one in four project officers are failing to submit completed evaluation recommendation implementation plans.

Figure 35: DEPI – Compliance with evaluation recommendations 2008–2013
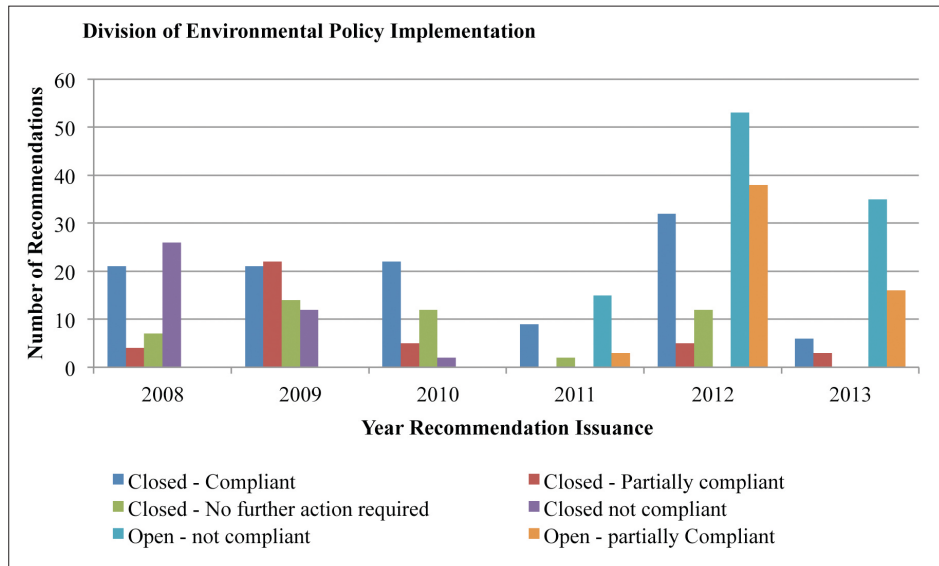
Figure 36: DTIE – Compliance with evaluation recommendations 2008–2013
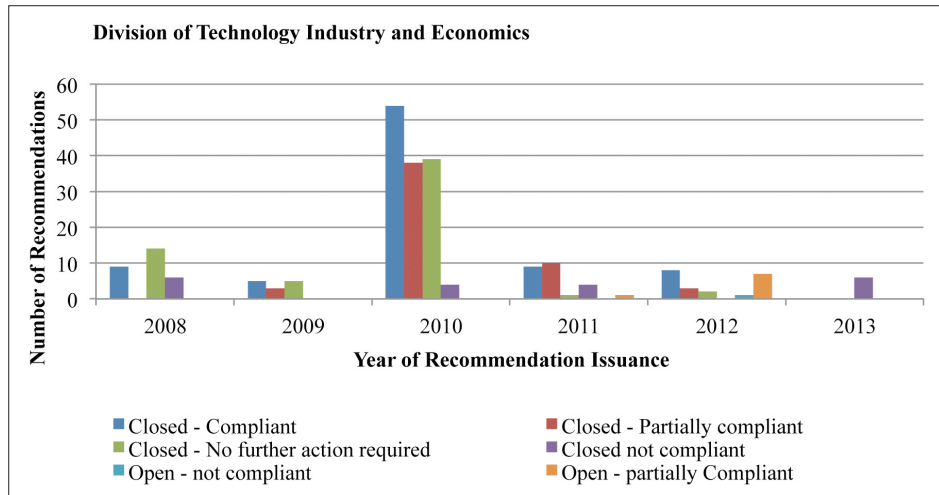
