



Distr.: General  
21 August 2024

English only



## United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

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### 167<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme

Nairobi, 12 September 2024

Conference Room 2

10:00 – 18:00 (GMT+3)

Hybrid meeting

### Draft Roadmap for the Development of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029 and Programme of Work for 2026-2027

- 1 Introduction:** At the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 6), decision [UNEP/EA.6/L.3](#) requested the Executive Director to prepare a draft **Programme of Work for the period 2026-2027** and a draft **Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2026-2029**, through inclusive and regular consultation with Member States and, as appropriate, relevant stakeholders, for consideration and approval by the Environment Assembly at its seventh session.

This note presents the roadmap, outlining the key activities and strategic issues to be addressed during the formulation of the 2026-2029 Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and 2026-2027 Programme of Work (PoW). The note has been updated following the 11th Annual Subcommittee (ASC) meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 8 - 12 July 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya.

- 1.1 Roadmap:** The roadmap below is an outline of steps and processes for developing the MTS and PoW. All steps will involve consultation with the CPR in an iterative manner to ensure inclusive and regular information sharing and consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders, promoting alignment and consistency throughout the process. The planning and formulation of the MTS and the PoW will occur between April 2024 and December 2025. The timeline and steps of the MTS roadmap in Fig. 1 below, highlights the key milestones

**Fig 1. Timeline and steps of the MTS Roadmap.**

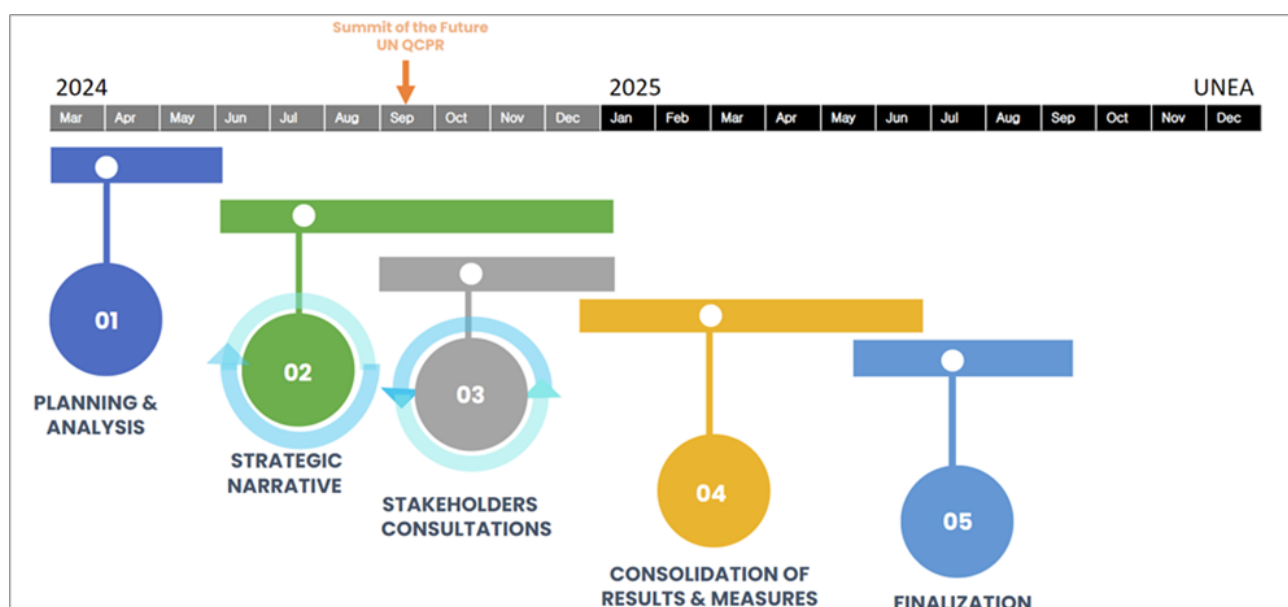


Table 1 below sets out the main outputs and activities of the five steps identified above. The table also includes an overview of all outputs for consultation with Member States, against key contextual content provided in annex 1. An overview of the meeting schedule with Member States is set out in table 2.

