

United Nations Environment Programme

EVALUATION OF THE
UNEP SUBPROGRAMME ON
ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Main Report
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
ASCOBANS	Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCSP	Climate Change Subprogramme (UNEP)
CEM	Commission on Ecosystem Management (IUCN)
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP)
CoP	Conference of the Parties
DCPI	Division of Communication and Public Information (UNEP)
DCSP	Disasters and Conflicts Subprogramme (UNEP)
DELG	Division of Environmental Laws and Conventions (UNEP)
DEPI	Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (UNEP)
DEWA	Division of Early Warning and Assessments (UNEP)
DGEF	Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination (UNEP)
DRC	Division of Regional Cooperation (UNEP)
DTIE	Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP)
EA	expected accomplishment
EbA	Ecosystem based Adaptation
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Area
EC	European Commission
EETU	Environmental Education and Training Unit (UNEP)
EF	Environment Fund
EGSP	Environmental Governance Subprogramme
EHE	Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU)
EM	Ecosystem Management
EMSP	Ecosystem Management Subprogramme
EMSPC	Ecosystem Management Subprogramme Coordinator
EO	Evaluation Office (UNEP)
ERB	Economy and Trade Branch (UNEP)
ESEU	Ecosystems Services Economics Unit (UNEP)
ETB	Economy and Trade Branch (UNEP)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMO	Fund Management Officer
FOS	Freshwater Operational Strategy
GC	Governing Council (UNEP)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environment Forum
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
GRASP	Great Apes Survival Partnership
GUPES	Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability
ICA	Internal Cooperation Agreement

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ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
IGO	Inter-governmental Organisation
IMDIS	Integrated Management and Document Information System
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
IO	Immediate Outcome
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IS	Intermediate State
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LOA	Letter of Agreement
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
MTO	Medium-Term Outcome
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOAA	US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OfO	Office for Operations (UNEP)
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services (UN)
PAG	Programme Approval Group (UNEP)
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PEI	Poverty Environment Initiative (Project title)
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PIMS	Programme Information and Management System
PoW	Programme of Work
PoWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas
PRC	Project Review Committee (UNEP)
ProFor	Program on Forests
PPR	Programme Performance Review
PSPT	Programme Strategy and Planning Team (UNEP)
QAS	Quality Assurance Section (UNEP)
RBM	Results Based Management
REDD	Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RESP	Resource Efficiency Subprogramme (UNEP)
RO	Regional Office (UNEP)
ROA	Regional Office for Africa (UNEP)
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP)
RONA	Regional Office for North America (UNEP)
ROWA	Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP)
SGA	Sub-Global Assessment
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMT	Senior Management Team (UNEP)
SP	Subprogramme (UNEP)
SPC	Subprogramme Coordinator (UNEP)

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SSFA	Small Scale Funding Agreement
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (GEF)
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (Project title)
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNON	United Nations Offices in Nairobi
UNU	United Nations University
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WFD	Water Framework Directive (European Commission)
WHC	World Heritage Convention
WOA	UN World Ocean Assessment
WPS	Water Policy and Strategy (UNEP)
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

Main Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

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

Aim and description of the EMSP

4. UNEP defines ecosystem management as *'an approach to natural resource management that focuses on sustaining ecosystems to meet both ecological and human needs in the future'*, which is based on the CBD's definition of the Ecosystem Approach and forms the framework for the EMSP. The EMSP is centred on i) the functioning and resilience of the ecosystems that provide ecosystem services and ii) equitable access to these services.
5. According to the MTS 2010-2013, the objective of the EMSP is that *'Countries utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being'*. There is no clear statement of the intended environmental (or social) impact and end point of the Subprogramme, rather the aim is that countries adopt an ecosystem approach. There were three expected accomplishments for the 2010-2011 period. These were slightly revised for the 2012-2013 biennium to read as:
 - EA (a) - Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes;
 - EA (b) - Countries and regions have the capacity to utilize and apply ecosystem management tools;
 - EA (c) - Strengthened capacity of countries and regions to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services.
6. There were 16 associated PoW outputs in the 2010-2011 biennium, which were reduced to 10 for the 2012-2013 biennium. The later outputs were significantly revised and are less specific, more strategic and better aligned under the EAs.
7. The Programme of Work (PoW) 2012-2013 indicates that the EMSP's intervention strategy was to: i) influence planning and assistance frameworks at the regional and national levels so that they incorporate a cross-sectoral, integrated approach focusing on ecosystem services, including incorporation of the value of ecosystem services into development planning systems to guide investment decisions; and ii) build the capacities of regional, sub-regional, national and local entities to assess ecosystem degradation, in order to slow down or reverse this trend while managing ecosystems for resilience. Emphasis was to be placed on equity issues and it is noted that the work would build on existing ecosystem programmes and involve cooperation with other initiatives. A global outreach project to 'make the case' for ecosystem management and support national and trans-boundary dialogue was considered a critical element of the overall Subprogramme strategy.

Strategic relevance and mandate

8. The evaluation found that UNEP's involvement in ecosystem management is justified by the global context and growing national priorities. There is a recognised need for increased capacity to tackle the management and restoration of ecosystem services and the mainstreaming of the ecosystem approach into development and economic policy areas, while ecosystem services assessments, particularly ecosystem valuation studies and natural capital accounting, are proving increasingly important in helping to prioritize investment in environmental interventions as part of development and financial assistance frameworks.
9. The overall aims of the EMSP have been relevant and aligned to global and country needs. The EMSP is also well aligned with UNEP's mandate as expressed in several UN General Assembly Resolutions and Reports, UNEP Governing Council Decisions and UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2010.
10. The EMSP has been relevant to the decisions and requests of the biodiversity-related MEAs and provided support for intergovernmental processes, particularly the Regional Seas programme and Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land based Activities (GPA), as well as helping to address UN priorities for attainment of MDGs (MDG 7 - ensure environmental sustainability). The EMSP reflects the CBD call for countries to adopt the ecosystem approach and supports implementation of the updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Contributions to these processes and programmes are often overlooked or underrated in project documents and thus also under-reported.
11. UNEP's comparative advantage in the area of ecosystem management is clear at the global and regional levels, but less so at the local levels due to its limited country presence. Many other organisations are also active in the field of ecosystem management, some with large and well-established work programmes whereas the evaluation found UNEP's visibility within the ecosystem management community to be, in general, low and its distinctive niche not clear. Consequently, there is a risk of overlap and duplication of efforts with other organisations, including other UN agencies. **Recommendation 1: In future EMSP planning documents UNEP should better specify and promote its role and niche in ecosystem management particularly in relation to, and following consultation with, other UN agencies and international NGOs with a greater focus on global- and regional- level interventions, where UNEP has a comparative advantage and can be seen as a leader in the implementation of the ecosystem approach.**
12. Specific criteria were to be applied to the selection of countries (and ecosystems) to be targeted for interventions under the EMSP, with a focus on countries with high biodiversity, high water stress, and recurrent food shortages, as well as those with trans-boundary ecosystems (mountain, forest, river basins, and coastal/marine ecosystems) which would comprise much of the 'regional dimension' of the EMSP. In addition, UNEP was to focus its activities on a limited number of countries requesting its support (emphasis on least developed countries and small island developing states) to achieve more tangible results and greater impact, rather than spreading effort too thinly, particularly where there was clear potential for results and transfer of knowledge or to build synergies with other UNEP subprogrammes, UN agencies and other partners, or where opportunities existed to build on past work.
13. The Subprogramme's awareness raising and mainstreaming activities, and most of its development of tools and methods and other capacity building initiatives have been essentially global in scope during the MTS 2010-2013 and it is not clear whether, or to what extent, the above selection criteria were applied. There is limited documentation on the selection of, or choice between, countries (or how other criteria were applied). Indeed, for a number of projects, implementation had already started and countries and regions had been selected at the beginning of the 2010-2011 biennium, suggesting that, at least initially, the geographic focus (and direction) of the EMSP was guided by legacy projects more than country needs. **Recommendation 2: The EMSP should specify guiding criteria for country selection (set out in the Programme Framework), with the rationale for country selection presented in project proposals and assessed and documented for all projects by the Project Review Committee (PRC) during the project review process (see Recommendations 3 and 9 below). UNEP needs to ensure that local level activities strategically support normative work at the global and regional level.** A country profile database which includes information on country priorities, support requests, past and present support would also greatly aid country selection decisions.

Theory of Change

14. The EMSP did not have a well-articulated Theory of Change (ToC). Attempts to reconstruct a ToC based on the EAs and Programmes of Work (PoW) outputs revealed an overall lack of coherence within the Subprogramme, including EAs that are cumulative and/or sequential in nature; little causal connection between the PoW Outputs

and the EAs (meaning performance at output level is not a good indicator for EA level); poorly articulated linkage between individual project activities and outputs and project outcomes (expressed as EAs or PoW outputs); strategies to accomplish the different EAs are often similar and many projects potentially contribute to multiple EAs or PoW outputs. At a practical level this meant that EAs were frequently characterised as 'accommodating'. In addition, the EAs are formulated at overly ambitious results levels that are largely beyond UNEP's capability to deliver, and are not appropriate to monitor UNEP's progress over the course of PoW implementation, or for the purposes of tracking whether UNEP is reaching its global and country goals. On the other hand the broad nature of the EAs has offered a degree of flexibility to accommodate emerging issues.

15. The EMSP results framework did not provide an adequate basis for focussing the work delivered under the EMSP, or for results based management (RBM). This is reflected in the limited correspondence between the designed EMSP portfolio described in the 2010-2011 Programme Framework and its 2012-2013 extension and the actual project portfolio and associated inability to fully align resources and personnel behind agreed outputs.
16. An underlying difficulty in framing the EMSP is that it is built around a set of approaches, grouped together under the broad concept of ecosystem management. Rather than addressing a specific environmental challenge, such as climate change, harmful substances or disasters and conflicts - ecosystem management is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Indeed, a significant amount of the work UNEP undertakes through its other subprogrammes is also based on, and promotes, the ecosystem approach, even if this is not explicitly stated. However, although the structural weaknesses of the EMSP are well recognised by UNEP staff, and some interviewees questioned whether 'ecosystem management' should be treated as a tool/approach to be integrated into other UNEP subprogrammes rather than a separate subprogramme in itself, ecosystem management is relevant to UNEP's mandate. UNEP has a comparative advantage in the area with a long history of, and identifiable expertise in, ecosystem management.

Performance

i. Effectiveness

Achievement of Expected Accomplishments

17. The lack of coherence and other weaknesses of the Subprogramme logic, combined with poorly formulated EA indicators, a general lack of baselines at both the Subprogramme and project levels, and limited/inaccurate information presented in PIMS and the PPRs, have made it difficult to assess contributions to the EAs and to evaluate the performance of the Subprogramme (See Reporting, below). PPRs ratings on EA delivery over the MTS 2010-2013 consistently indicate that the EMSP has performed less well than the other Subprogrammes since 2010. However, there are recognised weaknesses in the reporting and assessment systems and consequently direct comparison of performance across Subprogrammes (or even between projects) is questionable.
18. Nevertheless, based on the best available evidence, UNEP appears to have achieved the targets it set for the indicators associated with delivery of EA(a) and EA(b) during the MTS 2010-2013, although this depends on the interpretation of the indicator¹. Progress on delivery of the EA(c) is more difficult to gauge and debatable. However, if contributions by individual EMSP projects to all the EAs are considered (as is the case for the final PPR of the 2012-2013 biennium), and not just restricted to the EA they are associated with in PIMS, then all three EAs can be judged to have achieved their targets.

Achievement of immediate outcomes

19. The evaluation reconstructed a ToC for the Subprogramme which identified four Immediate Outcomes (IOs) which correspond to different dimensions of national, regional and global capacity for ecosystem management that can be improved in the short to medium term, and are at the level of results that UNEP can be realistically expected to attain after an implementation period of two to four years. However, given the limitations on availability of data at outcome level the emphasis of the Evaluation's analysis was on assessment of delivery of the services and deliverables from the EMSP that have contributed to, and form the foundations of, these outcomes.

¹ Specifically, whether EMSP project activities in a country can be counted as national results even if the associated activities only occur at the local/site level. This is the interpretation of successful 'country activity' presented in the PPRs.

20. Much of UNEP's work under the EMSP has been focused on developing, adapting and testing a wide range of tools and methodologies that can be used to assess, value, restore, and manage ecosystem services and biodiversity at multiple scales (IO1 - *Strengthened ecosystem management tools and methodologies*), and developed and tested a suite of practical approaches on the valuation of ecosystem services and natural capital accounting and demonstrated (through pilot projects) their integration into policy and investment frameworks (IO2 - *Ecosystem services valuation and natural capital approaches developed and promoted*). UNEP has also improved the technical knowledge base on ecosystem management through assessments and championed the development of knowledge networks, such as the Sub-Global Assessment Network; and information exchange systems to support policy formulation and decision-making on ecosystem management (IO3- *Improved technical knowledge and information systems for policy formulation and decision-making on ecosystem management*). Of particular note has been UNEP's support for the establishment of the IPBES, which will play a key role in strengthening the use of science in policy making, through acting as a knowledge platform linking sources of independent, credible (evidence-based) information on the status and value of biodiversity and ecosystem services to policy/decision-makers, and represents a key deliverable for UNEP during the MTS 2010-2013.
21. Much appreciated assistance has been provided to countries and stakeholder groups to utilise the various tools and approaches through targeted capacity building (workshops and other training events, outreach guidelines, 'how to' manuals, handbooks, etc.) and field projects to demonstrate how these tools and approaches can be used in practice. Capacity building efforts have often been extended through partner initiatives, such as through the Regional Seas Programme and the GPA. Several key publications have resulted from EMSP activities, including the widely praised Inclusive Wealth Report (2012), Green Economy in a Blue World Technical Report and various reports from The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) project, and the 'UNEP Policy Series on Ecosystem Management' publications available on the UNEP website.
22. However, the Subprogramme has lacked a coherent capacity needs analysis that set out what and where specific tools and methodologies were required. Rather, the impression is of a mixed portfolio of initiatives that lack overall coherence and integration, that results from the continuation of work initiated in biennia prior to the 2010-2013 period. In addition, while the EMSP's results relating to natural capital accounting are considered innovative and UNEP is gaining a reputation as a leader in this emerging area, many of the EMSP's 'tools and approaches' activities, such as management plans for protected areas, while valuable to those communities directly involved, are not particularly innovative. **Recommendation 3: UNEP should undertake a country baseline assessment in relation to ecosystem assessment, valuation and management tools and approaches with identification of criteria, , to help better guide the strategy for the SP in future (see Recommendation 9 below).**
23. It is not clear to what extent the various tools and approaches have been adopted and integrated into institutional (both government and non-government) practices and this has not been systematically measured and reported on. Also, despite the clear successes, there is little sense of a coherent/integrated set of UNEP tools and approaches promoted for ecosystem assessment, valuation, management and restoration developed through the EMSP, and no strong 'UNEP identity' or UNEP 'body of work' to this capacity building component of the Subprogramme. In addition, consolidation and better promotion of the various tools already developed and piloted for different ecosystems, highlighting of the relationships and similarities between them, and their presentation in a more user-friendly and accessible manner would add substantial value at the programme level, which, for now, is generally lacking from the EMSP. Consequently, there is a clear need for a Subprogramme-level lessons learning exercise to capture and analyse the experiences of the design, development, implementation and effectiveness of the various tools and approaches developed and promoted by the EMSP to date. **Recommendation 4: UNEP should review, publish and make more readily available its experience on the development, piloting and implementation of ecosystem assessment, valuation, restoration and management tools across a range of ecosystem types. This should be wider than the EMSP, including a review of EM in other Subprogrammes. The review should be used as a basis for developing a set of effective practical tools and approaches (a 'UNEP Ecosystem Assessment and Management Toolkit' or 'how to undertake ecosystem management' manual) for use by in-country practitioners, with a review of their effectiveness based on the best scientific evidence.** EMSP results and the toolkit could be promoted through a web-based, approach – an 'EM-wiki' – to provide an interactive and evolving learning and sharing platform with a 'menu' of tools and applications that can be used for ecosystem management and natural capital accounting. Such a Toolkit and EM-wiki platform would help to strengthen UNEP's position as a leader in the field of EM.
24. A key aim of the EMSP was to increase awareness of the need for the ecosystem approach and ecosystem management among decision-makers and the general public (IO4 - *Increased awareness of the need for the*

ecosystem approach and ecosystem management among decision-makers and the general public). Most of the EMSP's efforts to achieve this were to be delivered through the 'Making the Case' (MTC) project². Unfortunately, this project suffered particular challenges (especially lack of funding) and although corporate level communication efforts around EMSP projects were often strong, overall, communications of key EMSP messages and results has been poorly coordinated and not delivered effectively across the Subprogramme, and in general, communication has been a weak area of Subprogramme delivery.

25. The evaluation found that stakeholders did not have a good understanding of UNEP's ecosystem management work and the case for the ecosystem approach and ecosystem management has not yet been well-made through the EMSP. Awareness-raising and outreach have been hindered by poor documentation of the achievements of UNEP ecosystem management projects, weak collaboration between projects, and the lack of an agreed communication strategy to guide delivery of common messages and information to target audiences resulting in ineffective messaging. Weaknesses in the communication approach and delivery were recognised in 2012 and a review (termed a 'conceptual framework') was commissioned to facilitate a more coherent and integrated approach to communication across the EMSP. Unfortunately, the review could not be delivered in 2013, but it was completed in October 2014 and should help guide the communication of key concepts and messages for the new MTS 2014-2017.
26. The EMSP's online presence came in for particular criticism from both UNEP staff and external interviewees, with its website described as 'poor, outdated and lacking impact'. This does not encourage and support dissemination, replication or catalysis of EMSP project results and presents a poor impression of UNEP. **Recommendation 5: the EMSP website should be completely overhauled as a matter of urgency. It is suggested that a brief summary of each EMSP project is included on the updated Subprogramme website.**
27. Insufficient effort has been made to measure and document/report on whether and to what extent 'awareness and understanding' had been achieved and whether the EMSP has significantly helped change public attitudes, values and behaviours towards biodiversity and ecosystem services. The evaluation found some evidence of successes, notably in relation mainstreaming ecosystem management into development policy and planning. However, it is not clear how effective the means and approaches employed in communicating the key messages and information on the EMSP have been in bringing about behavioural change. To this end, an independent evaluation of UNEP's communications work to track and assess the use and impact of the UNEP's communications, outreach and advocacy work. is being considered. This should provide evidence of the utility and effectiveness of UNEP's communications work and provide lessons for the design of future communication and outreach initiatives at project, subprogramme and corporate levels.
28. Communications is a core, cross-cutting and cross-divisional activity that is integral to delivering on the EMSP and runs through all its projects. This would have been more effective if it had been organized at the Subprogramme level and applied across all EMSP projects with a coherent set of messages and standard materials. Projects which had their own independent and well-resourced communication plans with high internal capacity to address communication needs have been the most successful in getting their messages across, whilst those which invested little achieved less. Elsewhere communications were sometimes hindered by an attitude that communication was 'technically easy' and did not require specialist input. **Recommendation 6: Communication should be treated more strategically across all EMSP projects. UNEP should ensure that communication and outreach activities are integrated into each project from the project design stage with a dedicated budget line for such activities. The role of DCPI should be clearly documented in project documents/supplements, and each project should have a specific communication strategy. A role for SPCs should be to identify opportunities for collaborative communication activities across the project portfolio both within and beyond the EMSP.**

Attainment of higher level results and likelihood of impacts

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

² The 'Making the case for ecosystem services - a global outreach and communications package' project, led by DCPI.

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

31. Successful mainstreaming of ecosystem management into policy and planning at the national level is necessarily a long-term process and often beyond UNEP's comparative advantage and resources, given the lack of direct presence in most countries, limited resources in UNEP ROs and UNEP's short-term planning processes. However, there is evidence of *improved enabling conditions (institutional, legal and policy) for integrating ecosystem approach into development, economic and financial planning and decision-making frameworks (MTO2)*. The EMSP has helped countries to identify ecosystem management needs, and supported the formulation of national policies, strategies and plans that integrate ecosystem management approaches into environment, development, and economic and financial sectors. UNEP has also helped strengthen existing sector-specific regulatory frameworks, with good results from several projects. However, the evaluation found that linkages between the site-level ecosystem management and restoration work and the global/regional normative work were not fully exploited in some cases leading to some missed opportunities in terms of influencing policy, knowledge exchange and mobilization of global partnerships. Opportunities for UNEP to add value have been lost where project efforts at local level have not been explicitly linked to strategic objectives (such as piloting or demonstrating tools and methodologies to inform policy).
32. UNEP has had some notable success with incorporating the value of ecosystem services into economic, financial planning and investment decision-making, including work with a number of leading global financial institutions to develop methods to integrate ecosystem services into their global and national strategies and operations, and development and promotion of the Natural Capital Declaration. UNEP assessments and reports addressing the value of ecosystem services and natural capital are considered to have considerable potential to improve national economic and development strategies and policies. UNEP's work in this area, notably through the high profile TEEB project, is considered to have made the benefits of ecosystems more visible to economics, and helped encourage countries to move towards a green economy.
33. EMSP project design and country selection were not well aligned with some key national or country focussed processes – for instance, mainstreaming of EMSP projects into the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative was reported to be generally weak. **Recommendation 7: the EMSP should develop stronger linkage with key national processes and opportunities particularly those looking to mainstream environment into development, poverty reduction or financial sector policy (project designs should include specific activities, and project budgets provide earmarked resources, to support such mainstreaming where appropriate). The Regional Offices should have a key role in this process in close collaboration with the SPC.** UNEP could provide targeted inputs, such as ecosystem management tools and approaches, and policy guidance directly into existing or planned mainstreaming interventions being led by other partners (rather than creating new mainstreaming structures and processes itself).
34. Although not well defined in EMSP project documentation, the ultimate anticipated environmental and social impact can be stated as *'functional and resilient ecosystems that provide ecosystem services sustainably with an equitable sharing of the benefits and costs of protecting ecosystem services among society'*. Evidence of EMSP contributions to such high level impacts is very limited to date, although this is not surprising as reversal in ecosystem degradation and improved ecosystem resilience are very unlikely to be delivered at any significant scale over UNEP's 4-year MTS period. Nevertheless, there have been a few encouraging signs of success at a local scale including restoration efforts in Mau Forest and along the Tana River in Kenya, at Lake Faguibine in Mali and through the GRASP and Lifeweb projects.
35. With regard to *'enhancing human well-being'*, there has been little direct monitoring within the Subprogramme and it is difficult to assess. There is some evidence of improvements in human well-being (economic, social, health status) but it is mostly at local level and there are questions over sustainability of these results. Promotion of the green economy through EMSP activities can also be seen as relevant for enhancing well-being although, again, this has not been adequately documented by any EMSP projects.
36. There is little evidence to show that gender issues have been addressed to any significant extent within the EMSP, although some projects have made an effort to encourage participation of women in the project activities. The evaluation's findings are in line with the conclusions of previous evaluations and reviews and

reiterate the need for specific attention to be paid to this issue within UNEP. Specific treatment of equity issues has been a further weakness within the EMSP and represents a similar lost opportunity to engage key audiences. The principal activity set to address this issue under the EMSP was to be a set of actions dealing with support for the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. However, the Protocol was still not in force by the end of 2013, so there have been limited opportunities to deliver planned EMSP activities in the 2010-2013 period.

37. UNEP's global normative work, such as work of the TEEB project and the marine programme within the EMSP, is considered to have greater potential for long-term results and impact than activities at a local level as the former plays to UNEP's mandate and comparative strengths, such as its significant convening power to help move processes such as IPBES forward. However, although UNEP does not have a strong presence in most countries and there has been criticism of some local projects that have added little value, UNEP's experience at national and local level (often in collaboration with partners) brings credibility to its normative work and anchors it in real world situations, and part of UNEP's added value lies in its ability to link work on ecosystem management at these differing levels. Consequently, UNEP needs to ensure that local level activities strategically support global and regional level interventions, through a pilot and demonstration approach, and not as interventions for their own sake.
38. A coherent Subprogramme logic and framework with clear selection criteria for choice of projects would help better define and limit the EMSP to areas where it can be most effective and have most impact. However, several project managers suggested that many projects will need to be continued in order to achieve intended impacts and will need additional support, particularly with regards to policy level activities.

Efficiency

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

Sustainability

40. Prospects for sustainability of EMSP results are mixed. National government agencies are in many cases the primary beneficiaries of UNEP's support and frequently the key executing partner. Consequently, national government ownership is usually high, which supports sustainability. Many of the EMSP's outputs are policy guidelines, briefings, handbooks and other documents for use by governments and other decision-makers, and a certain degree of 'sustainability' can be said to have been achieved once these have been adopted or mainstreamed into relevant policies, plans and legislation (although their implementation is up to governments or partners and outside of UNEP's direct control). Furthermore, many of the tools developed or assessments undertaken by the EMSP projects have been captured in reports and publications that are available for download to other institutions involved in capacity development for ecosystem management, which supports sustainability and replication of project results. While some projects have had specific strategies to disseminate technical outputs, in other instances it is unclear who should promote these knowledge products.
41. Prospects for institutional sustainability have also been supported by the EMSP's development, support and promotion of various knowledge networks to encourage information exchange, peer learning, and the transfer of experience on ecosystem management and restoration, such as the Sub-Global Assessment (SGA) network and the IPBES.
42. However, several factors work against the EMSP's sustainability prospects. The lack of an overall EMSP strategy to ensure a coherent approach to capacity development has reduced the likelihood of institutional sustainability. In addition, sustainability is not considered to any significant extent in EMSP project documents which generally lack an 'exit strategy', and hand-over modalities to ensure continuity are usually unclear. Indeed, some projects in the portfolio are essentially 'rolling projects' with often a significant external demand (and expectation) for UNEP to continue a project if it has been successful. UNEP needs to manage these expectations and to avoid creating (UNEP) dependency. Also, a number of project managers felt that

sustainability is compromised because planning periods are generally too short – it is very difficult to achieve institutional sustainability for ecosystem management in two to four years especially given the time required for project inception and the usually limited funding available at the start of the programme cycle (and further resource mobilisation is often seriously impacted by the short planning cycle). Projects need to be designed with realistic timelines and not just to fit within UN planning cycles (See recommendation 14 below).

43. In addition, UNEP's support has quite often been narrowly focused on one or a small number of government and non-government institutions and frequently depends on a relatively small number of key personnel within these institutions. This may pose a risk to sustainability if the institution loses political support in the country, is restructured, or if key staff are transferred or leave. Even in the countries where UNEP has already provided intensive support, awareness and capacity for ecosystem management remains fragile and may need further strengthening for a considerable time to come. It is clear from the case studies that at least some EMSP projects will need continued investment and commitment from UNEP or partners for some years for project results to become sustainable, although it is often unclear how this would be achieved or who should be responsible (again a reflection of the lack of an exit strategy). Civil conflict and political instability has also compromised institutional sustainability of some elements of some projects within the EMSP. A longer-term, more comprehensive and strategic approach to capacity building is needed, and prospects for sustainability of capacity building activities would be enhanced if they were set in a clear framework for UNEP's EMSP work in regions and countries (see Recommendation 2). **Recommendation 8: The EMSP should target a broader range of longer-term strategically important government and non-government institutions partners/participants in its projects to reduce dependency on just a small number of individuals.** The EMSP could, for example, consider longer-term training/capacity development efforts to minimise the risk arising from loss of key individuals. **Regional Offices should be much more involved in partner/participant consultations as they have a long-term perspective on capacity building efforts.**
44. Sustainability of inputs by communities and civil society also remains a concern, partly because UNEP does not have a strong presence at the local level and local partner organisations usually have their own delivery and sustainability challenges. Also, judging from the case studies, some EMSP projects did not implement the governance structures envisaged in project documents (such as project steering committees), which has sometimes jeopardised the prospects for sustainability, particularly of local results, although there were exceptions, notably the TEEB. The lack of specific funding for stakeholder involvement at the project development phase also undermines ownership, and ultimately sustainability, and needs to be addressed by UNEP (see Recommendation 12 below).
45. The Regional Offices play an important role in ensuring sustainability of projects through monitoring, supporting resource mobilisation, and follow-up, and there is a clear need for them to become more engaged during design and implementation of the Subprogramme. ROs could play an increased role in ensuring that EMSP projects become better embedded in national and regional frameworks. The recent organisational changes to strengthen UNEP's regional focus will result in increased resources and personnel at the RO level which should help address these issues – but this increased support to facilitate sustainability efforts needs to be made explicit.

Replication, up-scaling and catalysis

46. Replication and up-scaling of UNEP's direct results is essential to drive change at a larger scale, beyond the relatively few partner countries and demonstration sites of the EMSP. Unfortunately, most EMSP projects examined did not have an explicit, coherent strategy for replication and up-scaling of results for the 2010-2013 period, and these aspects were usually only briefly mentioned in project documents. Also, there was no overall replication strategy or approved communications plan for the Subprogramme as a whole (which could have been another source of added value at Subprogramme level). Although there are some encouraging signs of further interest, there is no evidence that replication to other countries has taken place to any significant extent. Despite the lack of a coherent, well-articulated strategy, the technical deliverables and demonstration activities under EA(b) combined with enabling work under EA(a) and EA(c) do provide a sound foundation (or strategy) for scaling up the EMSP results (less so replication). The EMSP has also played a catalytic role by assisting some countries to accede to key multilateral environmental agreements, notably the Nagoya Protocol (in collaboration with the EGSP) and supporting countries to fulfil their obligations under various conventions, particularly CBD commitments, although this has been limited.
47. The evaluation generally found little evidence of deliberate use of EMSP products by other partners (government agencies, civil society, international organisations etc.) beyond expressions of interest, and some opportunities and routes for replication and up-scaling through partners and internal UNEP links such as very

limited involvement with dissemination of EMSP project results by DEPI's Environmental Education and Training Unit. Surprisingly, there was little evidence of uptake of EMSP results by other UN agencies despite formal collaborative technical agreements/partnerships with some other UN agencies working on ecosystem management and the ecosystem approach, e.g. UNDP, UNESCO and FAO, and some UN agency interviewees were largely unaware of the EMSP or its results. GEF projects, whilst responding to GEF priorities could build on UNEP work and assist in scaling up and replication of initiatives developed with non-GEF resources. The complementarity of GEF supported work to the UNEP and EMSP planning process should always be considered at the early stages of concept development. **Recommendation 9: UNEP should i) develop stronger operational partnerships with other key UN agencies and consider establishing a 'community of practice' on ecosystem management among the UN agencies involved with biodiversity and ecosystem services (perhaps also involving other key partners) to support replication and catalysis (this could be promoted through the UNEP-chaired UN Environmental Management Group); ii) promote greater linkage between future pilot and demonstration work and larger projects, such as GEF projects, or established processes, such as the Regional Seas Programme, as this would help promote replication, and iii) strengthen working relationships with networks associated with other UNEP Subprogrammes which employ ecosystem-based approaches, such as the climate change adaptation and REDD+ networks under the CCSP notably with regard to development and promotion of learning products.**

48. Part of the reason for the lack of emphasis on replication and catalysis is that projects are not well designed to keep track of these, and there are often no specific activities to promote replication/catalysis (there is a general lack of milestones and indicators to measure up-take, replication and catalysis). Replication often takes place after a project has ended so would need to be measured at the Subprogramme level with resources established to track this. Indeed, replication and catalysis may be occurring more frequently than measured, but, since they are not being properly tracked, it is impossible to determine to what extent, unless a project is particularly visible or the project manager is active in follow-up. **Recommendation 10: UNEP should ensure that a Subprogramme-level replication strategy is developed and that all projects have a clear replication strategy/framework, with funding and responsibilities for monitoring replication/catalysis clearly identified in their project document and reported on in PIMS.** The EMSP could consider conducting a survey of the current use of EMSP products and services, particularly by other UN agencies, as base information for such a strategy.
49. The shortcomings in UNEP's approach to replication have been recognized and, according to some interviewees, UNEP is now encouraging projects to give more attention to replication and up-scaling with increasing pressure for project managers to build them into their work.

Factors affecting subprogramme performance

50. There are a number of factors that have contributed positively or negatively to the delivery and performance of the EMSP during the 2010-2013 period, or which have put the future sustainability of achievements at risk.

Subprogramme structure and design and portfolio

51. The EMSP was largely built on UNEP's strengths and capabilities, which can be seen as strategic or at least pragmatic, although the resulting Subprogramme can also be characterised as supply driven in the sense that it largely adopted approaches and themes on which UNEP had been working in previous biennia. As the ToC analysis showed, the Subprogramme design was weak with a confused causal logic and no 'clear story line'. This has made it difficult to understand and communicate the EMSP both within UNEP and externally, and many of the Subprogramme's other deficiencies arise from its initial design weaknesses.
52. The development of the original project concepts in the EMSP framework for the MTS 2010-2013 was pragmatic reflecting ongoing work and interests. The rationale for this was twofold: i) that delivery of the PoW should build on UNEP's strengths and established comparative advantage and ii) the programme should accommodate the ongoing work of DEPI. The antecedents of the programme are evident in the EAs for the period 2008-2009 and in several long-running UNEP projects. In practice, there is only a limited correspondence between the designed EMSP portfolio described in the 2010-2011 Programme Framework and 2012-2013 extension and the actual project portfolio. The Programme Framework included 14 project concepts and the extension document added two more. However, there were a total of 31 active projects³ during the

³ Active projects were projects that implemented activities during the stated period, as opposed to projects that did not secure funding, were cancelled or suspended or were included in the PoW despite all activities having been completed before the start of the biennium.

2010-2011 PoW, and 25 projects during the 2012-2013 PoW. Only seven of these implemented projects were presented as a project concept in the Programme Framework or its extension document. The remaining project concepts seemed to have been implemented through several separate projects. However, the links between the remaining concepts and implemented projects were not always clear.

53. Most GEF work housed in DEPI can readily be linked to the PoW results framework for the EMSP but there was no real integration of EM-related GEF supported projects into the PoWs 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. Full integration of GEF portfolio into UNEP planning and reporting processes requires additional support through more 'organic' means that foster a culture of dialogue among staff with common thematic interests. UNEP staff dealing with GEF projects should be engaged in EMSP strategic thinking that should precede and complement more formal PoW and work planning processes.

Project Design, Approval and Revisions

54. The case studies undertaken in the context of the evaluation highlighted a range of selection and design issues at project level, often linked to UNEP's wider systems and processes. While these are not necessarily unique to the EMSP they have affected delivery of the EMSP.
55. The quality of project proposals reviewed for the evaluation case studies was variable. For example, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and partners were often poorly identified, some projects appear to have been funded without a full project document, and complementarities with other relevant projects such as those delivering to the same PoW Output or same thematic area were rarely detailed. However, the quality of project documents has improved over the MTS period.
56. The introduction of the requirement for all UNEP projects to have a ToC should help strengthen the project logic and structure. However, knowledge and experience of ToCs was found to be limited among EMSP staff and several project teams struggled with project logic and definition of outcomes, outputs and especially indicators during the design of their project document for the MTS 2014-2017. **Recommendation 11: UNEP needs to provide additional training in ToC/causal pathway design for both junior and senior staff to enable them to design more coherent, logically consistent ecosystem management projects and to plan better for future impact.**
57. There has been limited investment in project planning and development with resources sometimes drawn from ongoing projects. Limited consultation and planning with partners, stakeholders and ROs, has resulted in some projects being rather top-down in nature. There has also been no funding for establishing baselines against which subsequent progress and achievements could be measured. The ROs are vested with a responsibility to identify regional needs, but there is no specific budget for conducting needs assessments and it is unclear what current EMSP contributions to the ROs is actually intended to deliver. The evaluation also noted little or no awareness of the availability of (limited) project development funding amongst project managers (PMs) or for ROs. **Recommendation 12: UNEP should establish a mechanism to provide upfront financing for project development of larger strategically important initiatives with a clarification on how such projects are identified.** Project development funding is considered vital for proper project design, project stakeholder, country and donor consultation, and, ideally, should provide for initial baseline data collection.
58. Several EMSP projects were approved by the PRC with little or no secured funding. This shortfall in funding led to a need to downscale projects, with activities reduced or cancelled, particularly in the case of demonstration projects. This had repercussions on UNEP's image among donors and stakeholders. In the evaluation's view, projects should not agree on country level activities prior to securing funding in order to avoid changes in delivery plans and the consequent reputational risks. On the other hand, projects should factor in adequate project scoping and inception phases to allow adaptations based on consultations with partners. Another important issue raised was that some projects (including GEF projects) could only be modified to a limited extent following PRC advice as they had, sometimes, already been approved by donors prior to PRC review. **Recommendation 13: UNEP should consider a 2-stage process for project approval. At stage one, a more detailed project concept from the approved Programme Framework would be designed. The PRC could give initial approval to the project at that stage. PRC approval of the complete project document would only come after the project has raised (or has guarantees of) a minimum of 50% of funds.** However, attention would need to be given to ensure that this did not cause fragmentation of projects into small components. UNEP needs to recognise and plan for a pre-inception period [for EMSP projects] following concept approval to allow for fundraising and reorientation or modification of the design and implementation details if required. An inception phase for activities such as hiring staff and negotiating partner agreements should be considered for larger or more complex (multi-partner) projects.

59. Many of the EMSP projects are complex combining normative work (such as technical guidelines and policy work) with field interventions (pilot or demonstration projects), operate at multiple geographical scales (e.g. local, national and regional), and/or involve large multi-stakeholder or intergovernmental processes. Components in larger projects are sometimes interdependent and sequential in nature. Work aimed at changing policy needs to be synchronised with government policy cycles that are beyond UNEP's immediate control, while 'on the ground' ecosystem management work typically involves stakeholder processes that take considerable time to become self-sustaining and bring about change. Consequently, the two-year timeframe for the EAs and PoW outputs is insufficient for meaningful delivery of ecosystem management-related projects, and has also proved arbitrary and counterproductive for long-term programmes that are designed and managed as partnership initiatives and for intergovernmental processes supported by UNEP. Whilst the 2-4 year UNEP planning arrangement cannot be changed, projects could be adapted to work around these constraints. **Recommendation 14: UNEP needs to consider a longer programmatic perspective if it wishes to achieve better impact (and sustainability) in ecosystem management. In other words, project timelines should be realistic for the planned intervention rather than artificially required to correspond to PoW / MTS periods.** (See also recommendations 28 and 29).
60. A major issue relating to subprogramme organisation and management (not exclusive to the EMSP) has been the difficulty in balancing accountability and flexibility, which also shows up as an alignment issue. In practice many of the more complex projects within the EMSP were designed over a longer period (typically four years) or have had to be extended. Projects need to develop supplements at the start of a new biennium and to realign the project to new PoW outputs. While useful from an adaptive management perspective, the repeated use of supplements can create 'drift' in project objectives and strategies and rolling results frameworks and budgets, which undermines accountability to the originally approved results and creates a tension between accountability and flexibility. Several of the case study projects are effectively operating in a programme mode with the final project bearing little resemblance to the original approved project. Whilst flexibility is clearly needed to accommodate emerging opportunities and earmarked funding for activities in accordance with UNEP's mandate, there is a risk here that such projects grow in an opportunistic manner and skew the overall subprogramme delivery. This can sometimes undermine the rigour that a project modality is expected to bring in terms of accountability and RBM.
61. 'Umbrella' projects⁴ and other 'programme' projects are a particular problem. New components added to approved 'umbrella' projects are not subject to the same level of scrutiny by PRC as entirely new projects even where, from the donor perspective, they are stand-alone projects. Their identity may be lost in a larger 'umbrella' project leading to loss of accountability to the donor-approved results. Similarly, whilst the work may be valuable and it may be relevant to the EMSP, accountability to the original expected results is sometimes lost. This is exacerbated by the limited ability to link expenditure to activities. **Recommendation 15: UNEP should avoid approval of new 'umbrella' projects and expansion or extension of existing 'umbrella' projects with activities not envisaged and budgeted in the original proposal. The UNEP Programme Manual should provide clear guidance on when a separate, stand-alone project needs to be established for project management and accountability purposes. New projects should be established for large earmarked grants.**
62. UNEP is seeking to move away from single sector projects that look at only one thematic area, and to develop a larger more strategic vision. This would improve delivery of the ecosystem management approach, but there was some concern over how to develop common goals and messaging and to manage relationships with donors, when smaller projects are strung together (potential conflicts due to separate accountability to donors and the PoW being an issue for instance). In the evaluation's opinion fewer more strategic projects with a team of people running a larger project and donors buying into a shared project document, rather than each individual running a small project, would probably be better, and more emphasis should be placed on developing larger integrated projects in the future. However, attention needs to be given to ensure this approach does not lead to a new generation of 'umbrella' projects where discrete interventions are merely 'packaged' together and the mutual interdependencies and interactions among the project components / 'sub-projects' are minimal or non-existent.
63. Finally, project supervision arrangements were found to be inadequate in some cases. Most projects have no formal advisory or steering committee and therefore, have no "external" entity to review progress and to provide strategic guidance. In addition, project teams were generally small and management and supervision functions were often fulfilled by the same persons. Under these circumstances, there is a risk of management

⁴ These are projects that are composed of a set of stand-alone components (that could be managed as separate projects) where each of the components is not dependent on another to achieve their immediate outcome. Umbrella projects tend to have higher-level results that each of the components contributes to, but the immediate outcome of components are different.

issues not being picked up quickly and opportunities for mutual support and learning between teams in the Subprogramme can be lost. Administrative regulations and procedures in UNEP are also not well adapted for field-based operations and have led to many delays and frustrations, which sometimes affected the credibility of UNEP in the eyes of partners.

Sub-programme organisation and management

i. Accountability Framework

64. The overall lead Division for the EMSP is DEPI, with other Divisions accountable for specified outputs in each of the two PoW periods. The day-to-day work of programme coordination was the responsibility of a sub-programme coordinator (SPC) reporting to the Division Director. There were three EMSPCs during the evaluation period, typically supported by one administrative or junior professional officer.
65. Issues associated with the UNEP's accountability framework that have affected delivery of the programme of work have been raised in a number of other evaluations. Recurring issues include: i) the lead division centred nature of decision making; ii) limited authority of the SPC or lead Division over PoW outputs, projects or activities delegated to other accountable Divisions; iii) limited authority of the SPC that is not commensurate with responsibilities; iv) limited involvement of UNEP's Regional Offices in programming and project delivery; and, v) predominance of a divisional culture over a one UNEP culture.
66. The current evaluation confirmed that these factors affected EMSP delivery during the 2010-2013 period. Interviewees particularly expressed the view that real decision-making power related to the EMSP rested with the lead Division Director and that the SPC had a limited role and lacked authority which affected the SPC's ability to coordinate the programme particularly with regard to project and portfolio design, ensuring adequate reporting, and, crucially, in relation to resource allocation. This reinforced a perception that EMSP has been primarily a DEPI programme which to some extent inhibited collaboration and linkage with other Divisions and Subprogrammes. However, new organisational arrangements put in place during the first months of 2014 as well as the increased seniority of SPCs are expected to contribute substantially to resolving these issues.
67. The EMSP has had a limited programmatic / collective identity and dynamic that has added little value to the overall Subprogramme, and has been perhaps the single biggest weakness of the Subprogramme. The main purpose of the programmatic layer has been to align projects within the portfolio, which has been accomplished to a certain extent but is uneven (with the result that some projects have drifted or are less relevant to the Subprogramme).
68. There has also been no real sense of a team effort across the EMSP and cohesion and team-work within the Subprogramme could be improved. Some synergies and inter-linkages exist between certain projects but overall these are poor and staff still primarily identify with Divisions/Offices, Branches and Units and to some extent thematic areas, rather than with the EMSP and UNEP PoW. From the operational and management context, this indicates a weak Subprogramme identity and ownership, and the EMSP is essentially only regarded within a planning context.
69. The consequences of this poor linkage include: i) production of a suite of deliverables that lacked a broader strategic coherence; ii) failure to capitalise on experience across the UNEP network and the EMSP in order to promote learning, replication, uptake of tools, and catalysis of results; iii) missed opportunities for strengthening partnerships, collaboration, and resource mobilisation; iv) loss of opportunities for profiling UNEP's overall work on ecosystem management, for sharing experiences and for learning; and v) potential overlap of UNEP efforts at regional or country level. **Recommendation 16: The EMSP should encourage stronger inter-project, intra-divisional and cross-divisional consultation and cooperation as well as systematic communication, knowledge exchange and experience sharing between the EMSP projects, and the different functional units and Divisions involved with the EMSP.** Measures that would strengthen collaboration could include; i) developing and promoting thematic working groups, such as UNEP's Water Working Group (such groups should be cross-cutting inter/intra-divisional and GEF/non-GEF); ii) better pooling of resources and knowledge management for joint-planning and implementation to allow for more efficient collaboration among different Divisions involved in the EMSP; and iii) establishment of better mechanisms for sharing funds amongst Divisions tied to a collaboration link and with clear accountability. It is expected that the SPCs working together through the Programme Strategy and Planning Team will strengthen project linkages across the PoW and the SPC should pay close attention to country level/regional coherence at the programme framework design stage. Together these would help avoid two EMSP projects delivering similar work in a same country.