Figure 37: DEWA - Compliance with evaluation recommendations 2008–2013
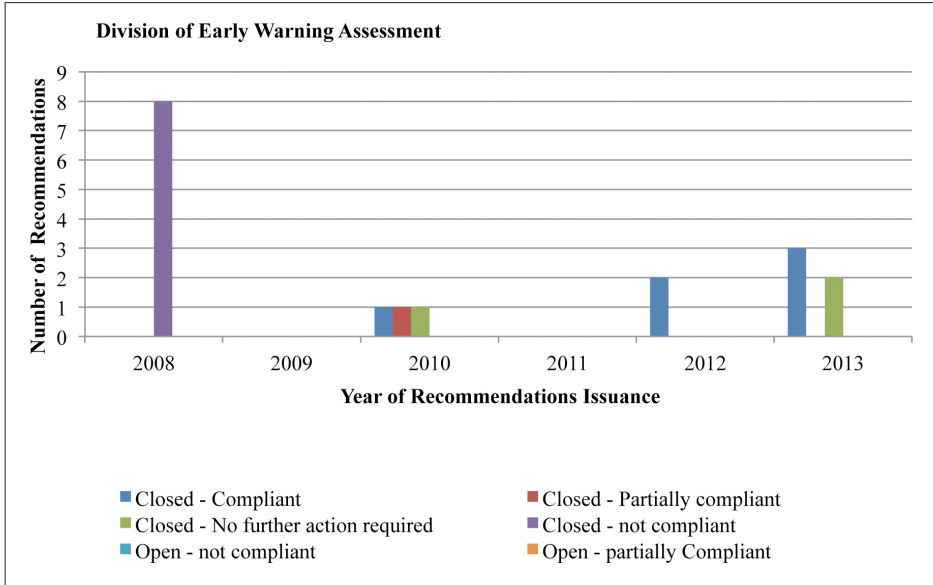
Figure 38: DELC - Compliance with evaluation recommendations 2008–2013
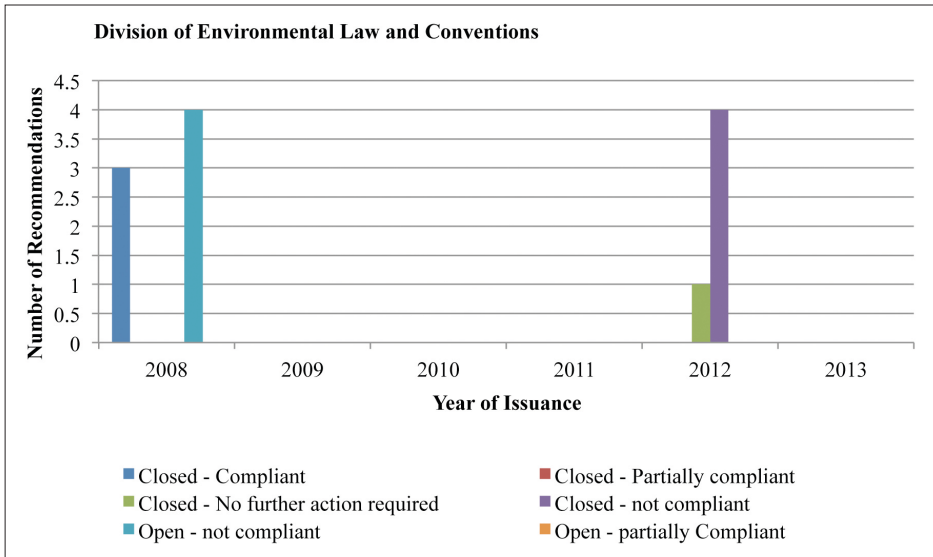
Figure 39: DRC - Compliance with evaluation recommendations 2008–2013