**Table 1. Main outputs and activities of the MTS Roadmap.**

Steps	Outputs for feedback from Member States	Main activities
1. PLANNING & ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MTS Roadmap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree on the roadmap.</li> <li>Internal communications and engagement.</li> <li>Review of scientific analysis on the environment: trends and projections.</li> <li>Lessons learned from audits and evaluations.</li> <li>Consider preliminary findings of foresight process.</li> <li>Update mapping of globally agreed international environmental goals and targets.</li> </ul>
2. STRATEGIC NARRATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MTS outline.</li> <li>Strategic narrative.</li> <li>Situation analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline of MTS.</li> <li>Update situation analysis.</li> <li>Develop strategic narrative.</li> <li>Revise theories of change.</li> </ul>
3. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conclusions from virtual dialogues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual Dialogue process with countries and stakeholders, including Major Groups, and the UN System including MEAs.</li> </ul>
4. CONSOLIDATION OF RESULTS & BUDGET DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft MTS.</li> <li>Draft results framework.</li> <li>Draft Budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of results and indicators.</li> <li>Costing of outputs.</li> <li>Development of budget.</li> <li>Incorporate recommendations from upcoming audits and evaluations.</li> </ul>

5. FINALIZATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Near final draft of MTS and PoW.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft MTS and PoW.</li> <li>Presentation to CPR.</li> <li>Feedback from ACABQ.</li> <li>Final adjustments.</li> <li>Editing and translation.</li> </ul>
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## 2. Phases of the strategic planning process

**2.1. Formulate:** UNEP will facilitate the identification of strategic priorities, emerging science-policy issues, and global and regional relevant issues, amongst other inputs, to shape the development of the MTS. Activities will involve reviewing the latest scientific analysis on environmental trends and projections, considering the signals identified in the foresight report, outcomes of UNEA and integrating lessons learned. Additionally, the process will account for broader global and regional trends impacting UNEP's operations and involve extensive consultations both internally and with external stakeholders.

**2.2. Guidance:** UNEP will facilitate review of the MTS by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), including the Annual Subcommittee, and approval of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA); as well as the review of the PoW by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). Iterative reviews by the CPR and the CPR subcommittee will, ensure the MTS and PoW is relevant, transparent and inclusive.

**2.3. Implement:** In January 2026, UNEP will start implementation of the approved 2026-2029 MTS and will deliver on the 2026-2027 PoW.

## 3. Considerations for the Formulation

**3.1. Refresh Vision:** To foster a cohesive, long-term vision, and ensure continuity and consistency across strategic planning cycles, the MTS for 2026–2029 will build upon the foundations of the current MTS, which articulates the crisis of climate change, the crisis of biodiversity loss and the crisis of pollution. The new MTS will expand on current achievements and improve the monitoring of progress toward outcomes, enhancing impact tracking. Key strategic pillars such as Climate Action, Nature Action and Pollution Action will be retained, as well as UNEP's foundational and enabling Sub-Programmes (Science-Policy, Environmental Governance, Economic and Financial Transformations and Digital Transformations) ensuring that concrete results and actions are implemented. High-level results will be contextualised within the strategic timeframe ending in 2030, fostering the generation and sharing of insights that will guide the development of future strategic plans.

**3.2. Analysis of environmental assessments, emerging priorities, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Building on the lessons learned from the 2022-2025 MTS, UNEP will identify environmental trends and emerging issues. This will involve examining key trends from the Strategic Foresight process, the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7), and inputs from the IPCC, IPBES, IRP, and other scientific panels. Additionally, the linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement, the Global Biodiversity Framework, the Global Chemicals Framework, and other relevant environmental agreements will be identified as well as how UNEP can position its "offer" to support countries in implementing their environmental priorities.