70. Several key strategic initiatives that would have strengthened the programmatic layer were not prioritized, notably communications (especially the MTC project) and products linked to a specific lesson learning project that was never funded. Lesson learning is poor and inconsistent across the Subprogramme, with very little interaction and learning between the different projects in the EMSP and sharing expertise is weak to the point where some projects are operating as silos (reflecting an organizational level problem). Lesson learning has been further weakened by the failure to deliver a key EMSP-level learning project. There is no real format or process to capture and formalise lessons learned and more guidance is needed on this, including clarity over what the purpose of these lessons are and who is supposed to learn them. It may be useful to introduce narrative reports more widely, even where not required by donors, with a focus on lesson learning. Significant value could be added at the Subprogramme level through improved internal learning processes and more coherent approaches to the development and use of learning products. **Recommendation 17: Lesson learning needs to be expanded and restructured at both the project and Subprogramme level. The EMSPC should develop processes to collate and share lessons from past and ongoing projects to promote learning. Reporting should include more detail on what did not work as well as the successes. Given its experience in the area, the UNEP Evaluation Office could advise on how best to capture and report on lessons learned. Attention needs to be given to Subprogramme-level learning (to be led by the SPC), and how to capture good project lessons (led by the project managers). The SPC should help ensure that these lessons are then integrated into the design of new EMSP projects.** Reflective/evaluative processes such as annual steering committee or annual project team meetings or mid-term of final evaluation processes would be suitable for lesson learning.

ii. Regional Delivery

71. There is an increasing (and almost overwhelming) demand for UNEP support on EMSP issues at country level but ROs currently have had very limited financial and human resources to meet this demand and staff are frequently over-stretched. Out-posted Divisional personnel have provided useful support in this regard, though relatively few have been out-posted DEPI staff who could provide technical assistance. At the same time, projects implemented in a particular country have sometimes been designed as separate interventions with few if any linkages, and there is little sense of a coherent portfolio of EMSP projects at country level. Interviewees emphasized that joint planning (including the ROs) both within the EMSP and with projects under other UNEP SPs would enable the EMSP to better respond to country needs, reduce overlaps and replication, and strengthen the overall Subprogramme structure.
72. The role given to ROs within the EMSP has been inadequate during the MTS 2010-2013. Field activities and capacity building initiatives were reported to have been developed in a top-down manner at headquarters level with insufficient consultation with ROs, and little interaction with countries in establishing priorities, designing interventions and determining allocation of resources. This generated concerns regarding: i) failure to exploit 'intelligence' on country and regional situations gathered by the ROs; ii) inappropriate identification and selection of partners; iii) insufficient attention to continuity, sustainability, and mainstreaming, including through UNDAF processes; and iv) reduced visibility and coherence of the EMSP at country or regional level with a failure to capitalise on synergies with other UNEP work including GEF projects, with the risk of potential duplication or overlap of UNEP efforts at regional or country level.
73. A wide cross-section of interviewees indicated that earlier and more comprehensive involvement of ROs and linkage to UNEP regional assessments would result in design of a PoW that better responds to the needs of countries, and that joint planning and implementation arrangements need to be put in place. There is a need for more clarity and agreement on modalities on how to develop, implement and resource the PoW through and with the ROs and the countries, and ROs need to be seen as part of the overall team.
74. ROs could also play a more important role at the country level, even taking over the coordination of the longer-term projects, as has happened with the Iraq Marshlands Project which is now managed by ROWA. But for the ROs to run longer-term projects efficiently, their operational capacity, funding and delegated authority need to be improved. **Recommendation 18: UNEP needs to ensure that ROs are more systematically involved in planning at programme and project level and ensure they are fully involved in implementation, delivery and resource mobilisation. Where there is a clear implementation role for a RO in a project this must be clearly specified in the project document and budget. RO staff should work together with UNEP headquarters more collaboratively on fundraising.** The recent changes to the ROs should help with these as should the recently revised (draft) UNEP project document template which requires clear identification of involvement of ROs which will be assessed by the PRC during the project review process.

iii. Linkages with other Subprogrammes and Divisions

75. The EMSP has natural affinities with the CCSP and DCSP, but synergies tend to happen based on personal contacts and on a case-by-case basis rather than through joint programming. Whilst some EMSP project managers have sought to engage with other relevant projects and subprogrammes, many opportunities for linkage and knowledge exchange within UNEP have been missed. Despite ecosystem management being widely employed in other UNEP subprogrammes, the EMSP has no formal UNEP-wide advisory or coordination role in the area of ecosystem management. The evaluation also found limited evidence of linkage between EMSP projects where the potential for strong linkage and synergies would seem to exist such as in the area of ecosystem service valuation and economics projects.
76. This weak internal collaboration and exchange has been exacerbated by several factors such as the difficulties of pooling resources across Divisions, weak incentives to promote in-house collaboration, and a lack of dedicated staff time for knowledge exchange and mutual support. The requirement to align a project under a single subprogramme and EA in PIMS encourages compartmentalization and works against developing synergies and collaboration across Divisions and subprogrammes. **Recommendation 19: UNEP should develop stronger connections between the EMSP and other UNEP ecosystem management work at both conceptual and programmatic levels, particularly with the ecosystem based adaptation (EbA) work in the CCSP and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (DRR) work in the DCSP. Measures that would strengthen collaboration between subprogrammes could include: i) regular meetings between the SPCs to facilitate joint planning, which would help to develop joint policies and ensure that the designed activities and outputs are more closely coordinated (focal points or PoW output managers could also play a more active role to support cross-divisional and cross subprogramme collaboration); ii) linking knowledge management systems in UNEP, and iii) establishment of an UNEP interdivisional forum or working group on ecosystem management to discuss ecosystem management issues and the future design of the Subprogramme (to include the SPC and staff from ROs and other Divisions).** These would all help improve the sense of identity and ownership of the EMSP within UNEP. Many of the measures suggested for improving better coordination, collaboration and lesson learning at the EMSP level under Recommendation 17 above would also support improved cross-subprogramme collaboration, given these two issues are cross-cutting and closely tied.

iv. Human and financial resources and management

77. Except for the SPC position, turnover of project staff within the EMSP during the 2010-2013 period seems to have been relatively low. Consequently, there is a good organizational memory among EMSP project staff, and to a large degree the EMSP has developed around the existing expertise within DEPI. EMSP staff were competent and capable, if often overstretched, able to deliver quality work within deadlines. However, motivation of staff delivering EMSP projects was undermined by the feeling of insufficient transparency in decision making in EMSP programming and particularly over resource allocation. Interviewees often mentioned that more training is needed, particularly on RBM, and that RO staff especially feel they have not received the same level of training opportunities as staff at UNEP headquarters. However, it should be noted that there will be dedicated regional coordinators from 2014-2015, which should help address the above issues to some extent.
78. At the time of this evaluation, Subprogramme-level contributions did not feature in divisional and individual workplans⁵, and it was not possible to determine to what extent the EMSP was delivered by UNEP staff, although some projects were known to have relied heavily on consultants.
79. The total planned budget for the EMSP during the MTS 2010-2013 period was US\$ 131.7 million and the total allocated budget for the same period was US\$ 147.6 million. The Environment Fund (EF) budget was lower than had been planned during both biennia (US\$ 71 million planned vs. US\$ 58 million allocated), but financial resources through Trust Funds and Earmarked Contributions were considerably higher (US\$ 55 million planned vs. US\$ 84 million allocated). The EMSP was the second largest recipient of EF amongst the Subprogrammes during 2010-2013 after the EGSP but only the fourth largest in terms of attracting extra-budgetary funding after the CCSP, EGSP and RESP. Norway, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands and Japan have been the most significant donors of extra-budgetary funding to the EMSP (not listed in the order of significance). During the period covered by the MTS 2010-2013, 78% of the EMSP EF funds were allocated for posts and the remaining staff positions were funded through extra-budgetary and RB resources.
80. Financial data related to the EMSP was often incomplete and confusing, which made it difficult to comprehensively examine how the EMSP budget was allocated among projects and Divisions or to determine how the funds were used once they had been allocated to other Divisions. If the relationship between financial

⁵ DEPI did not have a Divisional workplan indicating how much of its staff time is associated with the EMSP.

expenditure and programmatic activity is not clear, there can be no meaningful assessment of 'value for money'. Project managers do not have access to reliable financial information and tools, and do not have sufficient responsibility and accountability for project finance management. **Recommendation 20: Project Managers and Fund Management Officers should ensure there are adequate records of project expenditure against project activities. UNEP should ensure that financial management tool and processes facilitate this.**

81. The EMSP has lacked a resource mobilisation strategy and guidelines (unlike some other subprogrammes) and resources mobilisation has been uncoordinated at the EMSP level. None of the case study projects had developed clear resource mobilisation strategies, and they adopted different approaches to resource mobilisation. The lack of a coherent Subprogramme story line that can be communicated to potential donors has also limited the opportunities for successful fund-raising. **Recommendation 21: The EMSP should pursue a more coordinated and collaborative fund raising strategy and develop a specific resource mobilisation strategy for future Subprogrammes. The EMSP should explore broadening its donor base with greater targeting of the private sector (see Recommendation 25).**
82. Uncertainty over how much of the planned budget would materialize had negative implications on planning and delivery of the EMSP portfolio projects, with particular difficulties in terms of establishing realistic project milestones and planning costly, longer-term field interventions that involved partners. Also, there was some confusion among UNEP staff delivering EMSP projects on how extra-budgetary resources were allocated within the EMSP, and there was a general opinion among interviewees that resource allocation in the EMSP lacked transparency, and a demand for a more transparent and strategic process of allocation of Environment Fund, Trust Fund and Extra Budgetary funds. ROs in particular felt they are "down-stream" of resource allocation decisions. The MTE of the MTS recommended basing resource allocation on formally approved Divisional workplans, and allocating EF resources foremost to core functions of UNEP. These recommendations are further reinforced by the findings of this evaluation. **Recommendation 22: The allocation of EMSP resources should be clarified. The EMSP should develop principles and criteria to inform and guide resource allocation decisions for the EMSP.**
83. During 2010-2013, the actual EF budget was lower than that envisaged but financial resources received through Trust Funds and Earmarked Contributions were higher. However, in general, EMSP projects were over optimistic when it came to their aims and budgets during the MTS 2010-2013. This can be at least partly attributed to the prevailing corporate guidance during the design phase (2008-2009) to 'think big' and hence project managers designed ambitious projects that were not realistic with respect to resource mobilisation prospects. Shortfalls in resource mobilisation particularly affected the first biennium, where many projects began without adequate funding and some with no funding at all. Whilst the evaluation was not able to assess budgets at PoW output level, some PoW outputs had no associated projects while others had as many as five contributing projects during both biennia, suggesting an unbalanced distribution of funding between PoW outputs.

v. Cooperation and partnerships

84. EMSP projects succeeded in establishing good external partnerships. However, the depth of partnerships as well as distribution of roles and responsibilities varied. There appears to be little awareness/visibility of the Subprogramme among partners, who mostly identify UNEP expertise and outputs with branches and their thematic areas. Again, this is partly due to the lack of coherence and a lack of a 'clear story line' to the Subprogramme, exacerbated by poorly coordinated communication of EMSP results.
85. However, some EMSP projects made considerable investment in developing and maintaining strong partnerships with key stakeholder groups which meant they were able to call upon partners to help deliver key outputs, and allow the usually small project teams to multiply their efforts and deliver results above the level that would have been expected if they had operated alone. Consequently, time spent on partnerships can be considered cost-effective. Partnerships have also helped improve opportunities for replication and scaling up of Subprogramme results. However, whilst project documents usually list stakeholders and partners, there were frequently no resources to consult many directly at the design stage, especially those at the site/local level. This has limited the ownership of project designs although local partnerships were usually developed at a later date once financing is secured. Also, the attention given to building strategic partnerships to promote dissemination, replication and up-scaling of the results of local demonstrations and pilots was sometimes insufficient.
86. Specific issues were noted with respects to certain sets of partners. For instance, some MEAs have especially strong partnerships with UNEP and collaborate with UNEP on activities within the EMSP, or aspects of the EMSP are directly relevant to the corresponding convention. Particular concerns were expressed over the

ability of the EMSP and of the PoW in general to accommodate demand and expectations on UNEP (such as an urgent need to address emerging issues) arising from intergovernmental processes supported by UNEP such as the Regional Seas Programme and the GPA. While there have been some efforts to align UNEP support and expectations to such processes within UNEP's PoW it remains difficult to anticipate and accommodate emerging needs in predefined projects. Similarly, it is difficult to specify policy outcomes in a results-based framework. Nevertheless, there are examples where UNEP has been able to identify priority areas that can be supported in an appropriate timeframe. The evaluation notes that new project concepts (to deal with emerging issues) can be approved by SMT to be added to a Programme framework at any time.

87. Generally, results of UNEP's collaboration with MEAs (and Regional Seas) on ecosystem management are not adequately reported and the EMSP's contribution to the MEAs is not fully captured in PIMS. UNEP could better demonstrate how some of the overall work of the EMSP is relevant to the MEAs and SDGs. Both UNEP and the MEAs would benefit from a higher level of communication over their work programmes and could explore the possibility for greater linkage and development of joint projects in order to reduce potential overlaps and to increase areas of cooperation on ecosystem management. **Recommendation 23: UNEP should ensure through the project approval process that linkages and contributions to MEAs / SDGs are identified at the project design stage. QAS should also ensure that monitoring of these contributions is built into the reporting system within PIMS and the PPRs (so built into project performance assessment).** Improving reporting on linkages with relevant MEAs and how individual projects can help meet Aichi Targets as part of their 6-monthly reporting commitments would be desirable and help focus more attention on this issue. Linkage and reporting related to MEA priorities will be strengthened to some extent through the new (draft) UNEP project document produced in September 2014, under the EGSP, which requires identification of any potential impacts or opportunities that could result from projects related to the development, implementation and advancement of MEAs.
88. There has been some success with mainstreaming EMSP results into the business and financial sectors, including working with a number of leading global financial institutions to develop methods to integrate ecosystem services into their global and national strategies and operations. However, approval to engage with a private sector partner often takes a long time under UNEP's due diligence process and can constrain private sector collaboration. Also, according to interviewees, the economic and financial crisis has made the private sector more cautious about investing in 'unconventional' or innovative approaches such as payment for ecosystem services and even the Green Economy concept. Consequently, engagement with the private sector by the EMSP has not been as extensive as was hoped. Linkage with the private sector (and to a certain extent academia) needs to be strategized for most EMSP projects and this should be an increased focus for future EMSP work. **Recommendation 24: The EM SPC should clarify where opportunities exist in terms of private sector engagement and how the EMSP can best make use of these opportunities in order to increase collaboration with and investments made by the private sector. The EMSP needs to develop a clear strategy for engagement with the private sector, which could be done separately or as part of the partnership strategy (see Recommendation 27).**
89. At the country level, the EMSP strongly relies on partnerships with government institutions, other UN agencies, and civil society as UNEP generally has a weak country presence and lacks the resources to conduct large-scale interventions by itself at national level. The integration of ecosystem management approaches at the national level, and even building capacity for use of ecosystem management tools, is necessarily a long-term process that cannot realistically be achieved in two to four years. Strong government partners and well-established working relationships have often been the key in achieving policy outcomes for the EMSP, supported by UNEP's role as a 'neutral broker'. UNEP generally has adopted a technical advisory role within national partnerships rather than being a full executing agency. **Recommendation 25: The EMSP should continue to put strong emphasis on developing and maintaining partnerships with national governments and development partners such as UNDP and international NGOs that have strong national presence/programmes, to look for synergies and opportunities for shared work/interests e.g. ecosystem services assessment, valuation and management, if it is to successfully mainstream the ecosystem approach into national development and economic planning, and to catalyse the uptake of relevant ecosystem management tools and methodologies that the EMSP has already developed.** Given the importance of cooperation and partnership, especially in mainstreaming UNEP results at a national level each project should clearly articulate its link to the EMSP's partnership/stakeholder engagement strategy in its project document, which should be reviewed by the PRC and developed with the Project Document. **Recommendation 26: The EMSPC should develop a partnership strategy for the EMSP. This should set out the opportunities and needs, role and responsibilities of UNEP and partners, and resources available. The partnership strategy should link with the EMSP Communications Strategy and be revised at regular intervals. In addition, QAS should ensure that in order to grant project**

approval, each EMSP project document has a clearly articulated and detailed partnership/stakeholder section (not just a list of stakeholders) that links to, the overall EMSP partnership strategy.

vi. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

90. Reporting on Subprogramme delivery is the shared responsibility of the project managers and the SPC under the overall guidance of UNEP's Quality Assurance Section (QAS). In practice reporting at EMSP level has been primarily undertaken by the SPC and supporting staff with the guidance and support of the DEPI PPR focal point, and variable (usually limited) input from reporting focal points and other divisional PPR focal points. Reporting at the project level is the responsibility of the project manager, and the main tool for day-to-day project and subprogramme monitoring and reporting is PIMS.
91. Monitoring is essentially done at the activity and output level, and outcome monitoring is weak due to poor or non-existent quantitative baselines, non-SMART indicators (indicators of high-level change have been seen as particularly problematic), variability with regard to internal coherence of project logframes, and limited monitoring budgets. The quality of PIMS reporting was very poor in the first biennium in terms of structure and completeness, both at project and programme level, but has improved over the MTS, notably with the introduction of milestones, although there is insufficient evaluative evidence on project performance and progress towards immediate outcomes and impact. However, there were a number of issues with the formulation and use of milestones that call their suitability into question. Of particular concern is that poor delivery on milestones is associated with a strong management response that emphasises accountability to results rather than learning. It should be remembered that UNEP seeks to pioneer new approaches which inevitably means that there will be failures, and UNEP needs to build better recognition of the multi-faceted nature of risk – a poor rating does not necessarily imply poor project design or management; rather it highlights an opportunity to better understand constraints to effective delivery, and allows for adaptive management. Although no specific recommendation is given here as guidance already exists, the EMSP needs to improve monitoring on project outcomes and Expected Accomplishments, ensure better baseline information is collected, design SMARTer indicators and milestones (especially outcome-level milestones), and ensure a sufficient budget for monitoring is ring-fenced in project budgets.
92. Narrative reporting has tended to be anecdotal in approach and it is not always possible to map results reported at project level onto those reported at programme level. Reported EA and output level contributions cannot always be traced up from the project level reporting (in PIMS) and appear to be based either on narrative project reports and/or discussions with reporting focal points or project managers. In general, the roles and responsibilities of reporting focal points in relation to the roles and responsibilities of project managers and the SPC in the EMSP reporting cycle are not clear. The evaluation also found unease among UNEP staff over possible poor ratings, and resentment over ratings that are perceived as unfair which has discouraged frank reporting (and works against learning and adaptive management). In addition, there are issues with premature reporting and some questions over the eligibility of some reported contributions. Although there is some evidence that greater efforts have been made to verify reported delivery (e.g. by the SPC), the main limit to monitoring and evaluation is considered to be the quality of the data. **Recommendation 27: UNEP should clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff with regards to project and SP level reporting and the reporting responsibilities should be clearly described in the UNEP Programme Manual and covered in individual workplans.**
93. The evaluation found several important issues related to under- and over-reporting. Some of the larger and more complex EMSP projects had the potential to contribute to more than one PoW EA but have reported alignment and contributions against just one EA since 2012. This limitation has been driven by accounting restrictions in PIMS although from a conceptual point of view a project may deliver against more than one EA and more than one PoW output. Other types of under-reporting include policy outcomes catalysed by projects but which are delivered after closure of the project, and projects extended into a new PoW biennium or MTS period whose reported results at project level may contribute to earlier outputs or EAs. While contributions of extended projects are currently captured at project level on PIMS, there is no mechanism to consolidate such contributions at the EMSP level once a given PoW period is completed.
94. One immediate consequence of categorizing all projects under a single subprogramme and EA in PIMS is that the portfolio of projects under the EMSP is only a partial representation of UNEP's work on ecosystem management and of contributions towards the EMSP EAs. While the problem of underreporting affects other subprogrammes, it is particularly applicable to ecosystem management work that by its very nature contributes to and is supported by work in other PoW areas. **Recommendation 28: The requirements to report against just one EA should be removed from the UNEP Programme Manual. However, it should be made clear that project contributions reported against two different EAs and PoW outputs need to be supported by a**

credible project-level ToC. Recommendation 29. There needs to be more comprehensive, substantive and nuanced reporting. It is recommended that a narrative section is added to PIMS to allow more reporting. PIMS should be (re)structured to promote synergies (where there may be significant impact) instead of compartmentalizing projects. PIMS should contain the facility for recording and analyzing linkages between projects and subprogrammes.

95. So far, only a very small number of projects in the EMSP portfolio have been independently evaluated, even where funding is available or where the desirability of a mid-term review/evaluation was raised by the PRC, and there is a requirement for a final evaluation (according to a UNEP GC decision, and reflected in the UNEP Programme Manual). Many of the EMSP projects approved in 2010 are coming to an end in 2014 and will be required to undergo some form of terminal evaluation in line with UNEP policy, so the number of evaluations of EMSP is expected to rise considerably during the MTS 2014-2017.

1. Objectives, Scope and Approach to the Evaluation

1.1. Evaluation Objectives and Scope

1.1.1. Purpose of the Evaluation

96. The principal objective of the Evaluation was to assess the relevance and overall performance of UNEP's work related to ecosystem management (EM) from 1 January 2008 up to end-2013 (Programme of Work (PoW) 2008-2009, 2010-2011 and 2012-2013) according to standard evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact). The Evaluation also aimed to provide lessons and recommendations that may contribute to more effective delivery of the MTS 2014-2017, and PoW 2014-2015 as well as the design of future strategies, subprogrammes and projects.
97. Based on the Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR, Annex 1), the Evaluation considered whether, in the period under review, UNEP was able to strengthen the ability of countries to realign their environmental programmes and financing to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services and to integrate ecosystem management responses into national development processes, by providing environmental leadership in the international response to EM and complementing other processes and the work of other institutions.
98. The Evaluation examined the relevance of UNEP's EM strategy and its performance in delivering the expected accomplishments (EAs) and PoW outputs, and the effectiveness of management arrangements among UNEP Divisions for delivery of the EAs and PoW outputs defined for the Subprogramme. Partnerships with other UN bodies, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and institutions (including Multilateral Environmental Agreements - MEAs), regional bodies, national governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), scientific and environmental centers, and private sector organizations were also reviewed and their utility assessed.

1.1.2. Scope of the Evaluation

99. The Evaluation covered activities classified in UNEP's Programme Information and Management System (PIMS) under the EMSP and that were either still ongoing or had been started after 1 January 2008. However, although the period before 2008 was not assessed, projects and activities relating to the design and implementation of the MTS 2010-2013 which predate this year were examined. In other words, the Evaluation focused on projects that were ongoing in the period 2008-2013, but considered others where they usefully illustrated a wider point.
100. Ecosystem management is an approach or tool to tackling environmental degradation and promoting sustainable use of natural resources and human well-being, rather than a specific environmental threat. Consequently, there are strong EM dimensions in a number of other Subprogrammes, particularly in the Climate Change (CC) and Disasters and Conflicts (DC) Subprogrammes. Such activities, currently categorized under other Subprogrammes, were not assessed by the Evaluation but considered as part of the other Subprogramme evaluations. However, the Evaluation has sought to assess whether the linkage, exchange and collaboration arrangements between the EMSP and other relevant Subprogrammes have made full use of potential complementarities and synergies.
101. Much of the EMSP work is global or regional in scope with activities in many countries and covering different thematic areas, and individual projects vary considerably in size (e.g. budget), complexity and partnership arrangements. Consequently, the Evaluation tried to ensure adequate geographic and thematic coverage and include a broad range of Subprogramme projects and activities for robust analysis.

1.1.3. Evaluation audience (stakeholders) and use of the Evaluation

102. The immediate and priority users of the Evaluation include:
 - The UNEP Senior Management Team (SMT), comprised of the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, the Divisional Directors, the Director of the GEF Coordination Office, the Chief of the Executive Office and the Chief of the Office for Operations;
 - The Directors of the Regional Offices (RO) and RO staff involved in the EMSP;
 - Relevant staff from the Executive Office, and in particular the Chief Scientist and the Quality Assurance Section (QAS);

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- The EMSP Coordinator (EMSPC) and other Subprogramme Coordinators (SPCs);
- UNEP project managers and other staff involved in the EMSP, in particular the Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Branch, Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit, Freshwater Ecosystems Unit, and Biodiversity Unit in the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI), and the Economics and Trade Branch and Trade, Policy and Planning Unit in the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE);
- The UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum (GC/GMEF).

1.2. Evaluation approach and methodology

1.2.1. Overall approach of the Evaluation

103. The Evaluation was undertaken as an in-depth study using a participatory and collaborative approach, with much emphasis on interviews and opportunities for UNEP staff to comment on intermediate products of the Evaluation.
104. The Evaluation Team comprised two independent consultants with the active participation of two UNEP Evaluation Office (EO) staff. The Evaluation was managed by the EO of UNEP, which provided guidance on the overall Evaluation approach and quality assurance of the Evaluation deliverables and ensured coordination and liaison with all concerned units and other key agencies and stakeholders. A summary of the Evaluation timetable is presented in Annex 2.

Related Evaluations

105. A number of previous evaluations have assessed either the whole or elements of the EMSP in the last four years (see Box 1). These were reviewed during the inception period to better design the evaluation framework and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort with areas that have already been thoroughly examined.

Box 1. Evaluations with findings directly relevant to the EMSP

Evaluations directly addressing the EMSP
OIOS Audit of the Ecosystem Management Programme in UNEP (2013)
Evaluations addressing UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work
Formative Evaluation of UNEP's Programme of Work 2010-2011 (2011)
Mid-term Evaluation of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013 (2013)
OIOS Programme Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme (2013)
Institutional level audits
OIOS Audit - Internal Governance in UNEP (2010)
OIOS Audit - Management of Partnerships at UNEP (2012)

106. Annex 3 provides a summary of the findings of the evaluations that led to recommendations for change as well as their related management responses. Many of their conclusions on the structural and operational aspects of UNEP, the MTS and EMSP are similar. Management responses to the evaluations indicate that whilst some key recommendations have been implemented, and the findings that underpin the recommendations have been accepted, there has been limited implementation on some of the issues and challenges that have been raised repeatedly by different evaluations, notably related to SPC's accountability, reporting and authority (including with respect to resource allocation) and to organisational culture. However, in response to past recommendations, the SPCs now have dual reporting lines and heightened level of seniority.
107. Six-monthly and later annual Programme Performance Reviews (PPRs) are a rich source of information regarding evolving internal and external challenges. The reports indicate that EMSP performance is affected by a number of factors and interaction between these factors.
- **Poor programme design:** EAs pitched too far along the results chain/beyond UNEP's direct control; cumulative/sequential nature of EAs; lack of coherence between EAs and PoW outputs meaning performance at output level is not a good indicator for EA level; projects contributing to multiple PoW outputs or EAs; overambitious targets; poorly formulated indicators and inappropriate units of measure.
 - **Difficulties of applying results-based management to ecosystem management and capacity building projects:** longer term nature of ecosystem management/capacity building projects and mismatch with biennium reporting cycles; absence of project milestones in older 'legacy' projects meaning these are not

covered by automated reporting in PIMS; problems of reductionist approach (fragmented by time /activity).

- **Uneven funding allocation:** some projects unfunded or underfunded despite overall funding at SP level being largely as budgeted.
- **Management issues** are also highlighted, notably in the June 2010 report that reflects the findings of the Formative Evaluation of the PoW 2010-2011 and in June 2011 where a set of management actions is identified (matrix approach and issues of responsibility and accountability, programme coordination, communication, monitoring, and the attribution of funds to subprogrammes).
- **Limited understanding** of the ecosystem approach, within UNEP and amongst partners.
- **External issues** including adverse political processes, mismatch of UNEP project and national policy and planning cycles.

108. Many of the internal issues are substantiated in the minutes of meetings held between SPCs, QAS and senior management. These provide insights on issues encountered in the first two years of the 2010-2013 programming cycle as well as suggested follow up actions and proposed solutions⁶.
109. Initial interviews carried out during the inception period corroborated the findings of these earlier assessments. Whilst some organisational-level structural and managerial issues have been addressed by higher-level evaluations (acknowledged in this report), a number of these problems are still outstanding.
110. The current Evaluation examined and verified these organisational-level issues and acknowledges that they affected the delivery of the EMSP. However, the Evaluation Team focused more on the level of achievement of the EAs at the Subprogramme level and on broader strategic issues, with the aim to encourage greater longer-term strategic thinking about EM, and on issues of particular relevance for the design and implementation of the new EMSP framework (for 2014-2017 and beyond).

1.2.2. Evaluation focus and levels of analysis of results

111. Guided by the Evaluation ToRs (Annex 1), the Evaluation assessed the Subprogramme in three distinct but strongly related areas: (i) the relevance and appropriateness of the Subprogramme objectives and strategy; (ii) overall Subprogramme performance; and (iii) processes and issues affecting delivery of the Subprogramme.
112. The Evaluation reconstructed a Theory of Change (ToC) for the Subprogramme as a tool for analysis of the causal links between the EAs and the desired impact of the EMSP and to help identify Subprogramme-level drivers and assumptions.
113. The Evaluation was pitched primarily at the immediate outcome (Subprogramme expected accomplishment - EA) level and above, and sought to answer the questions of whether, why and how the outcomes have, or have not, been achieved. More specifically, the Evaluation assessed the progress made towards achieving the outcomes and identifying and assessing the key factors, both positive and negative, that have affected progress. It also examined whether the foundations were in place to sustain the outcomes, whether outcomes and impact drivers are in place to enable long-term impacts to be realized, whether required actions have been undertaken to promote up-scaling of the results, and the likelihood of sustainability of the Subprogramme results.
114. The proposed focus at the outcome level is justified because the EMSP is a large mixed group of projects and non-project activities operating at different geographic and temporal scales, delivering numerous and diverse outputs that are expected to contribute to a more manageable number of outcomes, rather than a single, well-demarcated project (where analysis at output level would feature more). Similarly, a focus at the impact level would not have been appropriate as it is difficult to attribute UNEP activities at impact level, where the actions of other actors and external factors may have more influence, assessing impacts presents significant methodological challenges, and impacts generally only become apparent over a much longer time frame than the 4-year MTS period.
115. The Evaluation did not set out to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the conduct of activities or the delivery of all project outputs against work plans. Instead, a broader portfolio-wide review (Portfolio Review) was undertaken to analyse how the changing collection of projects that has comprised the EMSP has contributed to achievement of the aims and higher-level results of the EMSP. Specific analysis was undertaken in order to:

⁶ The follow up to recommended actions and suggestions in these minutes is not documented.

- Describe and analyse the range and balance of projects within the EMSP across different outputs, in terms of size, resource allocation, geographic area of action, linkage to thematic areas, etc;
 - Analyse the 'fit' and linkage of projects to the three EAs (allowing identification of whether the project was likely, strategically, to lead to higher level outcomes), thematic areas, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the various processes used to deliver the EMSP;
 - Determine how the portfolio has evolved over time and whether and why projects continue across biennia, especially as each biennia is reflected in the Programme Performance Reviews (PPRs) as a discrete reporting period with its own targets;
 - Determine whether continuity is a deliberate strategy (EM is a long-term endeavour so this would be expected) or whether projects are indicative of 'retrofitting' and protection of 'pet projects'?
116. Representative projects from the portfolio were also analysed in more detail to verify whether the delivered outputs have been relevant and contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and to identify lessons on how to implement/catalyze/encourage an ecosystem approach.

1.2.3. Evaluation methods and limitations/constraints

117. The Evaluation used a combination of methods and tools to assess the strategic relevance, performance and delivery of the Subprogramme, principally desk review of relevant documents and interviews. No field visits were made to individual EMSP projects due to limited financial resources, and because the Evaluation's approach was focused on delivery at the Subprogramme level rather than at the individual project output level.

i. Desk Review

118. A desk review enabled the Evaluation Team to gain essential knowledge of the EMSP, its constituent projects and partnerships, other UNEP EM-related work and the global, regional, country and thematic context. Documents reviewed included:
- Relevant background documentation on the scientific, socio-economic and environmental dimensions of EM, and on current policies, strategies, multilateral agreements, approaches used in EM, including linkage between ecosystem management and delivery of both ecological and human benefits, and current challenges facing the adoption and implementation of ecosystem management at global, regional, national and local levels;
 - Background documentation on UNEP's strategy and engagement in the field of EM, including: PoW documents (from 2008 onwards); EM Subprogramme Strategy 2010-2011; Programme Framework documents; the UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013, as well as the UNEP MTS 2014-2017 and associated draft PoW for 2014-2015;
 - Background documentation on UNEP partnerships with key actors in the field of EM;
 - Subprogramme monitoring reports, including: performance reports, and financial reports, entries into PIMS, as well as relevant internal and external evaluation reports, such as the Mid-term Evaluation of the MTS 2010-2013 and Formative Evaluation of the PoW 2010-2011; and
 - Design, progress, completion and evaluation reports of individual UNEP projects related to EM.
119. A full list of the documents reviewed is given in Annex 4. Unfortunately, there were few independent evaluation reports⁷ and publications based on results of pilot or demonstration projects were generally intended to promote the tool or approach being demonstrated/piloted rather than critically evaluating the performance and outcomes of the project under which the tool or approach was being developed. Also, reporting in PIMS is very variable and insufficient (in many cases) to assess the delivery and quality of outputs and achievement of outcomes.

ii. Interviews

120. The evaluators used a semi-structured interview method, assisted by a list of topics and questions to be discussed (Annex 5). Responses/information were triangulated where possible, especially if they were considered controversial. Skype, telephone, and face-to-face interviews (list of interviewees given in Annex 6) were held with:
- UNEP senior management, the EM Subprogramme Coordinators (past and present), UNEP Division Directors, project managers and divisional staff, staff from the OfO/Quality Assurance Section (QAS), UNEP Regional Offices, EMSP Focal Points, and other relevant UNEP staff, with visits to Nairobi, Kenya

⁷ Of the 10 case study projects examined in depth only the TEEB and GRASP projects had had any external review during the 2010-2013 period.

(where UNEP and UNEP DEPI headquarters are located), Geneva, Switzerland (to interview DTIE project managers); and Cambridge, UK (to interview staff at UNEP-WCMC); and

- Interviews with key partners and stakeholders, including selected representatives of other UN agencies active in promoting EM (e.g. UNDP, FAO, UNESCO); relevant MEA Secretariats (CBD, CITES, Ramsar, UNCCD) and funding mechanisms, members of UNEP's Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR); donors; civil society and major groups (such as International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)), academia as well as the private sector.

iii. Selection of projects for detailed analysis

121. During the inception period, the Evaluation Team briefly reviewed all global, regional and country projects included in the Subprogramme that were completed or are still ongoing between 1 January 2008 and 30 June 2013, as part of the Portfolio Review. A sample of 10 projects was chosen for more in-depth analyses according to the following criteria:
 - They represented a range of activities conducted under the EMSP and alignment with the Subprogramme's strategy and objectives, i.e. spread across the three EAs and thematic areas (terrestrial, marine/coastal, freshwater and ecosystem services and economics);
 - They represented the geographic scope of the EMSP (global, regional, country, site-level);
 - They represented the relative importance or scale of the projects implemented under the EMSP, in terms of budget, duration, complexity, status as a discrete project or 'umbrella project'⁸, and criticality for the delivery of the Programme of Work; and,
 - Some projects in the sample were implemented by UNEP Divisions other than DEPI, e.g. DTIE.
122. Preference was given to projects that had been active in the period 2012-2013 to ensure that there was still a memory of the intervention, and consideration was given to the degree of documentation on performance (to assess the delivery and fit of the project within the SP) and the ease of access to resource persons.
123. The final 10 projects selected as case studies are given in Table 1 with details on the managing division, comments on their selection, and acronym for the project used in the rest of this Evaluation Report. The case study reviews were used to provide information that was analysed for general trends on relevance, performance and factors affecting delivery, etc. The 10 case study reports were largely completed by end May 2014, and are available from the UNEP EO.
124. The main Evaluation Report is largely based on the key findings from the 10 case studies and portfolio review, supplemented by information gathered from the interviews and review of the key documents.

iv. Limitations/constraints on the Evaluation

125. Considering the scope of the assessment and the resources available to conduct it, the Evaluation Team was not able to review all projects/activities in the EMSP. Rather, as mentioned above, it selected a meaningful sample of activities falling under the EMSP. Although budgetary considerations restricted the ability to undertake travel this did have the advantage of keeping the carbon footprint of the Evaluation to a minimum.
126. Apart from resource constraints (time, manpower and financing), the analysis of the Subprogramme was limited by availability of documents compounded by limited institutional memory as a result of turnover of the SPC position. An initial review of information held on the PIMS database and other sources showed a wide variability of information, both in quantity and quality particularly at the individual project level. For instance not even project documents were available for some projects. There was a particular lack of evidence on achievement at the immediate outcome and higher level results and information in PIMS was usually insufficient to assess this. Information on the allocation of financial and human resources for implementation of the EMSP was not readily available as such information is recorded from a Divisional perspective.
127. Given the relatively short timeframe for the interview period and the workloads of staff, availability of key personnel (both inside and outside UNEP) was also a limitation for interviews. It was particularly difficult to arrange interviews with key representatives from some global partners and in one case it was not possible to arrange an interview with any member of staff. Interviews were also not held with national government representatives, apart from some CPR members.

⁸ Umbrella projects have their origin in the programme framework concepts that often grouped thematically related but otherwise independent initiatives under a single project for the purposes of project submission and reporting under the PoW. Almost all of those concepts that went ahead can be characterised as umbrella projects.

Table 1: EMSP projects selected as case studies (source: PIMS)

Project title and PIMS number and acronym	Planned Region/country ⁹	Expected accomplishment	Thematic area	Managing Division	Comments for selection as a case study
Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP)(01043) GRASP project	Africa, Asia and Pacific/Many countries	EA (a), (b) and (c) (2010-2011) and EA (b) (2012-2013)	Terrestrial	DEPI	Ongoing. Been operating many years (initiated prior to 2008) so may possibly be able to assess impact. Independent evaluation of some parts of project and good documentation available. Links with some other EMSP projects so can examine synergies. Delivers across all EAs.
Community based integrated forest resource conservation and management project - Maasai Mau Forest (COMIFORM 1+2) (00517 and 01041) Mau project	Africa/Kenya	EA (a) (2010-2011) and EA (b) (2012-2013)	Terrestrial	DEPI	Ongoing. First phase began in 2007. Good documentation and indicators of success and some impact. Local to UNEP HQ so easy for team to assess.
Spain-UNEP LifeWeb (00814) Lifeweb project	Global, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean/many countries	EA (a), (b) and (c) (2010-2011) and EA (b) (2012-2013)	Terrestrial, Marine and Coastal	DEPI	Ongoing. Been operating many years so may possibly be able to trace impact. Important partnerships. Good documentation.
Tools and Methodologies for Assessing and Maintaining Freshwater Ecosystems (01049) Freshwater project	Global, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Asia/many countries	EA (a) (2010-2011) and EA (b) (2012-2013)	Freshwater	DEPI	Ongoing. Umbrella project. The principle freshwater project currently in the portfolio. Good documentation.
Integrated Coastal Management with Special Emphasis on the Sustainable Management of Mangrove Forests in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (01296) Mangrove project	Latin America and the Caribbean/ Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua	EA (b) (2010-2011) and EA (c) (2012-2013)	Marine and Coastal	DRC	Ongoing. Project was originally designed during 2004-2007 to commence in October 2009, but was revised following PRC recommendations to fit under 2010/2011 PoW. Good documentation.
Strengthening the Science-Policy Interface on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)/ (01284) IPBES project	Global	EA (c) (2010-2011) and EA (c) (2012-2013)	Ecosystem services and economics	DEPI	Ongoing. Project began in 2009. Global level project. Important partnerships, including with MEAs. Good documentation but no specific Project Document (just project document supplements)
The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) - Phase II (00179) TEEB project	Global/ Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Peru, Russian Federation, South Africa	EA (c) (2010-2011)	Ecosystem services and economics	DTIE	Ongoing. Project has been ongoing since September 2008 and revised several times. Very good documentation.
Sustainable Food Production: Utilizing Trade-off Analyses to devise direct payment programs to farmers for adoption of EBM in Agri-food	Argentina	EA (b) (2010-11) and EA (c) (2012-2013)	Ecosystem services and economics	DTIE	Ongoing. Managed by DTIE. Example of incorporating valuation into non-environment sector (agriculture in this case).

⁹ Not all activities in planned countries in some projects were realised.

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Project title and PIMS number and acronym	Planned Region/country ⁹	Expected accomplishment	Thematic area	Managing Division	Comments for selection as a case study
Ecosystems (01055) Argentina project					
Integrated Marine and Coastal Environment and Resource Management for Human Well-being (00820) ICM project	Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean/ Cambodia, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles	EA (b) (2010-2011) and EA (b) (2012-2013)	Marine and Coastal	DEPI	Ongoing. Wide-ranging umbrella project and principal marine/coastal project in portfolio.
Making the case for ecosystem services - a global outreach and communications package (00822) MTC project	Global, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Western Asia	EA (a) (2010-2011) and EA (a) (2012-2013)	Ecosystem services and economics	DCPI	Ongoing. Focused on communication and achieving understanding of the ecosystem approach so crucial for mainstreaming of UNEP messages on this issue. Poor documentation.

2. The International Ecosystem Management Context

2.1. Ecosystem approach and Ecosystem Management

i. Ecosystems and ecosystem services

128. According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Report (2005), an ecosystem is defined as ‘a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit’¹⁰. Ecosystems are often defined in terms of their dominant vegetation or environmental features, for example, lake, rock pool, or mountain ecosystem, and humans are viewed as an integral part of ecosystems. Ecosystem services as the benefits that people obtain from ecosystems. These include: provisioning services, such as food and water; regulating services, such as regulation of floods and land degradation; supporting services, such as soil formation and nutrient cycling; and cultural services, such as recreational and spiritual benefits.
129. The links between environment and human well-being¹¹ are complex, but many dimensions of human well-being (income, food, water, shelter, health, energy, etc.) are highly dependent on the productivity of ecosystems and on access to ecosystem services. Declines in ecosystem services most strongly affect the well-being of the world’s socially disadvantaged and vulnerable people, who generally rely heavily on these services, although any decline in ecosystem services undermines human well-being in all countries - developed and developing, urban and rural areas, alike.
130. Humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively over the past 50 years than in any comparable period of time in human history. This has resulted in a substantial and largely irreversible loss in the diversity of life on Earth. The MA analysed 24 ecosystem services and found that 15 were in global decline, and concluded that the continuing decline in ecosystem services presents a significant barrier to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries, including poverty reduction, and to achieving sustainable development targets for all countries.

ii. Ecosystem approach, rationale and definition

131. As the MA Report makes clear, the traditional sectoral and biome approaches to environmental policy and management, such as targeting agriculture and forestry, have not been effective in maintaining ecosystem productivity and biological diversity, stopping habitat fragmentation, or halting and reversing the overall decline in ecosystem services critical for human well-being. The alternative ‘ecosystem approach’ is guided by a conceptual framework that acknowledges the linkage and interdependence between ecosystem services and human social systems and recognizes the multi-dimensional aspects of human well-being. The CBD defines the ecosystem approach as ‘a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way...based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization which encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are integral components of ecosystems’¹². A key element here is the recognition that ecosystems are defined with reference to their human populations.
132. Focusing on ecosystem services has several important advantages over the traditional economic development paradigm, including that (among other things): it provides direct entry points into the economic and human development process; investment in ecosystems is investment in development infrastructure with clear links to human development and poverty reduction; ecosystem services permit the attainment of quick benefits through cost-effective pathways, e.g., improved water provision and quality through improved catchment management; and ecosystem services introduce the notion of value for regulating and supporting services normally not included in economic analysis (usually treated as externalities).
133. As the EMSP Programme Framework for 2010-2011 points out, although there has been increasing interest in ecosystem approach among national governments in recent years, there has been little application of the MA findings and the ecosystem approach to policy formulation, management programmes and development

¹⁰ Note that this definition does not specify any particular spatial unit or scale. Thus, the term "ecosystem" does not, necessarily, correspond to the terms "biome" or "ecological zone", but can refer to any functioning unit at any scale. It could, for example, be a grain of soil, a pond, a forest, a biome or the entire biosphere.

¹¹ Human well-being is defined as the freedom of choice and action to achieve basic material for a good life, health, good social relations and security. Well-being is at the opposite end of a continuum from poverty, a pronounced deprivation of well-being (CBD, MA (2005)).

¹² Convention on Biological Diversity, defined in CoP 5, decision V/6 (2000) (<https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/default.shtml?id=7148>) and Ecosystem Approach: Further Conceptual Elaboration, CoP 5, Montreal, Jan/Feb. 2000.

planning, especially in developing countries. A number of reasons have been proposed for this, including a lack of awareness and understanding among many national institutions and their stakeholders of the importance of ecosystem services for human well-being, the interdependence of ecosystem services and the forces that impact on them, and how declines in ecosystem services affect different social groups in different ways. It is also recognised that identifying the socio-economic value attributed to ecosystem services and the ability to undertake trade-off analyses of various services is still an emerging science.

iii. UNEP's view of ecosystem management

134. The MA (2005) adopted the CBD definition of the Ecosystem Approach, and it forms the framework for UNEP's approach to ecosystem management and its Ecosystem Management Subprogramme (EMSP). UNEP defines ecosystem management as *'an approach to natural resource management that focuses on sustaining ecosystems to meet both ecological and human needs in the future'*¹³. As the MA demonstrated, ecosystem services are usually interdependent - one ecosystem service is not delivered in isolation from others, and overuse of one ecosystem service may lead to a decline in other ecosystem services. Consequently, ecosystem services cannot be treated separately and it is essential to consider the *bundle of connected services* provided by ecosystems. The ecosystem approach also stresses that indigenous peoples and other local communities living on the land are important stakeholders and their rights and interests should be recognized. Thus both cultural and biological diversity are central components of the ecosystem approach, and management should take this into account. It is also recognised that there is no single formula to implement the ecosystem approach, as it depends on local, provincial, national, regional or global conditions. These views are strongly reflected in UNEP's approach to ecosystem management and form the foundation of the EMSP.
135. It is also worth noting that much of the work UNEP undertakes through its other Subprogrammes is based on, and promotes, the ecosystem approach, even if this is not explicitly stated, e.g. Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and REDD+ projects within the CCSP, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) projects within the DCSP, and many activities associated with UNEP's Green Economy work.

2.2. EM within MEAs and other international initiatives

136. The importance of the ecosystem approach and ecosystem management is recognized in various Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and by other intergovernmental processes and initiatives. Six major international conventions focus on biodiversity issues: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS or Bonn Convention), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (WHC) (see Annex 7). Each of these conventions works to implement actions at the national, regional and international level in order to reach shared goals of conservation and sustainable use and explicitly or implicitly stresses an ecosystem approach. Some have strong partnerships with UNEP and collaborate with UNEP on implementation of the ecosystem approach through the EMSP (see section 5.4).
137. The ecosystem approach is particularly important within the CBD, where it forms the primary framework for action, and is a tool that can be used to implement the objectives of the Convention, and the Convention calls on countries to adopt the ecosystem approach (CBD 2000: CoP 5 Decision V/6¹⁴). It was first introduced as a general principle of the CBD in 1995 during the CBD's second Conference of Parties (CoP), and in 2000 the fifth CoP adopted 12 principles and 5 operational guidelines to clarify the conceptual basis of the ecosystem approach and to provide a guide for implementation (CBD Decision V/6 (Ecosystem Approach)). More recently, the tenth meeting of the CBD held in 2010 adopted a revised and updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including a set of 20 targets - the Aichi Biodiversity Targets - for the 2011-2020 period (CBD 2010: Decision X/2). The Plan is the overarching framework on biodiversity, not only for the biodiversity-related conventions but for the entire United Nations system. The Aichi Targets are not prominent in the MTS 2010-2013 because the MTS was agreed well before CBD CoP 10, but they do feature strongly in MTS 2014-2017 and UNEP has a

¹³ See <http://www.unep.org/ecosystemmanagement/>. Other sources define ecosystem management in similar ways. The IUCN, for instance, defines it as "a process that integrates ecological, socio-economic, and institutional factors into comprehensive analysis and action in order to sustain and enhance the quality of the ecosystems to meet current and future needs" (IUCN 2011).

¹⁴ Notably paragraph 2 which *'Calls upon Parties, other Governments, and international organizations to apply, as appropriate, the ecosystem approach, giving consideration to the principles and guidance contained in the annex to the present decision, and to develop practical expressions of the approach for national policies and legislation and for appropriate implementation activities, with adaptation to local, national, and, as appropriate, regional conditions, in particular in the context of activities developed within the thematic areas of the Convention.'*

commitment to support their delivery (Aichi Targets 2, 6, 7, 11 and 14¹⁵ are of particular relevance to UNEP's EMSP).

138. The ecosystem approach also features prominently within the Ramsar Convention, which provides a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use¹⁶ of wetlands and their resources, promotes the benefits of wetlands for people, not just wildlife, and emphasizes the link with poverty reduction and sustainable development. Other key international initiatives which follow an ecosystem approach and with which UNEP has strong links include the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans which look to apply an ecosystem approach to the management of the marine and coastal environment in order to protect and restore the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems and enable their conservation and sustainable use.
139. Other relevant intergovernmental policy and legal frameworks that promote the ecosystem approach as an implicit or explicit part of their work include the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO 1995) and its associated technical guidelines which together provide the most comprehensive instrument on the concept of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (FAO also applies the ecosystem approach to agriculture and land management¹⁷), and various European Union initiatives such as the European Commission (EC) Water Framework Directive (WFD), the EC Habitats Directive, and the European Union (EU) Marine Strategy (and the proposed Marine Framework Directive) and the ICZM Directive, and the EU Common Fisheries Policy.
140. Many other international organisations and NGOs also have specific policy or programme frameworks that focus on ecosystem services. For instance, IUCN, which has a Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), has produced a number of seminal publications on the ecosystem approach¹⁸ including practical approaches to its implementation, and WWF has promoted the approach at scales ranging from individual landscapes/seascapes to international river basin and ecoregions.

2.2.1. Current views on the 'ecosystem approach'

141. Experience with the ecosystem approach has obviously increased since the design of the MTS 2010-2013 and the approach has continued to evolve and be adapted to different contexts with different schools of thought, but the central issue of the interrelationship between the biological/physical resource and human (socio-economic) dimension is common. For instance, some of the groups who initially promoted the ecosystem approach have adopted and now promote the 'landscape approach'¹⁹. This is closely related to the ecosystem approach, and indeed, many practitioners use the two terms - 'landscape approach' and 'ecosystem approach' - interchangeably to loosely describe any attempt to simultaneously address conservation and sustainable development objectives at multiple scales.
142. For many the 'landscape approach' has the merit that it is easier to conceptualise and communicate and has more traction with governments, whereas the ecosystem approach is viewed by many as too abstract and non-specialists find it difficult to understand. For instance, an ecosystem is often difficult to identify physically (see previous footnote) whereas the term 'landscape' is familiar to all and the interaction with people is explicit. Some organizations have now predominately moved to a landscape approach philosophy, such as the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the Program on Forests (ProFor), who have produced the Forest-Poverty Linkages Toolkit²⁰. The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and FAO are also now heavily promoting a landscape approach, and many donor agencies are becoming interested in a landscape approach. However, this is largely a debate about terminology and at root both have the same approach to ecosystem management.

¹⁵ Aichi Target 2 - Biodiversity values integrated; Target 6 - Sustainable management of marine living resources; Target 7 - Sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry; Target 11 - Protected areas increased and improved and Target 14 Ecosystems and essential services safeguarded

¹⁶ The 'wise use' doctrine is defined as 'the sustainable use of wetland ecosystem goods and services, especially water, for the benefit of biological diversity and human well-being through maintenance of their ecological character by implementing an ecosystem approach'. And see CoP Resolution XI.12 "Wetlands and health: taking an ecosystem approach", presented at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971), Bucharest, July 2012.

¹⁷ <http://www.fao.org/biodiversity/cross-sectoral-issues/ecosystem-approach/en/>

¹⁸ For example, see Shepherd, G. (ed.) (2008.). *The Ecosystem Approach: Learning from Experience*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 190pp.

¹⁹ "Landscape approaches" seek to provide tools and concepts for allocating and managing land to achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives in areas where agriculture, mining, and other productive land uses compete with environmental and biodiversity goals. See Sayer, et al (2013). Ten principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land uses. *PNAS* | May 21, 2013 | vol. 110 | no. 21 | 8349-8356. www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1210595110

²⁰ http://www.profor.info/sites/profor.info/files/Overview_FINAL_0.pdf

143. It is also worth mentioning that there has been no overall assessment or review of the uptake, implementation and success of the ecosystem approach in recent years, or rigorous comparison of the ecosystem approach with other approaches to judge relative effectiveness and efficacy. Given the debate on how best to protect, restore and manage ecosystem services sustainably for human well-being in the wider environment/conservation/development communities, UNEP should consider reviewing the field to inform itself of current thinking and practice and guide future project development at regular intervals. The study commissioned from UNEP-WCMC under the EMSP 'Making the Case' project in 2013, which was published in October 2014²¹, presents a brief overview and should inform the MTS 2014-2017, although unfortunately, this was not produced during the MTS 2010-2013 (see Paragraph 310).

²¹ Gibson, J., Wilson, L., Kelly, J., Vestergaard, O., Bowles-Newark, N., Strubel, M., Crowther, A., Francourt, M. and Brown, C. 2014. Towards and integrated approach to managing ecosystems. UNEP - WCMC, Cambridge (in press).