Division of Regional Cooperation

Number of Recommendations

Year of Recommendation Issuance

■Closed - Compliant   ■Closed - Partially compliant
■Closed - No further action required   ■Closed - not compliant
■Open - not compliant   ■Open - partially Compliant
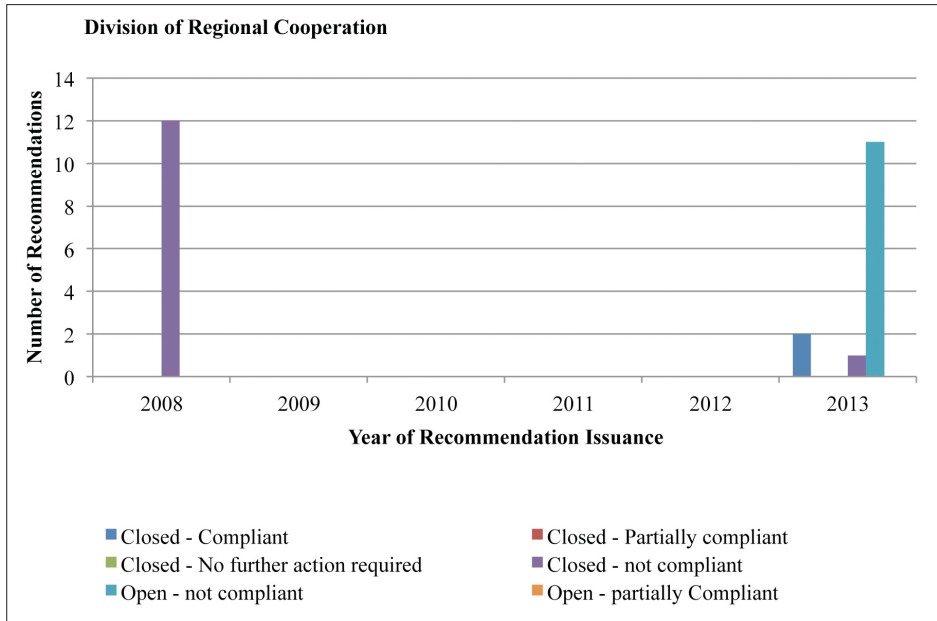
V. Performance of the UNEP Evaluation Office and evaluation quality

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

A. United Nations Evaluation Group - Professional Peer Review[79]

322. Current best practice for evaluation functions within the United Nations advocates for independent professional peer reviews. UNEP Evaluation Office was the subject of a professional peer review undertaken in 2011, with the findings being finalized and presented to the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives and formally released by UNEG in March 2012. The purpose of the Professional Peer Review was to provide an independent assessment of the functioning and quality of the UNEP evaluation function. More specifically, the peer review served to; enhance knowledge about, confidence in and use of evaluations by governing bodies and senior management of UNEP, provide suggestions and recommendations to improve evaluation policy and practice, build internal capacities and confidence of the evaluation function and support the office in its efforts to ensure greater acceptance and use of evaluation findings in the performance management system of the organization. The peer review was conducted in line with the UNEG Framework for Professional Reviews of the Evaluation Function of UN Organizations, also approved by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Evaluation Network.

323. In line with the framework, the peer review applied three core criteria that need to be satisfied for evaluation functions and products to be considered of high quality, i.e., independence, credibility and utility. The peer review panel consisted of: The Director, Evaluation Group, UNIDO, (Chair); the Special Evaluator for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium; and the Senior Evaluation Adviser, Evaluation Office, United Nations Development Programme. The following text has been extracted from the full report.

Overall conclusions of the Professional Peer Panel

324. UNEP follows the UNEG Norms and Standards in evaluation. The evaluation function is independent, well established and evaluation has, in recent years, been growing in importance. The Evaluation Office is a professionally managed function and, although human resources seem insufficient to deal with the high demand for its services and to carry out mandatory

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79   http://www.oecd.org/derec/50194754.pdf

project as well as strategic evaluations, the peer review panel recognizes the efforts made in the last few years to strengthen the office. The fact that the Executive Director is using evaluation compliance statistics in performance assessment of division directors is a good indicator of the perceived independence, credibility and of actual usage.

Independence

325.   There is adequate separation between the planning, monitoring and evaluation functions and a system is in place to ensure the absence of conflict of interest and adherence to evaluation standards and ethics. Evaluations are conducted in an independent manner and the Evaluation Office reports on evaluation findings without interference. Independence could, however, be strengthened through more regular and systematic reporting to governing bodies, as envisaged in the Evaluation Policy.

Credibility

326.   The Evaluation Office enjoys a high level of credibility, mainly due to the professionalism of its staff, the rigour of the evaluation process and the quality of its evaluations. Independent, external evaluators conduct most evaluations. Evaluation consultants are generally perceived as being independent and impartial. No case of conflict of interest was found.

