



# Evaluation of the Subprogramme on Climate Action 2014 - 2023

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Evaluation Office of UNEP (EOU)

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28 June 2024

- **UN Requirement** – All subprogrammes evaluated within a 6-year period
- **Scope:** Climate Action subprogramme, under the POWs 2014/2015, 2016/17, 2018/19, 2020/2021, 2022/2023
- **Objective:**
  - to help improve subprogramme design, coordination and delivery
  - accountability (performance of subprogramme projects)
  - learning (forward-looking reflections based on analysis of the SP effectiveness)
  - to provide insights, lessons and recommendations for the new Climate Division, which aims to bring greater coherence, impact and visibility to UNEP's work on climate change

- **Team and Timeline**

- Two senior external subject matter evaluation expert consultants and two senior Evaluation Office staff Q3 2023 – Q2 2024

- **Methods:**

- Mixed-methods approach
- Semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth conversations with key stakeholders
- Desk-based review and analysis of relevant documents including several levels of UNEP's reporting, project evaluations, project and programming documents
- 'Deep Dives' – Ecosystem-based Adaptation & Emissions Gap Report

- **Approach.**

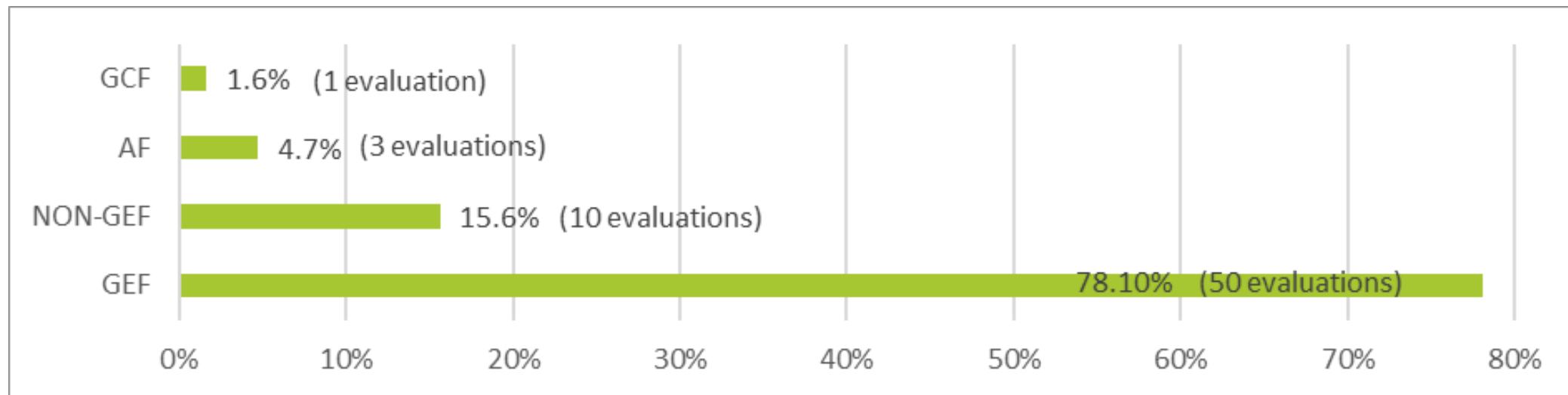
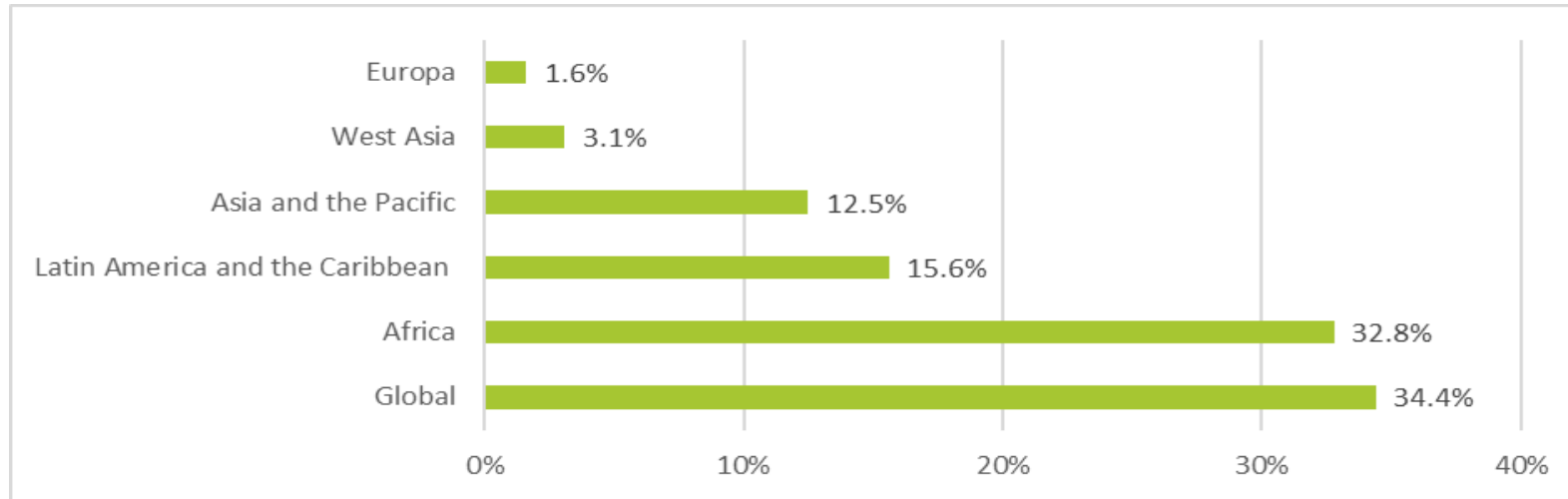
- Evaluation Reference Group - Sharing TORs, Preliminary findings, comments on draft report