3. Subprogramme Objectives, Strategy and Organisation²²

3.1. UNEP's Vision, Mandate and Comparative Advantage

144. UNEP's overall vision for the medium-term future is set out in its Medium Term Strategy (MTS), which for the period 2010-2013 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 was to be realised through a focus on six cross-cutting thematic priorities, each of which is treated as a separate subprogramme: *Climate Change; Disasters and Conflicts; Ecosystem Management; Environmental Governance; Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste; and Resource Efficiency – sustainable consumption and production*. The MTS for 2014-2017 reiterates UNEP's vision. It continues to identify the six cross-cutting thematic priorities as focal areas and adds a seventh: *Environment Under Review*.
145. UNEP's mandate is given by the UN General Assembly Resolution 2997 and various decisions of the UNEP Governing Council (GC) and other international fora, and has evolved to address current and emerging environmental challenges and changes in the international environmental governance. Many GC decisions are specifically relevant to ecosystems management (reviewed in the EMSP background document 'UNEP's Ecosystem Management programme: An Ecosystem Approach'). Specific reference is made to (among others): (1) management of various ecosystems (freshwater, marine and coastal, semi-arid and arid, arctic, river basins, forests and land management including soil conservation work, and small island environments) and measures for improved protection of endangered aquatic species, fragile ecosystems, habitats and other ecologically sensitive areas; (2) restoration of damaged systems and areas, as well as pursuing the establishment of new and the expansion of existing specially protected areas; (3) strengthening scientific understanding of ecosystem functions (to facilitate an efficient sustainable management of the environment), and the assessment and review of ecosystems and their functions; and (4) socio-economic aspects within management of ecosystems, including a mandate to develop market-based incentives for sustainable production and consumption.
146. UNEP's mandate empowers it to provide the high-level environment policy forum within the United Nations system - it has a central role (and is focal point) in the United Nations system for dealing with the environment and for achieving coherence on environmental issues and participates in numerous inter-agency boards, partnerships and other mechanisms. It is considered as a neutral and independent technical authority on environmental policy.
147. The MTS and its constituent Subprogrammes, including the EMSP, have been shaped by a number of strategy directions, including that UNEP should be guided by its mandate and should play to its comparative advantage. The MTS identifies various aspects of UNEP's comparative advantage as (summarised):
- Provision of the high-level environment policy forum within the United Nations system, and the focal point for the environment in a wide range of international processes and networks;
 - Strong links to environment ministries, regional and other environmental bodies and with the business and private sector;
 - Access to and ability to generate substantive expertise and knowledge on ways of addressing environmental issues and the inter-linkages between them, and can call on scientific expertise from a wide network of world-class scientific institutions and UNEP collaborating centres;
 - Experience and leadership working at the science-policy interface, facilitating multi-stakeholder processes, and promoting cooperation.
148. UNEP's mandate to undertake ecosystem management work was confirmed in the MTS 2010-2013 document, which was developed in consultation with, and approved by, the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), the representatives of UNEP-administered Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and representatives of civil society and the private sector (confirmed by evaluation interviews). The MTS identified ecosystem management as one of the six cross-cutting thematic priorities (subprogrammes)²³, and as an area in which UNEP considered itself to have a comparative advantage.
149. Taken together, the above give UNEP a strong convening power for addressing a wide range of environmental issues, and the status to speak as an authoritative voice for the global environment and provide a convincing

²² This section is intended largely for a non-UNEP audience less familiar with the UNEP structure and EMSP.

²³ (1) Climate change; (2) Disasters and conflicts; (3) Ecosystem management; (4) Environmental governance; (5) Harmful substances and hazardous wastes; (6) Resource efficiency.

argument for why UNEP is well placed to work on ecosystem management, especially at the policy and planning levels, through its normative work (particularly at the science-policy interface), and on capacity building.

150. The MTS expands on five 'means of implementation': Sound science for decision-makers: early warning, monitoring and assessment; awareness-raising, outreach and communications; capacity-building and technology support (Bali Strategic Plan); cooperation, coordination and partnerships; and sustainable financing for the global environment. It further identified the 'necessary institutional mechanisms' for achieving its objectives, including, notably, strengthening of the UNEP Regional Offices, planning for results, institutional knowledge management and resource allocation. Emphasis is placed on UNEP working collaboratively with other actors to achieve its expected accomplishments in these areas.

3.2. Rationale and Conceptual Framework for the EMSP

151. The rationale, conceptual framework and strategy for UNEP's Ecosystem Management Subprogramme (EMSP) were first set out in an internal working document titled *UNEP's Ecosystem Management Programme*²⁴: *An Ecosystem Approach*, drafted in March 2008 (UNEP 2008a). This document indicates that the programme is centred on i) the functioning and resilience of the ecosystems that provide ecosystem services and ii) equitable access to these services.
152. The rationale for intervention is the need to address the degradation of 15 of the 26 ecosystem services identified by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA 2005) and the consequent effects on human well-being. Based on an analysis of these 15 degraded ecosystem services and the mandate and comparative advantage of UNEP, 11 services were identified as most relevant and which needed to be given priority under the ecosystem management programme, namely:
 - Regulating services: climate, water, natural hazard and disease regulation, water purification and waste treatment, which are often strongly affected by the overuse of provisioning services;
 - Provisioning services: freshwater, energy (especially biofuel production) and capture fisheries;
 - Supporting services: nutrient cycling and primary production which underlie the delivery of all the other services; and,
 - Cultural services: recreation and ecotourism.
153. The conceptual framework indicates that UNEP's interventions were to be guided by five major interlinked elements: (i) human well-being, (ii) indirect and (iii) direct drivers of change, (iv) ecosystem functioning and (v) ecosystem services. The document identifies five entry points for UNEP to work on indirect pressures, direct pressures and human well-being, and each of these entry points is illustrated through examples (Figure 1).
154. At a more practical level the strategy highlights the expertise that UNEP can bring to these entry points including:
 - Assessment and monitoring (e.g., indicators, research and access to knowledge);
 - Risk management;
 - Management tools (e.g., conservation/protection, restoration, sustainable management, legislation, certification);
 - Ecosystem economics (e.g., payments for ecosystem services, incentives and financing mechanisms, valuation, equity and fairness principles);
 - Governance (e.g., international agreements, legislation, policies); and
 - Capacity-building and technology support.

²⁴ The term 'subprogramme' was not yet in use

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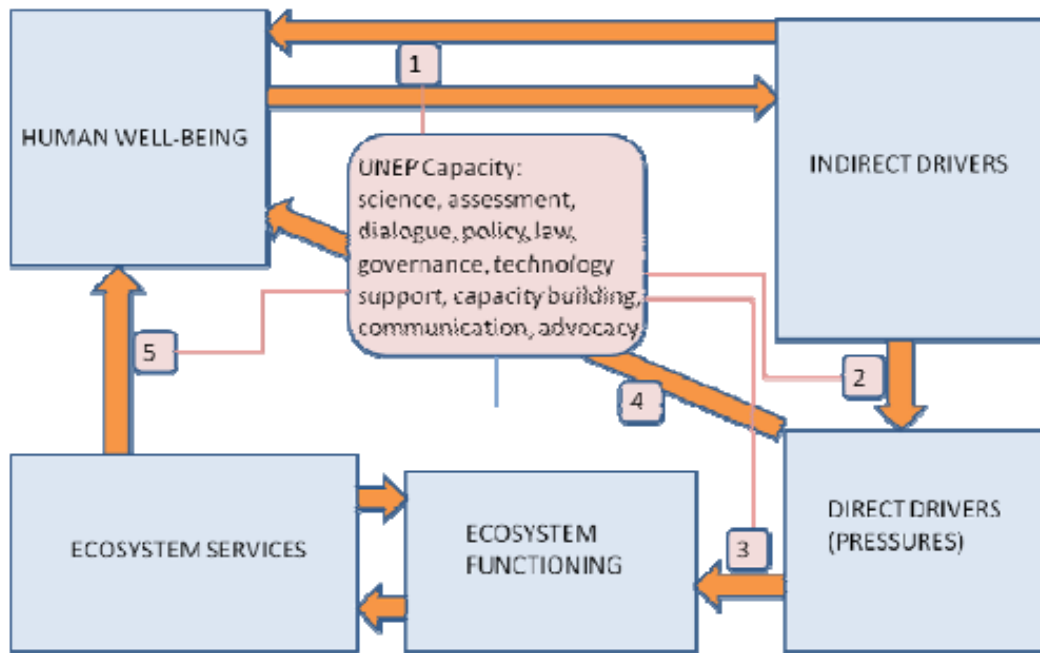


Figure 1. Identified entry points for UNEP’s work on Ecosystem Management (Indicated by numbers 1-5) (UNEP 2008c)

155. The document outlines ‘implementation modalities to support stakeholders at global, regional and national levels’ including i) development of guidelines and advocacy for the ecosystem approach at global level; ii) assessment of ecosystem services; iii) implementation of shared action plans (spanning institutional and technical capacity building, advocacy, communications, region specific norms, legal mechanisms) at regional level and national levels; and iv) working with ministries of environment, planning and finance to promote the overall incorporation of the ecosystem approach into national development planning through the Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI)²⁵.
156. The 2008 Programme document was later elaborated through a brief undated document (2008 or 2009) entitled ‘Operationalizing UNEP’s Ecosystem Management Programme’ that was intended to describe the operational modalities for implementation of the programme (UNEP nd.a). The document recognizes ‘that the conceptual approach provided in the programme document is new to many governments and stakeholders and can be complicated’. It elaborates a 4-step adaptive process to aid implementation of the EMSP with an objective, actions and results for each step (Table 2). Emphasis is placed on the use of sub-global assessments to define the place-specific interventions strategies under step 3.

Table 2. Operational Steps and Objectives for the Ecosystem Management Programme (Based on UNEP nd.a)

Operational Step	Objective and activities
1. Making the case – understanding and accepting an ecosystem approach	To engage countries and other stakeholders in a dialogue on ecosystems and development Activities to promote the ecosystem management approach and explain its advantages for development, including highlighting the role of ecosystem services and biodiversity in building a sustainable future and the critical role ecosystems play as infrastructure to support development
2. Generating the knowledge – assessing and developing knowledge systems for ecosystems	To provide place-based and policy-relevant information to guide the mainstreaming of ecosystem considerations into national and regional development planning Activities to develop and test tools and methodologies for national governments and regions to restore and manage ecosystems and biodiversity and to help countries understand and use ecosystem management tools effectively, including helping countries place a financial value on their ecosystem services and the costs and benefits of changes in the delivery of ecosystem services
3. Turning knowledge to action	To design place-based management interventions to improve delivery of ecosystem

²⁵ In practice, the PEI was implemented under the Environmental Governance Subprogramme (EGSP).

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– implementing ecosystem management tools to improve delivery of ecosystem services	services by addressing drivers and improving equity of service delivery Activities to help national governments integrate ecosystem services into development planning and investment decisions
4. Monitoring, evaluation and feedback – refining intervention strategies	To ensure optimal delivery of ecosystem services. Activities to monitor and evaluate management measures once in place, with improvement where needed

3.3. EMSP Strategies

157. The UNEP Strategic Framework for 2010-2011 (UNGA 2008) and PoW 2010-2011 include a succinct description of the EMSP strategy that can be seen to have been developed and refined from the brief programme description in the MTS 2010-2013. Specifically:
- UNEP will facilitate a cross-sectoral, integrated approach to ecosystem management to reverse the decline in ecosystem services and improve ecosystem resilience with respect to such external impacts as habitat degradation, invasive species, climate change, pollution and overexploitation.
 - UNEP will continue to catalyse integrated approaches to the assessment and management of freshwater, terrestrial, and coastal and marine systems.
 - In facilitating a more integrated approach UNEP will draw upon its knowledge base and on integrated environmental assessments for more effective management of natural systems on multiple scales and across sectors through technical and institutional capacity-building.
 - UNEP will promote adaptive management, participatory decision-making and sustainable financing through payments or investments for ecosystem services to address the drivers of ecosystem change that reverse degradation and increase ecosystem resilience.
158. The Programme of Work (PoW) for 2010-2011 states that the work on catalysing integrated approaches would build on ‘successful existing UNEP ecosystem programmes’ and ‘through other initiatives including support to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Environmental Outlook process, the Poverty and Environment Initiative, the economics of ecosystem services and the follow-up strategy for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.’ The PoW further indicates that in 2010-2011 it would concentrate much of its work on ‘a limited number of countries requesting its support to achieve more tangible results and greater impact’ and would support countries in their current level of ecosystem engagement (i.e., focus on management planning where ecosystem assessment has already been completed). Activities would be focused primarily on ‘those {areas} with high biodiversity, high water stress, recurrent food shortages and transboundary ecosystems, with special emphasis on least developed countries and Small Island Developing States’.
159. The PoW 2012-2013 indicates that the Subprogramme’s strategy is:
- To build the capacities of regional, sub-regional, national and local entities to assess ecosystem status and degradation and manage and restore ecosystem services. The EMSP was to develop, adapt, test and roll out tools and methodologies for ecosystem assessment, management and restoration that could be applied across a variety of ecosystem types. This was to include tools for ecosystem assessment and monitoring (which would help to strengthen the science-based information needed for policy formulation and planning), ecosystem restoration, integrated water resources management, and development planning and decision-making tools (such as scenario and trade-off analysis), including how to measure the economic value of ecosystem services and how to apply these values to decision-making and to the design of new economic instruments such as incentives and sustainable financing mechanisms.
 - To influence planning and assistance frameworks at the regional and national levels so that they incorporate a cross-sectoral, integrated approach focusing on ecosystem services, including incorporation of the value of ecosystem services into development planning systems to guide investment decisions, with results used to develop policy instruments such as ecotaxation. To help achieve this, the Subprogramme aimed to ‘make the case’ for ecosystem management, and facilitate institutional, policy, economic and governance changes necessary to enable cross-sectoral and, when relevant, transboundary cooperation for the management of ecosystems.
160. Emphasis is placed on equity issues and it is noted that the work will build on existing ecosystem programmes and will involve cooperation with other initiatives.

3.4. EMSP Results Framework

3.4.1. Programming and Results Hierarchy

161. The MTS for 2010-2013 states that ‘The Medium-Term Strategy constitutes the high-level programmatic results framework against which the overall performance of UNEP will be judged. Consequently, the MTS provides the vision and direction for all UNEP activities for the period 2010–2013, including results delivered through:

1. UNEP biennial programmes of work for 2010–2011 and 2012–2013;
2. UNEP Global Environment Facility (GEF) portfolio for 2010–2014;
3. UNEP earmarked contributions’ (Figure 2).

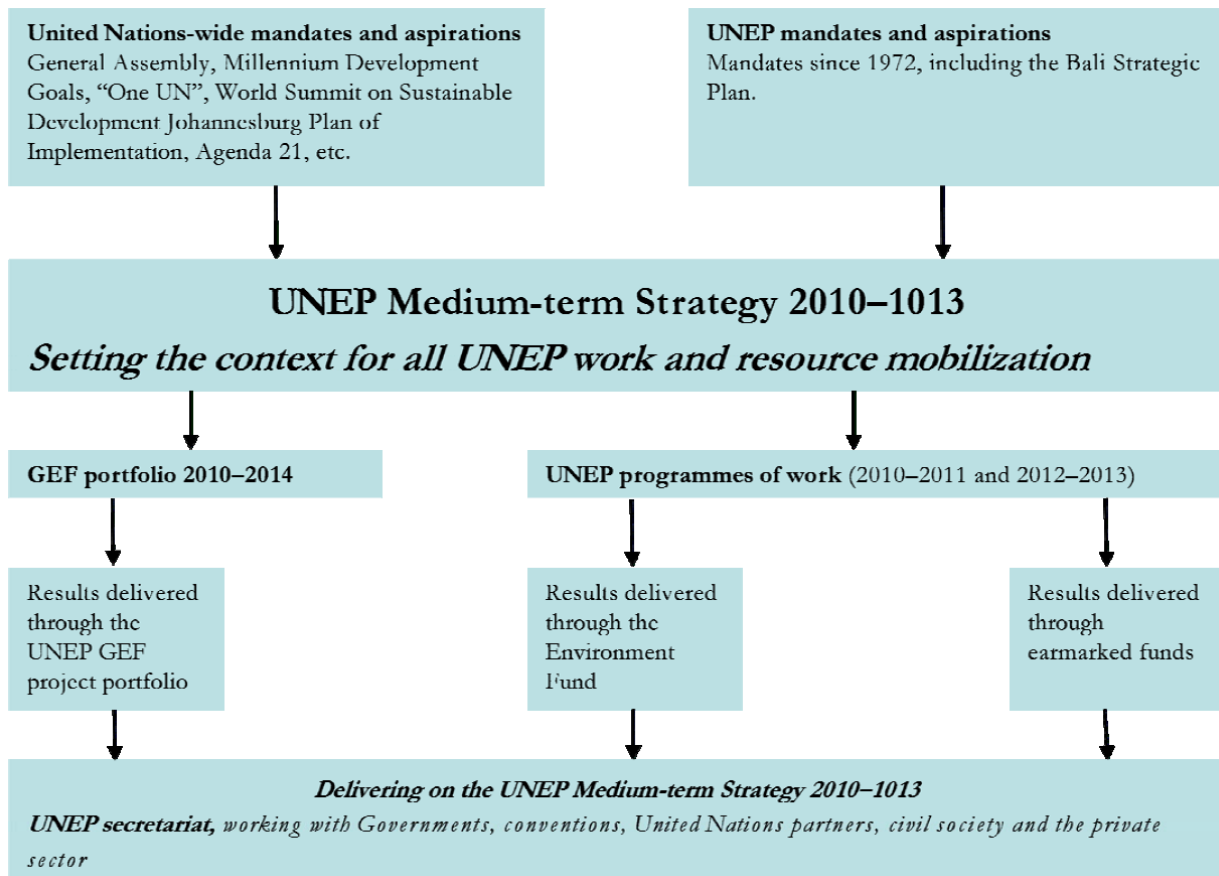


Figure 2. Delivery of the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 (Source: MTS 2010-2013, UNEP 2008a)

162. The UNEP subprogrammes – including the EMSP - were successively defined through a series of increasingly specific programme documents starting with the MTS. The key planning steps in the 4-year programme cycle, illustrated in Figure 3, are:

- The subprogramme objective and expected accomplishments (EAs) for each subprogramme are set out in the MTS;
- Indicators for each EA are developed in the strategic framework;
- Baselines and targets for EAs as well as outputs are set out in the biennial Programme of Work.

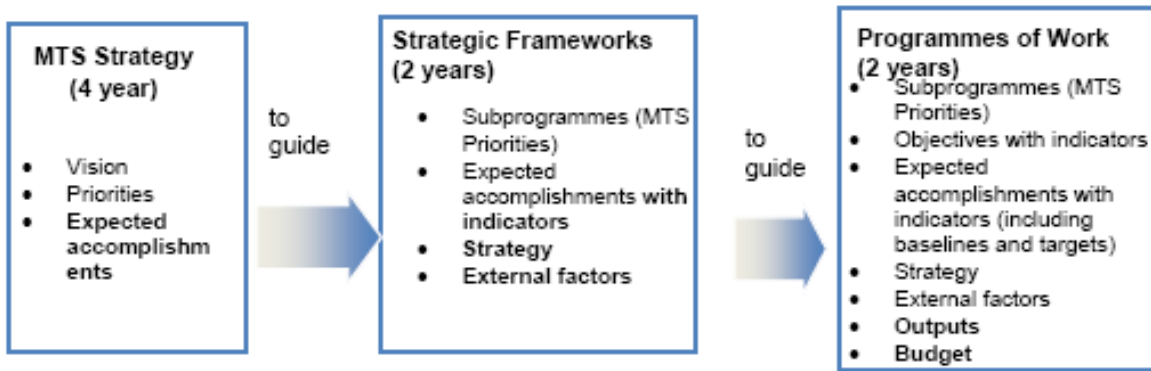


Figure 3. Programme elaboration from MTS to PoW (Source: UNEP Programme Manual, Dec 2012, UNEP 2012d)

163. At the next planning level, Subprogramme Coordinators (SPCs) were responsible for development of two-year Programme Frameworks for each PoW biennium, in collaboration with Regional Offices and UNEP Divisions. These were supposed to include concepts for the set of projects designed to implement the PoW, and an assessment of how the projects together will deliver the PoW, and to set out the causality between projects, PoW outputs and EAs, reflecting the hierarchy of results in Figure 4. Details on the Programme Frameworks are provided in Section 4.2. Identified risks included i) reliance on a greater number of programme partners and ii) insufficient allocation of funding for ecosystem management (compared to climate change and ecosystem based adaptation).
164. Relevant Divisions (see Section 3.5.1) were expected to develop detailed project documents and engage in raising funds for project implementation. The Framework elaborates on selection criteria for interventions at country level, reflecting the PoW guidance that work should take place in a limited number of countries (Paragraph 157).



Figure 4. Hierarchy of UNEP results (Source: UNEP Programme Manual, Dec 2012. UNEP 2012d)

3.4.2. EMSP expected accomplishments and PoW outputs

165. The EMSP has completed one programme cycle corresponding to the MTS 2010-2013, and spanning two biennia each associated with a PoW. It entered a second cycle in January 2014 based on the MTS 2014-2017 and associated PoW 2014-2015. The following paragraphs summarise the expected accomplishments or outcomes for these periods while a table of associated indicators of achievement, outputs, targets and lead divisions for each of the three biennia is attached as Annex 8.

i. MTS Period 2010-2013

166. UNEP prepared its MTS for the period 2010-2013 in response to Governing Council Decision 24/9 (February 2007). The MTS 2010-2013 is elaborated by two PoWs for the periods 2010-2011 and 2012-2013.

167. The objective of the EMSP is that '*Countries utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being*', and the three EAs for the 2010-2011 period are:
- EA (a)** - Countries and regions increasingly integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes;
- EA (b)** - Countries and regions have capacity to utilize ecosystem management tools;
- EA (c)** - Countries and regions begin to realign their environmental programmes and financing to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services.
168. The three EAs for the 2012-2013 biennium were rephrased so that they describe results rather than objectives and clarify UNEP's contribution to the alignment of national and regional environment programmes:
- EA (a)** - Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes;
- EA (b)** - Countries and regions have the capacity to utilize and apply ecosystem management tools;
- EA (c)** - Strengthened capacity of countries and regions to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services.
169. As the tables in Annex 8 indicate, the EA indicators and targets were modified in the second biennium, with direct implications for the expected level and/or nature of delivery under each of the EAs. Specifically:
- The indicator for EA(a) was unchanged but the target reduced from seven to five countries.
 - The two indicators for EA(b) reflect that the emphasis was changed from ecosystem assessment to ecosystem management, with indicators addressing application of management tools (at national level) and management of ecosystems to maintain or restore ecosystem services.
 - The focus of EA(c) was changed from national budgetary allocations to national and regional planning processes on the grounds that UNEP is unlikely to be solely responsible for changes in countries' budgetary allocations.
170. The PoW outputs were also substantially modified and the number reduced from 16 in the 2010-2011 biennium to 10 in the 2012-2013 biennium. Most of the earlier outputs describe a highly specific approach to ecosystem management and often seemed designed to accommodate a single project or set of closely related projects. At the same time the relationship to a given EA was often unclear particularly in view of the specification of EAs through indicators. In general the revised outputs for 2012-2013 are less specific but also more strategic. The outputs can be more directly linked to the EA indicators and are better aligned under the EA themes than those in the first biennium.

ii. MTS Period 2014-2017

171. UNEP prepared its MTS for the period 2014-2017, for adoption in 2013, at the request of the UN Governing Council (decision 26/9). The draft MTS for 2014-2017 was intended to guide the organization's work with governments, partners and other stakeholders. The MTS identifies seven Subprogrammes, including 'ecosystem management'. The EMSP is further elaborated in the PoW for the 2014-2015 biennium.
172. The objective, expected accomplishments (UNEP 2012b), indicators and PoW outputs (UNEP 2013a) for EMSP are summarised in Annex 8. Building on lessons from previous biennia, the expected accomplishments are supposed to: further focus UNEP's work within each of the subprogrammes and ensure internal coherence across divisions and branches in the institution; ensure that the level of ambition of the expected accomplishments are written as result statements that are attributable to UNEP's efforts; and ensure synergies between subprogrammes (UNEP 2012b). The three EAs for this period are:
- EA1/ Production:** Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased;
- EA2/ Marine Issues:** Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to sustain ecosystem services from coastal and marine systems is increased;
- EA3/ Enabling environment:** Services and benefits derived from ecosystems are integrated into development planning and accounting, particularly in relation to wider landscapes and seascapes and the implementation of biodiversity- and ecosystem-related multilateral environmental agreements.

3.5. Subprogramme Organisational Arrangements

3.5.1. Matrix Structure

173. The 2010-2011 Strategic Framework states that the UNEP PoW is to be implemented through the UNEP institutional structure, consisting of the six existing Divisions and a network of six Regional Offices, by drawing on their areas of specialization, strategic presence and capacity to deliver at the regional level.
174. The 2012 Programme Manual outlines the new matrix approach announced in 2009 in which UNEP's six thematic Subprogrammes were to cut across the organizational structure to help maximize capacity and expertise, and encourage the different Divisions and Regional Offices to work together to achieve common thematic objectives (Figure 5). Leadership and overall accountability for the subprogrammes was divided amongst three Divisions: DEPI, the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELIC), and DTIE.

	DEPI	DEW	DELIC	DEWA	DTIE	DRC
Subprogramme 1: Climate Change					✓	
Subprogramme 2: Disasters and Conflicts		✓				
Subprogramme 3: Ecosystem Management		✓				
Subprogramme 4: Environmental Governance			✓			
Subprogramme 5: Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste					✓	
Subprogramme 6: Resource Efficiency, Sustainable Consumption and Production					✓	

✓ = Lead Division

Figure 5. UNEP's matrix approach with Lead Divisions indicated for each Subprogramme (Source: UNEP Programme Manual, Dec 2012, UNEP 2012d)

175. The Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) was assigned responsibility for provision of a science base across all subprogrammes and the Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC) was assigned responsibility for the coordinated implementation at regional and country level across all subprogrammes. These arrangements are reiterated in the PoWs for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 with the latter adding that the Division of Communications and Public Information (DCPI) is responsible for outreach and the production of publications for all subprogrammes.
176. Leadership of Subprogramme 3 (Ecosystem Management) was assigned to DEPI. The PoW 2010-2011 states that given the interdisciplinary nature of the EMSP, DEPI was to play a coordinating role, ensuring that the work programme was executed in close collaboration with other UNEP divisions. Lead Division roles are defined in the 2012 Programme Manual²⁶, which states that *'The Lead Division Director's main role is to ensure programmatic coherence in the design and implementation of the Subprogramme, and that the defined outputs and projects will lead towards the achievement of the EAs and make credible contributions to the programmatic objectives'*. Divisional Focal Points for each of the subprogrammes, including the EMSP were assigned in each of the five non-lead divisions (including DRC HQ).
177. UNEP Regional Offices (managed as part of the DRC until mid-2013) have managed a number of sub-regional and country-level EM projects and focal points for the EMSP have been assigned in each of the ROs with their selection based on complementarily with their primary role (See section 5.2). These are not currently dedicated roles but the 2012 Programme Manual states that *'It is envisaged that, from 2014 onwards, Regional Offices will host regional focal points, who serve similar functions at the level of each region, under the supervision of the Regional Director and with a second reporting line to the Subprogramme Coordinator'*.

3.5.2. Subprogramme Coordinator

26 The Manual refers to the 2010-2011 accountability framework for further details

178. The UNEP Accountability Framework of 26 April 2010 sets out the programme accountability for the PoW 2010-2011 (UNEP 2010a). This includes a categorisation of divisional responsibilities as well as the 'establishment' of six Subprogramme Coordinators (SPCs)²⁷. The roles of the Programme Approval Group (PAG), Project Review Committee (PRC) and Quality assurance Section (QAS) are also described.
179. The 2012 Programme Manual states that: 'A Subprogramme Coordinator is appointed to ensure the development and implementation of a coherent and strategic programme in each of the priority areas. The Subprogramme Coordinators work under the supervision of the Director of the Lead Division²⁸; however their work spans across all Divisions to ensure an integrated and strategic approach to programme development. The Subprogramme Coordinator is primarily responsible for: facilitating the development of a Programme of Work that cuts across all Divisions in UNEP in the relevant priority area; facilitating a coherent implementation of activities across divisions to achieve measurable results for the Subprogramme, and; ensuring that implementation enables UNEP's ability to achieve results expected at the end of the biennium'.

3.5.3. EMSP linkage to other Subprogrammes

180. The EMSP differs from most of the other subprogrammes in the MTS 2010-2013 in that it is intended to put in place a *process* to accomplish broad environmental outcomes rather than a set of activities oriented towards addressing a specific environmental *pressure* (such as climate change or disasters and conflicts)²⁹. There is clear overlap and synergies between this subprogramme and other subprogrammes in that ecosystem management can serve as a tool for delivery of expected accomplishments under the CCSP and DCSP, for example through ecosystem-based climate change adaptation projects.
181. The PoWs for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 refer to the interdisciplinary nature of the EMSP and consequent need for close collaboration amongst DEPI and other Divisions. Indeed, it can be argued that ecosystem management cuts across all of UNEP's work, e.g. assessment and economic analysis, national planning, transboundary management, ecosystem restoration, market-based solutions (e.g., carbon trading), and dealing with invasive species.
182. The 2008 strategy document for the EMSP summarized linkages between ecosystem management and all five other subprogrammes (Table 3) (UNEP 2008c). However, the summary was at a quite general level and without explicit reference to other subprogramme EAs.

Table 3. Summary of linkages between Ecosystem Management and UNEP's other subprogrammes (based on EMSP Strategy, 2008, which reports on what was anticipated not on what was delivered, UNEP 2008c)

Subprogramme	Contribution of EM	Contribution to EM
Climate change	Mitigation (reduced emissions) through improved land use and reduced deforestation Ecosystem based adaptation and mitigation of impacts	
Environmental governance	Presentation of success stories (often from field-based 'pilots') to guide cultural, social, political and institutional processes	Effective governance at multiple scales is essential for effective ecosystem management
Hazardous substances	Strengthening of the regulating services that clean air and water	Reduction of hazardous substances to improve ecosystem health
Natural disasters and post-conflict response	Prevention and mitigation of natural disasters by strengthening natural barriers Restoration and recovery operations in post crisis areas benefit from an ecosystem approach Reduced competition for natural resources	
Resource efficiency	Understanding of effects of drivers and pressures on ecosystem integrity	Internalising environmental costs and removing perverse subsidies

183. Planning documents for the EMSP make implicit references to collaboration with other subprogrammes including references in the PoW 2010-2011 to climate change mitigation/Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) (outputs 112 & 113) and in the PoW 2012-2013 to ecosystem

²⁷ The Annex referred to on PoW roles and divisional responsibilities is not included in this scanned document.

²⁸ In March 2014 it was decided that SPCs would have a first reporting line to the Programme Strategy and Planning Team (PSPT) and a second reporting line to the Subprogramme Lead Division Director.

²⁹ The same applies to the Environmental Governance Subprogramme.

based adaptation (EA(b): tools and methodologies). In addition, many of the project concepts in the EMSP Framework include reference to contributions to outputs under other SPs. However there is little discussion of the implications of overlaps and linkages between subprogrammes or detail on outputs.

3.5.4. Integration of GEF Projects³⁰

184. The complementarity between the Programme of Work and work funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) within UNEP was discussed by its Governing Council at its 20th session and was subsequently considered by the 13th session of the GEF Council in 1999. The key elements of complementarity, considered to be *additionality*, *synergy* and *integration*, were elaborated at that time and whilst much has changed since then in terms of the managerial and administrative arrangements for GEF-related work within UNEP, the issue of complementarity and its associated elements retain their relevance today.
185. *Additionality* considerations mean that GEF projects should not formally be considered part of the PoW but should be consistent with UNEP's mandate and programme objectives. *Synergy* should be sought between initiatives in the PoW and areas that respond to GEF priorities whilst coinciding with UNEP's comparative advantage in the GEF. *Integration* requires that internal management and coordination mechanisms have been established in such a way that decision-making concerning the GEF takes place at the highest levels in UNEP.
186. In early 2011 staff were re-assigned from the former Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF) to other Divisions according to the thematic alignment of the GEF Focal areas with the Lead Divisions of the relevant thematic Subprogrammes. Therefore, staff working within the GEF Focal Areas of Climate Change and Chemicals and Waste were assigned to DTIE, whilst staff working within the GEF Biodiversity, International Waters and Land Degradation Focal Areas were assigned to DEPI. Most GEF work housed in DEPI can readily be linked to the PoW results framework for the EMSP, however some GEF projects in these focal areas contribute results to other subprogrammes. For example, the portfolio of GEF projects on National Biosafety Frameworks, better links to the Environmental Governance Subprogramme EA(b)³¹.
187. The MTS 2010-2013 clearly indicates the intention that GEF projects would be part of the delivery mechanism for UNEP's EAs for that period (see section 3.4.1). In practice, coordination and reporting of the subprogrammes during the MTS period 2010-2013 was largely restricted to the work delivered under the PoW outputs, including that funded through extra-budgetary resources³². Complementarities with the GEF portfolio are mentioned through references to a handful of projects in the PoW definition documents but there was no systematic list of GEF projects considered to have contributed, or be contributing, to the MTS, EAs or PoW outputs during the period 2010-2013.
188. There was no real integration of EM-related GEF-funded projects into the PoWs for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. Individual GEF project documents and evaluations provide only general statements on the project's alignment with the UNEP PoW with identification of the relevant SP and EAs although it is clear that GEF biodiversity, land degradation and international waters projects contribute in general terms to the EMSP. There has been limited consideration of the contributions of individual projects towards the PoW results or linkages to other EMSP projects. In addition, the contribution of the GEF portfolio to EAs and PoW outputs is not currently captured in PPRs or PIMS reporting on EMSP results (but see paragraph 591), further contributing to the problem of underreporting of UNEP's overall delivery on ecosystem management (see section 5.5.2).
189. The MTS 2014-2017 states that '*UNEP has strengthened alignment of its work with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to further enhance complementarity with the UNEP Programme of Work. Thus, the entire stream of GEF revenue will directly support the achievement of the MTS, while respecting the concept of complementarity and additionality*'. There has been an ongoing exercise to identify and capture contributions of internally executed GEF projects to the MTS 2014-2017 and to integrate the GEF portfolio into the 2014-2015 PoW in such a way as to enhance complementarity, show added value, and avoid substitution of UNEP finance³³. However, UNEP staff working on GEF projects do not regard the process of integration as fully complete.

³⁰ Also includes Adaptation Fund and MLF financed work.

³¹ "The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals, and to comply with related obligations is enhanced."

³² The EMSP strategic framework states that a number of projects are already being implemented with GEF but does not include GEF projects in the summary budget.

³³ UNEP internal memo dated 23 May 2013.

190. The 1999 report³⁴ states that “*Integrating GEF activities within UNEP means that the objectives of the GEF should be an integral part of internal decision-making on UNEP’s institutional priorities and programmes.*” In September 2011 the SMT approved a paper entitled “*The revised Project Cycle of UNEP/GEF*”. The paper set out the project cycle for UNEP-GEF projects under the new arrangements and identified the need to ‘synchronise’ the UNEP PoW planning process with the GEF portfolio and ‘pipeline’ in the preparation of Programme Frameworks. Despite this intent, integration of GEF work into UNEP’s broader programmatic planning process remains largely unfulfilled.
191. Full integration of the GEF portfolio and pipeline into UNEP planning and reporting processes requires additional support through more ‘organic’ / informal means that foster a culture of dialogue among staff with common thematic interests and responsibilities. The complementarity of GEF supported work to the UNEP (and EMSP) planning process should always be considered at the early stages (GEF soft pipeline) of concept development. UNEP staff dealing with GEF projects should be engaged in ongoing internal EMSP *strategic thinking* that should precede and complement more formal PoW and work planning processes. Here, SPCs and Branch Heads have an important role to play in keeping the entire portfolio of projects under review and fostering dialogue among staff that helps to identify where complementarities between PoW projects and GEF projects may currently exist or be further emphasized through concept development and project approvals. GEF projects, whilst responding to GEF priorities could, for example, build on UNEP work, and assist in scaling up and replication of initiatives developed with non-GEF resources (see section 4.4.2). Further harmonisation of UNEP and GEF project approval processes is still needed. Greater focus should be placed on the development and review of project concepts. GEF project cycle processes already include the preparation of robust concepts (PIFs) and UNEP project development and approval processes would benefit from a similarly robust approach at concept stage. PRC approval of GEF PIFs (especially their logframes) should happen before submission to the GEF CEO. This will avoid situations where PRC requests revision of project logframes that have already received GEF / country approval.

3.5.5. Partnerships

192. The MTS sets out in general terms opportunities for cooperation, coordination and partnerships with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), United Nations system and international institutions, civil society and the private sector, and UNEP collaborating centres of excellence. The Strategic Framework for 2010-2011 expands on relationships within the UN system and mentions bilateral aid agencies. UNEP’s partnership policy reflects that implementing partners are usually sub-contractors.
193. There are two main partner types within the EMSP – Subprogramme-level partners and project-level partners. The main actors to facilitate mainstreaming of the EMSP results into national and regional decision-making frameworks identified in the 2010-2011 Programme Framework document were national governments or regional institutions. Mobilising non-traditional partners (ministries of planning, economy, finance, energy, etc) as well as the private sector was considered likely to present a major challenge for this Subprogramme.
194. The Programme Framework 2010-2011 document identifies a number of supporting partners at the Subprogramme level arguing that as the objective of the EMSP is essentially about ensuring the recommendations of the MA are implemented, at Subprogramme level ‘MA follow-up partners will be crucial for UNEP’s implementation of this Programme of Work’. These were to include: World Resources Institute (WRI), IUCN, WWF, and the Stockholm Environment Institute among others. Several of these have been involved with specific projects but there has been no general involvement by these partners at the Subprogramme level, even though some, notably IUCN and WWF, have large, well-established and active ecosystem management (or landscape approach) programmes, and there is a growing ecosystem management community (see Section 2.1). This is partly a reflection of the absence of an existing framework to enable such engagement at the Subprogramme level, which is not helped by the lack of a strong identity and weak ‘story line’ for the EMSP (see Section 5.1.2).

3.6. Subprogramme Theory of Change

3.6.1. Background

³⁴ GEF Council (1999) Action plan on complementarity between the activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme under the Global Environment Facility and its programme of work (prepared by UNEP) GEF/C.13/5 Agenda item 7.

195. A good results framework should clearly articulate the logic that underpins the programmatic strategy. The subprogramme results framework should therefore present clear causal relationships between the Programme of Work outputs, the EAs and the Subprogramme objective.
196. The Theory of Change (ToC) is a diagrammatic representation of such causal relationships derived directly from the Programmes of Work and strategy/design documents to identify and help explain the causal pathways from intended actions, through outputs, immediate outcomes, medium-term outcomes, intermediate states to the ultimate impacts of the Subprogramme. The ToC also helps to identify key factors affecting the achievement of outcomes, intermediate states and impacts, including the necessary assumptions and drivers, and the expected role and contributions of key actors.
197. Ideally, the results statements at EA level should be defined in a way that creates a level of mutual exclusivity such that the PoW outputs and projects that contribute to the EAs can be organised, managed and monitored with clarity. In addition, according to the UNEP Programme Manual (2012), UNEP projects in the PoW should be listed under only one EA and the most relevant PoW output (based on the 'dominant' outcome and outputs of the project). If the results statements at EA level are too general and have significant definitional overlap then it becomes possible for many of the PoW outputs or projects specified under a particular EA to be linked to other EAs. For example, a PoW output or a project under EA 1 may also have a strong plausible causal link to EA 2. Under such circumstances the categorisation of specific projects under a particular EA may become rather arbitrary, which distorts the monitoring and reporting of progress towards each of the EAs, and makes assessment of overall performance of the Subprogramme problematic.
198. Attempts to construct a ToC for the EMSP based on the EAs and PoW Outputs for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 revealed a number of significant problems. The articulation of the results statements at the EA level in the EMSP is rather broad and the EAs overlap substantially and can be considered sequential to some extent, with the focus of each EA on enhancing various aspects of national capacity. Despite revisions, the 2012-2013 Programme of Work presented only slightly modified EAs from the 2010-2011 biennium and both suffer the same problem of overlapping results statements. For instance, the wording of EA(a) and EA(c) for the PoW 2012-2013 suggests that they are both EAs concerned with building capacity to mainstream ecosystem management into policy and planning processes, and EA(b) is focused on developing and implementing ecosystem management tools and methodologies, which would be used to support mainstreaming efforts of EA(a) and EA(c) (See Annex 8). Similarly, the EA indicators suggest that a broad range of approaches can be accommodated, with the indicator for EA(a) being essentially the same as that for EA(c), the only substantial difference being that the EA(a) indicator deals with planning processes, whereas that for EA(c) deals with planning instruments.
199. Furthermore, the EAs are overly ambitious and set relatively high in the causal pathway somewhat beyond UNEP's ability to deliver through the EMSP. They represent more 'medium term outcomes' or 'intermediate states' than immediate outcomes (expected accomplishments³⁵) (see Section 5.1.2). Although the formulation of the EAs could not be substantially changed after the MTS had been approved, this weakness in the EMSP design was recognised to some extent in the 2012-2013 biennium when the EA indicators and PoW outputs were revised (see Section 3.4.2). For instance, changes in national authority budgets were recognised as beyond the EMSP ability to deliver and so the indicator for EA(c) was changed from monitoring '*national budgetary allocations to address priority ecosystem services*' to '*national and regional planning instruments that include commitments and targets to integrate ecosystem management*'.
200. A further confounding factor is that the EMSP is built around a set of approaches, grouped together under the broad concept of ecosystem management, rather than, as is the case for several other UNEP subprogrammes, addressing specific environmental challenges, such as climate change, harmful substances or disasters and conflicts. Consequently, it is difficult to construct a clear causal logic for the Subprogramme based on the EAs and PoW outputs as stated for either the PoW 2010-2011 or 2012-2013 biennium. The Theory of Change approach was clearly not applied to the development of the original results framework when it was being designed (although this was not required at the time).
201. It should be noted that these weaknesses are well known and have been reported in previous evaluations, and lessons have been learned with the result that the articulation of the EAs for the MTS 2014-2017 and the PoW

³⁵ UN definition is that an expected accomplishment should be an immediate outcome (Instructions for the preparation of the 2012-2013 strategic framework pp.8-9 - <http://imdis.un.org/>). Immediate outcomes are defined as short to medium-term behavioural or systemic effects that projects contribute towards, and that are designed to help achieve the project's impacts. Intermediate states are defined as the transitional conditions between the project's (or programme's) outcomes and impacts that must be achieved in order to deliver the intended impacts (The ROTI Handbook, GEF 2009).

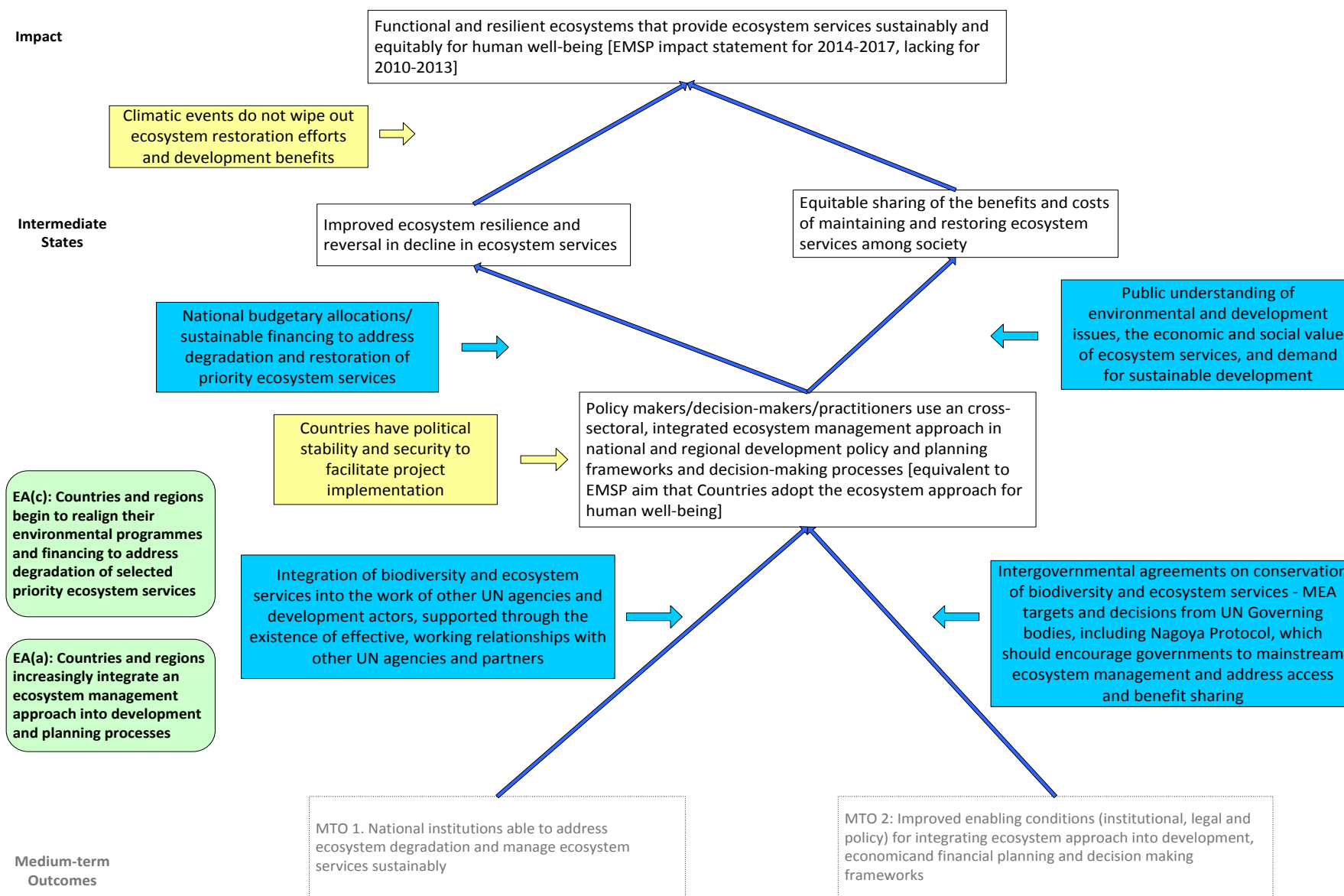
2014-2015 shows a substantial difference with that for the MTS 2010-2013. In the new MTS, the EAs have a higher degree of mutual exclusivity and primarily align with 'priority' thematic areas rather than to ecosystem management (capacity building) approaches.