**3.3. Lessons learned:** UNEP is a learning organisation and aims to continually improve. Lessons will be identified from planning processes, monitoring, evaluations, and audits. UNEP's Evaluation Office evaluates all UNEP projects and subprogrammes associated to a cost over \$1,000,000. A synthesis of evaluation findings will form a significant portion of the lessons learned. The lessons identified from this process will be incorporated into the development of

the 2026-2029 MTS and the 2026-2027 PoW. Annex 2 presents a systemization of existing lessons learned.

**3.4. Integration of cross-cutting issues:** The analysis underpinning the new MTS process will draw on the latest environmental data and evidence, including the impact of key issues such as: climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, desertification and land degradation. At the same time, UNEP will systematically apply both a gender perspective, a poverty eradication approach and a Leave No One Behind” lens to the analysis and later programming, so that the analytical bedrock of the new MTS enables a comprehensive understanding of how they each contribute to gaps in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and beyond.

**3.5. Regional Priorities:** UNEP will consider regional priorities and their connections to multilateral agreements, recognising their significant potential for driving local change and making progress towards the 2030 Agenda. As such, UNEP through its Regional Offices will identify regional priorities and engage with regional forums on the development of the new MTS and PoW as per UNEA 6 resolution [UNEP/EA.6/Res.3](#). A series of informal virtual dialogues will be used to capture priorities and determine the influence and relevance to the MTS and PoW.

**3.6. Collaboration with secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs):** UNEP is committed to global multilateralism and environmental governance through the environmental rule of law. UNEP will conduct a series of sessions to engage MEAs’ Secretariats. These sessions aim to gather insights on how UNEP’s global priorities can better align with the mandates of MEAs and contribute to their implementation, ultimately informing the MTS formulation process. In support of this effort, UNEP will also review relevant resolutions from the Conference of the Parties to identify key areas for synergies as determined in the latest UNEA 6 resolution [UNEP/EA.6/Res.4](#) on Promoting synergies for national implementation of MEAs.

**3.7. Engagement of Major Groups, including the Private Sector:** UNEP will engage with stakeholders, through the Major Groups and Stakeholders architecture including with the private sector, through a series of virtual dialogues.

#### **4. Considerations for the Guidance Phase**

**4.1. Drafting the MTS in consultation with Member States and Major Stakeholder Groups:** A preliminary draft of the MTS will be presented for consultation during the 169<sup>th</sup> CPR in Q1 2025. As the consultations evolve and priorities are defined, the draft will be iteratively updated to incorporate feedback and reflect insights, with consultations in June 2025 and at the Annual Sub-Committee in September 2025 (see table 2 below for a detailed timeline). This draft will be based on identified priorities and key issues. The MTS will outline the priority areas (subprogrammes), the strategies for delivering results, and emphasize operational alignment.