327.   Evaluations were generally found to be of high quality and a quality assurance system is in place both for evaluators and evaluation reports. However, the relatively small budgets available for project evaluations, a limited involvement of partner governments and a restricted call on national consultants, cause concern as regards the robustness of some evaluations. This said, evaluations rated by the peer review team and, over the years by GEF, consistently received good ratings. Methodologies used for planning as well as conducting evaluations are solid and often innovative. The methodological development is not only benefiting UNEP but also the larger UN community. Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToRs) are exhaustive and provide detailed guidance to evaluators.

Utility

328.   Evaluations are considered as useful by UNEP managers and staff and are used for accountability, performance appraisal and learning purposes. Findings often feed into the formulation of new phases or projects/programmes but less so to policy making or overall strategy formulation. Evaluations mainly assess technical issues and achievements of outcomes but there is very little attention to cross-cutting issues such as gender.

329.   The bulk of evaluations undertaken are terminal project evaluation and there is less scope for higher level strategic evaluations or evaluations of the linkage between UNEP's normative work and its link to technical cooperation. There has, however, been a move 'upstream' with the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) evaluations and the presently conducted evaluations of subprogrammes. The peer review panel endorses the focus on terminal evaluations but recognizes that this limits the possibility to identify and address weaknesses during project implementation.

330.   The present capacity constraints limit the usefulness of the Evaluation Office and this constraint is expected to increase with a growing UNEP, including GEF, project portfolio. The panel finds that the workload, the budget and the human resource base are not balanced. The panel, moreover, identified a need to strengthen the linkage between evaluation and

UNEP's Normative Work. The Biennial Evaluation Synthesis report is of good quality but the content not generally known within the organization.

331. A system for following up on recommendations is in place and functioning although there is limited ownership on behalf of the entity responsible for the evaluated programme/project/policy. UNEP has developed cutting-edge methodologies for analysing, categorizing and disseminating lessons learned but, unfortunately, activities in this area have not been conducted during the last few years. Senior management in UNEP could make a better use of the Evaluation Office's professional capacity by more focus on policy-level evaluation. The Evaluation Office contributes to enhancing the practice of evaluation in the UN system. The utility to Member States is not fully optimized as there are limited opportunities for the Evaluation Office to exchange with governing bodies.

B.   The OIOS Evaluation Scorecard of UNEP Evaluation Office

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

333. The Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations Secretariat (OIOS) conducted an assessment of evaluation capacity and practice for every entity in the Secretariat during 2013 using baseline information from 2010–2011 biennium. The 'evaluation scorecards' include an independent evaluation conducted by the Inspection and Evaluation Division in OIOS based on 15 indicators of evaluation practice. The indicators used are based on the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and supported by Member States in General Assembly resolution 67/226.

334. UNEP scored well against nearly all assessment criteria and sub-optimal scores were largely due to methodological weaknesses which were highlighted and communicated to OIOS on several occasions. The concluding remark from the OIOS Scorecard assessment of UNEP's evaluation function made in November 2013 was: "*UNEP has a robust evaluation function, with strong staff competencies, good procedures and adequate resources. It has achieved strong independence, with direct reporting of the head of evaluation to the Executive Director.*"

C.   GEF Independent Evaluation Office assessment of the quality of UNEP Evaluation Reports

335. Each year the independent GEF Independent Evaluation Office assesses the performance of GEF Implementing Agencies against a number of performance measures. This is reported in the GEF Annual Performance Report. Several of the performance measures cover important aspects of the performance of UNEP's Evaluation Office, benchmarked against the performance of the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group and UNDP's Evaluation Office. At the end of each GEF replenishment period an in-depth Overall Performance Study (OPS) is also conducted. In April 2013, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office published its usual Annual Performance Report 2012 (APR).

336. The performance of UNEP's Evaluation Office within the GEF compares very favourably against the World Bank and UNDP. For example, 100% of the UNEP Terminal Evaluations submitted in for FY 2012 were rated by the GEF Evaluation Office as 'moderately satisfactory' or better for quality. Across the entire period for which the quality of GEF evaluations has been formally assessed (since 2004), UNEP has achieved a higher proportion of evaluation reports rated as 'satisfactory' or above than any other GEF implementing agency (Table 5).