3.6.2. Reconstructed Theory of Change

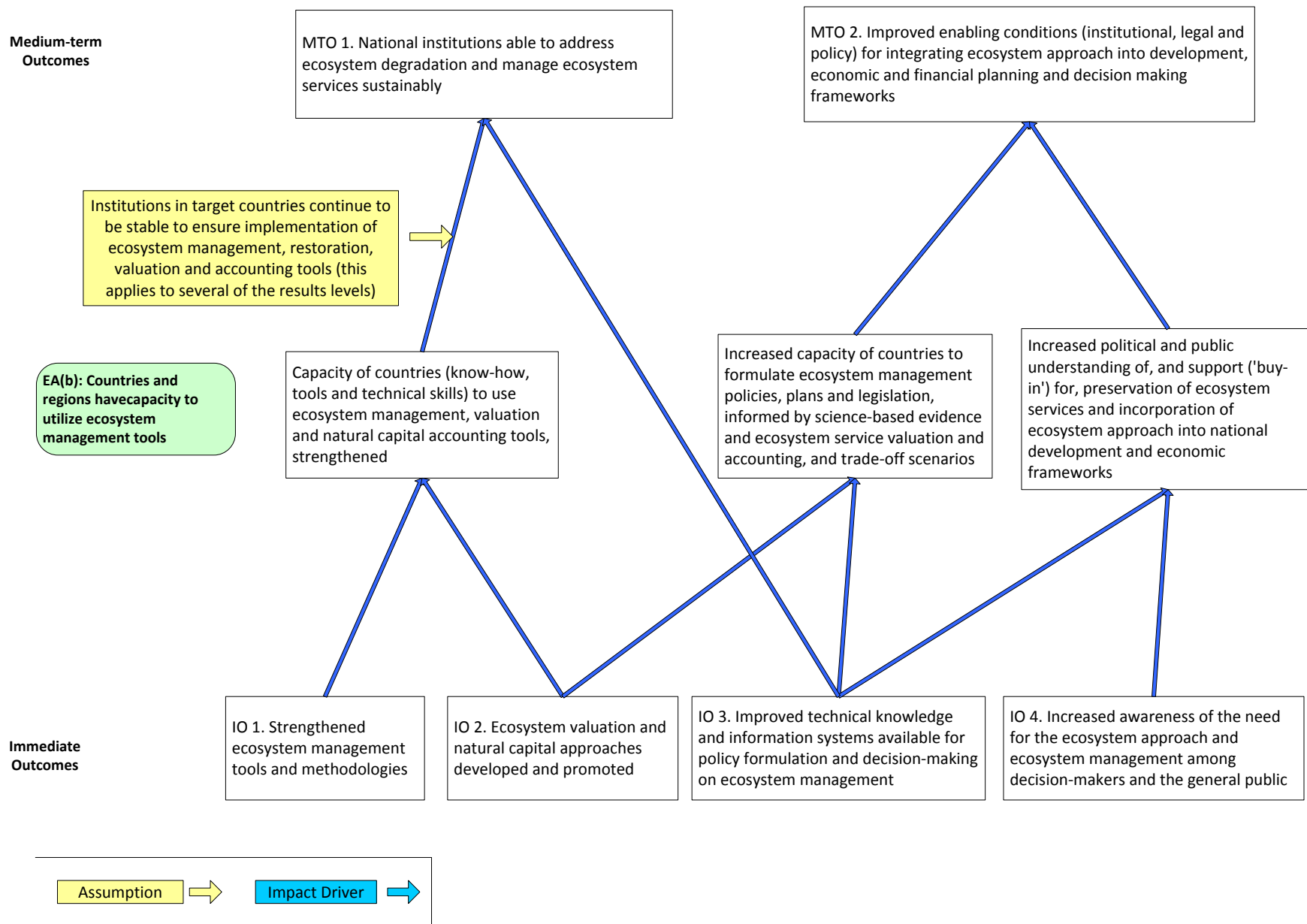
202. Despite the limitations described above, a basic ToC can be reconstructed for the EMSP for the period 2010-2013, using the MTS 2010-2013, Strategic Frameworks and Programme of Works for the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 biennia and the 2010-2011 Programme Framework document and narratives from other Subprogramme documents.
203. UNEP's stated **Objective** for the EMSP during the 2010-2013 period was '*to ensure countries utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being*'. UNEP's strategy to achieve this was to influence planning and assistance frameworks and facilitate institutional, policy, economic and governance shifts at regional and national levels towards a cross-sectoral, integrated approach to ecosystem management, while promoting awareness of the inter-linkages between humans and their impacts on ecosystems, and the benefits people derive from ecosystem services, including aspects of poverty and health. In doing so, the EMSP sought to promote (among other things) subregional ecosystem assessments, cross-sectoral policy integration, participatory decision-making, technological innovations, economic processes and environment and development linkages.
204. However, the EMSP's stated objective does not represent a result at impact level. Surprisingly, there is no explicit impact statement for the EMSP for the MTS 2010-2013 in any Subprogramme documents of the period. The closest, given in the PoW 2010-2011 and PoW 2012-2013, is that '*UNEP will facilitate a cross-sectoral, integrated approach to ecosystem management to reverse the decline in ecosystem services and improve ecosystem resilience with respect to such external impacts as habitat degradation, invasive species, climate change, pollution and overexploitation*'. Again, the first part of this is approach-orientated.
205. The **Overall Impact** to which the EMSP seeks to contribute can be formulated as '*Functional and resilient ecosystems that provide ecosystem services sustainably and equitably for human well-being*'. This is the same as that given for 2014-2017. This can be broken into two interdependent 'impact domains': i) improved ecosystem resilience and reversal in decline in ecosystem services and ii) equitable sharing of the benefits and costs of protecting ecosystem services among society.
206. Impact is expected to be achieved through the **Intermediate State** '*Policy makers/decision-makers/practitioners use an cross-sectoral, integrated ecosystem management approach in national and regional development policy and planning frameworks and decision-making processes*' (Figure 6) which is equivalent to the EMSP's aim that countries adopt the ecosystem approach for human well-being, and reflects a transition towards an ecosystem approach based development path.
207. Before this in the causal logic are a number of interrelated and interdependent **Medium-Term Outcomes** (MTOs). The two higher-level MTOs are: (1) *National institutions able to address ecosystem degradation and manage ecosystem services sustainably*, and (2) *Improved enabling conditions (institutional, legal and policy) for integrating ecosystem approach into development, economic and financial planning and decision-making frameworks*. The results at this level relate to institutionalizing the gains made at the immediate outcomes level. Expected accomplishments (a) and (c) are positioned slightly above this level in the ToC but below the Intermediate State, with the EA (b) positioned below the MTOs.
208. These MTOs are expected to be achieved through **Immediate Outcomes**, which directly result from key outputs (concrete services and products) delivered by the EMSP. This is the result level at which UNEP can have clear, direct influence. There are four immediate outcomes relating to improved tools and methodologies for ecosystem restoration and management, ecosystem valuation and natural capital approaches, technical information and knowledge systems needed for effective decision-making, and 'making the case' for the ecosystem approach.
209. **Immediate Outcome 1 (IO1). Strengthened ecosystem management tools and methodologies.** UNEP's work under this Immediate Outcome (IO) has been focused on developing and testing tools and methodologies for ecosystem assessment, management and restoration, and assisting countries and regions to utilise those tools through targeted capacity building, involving field pilots and demonstrations. Activities have included mapping of trans-boundary marine corridors and assisting in development of protected area management plans, as well as various guidelines and other normative work. Most 'piloting' and 'demonstration' activities within the EMSP projects contribute to this immediate outcome, and most of the projects/activities undertaken under EA(b) for 2012-2013 and some under EA(c) help deliver this immediate outcome.

210. **Immediate Outcome 2 (IO2). Ecosystem valuation and natural capital approaches developed and promoted.** UNEP has focused on developing methods and approaches to measure the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services (natural capital), how to apply these values to the design of economic and financial policy and instruments, such as incentives and sustainable financing mechanisms, how to use them to strengthen decision making by governments, businesses and consumers, and demonstrating their implementation through pilot projects. Activities contributing to this immediate outcome mostly relate to those undertaken under EA(c) and EA(b) for 2012-2013.
211. **Immediate Outcome 3 (IO3). Improved technical knowledge and information systems available for policy formulation and decision-making on ecosystem management.** This immediate outcome focuses on the EMSP's work on generating knowledge, such as identifying key drivers of change linked to degradation, to support evidence-based decision-making in policy and planning, and making this information more accessible through improved knowledge management systems. Most of the EMSP's assessment and science-policy interface work contributes to this immediate outcome. Many of the projects associated with this immediate outcome relate to EA(a) for the PoW 2012-2013.
212. **Immediate Outcome 4 (IO4). Increased awareness of the need for the ecosystem approach and ecosystem management among decision-makers and the general public.** A key aim of the EMSP is to ensure that decision-makers and the general public are better informed of the services and benefits derived from ecosystems and the economic, social and environmental costs of the 'business as usual' development/economic model. UNEP's work under this IO has been focused on 'making the case' to governments to catalyze the uptake of the ecosystem approach to enhance human-well being, through, for instance, regional dialogues on ecosystem approaches and presentation of the results of individual EMSP projects, as well as through more corporate-level activities and collaborative work with MEAs. Most EMSP projects had communication/outreach components but this IO is largely associated with EA(a) in 2012-2013.
213. It is recognized that the above four immediate outcomes are multi-faceted and all interact with each other to differing extents, which makes it difficult to categorise projects (or even activities) at this level. For instance, results from demonstration/pilots of tools and methodologies (IO1) potentially feed into technical information sources and knowledge delivery platforms (IO3), and may also provide material for awareness-raising and advocacy activities to promote the ecosystem approach (IO4). Also, many EMSP projects can be seen as contributing to different dimensions of an IO and no project fully encompasses a single IO. In addition, for various reasons (timing, funding) projects were often not able to deliver and link these contributions in a given place or process (e.g. pilot work or capacity building was not delivered, or was delivered before the related technical guidelines or tool was ready). Consequently, there is a risk that the necessary articulation between field and normative work will be lost. The latter is a general problem with retrofitting a ToC to a programme rather than an individual project.
214. The positioning of the PoW outputs in the causal logic is not presented as they were changed substantially between 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 (see section 3.4.2). They would need to be reassigned between the IOs above, and in some cases 'deconstructed' where they combine several services and products or where they were wrongly formulated, and there is no clear objective way to reassign them. It is worth noting that other significant benefits and impacts are likely due to the complementarities with other subprogrammes, particularly with regard to the relevance of the ecosystem approach as a tool for building resilience and aiding adaptation to climate change, as well as for disaster risk reduction.

Figure 6: Reconstructed Theory of Change for EMSP during 2010-2013 period



Evaluation of the UNEP Subprogramme on Ecosystem Management



3.6.3. Assumptions and drivers

215. Assumptions and drivers are those external factors or conditions that need to be present for change to happen (assumptions) or can positively influence the direction of change (drivers) along the causal pathways from outputs to outcomes to impacts. UNEP defines drivers as factors over which it can exercise a certain level of control and which can therefore be influenced by the EMSP. Assumptions are factors that the organization cannot influence, either by choice or by lack of capacity, or because they are external /beyond the control or mandate of the organisation. These are listed below but discussed in more detail in relation to the Subprogramme's performance in section 4.3.4.
216. Most drivers identified relate to the medium-term outcome level and above, and operate at the country capacity level or are needed to deliver on successful adoption and application of the ecosystem approach by stakeholders. The principal ones are:
- Public understanding of environmental and development issues, the economic and social value of ecosystem services, and demand for sustainable development including promotion of the Green Economy, which helps encourage continued political will, commitment and buy-in to integrate ecosystem approach into national economic and development agendas;
 - Intergovernmental agreements on conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services - MEA targets and decisions from UN Governing bodies, including Nagoya Protocol, which should encourage governments to mainstream ecosystem management and address access and benefit sharing;
 - National budgetary allocations/sustainable financing to address degradation and restoration of priority ecosystem services, which is part of the EMSP's overall strategy (to influence national budgetary investments, and improve long-term financing); and,
 - Integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into the work of other UN agencies and development actors, supported through the existence of effective, working relationships with other UN agencies and partners.
217. The main assumptions which again mostly operate at a higher levels of the causal chain, are:
- Sufficient political stability and security to enable project implementation at the national and local levels, and this must hold true for UNEP to be able to deliver the outputs under the EMSP;
 - Institutions in target countries continue to be stable to ensure implementation of ecosystem management, restoration, valuation and accounting tools (this applies to several of the results levels); and
 - Climatic events do not wipe out ecosystem restoration efforts and development benefits.

4. Evaluation Findings

4.1. Relevance and Appropriateness

218. The following section examines the strategic relevance of the EMSP and UNEP's evolving mandate and capacity in this area. It presents a brief analysis of the global context and needs, and whether UNEP's ecosystem management objectives are aligned with UNEP's mandate. The organisation's relative strengths and weaknesses (its comparative advantage) for ecosystem management are covered in section 3.1, and the strategic focus of the Subprogramme in section 3.3.
219. Unfortunately, there is no overarching strategy document for UNEP's involvement in ecosystem management to guide UNEP in developing and implementing ecosystem management initiatives for the 2010-2013 period (in contrast to other Subprogrammes, such as Climate Change which had its own UNEP strategy). There is little in the way of context and needs analysis in the main planning documents (MTS 2010-2013, Strategic Frameworks and Programme of Work documents) for either biennia, and the 2010-2011 Programme Framework and attached Project Concepts also fall short of presenting a full strategy. However, several UNEP thematic strategies do explicitly endorse ecosystem management as their main approach/means of delivery, notably UNEP's 2009 Marine and Coastal Strategy (UNEP 2009c) which 'encompasses the ecosystem approach as a key concept for managing human uses'; the 2007-2012 UNEP Water Policy and Strategy (UNEP nd.e), the UNEP Freshwater Operational Strategy (UNEP 2012a) which supersedes it, and the draft UNEP Forest Strategy (see section 3.2).
220. UNEP's current overall mandate, as summarized in the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy, comprises five interrelated areas:
- a. Keeping the world environment situation under review;
 - b. Catalysing and promoting international cooperation and action;
 - c. Providing policy advice and early warning information, based upon sound science and assessments;
 - d. Facilitating the development, implementation and evolution of norms and standards and developing coherent interlinkages among international environmental conventions; and
 - e. Strengthening technology support and capacity in line with country needs and priorities.
221. At the Subprogramme level, the first expected accomplishment, EA(a), relates to strengthening capacity to mainstream ecosystem management into development and planning processes, including raising awareness of the benefits of the ecosystem approach, and is consequently relevant to several areas of UNEP's mandate, particularly areas b and c above, with several Subprogramme outputs particularly relevant here (notably 312 and 313³⁶).
222. The second expected accomplishment EA(b) has a focus on building national capacity to enable countries to adapt and use ecosystem management tools and methodologies also links to several areas of UNEP's mandate, especially areas c, d and e (notably Output 321). Indeed, it could be argued that many, if not most of the individual EMSP projects contribute to some extent to the development, piloting and/or demonstrating of ecosystem management tools and approaches and so are relevant to UNEP's stated mandate.
223. The third expected accomplishment, EA(c) is relevant to UNEP's mandate focal areas a and e, particularly through its work at the output level on ecosystem service valuation and natural capital accounting (particularly outputs 334, 336 and 312). EA(c) also contributes to addressing UNEP's mandate areas b and c, through, for example, facilitating or strengthening access to sound science on biodiversity and ecosystem services for policy development (e.g. through PoW outputs 331 and 333).
224. However, most of the case study projects examined by the Evaluation did not give a clear presentation on their relevance to UNEP's mandate or cross-cutting issues, in their project documents or other supporting literature. For instance, few of the case study projects examined specifically mention their linkage to the Bali Strategic Plan even though a key focus of the EMSP is capacity building. Relevance to global environmental priorities is generally better addressed in project documents.

³⁶ For a list of the Programme of Work Outputs see Annex 7. PoW Outputs here refer to the revised set for the 2012-2013 Programme of Work, not the larger set of PoW Outputs from the initial 2010-2011 biennium.

225. Overall, the Evaluation finds that the global, regional and national context and needs fully justify UNEP's involvement in the area of ecosystem management, the EMSP is aligned with UNEP's mandate as expressed in relevant Governing Council decisions and the MTS 2010-2013.
226. However, it should be noted that UNEP's experience in supporting implementation of ecosystem management is not unique within the UN system and that there are a number of international organisations and NGOs such as IUCN and WWF that have long been active in ecosystem management and have significant field-level experience in the area. UNDP, for instance, has a well-established and extensive biodiversity and ecosystem services programme that operates largely at the national level (see UNDP 2012). Having said this, UNEP's mandate is complementary to the more development-orientated UN organisations in that it addresses the same issues from an environmental point of view, and emphasizes the critical link between functioning and resilient ecosystems and the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services for human well-being.

4.1.1. Relevance of EMSP to global context

227. Ecosystem management in the global context is discussed in Section 2. This section assesses the relevance of the EMSP to this global context. UNEP's EMSP is considered highly relevant, and responds directly, to a number of international calls for the adoption of the ecosystem approach including:

- The UN Millennium Declaration (2000) and its associated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNEP aims to address these through the focus on building national capacity to improve ecosystem management, whilst taking into account the equity impacts, and working closely with the multilateral conventions, and contributes to achieving MDGs related to eradication of extreme hunger and poverty (Goal 1) and development of a global partnership for development (Goal 8, especially through its work with SIDS), but especially ensuring environmental sustainability (Goal 7) and several associated targets³⁷;
- The Cartagena package (2002) which emphasized the need for UNEP to strengthen, amongst other things, its science base;
- The Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness (2005), which called for the alignment of aid with partner countries' priorities;
- The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), released in 2005, which highlighted the decline in ecosystem services, the connection between human well-being and healthy, resilient ecosystems and the need to address ecosystem degradation and loss of ecosystem services which represents a loss of capital assets, particularly impacts the poor and acts as a barrier to sustainable development and UN development goals (including the MDGs); and
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which provides an overarching framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, not only for the biodiversity-related conventions, but for the entire United Nations system and all other partners engaged in biodiversity management and policy development (see section 5.4 for partnerships with MEAs).

228. At the organisational level, the EMSP helps address UNEP's Bali Strategic Plan (UNEP GC 2004), which calls for a more coherent, coordinated and effective delivery of environmental capacity building and technical support in response to country priorities and needs, and requests UNEP to become more involved in capacity building at various levels, including the national level.

4.1.2. Relevance and consistency with aims and objectives of biodiversity-related MEAs

229. According to evaluation interviewees, there have been increasing calls for UNEP's work to become more relevant to, and supportive of, the aims and work programmes of key MEAs. The Programme of Work for 2012-2013 document presents a summary table with a brief listing of the relevance of each PoW Output with the main MEA priorities for the EM Subprogramme³⁸.
230. The EMSP aligns most closely with the needs of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD). The overall aim of EMSP - the adoption of ecosystem approach for human well-being by national governments - is in line with CBD decisions (see section 2.2), and helps to implement the CBD's call on countries to adopt the ecosystem

³⁷ Particularly: Target 7A: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources (mostly through addressing deforestation and sustainable use of ecosystem services); Target 7B: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss (through helping to increase the area of key habitats for endangered species included within protected areas); and Target 7C: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (through addressing need to improve supply and quality of water supplies) – see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/enviro.html>.

³⁸ UNEP (2010d). Programme of Work 2012-2013. Pp 52-56.

approach. As the 2012-2013 Strategic Framework document notes ‘the strategy responds to the Convention on Biological Diversity ecosystem approach, which calls for the conservation of ecosystem structures and functioning in order to maintain ecosystem services. It also responds to the call for a follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, recognising that ownership by countries of the approach, its methodology and its recommendations must be improved.’

231. The connection between UNEP’s ecosystem management work area and support to the CBD has been strengthened by the recent adoption of a revised and updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and the associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets, at Nagoya, Japan in 2010 (CBD 2010 Decision X/2). The EMSP is relevant to all five of its strategic goals and contributes towards meeting numerous associated targets³⁹, but particularly:
- Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society (especially Target 2)
 - Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services (particularly Targets 14, 15, 16), and
 - Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building (notably Target 19).
232. Most of the case study projects examined did not explain the relevance or linkage of their activities to MEA priorities in project documents to any significant extent. Many can be seen as helping to meet CBD targets, in particular those related to the CBD’s PoW Protected Areas (PoWPA), GEO and the Aichi targets. For instance, the IPBES project will help towards delivery of several Aichi targets, especially Target 19⁴⁰ and the TEEB project can also be seen as supporting the implementation of Article 11 of the CBD and its associated Programme of Work on incentive measures and valuation. Similarly, the LifeWeb project was designed in the context of the CBD PoWPA and contributes to two of its programme elements (direct actions for planning, selecting, establishing, strengthening, and managing protected areas systems and sites, and support for governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing), and the protection and sustainable management of tropical forests, which forms a core part of the GRASP project, are identified as priorities in both the GEO-4 and GEO-5 and globally acknowledged as essential.

4.1.3. Relevance to country situation and requirements

233. There is significant political support for UNEP’s ecosystem management work and some projects undertook national consultations with partners at the design stage to ensure they were relevant to national needs. Others that had a more restricted input from stakeholders during the design phase were nevertheless strongly focused on meeting regional and country needs. For instance, the TEEB project had a concerted effort to deliver products designed to meet country-level needs, with specific reports targeted at national, local and regional policymakers, and in multiple languages. Other projects were guided by national priorities when they were being revised to take account of changes in country needs, such as the Mangrove project. However, national and regional needs analyses were not undertaken systematically across the EMSP. The Regional Offices also provided feedback and suggestions for appropriate projects, particularly at the Programme Framework stage (although there were limitations, see sections 5.1 and 5.3).
234. Some projects also built on broader strategic documents that had strong regional and country input. For instance, the Freshwater project was built on the 2007-2012 UNEP Water Policy and Strategy (WPS) (UNEP nd.e) and the Freshwater Operational Strategy (FOS) that runs from 2012-2016 and guides all UNEP water-related activities (UNEP 2012a). Similarly, the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) project responded to the UNEP GC 2010 Decision on Oceans and supports implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and the Regional Seas Programme.
235. Some EMSP activities were undertaken at the specific request of countries. For instance, guidelines on water quality were developed following a call by UNEP’s Governing Council and in this sense the Subprogramme has also responded to country needs.
236. It should be noted that the Subprogramme has not been designed to align with national development priorities such as those set out in UNDAFs to any great extent, (although individual projects may be linked when UNEP

³⁹ <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>.

⁴⁰ By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

staff are involved in national UNDAF preparation), and that country support has tended to be a rather disconnected set of interventions without a common programme framework.

237. In terms of the adequacy of the geographical scope and country targeting strategy of the EMSP, according to the Programme Framework for 2010-2011, specific criteria were to be applied to the selection of countries (and ecosystems) to be targeted for activities under the EMSP (see paragraph 157). In addition, there was to be an emphasis on countries vulnerable to climate change and disasters and conflicts, as well as those with trans-boundary ecosystems (mountain, forest, river basins, and coastal/marine ecosystems), which would comprise much of the 'regional dimension' of the Subprogramme.
238. Countries were to be selected on the basis of specific requests from national governments and with national and transboundary political support, and where there was clear potential for results and transfer of knowledge or to build synergies with other UNEP subprogrammes, UN agencies and other partners, or where opportunities existed to build on past work (especially relevant for mainstreaming the ecosystem approach). Regional offices were to be consulted on the selection of target countries and projects and knowledge gathered through past or on-going projects, such as previous UNEP environmental assessments, and would be instrumental for identifying target countries. Also, according to the Programme of Work 2010-2011 document, UNEP was to focus its activities on a limited number of countries requesting its support to achieve more tangible results and greater impact.
239. However, it is not clear how these criteria were applied and there is limited documentation on the selection of most countries. In some cases the project document or PRC reports present the rationale for the choice of a specific target country but for most multi-country projects this is not given. There is no evidence that a deliberate choice was made between countries in order to limit their number and regional outputs appear less clear, which may be a reflection of the limited role or involvement of the Regional Offices (see 5.2.1). Indeed, the Programme Framework 2010-2011 points out that 'for a number of projects, implementation has already started, and countries and regions have been selected', which suggests that, for the beginning of the 2010-2011 biennium at least, the geographic focus of the Subprogramme (and direction) was partly guided by legacy projects, but this is perhaps understandable given the scale and scope of planning and management changes that were undertaken at that time. Donor interests and funding may also have been an influence at the time.

4.1.4. Appropriateness of approaches used to achieve EMSP objectives

240. The Subprogramme has employed both top-down (global level initiatives, strongly linked to UNEP's normative and catalytic role) and bottom-up (largely determined by country needs and requests) approaches. Many of the projects under the EMSP have followed a 'develop, test, demonstrate, disseminate, and mainstream' approach, particularly under EA(b) whose focus is on developing tools and methodologies for ecosystem management. Testing and demonstrating have usually been done at a relatively small scale (in a handful of sites or countries) and (under contract) by, or in close collaboration with, local or national stakeholders. The main tools and methodologies that were piloted/demonstrated and disseminated to date comprise four main categories: (i) protected area planning and management tools covering marine and terrestrial ecosystems; (ii) integrated freshwater management tools; (iii) economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services approaches; and (iv) species-specific tools. Most of these have included the publication of various norms and guidelines on 'how to do it', and dissemination of results has been achieved through advocacy, policy briefs, technical guidelines, training and technical assistance to countries and relied heavily on partners for support. Some projects have effectively combined top down and bottom up work to influence policy, but overall these linkages were not adequately exploited at the programme level.
241. The two main target groups for dissemination have been the international development community (e.g. UN agencies, international NGOs, MEAs, international financial institutions), and public and private stakeholders (e.g. government decision-makers and technical staff) in target countries. The approach with the first group has been to integrate EMSP results into their work and programmes and so support up-scaling of EMSP results through their own national capacity development efforts, so they become more of a conduit than an end-target for EMSP results. Integrating UNEP's results into UN agency and other development partner mainstreaming efforts (so-called 'double mainstreaming') is likely to be particularly cost-effective as mainstreaming structures do not then need to be set up by UNEP but are provided by the partner. For the second group, the focus has been on production of policy briefs for the decision-makers and development and adaptation/customization of ecosystem management tools and methodologies, technical guidelines and training efforts for the technical staff.

4.2. Portfolio overview

4.2.1. Project portfolio development and evolution

242. The foundations of the EMSP lie largely in the costed workplans of DEPI. Prior to 2010 and UNEP's organizational reform, UNEP Divisions prepared costed workplans that laid out biennial Programmes of Work. Following the transition from Divisional to Subprogramme based delivery and more results-based planning and management, UNEP has attempted to move from implementing isolated projects to implementing a cohesive portfolio of projects that contribute to broader strategic objectives. For each PoW biennium, the Subprogramme Coordinators, in collaboration with Regional Offices and UNEP Divisions develop Programme Frameworks that should include concepts for projects designed to implement the PoW and lay out the causality between projects, PoW outputs and EAs.
243. The EMSP developed a Programme Framework document for the PoW 2010-2011 with an extension document for the PoW 2012-2013. According to the EMSP Programme Framework 2010-2011, the EMSP Framework was designed to help translate the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment into a workable programme for application at the national and regional levels, and to assist countries to utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being. The EMSP portfolio was divided into two components; 1) developing and testing tools and methodologies for ecosystem management, and 2) incorporating ecosystem services into development planning and investment. Fourteen project concepts were approved by the UNEP Senior Management Team - six project concepts to deliver component 1, and 8 projects to deliver component 2⁴¹. The same projects were identified in the 2012-2013 Programme Framework extension document but with the addition of two further 'project areas'⁴², one of which has been implemented under the CCSP but the other was not realized.
244. Whilst in some cases projects were developed from these concepts and implemented under a corresponding project title, in most cases concepts represented a package of several initiatives that were later split and designed, approved and implemented as separate projects. The linkages between the concepts and the implemented projects were not always clear. From the 14 + 2 project concepts presented in the Programme Framework documents, a project document was developed for seven concepts under the corresponding project title⁴³. Six of these were implemented and one failed to secure funding⁴⁴. The majority of these seven projects could be characterized as 'umbrella' projects since they grouped thematically related but otherwise independent initiatives under a single project (see section 5.1.3 and 4.1).
245. The EMSP project portfolio during the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 biennia included a total of 53 projects as reported in PIMS⁴⁵ (see Annex 9 for a complete list of projects). Forty-nine of these projects were listed under the PoW 2010-2011 and 24 projects under the PoW 2012-2013. In addition to projects that actually materialized, these figures also include 3 projects that were planned but never implemented (cancelled or suspended) and 16 projects whose end date preceded the start of the 2010-2011 biennium even though a linkage to the EMSP PoW 2010-2011 was identified in PIMS.
246. Twenty-eight of the 53 projects were carried forward into the 2010-2011 biennium from the 2008-2009 period while 21 new projects were launched during the 2010-2011 biennium and 4 new projects during the 2012-2013 biennium. The 28 projects that were carried forward to the PoW 2010-2011 from previous years (project start date before 2010) underwent some level of adjustment (see section 5.1.3). The most common adjustment was the development of project milestones to better allow monitoring of progress but in few cases project components were revised and projects slightly renamed. There was an on-going effort particularly during the 2010-2011 biennium to either realign projects with the PoW, revise projects to ensure they included performance milestones, or to bring them to closure. At least two additional projects were proposed to be incorporated in the EMSP, but linkages to the Subprogramme were considered insufficient and the projects were rejected although they were allowed to complete their activities without re-alignment with the PoW. The Evaluation also noted some 40 ecosystem management related projects on-going since 2008-2009 and 2010-

⁴¹ There was a mismatch between the components and subprogramme EAs and the idea of components has not been adopted in subsequent documentation or reporting.

⁴² 'Blue carbon' and 'linking MA follow up, TEEB follow-up and IPBES.'

⁴³ These were: Tools and methodologies for assessing and maintaining freshwater ecosystems; Biodiversity and ecosystem functioning; Making the case for ecosystem services – global outreach and communications; Integration of sustainable ecosystem management into national development processes; Knowledge management, information sharing and learning; Evaluating the trade-offs and benefits of sustainable food production systems; Strengthening the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

⁴⁴ Knowledge management, information sharing and learning

⁴⁵ This figure does not include GEF – funded projects. GEF project integration into the EMSP portfolio is discussed in section 4.5.

2011 that still required financial closure⁴⁶. QAS has a system in place to track and update the status of completed but not financially closed projects, through PIMS and communicate the information to the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP on a monthly basis, although a timeline to financially close completed projects is still unclear.

247. A total of 31 projects delivered the PoW 2010-2011⁴⁷ and of these projects, 23 were carried over to the 2012-2013 biennium. Whilst the majority of these projects were designed to last more than two years, the carry-over also partly contributed to the late start of majority of the projects and the consecutive project extensions as described in section 5.1.3. A total of 25 projects delivered the EMSP PoW 2012-2013. As per May 2014, 19 projects from the EMSP PoW 2012-2013 were still under implementation implying that they were not able to complete all planned activities during the MTS 2010-2013 period. Five of these projects were launched prior to 2010, 10 were launched during the 2010-2011 biennium and 4 were launched during 2012-2013 biennium.

4.2.2 Project portfolio alignment

248. The EMSP portfolio under the MTS 2010-2013 period covered a wide range of projects from short-term single-country interventions that address a specific ecosystem management related problem whilst functioning as demonstration projects to test ecosystem management tools and approaches with a potential for wider adoption, to long-term multi-faceted, multi-country projects (see Annex 9). Some projects under the EMSP could be regarded more as programmes in their own right; they are generally long-term initiatives, have a clear regional/thematic focus, engage with long-term partners, and have an evolving work-plan. These projects are able to provide long-term support to countries and due to their scope and evolving work-plan they are also likely to contribute to more than one EMSP EA and even to other SPs. For example, the GRASP project which was launched in 2001, functions under the auspices of the Great Apes Survival Partnership and responds to needs identified through the Partnership's management functions. Many of these projects have attached funding from a cross section of partners. In contrast, the LifeWeb Project, which aimed to demonstrate approaches to improve the management of existing protected areas in a number of countries, within the context of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), was planned and fully implemented on the basis of funding from a single UNEP partner.
249. Many EMSP projects can be seen as testing, piloting or demonstrating tools and methodologies, and hence can be viewed as contributing to EA(b). However, it is not always clear what these projects are actually testing, and according to some interviewees 'testing of approaches' was used as a rationale to 'park' or 'anchor' some projects within EA(b) when they did not easily fit under other EAs or even the EMSP.
250. Each project under the EMSP portfolio contributed to one or more PoW outputs, and in turn almost every PoW output had either one or several contributing projects. Whilst the EMSP EAs essentially remained the same from the 2010-2011 to the PoW 2012-2013, the PoW outputs underwent considerable changes and the number of PoW outputs was reduced from 16 to 11 (see section 3.4.2). As a consequence, most EMSP projects changed their PoW output contribution, and some even changed contribution towards EAs (see section 5.1.3) between the two biennia. Because of this, each project's contribution towards EAs and PoW outputs needs to be considered separately for each biennium.
251. The distribution of projects among the PoW outputs is unbalanced. During the PoW 2010-2011, one PoW output (PoW output 332) had no projects that reported progress against its delivery, seven PoW outputs were each to be delivered by only one project, whilst other PoW outputs had as many as five contributing projects. The distribution of projects contributing to PoW outputs was similarly unbalanced during the 2012-2013 biennium; again, there was one PoW output without any contributing projects (PoW output 335), two PoW outputs had only one project each, whereas one PoW output under EA(b) had five contributing projects.
252. Based on information available in PIMS, 14 projects reported their contribution to EA(a) during the 2010-2011 biennium, 12 projects to EA(b) and 11 projects to EA(c). Even though several projects identified contributions to more than one EA, the projects were only able to report a contribution against one EA due to reporting system restrictions. During the 2012-2013 biennium, 8 projects reported their contribution to EA(a), 11 projects to EA(b) and 11 projects to EA(c). Figures in Annex 10 summarise the alignment and contribution of the EMSP portfolio projects to the EAs and PoW outputs for 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015.

⁴⁶ UNEP Annual Programme Performance Report 2012. These are projects that appear to be inactive and have passed their 'closing date' in PIMS but have yet to have their financial file officially closed.

⁴⁷ This figure only includes projects that were actually implemented during 2010-2011, and excludes projects that were planned but later either cancelled or suspended or projects which end date preceded 2010.

4.2.3 Divisional distribution

253. DEPI is the Lead Division for the EMSP and was the managing Division for a great majority of the EMSP projects during the MTS 2010-2013 (see Table 4). According to PIMS, DEPI was in charge of the implementation of 35 of the 53 EMSP projects⁴⁸. The second largest portfolio of EMSP projects was managed by DTIE (9 projects), then DEWA (4), DRC (3) and DCPI (1). The Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELCO) did not manage any projects under the EMSP. Prior to its dismantlement in late 2010, the Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF) managed one project with identified linkages to the EMSP that was included in PIMS even though the project was completed before the PoW 2010-2011 had begun. Of the projects that materialized and were actually implemented during the 2010-2013 period, DEPI still managed the largest proportion (30), followed by DTIE (5), DRC (3) DEWA (2) and DCPI and DGEF with one project each (see section 5.3.2 for EMSP budget allocations).

Table 4. Assignment of outputs by Division in 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 (Sources: EM Programme Framework, PoW 2012-2013, Draft PoW 2014-2015; Outputs marked with an asterisk were originally assigned to DRC, but reassigned to DEPI when DRC was dismantled in mid-2013)

Division	Assigned outputs in EMSP Framework 2010-2011	Assigned outputs in Pow 2012-2013	Assigned outputs in Pow 2014-2015
DEPI (Overall Lead Division)	311,312,313,314, 321,322,323,324 331, 335	312,313 321, 322 331,332, 335	311,312,313, 314* 321,322,323,324* 331,333,334
DCPI	316	311	-
DELCO	315 334	-	335
DEWA	-	333	-
DRC	332	-	NA
DTIE	325 333	336	315 325 332

254. The 2010-2011 Programme Framework and PoWs for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 identified the accountable Division for each PoW output related to their areas of specialisation. DEPI was the accountable Division for 10 out of 16 PoW outputs, DTIE for 2 PoW outputs, and DRC and DCPI for 1. DEWA was not accountable for any PoW outputs even though it managed two projects. Interestingly, DELCO was accountable for 2 PoW outputs⁴⁹ without having a lead role in any of the EMSP projects and hence it relied on funding channeled through projects managed by other Divisions in order to comply with its designated responsibility. For the 2012-2013 period DEPI was identified as the accountable division for 7 PoW outputs, DTIE, DEWA and DCPI were each accountable for one PoW output, and DRC and DELCO were not accountable for any.

255. The project concepts included in the EMSP Framework for 2010-2011 indicate that DEPI was to be the managing division for nine of the anticipated fourteen EMSP projects (contributing to one or more outputs). All fourteen projects were to be cross-divisional in nature with eight including components or activities led by Divisions other than the managing Division.

4.2.4 Thematic distribution

256. UNEP's work in the field of ecosystem management during the MTS 2010-2013 addressed terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems and ecosystem services and economics, but one project dealt with provision of communication services to the rest of the EMSP. Even though the EMSP was not structured along thematic streams of work during the MTS 2010-2013 period, the thematic distribution of projects closely followed the existing branch structures of DEPI (a reflection of the reality in DEPI). However, a notable aspect of the thematic coverage of the EMSP portfolio was the absence of projects addressing dryland ecosystems and

⁴⁸ Including projects that were implemented or cancelled, suspended or whose end date precedes 2010.

⁴⁹ In practice, just one project contributed to the two PoW Outputs for which DELCO was accountable (the UNEP-Spain LifeWeb project led by DEPI).

the limited coverage of mountain ecosystems. The majority of the projects with a clearly identifiable thematic linkage were related to ecosystem services and economics. The second largest group of projects addressed terrestrial ecosystems (excluding freshwater), followed by marine and coastal ecosystems and freshwater ecosystems related projects. A few projects adopted a regional perspective and addressed both terrestrial, and marine and coastal ecosystems through an integrated approach. However, the number of EMSP projects in each thematic group does not entirely cover the depth and width of a particular thematic issue due to the very different sizes and durations of the projects. The thematic approach is expected to become more pronounced during the MTS 2014-2017 as the EAs have been re-formulated along thematic result lines.

4.2.5 Geographical distribution

257. Country selection within the EMSP portfolio was based on three factors: existing work, country requests, and considerations of strategic engagement. According to PIMS, UNEP delivered work related to ecosystem management in 100 countries during the MTS 2010-2013. The majority of projects were implemented in Africa (39) and Latin America and the Caribbean (22). Some projects were implemented in Asia and the Pacific (20), but very few in Europe (12), West Asia (5), and North America (2)⁵⁰ (Figure 7). However, it is not clear if activities in all envisaged locations materialized or how the 'countries' were counted - for example, did participation in a training course count as 'country involvement' or was a more substantial presence, such as a pilot/demonstration project or a partnership, required?
258. Some evaluation interviewees considered the low number of projects implemented in Eastern Europe as a potential imbalance between regional needs and UNEP's support. However, it could also be argued that in general, extra-budgetary funding should be secured more for work in developing countries and, since the European region receives considerable funding from the EU, there is less need for UNEP's assistance here than for other regions.
259. According to PIMS, the vast majority of projects were multi-country projects, followed by single-country projects and global initiatives. The majority of multi-country projects extended across several regions with one project alone (Freshwater project) implemented in 39 different countries in five regions (see section 4.1.3). It is questionable whether a single project covering as many as 39 countries has spread its activities and resources too thinly and whether targeting a smaller number of countries would have been more effective (although it would also depend on the intervention, standardized activity sets, such as GEF Enabling activities or NBSAPs, would be easiest to apply). Several countries had 2-4 ongoing EMSP projects during the MTS 2010-2013. Those countries with the highest number of projects were India (7) and Kenya (6). Some interviewees raised concerns that in some cases projects implemented in a particular country were designed as separate interventions with little or no linkages, rather than a coherent portfolio. Interviewees emphasized that joint planning both within the EMSP and with projects under other UNEP SPs would, on the one hand, enable the EMSP to better respond to country needs, and on the other hand, reduce overlaps and replication. Whilst assessing coherence of the projects implemented in one country is beyond the scope of the Evaluation, the case studies and interviews imply that the coherence of country-level project portfolios is very variable and could be strengthened, particularly if ROs are more involved in joint planning (see sections 5.1 on design and structure and 5.3.2 on resource allocation).

⁵⁰ includes only those projects that were active during that period.

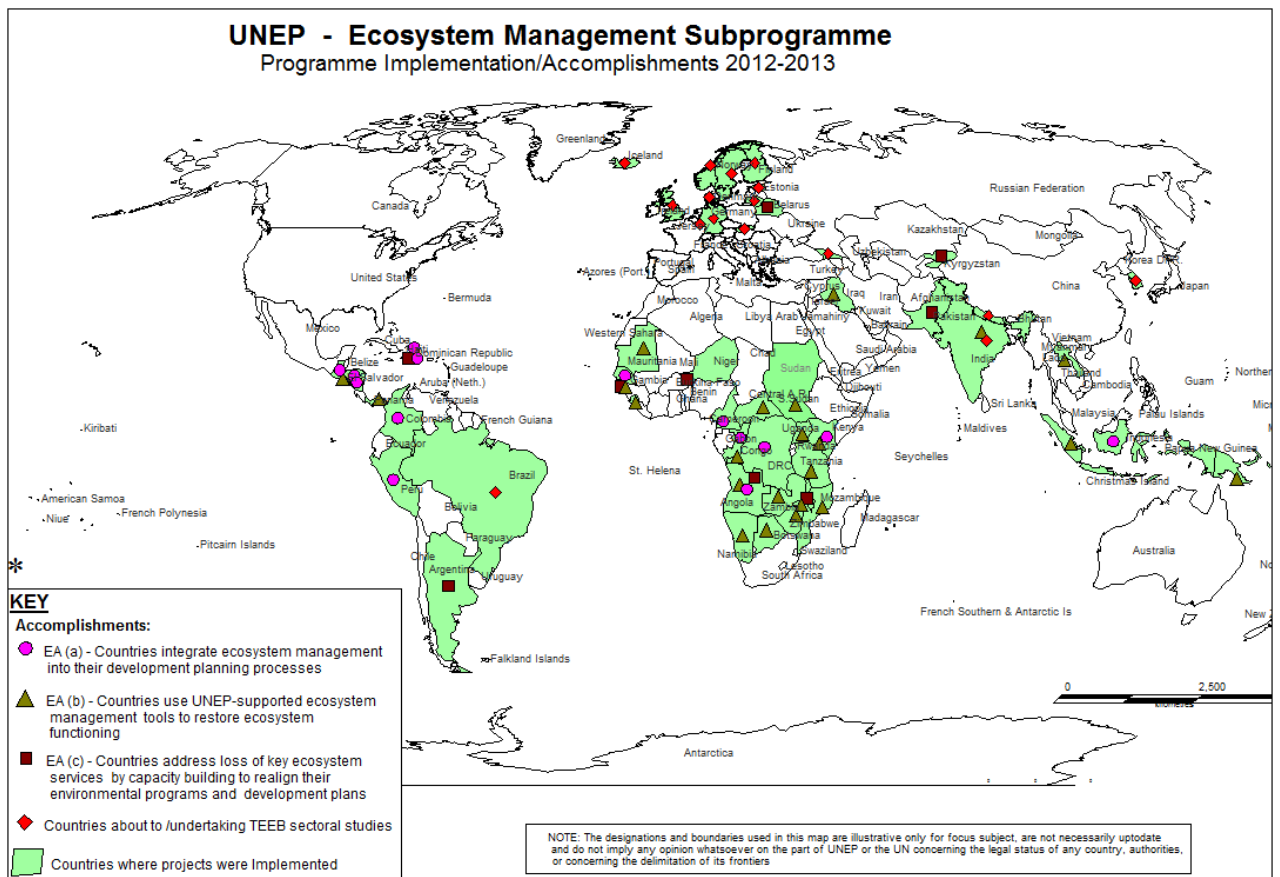


Figure 7. Regional distribution of the EMSP project portfolio (Source: PPR 2012-2013, UNEP 2013e)

4.3. SP Performance (effectiveness, efficiency)

4.3.1. Assessing performance and limitations on assessment

260. This section provides an overview of the performance of the EMSP since 2010 and a summary of the results achieved during this period, although many of the projects in the EMSP began prior to 2010 (see section 4.2).
261. As discussed previously, the EAs as formulated are set at a relatively high level in the causal logic, beyond the immediate control of UNEP, and consequently, assessing performance towards EAs is problematic, especially for EA(a) and EA(c) (see section 3.6). Furthermore, there were changes to EA indicators, the number of PoW outputs and their associated projects (with indicators and targets revised in some cases), between the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 biennia (see section 3.4.2) and issues with baselines (see section 5.5). Together these complicate understanding and assessment of the performance of the EMSP (see section 5.5).
262. Consequently, only a brief analysis of the delivery of the EAs is presented here, according to attainment of EA indicator targets specified in the planning documents, and delivery is assessed mostly based on information from the 2012-2013 biennium, with some general comments on delivery for the earlier 2010-2011 period for which much less information is available. However, since reporting on EA indicators is largely cumulative, focusing on the 2012-2013 biennium gives an overall picture of the assessment of the EAs over the whole MTS 2010-2013 period⁵¹. This is followed by a more detailed presentation on the contributions towards achievement of the immediate outcomes (IOs, see section 3.6), Medium-term Outcomes (MTOs), intermediate states (ISs) and the prospects for longer-term impact, outlined in the ToC section (see section 3.6).

⁵¹ There were revised baseline counts in the later (2012-2013) PoW where the same/similar indicators were retained. However there are clear issues with the reliability of reporting and difficulties in verifying these results since there is no systematic record of what the counted contributions were (see section 5.5).

4.3.2. Assessment of performance by expected accomplishment

4.3.2.1. Performance during 2010-2011

263. As noted above, records in PIMS are relatively light on detail for the 2010-2011 period (see section 5.5), but the summary for the first biennium states that ‘notable progress’ was made for some high profile initiatives such as TEEB, IPBES and the Mau project, which was confirmed by the Evaluation. Each of these projects built on a firm base of work produced in the PoW 2008-2009 period, which allowed them to ‘hit the ground running’ to a certain extent (although new funding was required and the projects needed to be modified to fit within the new EMSP framework). However, other projects, particularly those with new project designs, had a slow start to the MTS 2010-2013, due to a variety of factors, including the need to raise funds, the overly ambitious nature of individual projects, and delays over the UNEP project approval process (see section 5.1.4).
264. Overall, the available evidence suggests that for the 2010-2011 period none of the EAs were fully achieved as many projects had just started or started late or had to be downsized towards the end of the biennium due to lack of funding (or a mismatch between ambition and funding realities). Evidence from the case studies underscored that many reported contributions were not eligible at that stage. However, it is recognised that the development and testing of tools and methodologies and mainstreaming results into policy processes are time-consuming practices, and difficult to complete in a single biennium. In the case of EA(c), it was also recognized that the associated indicator for the 2010-2011 biennium required an increase in national budgets for environment, which was beyond the ability of UNEP to achieve or even influence in a 2-year period, and simply unrealistic (and also UNEP does not have resources to identify change at national level, especially after projects end).

4.3.2.2. Performance during 2012-2013

EA (a): Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes

265. The indicator for achievement of this EA(a) is: ‘Increased number of national and regional development planning processes that consider ecosystem services as a component for sustainable development with the assistance of UNEP’⁵². The target for this indicator for 2012-2013 given in the Programme of Work document is 15 planning instruments (although this is given as 19 in the final PPR for 2012-2013 period), with a December 2011 baseline of 10 (14 in the PPR), so an additional 5 planning instruments were to be achieved by the end of 2013.

Comments on achievement of the EA(a)

266. It is difficult to assess delivery of this EA due to the lack of specificity in the wording of the EA and its indicator and confusion over what is to be achieved under this EA. For instance, the term ‘development planning processes’ is not defined and appears to have been interpreted quite broadly in the selection of projects that contribute to the EA. What constitutes ‘consideration’ is also not defined in practical terms (is it a brief mention of the term ‘ecosystem service’ in a planning document, or must it necessitate a whole policy built around the ecosystem approach to qualify as a success?). Again, these terms have been broadly interpreted by UNEP in the PPR reports during the biennium, including the final PPR covering the whole of the 2012-2013 biennium⁵³, which states that this target has been met. In addition, the wording of the EA and its associated indicator suggests that the focus of this EA is on mainstreaming the ecosystem approach into development policy and planning processes. However, the final PPR for 2010-2011 period states that the strategy for achieving this EA was essentially about ‘making the case’, which suggests a focus on communication and awareness-raising. However, the EA does include the ‘Making the case’ (MTC) project among its constituent projects. Reporting on this EA also includes ‘developing tools and building capacity for valuation of ecosystem services’, which should be covered under EA(b). Consequently, projects and activities within this EA were delivering much more than is reflected by the overall indicator for the EA, although this could be viewed as a failure in the design of the EA to adequately frame the focus for the EMSP work (see section 5.1).

⁵² The ‘unit of measure’ for this EA is the ‘number of national planning instruments that consider the relationship between ecosystem services and development’.

⁵³ UNEP (in press). Programme Performance Report 2012-2013. UNEP/EA.1/INF/6 Advance Copy. Draft seen by the Evaluation Team dated 26 February 2014.

267. Whilst keeping in mind the above comments, based on the evidence available, most of the projects linked to EA(a) do appear to have delivered planning instruments that have had a national scope, with valid contributions from the 'Incorporating the value of forest-related ecosystem services into national accounts' projects (piloted in Kenya but being replicated in Gabon and Morocco), the 'Agroforestry and landscape rehabilitation' project (for Haiti), and the 'Follow up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment' project which included the Sub Global Assessments (SGA) undertaken for Thailand and Guatemala. However, there is a question of whether some EMSP projects that operate at only one or a small number of specific sites within a country can be considered as contributing 'national and regional development planning processes' to the indicator target. For instance, the trans-boundary Mayombe Forest project which is listed under EA(a), only covers a small part of Angola, Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo.
268. Based on evidence available to the Evaluation, national development planning instruments/documents that show evidence of incorporating the ecosystem approach during the 2012-2013 period, have been completed in at least 3 countries (Kenya, Thailand, Guatemala), others are under consideration in 3 countries (Gabon, Morocco, and Kazakhstan) and one joint sub-national plan has been developed and is under implementation in three countries (Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic of Congo). Thus, the target for the biennium – an additional 5 planning documents – has essentially been achieved.
269. It should be noted that the last PPR for the 2012-2013 period considered contributions from all projects irrespective of which EA they were linked to, so in the case of EA(a) many EA(b) and EA(c) projects appear to contribute to achieving its target. This can be seen as a pragmatic approach to the restrictive EA alignment /reporting issue for inherently complex projects (see section 5.1).

EA (b): Countries and regions have the capacity to utilize and apply ecosystem management tools

270. The focus of this EA is on the development and testing of ecosystem management tools and methodologies for a range of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and to build capacity for their use in target countries, mostly through pilot or demonstration activities⁵⁴, targeted training workshops and technical publications and materials.
271. There are two indicators of achievement for the 2012-2013 biennium. The first indicator (b(i)) for this EA is: 'Increased number of countries addressing ecosystem degradation through the application of UNEP-supported ecosystem management tools with the assistance of UNEP'. The target for this indicator was 20 countries and regions using UNEP-supported ecosystem management tools to tackle ecosystem degradation, with a December 2011 baseline of 10, so an additional 10 were to be achieved by the end of 2013. The second indicator (b(ii)) is 'increased number of terrestrial or aquatic ecosystems managed to maintain or restore ecosystem services with the assistance of UNEP'⁵⁵. For the second indicator, the target was 18 ecosystems (terrestrial or aquatic) where activities to maintain or restore ecosystem functioning were 'completed or underway' with UNEP's assistance, with a December 2011 baseline of 8 so an additional 10 were to be targeted during 2010-2013.
272. Like EA(a), both indicators have weaknesses in the way they are formulated (see section 5.5) and are open to interpretation, and thus present difficulties for evaluating progress towards achievement of the EA. For instance, the first indicator really only indicates whether '*UNEP-supported ecosystem management tools*' were used in a country (process indicator) and not whether they were effective or had any impact. In the case of the second indicator, it is not clear how 'ecosystems managed to maintain or restore ecosystem services' will be assessed, and the term 'under way' in the unit of measure suggests that it is only necessary for UNEP to begin a project for it to count towards achievement of the target. So virtually any project can be counted towards delivery of this EA. Certainly if protected area management is viewed as a process, most site-based projects under this EA could be considered as having delivered. In addition, ecosystems are not defined functionally or geographically for this target and what constitutes an 'ecosystem management tool to address degradation' is also not defined. Therefore, again, what counts as a contribution to achievement of targets can be interpreted very broadly.

⁵⁴ Piloting is defined as testing a new approach or tool, demonstration as showing a tool or approach in a new area or to a new audience (so there should be complementary activities to show it off).

⁵⁵ The associated 'unit of measure' for the first indicator is the 'number of countries and regions using UNEP-supported ecosystem management tools to tackle ecosystem degradation' and for the second the 'number of ecosystems where activities are completed or under way to maintain or restore ecosystem functioning with UNEP assistance'.