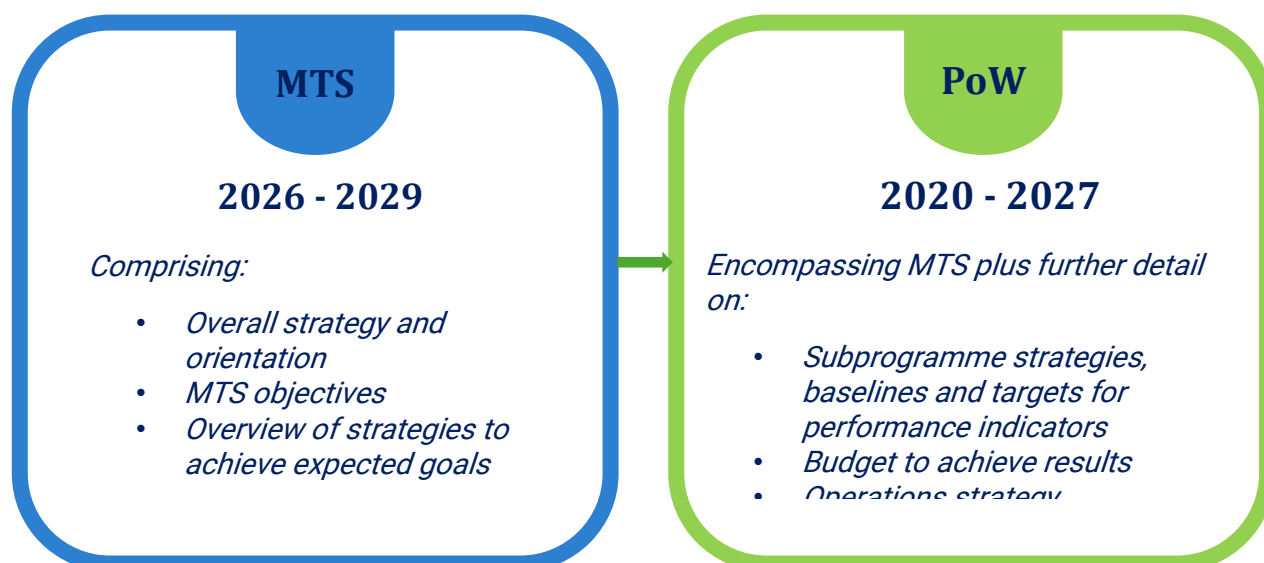
**Table 2: Draft Consultation Plan with Member States.**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activity</b>
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 Annual Subcommittee: The secretariat presents the MTS and PoW Roadmap.</li> </ul>
September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>167<sup>th</sup> CPR: The secretariat presents the updated roadmap with lessons learned.</li> </ul>
October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual dialogues with the Member States for the next MTS and PoW and budget.</li> </ul>

December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>168<sup>th</sup> CPR: The secretariat presents the discussions and feedback from the Member States at the Virtual Dialogues as well as the budget options paper for the PoW 2026-2027.</li> </ul>
March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>169<sup>th</sup> CPR: The secretariat presents the 1<sup>st</sup> draft MTS and PoW.</li> </ul>
June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>170<sup>th</sup> CPR: The secretariat presents the revised MTS and PoW.</li> </ul>
September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12<sup>th</sup> ASC recommends that the CPR endorses the MTS and PoW (including the budget) and will give a mandate to the secretariat to come up with a draft UNEA 7 decision.</li> <li>Package sent to ACABQ for review.</li> <li>ASC will provide an informal endorsement for the Secretariat to submit the documents to UNON for editing and translation.</li> </ul>
September 2025 (tbc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPR at its subsequent quarterly meeting adopts the recommendation emanating from the ASC and endorse the document for approval by UNEA.</li> </ul>
Intersessional period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations on the draft UNEA 7 decision would then begin during the intersessional period leading up to OECPR and UNEA.</li> </ul>
December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNEA-7 approval.</li> </ul>

**4.2. Drafting the PoW:** The PoW further elaborates the Theories of Change and results that derive from the MTS, UNEP will review how to achieve them including by strengthening partnerships. The PoW will set out how UNEP programmes are delivered through each of the UNEP Subprogrammes. An evaluation plan will be developed in parallel with the drafting of the programme of work. The process will include identifying performance against budget and lessons learned to provide a basis for the 2026-2027 budget as well as clearer alignment to results.

**Fig 2. Main contents of MTS and PoW**



**4.3. Anticipatory and Agile:** Since the 2022-2025 MTS outlined steps toward a more effective and efficient business model, UNEP has significantly invested in innovative ways of working and management for results. This includes investing in staff for sustainable organisational change, advancing gender equality, and securing a strong organisational design for collective accountability. Alongside these efforts, UNEP has focused on digital transformation and fostering innovation. Moving forward, UNEP will embed adaptive management, enhancing our ability to anticipate and prevent environmental shocks.