Table 5. GEF Independent Evaluation Office's analysis of the quality of GEF project evaluation reports submitted by the GEF Implementing Agencies (World Bank, UNDP and UNEP).

	Year of TE Completion									
Criteria	2004 & earlier	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	All Cohorts
Percentage of terminal evaluation reports rated Moderately Satisfactory or above for quality										
All projects	72%	89%	87%	90%	91%	93%	85%	82%	86%	86%
Full-sized projects	71%	91%	93%	100%	96%	91%	89%	86%	83%	89%
Medium-sized projects	72%	85%	83%	82%	86%	96%	80%	74%	90%	83%**
UNDP projects	75%	95%	86%	100%	92%	90%	81%	82%	86%	86%
UNEP projects	50%	63%	100%	100%	100%	100%	78%	80%	100%	84%
World Bank Group Projects	83%	91%	88%	78%	85%	93%	92%	75%	100%	87%
Percentage of terminal evaluation reports rated satisfactory or above for quality										
All projects	43%	53%	40%	60%	55%	73%	61%	38%	49%	53%
Full sized projects	43%	60%	45%	67%	68%	72%	75%	46%	48%	59%
Medium-sized projects	44%	44%	35%	54%	43%	74%	40%	21%	50%	46%**
UNDP projects	25%	55%	33%	50%	54%	59%	54%	31%	42%	44%**
UNEP projects	40%	25%	33%	71%	57%	88%	67%	60%	86%	63%
World Bank Group Projects	50%	59%	48%	65%	55%	81%	67%	75%	100%	61%
Total No of rated evaluations	67	62	53	52	53	74	61	56	49	527

337. The most recent (2012) GEF Annual Performance Report[80] states "Little distinction is seen in overall reporting quality among GEF agencies when using the moderately satisfactory or above threshold. However, differences in the overall quality of terminal evaluations among GEF agencies become more visible when using the satisfactory and above threshold. The percentage of assessed UNDP terminal evaluations with overall ratings of satisfactory or

above is 44%, compared with 63% for UNEP evaluations, and 61% for World Bank Group evaluations. This difference is statistically significant at a 95% confidence level." These findings highlight the consistently high performance that has been attained by the UNEP Evaluation Office since 2006.

D. UNEP Results-Based Management training

338. During 2012–13 Biennium Evaluation Office staff made significant contributions to the development of the UNEP Programme Manual and to the preparation of training materials for in-house RBM training. Evaluation Office staff prepared the RBM training modules that focus on project design, espousing a comprehensive and rigorous approach involving the preparation of 'problem trees', their conversion into 'objective trees' followed by the selection of interventions that are designed through the use of 'Theory of Change' ('impact pathway' or 'logic model') approach. These methods help project designs to properly capture the expected results and identify key target groups/stakeholders, 'impact drivers' - things the project can influence to increase the likelihood of progress towards impacts, and 'assumptions' - factors beyond the immediate control of a project that can affect the progress towards intended results. Assumptions, when properly identified, can greatly assist in monitoring of risk in the external environment of an intervention. The pedagogical approach combined delivery of factual information with interactive group work sessions where concepts were applied through practical examples. Each topic presented was followed by informal 'true' or 'false' questions that engaged the audience and were answered in plenary.

339. The course was delivered in four modules. The first day covered Module 1 (an overview of the UNEP RBM Framework, POW formulation, and project approval process) and Module 2 (Project formulation using Theory of Change, discussion of indicators and the UNEP LogFrame). Day 2 covered Module 3 (Project management basics such as safeguards, gender, inception meetings, management tools such as work plans, missions, etc.), and Module 4 (Monitoring and Reporting with a focus on what project information must be reported in PIMS and good reporting techniques). RBM training events for UNEP staff were held throughout the 2012–13 biennium with professionals from the Evaluation Office working in close collaboration with staff from the Quality Assurance Section as presented in the table below.