Comments on achievement of the EA(b)

273. Keeping in mind the above caveats, the target for the first indicator can be considered to have been achieved as UNEP-supported ecosystem management tools have been tested or applied in at least 21 different countries (and probably more in cases where only 'testing' took place) over the MTS 2010-2013. Conservation tools for marine and terrestrial protected areas are reported to have been tested and in some cases deployed with UNEP's support in at least 10 countries (Central Africa Republic, the Congo Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Panama, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Iraq and Liberia); the GRASP project's *'Great Apes monitoring and reporting tool'* has been developed and was to be deployed in two range states (Cameroon and Democratic Republic of Congo) and its *Climate change, land use and orangutan survival in Borneo* component has been implemented in Indonesia and Malaysia (although this is probably more relevant to the Climate Change Subprogramme); economic assessment tools were employed in at least two countries (India and Uganda); economic evaluation was undertaken in parts of 8 riparian countries along the Zambezi River (Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana), and other relevant ecosystem management tools have been applied in at least two other countries (Mozambique and Kenya) under EA(b).
274. However, it is not clear how effective the different tools and approaches have been as this has not been measured and adequately reported on. Also, as for the other EAs, activities for many of the projects linked to this EA are targeted at the sub-national or site (usually protected area) levels, such as the Mau forest ecosystem management plan and Tana River Catchment management plan in Kenya, the management plan for the Silverbank Humpback Sanctuary in the Dominican Republic, and UNEP's work on improving management of freshwater ecosystem services at Lake Faguibine in Mali. It is unclear whether these results will be scaled up to national and regional levels, or even if they have utility at national and regional levels (although many probably do).
275. In terms of the second indicator, most of the associated projects can be considered to have successfully delivered ecosystem-level activities, as they operate within specific ecosystems including UNEP's work in the Mau Forest and in the Tana River ecosystem, both in Kenya. However, several projects include species-focused work e.g. mapping of turtle habitats and vulnerabilities in Guinea Bissau, spatial planning for marine mammals in the Caribbean, and Great Apes monitoring in Africa and Asia, which would seem less relevant to the second ecosystem-focused indicator, although they do help deliver on the EA(b) associated PoW output 322⁵⁶. Overall though, the second indicator target – 10 additional ecosystems – can be considered to have been achieved given the broad wording of the unit of measure and the vagueness over what qualifies as an 'ecosystem unit' under this EA.

EA (c): Strengthened capacity of countries and regions to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services

276. The focus of this EA is on supporting governments to mainstream ecosystem management approaches into development policy and planning decisions, including using results of EA(a) and EA(b), but also on integrating ecosystem services into economic and financial sector decision-making. This EA is usually titled 'ecosystems services and economics', 'ecosystem services and financing' or sometimes just 'biodiversity', which is a reflection of its constituent projects.
277. The indicator for achievement of this EA is: *'Increased number of national and regional planning instruments that include commitments and targets to integrate ecosystem management at the national, regional and sectoral levels with the assistance of UNEP'*⁵⁷. The target for the indicator EA(c) was 16 'planning instruments committed to preserving biodiversity and selected ecosystem services with specific targets for the benefit of human well-being'. The baseline at December 2011 is given as 6, which means an additional 10 instruments were expected to be delivered by the end of 2013. The indicator of achievement is very similar to the indicator for EA(a), the difference apparently being that the indicator for EA(a) focuses on planning processes, whereas the indicator for EA(c) focuses on planning instruments (so the likely outcome of planning processes), although the Unit of Measure for the EA(a) indicator refers to 'planning documents'.
278. There seems to be a mismatch between the wording of the EA and its indicator and Unit of Measure. The wording of the EA seems rather limited in that it refers to realignment of 'environmental programmes' to

⁵⁶ 'Coherent application of tools and approaches for the assessment and conservation of biodiversity is promoted by countries and the uptake of such tools and approaches is catalysed through the United Nations system. Target: five countries'.

⁵⁷ The 'unit of measure' the 'Number of planning instruments committed to preserving biodiversity and selected ecosystem services with specific targets for the benefit of human well-being'.

address ecosystem service degradation, whereas the indicator mentions integration of ecosystem management into 'sectoral levels', presumably including non-environment sectors such as finance and infrastructure, suggesting the EA is targeted at a broader development agenda, which is reflected by the inclusion of several projects under this EA which are looking to mainstream ecosystem valuation and natural capital accounting into the financial sector.

279. As for the other EAs, the weak and vague nature of the indicator makes assessment of the achievement of delivery of the EA problematic. For instance, it is not clear what 'commitments...to integrate ecosystem management at the national, regional and sectoral levels' means in practice, and it is not clear whether any of the planning instruments produced under this EA had specific targets for mainstreaming ecosystem management (certainly not within the case study projects, and not reported on in PIMS).

Comments on achievement of the EA(c)

280. Based on available evidence, it is unclear whether 10 '*planning instruments committed to preserving biodiversity and selected ecosystem services*' have been delivered under EA(c) during the 2012-2013 period - again, these need to be national (or regional) according to the indicator. Appropriate activities within EMSP projects that have contributed at the national level include: a Ministerial Decree in related to coastal wetlands management under the umbrella of the Ramsar Convention formalised in Honduras and the Haiti Regeneration Initiative which incorporated an ecosystem management approach into its environmental restoration planning as part of disaster-recovery planning. The 'Biodiversity and Ecosystem functioning' project under EA(c) was also to support the updating of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in light of the post CoP 10 CBD Strategy and Aichi Targets in 6 countries but it is not clear whether these were achieved before the end of 2013.
281. Despite the above reservations, there have been a number of projects under EA(c) that have made valuable contributions towards its overall aim of mainstreaming of the ecosystem approach into government decision-making processes but do not count towards achievement of the indicators. For instance, the IPBES, which was established in December 2013, with support of the EMSP IPBES project, will provide an essential framework to provide policymakers with credible and independent scientific information on the status and valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, but it cannot be classified as a 'planning instrument'. Similarly, while Country Studies produced under the TEEB project under this EA are aimed at decision-makers, they are not considered as official 'planning instruments' (rather as information sources and guidance documents).

4.3.3. Delivery according to the Immediate Outcomes, Medium-term Outcomes, and intermediate states and likely impacts

282. As noted in the ToC section, the lack of coherence in the EMSP design undermines the potential to assess progress and performance of the Subprogramme and, as discussed above, it is difficult to evaluate achievement of the EAs which are set high in the Subprogramme's causal logic and mostly beyond UNEP's ability to achieve as an immediate outcome. In an alternative assessment of performance this section examines the achievement of immediate outcomes, which is the level of results that UNEP can be realistically expected to attain after an implementation period of two to four years. The immediate outcomes largely address different elements needed to build the capacity of countries to adopt and utilise ecosystem management to address ecosystem degradation and restoration and achieve more sustainable utilisation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and much of the section below describes UNEP's activities to build the foundation for such outcomes.
283. As the EMSP was not built around the (retrofitted) Theory of Change suggested in section 3.6.2, there are no indicators or targets to gauge achievement of the immediate outcomes, or higher level medium-term outcomes, intermediate states or impact, and outcome level reporting in PIMS and partner or donor progress reports are limited. Consequently, the section below is largely descriptive and the assessment of delivery of the immediate outcomes and higher-level results is based on qualitative analysis of evidence available to the Evaluation Team.
284. Again, due to time and budget limitations, the Evaluation Team was not able to consider the full EMSP portfolio, but focused on evidence from the 10 case study projects, PIMS entries and PPR reports supported by evaluation interviews.

4.3.3.1. Achievement of Immediate Outcomes

285. Four immediate outcomes are identifiable which are steps en route to the overall Subprogramme aim (see section 3.6). The following section gives an overview of progress towards each immediate outcome during the MTS 2010-2013. However, given the limitations on availability of data at outcome level the emphasis of this section is on assessment of delivery of the services and deliverables from the EMSP that have contributed to, and form the foundations of, these outcomes.
286. Some projects have contributed to all four immediate outcomes (most of the case study projects examined in detail contribute to more than one immediate outcome) and as well as to medium term outcomes and even intermediate states.

Immediate Outcome 1. Strengthened ecosystem management tools and methodologies

287. Much of UNEP's work under the EMSP has been focused on developing, adapting and testing tools and methodologies that can be used to restore and strengthen the resilience and productivity of terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal systems, and biodiversity at multiple scales, and providing much appreciated assistance to countries and regions to utilise those tools through targeted capacity building and field projects to demonstrate how these tools and approaches can be used in practice. Most EMSP projects have elements addressing such tools and methods, and have made a contribution to the achievement of this immediate outcome. Some projects focused on the development of tools in the first biennium and set out to address their demonstration, application, adaptation and uptake in the second biennium. This immediate outcome corresponds most closely with EA(b). Results under this immediate outcome also contribute to the achievement of several CBD Aichi Targets, particularly number 14 and 15⁵⁸.
288. The wide range of tools and approaches developed under this immediate outcome include: location-based tools, particularly protected area planning and management tools covering both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, and integrated freshwater management tools; and species- (rather than ecosystem-) focused tools, including species-monitoring protocols such as a camera system to monitor Mediterranean Monk Seal populations. With regards to specific ecosystem types addressed, tools and approaches have been delivered for forest ecosystems in Kenya, through the development and implementation of the Mau Forest management plan and related follow-on initiatives, and many forest-related protected area and local forest community initiatives through the GRASP project. Successful aquatic ecosystem projects highlighted by interviewees included a wide range of marine and coastal initiatives under the auspices of the ICM project, and the tools relevant to marine and coastal ecosystems were widely praised.
289. UNEP has supported tools/approaches to manage various trans-boundary ecosystems through the EMSP, including: support for the development of a trans-boundary framework for conservation and sustainable development of the Mount Kailash Sacred Landscape region of Nepal, India and China; a trans-boundary management plan for Mayombe Forest in the Congo Basin; and a decision support system aimed at attenuating floods and droughts on the Zambezi River for the benefit of 10 countries that share the river system.
290. The development and testing of tools has usually been accompanied by specific capacity building workshops and other training events that sought to build on existing capacity of countries to utilize the ecosystem approach. The exact numbers of individuals receiving training is unknown but it certainly runs into the many hundreds over the course of the MTS 2010-2013, with capacity building efforts often extended through UNEP-supported and partner initiatives, such as the Regional Seas Programme and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land based Activities (GPA).
291. These efforts have been supported and expanded by numerous useful and well-received training and outreach guidelines, publications and handbooks (many available through the UNEP or individual project websites), including: for freshwater ecosystems '*An Ecosystems Services Approach to Water and Food Security*', '*Clearing the water: focus on water quality solutions*' and the manual '*Ecosystem Management - Concept to Local-scale implementation*'; for marine and coastal ecosystems '*Governing Marine Protected Areas - Getting the Balance Right*', '*Blue Harvest: inland fisheries as an ecosystem services*' and '*Taking Steps toward Marine and Coastal Ecosystem-Based Management - An Introductory Guide*'; and for policy makers a '*Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Manual*' that presents the MA assessment tools and methodologies.

⁵⁸ Aichi target 14 - by 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable, and Aichi Target 15 - by 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

292. Despite the above successes, there is no sense that a coherent set of UNEP tools and approaches to apply ecosystem management and restoration (a 'UNEP Ecosystem Management and Restoration Toolkit') having been developed, tested, demonstrated and promoted. Rather the impression is of a mixed collection of disconnected initiatives. Indeed, there also appears to have been relatively little sharing of experiences on the development and use of ecosystem management tools between individual EMSP projects, which seems to have been largely confined to exchange and discussions between staff working within UNEP Units or Branches. Consequently, there is no strong 'UNEP identity' to this component of the Subprogramme.
293. Also, although training and outreach was well received, the extent to which UNEP's ecosystem management tools were then adopted and integrated into national government and stakeholder practice has not been systematically measured and is unknown. Feedback from training courses and follow-up discussions with trainees by project managers on whether tools/approaches are being applied subsequently (and any constraints on their use and suggestions for improvement) are not recorded in PIMS, are generally poorly captured in project reports (where they exist), and have not been collected and analysed systematically across the Subprogramme, although such data do exist for some projects e.g. Freshwater project. Consequently, there is little narrative on the experiences of the design, development, implementation and effectiveness of the various tools and approaches to tackling ecosystem degradation, restoration and management undertaken by the EMSP to date, and no summarizing publication on this, which would be valuable.
294. However, judging by requests for follow-up capacity building activities and invitations for similar events in other areas/countries, stakeholders see considerable utility and value in the tools and approaches developed and promoted by UNEP, and it would be valuable to review UNEP's experience and capture this in a specific publication. Such an analysis would help bring greater cohesion to the Subprogramme, and demonstrate that UNEP has credibility in this area. The various tools already developed and piloted for different ecosystems also need to be consolidated and better promoted, highlighting the relationships and similarities between them, and presented in a user-friendly and accessible manner. Some case studies on EMSP work over the MTS 2010-2013 period were to be captured within an 'Ecosystem Management Approach framework concept' report carried out under the 'Making the Case' project, but this was not delivered before the end of the 2013 (published in October 2014).
295. One perceived weakness of UNEP's efforts in this area is that the Subprogramme has lacked a coherent capacity needs analysis that sets out what and where specific management tools and methodologies were needed to address ecosystem degradation and management (none was undertaken during the Subprogramme design phase though this was identified as important in the 2008 EMSP concept paper). Instead, development and testing of tools and approaches has tended to be more *ad hoc*, influenced by donor interests, and often the continuation of work undertaken in biennia prior to the 2010-2013 period.
296. Another issue here is that promotion of appropriate tools and methodologies should be based on evidence of their effectiveness (evidence-based practice), which implies testing and comparison with other tools and methods or use of a control site in an attempt to answer the question 'Is this an effective tool/approach for ecosystem management and/or ecosystem restoration, in particular situations/ecosystems?' However, this does not seem to have been attempted by any of the projects in the EMSP portfolio, nor does selection of tools/methodologies for 'testing' seem to have been based on a critical review of the literature where evidence suggests the tool may be effective in that situation. Also, individual EMSP project documents do not specify what constitutes an ecosystem management tool or approach and many of the tools and approaches that are described as being 'piloted' under this Subprogramme are already well established (if not well-tested), such as protected area management plans, so not all of the work achieved under this immediate outcome seems to be truly innovative, even if it is valuable and appreciated by national and local partners and stakeholders.
297. In summary, evidence from the Evaluation suggests that UNEP has developed and promoted a range of useful ecosystem management and restoration tools and approaches that have been well-received by in-country stakeholders, particularly where projects have had field elements with tangible deliverables, although it is not clear to what extent they have been integrated into institutional (both government and non-government) practices. In addition, training and outreach to build capacity to implement these tools and expand their use within the target countries and beyond could have been more coherent and coordinated.

Immediate Outcome 2 – Ecosystem services valuation and natural capital approaches developed and promoted

298. UNEP has developed and tested a suite of practical approaches on the valuation of ecosystem services and natural capital accounting and demonstrated (through pilot projects) their integration into policy and investment frameworks, with additional targeted capacity building activities to assist countries to use these

approaches. The mix of tools and methodologies developed should help support countries to identify the costs and benefits of changes in the delivery of ecosystem services, to measure the economic and financial value of biodiversity and ecosystem services, identify trade-off scenarios, and to apply these values to the design of economic policy and instruments, such as incentives and sustainable financing mechanisms. This will strengthen decision-making by governments, businesses and consumers and contribute to the transition to the Green Economy and reinforce UNEP's Green Economy Initiative⁵⁹. UNEP's work in this area also aids delivery of MEA agreements, particularly through furthering adoption of the valuation of ecosystem services particularly in relation to the delivery of Aichi Target 2⁶⁰.

299. EMSP projects that have contributed towards delivery of this immediate outcome are considered among the most innovative in the EMSP portfolio, and include:
- A project presenting a trade-off analysis between food security and ecosystem services in India where several policy dialogues have taken place to explore how the results can be used to inform local and national development planning, and a similar project '*Utilizing Trade-off Analyses to devise direct payment programs to farmers for adoption of EBM in Agri-food Ecosystems*' in Argentina, which presents an interesting 'model' for addressing degraded farming systems where farmers (wheat farmers in this case) and other stakeholders along the value chain can see the negative impact of destructive farming and land use practices;
 - An analytical tool to trace the contribution of forests to various economic sectors in Kenya (which is being replicated in Morocco and Gabon), and similarly a project to develop an 'eco-taxation' model for forest areas in Senegal;
 - The 'Integrating ecosystems into financial sector operations' project managed by DTIE, and treated under the UNEP Finance Initiative⁶¹, which has been working with a number of leading global financial institutions (banks, insurers, fund managers) to address the challenges arising from the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services; and,
 - The TEEB project which has produced important products that document the economic (and social) value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and supported countries to assess and analyse these assets and mainstream them into policy making in some cases (see above).
300. UNEP has published a number of important norms and 'how to' guidelines to promote ecosystem valuation and natural capital accounting as a contribution to building capacity of stakeholders to generate scientifically and economically credible information required for integrating ecosystem services into national economic and development frameworks, particularly from its Ecosystems Services Economics Unit (ESEU) in Nairobi, and the Economy and Trade Branch (ETB) in Geneva. These include: *Guidance Manual for the Valuation of Regulatory Services* (UNEP 2010), *Valuation of Ecosystem Services in Coastal Ecosystems: Asian and European Perspectives* (2011); the *Inclusive Wealth Report* (2012)⁶², the Outcome Declaration from the Valuation and Accounting of Natural Capital for Green Economy (VANTAGE)⁶³ conference held at UNEP in December 2013, and a number of publications of UNEP-backed studies, including *Orangutans and the Economics of Sustainable Forest Management* produced under the GRASP project and *Green Economy in a Blue World* Technical Report. All of these sources and the above initiatives can also be viewed as potential sources of technical knowledge contributing to Immediate Outcome 3.
301. According to external stakeholders, whilst other UN agencies, such as UNDP, and the World Bank, are also focusing on natural capital approaches, UNEP has developed a number of 'high profile' and highly regarded projects in this area, notably the TEEB project, and UNEP is acknowledged as one of the leaders in this emerging field. However there is still a lack of coherence to UNEP's work in this area. There is little sense of a UNEP 'body of work', rather an impression of an *ad hoc* mix of (admittedly) high quality projects. This may have been partly due to limited exchange in the past between DEPI which hosts the ESEU and DTIE which hosts the ETB, which together have managed and delivered most of the projects under this immediate outcome.

⁵⁹ <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>

⁶⁰ Aichi Target 2 - By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.

⁶¹ See http://www.unepfi.org/work_streams/biodiversity

⁶² A joint initiative launched at Rio+20 by the United Nations University's International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (UNU-IHDP) and UNEP. See http://www.unep.org/pdf/IWR_2012.pdf

⁶³ <http://www.es-evaluation.org/index.php/es-e-unit/vantage>, and see <http://www.es-evaluation.org/index.php/res/publication> for relevant publications.

Immediate Outcome 3 –Improved technical knowledge and information systems for policy formulation and decision-making on ecosystem management

302. This immediate outcome involves activities to generate and collate scientific and technical information on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and to strengthen knowledge platforms/networks/initiatives to improve access, availability and transfer of evidence-based information to key audiences for decision-making. This immediate outcome will help national governments and regions determine which ecosystem services or sites to prioritise for action and to design and develop effective policies and intervention strategies to better and more equitably manage or restore them.
303. UNEP has generated a considerable body of technical information on ecosystem services and their values, key drivers of change linked to ecosystem degradation, and experiences from testing approaches to ecosystem management and restoration and ecosystem service valuation and natural capital accounting (from immediate outcomes 1 and 2), which could be used to support evidence-based decision-making. UNEP has assisted governments to undertake rapid assessments of the linkages between key ecosystem services and human well-being, state and trends of ecosystem health, and drivers of change. Specific EMSP interventions have included Integrated Ecosystem Assessments and the Sub-Global Assessments (SGA), e.g. in Guatemala and Thailand, and support for the reestablishment of the SGA Network⁶⁴ which provides a common platform to assist practitioners (individuals and organizations) involved in ecosystem assessment at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels and for the sharing of lessons learned from the SGAs. Some of this information is available on the UNEP website, such as the 'UNEP Policy Series on Ecosystem Management' publications. UNEP has also provided assistance to a number of countries in developing biodiversity assessment indicators within the CBD's framework of global biodiversity indicators through the EMSP, and capacity building efforts have included training on indicators and data analysis for regional assessment of the state of marine environment in six regions (through Regular Process workshops).
304. The TEEB project, managed by DTIE from Geneva, has been an important source of knowledge for changing attitudes towards the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and sometimes with immediate policy applications. Key TEEB publications (information sources) include: '*TEEB for Local and Regional Policymakers*', '*TEEB for Business and Enterprise*', '*The Green Economy in a Blue World*', '*TEEB for Cities*' (2011), '*TEEB for Water and Wetlands*' (2013)⁶⁵, as well as country case studies from a number of countries⁶⁶. Other TEEB reports on Agriculture & Food, Oceans & Coasts and the Arctic were under preparation in 2013. Various capacity building activities on TEEB outreach and country implementation, including development of TEEB Country Studies, aided by a guidance manual issued in May 2013, have also been undertaken and judged successful by stakeholders. Some of these workshops were held on a regional basis involving participants from up to 25 countries at a time and some in partnerships with the CBD Secretariat (Ecuador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Lebanon).
305. UNEP's IPBES project has also made a very important contribution to this immediate outcome. During the MTS 2010-2013, UNEP has provided an interim secretariat and technical support during the process to establish the IPBES⁶⁷. This has been delivered in a reasonable time despite the need to obtain agreement from the world's governments on a new global platform, and represents a major deliverable for UNEP. IPBES's key role will be to strengthen the use of science in policy making, through acting as a knowledge platform linking sources of independent, credible (evidence-based) information on the status and value of biodiversity and ecosystem services – mostly from scientific institutions and science data sources (assessments, studies, databases, centres of excellence), but also importantly from traditional knowledge sources - to decision-makers. Other notable successes at the global level mentioned by interviewees include the Global Assessment of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), and particularly UNEP's work on water quality issues including the Global Water Quality Assessment (led by DEWA), the development and the launch of the International Water Quality Guidelines for Ecosystem Services (in collaboration with UNU-EHS and Global Water Systems project⁶⁸ in June 2013).
306. External stakeholders and partners interviewed by the Evaluation expressed the opinion that the knowledge products produced by UNEP have good potential to influence decision-making on natural resource

⁶⁴ <http://www.ecosystemassessments.net/>

⁶⁵ See publications page of the TEEB website <http://www.teebweb.org/our-publications/all-publications/>

⁶⁶ for instance, Tanzania and Tunisia (Africa); the Nordic region (Europe); Colombia and Ecuador (South America); and China, India, and Indonesia (Asia) – see <http://www.teebweb.org/resources/teeb-case-studies-list/>

⁶⁷ <http://www.ipbes.net/>

⁶⁸ <http://www.gwsp.org/>

management, and it was noted that results under this immediate outcome will help support the work programmes of several MEAs, particularly delivery of the CBD's Aichi Target 19⁶⁹.

307. Another weakness is that whilst some linkages between EMSP projects have been made - for instance, there are preliminary plans for feeding results from the TEEB studies into the IPBES - information exchange between projects has not been particularly widespread or as coordinated as it could have been.

Immediate Outcome 4 – Increased awareness of the need for the ecosystem approach and ecosystem management among decision-makers and the general public

308. During the Subprogramme design phase (2008-2009), it was recognised that not all countries and stakeholders were familiar with the MA and its findings, and that many (if not most) countries still measured development and wealth purely in economic terms. Consequently, a key aim of the EMSP has been to 'make the case' for the adoption of the ecosystem approach to enhance human well being through raising awareness of both decision-makers and the general public. Indeed, an early (but undated - 2008 or 2009) EMSP document⁷⁰ argues for awareness raising as the first step in operationalising the EMSP, and a specific PoW output was identified for the communication of the ecosystem approach⁷¹. This was to be done through individual projects, regional dialogues on ecosystem approaches, more corporate-level activities, and collaborative work with MEAs, but most of the EMSP's efforts in this area were to be delivered through a specific intervention – the '*Making the case for ecosystem services - a global outreach and communications package*' project known as the '*Making the Case*' (MTC) project, led by DCPI.
309. The MTC project, which began in early 2010, aimed to promote the ecosystem approach at the corporate level through targeted awareness-raising activities at specific regional and global events, such as Conference of Parties (CoP) meetings of the biodiversity related MEAs, and hosting specific workshops to sensitize journalists on issues such as illegal trade in wildlife, green economy, and the land-ocean connection. However, its main role was to act as service provider for the communications and outreach needs of other EMSP projects. Specific activity sets for individual EMSP projects were to be identified in the early stages of the MTS (so from early 2010) and set out in a Communication Plan (termed a '*global outreach strategy*' in some documents) for the EMSP. This was intended to give consistency to information and messages among projects and help give shape, coherence and a better identity to the overall EMSP. However, unfortunately, the Plan was not approved.
310. It was acknowledged by both DEPI and DCPI in 2012 that communication of the ecosystem approach was not being delivered effectively in any coherent, coordinated fashion through the EMSP, and understanding of the ecosystem approach and ecosystem management among stakeholders (even among members of the CPR) was generally poor and limited. As a result, a review (termed a '*conceptual framework*') was commissioned from UNEP-WCMC in mid-2013 to define the ecosystem management approach with case studies, best practice and outline policy guidance, in order to support a common understanding of terminology and practice across the EMSP and facilitate more coherent and integrated communication of key messages within and by UNEP. Unfortunately, the report was not delivered by the end of the 2013, although it was finally published in October of 2014 so should help guide the communication of key concepts and messages for the new MTS 2014-2017.
311. Most EMSP projects had minimal engagement with the MTC project, or where they did it was typically only in response to requests for support to launch project publications or a news event on project activities rather than any overall input into the design and delivery of a project's communications and outreach work and materials. However, some projects have had their own independent and well-resourced communication plans with high internal capacity to address communication needs and have been successful in getting their messages across (and raising visibility of the project helped meet UNEP corporate concerns), notably the GRASP, Mau, TEEB, IPBES, and LifeWeb projects. The TEEB (phase II) project was particularly praised for delivering a coherent and integrated set of communication and outreach activities, and for the good collective engagement in communication activities across the project's stakeholders. It invested heavily in communication and outreach activities, with a dedicated Communications Officer, significant budget and developed its own communication strategies. There are clearly important lessons here that could be captured and shared with other EMSP and UNEP projects.

⁶⁹ Aichi Target 19 – *By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.*

⁷⁰ UNEP (nd.a). Operationalising UNEP's Ecosystem Management Programme. Unpublished, c.2008.

⁷¹ PoW Output 316: A global outreach strategy to promote the sustainable use of ecosystem services for the achievement of development objectives is implemented for 2010-2011 biennium, and PoW O 311: Global, regional and national awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services for sustainable development are improved' for 2012-2013 biennium.

312. On the other hand, corporate level communication efforts around EMSP projects have often been strong, which has been partly attributed to pressure to focus on high-profile events and service requests from the Executive Director's Office for material for speeches and briefing papers. Promotion of the ecosystem approach at the corporate level has also been supported by a number of high quality technical publications, policy briefings and outreach products (see IO1, IO2 and IO3), which have received wide media attention and helped support policy and regulatory initiatives and advocacy efforts. For instance, external stakeholders interviewed by the Evaluation particularly mentioned the *Inclusive Wealth Report* and TEEB reports as helping to promote a better understanding of the value of ecosystem services. According to the final PPR for 2013, UNEP disseminated over 130 press releases to international media at key events, including Rio+20, UNEP's Governing Council (GC) and the World Water Forum, resulting in over 45,000 articles on ecosystem management issues (UNEP 2013e).
313. Apart from presenting important technical data sources, the EMSP's publications have also helped to raise the profile of UNEP with respect to ecosystem management, and thus work toward delivering UNEP's mission statement (see section 3.1). It is also expected that achievement of this immediate outcome would contribute towards delivery of Aichi Target 1⁷² (*By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably*).
314. However, concern was expressed that generally the link between results, reports and publications and decision-making processes/frameworks needs to be better developed with more thought on how best to communicate UNEP's technical knowledge on ecosystem management. For instance, although many individual projects within the EMSP have produced important technical information and publications, relevant information in these products is not always in the most appropriate form/format for influencing decision-makers. This could be addressed by perhaps embedding qualified communications officers with relevant technical know-how in large projects and/or subprogrammes who can address project-specific communication and outreach challenges (i.e. much more than a focus on corporate communications - as mentioned previously these are very different roles) and this is an area where technical input from DCPI could increase effectiveness and add value.
315. A significant criticism of the awareness-raising activities of the EMSP (both at the individual project and subprogramme levels) is that there has been no attempt to measure whether 'awareness and understanding' had been achieved and whether the EMSP has significantly helped change public attitudes, values and behaviours towards biodiversity and ecosystem services. In other words, it is not clear how effective the means and approaches employed in communicating the key messages and information have been. For instance, the MTC project's indicators are simple process indicators, such as the number of website and social media hits or media coverage, which may indicate interest in the topic but they do not demonstrate increased 'understanding' or changed attitudes or patterns of behaviours, particularly not among the key target group (decision-makers involved with development planning processes). Measuring and documenting/reporting on success in awareness-raising and behavioural change was found to be weak or non-existent for all the EMSP projects examined by the Evaluation.
316. A further issue is attribution. Reporting in PIMS states that 'UNEP website download statistics continue to demonstrate an intense interest in ecosystem services, sector by sector but also as a 'concept' and global issue'. This may be true (although no direct evidence is given) but it cannot be determined whether this stems from the MTC project or even DCPI's work or is due to the work of other organisations active in the area of ecosystem management, of which there are many. Consequently, it is impossible to say to what extent the EMSP has directly led to an increased understanding of the need for governments to adopt the ecosystem approach.

Website

317. The 'public face' for much of the effort to 'make the case' for the ecosystem approach, particularly at the corporate level, has been the UNEP-hosted EMSP website⁷³ where there are links to some EMSP projects and publications. Some projects have much better web presence than others – the TEEB and the GRASP projects (independent of the UNEP website) are considered to have among the best and most effective communication 'tools'⁷⁴, but others are poor and need revision. The Evaluation found widespread criticism of the standard and utility of the EMSP webpages and the overall UNEP web experience a lack of full list of the organisation's projects, little information on individual EMSP projects or poor links to them, an outdated style with poor

⁷² Aichi Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

⁷³ According to the final PPR for 2013, UNEP ecosystems management websites received some 209,000 visits over the biennium.

⁷⁴ A Google search for 'UNEP GRASP', for instance, brings up a wide range GRASP-related links to publications, press releases, media products such as YouTube videos, and more than 12,000 likes in Facebook, but EMSP was not mentioned in the selected sites visited.

interactivity, and infrequent maintenance and updating with presentation of old information (several years old on some EMSP webpages⁷⁵) and exceptionally slow downloading with frequent interruptions of service. Feedback from external partners was that the EMSP's online image was "poor, outdated and lacked impact", which does not encourage and support replication or catalysis of EMSP project results and presents a poor impression of UNEP, EMSP webpages and UNEP website clearly needs to be completely overhauled and treated as a priority action.

Collaboration and coordination on communication activities

318. Part of the reason for the rather mixed success of the communication activities within the EMSP is the frequently poor collaboration and coordination between the MTC project, other EMSP projects and other relevant groups within UNEP. For instance, the Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU), based in DEPI, which focuses largely at the tertiary education level and works with a very extensive and well-established global network of universities⁷⁶ (a key audience that is not sufficiently recognized within UNEP) was not involved with the MTC project until very late in the MTS 2010-2013 and then only superficially, and has had little interaction with most of the individual EMSP projects. This was considered a lost opportunity as the EETU has extensive experience in the area of outreach and training and could have been used to promote projects results further and to new relevant audiences, feeding in analyses/materials/results from the EMSP into the higher education sector to influence future decision-makers and technical staff at a critical point of their education.
319. Another reason for the poor collaboration may have been down to perceptions about the value and technical difficulty of communications and outreach work. Some UNEP interviewees had a rather negative attitude towards awareness-raising and outreach work, with a perceived lack of respect for, and acknowledgement of, communications work as a discipline in its own right that requires trained, experienced staff, and the Evaluation came across the view that 'anyone can do communications work' (and by implication that it is easy and does not require specialist technical input). In practice effective awareness-raising and outreach involves skills sets and training that most EMSP project managers lack, such as in human behavioural psychology and social marketing, as well as graphic and website design, and writing, public speaking and media skills.
320. Overall, communication of the ecosystem approach through the Subprogramme has been variable, and not delivered in a coherent, integrated fashion during the period 2010-2013. Ensuring a clear understanding of the terms 'ecosystem management' and 'ecosystem management approach' is critical to communicating the aims and results of the Subprogramme and this should have been initiated early in 2010 rather than close to the end of the MTS 2010-2013.
321. Also, although it is recognised that assessing changes in awareness and knowledge (and more so attitudes and values) of individuals and groups is a costly and time-consuming challenge (and no EMSP budget line was identified for this), given that large amounts of funds (including in-kind support) have been spent on communication and outreach activities through the EMSP (and the other subprogrammes) over the course of the MTS 2010-2013, it is important to determine whether this has been cost-effective or whether alternative approaches should be employed. It would be valuable if an independent evaluation of the communications work for the EMSP (indeed for the whole of the PoW across all subprogrammes) for 2010-2013 was undertaken as it would help to strengthen the delivery and effectiveness of the communication activities for the new MTS 2014-2017.
322. At the global level, UNEP has also undertaken successful advocacy (in the sense that UNEP is a general advocate for the environment in international processes rather than advocacy targeted to government decisions) on a broad range of issues, usually linked with its corporate communication work (see IO4). These include campaigning for the adoption of water quality as an issue by UN Water⁷⁷, championing the adoption of the revised Global Strategy for the Survival of Great Apes and their Habitat, and supporting the intergovernmental process to adopt the Manila Declaration on the marine environment in May 2012.
323. As the MTS 2010-2013 points out 'awareness-raising, outreach and communications, including education and training, will be integral to delivering on the six cross-cutting thematic priorities (subprogrammes)... (and) the six cross-cutting thematic priorities will guide the UNEP outreach and communication outputs and products'. Consequently, it would perhaps have made more sense if the communication and outreach support had been

⁷⁵ For instance, on 4 March 2014, the Freshwater project's website (<http://www.unep.org/themes/Freshwater/index.asp>) still had an advert for World Water Day (WWD) 2011 although clicking on the link took you to UNWater.org with information about WWD 2014.

⁷⁶ Global Universities Partnership on Environment for Sustainability (GUPES)

⁷⁷ <http://www.unwater.org/>

provided as a service across the whole EMSP rather than a specific EMSP project hosted by DCPI. A follow-up 'Making the Case' project led by DCPI with the same arrangement has been approved for the MTS 2014-2017.

4.3.4. Contribution to medium term outcomes

324. Moving further up in the reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC), beyond the level of immediate capacity enhancement, it becomes increasingly difficult to assess the contribution of UNEP's work, and Evaluation becomes progressively more theoretical and speculative, with the likelihood of reaching intermediate states and then impacts depending on an increasing number of external factors and conditions. Nevertheless, some contributions to medium-term outcomes and intermediate states can be identified using the reconstructed ToC and are presented below. This section also assesses the likelihood of longer term impacts on the environment and human well being, based on the quality and extent of achievements already made, and the degree to which underlying assumptions and impact drivers affect these.

Medium Term Outcome 1 – National institutions able to address ecosystem degradation and manage ecosystem services sustainably

325. There has been no systematic monitoring of the extent to which the EMSP's tools, approaches, information or knowledge platforms and other capacity building efforts (delivered under immediate outcomes 1-3) have been adopted and incorporated into working practice, and no framework has been put in place to monitor these in a systematic fashion. However, although much of the evidence is anecdotal, overall, the EMSP does appear to have significantly strengthened national institutional capacity to develop and execute plans and projects to reverse ecosystem degradation and manage ecosystem services more sustainably, at various scales and for a diverse range of stakeholders, evidenced through project work carried out at the national and site levels, particularly through pilot projects in Africa and Latin America.

326. Field demonstrations and training courses for national stakeholders on the application of concepts and tools, policy and planning skills, ecosystem management or restoration, assessment methods, monitoring, and improved information availability and knowledge platforms have all contributed to enhanced technical know-how in supported countries, and enabled them to better access and use ecosystem management tools, approaches and information. For instance:

- Kenya is using ecosystem management tools developed with UNEP assistance for the restoration of Mau Forest complex and along the Tana River;
- Mozambique has developed a drought management tool to address freshwater resources;
- The Iraqi National Protected Areas Committee has been supported to develop a framework for establishing protected areas in the Iraqi Marshlands;
- Marine protection officials are using tools and training provided by UNEP for an ecosystem management based concept and plan for the Silverbank humpback sanctuary in the Dominican Republic;
- A number of countries have adopted the guidance manual for valuation and accounting of ecosystem services (South Sudan, Tanzania, PDR Laos, Panama, Indonesia), and at the regional level, there has been some initial work to apply economic valuation and management tools in the Zambezi river basin with 8 riparian countries involved (Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana); and
- Some EMSP projects have also provided improved physical capacity on the ground, ranging from providing equipment for protected area staff to improving protected area infrastructure, and building of a clinic to support community engagement/ownership through the GRASP project.

327. UNEP has helped build a substantial volume of knowledge products and supported knowledge exchange networks and scientific databases such as the SGA network. These are generally highly valued and have the potential to continue to build ecosystem management capacity over a much longer life-time than the 4-year MTS, as well as assisting governments to implement ecosystem assessment tools, including Integrated Ecosystem Assessments and Sub-Global Ecosystem Assessments.

328. Specific institutional arrangements have also been established to provide capacity support through some projects. For instance, Technical Support Teams were created through the GRASP project enabling partners to respond to emerging situations and mobilize resources and action quickly.

329. A strategic approach was often taken to capacity building due to limited resources, including training events designed to magnify and reinforce learning through a training-of-trainers approach and/or participants were charged with developing follow up activities, some of which were linked to the pilot activities funded by UNEP

and partners. Given the generally poor understanding of the ecosystem approach (see paragraph 310), both direct support activities (thematic workshops, specific training and coaching, active information exchange events) and indirect capacity building activities, e.g. publications, on-line toolkits, web-based platforms and clearing house mechanisms, are relevant for EMSP's work. Although UNEP does not have a comparative advantage at the local/site level (see section 3.1), and there are higher costs to operating locally, field projects are considered important as they offer an opportunity to demonstrate tools and approaches practically and can encourage others to champion the results locally and nationally, promoting replication and up-scaling. Given UNEP's constraints, partnerships have been particularly important in delivering such capacity building activities (see section 5.4).

330. However, there are still questions over how relevant, comprehensive and sustainable capacity development by the EMSP has been, and whether it was properly targeted at the most appropriate groups/individuals given the lack of any specific capacity development plan for the EMSP or its projects. For instance, many government partner agencies of UNEP are seriously understaffed and have very limited resources and there are concerns about their capacity to take on and deliver UNEP projects, and overall it is not clear what impact has occurred following training linked to field demonstrations (some behavioural changes among those trained have been reported but the evidence is anecdotal and the scope of these changes is usually quite restricted). Responses to capacity building needs varied among projects with some clearly having paid much more attention to key issues than others. For instance, capacity building was well integrated with other project activities in the ICM project which linked training to guidelines and created good prospects for continuity of capacity building through linkages with Regional Seas processes. Regional Offices were well aware of the weaknesses in UNEP's capacity building efforts and much of their work in connection with the EMSP was orientated to supporting this. Some ROs expressed a clear vision of national capacity being built on long-term relationships and better coherence of work at country level, although this would necessitate greater in-country presence and increased investment in staff and resources at the RO level.

Medium Term Outcome 2 – Improved enabling conditions for integrating ecosystem approach into development and economic planning and decision-making frameworks

331. This medium term outcome relates to improvement in the national and regional policy, legal and institutional (structural and managerial) environment to support the integration of the ecosystem approach into national development and economic planning and decision-making frameworks. This is still considered a work in progress as the ecosystem approach is a relatively new approach and the benefits of ecosystem management are still not well appreciated (see section 2.1). In addition, intensive mainstreaming activities at the national level often fall outside UNEP's comparative advantage and resources (especially given the lack of direct presence in most countries and the limited resources in UNEP Regional Offices). Successful mainstreaming of approaches into policy and planning at the national level is necessarily a long-term process and requires a long-term commitment. However, there are a few examples where the UNEP interventions have already contributed to achieving this medium term outcome, including contributions from several UNEP 'flagship projects', such as TEEB, IPBES, GRASP, LifeWeb, and which are highlighted in UNEP Annual Reports.

Improved policies and plans

332. Although, the EMSP has had a relatively limited direct influence on the national legal frameworks it has helped countries to identify ecosystem management needs, supported the formulation of national policies and strategies that integrate ecosystem management approaches into environment, development and economic and financial sectors and investments and helped strengthen existing sector-specific regulatory frameworks.
333. For instance, the Mangrove project helped support the preparation of policy documents at national or municipal level on the protection and management and mangroves in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala and the formalisation of a Ministerial Decree related to coastal wetlands management in Honduras under the umbrella of the Ramsar Convention. According to information in PIMS, an ecosystem management approach has also been incorporated into environmental restoration plans in Haiti as part of its post-disaster recovery development planning. Similarly, a project on trade-off analysis between food security and ecosystem services in Punjab, India enabled the state Government to develop policy options following a series of policy dialogues supported with findings from a field study in Punjab, and according to the Rehabilitation of the Mau Forest Ecosystem Programme Document prepared by the Republic of Kenya (2010) 'UNEP has been instrumental in cultivating political will with the Government [of Kenya] to tackle the massive task of conserving the Mau Forests Complex'.

Mainstreaming into economic and financial sectors

334. UNEP has had some success with incorporating the values of ecosystem services into economic planning and investment decisions, including into the design of policy instruments such as taxes and payments for ecosystem services, and into national systems for accounting, planning, and management. UNEP reports and assessments, related to the value of ecosystem services and natural capital accounting, are considered to have considerable potential to improve national strategies and policies and shape delivery of this medium-term outcome.
335. For instance, the TEEB project has successfully promoted the conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services by demonstrating their real economic values, and according to an independent Terminal Evaluation (TE) undertaken in 2011 (Pritchard 2011) ‘has equipped stakeholders to integrate economics more effectively into biodiversity conservation and to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystems into economics’. Although TEEB Country Studies are not expected to be endorsed as official government documents, other formal national instruments notably NBSAPs use TEEB information and build on TEEB exercises and TEEB has frequently been referenced in the development of NBSAPs and similar planning documents⁷⁸, and there are a number of references to TEEB within CBD Decisions (such as on protected areas, incentive measures, and business engagement). Non-project individuals interviewed by the Evaluation commented that feedback they had received from governments, business, and so on, suggested that TEEB project has helped to make the benefits of ecosystems “more visible to economics”. However, the TE found that TEEB’s arguments had been mostly incorporated into policies and projects related to the environment sector and taken up by audiences predisposed to be supportive, but with limited linkages to broader audiences.
336. Encouragingly, there have been some successful attempts to mainstream EMSP results into the business and financial sectors. For instance, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) has produced a Corporate Ecosystems Valuation Guide that ‘operationalizes’ the TEEB’s key messages and recommendations at the company level. The EMSP project ‘Integrating ecosystems into financial sector operations’ has been working with a number of leading global financial institutions to develop methods to integrate ecosystem services into their global and national strategies and operations, and has played a key role in the development and promotion of the Natural Capital Declaration. However, according to interviewees, the economic and financial crisis has made the private sector more cautious about investing in ‘unconventional’ or innovative approaches such as payment for ecosystem services and even the Green Economy concept. Consequently, engagement with the private sector by the EMSP has not been as extensive as was hoped.
337. DEPI’s Ecosystems Services Economics Unit (ESEU) has also been actively engaged in ecosystem valuation work and supporting the mainstreaming of results into government policy in various countries. However, at least some of the work of the Unit does not appear to be associated with specific EMSP projects and consequently is not adequately captured in reporting in PIMS.

Institutional support

338. Another important contribution to this medium term outcome has been UNEP’s support for the development or strengthening of new or existing institutional structures to facilitate ecosystem management. For instance, UNEP has provided support for the establishment and operation of the IPBES, which became operational in December 2013. Similarly, activities along the Tana River under the EMSP’s Freshwater project are directly credited with the establishment of the Tana River Catchment Authority, and the Mau project has facilitated the strengthening of institutions (governance arrangements) at the county government and local community cooperatives levels, which has improved capacity to manage forest and water resources in the Mau Forest region (and also improved the prospects for sustainability).
339. UNEP has provided advisory services to relevant external institutions and projects, including legal review and advice on how to integrate assessment and field research recommendations into environmental policy, as part of some project interventions under the EMSP, such as assistance to several countries on identifying gaps and preparing draft Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) documents to meet Nagoya Protocol commitments, as well as support to national processes toward NBSAP update, which has included helping to put in place the capacities and systems required to undertake TEEB Country Studies. In other cases this seems to be independent of specific EMSP projects. For instance, the ESEU provides support to ecosystem services projects outside of UNEP which is often done ‘informally’ and (again) not captured in reporting under specific EMSP projects. This

⁷⁸ Up to April 2014, there had been 10 revised NBSAPs that mention TEEB along with the EU’s Biodiversity Strategy.

suggests that staff and resources are not always aligned under Subprogrammes and illustrates a general point that UNEP's broader engagement with the environment community is greater than reported.

340. Despite positive comments on UNEP's role and effectiveness, some interviewees did suggest that the effectiveness of UNEP's mainstreaming work could have been improved if project design and country selection had been better aligned with key national processes, such as the UNDAF, and the PEI countries. Although UNEP staff are involved with these processes, it was felt that the ecosystem approach is not being sufficiently promoted as a means to deliver more effective national policies and programmes. Although both the UNDAF and PEI focus more on national sustainable development and tackling poverty reduction, the ecosystem approach is highly relevant here given the linkage between human well-being and functional and resilient ecosystem services, and is increasingly seen as a key component in sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies by the development community. The EMSP should consider stronger linkage with such opportunities particularly those looking to mainstream environment into development, poverty reduction or financial sector policy, where UNEP could provide targeted inputs, such as ecosystem management tools and approaches and policy guidance into existing or planned mainstreaming interventions being led by others partners (the so-called 'double mainstreaming' approach) rather than creating new mainstreaming structures and processes itself.

4.3.5. Assessment of intermediate state and impact prospects

341. The following section examines the key external factors or conditions that need to be present for change to happen (assumptions), how they have affected delivery of the EMSP and the extent to which future outcomes are likely to be compromised as a result of assumptions not holding. It also examines what UNEP is doing to influence the process of change (drivers) along the causal pathway from immediate outcomes to medium term outcomes to intermediate states, and ultimately to the achievement of environmental and other impacts. It expands on the brief listing given in the ToC section (see section 3.6.3).

4.3.5.1. Impact drivers and assumptions

342. The Evaluation identified a number of drivers and assumptions that are required for enhanced country capacity for improved adoption and implementation of the ecosystem approach and achieving impacts.

Drivers

Public understanding of environmental and development issues and demand for sustainable development

343. Awareness-raising, outreach, advisory and advocacy activities by UNEP and others are helping to support political willingness and commitment, and maintain public pressure on government agendas and the private sector to improve environment protection, sustainable development and poverty reduction and integrate ecosystem approach into national economic and development sectors (see paragraph 331 – Medium Term Outcome 2). EMSP activities targeted at changing attitudes, values and behaviour, based on increased understanding of, and access to, information on the status and value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and the linkages with economic and social development, including human livelihoods and poverty reduction (see IO3 and IO4), should contribute to this driver.
344. Similarly, the promotion of global poverty reduction agendas by the UN, NGOs, civil society groups, etc, should encourage/pressure governments to adopt the ecosystem approach, furthering the likelihood of achieving EMSP aims. It is also worth noting that UNEP's CCSP work on ecosystem-based adaptation and the DCSP's activities related to disaster risk reduction, both of which are underpinned by the ecosystem approach should also contribute to this driver.
345. Also, an increasing number of governments and stakeholders are engaging in the Green Economy concept⁷⁹ and exploring how to put it into practice, which will promote the uptake of the ecosystem approach. UNEP's work on natural capital accounting and ecosystem valuation under the EMSP (see paragraph 298, IO2) is supporting the mainstreaming of elements of the Green Economy concept into international and national policy making, and there are complementarities between the EMSP and the Resource Efficiency Subprogramme (RESP) where most of UNEP's work on the Green Economy resides.

⁷⁹ The Green Economy is defined as an economy that results in reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment. It is closely related with ecological economics, but has a more politically applied focus. See www.unep.org/greeneconomy/

Intergovernmental agreements on conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services

346. UNEP supports various environment-related intergovernmental agreements and processes that are helping to drive the adoption of the ecosystem approach, with the CBD's 2011-2020 Strategy and Aichi Targets having particularly important implications on the national uptake of UNEP's current and future achievements in ecosystem management. Within the EMSP, results from various TEEB-related activities, notably Country Studies, are already being fed into the CBD-driven process to update NBSAPs. Similarly, the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol should help encourage governments to address equity issues more extensively and systematically, and the EMSP has been supporting the Protocol through a specific PoW Output during the MTS 2010-2013 (although there have been few results during this period – see paragraph 372).
347. The recent establishment of the IPBES will provide an enhanced science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services for decision/policy making, and so should itself become a driver for the uptake of the ecosystem approach (including direct incorporation of results from relevant EMSP projects in the MTS 2014-2017 period), if the Platform can become financially sustainable.