**4.4. Leveraging Partnerships within the UN System:** UNEP will continue to deepen its partnerships within and across the United Nations system, leveraging the complementary skills and expertise of other agencies and enhancing coherence while guiding joint programmatic responses to tackle environmental issues. This will be done by taking advantage of the fact that all strategic plans are now aligned in their timeframe following the guidance from the QCPR. By combining UNEP's environmental expertise with the rest of the UN country, regional and global capacities, we can make a more significant impact while advancing towards a coherent integration of the United Nations Reform Agenda.

**4.5. Diversifying resource mobilization:** At a time when development and environmental gains are most at risk, securing predictable and flexible funding will be critical to achieving UNEP's new MTS and ultimately the SDGs. UNEP will work towards diversify its funding base from Member States, vertical funds, and foundations as well as other funding partners.

**4.6. Alignment to policy process and UNEA resolutions:** To leverage the impact of UNEP's work the process will ensure the UNEP MTS and PoW are aligned to key international policy processes. UNEP will identify and keep in view policy process dependencies.

**4.7. Innovation:** To move beyond ideas, UNEP will explore how to successfully implement new approaches that add value and lead to lasting impact. Throughout the strategic planning process, UNEP will place an emphasis on how innovations can be identified and successfully adopted and scaled up to increase impact.

**4.8. Integrated approaches:** UNEP will extend its focus beyond sectoral approaches to identify opportunities for transformative change. The organization will build on its normative mandate but also on its programmatic role. This way, it will continue to deliver projects that are strategically planned, aligned, and managed to achieve strategic objectives. These results-based management approaches will consist of a mix of short, medium, and long-term interventions, each bolstered by the latest science, advocacy, investment and impact. Adopting this approach involves understanding issues from a systemic perspective and leveraging interconnections across various interventions to achieve broader objectives and increase results.

**ANNEX 1: Evaluation and audit-related inputs and timeline.**

<b>UNEP Reports</b>	<b>Period Covered</b>
1. Board of Auditors Report (2023)	January 2023 – December 2023
2. Board of Auditors Report (2022)	January 2022 – December 2022
3. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) a) Audit of delegation of authority at the United Nations Environment Programme b) Audit of procurement at the United Nations Environment Programme c) Audit of the Ecosystems Division of the United Nations Environment	January 2020 – December 2022
4. Evaluation Synthesis Report a) An evaluation of the Environmental Governance Sub-Programme b) Independent evaluation of UNEP Policy & Strategy for Gender Equality & the Environment, 2015-2020 c) Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Inquiry into the design of a sustainable financial system and Interim Review of the UNEP/GEF Aligning the financial system and infrastructure and infrastructure	2022 - 2023

investments with sustainable development (Components 1 and 2) d) Evaluation of the implementation in the formulation of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) interagency programme 'Operational Strategy 2016-2020	
5. Formative Evaluation of the UNEP Delivery Model & Programmatic Approach, introduced in the 2022-2025 MTS	2022 – 2025 (Evaluation ongoing)
6. Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Climate Action	2014 - 2023
7. Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Chemicals and pollution	May 2024 – June 2025
8. Independent Review of UNEP's Contributions to Poverty Reduction (funded by SIDA)	2021

## ANNEX 2: Compilation of Lessons Learned.

Source	Finding/Lesson Learned	Recommendation/s
<i>Source: Evaluation Synthesis Report 2022 – 2023</i>	The Inquiry Project did not make a concerted effort to address the needs of vulnerable countries and communities, especially small island developing states (SIDS), and very poor countries in general.	Analyze and integrate targeted programming for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), indigenous organizations, and other marginalized groups across its activities, potentially leading to a UNEP-wide strategy coordinated by the Ecosystems Division.
<i>Source: Independent Review of UNEP's Contributions to Poverty Reduction, on behalf of Sida 2021</i>	The absence of a consistent approach in UNEP to poverty reduction and its relation to environmental change hampers the maximization of UNEP's contribution to sustainable development and its environmental, social and economic pillars. UNEP's programming currently contributes below its possible full potential to poverty reduction in sub-programme and country contexts.	Incorporate a people-oriented approach and a social development perspective as part of UNEP's global strategy, including support to poverty reduction and related social development issues in terms of their relation to environmental and economic aspects of sustainable development in the MTS and POW for the period 2022 and beyond.  Include an explicit focus on poverty and the agenda 2030 principle of leaving no one behind (LNOB) in MTS and POW, enhancing aspects of