*“The evaluation finds that the subprogramme is strategically highly relevant for UNEP and the global community. The subprogramme addresses decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience efforts in a comprehensive way and covers the adaptation as well as the mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement including the transparency framework. In fact, UNEP is much more important for the climate conversation in general and the evolution and implementation of the Paris Agreement in particular than its own narratives imply.”*

# Evaluation Findings – Overall Performance

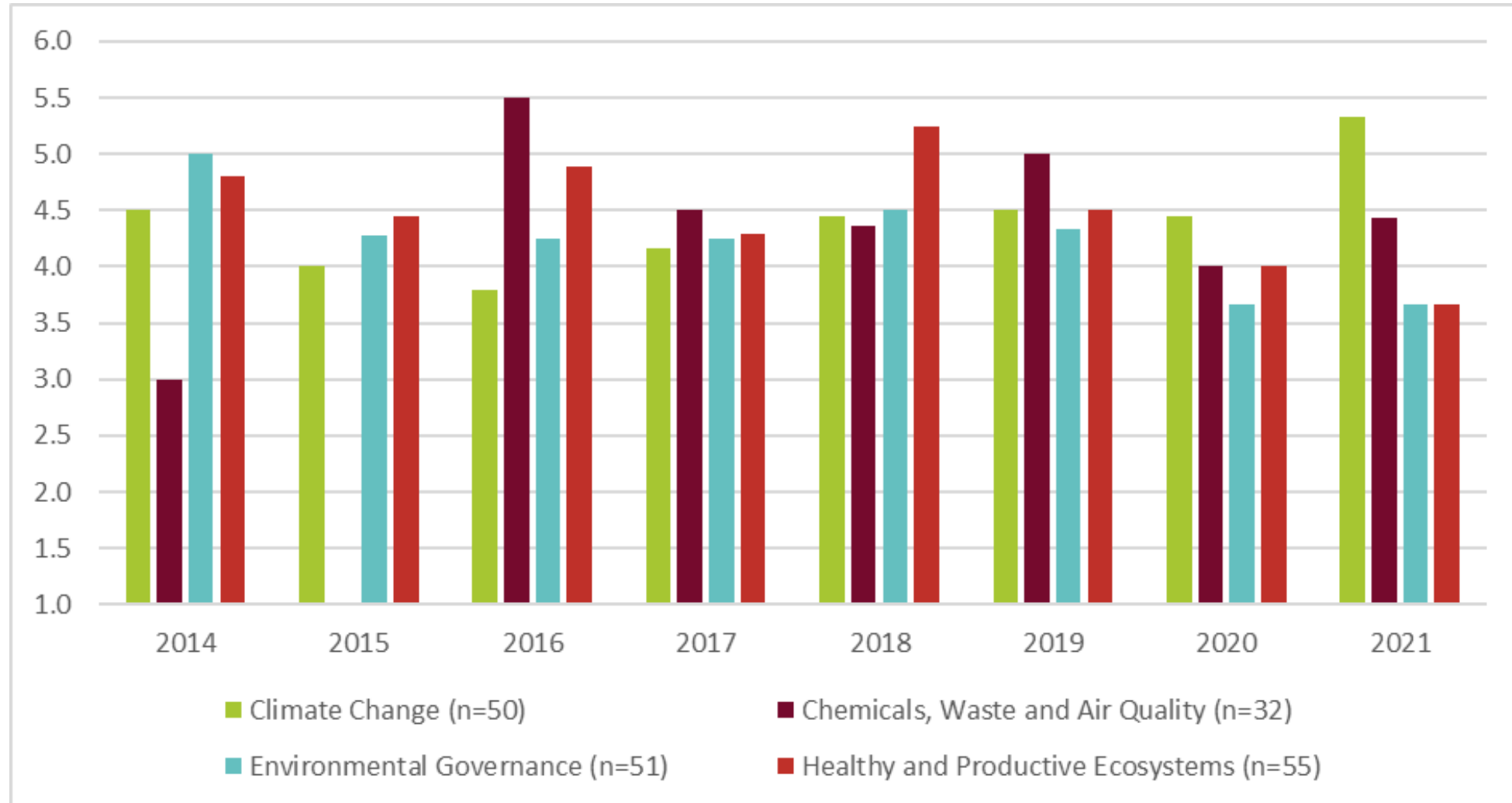
Geographic distribution and funding source of the 69 projects with completed Terminal Evaluations