National budgetary allocations/sustainable financing to address degradation and restoration of priority ecosystem services

348. Continued adequate national budgetary allocations or other sources of financing are needed to utilise the new tools, approaches, enhanced information, and skills, and implement the improved policies, plans and regulations delivered through the EMSP capacity and enabling efforts but mobilization of domestic funding, particularly for the longer term, is often challenging. However, countries will mobilize funding for environment (although not necessarily for ecosystem management) when the case is built, and UNEP seeks to promote initiatives that support this, e.g. the joint UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative⁸⁰. Also, the increasing appreciation of the economic value of natural capital among business communities, and the desire to minimise poor environmental management as a business risk provide opportunities for generating sustainable finance from the private sector through joint initiatives, partnerships, and/or sponsorship, and UNEP is addressing this through several initiatives, including the Finance Initiative, to which the EMSP contributes. Unfortunately, the global economic and financial downturn has made private financial institutions much more cautious and risk averse in recent years, especially with regard to relatively 'untested' approaches such as natural capital accounting which are still in their infancy as disciplines (although promotion of innovative approaches is a key role for UNEP). However, UNEP is considered at the forefront of this developing field, and the TEEB project and UNEP's Finance Initiative have returned some good results in this area. UNEP sought to influence or support improvement in national budget allocations largely through outputs under EA(c) but changes in national budgetary allocations were not systematically tracked by the EMSP, even though it was an intended expected accomplishment.

Integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into the work of other UN agencies and development actors

349. Incorporation of environment and sustainable development considerations into other UN agencies and international organisations is an important outcome driver that will facilitate the use of results from the EMSP. Some of these organizations have a stronger, more developed country presence than UNEP (e.g. UNDP and FAO) and provide direct support to countries on environmental management and poverty reduction, and some have their own biodiversity and ecosystem services programmes, such as UNDP⁸¹. UNEP has built strong partnerships and collaborated with many of these on joint initiatives, such as the IPBES (with UNESCO, FAO and UNDP), and UNEP's catalytic role in UN country teams and in regional and national planning processes and linkages to the UNDAF process and the PEI, should similarly help drive adoption of the ecosystem approach. The importance of collaboration and partnerships to delivery of the EMSP is discussed in section 5.4.

Assumptions

Political and security situation remains relatively stable

350. There is a basic assumption in the countries where the EMSP operates that the political stability and security situation will not deteriorate to a level that makes UNEP's work too difficult or dangerous, hampers the uptake of UNEP's products and services by stakeholders, or adds serious non-environmental threats to the environment or livelihoods that would overshadow any positive impacts that could have been achieved

⁸⁰ <http://www.unpei.org/>

⁸¹ http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/environmentandenergy/focus_areas/ecosystems_and_biodiversity/

through UNEP's work. These issues have affected some EMSP projects, notably the Mayombe project where political considerations in the Congo hampered progress, at Lake Faguibine in Mali, which had to be suspended due to civil conflict in the country and in Haiti where an earthquake following a hurricane created very difficult working conditions for UN agencies and necessitated a major change in the overall development support for the country. UNEP has attempted to ameliorate this risk by creating and maintaining a diverse base of partners both at government and the civil society levels in case some partners lose their effectiveness in a country.

Institutions in target countries continue to be stable to ensure implementation of ecosystem management, restoration, valuation and accounting tools

351. The delivery of the higher levels of the causal logic will take many years so there is a need for continued institutional stability. If this is not maintained then the future of the EMSP results may be put at risk. For instance, many national and local partners of UNEP, on which UNEP often relies heavily for delivery of local and national level activities, remain (sometimes seriously) understaffed and there is often a high turnover of trained staff, which can constrain their capacity to absorb and use the technical support that UNEP can offer. This is a continuous threat to Subprogramme performance and sustainability of EMSP results which UNEP has set out to mitigate by following a 'training of trainers' approach and diversification of partners.

Climatic events do not destroy ecosystem management results

352. It is also assumed that climatic events will not wipe out any ecosystem restoration efforts and development benefits delivered through the EMSP, including immediate results through field interventions. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and extent of extreme weather events (such as heatwaves, droughts and tropical storms) and have related negative socio-economic consequences, which have the potential to reduce or reverse UNEP-led efforts to address ecosystem degradation and restoration, particularly at the local level. However, adoption of ecosystem management promoted by the EMSP should help to increase the resilience of vulnerable habitats and associated human communities to climate change impacts, and indeed, as mentioned above, ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) is a key strategy used to support climate change adaptation by UNEP and other UN and international agencies. However, this was not been reported as an issue in any of the case study projects or general EMSP reporting for the 2010-2013 period, and climate change impacts remain as hypothetical threats for now.

4.3.5.2. Intermediate states and likelihood of impacts

353. Intermediate states are located further along the causal chain and, in this case, concern the adoption and implementation of the ecosystem approach through national, regional and sectoral policy and planning frameworks and instruments with commitments and targets to integrate ecosystem management into these levels and address equity of benefits and costs of ecosystem management. This corresponds to the overall aim of the EMSP that 'countries adopt the ecosystem approach for human well-being'. Beyond this, the ultimate anticipated environmental and social impact is functional and resilient ecosystems that provide ecosystem services sustainably with an equitable sharing of the benefits and costs of protecting ecosystem services among society (see section 3.6).

354. However, there is inevitably a significant time lag between project outcomes in terms of changed human behaviour and their desired environmental and social impact. Improved ecosystem resilience and a reversal in the decline of ecosystem services is very unlikely to be delivered at any significant scale over UNEP's 4-year MTS planning framework period (and certainly not within a 2-year PoW), and indeed evidence of impact-level achievements within the EMSP is very limited to date.

355. Assessment is made more difficult because likely, or even the desired, impacts were not well-identified and defined in EMSP project documentation, and individual projects have lacked a ToC, which would have set out the anticipated environment impacts and the intermediate stages to reach them⁸². None of the 10 case projects examined in detail as part of the Evaluation had specific indicators of ecosystem condition, degradation and restoration that could have been used to assess their environmental impact (see section 5.5).

356. The 'impact indicator' for the overall aim of the EMSP given in the MTS was an 'increase in environment-related budget allocated to ecosystem management'. However, this is not a direct measure of changes in environmental conditions and increased funding does not necessarily translate to restored ecosystems or lead to ecosystem services being used in a more sustainable way. In any case, this has not been measured by the EMSP (or for individual projects) and was abandoned (but not replaced) as an indicator after the 2010-2011 biennium.

⁸² A ToC was not required when the projects were developed. This was only introduced for the MTS 2014-2017.

357. UNEP is also dependent on the actions of partners and country priorities in order for these changes/impacts to become manifest, and, though influential in terms of its accepted UN mandate, convening power, capacity to call on technical expertise, and to some extent resource mobilisation (see section 3.1), UNEP is a relatively modest player on the ecosystem management scene. Its interventions represent only a small portion of the total global effort involving governments, donors, and other institutions, which means it is generally difficult to identify and measure UNEP's contribution at the higher results level. However, it should be noted that UNEP aims its interventions (in general) to try to change the way governance, regulatory and management 'systems' function. UNEP aims for 'upstream' changes that are intended to lead to changes in environmental status and condition, although such changes are 'downstream' and come about indirectly, so attribution is challenging.
358. Based on the findings of the Evaluation, there is some evidence of successful adoption and integration of the ecosystem approach and there are positive indications that UNEP's interventions have contributed to several outcomes that are either beginning to show or have implicit forward linkages to the intermediate states and expected impact.

Adoption of ecosystem approach by countries

359. At the global level, the TEEB project results have already had a significant influence, having been incorporated (and attributed) in policies and projects worldwide, such as the revision process for NBSAPs⁸³, and the TEEB project's language has been increasingly reflected in Ministerial speeches, in strategic priorities of conservation agencies and NGOs, and in projects such as the World Bank's 'Wealth Accounting and Valuing of Ecosystem Services' project. The TEEB project also influenced the development of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the achievement of several of these⁸⁴ is likely to draw heavily on national-level TEEB information. Consequently, the Aichi Targets are an important driver for embedding TEEB in policy discussions. Likewise, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 calls on EU Member States to map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services, and promote the integration of these values in accounting and reporting systems at EU and national level. Taken together this suggests that there has already been a significant degree of successful adoption of the ecosystem approach through the TEEB project. Indeed, according to its Terminal Evaluation report, the label 'TEEB' is beginning to be used as shorthand for the whole field of ecological economics, and in effect it has become a 'brand' (also mentioned by several interviewees). Consequently, it is likely that the TEEB project will contribute to a significant mid-to-long term impact (clearer than for most other EMSP projects).
360. Another EMSP project that is likely to contribute to significant impact over the longer term is the IPBES, which it is hoped will result in a significant (pivotal?) change in the relationship and global interface between conservation science and policy, somewhat similar to that for climate change issues brought about by the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988⁸⁵.
361. At the national level, there have been a number of successes. For instance, the Government of Kenya adopted a policy on the protection of the country's 'water towers' (essential sources of freshwater for many millions of Kenyans) and its Ministry of Finance allocated US\$ 26 million to ecosystem conservation and restoration activities in priority areas throughout the country reportedly as a direct result of UNEP interventions. However, several project managers raised the point that additional effort is needed to reach impact on their projects, particularly at the policy level.

Ecosystem restoration and sustainable utilisation of ecosystem services

362. With regard to achieving environmental impact, it is recognised that ecosystem restoration takes many years. Although it is not being measured directly by the EMSP projects, albeit relatively small-scale and local interventions, there have been a few encouraging successes over the 2010-2013 period.
363. Examples of practical ecosystem restoration in the EMSP portfolio to date include the Mau project, which was implemented in close collaboration with the Government of Kenya and, according to the PPR 2012-2013⁸⁶, restored over 40,000 hectares of Mau Forest land, and established institutions and instruments to oversee the

⁸³ The timing of the CBD-required updating of NBSAPs has offered an opportunity for embedding the results of TEEB in medium to long-term national programmes. Several countries are explicitly linking NBSAP revision with TEEB exercises and this has been one of the focal areas of outreach efforts in 2012-2013 for the TEEB project which will continue into 2014-2015 biennium.

⁸⁴ Particularly Target 2 - By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems, but also Targets 1, 3, 4, 11, and 20.

⁸⁵ However, IPBES will have to deal with the challenge of covering a wider range of scales and topics than IPCC does and has larger work programme. For instance, IPBES will not only conduct assessments (as IPCC does) but is also expected to provide policy-relevant tools and methodologies, identify and prioritize key scientific information needed for policy makers, and build the capacity to support these efforts.

⁸⁶ 2012-2013 PPR page 74 'ecosystem rehabilitation projects include the Mau Forest in Kenya (40,000 hectares recovered)'.

restoration effort established at national and county government level. Another example is the Freshwater project which had some initial success at rehabilitating Lake Faguibine⁸⁷, in Mali, until the civil conflict in the country caused its suspension. Stakeholders praised this project as particularly a good example of an ecological rehabilitation project that demonstrated in a very practical and tangible way, the importance of freshwater ecosystem services for fisheries, transport, agriculture, consumption and human well-being, and has helped build capacity to plan and execute ecosystem management. Interviewees also praised the ecosystem restoration activities along the Tana River in Kenya. These focused on implementation of an integrated water resources management plan for the Tana River basin to arrest erosion and siltation through constructing sand dams, planting trees and community wood lots and practicing on-farm conservation activities.

364. Other projects including the GRASP and LifeWeb projects have also delivered some relatively small-scale (but nevertheless important and highly appreciated) environmental benefits, including protection of some of the most critical habitats for Great Apes and support for protection of community managed zones and certified logging concessions, and establishment of corridors between protected areas. However, there are only a few cases where such activities have influenced the higher policy making level (protection of mangrove areas in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua is a good example) which would make the results more sustainable, enhance opportunities for replication and improve prospects for impact.
365. Unsurprisingly, those projects which have been operating over several biennia (so started pre-2010) with long-running partnerships, e.g. TEEB, GRASP, Mau projects, have most evidence of results and are judged more likely to deliver impact over the longer term. This illustrates the point that impacts generally only become apparent in the long-term and suggests that many of the EMSP projects need to continue in order to reach impact.

Contribution to human well-being

366. The EMSP Objective is *'to ensure that countries utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being'*. The degree to which the EMSP has enhanced human well-being is not documented in most instances in EMSP projects or analysed by the PPRs, nor is linkage with 'enhanced human well-being' made clear in most project documents, and few project logframes contain any indicators relevant to human wellbeing (common measures could include individual and family income, social and health status). The Mau project has an indicator related to establishment of community nature-based businesses, which links to human well-being, but this is a rare example. Rather, there is a general assumption that since the UNEP ecosystems approach is an integrated strategy for managing land, water and living resources that recognizes the strong linkage between ecosystem services and human well-being, if a project promotes the ecosystem approach then 'human well-being' will be delivered as a consequence.
367. However, some projects did undertake relevant work that can be considered as making a contribution towards improved human well-being (economic, social, health status) at a local level, principally realised through enhancing the livelihoods of local communities, even if this wasn't properly captured in project logframes. The Mau project, for instance, is likely to improve human well-being indirectly through restoring the ecological health of the Mau Forest Complex, which will lead to improved local hydrology that should benefit both large-scale agricultural activities in the area and local small-scale farmers. Other community based initiatives that appear to have delivered some benefits to local communities include the LifeWeb project in Leuser NP in Sumatra, which, based on self-reporting, has helped establish and promote ecotourism, and the first gorilla tourism project managed by a community within the Nouabale Ndoki and Lossi Interzone in the Republic of Congo. More generally, the GRASP project has enhanced human well-being through improving protected area security and reducing the risk of violent crime at some of its target localities. Other examples include the Freshwater project which has directly supported communities in the Tana Basin (an area of high economic value) that have implemented ecosystem rehabilitation activities and started to see improved access to water for domestic and food production according to interviewees, and project activities at Lake Faguibine in Mali, a critical source of food, water and livelihoods, had started to improve the situation of local communities until the project was suspended due to civil conflict. However, whether these results are sustainable in the long-term is unclear (see section 4.4.2).

4.3.6. Other associated issues

Gender

⁸⁷ http://www.unep.org/Themes/freshwater/PDF/Factsheet_LakeFaguibine.pdf

368. There is little evidence that gender issues have been addressed to any significant extent within the EMSP. However, some projects have made an effort to encourage participation of women in their activities, including in capacity building workshops and identification of experts associated with drafting or review of publications, and there are examples of direct benefits to women through pilot projects particularly those involving community development elements, e.g. through the LifeWeb and GRASP projects. However, the benefits to women are not properly documented - gender-disaggregated data were not routinely collected or gender-specific analysis undertaken, and most reports on this are little more than anecdotal. Of the 10 case studies, only the Mau project had incorporated gender targets in results, although the Freshwater project has collected some gender-specific information. Opportunities were also lost in technical guidelines to expand on practical approaches to promote better gender equality. Overall, the EMSP was not able to demonstrate its contribution to promoting gender equality, which reflects the findings of the MTE of the MTS, the Formative Evaluation of the PoW 2010-2011 and the 2012 Review of Gender Mainstreaming in UNEP, and it is clear that specific attention needs to be paid to this issue within the Subprogramme.

Equity

369. The poor, particularly in rural communities, rely directly on ecosystem goods and services for their livelihoods and any decline in services disproportionately affects the world's most disadvantaged and vulnerable people. In addition, they often pay a comparatively high cost for their maintenance or see little benefit from their exploitation (in contrast with gains made by external investors). It is recognised that unless equity issues are addressed, effective and sustainable solutions to restoring and managing ecosystems will not be possible and present a barrier to sustainable development.
370. However, treatment of equity issues is a further weakness within the EMSP and represents a similar lost opportunity to engage key audiences, despite the importance of addressing equity being stated in many UNEP documents, including the MTS 2010-2013 and 2010-2011 Programme Framework, and promoted as integral to UNEP's principles and work. These documents stress that ecosystem management must not only be effective but also fair, ensuring that the benefits and costs of ecosystem management and restoration are shared equitably and contribute to improving local livelihoods and poverty reduction. Consequently, the EMSP was to examine the testing and incorporation of rights and equity approaches into national and international processes, including access and benefit sharing from bio-prospecting and payment for ecosystem services, and how communities could be rewarded or compensated for their ecosystem stewardship.
371. Although it was expected that all projects across the EMSP would consider equity issues (and report on these, with relevant disaggregated data), few have addressed the issue directly (acknowledged by interviewees), and there has been very limited reporting on equity issues within the Subprogramme. Equity was not identified as a major element within any of the 10 case study projects examined by the Evaluation, although some work on the bio-community protocol in the second biennium has led to production of guidelines and their testing under the LifeWeb project.
372. The principal activity set to address this issue under the EMSP was to be a set of actions dealing with support for the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing under PoW output 335⁸⁸. PIMS and the last PPR for 2012-2013 claim that national action plans to prepare for early ratification and implementation of the Protocol have been drafted in 19 countries and this is highlighted as a significant achievement. However, this PoW output had no specific project or activities associated with it during the 2010-2011 biennium and those reported for 2012-2013 appear to represent the results under a series of GEF projects, which, up to the end of 2013, had not been formally integrated into the PoW. In addition, the GEF activities were only at a very early stage of development, and plans cannot be said to have been 'drafted' in any advanced form. Thus this deliverable is considered misreported, possibly in an attempt to show that the EMSP had produced some results under PoW output 335 during the MTS 2010-2013. Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) is largely under the remit of DELC rather than DEPI and there appears to have been limited cross-divisional working on this topic, which may be another reason for poor attention to the issue. However, it should be noted that the Nagoya Protocol was only adopted in October 2010 and was not in force by the end of 2013⁸⁹, so there have been limited opportunities to deliver this EMSP project in the 2010-2013 period (although this should have been recorded in PIMS).

⁸⁸ 'Technical support is provided to countries to pilot test approaches and, if possible, operationalizing the protocol for access and benefit-sharing. (Target: six countries)'

⁸⁹ The Protocol only enters into force 90 days after the fiftieth instrument of ratification, and as of 25 April 2014, there were still only 31 ratifications, so the Protocol is still not in force in the early stages of the MTS 2014-2017.

Contribution to achieving UNEP's vision

373. UNEP's overall vision for the period 2010-2013 set out in the MTS 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'. It can be argued that much of the outreach, awareness-raising, and advocacy work within the EMSP, particularly through its flagship projects such as the TEEB, IPBES, LifeWeb and GRASP projects, has helped to promote UNEP's profile as a global environmental authority and to meet this higher organizational goal. For instance, the Subprogramme's protected areas projects associated with the LifeWeb project, have especially helped raise UNEP's profile in respect work on protected areas and a number of non-UNEP interviewees expressed the opinion that the IPBES and TEEB projects and UNEP's work with the Regional Seas programme had helped raise UNEP's credibility as a leader in addressing global environmental needs and a body that helps drive the global environmental agenda.

4.3.7. Efficiency

374. Judged on information from the 10 case studies, there was no strong indication that UNEP had systematically included significant cost-saving or time-saving measures during project design and/or implementation phases (not obvious in project documents). However, evidence suggests that UNEP project teams do typically make use of pre-existing systems, efforts and synergies, and many of the case study projects, such as the GRASP, TEEB, and Mau projects, built on successful experience or lessons learnt from prior projects or represent a scaling up of earlier successful activities, which helped promote cost-effectiveness and efficiency. Another factor responsible for the effectiveness and efficiency of the more successful EMSP projects has been the development and cultivation of strong partnerships (see section 5.4). Partners often have a better knowledge and understanding of the local situation than UNEP. UNEP's comparative advantage and mandate, e.g. wealth of past experience, leveraging expertise of partners, large-scale mobilisation of stakeholders including expert networks (an aspect of convening power), also promote efficiency. Internal UNEP structures, particularly the inter-divisional working groups, e.g. Water Working Group, have also helped to promote cost-effectiveness through seeking linkages and synergies.

375. It should be noted that there have been significant delays to some EMSP projects, especially in the 2010-2011 period, due to a variety of external and internal reasons, including political instability, civil conflict, institutional changes, insufficient funding and/or delayed funding (disbursement or allotment), lack of capacity by implementing partners, as well as delays due to UNEP's administrative processes and problems with project design with many projects requiring project extensions in order to complete their activities. These have inevitably meant higher staff and administrative costs and reduced the effectiveness and efficiency of the Subprogramme, and are a reflection that many projects were too ambitious in terms of design, scope and budget. For instance, the Freshwater project received very limited funding in the first biennium and some project activities had to be cut due to other factors (shown in approved project document supplements) with some elements suffering particularly, notably the work at Lake Fagubuine, Mali, which had to be suspended due to the civil conflict. Other projects especially affected by delays include the 'Making the Case' project and the Mangrove projects. Factors affecting the delivery and performance of the EMSP are discussed in more detail in Section 5. The various and widespread delays illustrate the point that a 4-year MTS (and a 2-year PoW) is usually not long enough to complete a successful project, as it can take 1-2 years just to get a project up and running, and this needs to be considered when planning future subprogrammes and projects.

376. The Programme framework indicates that there was to have been a dedicated EMSP learning project ('*Knowledge management, information sharing and learning*') project under output 316 in PoW 2010-2011) that would, presumably, have contributed to an understanding of efficiency and effectiveness across the Subprogramme, but this project was suspended and never developed.

4.4. Sustainability, replication and upscaling

4.4.1. Sustainability

377. Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived benefits and impacts after external project funding and assistance ends. The sustainability assessment examines the likelihood that results achieved so far will be sustained after UNEP assistance comes to an end as well as the factors affecting

sustainability, according to four standard categories: i) socio-political sustainability; ii) financial resources; iii) institutional sustainability; and iv) environmental sustainability.

378. The analysis of sustainability was hindered in part because only a small number of projects examined for this Evaluation have evaluative documentation in the form of progress reports, a mid-term review or final evaluation⁹⁰. This shortcoming is discussed further in the Monitoring and Evaluation section (section 5.5).

Socio-political sustainability

379. Like other UNEP Subprogrammes, the EMSP is largely orientated towards building capacity of national government agencies, which in most cases are the primary beneficiaries of UNEP's support and frequently the key executing partner. Indeed, many projects have been developed following direct requests from, or encouraged by, national governments. Consequently, national government ownership is usually high, which supports sustainability. However, as is the case for other Subprogrammes, UNEP's support through the EMSP is quite often narrowly focussed on one or a small number of government institutions and frequently depends on a relatively small number of key personnel within these institutions. This can constitute a risk to sustainability if the institution loses political support in the country, is restructured, or if key government staff are transferred or leave. Consequently, there is usually a need for long-term training/capacity building efforts (and a 'training of trainers' approach) to minimise this risk. In addition, although government support has generally been very good, such support requires political stability for sustainability of project results.
380. Participation and ownership by non-governmental stakeholders are also important supporting factors for socio-political sustainability. However, although many of the Subprogramme's protected area pilots and demonstrations have had strong civil society stakeholder involvement, which should increase ownership of results, sustainability of inputs by communities and civil society usually remains a concern, partly because UNEP does not have a strong presence at the local level and has to rely on local partner organisations to manage and deliver project activities at this scale and these groups usually have their own delivery and sustainability challenges. Generally, support has been highest (and potential for socio-political sustainability greatest) where local communities can see direct benefits from the UNEP project, such as those along the Tana River delivered under the Freshwater project. Ownership of UNEP initiatives by civil society at the global level where UNEP's reputation as a 'neutral broker' facilitates collaborative working between government and non-government is perhaps clearer, e.g. for the IPBES project, and the results are more likely to be sustainable. Assessment projects, notably the SGA (a component of the Capacity development for effective use of ecosystem and assessment in developing countries project) and elements of the TEEB project, have also had particularly strong stakeholder involvement, which should increase ownership of results.
381. Communication has played a particularly important role in facilitating ownership, and in some cases projects have had specific communication strategies that seek to disseminate project results as one route to sustainability. UNEP's IPBES team, for instance, employed a Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Officer, developed several communication and outreach strategies, ensured that all relevant documents were available from the IPBES website⁹¹, and organised 'Stakeholders' Days' in advance of IPBES Plenary meetings as opportunities for a wide range of interested organizations to receive updates on the IPBES process. The resulting high level of consultation and endorsement by stakeholder groups and four participating UN agencies during the 4-year negotiation phase made it more likely that IPBES would be widely adopted as a key forum for science-policy debate and an accepted source of information on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
382. However, based on evidence from the case studies, stakeholder analysis has been generally weak and/or absent at the project design/planning stage (less so for legacy projects where partnerships were already established and stakeholder groups known), and poorly presented in most EMSP project documentation examined. In some projects a detailed analysis, including stakeholder capacity and potential direct and indirect roles of partners in the intervention was only undertaken once the project had started and received funding (a reflection of lack of specific funding for stakeholder involvement at the project development phase). In many cases, sustainability lessons drawn from previous or on-going interventions were not explicitly stated and brought forward into the design of current activities.
383. Many projects set out to establish participatory project governance structures, such as project steering committees. In some cases these have been established, such as the appointment of national focal points in

⁹⁰ Of the 10 case studies examined in more detail only the TEEB project had an evaluation during the 2010-2013 period, although one is planned for the Mangrove project.

⁹¹ <http://www.ipbes.net/>

Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala for the Mangrove project, which helped to ensure continued national ownership and facilitated mainstreaming of project results into national level policy and planning processes. However, EMSP projects have often failed to implement the governance structures envisaged in project documents which has undermined the prospects for sustainability of results. UNEP now has guidelines on facilitating and demonstrating ownership of projects that need to be considered in the design stage (at least for national pilot projects), including the requirement for letters from countries, co-financing, and establishment of steering committees.

384. For many projects delivering local-level activities (mostly pilots and demonstrations), there is an acceptance that there needs to be additional or continued training/capacity building support to maintain stakeholder ownership due to the usually low existing capacity at the local level, such as through training on alternative income generating (livelihood) activities. In addition, equity, including access and benefit sharing are critical issues affecting sustainability, particularly at the local level, where it is important to demonstrate that the management of ecosystem services and ecosystem restoration benefits all sections of society. However, equity issues have not been adequately addressed through the EMSP (see paragraph 370) which does present a potential risk to socio-political sustainability, although a useful publication titled '*Community protocols for environmental sustainability: A guide for policy makers*'⁹² has been produced through UNEP which should help support future projects better address aspects of this issue.

Financial sustainability

385. Unsurprisingly, inadequate financial resources was highlighted as the main factor affecting sustainability among those projects examined by the Evaluation, and was identified as a risk in the Programme Frameworks. The need for adequate resource to translate policy, plans and capacity building measures undertaken by UNEP and its partners into action is identified as an assumption in the Subprogramme Theory of Change (see section 3.6). Some projects have relied very heavily on UNEP financial support and may not be sustainable after this funding finishes. Among the 10 case studies examined sustainability of the results of the Argentina project is considered the least likely if follow-up funding cannot be identified.
386. Long-term funding to address environmental issues at the national level is often lacking because many of the target countries where the EMSP operates have a weak financial resource base to start with, and the environment has, in most cases, not been a priority concern for the national government. This has been particularly the case for those countries emerging from conflicts such as DRC and Sierra Leone or which have suffered natural disasters such as Haiti. In addition, resource mobilisation has been challenging in the last few years because of the global economic and financial crisis, and many donors have changed their policies towards funding for environment. This challenge is illustrated by the difficulty in raising funds for some of the key EMSP projects during the first biennium of the MTS (see section 5.3.2), and financing to ensure sustainability of Subprogramme results has been an issue for even the most successful projects during the MTS 2010-2013, e.g. IPBES project.
387. However, despite the difficulties, there are some positive signs of increasing private sector funding, notably for initiatives that involve the development, testing or use of Payment for Ecosystem Services and other potential economic tools and market-based approaches, although these are only just being explored through the EMSP (see section 4.3.4).
388. Some projects have set up revolving funds and/or have sought financial sustainability through generating finance themselves through community level income generation and enhanced alternative livelihood schemes, e.g. beekeeping and nature-based tourism. However, this model is not widespread among EMSP projects and has high capacity building needs.
389. In addition, there is a concern about the impact these schemes may have on those involved if they do not become financially sustainable. Investments made through local-level project activities may be a relatively small part of a project's budget but they can be highly significant for local communities. If local alternative livelihood schemes fail and locals (individuals, groups) lose out financially it can have a very significant negative impact on lives as well as damaging trust and the reputation of UNEP. Whilst there is no direct evidence of such a situation in the current EMSP projects (although for many it is still too soon to judge), UNEP needs to be aware that it has a responsibility to ensure that it commits sufficient resources to ensure that such local schemes can become sustainable. Unfortunately, the short UNEP project cycle works against these types of activities that

⁹² http://www.unep.org/delc/Portals/119/publications/Community_Protocols_Guide_Policymakers.pdf

usually require a much longer period to become sustainable. It should also be noted that such pilot or demonstration activities may be considered successful globally based on early (2-4 year) results but can only be considered successful locally if the results are sustained and this should be acknowledged in UNEP reporting.

390. The general feeling among project managers was that a minimum level of financing is needed to attain sustainability of project results. Linking pilot and demonstration work to larger projects (e.g. GEF projects) or established processes could also help improve the likelihood for financial (and institutional) sustainability and also increase the opportunity for replication of results.

Institutional Sustainability

391. This dimension of sustainability relates to institutional frameworks and capacity required to sustain results, but also concerns policies and legislation. Unfortunately, efforts to strengthen these often require a considerable period of time, and many of the countries targeted through the EMSP will need continued support from UNEP or partners for some years.
392. Much of the effort within the EMSP to build institutional sustainability has centred on building managerial and technical capacity for ecosystem management, especially through demonstration projects and linked training activities. However, the often high staff turnover among government agencies presents a risk to sustainability and necessitates a certain minimal level of continued capacity building. The lack of an overall strategy to ensure a coherent approach to capacity building (not reliant on one-off training events) for the Subprogramme reduces the chances of institutional sustainability. The Evaluation found that the Regional Offices particularly recognise the need for this as they play an active role in ensuring sustainability of projects through monitoring, supporting resource mobilisation, and follow-up. ROs work directly with countries and partners, and there is a clear need for ROs to become more actively engaged during design and implementation and have greater decision-making authority within this (and other) Subprogrammes to improve the likelihood of sustainability of UNEP results. The recent organisational changes to strengthen UNEP's regional focus (see paragraphs 488 to 494) will result in increased resources and personnel at the RO level that should help address these issues.
393. Of the institutional structures catalysed or created through the EMSP, IPBES can be considered sustainable as the Platform has now been formally established and endorsed by numerous governments. Also, UNEP co-hosts the GRASP Secretariat (with UNESCO) which can be considered institutionally sustainable, at least for the medium-term.
394. In addition, the EMSP's development and promotion of various knowledge networks to encourage information exchange, peer learning, and the transfer of experience on ecosystem management and restoration support the prospects for institutional sustainability. Of particular note here is the SGA network. Evidence in PIMS and evaluation interviews suggests this is now in place and enhancing partnerships and knowledge sharing. The establishment of the IPBES should also provide an important knowledge networking mechanism (although there are concerns about its long-term financial sustainability). Also, linkage to UNEP-supported networks associated with other subprogrammes, such as the adaptation and REDD+ (both of which employ ecosystem-based approaches) networks under the Climate Change Subprogramme, would help increase prospects for sustainability (as well as impact and replication) of EMSP results.
395. UNEP has also expanded the knowledge base on ecosystem management through a significant number of key reports and guidelines. Many of the tools developed or assessments undertaken by the EMSP projects have been captured in reports and publications that are available for download to other institutions involved in capacity building for ecosystem management e.g. Capacity and Development in Sustainable Water Management (Cap-Net)⁹³ for water resources, which supports sustainability and replication of project results, although in some instances, it is unclear who should promote these knowledge products (projects usually lack a clear replication strategy/framework) and there is a risk that they will not be as widely disseminated and adopted as they should be. EMSP projects do not generally have a specific replication strategy.
396. Building strong institutional partnerships (see section 5.4) is seen as particularly important for sustainability of Subprogramme results, especially where there is a shortfall of funding. Those with partners with a well-established presence, commitment and expertise in an area (place or theme) and on-going activities with continuing resource mobilisation have generally led to more effective delivery and better prospects for follow on, and consequently for sustainability. Similarly, projects that involve institutions that have a long-history of partnership with UNEP, such as the GRASP project, have tended to deliver greater and more sustainable results.

⁹³ <http://www.cap-net.org/>

Sustainability for the Mayombe project, for instance, is considered promising as the project builds on establishing a long-lasting partnership dedicated to manage the transboundary areas (of Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo and Angola) sustainably, has a strong focus on national stakeholder involvement, and efforts to enhance protected area management were built on on-going efforts of the partner organizations with good experience in this area. Similarly, sustainability of the efforts at Mau Forest, Kenya, is promoted by high government buy-in, establishment of the Kenya Water Towers Agency, drafting of forest by-laws, as well as the commitment of local partners, specifically the cooperative societies.

397. Many of the EMSP project outputs involve the production and promotion of policy guidelines, handbooks and other documents for use by governments and other decision-makers, and so are largely normative in nature. Once these are mainstreamed into relevant policies, plans, and legislation, a certain degree of 'sustainability' can be said to have been achieved although their implementation is up to the government (or partner), which is outside of UNEP's direct control. For instance, the NBSAPs are viewed as vehicles for mainstreaming TEEB results and a number have already incorporated information and recommendations from TEEB Country Studies (see paragraph 335). TEEB results can facilitate the delivery of CBD's Aichi Targets (see paragraph 359), making them more likely to be taken up. Similarly, much of the work under the ICM project has been normative in nature, and the opportunity for uptake of project results is being realised through the Regional Seas platform through training and ongoing influence of norms at regional and global level.

General comments and constraints on sustainability

398. Based on a review of the 10 case studies, sustainability does not appear to have been considered to any significant extent in EMSP project documents (although the issue is often raised in PRC reports) and projects generally lack 'exit strategies'. Indeed some projects in the portfolio are essentially 'rolling projects', and there is often significant external demand (and expectation) for UNEP to continue a project if it has been successful. UNEP needs to be careful not to generate expectations or create (UNEP) dependency.
399. For projects with field components including pilot or demonstration activities, such as the Lifeweb, GRASP, and Freshwater projects, prospects for sustainability are quite varied depending on the demonstration component (subproject). However, many of the site projects were delivered as part of longer-running programmes by executing partners (mostly regional and national NGOs) who have a longer-term commitment to the area and well-established relationships and networks (particularly the case in the GRASP and LifeWeb projects). In this context UNEP's support has provided a boost to ongoing work but it was not necessarily designed with an exit strategy in view. Many of the individual activities have potentially longer-term effects, including training, community level development (e.g. ecotourism), and institutional strengthening (e.g. development of new management protocols or plans), but these gains are likely to be fragile where there are not yet local partners to take on recurrent costs (such as replacement of equipment or purchase of fuel).
400. In some cases UNEP's work was undertaken in areas where sustainability has been compromised by civil conflict (notably activities at Lake Faguibine, in Mali) or political instability (such as the Mayombe project due to the political situation in Central Africa).
401. A number of project managers also felt that sustainability is compromised because planning periods are too short for most projects – it is very difficult to achieve sustainability within the 2-year PoW cycle or even the 4-year MTS cycle (especially for field projects) given the time required for project inception and the usually limited funding available at the start of the programme cycle. Consequently, significant results may not be delivered until the second biennium and there has been a tendency to seek a project extension or restructure the project as a new project for the next MTS to ensure continuity and sustainability of project results.
402. In some cases, UNEP's continued presence, involvement and continued backing and support are seen as important for sustainability as funding. This is particularly the case for the GRASP project where there is a feeling that the GRASP Secretariat needs to be chaired by a UN agency and UNEP is seen as having an advantage here as no other global institution has the same combination of mandate and comparative advantages needed to ensure the continued international pressure and support necessary to save the Great Apes which is seen as requiring a long-term effort.

4.4.2. Replication, up-scaling and catalysis

Replication and up-scaling

403. Replication and up-scaling of UNEP's direct results is considered essential to support change at a larger scale, beyond the relatively few partner countries and demonstration sites. Replication is often defined as lessons, experiences, demonstrations, techniques, or approaches coming out of a project that are repeated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects. Replication can have two aspects, replication proper (lessons and experiences are replicated in different geographic area) or scaling up (lessons and experiences are replicated within the same geographic area but funded by other sources). Replication and up-scaling of UNEP's direct results are considered essential to drive change beyond the relatively small number of partner countries and organisations and pilot and demonstration sites involved in EMSP projects.
404. Although some projects did produce their own dedicated communication/outreach strategy or plan that promoted replication and up-scaling of project results, many EMSP projects did not appear to have a coherent strategy for replication and up-scaling of results for the 2010-2013 period, and these aspects were usually only briefly mentioned in project documents. Also, there was no overall replication strategy or communications plan for the Subprogramme as a whole. As a result there has been a rather scattered, *ad hoc* approach to replication and up-scaling of EMSP results. Promotion of the various ecosystem management tools and methodologies produced through the EMSP (under EA(b)) at the national and international level and to the wider environment and development communities can be viewed as a part of a 'strategy' to promote replication and up-scaling.
405. The Evaluation found evidence of good uptake of ecosystem management tools and approaches delivered through the EMSP (although this has not been systematically recorded), such as promotion and training on tools and products produced by the ICM project through Regional Seas initiatives and development of training modules on aspects of ecosystem management e.g. through LifeWeb and GRASP projects, which should create a multiplier effect especially where a 'training of the trainer' approach has been adopted. However, there is little evidence of follow-up training and there are limits to what can be achieved through training workshops with issues of staff turnover for instance.
406. Many of the EMSP's mainstreaming and enabling activities, normative work and guidelines delivered through EA(a) and EA(c) can also be seen as part of the up-scaling 'strategy', although there have been few visible results to date as these processes generally require longer than a 4-year MTS period. Perhaps the best example is the TEEB project, where several global, regional, national, local and business sector assessments have been undertaken by others based on the TEEB model. For instance, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development produced a Corporate Ecosystems Valuation Guide in 2011, which includes TEEB recommendations and case studies of companies that have 'road-tested' the approach, and an independent 'TEEB for Business Coalition'⁹⁴ has been launched in the UK, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has embarked on an 'Economics of Land Degradation' initiative that is drawing on the TEEB project's experience. Replication has also been enabled by the development of networks and partnerships that enhance uptake of EMSP results and knowledge sharing.
407. Replication in other countries is a key aim of most EMSP pilot projects but has not yet taken place to any significant extent. Replication could have been improved if pilot and demonstration work had been linked to larger projects (e.g. GEF projects) or established processes (e.g. Regional Seas), but there were few obvious examples where these appeared to have been pursued among the case study projects, and the Evaluation generally found little evidence of replication of EMSP products by other partners (government agencies, civil society, international organisations etc.) beyond expressions of interest. In general, the pilot projects seemed to be mainly focused on delivery of outputs and few resources and little time were allocated to the actual communication and promotion of results. These weaknesses have been recognized and according to some interviewees UNEP is now encouraging projects to give more attention to replication and up-scaling with increasing pressure for project managers to build them into their work.

Catalysis

408. Catalysis can be said to occur in cases where UNEP activities have stimulated others to undertake complementary activities in line with UNEP's aims and results. The EMSP has played an important catalytic role through providing assistance to some countries to accede to key multilateral environmental agreements, and fulfil obligations under the conventions. This particularly relates to the Nagoya Protocol (under PoW output 335) and support for the revision of NBSAPs which help meet obligations under the CBD. The Regional Offices have played a particularly important support role here and the need for this service is likely to increase.

⁹⁴ TEEB for Business Coalition, recently rebranded as the Natural Capital Coalition (see <http://www.naturalcapitalcoalition.org>).

409. However, broader catalytic effects at the national level are considered to have been limited due to UNEP's generally weak country presence and underdeveloped operational partnerships with other UN agencies (see section 5.4), although there are examples of new local institutions having been catalysed through the influence of some EMSP projects. For instance, the National Steering Committees established through the Mangrove project are reported to have brought about change beyond the original scope of the project such as the creation of a Fisheries Board in Bluefields, Nicaragua.
410. In addition, PoW outputs 321 and 322 in the PoW 2012-2013 highlight the uptake of EMSP tools and methods catalysed through other UN agencies. However, based on evaluation interviews, it is not clear to what extent there has been such uptake among the 10 case study projects UNEP may want to survey the use of its EMSP products and services by other UN Agencies and develop a clearer strategy for how these tools should be 'catalysed' by other UN agencies (each project needs to consider this in its own partnership strategy).
411. In general, projects are not well designed to keep track of replication and catalysis of project results – there is a lack of milestones and indicators to measure up-take/replication/catalysis and it is frequently absent in project logframes. Replication and catalysis may be occurring more often than thought but as it is not being tracked and reported effectively this does not show up, unless the project is particularly visible (e.g. TEEB) or if the project manager follows up. Additionally, part of the difficulty is that replication and catalysis often take place after a project has ended so there is no opportunity to measure it through the project, unless projects have follow-on phase, in which case replication and catalysis activities should be actively pursued and monitored. For projects that are discontinued, post-project monitoring and reporting of results would best be addressed at a programmatic level. In some cases dedicated funding may be required. Another related issue is that even if replication is presented as important in the main text of the project document it is usually absent from the work plan. There are often no specific activities to promote replication/ catalysis, and it is not clear who replication/catalysis is aimed at. There seems to be a general assumption in project designs that project results will be replicated or will catalyse action automatically at the end of the project without any specific activities.
412. Overall, there are a few examples of replication, up-scaling and catalysis, and these are principally of ecosystem management tools and methodologies through the project-level technical outputs (manuals, guidelines etc.), trainings and dissemination events, with further potential through mainstreaming and enabling activities. However, although there are some encouraging signs of further interest, in most cases concrete results still have to be seen from the EMSP.

Role of partnerships and networks in replication and catalysis

413. Partnerships and networks, especially where there is high stakeholder ownership of a project, have played a key role in facilitating replication, up-scaling and catalysis of UNEP results, particularly in relation to knowledge-sharing and capacity building for ecosystem management. The EMSP has helped support the Sub-global Assessment Network⁹⁵, for instance, which seeks to create a common platform for practitioners (individuals and organizations) involved in ecosystem assessment at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels, which will facilitate replication and up-scaling.
414. Other UN agencies, notably UNDP, are often identified as key partners in project and Subprogramme documents (e.g. Programme Framework for 2010-2011) or joint UN-related frameworks and processes, e.g. UNDAFs, and there is an expectation that they will integrate UNEP's results into their own approaches and work, thus helping to promote replication of EMSP results. Indeed, PoW outputs 321 and 322 in the PoW 2012-2013¹ highlight the uptake of EMSP tools and methods catalysed through other UN agencies. However, based on evaluation interviews, it is not clear to what extent there has been such uptake among the 10 case study projects (the ICM fell under output 321 and had links to the Regional Seas programme). Despite formal collaborative technical agreements with some other UN agencies, e.g. UNDP and UNESCO both of which have significant biodiversity and ecosystem service work programmes themselves, some interviewees were largely unaware of the EMSP or its results and different agencies appear to be pursuing different approaches on tools and methodologies (on assigning value to ecosystem services, for instance) with little interaction or sharing. There is certainly no sense of a 'community of practice' on ecosystem management among UN agencies or involving other key partners. It is clear that that there is room for improvement with regard to uptake of UNEP tools and approaches for ecosystem management by other UN bodies, and UNEP may want to survey the use of its EMSP products and services by other UN Agencies and develop a clearer strategy for how these tools should be 'catalysed' by other UN agencies (each project needs to consider this in its own partnership strategy).

⁹⁵ <http://www.ecosystemassessments.net/>

415. Some opportunities and routes for replication and up-scaling through partners were missed. For instance, DEPI's Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU), has been little involved with dissemination of EMSP project results, even though it works with an extensive and well-established global network of universities which could have been used to promote UNEP's analyses/materials/results more and to new relevant audiences. Higher education institutions and networks are an important audience that is not sufficiently recognized within UNEP, comprising future decision-makers at a critical point of their education (government decision-makers generally tend to have a university education) and there is interest in integrating UNEP results and products into university curricula (with significant interest from some universities in China, for instance).
416. As has been noted previously, many of the EMSP projects examined had poor websites that were infrequently updated, which gives a poor impression of the project to partners and stakeholders (see section 4.3.4). This does not encourage and support replication or catalysis of project results.

4.5. EM portfolio contribution to MEAs

417. UNEP has partnership arrangements with many MEAs and other inter-governmental processes, and provides secretariat services for several of the main biodiversity-related MEAs (CBD, CITES and CMS). The EMSP has responded to some of the priorities of the biodiversity-related MEAs and made a significant contribution to helping the MEAs achieve their aims. Most of UNEP's work in relation to the global MEAs is undertaken through the EGSP rather than through the EMSP, although there have been substantial interactions between individual EMSP projects and UNEP's partnerships with the global-scale biodiversity-related MEAs.
418. Support from the UNEP MEA Focal Points located in UNEP Regional Offices, usually out-posted DELC staff, has been particularly praised by the MEAs as providing a very important service on their behalf. The Focal Points work with governments and the MEA Secretariats in order to strengthen capacity of the countries to implement the decisions of the MEAs, e.g. to revise/establish NBSAPs as well as thematic and substantive work on MEA programmes, and been highly relevant to the EMSP's aim to encourage adoption of the ecosystem approach. MEA partners generally see the benefits of the partnership with UNEP and are supportive of its projects.

CBD

419. EMSP projects have helped address several CBD Decisions⁹⁶, particularly in relation to mainstreaming the ecosystem management into national level policies and practices, including the economic and financial sectors, and the implementation of the Strategic Plan and several Aichi targets. There has been successful collaboration on updating NBSAPs with the TEEB project, through the TEEB Country Studies, and biodiversity indicators work of the EMSP making an important contribution. Joint capacity building workshops with CBD have been organised in several countries, some on a regional basis involving participants from up to 25 countries. Also singled out as making significant contribution is UNEP's policy work on marine issues and work on forests, protected areas and climate change thematic areas, for which CBD has specific programmes of work. The LifeWeb project has also supported the larger CBD LifeWeb Initiative⁹⁷, although collaboration was relatively weak. The EMSP has also aimed to address the third goal of the CBD – 'fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources' through one PoW output⁹⁸ that focuses on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), which benefits the aims of the Nagoya Protocol although little tangible has been achieved to date in this area (see section 4.3.7).
420. The EMSP has also helped developed tools to identify Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA)⁹⁹ and provided capacity building workshops and technical support (requested by countries) to help designate these sites through its 'Biodiversity and ecosystem Functioning' project (32.P4). This is being followed up by joint DELC/DEPI discussions on how best to put in place a governance process for the EPSA sites.
421. The EMSP is judged as the UNEP Subprogramme most able to deliver on the CBD Strategic Plan and particularly the Aichi Targets, but a specific criticism voiced during two interviews was that the EMSP, and UNEP generally, has not given enough attention to these over the last four years, even though both the Plan and the Targets are recognised in decisions and resolutions of all the other major biodiversity-related MEAs acknowledged by the

⁹⁶ For instance, CBD Decision X/5 covers implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan during the 2011-2020 period, highlights the need for increased support to Parties, especially for least developed countries, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and economies in transition, to strengthen capacity for the implementation of the objectives of the Convention.

⁹⁷ <http://lifeweb.cbd.int/>

⁹⁸ 335: Technical support is provided to countries to pilot test approaches and, if possible, operationalizing the protocol for access and benefit-sharing.

⁹⁹ <http://www.cbd.int/ebsa/>

UN General Assembly. It was noted by interviewees that other UN agencies are increasing their focus on the delivery of the Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets and the comment was made that UNEP is falling behind on this. The relatively limited reference to the Strategic Plan and Aichi targets during the 2010-2013 period in the EMSP, which is partly due to UNEP's very long planning process that makes it difficult to incorporate new, emerging issues (see paragraph 445). The planning work leading to the MTS 2010-2013 period had many key aspects 'locked in' by decisions taken in 2008-2009. Although CBD pressed for inclusion of the Aichi Targets in UNEP's MTS 2014-2017 and they are included, there has been little on the UNEP website about the Strategic Plan or the Aichi Targets, UNEP's work to address them, or even links with CBD (although this may be more a reflection of poor updating of its website (see section 4.3.4), and there was an external perception of a lack of alignment and coherence on messages between UNEP and UN partners in relation to the Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets.