Location	Dates	RBM Trainers
Paris	May 2–3, 2012	Ellen Daltrop (QAS) and Anna Guerraggio (EO)
Geneva	May 8–9, 2012	Ellen Daltrop (QAS), Michael Carbon (EO)
Nairobi	May 15–16, 2012	Ellen Daltrop (QAS), Michael Carbon (EO)
Bangkok	May 21–22, 2012	Anna Guerraggio (EO)
Osaka	May 24–25, 2012	Anna Guerraggio (EO)
Nairobi	May 29–30, 2012	Ellen Daltrop (QAS), Michael Carbon (EO)
Nairobi	June 19–20, 2012	Anna Guerraggio (EO), Michael Carbon (EO) and Julia Zupan (UNON)
Manama	June 26–27, 2012	Anna Guerraggio (EO)
Panama	July 4–6, 2012	Michael Carbon (EO)
Montreal CBD	April 22–24, 2013	Michael Spilsbury (EO), Yunae Yi (QAS)
Montreal MLF	April 25–26, 2013	Michael Spilsbury (EO), Yunae Yi (QAS)
Cambridge WCMC	April 29–30, 2013	Michael Spilsbury (EO), Yunae Yi (QAS)
Geneva	November 26–29 2013	Michael Carbon (EO), Maria Zuniga (QAS)

340.   Feedback from RBM training participants was positive, and Module 2 dealing with 'Theory of Change' in project design, delivered exclusively by the Evaluation Office, was particularly well-regarded.

E.   Briefing UNEP Staff of the roles and processes of the Evaluation Office

341.   In the course of 2012 and 2013, the Evaluation Office has taken the opportunity presented by staff missions to enhance the understanding of out-posted UNEP staff on the roles and processes of the evaluation function. In a 90 minute session, the purpose and processes of evaluation in UNEP were presented and discussed - from evaluation planning to following up on implementation of evaluation recommendations - with special emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of the EO and project managers. Briefing sessions were held in Paris, Panama and Geneva and further sessions are anticipated in other UNEP regional offices in the course of 2014.

Annex 1

List of Projects evaluated in the 2012–2013 biennium

1. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/4040-06-07 (4921) Promoting Environmentally Sustainable Transport in Latin America (NESTLAC) GEF ID 2178, By Ms. Rosa Angelica Castro Rodriguez, October 2011

2. Terminal Evaluation of project GF/1010-01-05 (4307) Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Bermejo River Binational Basin: Phase II GEF ID No. 886, By Mr. Hugo Navajas and Mr. Mario Schreider, October 2011

3. Mid-Term Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/6030-06-13 (4957) Addressing Transboundary Concerns in the Volta River Basin and its Downstream Coastal Area, GEF ID 1111, By Ms. Sarah Humphrey (Consultant), November 2011

4. Mid-Term Evaluation of the project CP/4050-08-03 (3728) "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity - Phase II", by Mr. Dave Pritchard (Consultant), December 2011

5. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/6030-03-01 (4627) Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia GEF Id No. 1097, By Mr. Philip Edwards, Ms. Lisa Pourlak (Consultants) and Ms. Svetlana Kolesnikova (Research Assistant), February 2012

6. Terminal Evaluation of Project GF/4040-05-09 (4826) Assessment of Risk Management Instruments for Financing Renewable Energy, GEF ID 2538, By Bernt Frydenberg (Consultant), March 2012

7. Terminal Evaluation of project UNEP/GEF GF/3030-05-01 (4882) Nature Conservation and Flood Control in the Yangtze River Basin, By Mr. Peter Whalley and Mr. Xiangyang Fang (Consultants), March 2012

8. Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-07-03 (4985) Participatory Planning and Implementation in the Management of Shantou Intertidal Wetland, Guangdong, China, By Mr. Francis Hurst (Consultant) and Mr. Xiongzhi Xue (Consultant), March 2012

9. Terminal Evaluation of project CP/4040-09-02 (3743) - Enhancing for Renewable Energy Technology Deployment in Brazil, China and South Africa (EIRET), by Mr. Andreas Jahn, March 2012.