Project-level performance is Satisfactory on average



# Evaluation Findings – Overall Performance

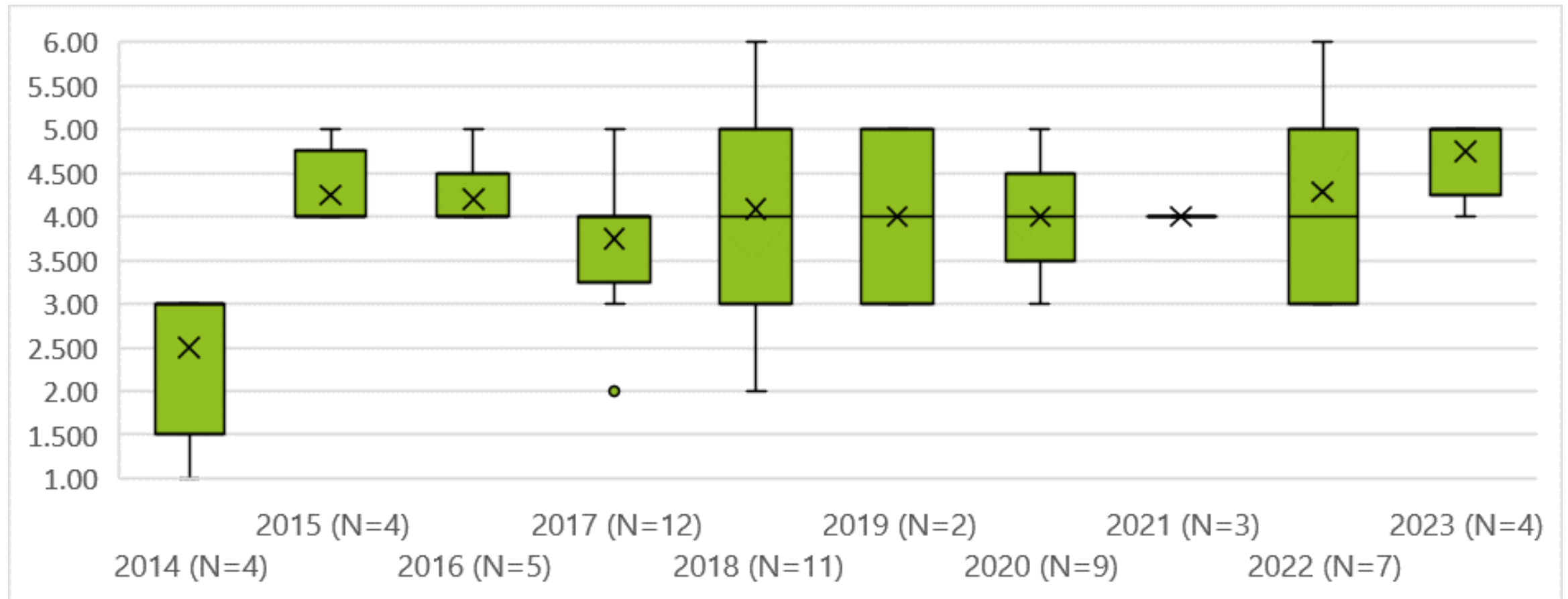
Average project ratings for "Effectiveness" per year of project Completion (2014-2021)