Other MEAs

422. There has been less direct collaboration between the EMSP and the other UNEP-hosted MEAs. Cooperation with CITES has centered on wildlife trade issues, although most of this has been managed by DELC under the EGSP rather than EMSP, and CITES contributed to the TEEB for Business Report. However, EMSP projects are also recognised as benefiting CITES indirectly. IPBES and TEEB, for instance, give prominence to and encourage the use of science-based evidence in policy-making. This is key to CITES work as sustainable trade levels of plant and animal species need to be based on accurate counts, and if the scientific data are not given sufficient attention and are of poor quality then quotas are likely to be miscalculated and populations will decline.
423. There has also been little engagement with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) through EMSP projects (although not surprising as CMS has a species rather than ecosystem focus). UNEP's Regional Office for North America (RONA) used EMSP funding to support efforts to address marine litter issues, principally with the CMS Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) and jointly with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the GPA, and the GRASP project has supported implementation of the CMS Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats (Gorilla agreement).
424. There has been collaboration with other biodiversity-related MEAs over the 2010-2013 period through various task forces that EMSP projects have participated in, including a UN Water Task Force on Water Resources Management and Waste-water Quality in which Ramsar is represented (also CBD). UNEP has collaborated with the Ramsar Bureau and CBD on development of the environment chapter of the UN World Water Development Reports through input from the EMSP Freshwater project, and with Ramsar through the development of the TEEB for Water and Wetlands report. UNEP's Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) office has also cooperated with the Ramsar Bureau to support designation of wetlands of international importance at national level in Central America. UNEP has also supported Iraq's application to the World Heritage Convention through the EMSP's Iraq Marshlands Project (Iraq has sought to apply for World Heritage Status for its southern wetlands).
425. It appears likely that there is more collaboration at the national level with various biodiversity-related MEAs than is being reported on and recognised within UNEP. This may in part be a reflection of under reporting (there is no specific section in PIMS for detailing results with relevance to the MEAs) and it is recommended that UNEP give greater attention to covering these in its reporting and public information materials e.g. PIMS, Annual Reports, PPRs website, etc.
426. Some individual EMSP projects have made contributions to the priorities of several MEAs. For instance, all the major biodiversity-related MEAs (CBD, CITES, CMS, Ramsar, WHC, ITPGRFA and UNCCD) are seen as an important user group for IPBES and have been strongly engaged in the development of the Platform and been supportive of the process and product despite some initial reservations over duplication of effort. All have discussed synergies and linkages with IPBES, and suggested ways in which the IPBES could support specific areas of interest to the MEAs. For instance, the CBD has suggested that IPBES could contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for 2015 and 2020 and provided information for policy options to deliver the 2050 Vision of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. Similarly, the CMS has expressed an interest in activities related to migratory species, and Ramsar on wetlands, and the proposed IPBES thematic report on land degradation and restoration is highly relevant to the mission of UNCCD.
427. Overall, the linkages and engagement between the EMSP and biodiversity-related MEAs over the 2010-2013 period have not been as strong as would be expected. There has been no formal analysis of potential links between the EMSP and the MEAs and mapping of individual EMSP project contributions to MEA priorities was not conducted during the MTS 2010-2013. The Governing Council has requested UNEP to look at synergies with

the MEAs at global and national levels and develop a more coherent approach to partnership and a project to map such linkages is being undertaken by DELC. Together these will hopefully identify ways in which UNEP can partner with the MEAs to better support future implementation of the Programme of Work of the MEAs. In the meantime, improving reporting on linkages with relevant MEAs and how individual projects can help meet Aichi Targets as part of their 6-monthly reporting commitments would help focus more attention on this issue¹⁰⁰.

Regional Seas

428. UNEP provides important support for the Regional Seas Secretariats (of which six are hosted by UNEP) and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), both of which have significant country ownership and are associated with independent intergovernmental processes, and UNEP provides input to the UNGA-mandated Regular Process (now the UN World Ocean Assessment (WOA)¹⁰¹). Each of these have their own processes that generate demands and expectations for UNEP support, but have also been extremely important for the delivery of the EMSP.
429. UNEP has been involved in the organisation of several region-specific meetings and training courses relevant to the Regional Seas Programme under the EMSP, and in consultations related to global outputs, such as establishment of a regional seas coral partnership. In addition the ICM project was intended to support implementation of the GPA and the Regional Seas Programme.
430. Some interviewees expressed concerns over the ability of the EMSP (and other subprogrammes) to accommodate the expectations and emerging needs of key constituencies whose work UNEP is mandated to facilitate. Specifically the PoW approach failed to provide a vehicle to respond in a timely manner to the priorities and emerging needs expressed in decisions and approved work programmes of intergovernmental processes such as the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment¹⁰², the GPA and the Regional Seas Programme. However, lessons have been learned with regard to timely identification of priority issues - for instance, UNEP was able to anticipate and respond to GPA decisions on establishment of two global partnerships in October 2013 through two PoW outputs for 2014-2015 including one under EMSP.

¹⁰⁰ The draft revised UNEP project document template from September 2014 requires description of a project's relevance to MEAs, as well as description of 'any potential impacts or opportunities that could result from this project related to the development, implementation and advancement of environmental governance, laws and regulations – including MEAs'.

¹⁰¹ UN World Ocean Assessment - Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment Including Socioeconomic Aspects. www.worldoceanassessment.org

¹⁰² <http://www.unep.org/roa/amcen/>

5. Processes and Issues Affecting Subprogramme Performance

5.1. Design and Structure

5.1.1. Design Process

431. UNEP's MTS 2010-2013 was prepared in response to a Governing Council decision of 2007. The Strategic Framework with EAs and indicators for 2010-2011 was presented to the UN General Assembly in 2008 while the Strategic Framework for 2012-2013 was presented in 2010. The EMSP Framework was developed in 2009 and approved internally within the UNEP Secretariat in February 2009. The Mid-term Evaluation of the MTS 2010-2013 highlighted the importance placed on external consultations during the design of the MTS 2010-2013; a process that is associated with broad and ambitious definition of the EAs across all subprogrammes. In contrast, the six subprogramme sections of biennial PoWs were led by the lead Divisions for those subprogrammes and associated with stronger internal consultations.
432. There is little documentary evidence of stakeholder input to the development of the overall EMSP. However, it is understood that each Division hosted a retreat with the participation of outside stakeholders (including MEAs and NGOs) as part of the MTS 2010-2013 development process, and the CPR was kept informed on the approach and priorities. This process took around 12 months and was considered rushed and unsatisfactory by some interviewees. In contrast, consultation with long-term partners and stakeholders over the development of the MTS 2014-2017 and PoW 2014-2015 has been much improved with external partners, although the degree to which comments and recommendations were incorporated into the new frameworks was said to be very variable. For instance, ROs in particular reported that they received limited feedback on the way in which their comments were incorporated (Paragraph 489).
433. The issue of an extended lead time for programming is an ongoing issue with PoW outputs and indicators having been defined for the period 2016-2017 by early 2014, before any lessons could be learned from implementation of the PoW 2014-2015. The lead time for planning and programme approval also limits the extent to which the MTS and PoW are able to accommodate emerging issues.
434. There was some scepticism amongst interviewees regarding the original identification of this Subprogramme which has been described as a 'parking ground' or a 'catch-all' designed to accommodate DEPI's ongoing and planned work. This can be seen as strategic or at least pragmatic in that it built on UNEP's strengths and capabilities (Paragraph 444). However the resulting Subprogramme can also be characterised as supply driven in that it largely adopted approaches and themes on which UNEP was already working.

5.1.2. EMSP Structure

435. Weaknesses in the EMSP structure and associated difficulties in reporting (Paragraph 580) have been reported in previous evaluations and have been widely acknowledged in the management responses to evaluations (Annex 3). The following paragraphs set out the findings of this Evaluation related to the EMSP structure, building on the analysis in Section 3.6 of this report.
436. Structural issues highlighted in the Section 3.6 include the definitional overlap amongst the EAs, the broad scope and lack of focus of the EAs which refer to delivery mechanisms rather than environmental challenges, and the ambitious nature of the EAs which are phrased as outcomes that are beyond UNEP's immediate control and ability to deliver (Paragraphs 198). The difficulties in developing a coherent structure can be traced back to the multiple entry points to ecosystem management illustrated in the EMSP concept document (Paragraph 152) and as well as the essential nature of ecosystem management as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.
437. There have been several attempts to frame a more logical structure to the Subprogramme since the EAs were approved:
- EAs have been sometimes represented as sequential or hierarchical in nature, mapping on to the operational steps set out in the programme concept document (Paragraph 155) and 2010-2011 Programme Framework. The June 2011 PPR states that EA(c), characterised as 'mainstreaming', should result from delivery of EA(a), characterised as 'making the case', and EA(b), 'tools and methodology'. However this understanding of the nature and relationship between the EAs is inconsistent with the subprogramme outputs and projects.

- An early review of the EMSP Framework by the QAS in 2009¹⁰³ points to strong similarities between EA(a) and EA(c), both of which are concerned with mainstreaming ecosystem management at national level. This is echoed in a September 2012 presentation to the SPC that reports EA(a) and (c) highlights, challenges and achievements under a single heading (with EA(b) treated separately).
- The 2010-2011 Programme Framework document organised the fourteen EMSP projects under two components and attempted to map these onto the operational steps.
- The fourteen projects were categorised under three themes that cut across the EAs and operational steps in an EMSP factsheet, namely: 'making the case', 'restoration and management', and 'development and investment'.

438. The lack of a clear causal logic for the subprogramme makes it hard to understand, and partly explains the view of many UNEP staff interviewees and external stakeholders that the subprogramme lacks coherence. Interviewees remarked that there is no 'clear story line' to the subprogramme, which makes it difficult to understand and communicate, and that it is not clear what the subprogramme is trying to achieve or how this will be accomplished. Several interviewees suggested that the EMSP could encompass UNEP's entire work programme.
439. At a practical level the EAs are frequently characterised as 'accommodating' and have failed to provide an adequate framework for focussing the work delivered under the EMSP (Paragraph 197). Strategies to accomplish the different EAs are often similar and results of individual projects could and indeed have been reported against several EAs even if they are primarily aligned with just one output for administrative and reporting purposes (See also Paragraphs 197, 501 & 589).
440. The EMSP outputs for 2010-2011 were often very specific and describe a set of interventions that illustrate different aspects of the strategy described in the PoW 2010-2011 (see section 3.3) rather than a coherent set of actions that is necessary and sufficient to accomplish the subprogramme EAs. Outputs for 2012 to 2013 are fewer in number and can be more directly related to the EAs as specified by the revised indicators (Section 3.4.3). Many of the EMSP outputs in both biennia are phrased as outcomes and there is frequently a mismatch between measures at EA, output and project level (Paragraph 455).
441. Lessons have clearly been learned from this first cycle of the EMSP and the articulation of the EAs for the MTS 2014-2017 and the PoW 2014-2015 shows a substantial difference with that for the MTS 2010-2013. Key changes in the EAs in the new MTS include a higher degree of mutual exclusivity and clearer linkages between outputs and the associated EAs (Section 3.4.2/ Paragraph 169).

5.1.3. Project Portfolio

442. Projects are described in the Programme Manual as the operational vehicle for implementing UNEP's PoW and are defined as 'a planned set of coordinated and interlinked activities to deliver agreed outputs over a fixed time period and within certain cost and other limitations'.
443. The principal mechanism for delivery of the EMSP has been UNEP PoW projects (Section 3.4.1). The portfolio for 2010-2011 was originally defined through a set of 14 project concepts defined by and annexed to the EMSP Framework (Paragraph 243) that were identified and drafted through an internal consultative process. Each of the projects is indicated as contributing to one or more PoW outputs but the causal logic between project outputs and higher level results is not always clear.
444. The development of the original project concepts in the EMSP framework was pragmatic reflecting ongoing work and interests. The rationale for this was twofold: i) that delivery of the PoW should build on UNEP's strengths and established comparative advantage and ii) the programme should accommodate the ongoing work of DEPI. The antecedents of the programme are evident in the EAs for the period 2008-2009 and in several long-running UNEP programmes. At the same time it was recognised amongst senior management that it would probably take more than two to four years to fully implement the matrix approach and associated programming and organisational changes.
445. There was a deliberate effort to limit the number of projects and this resulted in many of the original project ideas being combined on the basis of the output to which they best contributed, creating a set of 'umbrella' projects. In many cases the 'umbrella' projects have little real coherence in that individual components were both programmatically and operationally independent (to be managed by different units over different timeframes, with differing funding sources and prospects). In some cases the overarching project logic is weak

¹⁰³ QAS Review of Programme Frameworks, prior to PAG.

or forced and the link between project outputs (services and products) and project outcomes¹⁰⁴ is poorly articulated.

446. In practice, there is only a limited correspondence between the designed EMSP portfolio described in the Programme Framework and extension and the actual project portfolio (Paragraph 244). It is not always easy to map approved project documents to the project concepts in the Programme Framework and approved project documents do not explicitly state which project concept they are delivering. It is uncertain whether project review and quality assurance mechanisms actually verified whether EMSP projects were in line with the approved project concepts. Some project activities were also undertaken at the specific request of countries. For instance, guidelines on water quality were developed following a call by UNEP's Governing Council (previously such guidance was lacking) and in this sense the project has responded to country needs.
447. The portfolio review as well as the case studies undertaken for this Evaluation suggest that work across the EAs and outputs has been unevenly funded in terms of i) the level of funding allocated to projects under different outputs and EAs (Paragraph 251) and ii) the level and timing of funding allocated to different components of 'umbrella' projects.
448. One effect of uneven funding is that strategic projects in the EMSP Framework such as the MTC project that was to underpin delivery in other areas, and the 'knowledge management, information sharing and learning' project¹⁰⁵ that could have reinforced the programmatic dimension of the EMSP, were underfunded particularly in the first reporting biennium.
449. There was a substantial portfolio of ongoing work that was somewhat related to the EMSP and project managers were asked to retrofit this work so that it was aligned to the PoW (Paragraph 245). Similarly the late start and/ or extended duration (Paragraph 463) of the EMSP projects means that 23 projects that started or were ongoing in the 2010-2011 biennium were carried over to 2012-2013 (Paragraph 247). Projects that were carried over to the second biennium were required to produce a project document supplement demonstrating their realignment to the new PoW outputs. This generated an 'avalanche' of project revisions requiring attention by QAS and the PRC and adding to the backlog of project approvals (Paragraph 465). Realignment supplements related to the PoW 2012-2013 outputs were sometimes approved only in late 2012 or early 2013.
450. Many, but not all, projects spanning biennia were aligned to a different EA in 2012-2013 than in 2010-2011¹⁰⁶, reflecting that projects were expected to have already delivered to one EA and would, with a more advanced strategy, deliver to a second EA through more advanced implementation. In practice many projects were still at a relatively early stage in implementation at the end of the first biennium and realignment was a rather cosmetic exercise with changes in the articulation of project outcomes but not in strategies or activities. The malleability of project alignment was facilitated by the overlapping nature of EAs and reorganisation of PoW outputs in the second biennium.
451. The manager of one 'umbrella' project reported that the project lost its niche in the second biennium in that it was no longer the only project expected to contribute to a given PoW output. The fact that the project was no longer solely responsible for a PoW output and its associated target undermined the sense of accountability to PoW results, and suggests that more generally where multiple projects contribute to a POW output the perceptions of accountability of the contributing projects can be limited or diminished.
452. These processes would have been smoother had there been a fully developed EMSP Programme Framework for 2012-2013 that took account of the ongoing portfolio of work and change in outputs.

5.1.4. Project Design, Approval and Revisions

453. The case studies undertaken in the context of this Evaluation have highlighted a range of design and selection issues at project level, often linked to UNEP's wider systems and processes. While these are not necessarily unique to the EMSP they have affected delivery of the EMSP.

Project Design

454. The quality of project proposals reviewed for the evaluation case studies is very variable and some projects appear to have been funded without a full project document. Project concepts typically originate in Divisions or ROs in liaison with a range of partners including donors. Some high profile EMSP projects including IPBES and

¹⁰⁴ Expressed as one or more EAs or PoW outputs.

¹⁰⁵ Projects 5 & 6 in the EMSP Programme Framework, both related to output 316.

¹⁰⁶ Seven of the 10 case study projects in this Evaluation reported against a different or reduced number of EAs in the second biennium.

TEEB have originated outside UNEP. Project managers and other interviewees reported that there is little investment in project development and there has been little or no funding available (Paragraph 532) for consultation and planning with partners and stakeholders, exacerbating the top-down nature of some projects. There was little or no awareness of availability of project development funding in ROs or amongst project managers in general.

455. In terms of alignment to the EMSP EAs and PoW outputs, most EMSP projects have included one or more EMSP output or EA as a logframe outcome but the linkage between their outputs and activities and these outcomes is generally not well articulated. In addition there is frequently a mismatch between the level of intervention at project level, often related to a sector or locality, and the expression of EAs results in terms of ‘number of countries’ leading to difficulties in establishing what results are sufficient to be counted as a contribution to the EA target (see section 4.3).
456. Project documents or concepts presented to PRC typically include logframes and project milestones but there are often issues with the nature or specification of milestones, outputs, outcomes, and indicators of outcome¹⁰⁷. UNEP project logframes are expected to include milestones marking progress towards outputs and outcomes and these were largely in place for progress towards outputs by the start of the second PoW biennium. However, guidelines regarding design of milestones were not always followed in the case study projects, and project milestones often fail to capture a logical progression towards a project output but instead describe completion of a collection of independent activities under that output. At the same time, project managers reported being allowed to include only a limited number of milestones in PIMS and observed that it is difficult to capture delivery of complex projects with just one milestone per project output for any six month period¹⁰⁸.
457. Milestones were typically revised in project document supplements and were commonly simplified or downgraded even where project outputs were unchanged. This Evaluation found a number of projects where all or most project milestones included in PIMS had been delivered despite shortfalls in delivery at the level of project output indicators (Paragraph 473).
458. Cross cutting issues are addressed in the project concepts in the EMSP framework. Inclusion of cross cutting issues was reviewed in the evaluation case studies¹⁰⁹ with the following conclusions:
 - There is limited or superficial consideration of gender and disadvantaged groups in most project documents with some passing references to women and disadvantaged groups being a specific target group or beneficiary but just one project expanding on how this would be achieved;
 - There is limited direct consideration of environmental and social safeguards in project documents but the nature of the ecosystem approach means that most projects have worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders;
 - The Bali Strategic plan was not addressed directly in any of the project documents reviewed (the EMSP is not strongly connected with technology although some technological innovation has occurred at some project sites, such as Monk Seal surveillance); and,
 - South-South cooperation is not directly addressed in project documents although it is a feature of many projects through (among other things) multi-country training and consultations, use of expert groups in activities such as development of guidelines, and through practical learning across networks of field sites.
459. Finally, with regard to pilot and demonstration projects, this Evaluation found that opportunities to add value have been lost where project efforts at local level have not been explicitly linked to strategic objectives (such as piloting or demonstrating tools and methodologies to inform policy). This is regrettable given the shortage of opportunities to test normative outputs such as methodologies and guidelines as a result of significant funding shortfalls on some projects (which often led to planned field work being scaled back). An additional weakness related to ‘work on the ground’ has been a frequent failure to develop appropriate sustainability measures or exit strategies Paragraph 398).

Project Duration

460. The two-year timeframe for the EAs and PoW outputs is insufficient for meaningful delivery of ecosystem management. Many of the EMSP projects combine normative work (such as technical guidelines and policy

¹⁰⁷ Many of the EMSP projects were first designed before 2010, and predate efforts to conduct training in Results Based Management as well as prevailing guidance in the December 2012 programme manual.

¹⁰⁸ As recommended in the 2012 programme manual.

¹⁰⁹ Based on a available documentation.

work) with field interventions (pilot or demonstration projects), operate at multiple geographical scales (e.g. local, national and regional), and/or involve large multi-stakeholder or intergovernmental processes. Components in larger projects are sometimes interdependent and sequential in nature while ecosystem management work 'on the ground' typically involves stakeholder processes that take considerable time to become self-sustaining and bring about change, and work aiming at changing policy needs to be synchronised with government policy cycles.

461. The two year programming cycle has also proved arbitrary and counterproductive for long-term programmes that are designed and managed as partnership initiatives and for intergovernmental processes supported by UNEP in view of difficulties in synchronising UNEP's work with their programmatic and decision making cycles, such as for the IPBES process.
462. Difficulties in delivering within a single PoW cycle have been exacerbated in the EMSP by i) funding issues including funding received late in the PoW cycle, shortfalls in funding and uneven funding of project components; ii) the frequent need for project preparation or (informal) inception phase including for recruitment for internally executed projects, partner review for externally executed projects, and for stakeholder consultations that were often not undertaken in project development (Paragraph 454); and iii) the definition of EAs, outputs (and even project milestones) at outcome level and therefore dependent on behavioural or policy changes beyond UNEP's immediate control (Paragraph 436 and 440).
463. In practice many of the more complex projects were designed to operate over a longer period (typically four years) or have had to be extended. This is associated with the administrative hurdle of developing supplements at the start of a new biennium and compounded by the need to realign the project to new PoW outputs (Paragraph 449). It is likely that some EMSP project contributions to PoW outputs and EAs will be realised and consolidated only after the project is completed (e.g. policy decisions taken as a result of normative work or field interventions such as in the Mangroves project) but there is currently no mechanism to capture post-project effects.

Project Review

464. All projects that are submitted for inclusion in the EMSP – including new projects and projects that were ongoing at the start of the MTS period – have been subject to review by UNEP's Project Review Committee (PRC) prior to their approval. In most cases the EMSPC has served as a presenter or resource person at the meetings where EMSP proposals are presented.
465. The PRC process is often iterative in nature with one or more sets of review comments required to be addressed prior to approval, reflecting sometimes weak or poorly justified proposals. Project managers have reported being frustrated by the length of the PRC process. Delays are caused by the backlog of projects or project supplements pending PRC approval, the relatively infrequent meetings of the PRC, but also because project managers do not always respond promptly or fully to comments – either because they disagree with comments, are unable to accommodate them owing to restrictions on available funding, or are have difficulty making the required changes (e.g. preparing appropriate project indicators).
466. The EMSP project case studies highlighted a number of issues and anomalies that put into question the ability of UNEP to align significant partners and resources to the PoW in a timely manner, including:
 - New projects were unable to start for up to a year as a result of not having been approved by the PRC;
 - Ongoing projects from a previous biennium that had to be aligned or realigned were approved over a year into implementation;
 - Projects were approved with only a small proportion of secured funding and later had to be revised to reflect realistic funding levels;
 - Projects where PRC has been forced to accept only limited changes since project documents had already been approved by the project donor; and
 - In one case a new (2010) project was approved at Division level prior to PRC approval and a project manager was recruited prior to Division approval.
467. It should also be noted that investments that are not well aligned to the programme represent an opportunity cost in that they occupy the time of skilled personnel and take up institutional space (committee time, financial services and so on) that may be better spent on aligned work. There is an inevitable tension where donors have their own priorities and expectations, the work is inherently worthwhile and fits with UNEP's wider mandate.

Project Revisions

468. Many EMSP projects (including all of the projects considered as case studies for this Evaluation) have undergone one or more revisions that are formalised through a project document supplement to be approved by the PRC (Paragraph 465). The supplement has typically been triggered by the transition to a new PoW period (Paragraph 449) or by receipt of additional or unanticipated extra-budgetary funding that is associated with new or expanded activities.
469. Project supplements are typically brief and indicate that there have been only limited efforts to redesign projects despite quite profound changes in the budget, project approach and/or scale or scope of delivery. Revised logframes in the supplements of evaluation case study projects typically include no or only modest changes to project outputs and indicators, although there is often more substantial modification of milestones (Paragraph 457).
470. Many of the case study projects have changed significantly during their lifetimes. This was often but not always in view of lower than anticipated funding for the overall project (Paragraph 530) or for components of 'umbrella' projects where efforts to pursue an overall results framework are thwarted by uneven levels and timing of funding across components.
471. While useful from an adaptive management perspective, the repeated use of supplements creates a situation of rolling results frameworks and budgets, which undermines accountability to the originally approved results. Several of the case study projects, including 'umbrella' projects and larger flagship projects which attract additional funding, are effectively operating in a programme mode with the final project bearing little resemblance to the original approved project. There is a risk here that such projects grow in an opportunistic manner and skew the overall subprogramme delivery. In addition, accountability to individual grants¹¹⁰ and earlier objectives has been lost where supplements allow earlier funds to be carried forward on a project with a revised logframe.
472. In some cases projects have been revised to accommodate emerging issues and the needs of traditional UNEP constituencies highlighting the importance of flexibility in delivery of the PoW. At the same time programmes like GRASP or the marine programme that need to be responsive to external processes are continuing to try and operate in a programmatic manner on the basis of one or more quite restricted projects. This may involve diverting human resources (time/expertise) and even funding from one or more approved projects especially if the PoW and associated project approach are seen as an imposition that have put unwelcome constraints on traditional funding sources.
473. On the other hand, overambitious projects and projects with funding shortfalls have often adjusted their milestones so that they attain most or all of their milestones despite delivery that falls far short of the originally proposed project. This partly reflects a strong management response to poorly performing projects (rated 'red' in half-yearly assessments) and has masked the extent to which delivery has been affected by uneven funding across the portfolio, by administrative delays, or by external factors such as political insecurity that have affected delivery of some projects.

5.2. Organisation and Management

5.2.1. Management and Supervision

474. The accountability framework for the EMSP and for the Subprogrammes in general is described in Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2. Issues associated with the accountability framework that have affected delivery of UNEP's Programme of Work have been raised in a number of other evaluations (see section 1.2.1) and are summarised in Annex 3. Recurring issues include i) the lead Division centred nature of decision making, ii) limited authority of the SPC or lead division over PoW outputs, projects or activities delegated to other accountable divisions, iii) limited authority of the SPC that is not commensurate with responsibilities, iv) limited involvement of regional offices (ROs) in programming and project delivery. The predominance of a divisional culture over a one UNEP culture has also been highlighted.
475. This Evaluation has affirmed the findings of previous evaluations. The following subsections summarise the findings of this Evaluation related to the way in which management and supervision arrangements have affected delivery, ownership or satisfaction with the EMSP.

¹¹⁰ In this context, this refers to earmarked funding based on an approved project document.

476. New organisational arrangements put in place during the first months of 2014 (Paragraph 479) as well as the increased seniority of SPCs are expected to contribute substantially to resolving these issues.

The Subprogramme Coordinator and Lead Division

477. The EMSPC, and indeed SPCs in general, have essentially played an internal coordination or ‘back-office’ role and have been relatively junior in the UNEP managerial hierarchy (one SPC described their role more as an advisor than coordinator). They have been regarded as lacking authority with respect to senior and project managers in the lead division and in other divisions and this has affected their ability to coordinate the programme including with regard to project and portfolio design (Paragraphs 446 and 455) and to ensure adequate reporting.
478. The EMSPCs put considerable effort into development of the programme frameworks for 2010-2011 and 2014-2015 and played an active role in project alignment and retrofitting. However, projects have been developed and managed through the Division and branch or RO structure and the EMSPC has had little ongoing influence on the EMSP project portfolio beyond providing input to the project approval process as a participant (presenter) in the Project Review Committee (PRC).
479. There is a general perception that real decision-making power related to the EMSP rests with the lead Division Director and that there are some inherent conflicts between the cross-divisional nature of the Subprogramme and the Division Director’s role to lead and promote the work of DEPI. The EMSPC has had little or no real decision-making power – particularly and, crucially, in relation to allocation of resources (Paragraphs 481 & 491, 526). This has reinforced the view that EMSP is primarily a DEPI programme (See also Paragraphs 444 & 481). Recent changes that make SPCs full time Senior Programme Officer positions with revised reporting lines present new opportunities to enhance project / portfolio design and improve the transparency and rationale for resource allocations (Paragraph 178).

Role of other Divisions

480. The role of other Divisions in delivery of the EMSP is threefold: i) other ‘accountable’ divisions were assigned primary responsibility for a subset of EMSP outputs in the Programme Framework for 2010-2011 and the PoW for 2012-2013 (see section 3.4.1); ii) different Divisions were assigned responsibility for components or activities in many of the project concepts set out in the Programme Framework and in related or new projects developed during the following years; iii) some Divisions were to provide corporate services to the EMSP, notably DCPI with respect to communications and outreach support¹¹¹.
481. Focal points for the EMSP have been assigned in each of the other divisions though their responsibilities are not formalised in their job descriptions. Activities have included acting as an intermediary for circulation and collation responses to EMSPC requests related to planning and programming. In addition reporting focal points were assigned for EMSP PoW outputs in four Divisions (Paragraph 567).
482. There is a widespread perception that the EMSP is primarily a DEPI subprogramme and that DEPI has favoured its own projects in terms of resource allocation. In practice DEPI led implementation of 35 of 53 projects which is in line with its lead on a majority of PoW outputs (Section 3.5.1). There is at least one reported case of the EMSPC identifying and justifying allocation of resources for a non-DEPI project.
483. Many of the EMSP projects are jointly implemented by a lead Division and one or more other Divisions. In some cases this reflects the construction of ‘umbrella’ projects that brought together thematically related concepts according to the output to which they contributed (Paragraph 445) but which are often essentially independent activities. In others it reflects a more deliberate effort to engage wider networks or complementary expertise that has a bearing on ecosystem management or builds on longstanding collaboration between divisions on issues such as oceans assessment.
484. EMSP projects are mostly managed by DEPI, whereas most MEA-related work is managed by DELC. According to interviewees, communications between these two Divisions on MEA matters has been inadequate and improving inter-divisional communication would help both strengthen delivery of the MEA priorities by UNEP and ensure a more unified UNEP approach to work with MEA Secretariats.
485. In terms of organisational culture, interviewees identified more strongly with their Division and Branch than with UNEP thematic subprogrammes. Many have found the transition from costed workplans to results-based management difficult in that the transition did not always accommodate established patterns of working, such

¹¹¹ This has become closely associated with the ‘Making the Case’ project.

as delivery of thematic strategies at branch level. The general perception that there is internal competition for resources has accentuated Division and Branch loyalty.

486. There have also been a number of more practical obstacles to working across Divisions and with ROs including i) additional transaction costs; ii) reluctance of project managers to take on responsibility for project delivery when they do not have authority over staff in other divisions; iii) friction over reporting, timeliness of delivery or understanding of the extent of delegation or oversight; iv) shortcomings in capacity and expertise; v) differences in choice of traditional partners or identification of constituencies and vi) differences in working and communications styles, often referred to simply as 'personalities'. Project governance structures have been rarely implemented as planned but in some cases have proved valuable in promoting cross-divisional teamwork¹¹².
487. Beyond the context of individual projects, linkages within and between Divisions have been facilitated by thematic working groups such as the Inter Divisional Water Group. Such groups have led to the design of joint projects, identification of potential funding sources and strengthening or establishment of new partnerships. Other potentially useful groups such as the 'Economics Working Group' are inactive.

Role of Regional Offices

488. UNEP's Regional Offices (ROs) have been managed through the DRC for most of the period under consideration. The ROs – like Divisions – had assigned EMSP focal points who supported the programme alongside and based on compatibility with their other work (Paragraph 176), and there has been considerable turnover in this role. In some cases the task has been delivered by out-posted DEPI staff. In addition, each of the ROs also hosted a Regional Information Officer vested with the responsibility to support the SPs in their regional communication needs. For the EMSP, they were particularly relevant for the MTC project.
489. Ownership of the PoW and of the EMSP has been affected by the way in which it is seen to limit the RO's ability to respond to regional and national stakeholders. Interviews revealed some dissatisfaction with the role ROs have played in programming, exemplified by development of the latest set of subprogramme frameworks where the ROs have been invited to comment on successive drafts, often with short deadlines, and have not always had feedback on how their ideas have been addressed. Nevertheless the process in 2013 was regarded as better than in previous PoW cycles where the general view was that there had been little shared programme design and planning. A wide cross-section of interviewees indicated that earlier and more comprehensive involvement of ROs and linkage to UNEP regional assessments would enable design of a PoW that better responds to the needs of countries.
490. Field activities and capacity building initiatives are reported to have been developed in a top-down manner at headquarters level with insufficient consultation with ROs. This has generated concerns regarding i) inappropriate identification and selection of partners; ii) insufficient attention to continuity, sustainability, and mainstreaming including through UNDAF processes; and iii) reduced visibility and coherence at country or regional level with a failure to capitalise on synergies with other UNEP work including GEF projects.
491. In general the ROs report that they are 'downstream' of funding decisions related to projects (with limited influence on funding allocations and being 'outside the loop' on extrabudgetary funding) and there is a perception in some ROs that projects originating in the region are less likely to be funded (despite considerable potential for generating co-finance in the region), are subject to more rigorous screening by PRC and suffer from a lack of ownership and appropriate technical support at headquarters level. Until 2014, ROs benefitted from small workplan-based grants through DRC to support their work on subprogrammes including the EMSP. The ROs expressed strong views about the need for separate funding to identify and develop projects under the EMSP.
492. There was also a reported feeling that regional and country 'intelligence' provided by the ROs is not being fully taken into account and utilized by UNEP in Nairobi, a finding not limited solely to the EMSP. For instance, ROs were keen to see the needs and priorities of countries recognised in Subprogramme planning but this proved challenging: ROs expressed the view that often these would be lost or watered down in final products, indicating that UNEP HQ was failing to take advantage of knowledge on the ground. Some ROs felt that some key issues have not had the prominence they deserve. For instance, the threat from invasive species has not been addressed to any significant extent by the EMSP in the MTS 2010-2013 period and is little reflected in the EMSP for 2014-2017, despite recommendations from ROs. RO staff also expressed the view that ROs should manage more field-level interventions.

¹¹² Based on the 10 project case studies in this Evaluation.

493. Constraints to effective working with ROs are similar to those described for Divisions (Paragraph 486). In addition, capacity to work on EMSP issues is limited in some ROs, but it has not always been possible to identify or engage technical experts within UNEP to provide support (Paragraph 496). Out-posted Divisional personnel have provided one useful bridging mechanism in this regard, though there are relatively few out-posted DEPI staff. The general installed capacity of the ROs is low and their staff are often overstretched. There is increasing demand from countries for UNEP's services and products and greater delivery on the ground, but the ROs lack the capacity to provide the requested support (and operational rules would need to be more flexible to accommodate this). The ROs also expressed strong views about the need for continuity and sustainability of EMSP projects, which would again require RO input and additional resources.
494. Measures to implement GC decision 27/10 as well as appointment of dedicated regional subprogramme coordinators from 2014 are expected to address some of these constraints and improve the situation¹¹³.

5.2.2. Programmatic Coordination

Linkages between projects within the EMSP

495. The main instrument for programmatic coordination at EMSP level has been the 2010-2011 Programme Framework (Paragraph 162), which was intended to guide overall delivery of the PoW EAs. Part of the role of the SPC was to provide Subprogramme coordination and promote cohesion and linkages, but their input into the day-to-day programme coordination has been largely limited to individual project selection (or 'retrofitting' and 'realignment') and reporting.
496. Many of the EMSP projects are broad-based, encompassing policy and other normative work, communications and field initiatives and employing a wide range of approaches. The Evaluation found that while coordination between thematically related projects does take place within Branches, Units and programmes such as GRASP, opportunities to build linkages between projects employing similar strategies or tools are being missed. Examples include the large number of projects that have ecosystem service valuation components but are not linked to TEEB and the apparent failure to consider the large body of technical guidance documents produced by UNEP when developing popular guidance on ecosystem management.
497. Part of the reason for this appears to be cultural, with divisional, branch and even project 'silos' still very much present more than four years after the introduction of matrix structure. Linkages to technical experts within UNEP have been hindered by a simple lack of awareness of other work being undertaken elsewhere in UNEP network and in at least one case by reluctance on the part of an expert to engage with another project. Many interviewees reported that connections are serendipitous or based on personal contacts.
498. The consequences of this poor linkage include: i) sub-optimal technical deliverables; ii) failure to capitalise on experience across the UNEP network and the EMSP in order to promote learning, replication, catalyse uptake of tools, and magnify results; and, iii) missed opportunities for strengthening partnerships and collaboration.

Linkages between Subprogrammes

499. The overlap between the EMSP and other subprogrammes was a recurring theme in evaluation interviews. The linkage to other Subprogrammes has been highlighted in earlier evaluations where the role of ecosystem management in supporting delivery of other EAs has been associated with the difficulty of having the EMSP recognised and coordinated as a distinct area of work (Paragraph 438).
500. As mentioned above (see section 3.5.3) ecosystem management serves as a means of delivery (an approach or tool) for other Subprogrammes, notably Climate Change and Disasters and Conflicts, while implementation and mainstreaming of ecosystem management builds on the work of other subprogrammes on assessments and governance. The case study projects considered in this Evaluation demonstrated how cross-thematic projects spanning both PoW periods have generated informal but effective working relationship across branch structures in the areas of REDD and ecosystem-based adaptation and have contributed to more comprehensive guidance documents and field interventions.

¹¹³ The draft revised UNEP project document template from September 2014 states that projects need to describe how all relevant UNEP Divisions and Regional Offices have been consulted, show the roles and relationship of Regional Offices in the project implementation structure, and what ROs are to provide and achieve, and indicate when resources are to be spent through Regional Offices. The PRC will share the project documents with the Regional Offices for comments.

501. The project concepts outlined in the Programme Framework and many of the projects approved in the first biennium anticipate contributions to multiple PoW outputs including outputs under more than one EA and Subprogramme. Later project documents typically refer to only a single EA while references to secondary outputs were generally dropped in project revisions for ongoing projects that entered the second PoW period in line with guidance in the 2012 UNEP Programme Manual.
502. While the prevailing guidance simplifies accountability, one immediate consequence is underreporting. Projects are now categorized under a single Subprogramme and EA in PIMS with the consequence that the portfolio of projects under the EMSP is only a partial representation of UNEP's work on ecosystem management and of contributions towards the EMSP EAs (Paragraph 592). While the problem of underreporting affects other subprogrammes, it is particularly applicable to ecosystem management work which by its very nature contributes to and is supported by work in other PoW areas.
503. Other consequences of the poor linkages between Subprogrammes include loss of opportunities for profiling UNEP's overall work on ecosystem management and for sharing experience and for learning. One interviewee reported that the requirement to align a project under a single subprogramme in PIMS encourages compartmentalization and works against synergies and working across Divisions and Subprogrammes.

5.3. Human and Financial Resources Administration

5.3.1. Human Resources

504. Human and financial resources administration and management processes are similar across the subprogrammes and have been identified in previous higher level evaluations, such as the MTE of the MTS 2010-2013, as factors often affecting the delivery of SPs (see Annex 3). The current Evaluation also found that these factors affect the delivery of the EMSP.

5.3.1.1 EMSP team and DEPI support

DEPI staff time

505. Information on the number of staff who primarily contribute to the EMSP was not readily available, but based on evaluation interviews and information from project managers, delivery of the EMSP clearly resides mostly within DEPI. However, DEPI did not have a Divisional workplan at the time of the Evaluation indicating how much of its staff time is associated with the EMSP and Subprogramme-level contributions are not featured in individual workplans. The Evaluation was also not able to determine to what extent the EMSP was delivered by UNEP staff and to what extent by consultants, United Nations Volunteers and others that are not visible in the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) system. In addition, IMIS limits a staff members' contribution to a single SP and hence IMIS information does not capture the reality that staff often divide their time between several SPs. In general, UNEP staff who were interviewed for the Evaluation did not associate themselves with the EMSP, but rather with a Division, Unit, Branch or a particular project. From the operational and management perspective, this indicates a weak SP identity and ownership, and SPs are primarily regarded within a planning context.

Subprogramme Coordinator

506. The EMSP Coordinator post resided in DEPI during the whole of the MTS 2010-2013 (A UNEP Senior Management decision in early 2014 subsequently reassigned all SPC posts to a new Programme Strategy and Planning Team (PSPT)¹¹⁴. The turnover of EMSP SPCs has been notably high; during the 2010-2013 period there have been three EMSPCs, the most recent during that period having started in February 2013 and retired at the end of January 2014. The recruitment process to contract a fourth was completed at the time when this Evaluation was being finalized with a gap of several months in 2014 where there was no EMSPC in position. According to the evaluation interviews, the consequent lack of continuity has reflected negatively on the SP delivery. It was perceived that no single SPC held the position long enough to be able to coordinate it effectively and his was exacerbated by insufficient induction and hand-over time between the SPCs (not properly factored in by DEPI), with the hand-over period managed according to the departing SPCs' own

¹¹⁴ A new Structure and Configuration for UNEP's Strategic Planning Functions. - Internal UNEP Memo from the Executive Director dated March 7th 2014.

availability and volition. Consequently, key individuals in DEPI, particularly in the SPC's team and DEPI's Programme Support Unit, had to take over SPC duties without adequate support or release from other duties.

507. The limited authority of the SPCs has been identified in previous evaluations (see Annex 3) as a significant issue limiting the ability of SPCs to fully undertake their duties (see section 5.2.1) and was again repeated by evaluation stakeholders. Moreover, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the EMSPC viewed by the Evaluation lacked detail and were very broad and convoluted, adding confusion over what exactly was expected from the EMSP Coordinator¹¹⁵. Having responsibility without authority has caused considerable frustration and negatively influenced motivation and morale of the SPCs, since none of the three former SPCs has appeared to have a significant role in the EMSP decision-making processes. In general, project staff were sympathetic to the EMSPC's situation and perceived the duties of SPC to be onerous and unrewarding. The workload of the EMSPC peaks during reporting and programming periods (that may overlap) and there is limited provision for dedicated support staff. Whilst one of the SPCs felt that adequate support was received from the Subprogramme project staff to fulfil the SPC duties, another felt that project staff support was insufficient, particularly when it came to preparing planning documents or reporting on the EMSP performance. On the other hand, project staff felt they were not given opportunities to contribute to internal EMSP planning processes and that their suggestions were not considered (see section 5.1).

Focal points

508. Each EMSP PoW output and EA had a designated reporting officer in charge of collating evidence from project managers on progress against the PoW outputs and EAs and communicating that information to the SPC. However, these responsibilities were not reflected in individual workplans and added to existing responsibilities (see section 5.5), which impeded delivery of these tasks. The reporting focal points also experienced difficulties in obtaining information from the project managers and the quality of information received was not always adequate for reporting against higher-level EMSP results (see section 5.1 project design).
509. Each Division and RO also had a designated EMSP Focal Point with responsibility for identifying regional needs for EM-related work and promoting regional coherence of the EMSP. These tasks were not part of individual workplans and, consequently, there was lack of clarity over what was expected from the Focal Points. These tasks, particularly with regards to the regional coherence of the EMSP, were perceived as challenging and the Evaluation found indications that, in general, coherence was more likely to be determined by personal relationships than strategic planning processes. According to some RO interviewees, projects were often 'parachuted' into regions and tended to be designed in isolation without sufficient RO staff input or country consultations. The communication and collaboration between the SPC and RO SP Focal Points seemed to be greatest with the in Regional Office for Africa (ROA), probably because both are based in Nairobi which enabled frequent communication.

5.3.1.2 Project staff

Project staffing and capacity issues

510. The Evaluation did not review staff performance reports or systematically collect evidence on the adequacy of human resources, staff competence or staff morale, and so it is not possible to provide a detailed analysis on how human resources-related issues influence the EMSP delivery. However, based on evaluation interviews and the case studies, it was clear that staff allocated to EMSP were competent and capable.
511. The adequacy of human resources has varied considerably across projects. Some projects identified shortage of staff as a considerable challenge, whilst others did not. Insufficient capacity in the ROs to properly deliver the EMSP was also frequently mentioned by interviewees. Among the evaluation case studies, those that particularly suffered from shortage of staff during implementation (Freshwater, MTC, TEEB, GRASP) commented that low capacity which had negatively affected project delivery, caused delays and/or reduced the project's delivery potential. In cases where human resources were insufficient, staff and partners often had to contribute additional time themselves to ensure delivery (TEEB, GRASP). Whilst putting in extra effort can work as a short-term solution, it is not a sustainable arrangement and should not be relied upon. A better and longer-term arrangement to overcome staff shortages would be to build strategic partnerships, as some projects, such as TEEB, have done. In terms of staff capacity (skills), interviewees often mentioned that more

¹¹⁵ The role of UNEP's SPCs has been revised from the PoW 2014-2015. All SPCs have become grade P-5 with a higher level of authority, clearer ToRs and reporting lines that allow separation from Divisional management. Subprogramme Coordinators for all the subprogrammes were still being recruited as of June 2014. The new Coordinators will have joint reporting lines to i) a coordinator in the newly created *Programme Strategy and Planning Team* and ii) relevant Division directors (DEPI in the case of the EMSPC).

training is needed particularly on Results Based Management (RBM), and that ROs, especially, feel they have not received the same level of training opportunities as staff at HQ. However, it should be noted that there will be dedicated regional coordinators from 2014, which should help address these issues

512. To some extent, existing capacity within the organization was not sufficiently used to support delivery of the EMSP during the MTS 2010-2013. For example, the Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU) within DEPI could have supported EMSP projects with educational components, but collaboration was very seldom established (see sections 4.3 and 4.4). Similarly, the capacity of DCPI was not always used to its full potential. The EMSP projects often perceived communication and public information related activities as something that could easily be done by the project teams themselves, without involvement of, or allocation of resources to, DCPI. On the other hand, DCPI's capacity to manage projects (e.g. MTC) was also questioned, as project management has not traditionally been DCPI's modality of work.
513. Based on the interviews and case studies, turnover of project staff within the EMSP during the 2010-2013 period seems to have been relatively low. Consequently, there is a good organizational memory among EMSP project staff, and to a large degree the entire EMSP has been built around the existing expertise within DEPI. The low level of staff turn-over could be interpreted as a measure of the level of trust and confidence in staff capabilities by UNEP's Senior Management. On the other hand, it might also be influenced by the cumbersome administrative arrangements that make staff recruitment (and release) a highly resource consumptive process. Where staff turnover was higher, interviewees identified this as a negative factor affecting project delivery, particularly if project management staff changed during project implementation.
514. Several organizational and procedural factors have negatively affected EMSP staff motivation, both at coordination and project level, including cumbersome organisational and administrative structures. Among the concerns expressed to the Evaluation was a view that DEPI projects were favoured in terms of EMSP PoW budget allocations, a perception that project proposals initiated by staff at the HQ / DEPI were assessed less rigorously and hence projects were granted an approval with lower requirements than projects initiated in ROs and Division offices outside Nairobi, indicating that projects across the EMSP do not receive an uniform treatment. However, the Evaluation did not find any evidence to support this perception. EMSP staff felt that these factors limited their ability to work effectively, collaborate and influence decision-making processes, which was directly reflected as reduced ownership of the EMSP¹¹⁶. In general, motivation of staff delivering EMSP projects was undermined by the feeling of insufficient transparency in decision making in EMSP programming and fund allocation - a common view among staff was that little could be done to influence the EMSP decision making processes including resource allocation and that the matrix system has rather reduced possibilities of project staff influencing decision-making, instead of supporting it.
515. The Evaluation found that good personal relations among staff were the most significant factor fostering collaboration among different teams.

Staff recruitment issues

516. UNEP's administrative processes, related to recruitment of staff caused frustration among EMSP staff. Although slow administrative processes are not an EMSP-specific feature¹¹⁷, they were identified as a considerable problem for the EMSP delivery by EMSP staff. In general, recruitment of staff through the UNEP/UNON process typically takes a minimum of six months, but for projects such as the Mangrove project and GRASP, recruitment of project staff took as much as a year). A 6-12 month delay due to difficulties in recruiting project staff in a 2-4 year project can be regarded as considerable and has resulted in inadequate hand-over where staff changes occurred during the project implementation, such as LifeWeb and Mangroves). As a result, projects often relied on consultants for delivery. However, UN Staff Rules and Regulations on duration of consultancy contracts caused challenges when only a limited number of qualified consultants were available and continuity was needed. In some cases, the long recruitment processes led to contracting temporary consultants to continue managing projects while a project manager was being recruited. Heavy use of consultants in project management had significant disadvantages in some instances, for example the MTC project relied heavily on consultants during project design and the early stages of implementation and when the UNEP project manager took over there was little institutional memory of how the project had been developed and delivered.

¹¹⁶ This view echoes a presentation held given by an external ecosystem management expert in an EMSP Workshop in January 2014 which concluded that "My strongest impression of this week has been that I'm sitting in a room full of bright, engaged, thoughtful people whose capacity to act effectively on EM is being balked and weakened by the structures they are working inside".

¹¹⁷ The slowness of UNEP/UNON recruiting processes and the consequent delays in project delivery are by no means unique to the EMSP. The Evaluation of the DCSP (2012) noted that slowness of recruitment processes affected negatively of the SP delivery and the same was noted for some EGSP projects.

5.3.2 Financial resources

EMSP budget

517. The total planned budget for the EMSP during the MTS 2010-2013 period was US\$ 131.7 million, whereas the total allocated budget for the same period was US\$ 147.6 million¹¹⁸. During both biennia, the actual Environment Fund (EF) budget has been lower than had been planned (US\$ 71 million planned vs. US\$ 58 million allocated), but financial resources through Trust Funds and Earmarked Contributions were considerably higher (US\$ 55 million planned vs. US\$ 84 million allocated) (Table 5). Compared to other Subprogrammes, the EMSP was the second largest receiver of EF funds during the 2010-2013 period after the EGSP and the fourth largest SP in terms of attracting extra-budgetary funding after the CCSP, EGSP and RESP (Figure 8).

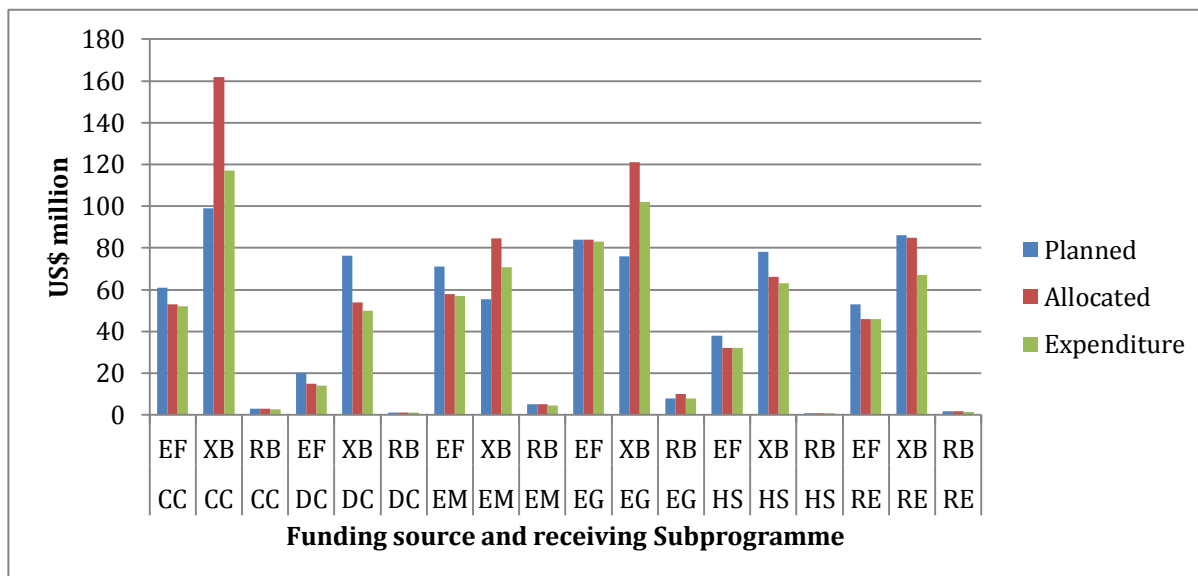
Table 5. Planned and mobilized EMSP project portfolio costs 2010-2013 (source 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 PPRs, UNEP 2011c, UNEP 2013e)

PoW	Source	Planned budget (US\$ million)	Allocated budget (US\$ million)	Expenditure ¹¹⁹
2010-2011	<i>Environment Fund</i>	35	30	29
	<i>Trust Funds and Earmarked Contributions</i>	27	40	35
	<i>Regular Budget</i>	2	2	2
2012-2013	<i>Environment Fund</i>	36.2	28	27.9
	<i>Trust Funds and Earmarked Contributions</i>	28.3	44.4	35.6
	<i>Regular Budget</i>	3.2	3.2	2.5

¹¹⁸ These figures only include EMSP PoW 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 budgets. The figures are exclusive of EMSP – related GEF funded projects.