		poverty where it is needed most, in LDCs in Africa and other regions, in fragile contexts and in specific underserved areas and groups and marginalized people in MICs. Apply a multi-dimensional approach to poverty and social development including objectives concerning people's livelihoods, health, security, and resilience.
<i>Source: Board of Auditors Audit of the United Nations Environment Programme for the financial year ended 31 December 2023</i>	The Board noted that out of the 718 ongoing projects of all types as at the end of 2023, UNEP could only provide two projects related to the implementation and delivery of the Sendai Framework. Furthermore, of these two projects, one was associated with the Framework at the outcome/output level while the other one was at the activity level. 55. The Board further noted that the MTS 2018-2021 included a dedicated subprogramme "Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts". However, this sub programme or project portfolio was not included in the MTS 2022-2025.	<p>The Board is of the view that the Sendai Framework, which outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action, is an overarching framework for preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks and a crucial framework for achieving several SDG targets and indicators. Thus, UNEP needs to still pay special attention to the framework, even without a dedicated subprogramme or project portfolio in the new four-year period of 2022-2025. 58.</p> <p>The Board recommends that UNEP conduct an in-house inventory on all Sendai Framework-related projects and activities across the UNEP Programme of Work.</p>
<i>Source: Evaluation Synthesis Report 2022 – 2023</i>	Though it played a critical step to introduce gender mainstreaming in UNEP, the Gender Policy and Strategy has become largely symbolic of UNEP's unrealized ambitions in gender. The overall lesson learned is that without senior management attention, resource allocation, results frameworks, monitoring systems, a functioning gender architecture, and a concerted effort at sensitizing and capacitating staff as to what mainstreaming gender entails within UNEP programmes, gender quickly became a forgotten priority. Periodic reporting to the governing body on the nature and type of gender programming is a crucial indicator of agency commitment. Reporting on gender parity advances and isolated examples of programmes working on gender in a few paragraphs in annual progress reports is not a substitute for systematic reporting to UNEA on an annual or biennial basis.	Appoint a high-level, internal Task Force to undertake a time-bound exercise to foster organization-wide attention to gender mainstreaming in both programme and institutional domains. This exercise should be led by a high-profile champion such as the Deputy Executive Director to devise an updated strategy involving a rethinking of UNEP's approach to Gender with particular focus on the opportunities presented by UN Reform efforts at the country and regional levels, and with the GSU serving as secretariat. This new thinking could involve revisiting the Theories of Change (TOC) in the Programmes of Work (PoW) to ensure that gender is incorporated as a critical driver to inclusive change and in indicator frameworks.



<p><i>2020 Assessment Cycle United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) MOPAN Assessment Report</i></p>	<p>UNEP seeks to integrate the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, women’s empowerment, and human rights. Strong attention to gender balance is clearly reflected in its own internal leadership, management, and staffing. However, UNEP has made greater progress in achieving a gender balance internally than in the results of its projects. This shortcoming was evident both in strategic documents and during interviews. The organization has emphasized that environmental rights are human rights, highlighting the need to protect environmental defenders. However, less attention is given to this concern in its operations despite its acknowledged importance.</p>	<p>Both gender equality and human rights could be strengthened at both strategic and project levels.</p>
<p><i>Programme Performance Report 2022-2023</i></p>	<p>Demand from Resident Coordinators is higher than the support UNEP can provide. While the network of UNCT Focal Points is a key asset for UNEP’s engagement at country level, there are limitations in UNEP’s participation in the UNCTs that is mostly remote and part-time. There is also an increasing expectation that UNEP contributes to several Working Groups and processes in the UNCTs and an increasing demand for technical expertise on a broad range of topics and support on environmental data and analytics.</p> <p>UNEP mostly engages in the UN Country Teams without any physical presence in the country. Findings from the Secretary General’s 2023 report on the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) indicate that 95 per cent of governments and 88 per cent of Resident Coordinators find it easy to access technical expertise from entities with physical presence. This indicates that despite UNEP’s efforts, governments might not be accessing as much support from UNEP as they would like to receive.</p>	<p>There are opportunities to explore additional ways of strengthening engagement with UNCTs, including by building on good practices employed by other UN entities. Options including the establishment of a standing surge capacity pool of expertise and the establishment of environment advisors in Resident Coordinator Offices were proposed during the panel discussion with Resident Coordinators at the 10th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the CPR.</p>
<p><i>Source: Evaluation Synthesis Report 2022 – 2023</i></p>	<p>The SP-EG portfolio was found to be fragmented and not reflect a clear strategic direction or pathway towards articulated goals. The</p>	<p>UNEP’s leadership role and approach to environmental governance needs a clearer focus, strategic priorities and more specific Outcomes. The</p>