# Evaluation Findings – Overall Performance

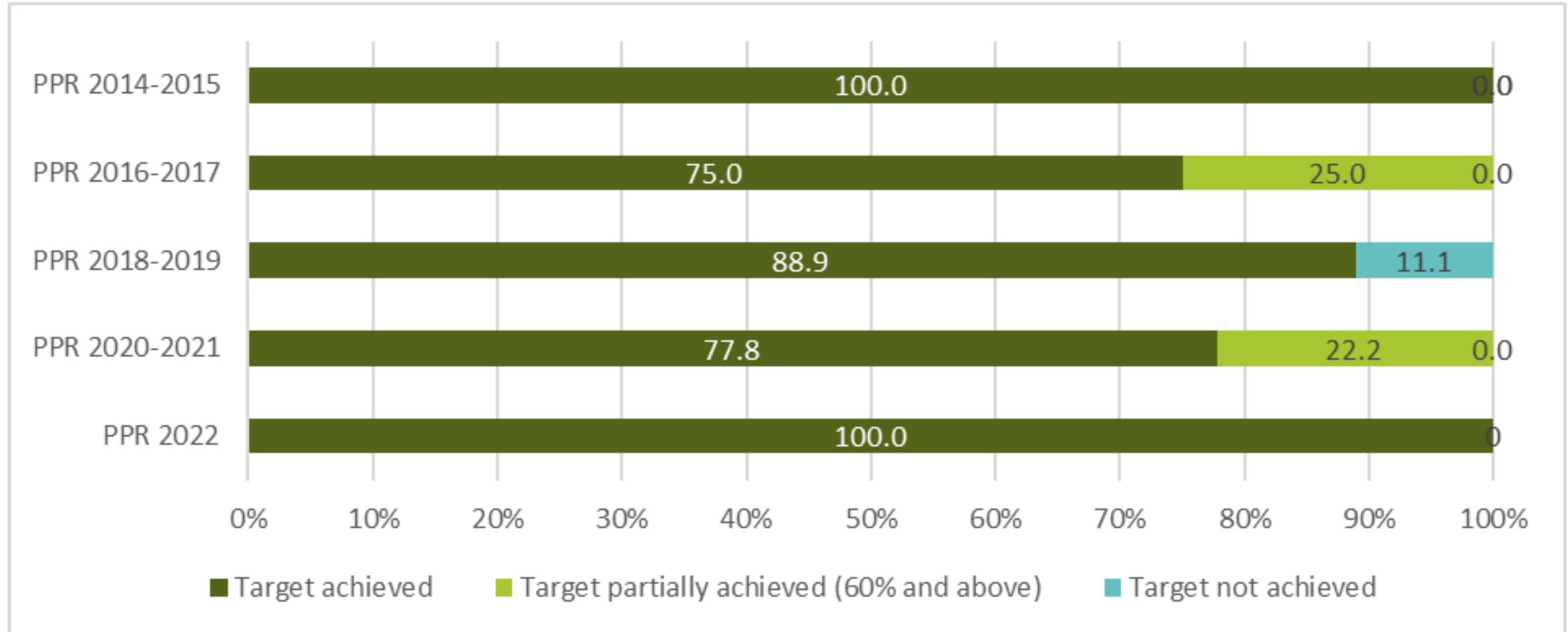
Sustainability of outcomes rating of evaluated projects(2014-2021)

Average = Moderately Likely



# Evaluation Findings – Overall Performance

## Indicators of achievement of the SP-CA reported in the PPR (2014-2021)





## *Where has UNEP's work on climate action been most impactful?*

- “Through its influence on member countries, facilitated by the provision of accessible and relevant scientific data on climate change.” This knowledge enables member countries by providing guidance on ways to advance and specifically to formulate informed strategies.
- Through “the influence on the debate. UNEP’s flagship reports, including publications such as the Adaptation Gap Report, the Emission Gap Report, and the Global Environment Outlook series, serve as crucial instruments of influence in this dimension. These reports distill complex scientific information into comprehensible and actionable insights for member states, as well as other organizations working in similar areas, serving as a starting point for many discussions.”
- Another identified impact has been how UNEP plays a pivotal role in convening diverse stakeholders – member countries, NGOs, civil society organizations, businesses, and academia – to collaborate on various aspects in the field of adaptation and mitigation, including on reporting and influencing the UNFCCC negotiations.
- Lastly, UNEP has managed to start global climate action around specific topics. E.g. Ecosystem-based Adaptation

- **Recommendation 1: UNEP should continue to create and manage knowledge-cum-implementation partnerships around important climate solutions.**
- UNEP's specific trait is that it can link global advocacy and science-based knowledge management with action on the ground, in a sectoral, global-umbrella-with-country-pillars approach. By streamlining its priorities and leveraging its strengths as a knowledge-based and normative organization through strategic partnerships, UNEP can potentially enhance its overall effectiveness in tackling climate change and avoid being distracted into areas that do not play to its strengths.