10. Terminal Evaluation of project GF/1030-04-01 (4749) - Conservation and Use of Crop Genetic Diversity to Control Pests and Diseases in Support of Sustainable Agriculture, Phase I, By Ms. Christine Padoch (Consultant), April 2012

11. Mid-Term Evaluation of project GF/4010-07-06 (4987) GFL/2328-2732-4987 "Demonstrating and Capturing Best Practices and Technologies for the Reduction of Land-Sourced Impacts Resulting from Coastal Tourism (short title: COAST)" GEF Id No. 2129, By Mr. Nigel Varty (Consultant), April 2012

12. Terminal Evaluation of project ROA-2648-1571-2611 Building National Capacities for Biodiversity Indicators and Reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa, By Mr. David Pritchard (Consultant), April 2012

13. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDA project ROA-5060-1570-6875 Strengthening National Institutional Capacities for Mainstreaming Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) into National Poverty Reduction Strategies, By Ms. Camille Bann (Consultant), April 2012

14. Terminal Evaluation of project GP/3000-06-05 (2A39);GP/3000-07-01 Improving Municipal Wastewater Management in Coastal Cities in ACP Countries, By Mr. Jens Bjerre (Consultant), April 2012

15. Terminal Evaluation of project CPL-5068-3A13-1161 Enabling Developing Countries to Seize Ecolabelling Opportunities –Capacity Building and Technical Assistance for Industries and Governments in Developing Economies, By Ms. Aimee Russillo (Consultant), April 2012

16. Terminal Evaluation of project GF/6030-05-01 GFL/2324-2731-4834 Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (IWCAM), By Mr. Andrea Merla and Mr. David Simmons (Consultants), May 2012

17. Terminal Evaluation of the Project GF/1030-05-03 (4900) "Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Páramo in the Northern and Central Andes" GFL-2328-2714-4900, by Mr. Charles Kenny-Jordan and Ms. Maria Eugenia Quintero, 2012 (Consultants), June 2012

18. Terminal Evaluation Support for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework MSPs in Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Moldova, Slovakia, Cambodia, Vietnam, By Mr. Siva Vanga Reddy and Mr. Camillo Risoli (Consultants), June 2012

19. Terminal Evaluation of project SF/2000-07-01 (2A61) Strengthening Trade Union Participation in International Environmental Processes, Ms. Rudith King (Consultant), June 2012

20. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project GF/3010-05-04 (4842) "Strengthening the Network of Training Centers for Protected Area Management through Demonstration of a Tested Approach" Zapovednics, by Ms. Svetlana Kozlova and Mr. Mikhail Paltsyn (Consultants), October 2012

21. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/6030-04-12 (4809) Combatting Living Resource Depletion and Coastal Area Degradation in the Guinea Current LME Through Ecosystem-Based Regional Actions, By Ms. Sarah Humphrey and Mr. Christopher Gordon (Consultant), November 2012

22. Sub-Programme Evaluation on Disasters and Conflict, by Mr. Michael Carbon, Ms. Tiina Piiroinen with contributions from Mr. E. Quiroga, Ms. Yasemin Altinsoy and Mr. Morten Jensen (Consultants), December 2012

23. Sub-Programme Evaluation on Environmental Governance, Mr. Hugo Navajas, and Ms. Linda Ghanime (Consultants), November 2012

24. Terminal Evaluation of project CP/5022-07-01 (3630) Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum (GAP Forum), Mr. Bernard Mazijn (Consultant), July 2012

25. Terminal Evaluation of project GF/3010-06-17 (4956) Integrating Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change into Sustainable Development Policy Planning and Implementation in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACCESSA) GEF ID 2752, By Ms. Joana Talafre (Consultant), August 2012

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31. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/3010-03-21 (4694) Russian Federation - Support to the National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, Tranche 1, by Mr. Ivan Holoubek and Mr. Oleg Sutkaitis (Consultants), 2012

32. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-GEF project GFL-2328-2770-4B25 "Enabling a Paradigm Shift Towards Monitoring and Assessment within the UNCCD – Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS)", by Mr. Ian Crain and Mr. Segundo Coello (Consultants), December 2012

33. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GF/1030-04-02 (4773) ECORA - An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic GEF ID 413, by Mr. Ivan Senchenya (Consultant), September 2012

34. Review of Arrangements Adopted Pursuant to the "Synergies Decisions" on Enhancing Co-operation and Co-ordination among Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, By Mr. Lee Alexander Risby and Ms. Teresa Cristina Nogueira Amador De Bettencourt (Consultants), February 2013

35. Mid-Term Evaluation of UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (2010–2013), By Mr. Robert Malpas, Ms. Alison King & Ms. Arundhati Inamdar-Willets (Consultants), February 2013

36. Terminal Evaluation of project GF/4040-04-10 (4767) Development of Strategic Market Intervention Approach for Grid-Connected Solar Energy Technologies (EMPower), By Mr. Brahamanand Mohanty (Consultant), January 2013

37. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP-GEF project GFL/QGL-2328-2760-4880 "Reducing Pesticide Runoff to the Caribbean Sea – GEF 1248, by Mr. Hugo Navajas (Consultant), February 2013

38. Evaluation of UNEP Sudan Country Programme, Mr. Jonathan Bennett (Consultant), April 2013

39. Terminal Evaluation of project CP/4040-08-06 Climate Change and Development Adapting by Reducing Vulnerability (CC DARE), By Ms. Juliane Zeidler and Ms. Justin Braby (Consultants), April 2013

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41. Mid-Term Evaluation of project (2600) Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem-Regional Component: Implementation of Agreed Actions for the Protection of the Environmental Resources of the Mediterranean Sea and Its Coastal Areas, By Ms. Sarah Humphrey and Mr. Nee Sun Choong Kwet Yive (Consultants), July 2013

42. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/1030-02-05 (4517) Conservation and Sustainable Management of Below Ground Biodiversity, Phase II, by Mr. Kust German (Consultant), July 2013

43. Mid-Term Evaluation of the project GFL/2328-2780-4B34 (3807) Project for Ecosystem Services (ProEcoServ) by Ms. Camille Bann (Consultant), August 2013

44. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project BPL/CPL/GFL/2328 - 2740 PMS: BP/CP/ GF/6010– 04 (2520) Development of Sub-Regional Environmental Action Plans of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by Ms. Susan Matambo (Consultant), August 2013

45. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP? Project CC/3010-09-07 (4A56) Economic Analysis of Adaptation Options by Mr. Thomas Downing (Consultant), September 2013

46. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GFL/2648-2713-4A47 (3449) Sustainable Forest Management: Carbon Benefits Project: Modelling, Measurement and Monitoring, by William Dougherty, Francis Muthuri and Wang Yexu (Consultants), September 2013

47. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GF/1020-04-01 (4757) In-Situ Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives Through Enhanced Information Management and Field Application, by Giorgio Brandolini (Consultant), October 2013

48. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project CP/5023-01-01 Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), by Mr. Christian Prip (Consultant), November 2013

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50. Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project GFL-2328-2720-4FE1 (3457) Global Market Transformation for Efficient Lighting Project (en.lighten initiative) by Mr. Gonzalo Castro de la Mata and Ms. Nadia Bechraoui (Consultants), September 2013

51. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP project NFL-5066-2668-2632-220100 Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation Initiative, by Mr. Ram Chandra Khanal (Consultant), September 2013

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55. Terminal Evaluation of UNEP/GEF project GFL-2328-2770-4984 (2377) Sustainable Land Management in the High Pamir and Pamir-Alai Mountains – and Integrated and Transboundary Initiative in Central Asia Phase I, by Mr. Francis Hurst and Mr. Firuz Ibragimov (Consultants), December 2013

56. Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF projects on Supporting the Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) (four MSPs: Pacific (3663), West Africa (3674), South and East Africa (3673) and LAC (3778), by Mr. Nee Sun Choong Kwet Yive and Mr. Ziad M. Abu-Kaddourah (Consultants), December 2013