¹¹⁹ 2010-2011 expenditure figure represents estimated expenditure as at 31 December 2011. The 2012-2013 figure represents actual expenditure as at 31 December 2013.

Figure 8. UNEP budget 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 by subprogramme and source of funding (US\$ million).



EF=Environment Fund, XB=Extra-budgetary resources, RB=Regular Budget; CC=Climate Change SP, DC=Disasters & Conflicts SP, EM=Ecosystem Management SP, EG=Environmental Governance SP, HS=Harmful Substances Hazardous Waste SP, RE=Resource Efficiency SP (Source: PPR 2012-2013, UNEP 2013e)

518. The majority of the EMSP budget (61%) comprises Trust Funds and Earmarked contributions (extra-budgetary resources) and UNEP’s core funding, the Environment Fund, is used to fund both post and non-post activities. During the MTS 2010-2013, 78% of the EMSP EF funds were allocated for posts and the remaining staff positions were funded through extra-budgetary and RB resources. The ratio of EF funds used for post and non-post activities has been similar during the PoW 2010-2011 and PoW 2012-2013. From the core budget, 22% was used to fund non-post activities, which is less than the 25-30% expected by the Governing Council. UNEP in general seeks to increase contributions to EF to avoid spreading its work too wide and thin as could occur if Earmarked Contributions or Trust Funds with their own priorities and constraints comprise a significant proportion of the overall funding. Increasing EF funding for the EMSP is also considered desirable so that funds can be secured for projects that are strategically important for the delivery of the SP (but not as attractive to donors).
519. The Evaluation was not able to establish exact contributions from different donor countries but the financial records indicate Norway, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands and Japan have been the most significant donors of extrabudgetary funding to the EMSP (not necessarily listed in the order of significance).

Resource Mobilisation

520. The MTE of the MTS 2010-2013 noted the need for a coordinated effort to resource mobilization but it also recognised that staff were mindful of their own responsibilities with regard to of Resource Mobilisation (RM). The Evaluation noted similar factors and processes affected the EMSP. The EMSP lacks a RM strategy¹²⁰ and guidelines and there is lack of a coordinated approach to RM within the SP. EMSP staff interviewed were of the opinion that a more strategic, transparent and collaborative fund raising system would be more effective in attracting funding than the current frequently uncoordinated approach. According to the UNEP Programme Manual, all efforts to mobilize extra-budgetary funding should involve a SPC, ROs and the Donor Partnership and Contributions Section. However, interviews revealed that EMSP project managers still approached donors without consultation with the SPC or regional EMSP focal points. Another limitation of the Subprogramme’s approach to fund-raising, is the lack of a coherent Subprogramme framework and portfolio with a clear story line that can be communicated to potential donors (see section 5.1.2).
521. The Evaluation found that the EMSP staff in Divisions and ROs did not always have clear view of their responsibilities with regard to resource mobilisation and there was also lack of understanding over the respective roles of the Donor Partnership and Contributions Section and the SPC. Even though the UNEP

¹²⁰ As a comparison, the DCSP has a sound RM strategy that is regularly updated and applied. The Evaluation of the DCSP deemed this approach as beneficial for the delivery of the SP. According to the Programme Manual, each SP should have a SP specific RM strategy.

Resource Mobilization Strategy (UNEP 2009d) and its Guidelines on Federated Resource Mobilization identify specific roles and responsibilities for resource mobilisation at different organizational levels, interviewees had differing views on the role of the EMSPC in resource mobilisation. On one hand, it was expected that the SPC should/would present the portfolio to donors and represent EMSP in donor consultations or discuss funding issues with the CPR as project managers do not necessarily have the required access or strategic overview. On the other hand, some interviewees thought that the SPC's role was to coordinate programming and did not involve RM. To date, the EMSPCs have not had a systematic role in resource mobilisation although support has been provided to some individual projects.

522. The Evaluation noted differences in the success of EMSP projects in attracting funding; whilst some were successful in mobilizing extra-budgetary funding, others experienced considerable shortfalls. None of the case study projects had developed clear resource mobilization strategies, they adopted different approaches to resource mobilisation in practice. Some projects, such as GRASP, were particularly active in approaching donors, including the private sector. Other projects, such as TEEB were initially requested by donors and consequently received considerable donor support from the outset. TEEB has also been particularly active in maintaining good donor relations, including involving donors in the project's decision-making processes, which has led to successful follow-up funding in some cases.
523. Evaluation interviews highlighted that, in general, an increasingly active and strategic approach to fund-raising is needed and that the EMSP needs to broaden its donor base. Under the current funding situation, projects expressed concern that limited resources exist compared to amounts needed to meet requests from countries for UNEP's support. As an UN Agency, UNEP was seen to be in a privileged position to raise funds compared to non-UN organisations conducting similar ecosystem management work, but it was also commented that the EMSP relies too much on attracting funds through its 'UN stamp' and may be losing opportunities from the failure to adopt a more active approach to resource mobilisation. The Evaluation noted a relatively poor private sector engagement in terms of resource mobilisation, even though the need to engage more with the private sector and to go beyond the usual government donors was widely acknowledged by the EMSP staff. However, there were some positive attempts to engage with the private sector (see section 5.4), although UNEP's organizational structures often do not help facilitate private-sector engagement and often work too slowly to effectively tap such opportunities.

Resource Allocation

524. The MTE of the MTS found that in the absence of Divisional workplans, UNEP did not fully follow a Results Based Budgeting system and hence, resource allocation lacked transparency and accountability. Evaluation interviews indicated that this also applies to the EMSP; there was some confusion among UNEP staff delivering EMSP projects on how extra-budgetary resources were allocated within the EMSP, indicating a lack of transparency in resource allocation processes. The MTE of the MTS recommended basing resource allocation on formally approved Divisional workplans, and allocating EF resources foremost to core functions of UNEP. These recommendations are further reinforced by the findings of this Evaluation.
525. DEPI manages the great majority of EMSP projects, followed by DTIE. Consequently, the largest proportion of EMSP funds was raised by these two Divisions. The Evaluation Team attempted to verify how the EMSP budget was divided among the different divisions, but the EMSP financial records from IMIS did not allow a definitive assessment of this since the recipient of the funds was not always identifiable.
526. During the MTS 2010-2013 period, the EMSP Coordinator proposed allocation of the EMSP budget, which was then reflected in the biennial PoW and was approved by the CPR. However, authority to decide on the actual EMSP budget allocation to the different DEPI Units and Branches, as well as other Divisions to deliver the EMSP was vested with DEPI Director. A general opinion among interviewees was that fund allocation in the EMSP lacked transparency, the SPC had little influence on actual budget allocations¹²¹ and that resource allocation of EMSP seemed to be skewed towards the Lead Division. ROs in particular felt they are 'down-stream' of resource allocation decisions. Evidence collected for the case studies suggested that an EMSP project's budget was often fully vested in DEPI, but collaboration and sharing of resources was enabled by signing of Institutional Cooperation Agreements (ICAs) during the project implementation.
527. The Evaluation attempted to verify how the EMSP budget was allocated among the PoW projects based on EMSP yearly financial records for the period 2010-2013, and to compare allocations by EAs to assess whether allocation corresponded to delivery and responsibilities. However, the Evaluation found that the assessment of

¹²¹ From 2014-2015 PoW, the SPCs will be working under a new set of ToRs, with a higher level of authority and dual reporting lines to SP Lead Division and the OfO. The revised role and authority of the SPCs may increase SPCs influence in resource allocation.

allocations and expenditures by EAs was not possible beyond assessing the estimated allocations presented in PoW documents. The financial records in PIMS were not always up to date and the EMSP financial records lacked clear project identification information and hence it was not always possible to link budget transactions to a particular EMSP project. This made it impossible to examine how the EMSP budget was allocated among projects. It was also difficult to examine fund allocation to projects led by Divisions other than DEPI, since the financial records often only made a link to a particular Division without specifying the actual recipient project of the funds. Once the funds had been allocated to other Divisions, DEPI was not able to keep track of how the funds were used, since there was no financial reporting back to the lead Division (see section 5.2).

528. The Trust Fund contributions to the EMSP budget can be re-allocated by the Lead Division Director if the need arises during the course of a biennium. Usually, there are no re-allocations during the first year in a biennium, but funds can be re-allocated during the second year from projects that are not delivering to projects that need additional funding or to fund emerging issues. Recipient projects for re-allocated funds are clearly expressed in internal memos but re-allocations do not necessarily establish links to the EMSP PoW and funds can be re-allocated to emerging issues without clearly specifying how the work contributes to EMSP higher level objectives. Interviewees did not have a clear understanding of the basis on which the funds were re-allocated.

Project planning and financing

529. Uncertainty over how much of the planned budget would materialize had negative implications on planning and delivery of the EMSP portfolio projects. The planned budget allocations at the beginning of each biennium are estimates based on budgets from previous years against projections of donor commitments. However, donor cycles do not match UNEP's programming cycles, but instead funding comes in throughout the biennium and the actual funding can only be accurately stated at the end of the two-year period. This budget uncertainty has inevitable repercussions for allocations to EMSP projects. Project budgets are disbursed through several allotments throughout the programming cycle, and each disbursement is subject to revision based on expenditure. This has created particular difficulties in terms of establishing realistic project milestones and planning costly, longer-term field interventions that involve partners, since projects often entailed complex planning arrangements and subcontracts and many had to manage expectations of national stakeholders.
530. Projects across the EMSP were overly optimistic when it came to their aims and budgets during the MTS 2010-2013 (Table 6). This can be at least partly attributed to the prevailing corporate guidance during the design phase (2008-2009) to "think big" and hence project managers designed ambitious projects that were not realistic with respect to resource mobilisation prospects. The evaluation case studies suggest that projects that were internationally recognized and widely supported beyond UNEP (such as TEEB, IPBES, GRASP) received more funding, compared to 'less high-profile projects'. Some projects (such as TEEB) received additional extrabudgetary funds to those planned, resulting in an up-scaling of the project activities but also led to project results becoming 'moving targets' through several project revisions (see section 5.1). However, ideally from a programmatic point of view, funding priorities should be determined by a balanced portfolio delivery and funding should ideally be secured for all approved portfolio projects in order to ensure delivery against all EMSP components before individual projects are granted resources to deliver beyond their original design. The authority of the SPC could be reinforced in this regard to help ensure that funding decisions support a holistic delivery of the EMSP portfolio.

Table 6. EMSP combined project budgets; planned and programmed (source: PIMS)

Period	Planned (US\$)	Programmed (US\$)	Funding gap (US\$)
2010-2011	91,220,777	29,219,718	62,001,058
2012-2013	65,661,712	23,215,718	42,445,993

531. Several EMSP projects were approved by the PRC with little or no secured funding¹²² and as a consequence of the unrealistic project designs, funding for most projects fell short on planned vs. realized budgets). Shortfalls in funding led to a need to downscale projects, with activities reduced or cancelled, particularly in the case of demonstration projects, such as Argentina and Freshwater projects (see section 5.2). According to

¹²² From the beginning of the 2012-2013 biennium projects were required to have 25% or \$200,000 of the project funding secured before the project can be approved by PRC.

interviewees, this had negative implications on UNEP's image among donors and stakeholders. Projects should not agree on country level activities prior to securing funding in order to avoid changes in delivery plans and the consequent reputational risks. On the other hand, projects should factor in adequate project scoping and inception phases to allow adaptations based on consultations with partners.

532. In general, there seemed to have been little investment in project development within the EMSP (see also section 5.1.4). A low level of funding within the EMSP was allocated to DEPI Units/Branches for project planning purposes at the beginning of each biennium, based on decisions by the DEPI Division Director on how much seed money was needed. However, it is not clear on what basis such funds were dispersed and there seemed to be limited knowledge among the EMSP staff of this opportunity, indicating lack of transparency/effective communication. However, it is likely that there would have been insufficient funds to meet the overall demand for project planning. An EM activity fund would be beneficial for project development and for establishing baselines and should be established. Similarly, the ROs are vested with a responsibility to identify regional needs, but no specific budget has been provided for conducting needs assessments.
533. The shortfalls in project development phase, combined with lack of funds for implementation and the consecutive slow onset of projects often resulted in projects being revised and extended to the next biennium. Trust Fund resources and Earmarked Contributions can be taken forward from one biennium or a MTS period to the next, but reporting is structured around PoW periods. Even though PIMS allows project-level reporting after the end of a biennium, these results no longer get rolled up to the higher EMSP – level in PIMS, particularly at the turn of a MTS period. This could potentially lead to under-reporting of results (see section 5.5). Project delays and extensions inevitably also came with increased coordination costs whereby more UNEP staff time was used to implement a particular project than was originally envisaged, such as in the LifeWeb project where this was covered with the increase in income to the project.

Financial management and administration

534. The EMSP Evaluation has not assessed the rigour of financial management of each EMSP project in detail, but based on the case studies, project-level finances seem to be, in the majority of cases, adequately managed. There was, however, variation among EMSP projects in the rigour of their financial reporting, ranging from detailed reporting against expenditure, to projects that basically had no financial data in PIMS¹²³. This made it difficult to assess expenditure against delivery, sources of funding, and fund allocation to subcontracts (legal instruments), and also to analyse the linkage between funds and activities particularly for 'umbrella' projects.
535. Since UNEP is not a resident UN agency, it usually lacks a direct presence in most countries does not routinely organize its work through country programmes¹²⁴, and has limited resources in UNEP Regional Offices (see section 5.2). Consequently, UNEP has generally subcontracted¹²⁵ or enabled packages of work through partners who have a more established presence, networks and relationships, relevant country or technical expertise, and greater resources particularly at national and local level. It is perceived that such partners are better able to deliver on the ground, particularly for local piloting and demonstration elements, rather than through direct implementation of initiatives through headquarters or UNEP Regional Office staff.
536. Most EMSP projects have been externally executed and managed through a number of Small Scale Funding Agreements (SFFAs)¹²⁶ for up to US\$ 150,000 although other forms of legal agreements, including Letters of Agreement (LOAs) and Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) have also been signed with executing partners for delivery of project components. The quality of the legal instruments associated with the case study projects examined by the evaluation varied greatly between and within projects and many are often not included in PIMS and hence there is very limited reporting back to the organization on what has been delivered through a legal instrument. In some cases expectations and deliverables, roles and responsibilities and timetable for delivery were clear with detailed budget estimates presented, but in other cases it was difficult to get a clear picture of which project components were delivered by partners or their value, and it was often unclear how individual legal instruments contribute to a project or the EMSP.

¹²³ Financial data is imported from IMIS to PIMS manually. This is likely to contribute to the variation in the rigour of financial reporting in PIMS. The fact that data is imported manually also increases the possibility of errors.

¹²⁴ Exceptions being Kenya where it has long-term projects and its Headquarters is based, or, to a lesser extent, where its Regional Offices are located, or where the DCSP has developed a country programme to address disaster and conflict relief.

¹²⁵ The 2013 OIOS *draft Audit of the Ecosystem Management Programme* notes that close to 100% of the EMSP implementation was outsourced through contracting to partners.

¹²⁶ This corroborates the 2013 *Audit of the UNEP Programme* that noted that UNEP acted as a catalyst and effectively engaged other partners in line with its mandate. It reported that many of the agreements were for less than US\$ 200,000 and found that related controls were adequate.

537. The Evaluation found indications that in few cases EMSP PoW funds were allocated to, and expended by projects that had no approved project document, or were indicated by QAS as projects requiring financial closure and thus were not included in PoW. EMSP funds allocated to Divisions other than DEPI for delivery of specific EMSP activities were often associated with Divisional costed workplans and thus it was not possible to say which projects the funds were used for or to which EAs they contributed. On several occasions, EMSP funds were also allocated to DEPI costed workplans, making it impossible to know which PoW activities the funds were used for. The Evaluation does not imply misappropriation or inappropriate use of funds, but based on its findings the link between financial records and the PoW is not always clear and allocation of EMSP funds is not fully transparent. If the relationship between financial expenditure and programmatic activity is not clear, there can be no meaningful assessment of 'value for money'. It is therefore important to ensure that adequate records of project expenditure are kept against project activities and that the financial management tools and processes at the organizational level facilitate this.
538. Evaluation interviewees raised several issues related financial management that negatively affected the EMSP delivery. One issue that was particularly highlighted was that even though UNEP encourages work across divisions and SPs, the financial management structures do not fully support this. The same was noted in the EMSP Workshop held in Naivasha in January 2014 and it was suggested that UNEP should "put a funding link where a collaborative link is needed". The Evaluation agrees with this suggestion. Collaboration among different Divisions within the same SP is enabled either through direct EMSP budget allocation to the respective Divisions or an ICA between the Divisions. However, it is not possible to report on this funding. This has been particularly problematic for projects that work across SPs within DEPI (such as GRASP) and is likely to reduce the frequency of collaboration (e.g. ecosystem valuation work and UN-REDD, and DCSP work to improve ecosystem resilience). Additionally, results achieved through such collaborations are seldom reported at a programme level.
539. Another frequently raised issue was slow release of funds from UNEP after project approval and signing of legal instruments with partners. This was seen to have negatively affected project delivery and even caused potential reputational damage to UNEP, especially in situations where country level activities were delayed due to slow release of funds (such as in the Argentina project). In some instances, donor approval and priorities were juxtaposed with UNEP's project approval processes; the need to sign off on donor agreements and start disbursing funds led, in one extreme case, to a situation where the project manager was contracted before off the Division Director signed the project document (see paragraph 466). In other cases, delays in approval of legal instruments caused delays in project delivery, which according to the evaluation interviews, reflected negatively on UNEP. The delays were due to several factors, such as the partnership review processes, changes in UNEP senior management particularly during the 2012-2013 biennium, and differing legal requirements of partners including within the UN system.
540. The records in PIMS did not include all legal instruments with partners, but only those that were identified as project milestones. Moreover, since progress reporting was not linked to a budget/legal instrument, it was not possible to verify what activities had been delivered through which legal instrument. Often legal instruments were of short duration and for small amounts, resulting in frequent revisions and adding to the administrative burden of projects and their partners.

5.4. Cooperation and Partnerships

541. UNEP has built and maintained a large, broad and impressive network of external partners, donors and other stakeholders through the EMSP. Many of these partnerships have been critical for delivery of EMSP activities at the local level and to mainstream Subprogramme results into global, regional and national level policies, plans and programmes in order to achieve immediate outcomes, and increase the likelihood of delivering medium-term outcomes and impact, despite limited resources.
542. The following section details key issues surrounding EMSP partnerships and the impact these have on EMSP performance.

5.4.1. Involvement of partners in implementation of Subprogramme and projects

543. Project partners were selected according to their relative strengths and ability to deliver specific activities/project components, and to fill gaps where UNEP was unable or at a disadvantage to deliver.

544. EMSP project documents usually make explicit mention of stakeholder participation in their project designs (reflecting the UNEP project document template) and identify a preliminary list of partners (including UNEP ROs). However, the actual involvement of Subprogramme partners has differed based on the financial resources available and activities to be undertaken but reflects a diversity of actors providing both technical know-how, and regional/national/local experience complementing that available in UNEP. Also, whilst project documents usually list stakeholders and partners, there were frequently no resources to consult many directly at the design stage, especially those at the site/local level (see section 5.3.2). This has limited the ownership of project designs although local partnerships are developed at a later date once financing is secured.
545. At the project level, partners have been heavily involved in implementation, and interviewees reported that many projects have operated in a highly participatory manner. The TEEB, Mangroves, Freshwater and IPBES projects were all commended by interviewees on partner and stakeholder participation.
546. Many projects had some form of project oversight structure (see paragraph 383) that involved partners and stakeholders to ensure participation and accountability. These served as a route for stakeholder/partner input to project design, planning and implementation, and facilitated mainstreaming, catalysis and up-scaling of results (although the effectiveness of these project-level structures in this regard has not been tracked). One particularly successful example at global level is that adopted by the TEEB project, which established a 15-person Advisory Board to provide strategic oversight and comprised a mixture of senior economists and conservationists that became one of the key fora for stakeholder input to the TEEB, providing an important level of internal quality control and guidance that strengthened the stakeholder appeal and sustainability of TEEB's outputs. The TEEB project has also had strong stakeholder ownership through its Coordination Group, which included the principal project funders (expanded over time), project team, and others, and provided very regular hands-on operational guidance. These two TEEB project arrangements could perhaps be examined as possible models for stakeholder engagement for other global normative UNEP projects.
547. Less institutionalized approaches have also been successful in facilitating partnerships and collaboration, which has helped delivery of the Subprogramme. For instance, the IPBES 'Stakeholders' Days' held in advance of Plenary meetings offered opportunities for a wide range of interested organizations to discuss their engagement in the IPBES initiative through informal exchange of views on aspects of the plenary meetings agendas, and for stakeholders to craft a joint statement for presentation to the IPBES Plenary meetings, and were applauded for enabling stakeholder participation by interviewees.
548. However, building and nurturing partnerships has required considerable investment of UNEP staff and resources, and partnership management has frequently been demanding and a challenge for some EMSP projects. Costs of partnerships have included reduced visibility (partners do not use UNEP logos) and UNEP being viewed primarily as a source of funding (which can create expectations which need to be carefully managed to avoid tensions). In addition, political differences or perceived competition between partners (e.g. between UN agencies with an environmental element to their remit) have made joint collaborations difficult on occasion, and some projects with a diverse array of partners have sometimes suffered from delays in reaching consensus on the way forward. The IPBES project, for instance, took longer than originally programmed as creation of the Platform required lengthy negotiations to reach agreement between national governments and other stakeholders, and establishing collaboration with local authorities, communities and political leaders in the Mau project required building trust which again took longer than anticipated due to the previous history of inter-ethnic violence in the Mau area.
549. Inevitably, partnerships/joint collaborations have also meant that in some cases it has been difficult to separate out and attribute UNEP's contributions from collaborative efforts and attribute results to UNEP, which is important for accountability (although sharing recognition for contributions does increase/facilitate project visibility, and opportunities for replication and up-scaling). Indeed partnerships usually mean that UNEP is not in complete control of, or able to guarantee, project delivery. However, overall, despite the costs, maintaining partnerships and networks has clearly been worthwhile and offset by opportunities for magnifying UNEP's efforts across the EMSP.

5.4.2. Perception of EMSP and UNEP as a partner among partners

550. Knowledge of the EMSP among partners was generally rather poor. The EMSP is essentially an internal UNEP coordinating framework, and there was little awareness of the EMSP's structure and purpose, or even its existence among external partners, including some long-standing ones (unless the interviewee had previously worked for UNEP). In some cases, the EMSP was viewed simply as a mechanism for financing of projects and there was little awareness of other activities/projects within the EMSP. External interviewees had limited knowledge of the EMSP (and particularly the boundaries between the EMSP and other subprogrammes), but

were more familiar with the traditional UNEP Divisions and Branches. This is partly because there is no 'face of the EMSP' – neither the SPC, nor anyone else in UNEP, has played a significant role in representing UNEP's ecosystem management work to partners and the wider world – and there is little understanding among partners over what the EMSP is trying to achieve as communication/information materials on the EMSP (available through the website, for instance) are not clear or up-to-date (see section 4.3.4). Greater awareness of the Subprogramme's purpose and structure through improved communication would help improve the effectiveness of partnerships and should be addressed.

551. Where external stakeholders have been more actively involved with UNEP, they expressed appreciation for the wider role UNEP has played through the EMSP, especially its normative work, and in-house expertise and access to technical assistance through regional and global knowledge networks. According to some interviewees, UNEP's involvement in a project gives a project 'credibility' and 'gravitas'. For some, UNEP is also seen as having an important role in exploring, testing and promoting new ideas, tools and approaches to ecosystem management that other UN agencies or partners do not necessarily have the interest, remit or flexibility to undertake. UNEP's convening power is also seen as a particular advantage to partners. This is illustrated by the choice of host for the IPBES Interim Secretariat, where, according to interviewees, there were a number of possibilities but UNEP was seen as the best choice because of its mandate as the UN agency leading on environmental issues and its ability to bring and hold a diverse mix of stakeholders together.
552. Overall, the partnerships and collaborations and networks the EMSP has generated and supported were considered to have helped build considerable 'social capital' by interviewees with increased capacity of partner organisations and individuals to carry out successful fund raising, other institutional management and administrative work and most importantly increased capacity for ecosystem management through its partnerships and networks (although these have not been measured directly through the EMSP).
553. However, it should be noted that partnership with UNEP is not necessarily viewed as without challenges by partners, and negative views work against effective delivery. For instance, common complaints against UNEP as a partner include slow and cumbersome administration with delays and shortfalls in funding (to the point where a partner in one project nearly pulled out). There was also a perception of a 'lack of fidelity' to agreed courses of actions mentioned for one project, which negatively impacted UNEP's credibility and reputation. Interviewees also raised a number of largely institutional issues relating to partnerships and collaborations with MEAs, UN agencies and others. Most of these apply across the whole Programme of Work, not just the EMSP and have been discussed by previous evaluations and assessments (see Annex 3). For instance, in the case of the MEAs, UNEP's role is to facilitate their implementation but not to influence internal processes or their decisions, but according to interviewees there is often a sense of frustration with UNEP on joint initiatives because 'UNEP's instinct is to control and lead' and that it is 'not catalytic enough', that it can intrude into areas that are better covered by others who have a more specific mandate. Overall, working relationships at the institutional level with the MEAs, UN agencies and other partners were described as 'mixed', although at individual staff level, cooperation and collaboration are said to be generally very good. Suggestions were made that UNEP needs to be more collaborative and consultative on issues with its partners at the institutional level.

5.4.3. Impact of partnerships on delivery of the EMSP

554. Involvement of a wide range of partners has helped promote project ownership and buy-in, which has also helped promote replication and up-scaling, sustainability and impact prospects of UNEP's capacity building efforts.
555. Partnerships and multi-stakeholder networks have helped to leverage UNEP's work by facilitating a common understanding of issues and helped to get messages across more widely and effectively. These have been particularly important for the EMSP's efforts to strengthen the use of scientific evidence in policy development e.g. in the IPBES project, and to integrate environmental issues beyond the environment sector, particularly into the financial sector. Other advantages gained by EMSP projects from partnerships include increased project visibility, and help leveraging funding and co-finance. Effective partnerships have also helped support project resilience. For instance, there were significant changes to roles within the NGO partnership associated with the Argentina project but different partners were able to take over as others had to drop out enabling the project to continue. In addition, partnerships have also promoted cost-effectiveness through eliminating the need to build new systems for national and local delivery, since projects can rely on existing partner structures, and avoid duplication.
556. In some cases, specific factors were reported to have contributed to successful partnerships, which may offer valuable lessons for other UNEP projects. The TEEB project, for instance, has employed a high-level charismatic leader/champion as Team Leader who was well-respected within the financial and business communities which

greatly facilitated access to these sectors (and high-level government officials) and provided an opportunity to promote the TEEB case to audiences traditionally less receptive to the environmental messages (in the TEEB case the financial sector).

5.4.4. Influence of partnerships with key groups

i. UN agencies, and expert centres

557. Although UNEP has relatively strong long-standing partnerships with other UN agencies¹²⁷ there appears to have been no overall strategy for engagement with UN agencies across the Subprogramme; rather collaboration has been on a project-by-project basis and is not consistent (there is no mention of UNDP taking up the tools&methods in the EMSP PoW documents, so this seems to be mainly a project-document level issue). Despite good collaborations on some projects, such as IPBES (involving UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP, FAO and formalised in a Collaborative Partnership Agreement), and on TEEB (involving UNDP through the Biofin Project¹²⁸), there is clearly increased need and scope for collaboration with other UN agencies on EMSP projects. For instance, UNESCO has a very strong programme in the aquatic sciences – the International Hydrological Programme 129 which could be better linked with the EMSP’s work on freshwater ecosystems.
558. Overall, there was a strong feeling from interviewees that improved strategic partnerships between UNEP and other UN agencies on ecosystem management would improve project delivery and impact for both parties, and such partnerships need to be further explored and defined. Interviewees recommended that interagency cooperation on specific EMSP projects should be routinely raised at high level within these organisations to ensure smooth operation of joint projects and to identify synergies and opportunities for cooperation/collaboration.
559. Although interviewees reported that UNEP had tried to bring in more ecosystem thinking into the broader development agendas of the UN, including through the EMSP, they were uncertain how much impact this had had, and it may be an area that UNEP needs to examine, specifically to what extent the ecosystem approach has been adopted by other UN agency agendas through targeted EMSP actions.
560. Several UN-related expert centres have been important partners providing much appreciated and high quality support to EMSP projects, notably UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)¹³⁰ in the UK and UNEP-Danish Hydrological Institute (UNEP-DHI) Center for Water and Environment in Denmark. The collaboration with these two institutions has added considerable value, principally in terms of specialist technical capacity to the EMSP and their inputs have been critical to the delivery of important components of the Subprogramme.

ii. Partnerships with governments, civil society and private sector

561. UNEP responds to the decisions of member states of its Governing Council (now United National Environment Assessment - UNEA), and consequently its traditional partners are largely governments. However, non-governmental stakeholder participation is actively promoted by UNEP. In the EMSP, this has been most explicitly through projects where UNEP is piloting a community-based natural resources management approach as a component of support provided to the establishment and/or management of a protected area, for instance in the form of local alternative employment opportunities, such as GRASP that promoted ecotourism ventures to promote conservation of the Mountain Gorillas. However, most EMSP projects have made efforts to link with ‘wider public’ audiences beyond this, although the effectiveness and impact of these civil society engagement activities have not been assessed.
562. UNEP also has developed and/or maintained strong partnerships with academia and research bodies both globally and at the project level. These groups have been heavily involved in the development and review many of the technical reports produced by the EMSP. For instance, the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) has been involved in helping to mainstream ecosystem management into curricula at universities around the world using EMSP results (publications). However, there was a strong view that the EMSP need to collaborate more with universities (even schools) on awareness-raising activities and

¹²⁷ UNEP is also the focal point for environment within the UN Development Group (UNDG), plays a key role in interagency initiatives such as UN-Water, and under the One UN approach UNEP works to coordinate with other UN agencies in countries where it operates, with UNEP assessments and technical input being used to bring environmental issues into UNDAFs (all of which generate demands and expectations of its Subprogrammes).

¹²⁸ http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/environmentandenergy/projects_and_initiatives/biodiversity-finance-initiative/

¹²⁹ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/ihp/>

¹³⁰ The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is a collaboration between the UNEP and WCMC 2000, a UK-based charity. UNEP-WCMC is UNEP’s specialist biodiversity assessment arm, and the Centre for UNEP’s collaboration with WCMC 2000.

partnerships promoted with these groups promoted more due to the catalytic role they could play for EMSP results. External partnerships with media organizations and journalists have also been strong and important for some projects, notably the MTC project.

563. The private sector is traditionally not a strong constituency for UNEP and to date UNEP has supported the development of relatively few private-sector partnerships through the EMSP, although there has been some excellent targeted work at the global level through the TEEB (e.g. TEEB for Business - report which included input from business leaders) and the 'Integrating ecosystems into financial sector operations' project which has targeted banks, insurance companies and other financial - sector institutions. Both of these have been judged successful in part because they have employed staff with relevant backgrounds and were able to 'talk the talk', although it is still not clear whether this is being translated into changes in national budgets and economic policies. There is also a specific PoW output targeted at the private sector (PoW Output 336 for 2012-2013), of which the principle activity for delivery has been the Argentina project. The Argentina project has built good partnerships with companies in the food production sector (specifically wheat). Also, the Freshwater project, engaged with the private sector in some areas, e.g. work on water and energy and market-based incentives on freshwater ecosystem services, but no dedicated effort appears to have been made to engage key private sector players at the demonstration sites or globally, and the project's focus has been on government and non-government institutions.
564. The private sector is arguably the most important actor in terms of achieving real world change as it is the cause of much of the uncontrolled damage to ecosystem services. However, awareness of the economic costs and benefits of maintaining and restoring ecosystem services among the business community is still considered too low, particularly at the individual business level (companies need to understand how they specifically can benefit and what practical actions they can take). Also, engagement with the private sector poses particular problems as UNEP's due diligence process can be exceptionally drawn out, leading to undue delays in project implementation and reputational damage, and it and constrains private sector collaboration. Overall, linkage with the private sector has not been clearly strategized for most EMSP projects and this should be an increased focus for future EMSP work.

iii. Partnerships with donors

565. Partnerships with donors have obviously been important for the delivery of all projects, but in some cases relationships have extended beyond the simple donor-recipient arrangement, with some interesting models developed by the EMSP. In the TEEB project, for instance, there was very much a two-way flow of benefits between the TEEB project and the key donors, who were members of the project's Coordination Group. Maintaining the Group paid dividends in terms of iterative fine-tuning (important with evolving/novel issues), flexibility over management and spending of donor funds, and helped leverage significant additional funds from donors due to the levels of trust built with key donors on the Coordination Group. Importantly, it helped ensure that the TEEB project remained relevant to donor needs and wishes and was able to capture these and led to greater traction in international fora, such as CBD CoPs, with donors acting as champions for TEEB at these meetings, e.g. discussions on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and the Aichi Targets. Indeed, communication and engagement with donors and the linking on policy development were seen as key factors in the success of the TEEB project. Other EMSP projects could possibly examine such an arrangement if appropriate.

iv. South-South partnerships

566. The use of South-South cooperation is viewed as a useful strategy for partner countries to engage and learn from one another on specific topics, including ecosystem management, and to help build important networks and share ideas. Unfortunately, this is not emphasised in EMSP project documents, and few of those examined specifically mention South-South collaboration and it is not well reported in PIMS or PPRs. The main relevant activities for supporting such partnerships through the EMSP have been regional capacity building workshops, regional meetings such as through Regional Sea and MEAs consultations, and it is implicit in transboundary activities and promotion of learning across the sites such as through the GRASP project (see section 5.1.4).

5.5. Monitoring and Reporting

5.5.1. Reporting Arrangements

567. Reporting on Subprogramme delivery is the responsibility of the SPC under the overall guidance of UNEP's Quality Assurance Section (QAS). The EMSPC has been supported by EMSP team members, by PPR focal points for each Division, by reporting focal points assigned for each EMSP output and EA, and by project managers. One or more staff members in each of DEWA, DELC, DTIE and DCPI were assigned as reporting officers for outputs 333 335, 336 & 311 respectively in 2012-2013 reflecting the delegation of these EMSP outputs to accountable Divisions¹³¹ (Paragraph 253). In practice reporting at EMSP level has been primarily undertaken by staff providing assistance to the EMSPC and with the guidance and support of the DEPI PPR focal point. Some reporting focal points and other divisional PPR focal points appear to have played a limited role in EMSP reporting.
568. Reporting at the project level is the responsibility of the project manager. Reporting on cross-divisional projects has sometimes been a source of friction where the manager has responsibility for timely reporting but has no authority over staff in other divisions.

5.5.2. Monitoring & Reporting System

569. The main tool for day-to-day project and subprogramme monitoring and reporting is PIMS. In addition, six-monthly and, later, annual Programme Performance Reviews (PPRs) produced under the oversight of QAS provide a useful summary of the performance of the EMSP over time and highlight changes in reporting style as part of the UNEP reform process. They also provide a brief account of factors affecting delivery of the PoW and programme performance.

Reporting at Project Level

570. Project delivery is reported in PIMS on the basis of a project's results frameworks or its logframe comprising project outcomes, indicators, outputs and milestones. PIMS project reporting includes narrative sections on project performance highlights, lessons learned and implementation challenges, a finance overview, supporting documentation as well as rated sections addressing selected indicators of programmatic and budget performance and project cycle management which may draw attention to the need for management action.
571. The approach to project performance ratings has changed over the MTS period. These were initially based on self-assessments by project managers, then manager's ratings subject to review by QAS¹³² and the SPC, then, from June 2011 on delivery of project milestones. Progress against milestones as well as narrative texts can be continuously updated by project managers, Fund Management Officers (FMOs) and other authorised project collaborators, and is typically consolidated at least twice a year in the lead up to the June and December reporting deadlines.
572. The quality of PIMS reporting was very poor in the first biennium in terms of structure and completeness, both at project and programme level. In addition, many projects, particularly legacy projects, had failed to develop milestones and these had to be retrofitted to projects over the first biennium. Reporting has improved in the 2012-2013 biennium and PIMS milestones, outputs and outcomes generally now reflect the latest project logframe. However there remains some variability with regard to internal coherence of project logframes and the quality of indicators and milestones (Paragraphs 456 & 576). Some project managers reported that the limited narrative fields in PIMS made it difficult to properly capture or explain project delivery. This Evaluation also found that it was difficult to link project expenditure to activities as financial data were often incomplete or out of date and many reporting officers did not attach contracts such as small scale funding agreements (SFFAs) related to specific project deliverables.
573. A minority of project managers are also required to produce or contribute to narrative reports to donors on the basis of extra-budgetary funding. Some managers found such reporting to be a useful stocktaking exercise as a basis for adaptive management. However, others considered reporting (like preparation of project documents) to be a bureaucratic exercise that took time and effort that could be better spent on delivery. It is clear from the case studies that good narrative reports can serve to reinforce institutional memory as well as serve as a learning tool, and these played an important role in ensuring continuity where there were staff changes at project level.
574. There have been limited efforts to monitor project effects beyond the immediate project outputs, and where applicable, direct project contributions to EMSP outputs and EAs. This in part reflects the inherent difficulties with monitoring uptake of broadly targeted normative outputs such as tools and guidelines and the long-term

¹³¹ And apparent further delegation related to output 335 for which DEPI was the original accountable division.

¹³² Quality control is based on the organisation and completeness of information rather than its accuracy.

nature of change and difficulty in establishing baseline scenarios in ecosystem management interventions which are typically complex and involve multiple stakeholders.

Project Milestones

575. Projects have been required to include milestones¹³³ towards their outputs in project logframes since the start of the MTS 2010-2013 cycle, with prevailing guidance indicating that there should be one milestone per six month period towards each project output and that milestones should be 'one dimensional', addressing one easily verified project deliverable¹³⁴. Timely milestone delivery has been used as a basis to rate project performance in PIMS, with non-delivery of more than 80% of due milestones being associated with an 'off track' rating. They were also used for several PPR reports as a basis to gauge overall EMSP delivery (Paragraph 583).
576. The case studies undertaken for this Evaluation have drawn attention to a number of issues with the formulation and use of milestones. Specifically:
- Milestones frequently fail to capture a logical progression of deliverables towards a given output and outcomes, some output-level milestones are formulated as outcomes that go beyond the project output to which they are supposed to lead (Paragraph 456), and there has been little if any use of milestones to track delivery of intermediate outcomes (See also, Paragraph 574);
 - Combining a limited number of milestones is not considered a sufficient basis to capture performance in complex projects particularly for projects linking field interventions and normative work or working at multiple sites;
 - All milestones are weighed equally in establishing project performance and programme delivery, despite some being very much simpler to deliver than others;
 - Late milestone delivery is sometimes associated with delayed project starts, causing resentment around the associated 'off track' rating, since the project approval process and timing is beyond the control of project managers; and,
 - Strong management response¹³⁵ to poor ratings (Paragraph 457 and 473) has generated an incentive to establish simple milestones that fall short of the associated output and has compromised the use of milestones to gauge programme delivery and undermined their value as project management tool.

Reporting at Subprogramme Level

i. PIMS

577. Subprogramme level reporting in PIMS reports progress towards EAs based on one or more indicators, and towards PoW outputs, based on targets and a brief narrative summary. Reporting on outputs in the 2010-2011 biennium is very patchy, reflecting the limited programme delivery at this stage.
578. The PIMS structure includes sections for an overview, performance remarks and lessons learned for each EA that have been completed in a cursory manner. At subprogramme level, the structure includes sections for highlights, performance constraints, management actions, and IMDIS deliverables and the first two of these sections have been briefly addressed for the EMSP in the 2010-2011 biennium.
579. This Evaluation found that the approach to EMSP-level reporting in PIMS is rather anecdotal in nature and it is not always possible to map results reported at project level onto those reported at programme level¹³⁶. Reported EA and output level contributions cannot always be traced up from the project level reporting (in PIMS) and appear to be based either on narrative project reports and/or discussions with reporting focal points or project managers. As a result some projects are very strongly represented in PIMS (and PPR) reporting while others appear to have been overlooked¹³⁷. The evaluation of the reporting of the case study projects found that projects are sometimes reported to have delivered against outputs and EAs to which they were not expressly aligned. There are also issues with premature reporting and some questions of eligibility of some reported contributions (see also '*under-reporting and over-reporting*' below).

¹³³ The 2012 Programme Manual defines a milestone 'a scheduled event representing progress towards the achievement of project outputs and outcomes, and a benchmark against which the progress of the project will be measured'.

¹³⁴ The Formative Evaluation of the 2010-2011 further recommended that milestones should be set also to track progress towards outcomes – a recommendation that was accepted.

¹³⁵ In direct contravention of advice in the programme manual.

¹³⁶ These findings are evidenced by the project case studies.

¹³⁷ An alternative interpretation is that a number of EMSP project failed to contribute to outputs and EAs.

580. Previous evaluations of the MTS as well as the EMSP Audit have found that that programmatic objectives across the PoW lacked clarity for measurement of accomplishments, that EAs were pitched at too high a level and that Indicators are poorly formulated particularly at EA level (Annex 3; see section 3.6.2 and/ or section 5.1.2). Difficulties in reporting are compounded by the structure of the EMSP including the weak linkages between projects and outputs and between outputs and EA indicators (Paragraph 440).
581. In addition, there have been differences in interpretation by project managers as to whether or at what point a sectoral or local result at output level is eligible to be counted as a contribution at EA or national level (Paragraph 455 and section 4.3), leading to uneven reporting. PIMS records at project level are not sufficiently detailed to substantiate whether a contribution is eligible.

ii. Programme Performance Reviews

582. Six-monthly programme performance reviews (PPRs) provide a useful and reflective account of programme delivery across the UNEP PoW with a good analysis of internal and external implementation challenges and relevant management recommendations. Programme performance is addressed in narrative sections as well as through performance ratings for each EA. Narrative reporting tends to be anecdotal in approach and echoes the uneven inputs to project and EMSP reporting on PIMS, though there is some evidence that greater efforts have been made to verify reported delivery (e.g. by the SPC). The PPRs do not stress the linkages between the Subprogrammes.
583. Several different approaches have been used to measure programme performance over the period covered by the Evaluation. Programme performance ratings from 2010 were based on performance at output level which was rolled up from ratings for associated projects provided by project managers. Ratings from June 2011 were based on performance against milestones at project level providing a more objective approach. However this was undermined by weaknesses in project milestones (Paragraph 576), by the limited coherence in the EMSP between project, PoW (output and EA levels (Paragraph 440)), and by the fact that not all EMSP projects under implementation for a given assessment period had developed milestones (particularly in the first biennium). The PPRs from 2010-2013 consistently indicate that the EMSP has performed less well than other subprogrammes but flaws in the rating system undermine the validity of this finding.
584. The ratings in the December 2013 PPR are based on delivery against EAs using the indicators for the period 2012-2013. Contributions to EA(c) were not reported in view of an absence of reliable data at indicator level¹³⁸ (despite some very good work under the umbrella of this EA). The problem of measurability is at least partly due to the EA having been set at too high a level.

iii. Revised Indicator Baselines

585. Baselines for delivery against EA-level indicators were revised in the PoW 2012-2013. However it has not been possible to verify associated delivery since there is no systematic record of which counted contributions counted, echoing the anecdotal approach to reporting in PIMS and PPRs.

Under-reporting and Over-reporting

586. The prevailing programme performance system is associated with several types of under-reporting though it was beyond the scope of the Evaluation to investigate the extent of under-reporting to the EMSP in a systematic manner.
587. An immediate cause of under-reporting within a PoW cycle is failure to report contributions to the EMSP made by projects that are aligned under other Subprogrammes, including projects on disaster risk reduction (DCSP) and climate change adaption (CCSP) that are promoting an ecosystem approach as a solution (Paragraph 179). One example of a well-established project that can be expected to have made contributions to the EMSP is the *UNEP-UNDP Poverty Environment Initiative* (PEI) under the EGSP, whose expected outcomes include mainstreaming of environment in national policies and increased public sector investment in environment.
588. Similarly, some of the larger and more complex EMSP projects, including several of the case study projects, had the potential to contribute to more than one PoW EA but have reported alignment and contributions to just against one EA since 2012 based on prevailing guidance in the Programme Manual.

¹³⁸ An earlier PPR reported that EA(c) was not achievable on the basis of the indicator established for the first biennium since this was beyond UNEP's control.

589. These types of under-reporting have been driven by accounting limitations in PIMs which constrains a project to reporting under just one EA (Paragraph 501) despite acknowledgment that from a conceptual point of view a project may deliver against more than one EA and more than one PoW output. Whilst there is an understandable need to make sure there is no duplication/double reporting of project activities by reporting the same results under different subprogrammes or EAs, it can be difficult for some projects to identify where best to report.
590. Two other types of under-reporting are i) contributions such as policy outcomes catalysed by projects but which are delivered after closure of the project (Paragraph 463)¹³⁹ and ii) projects extended into a new PoW biennium or MTS period whose reported results at project level may contribute to earlier outputs or EAs. While contributions of extended projects are currently captured at project level on PIMS, there is no mechanism to consolidate such contributions at the EMSP level once a given PoW period is completed.
591. Finally the contributions of UNEP's large portfolio of GEF projects - particularly International Waters and Biodiversity focal area projects – were not systematically captured in PoW reporting during the period 2010-2013 (Paragraph 188), though there are a few cases where results of GEF projects have been reported when there is no other relevant work to report¹⁴⁰. The contribution of the GEF portfolio will be recognised from 2014.
592. The consequences of under-reporting include:
- Failure to capture and showcase the full extent and range of UNEP's experience in ecosystem management;
 - Failure to build linkages and generate synergies amongst projects and Subprogrammes working in the same country or region or on similar themes;
 - Reduced opportunities for organisational learning on ecosystem management.
593. There have also been a few cases of over-reporting at the EMSP level in PIMS and the PPRs, including: i) premature reporting at output or EA level, particularly during in the first programme biennium when projects started later than anticipated, and ii) reporting of the same results (as opposed to different results under the same project) against more than one output or EA¹⁴¹. In general, over-reporting at EMSP level appears to be a result of failures in the reporting system rather than deliberate exaggeration of delivery, and is compounded by the overlapping nature of outputs and EAs which emphasise means rather than ends.

Evaluations

594. The EMSP has been included in a number of UNEP programme evaluations, including an OIOS Audit of the Ecosystem Management Programme, which were considered during the inception phase of this Evaluation (Paragraph 0 & Annex 3). Issues affecting subprogramme progress have also been raised in PPRs and were discussed at occasional meetings between the SPCs and QAS during the first PoW biennium. Many of the issues raised have been addressed during the four years covered by this Evaluation.
595. Many of the EMSP project documents anticipate a mid-term review/evaluation and final evaluation and budgets are allocated, but in practice few project evaluations have been undertaken to date¹⁴² even where funding is available or where the desirability of a mid-term review/evaluation was raised by the PRC. The value of a mid-term evaluation or review is well illustrated by the TEEB project where the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations helped improve the delivery and impact of the project and have been instrumental in shaping future TEEB's direction and activities (Phase III) for the MTS 2014-2017. Many of the EMSP projects approved in 2010 are coming to an end in 2014 and will be required to undergo some form of terminal evaluation in line with UNEP policy, so the number of evaluations of EMSP is expected to rise considerably during the MTS 2014-2017.

¹³⁹ This is associated with the EMSP EAs and some outputs being set at outcome level.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. Work on access and benefit sharing under PoW 2012-2103 Output 335.

¹⁴¹ The December 2012 PPR notes that progress on two EA(c) outputs was reported using results from a project aligned under different outputs since there was no ongoing project contributing to the two EA(c) outputs.

¹⁴² TEEB and the Mt.Kailash project. An evaluation of the Central America mangroves project is underway.

6. List of Annexes

Annex 1 – Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToRs)

Annex 2 – Evaluation timetable

Annex 3 – Summary of previous evaluation findings relevant to the EMSP

Annex 4 – Documents reviewed

Annex 5 – Evaluation Matrix

Annex 6 – List of interviewees

Annex 7 – Summary of linkage between EM and main MEAs

Annex 8 - EAs and PoW Outputs 2010-11, 2012-13 and 2014-15

Annex 9 - List of projects in the EMSP during 2010-2013

Annex 10 – Alignment and contribution of the EMSP portfolio projects to the EAs and PoW outputs for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013