- **Recommendation 2: UNEP should develop more strategies to provide countries with readily applicable information on solutions for both mitigation and adaptation measures.**
- While highlighting gaps through high-level science-based publications is important to provide a call for action, communicating and providing scalable solutions might be a more active contribution to overcoming the challenge. The organization should develop (digital) tools for available solutions based on evidence and provide active knowledge management on what works (and not only on what are the gaps) – and lobby for their implementation through its networks. If this can be linked with the scientific core and approach of the organisation, this can ensure that scientific knowledge is effectively translated into actionable information.

- **Recommendation 3: Internally, UNEP should improve transparency and communication on resource allocation and should enhance clarity on where long-term resources are needed to ensure continuity versus where project-based initiatives are better suited.**
- The evaluation underscores the critical need for improved communication regarding resource allocation within UNEP, impacting both internal and external stakeholders. Internally, a lack of transparency in resource allocation processes leads to budgetary unpredictability for the subprogramme as well as a lack of clarity regarding the availability of staff resources. This not only hinders the development of strategic long-term plans but is also resulting in staff dissatisfaction. Externally, donor countries have also expressed discontent with the current system, citing difficulties in tracing the flow of their contributions. While the introduction of thematic funds represents a potential step forward, further strategic development is necessary to ensure their effectiveness. Decisions cannot be based on valid assumptions about the functioning and needed resources without a remapping of the existing staff positions to the subprogrammes.

- **Recommendation 4: UNEP should fully implement its strategic paradigm and strive to utilize indicators that are tied to the Paris Agreement, suited for management and reporting and able to demonstrate UNEP’s contribution to filling the gap.**
- Generally, UNEP’s indicators do not measure the contribution of the organization towards “closing the gap”. This means that the PCPs and thematic Divisions cannot use these indicators for their internal strategic coordination or demonstrate that they cover the gaps in climate action as demonstrated by EGR and AGR. The PCPs still base their TOCs on the SP-CA building blocks, lacking a coherent or complete programme logic behind it – and thus, also no (or very few) SMART indicators. But as the current MTS already follows the Paris Agreement’s logic, closing the gaps on the lower-level indicators is possible with the next PoW.

- **Recommendation 5: Further clarify roles and responsibilities of SP-CA involved staff, including integration of the SP-CA coordination function in the new Climate Change Division.**
- Noting the establishment of the new Climate Change Division, if greater clarity is desired with respect to the roles of the SP-CA coordination function (Policy and Programme Division, global subprogramme coordinator, regional subprogramme coordinator, other staff), and UNEP's divisions and regional offices on climate action, then **UNEP could consider supplementing the UNEP Delivery Model Policy 2022 with a high-level outline of the functions of the divisions, regions and subprogramme coordination function on climate action, including specifying a DRI for specific areas such as engagement with external partners. This could be implemented as a test run in 2024 – 2025, i.e., in the final phases of the current MTS.**

- **Recommendation 6: UNEP should increase practical relevance and internal utilization of flagship reports by improving coordination and communication across divisions.**
- UNEP employs the EGR and similar gap analyses and similar gap analyses to identify potential areas for intervention by contrasting scientific findings with the current state. By leveraging these analyses to inform its approach and projects on climate action, UNEP could achieve a more strategic direction. This would necessitate enhanced internal coordination and communication within the organization. These efforts could involve systematically evaluating which findings hold the most relevance for UNEP's collaborations with member countries and exploring how these insights can be translated into solution-oriented deliverables.

- **Recommendation 7: UNEP should increase its leadership visibility in the global climate action arena.**
- If UNEP wants to be perceived as a champion and a trendsetter in climate action through its activities and products, the organization will need to make itself more visible at the major negotiations, such as the COP. UNEP apparently lacks a prominent public figure who embodies the organization's work on climate change. This makes it harder for stakeholders to recognize UNEP's contributions and hold UNEP accountable. The new Director will need to make an effort to become a prominent spokesperson for UNEP's climate efforts, raising public awareness and accountability. UNEP's senior leadership recognizes the need to enhance its performance on climate action. This is evident in the interim Director's consolidation plan for the new Climate Change Division, which resonates with several key recommendations of this evaluation, including strengthening partnerships, fostering internal cooperation within UNEP, and increasing engagement with UNFCCC and COP negotiations.



# Thank you



Evaluation  
Office

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Contacts:

Michael Spilsbury ([michael.spilsbury@un.org](mailto:michael.spilsbury@un.org))

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Evaluation Office of UNEP

Nairobi, Kenya

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