	<p>portfolio did respond to United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and funding partner priorities; however, the relevance at the national level for individual Member States was less clear. The portfolio, as a whole, did not operate on systematic country needs assessments or prioritization although there were some positive approaches by some individual projects and programmes. Nonetheless, specialized environmental law expertise, regional environmental governance activities and support to MEAs were considered highly relevant as a means for achieving EG related results.</p>	<p>SP-EG should develop, in collaboration with other subprogrammes, Divisions and MEAs, an improved overall strategy and mechanisms to strengthen its approach to EG across UNEP in line with the MTS 2022-2025 UNEP thematic priorities. This needs to include a clear, working definition of EG to inform the SP-EG's scope and activities. The SP-EG needs a targeted results framework (especially immediate Outcomes, direct indicators and units of measure) to help guide the SP-EG, as foundational and cross-cutting subprogramme, in relation to the UNEP thematic priorities. Adopting a SP-EG Theory of Change (ToC), nested with the three thematic subprogramme ToCs, would aid design and implementation.</p> <p>Adopt a cross-cutting and mainstreamed approach for the PoW to solidify SP-EG as a foundational subprogram. Conduct a strategic review to identify synergies and integrate actions across subprograms, emphasizing the connection with UNEP's three thematic priorities.</p>
<p><i>Source: Board of Auditors Audit of the United Nations Environment Programme for the financial year ended 31 December 2023</i></p>	<p>The Board noted that there was no dedicated evaluation plan document for each of the seven subprogrammes, on which UNEP has been working since 2022, as per the ST/SGB/2018/3 bulletin. In the Appendix I of the PoW 2022-2023 which acted as UNEP's evaluation plan, there were only one paragraph and two charts referred to the preliminary arrangement of subprogramme evaluation, with no details nor characteristics of each subprogramme involved.</p> <p>The Board is of the view that the evaluation plan for subprogramme is a requisite as well as an essential instrument for preparing, organizing and conducting both the subprogramme evaluation itself and the project evaluations/reviews contributing to the subprogramme</p>	<p>The Board recommends that UNEP specify in its Programme of Work document that the detailed evaluation plan for a subprogramme is in the form of a Term of Reference, which will be prepared annually and will cover the requisites of an evaluation plan.</p>

	<p>evaluation. Moreover, changes on the scopes, periods and measures for collecting information will result in the changes of the geographical focus and intensity of effort which may have implications for the evaluation budget required.</p>	
<p><i>2020 Assessment Cycle United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) MOPAN Assessment Report</i></p>	<p>Despite improvements during the assessment period, results-based management remains a work in progress. Better assessing all results is an opportunity for strategic alignment.</p>	<p>UNEP must improve how it identifies and communicates the results and impacts of its actions, including its normative work, advocacy, environmental policy advice, and knowledge products, beyond the outcomes of its donor-funded projects. This involves showing its contributions to the UN system and Member States in a clear and measurable way.</p>