

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: THE ENVIRONMENT FUND



What is the Environment Fund?

The **Environment Fund** is our core source of flexible, un-earmarked funds. It allows us to carry out our mandate of being the leading global authority on the environment, with the power to positively influence government policies and to drive the global conversation on the environment. It helps us support countries to deliver on the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

What is the Environment Fund used for?

The Environment Fund provides the bedrock for our work worldwide. It is used for the identification of emerging environmental issues and innovative solutions, advocacy and awareness-raising, capacity-building and results-focused programme management and oversight. It also supports our convening power in bringing together governments, the private sector and civil society to advance the global environmental agenda, for example through the **UN Environment Assembly**.

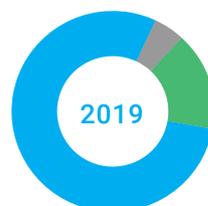
Of the fund, 85 per cent is used for the implementation of the **seven thematic sub-programmes** of our Programme of Work, approved by our 193 Member States. The rest supports strategic direction, management and programme support, which are critical for implementing the organisation's vision and ensuring robust oversight and delivery.

How is the level of the Environment Fund budget determined?

The UN Environment Programme's Member States approve both the Programme of Work and the Budget at the UN Environment Assembly. The level of the Environment Fund is based on the Programme of Work. For the biennium 2018-2019 the budget was USD 135.5 million per year, and for 2020-2021, the approved budget is USD 100 million per year.

How is the Environment Fund financed?

As an organisation, we depend on voluntary contributions for 95 per cent of our income. The Environment Fund itself is financed entirely by voluntary contributions from our Member States.



82% EARMARKED RESOURCES

14% ENVIRONMENT FUND

4% UN REGULAR BUDGET

Total income by funding type

As the success of our work highly depends on the contributions made, we encourage all 193 Member States to contribute their fair share to our Environment Fund. A universal membership carries a universal responsibility.

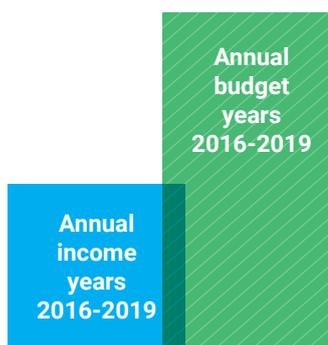
What is each Member State's "fair share" of the Environment Fund (the VISC)?

The "fair share" that each Member State is encouraged to contribute to the Environment Fund is represented by the Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions (VISC). The VISC was established in 2002 by the Member States, to broaden the base of contributions and to enhance predictability of funding to the Environment Fund.

Simply put, the VISC-level is a percentage figure that is applied to the Environment Fund budget to determine each Member State's fair share of the budget. The VISC-level is based on the UN Scale of Assessments, but it also considers other factors, such as previous high levels of contributions and country-specific socio-economic factors.

For more detailed information and for proposed levels of contributions for each Member State, please refer to the VISC information document **UNEP/EA.4/INF/11** prepared for the fourth UN Environment Assembly, and **here** for the 2020-2021 VISC-levels.

Top-15 contributors provide around 90% of Environment Fund income



Environment Fund income is only around 50% of approved budget

Top contributors to the Environment Fund (2016-2019 contributions combined)

Ranking	Country	Total USD million received (2016-2019)
1	Germany	33.9
2	Netherlands	30.6
3	France	30.2
4	USA	24.3
5	Sweden	20.1
6	Belgium	18.3
7	United Kingdom	16.8
8	Switzerland	15.9
9	Norway	12.0
10	Canada	9.4
11	Japan	9.3
12	Denmark	7.2
13	Finland	5.6
14	Italy	5.6
15	China	4.0

How much has each Member State contributed to the Environment Fund?

To check each Member State's contribution to the Environment Fund, visit our [contributions page](#), where you find information from 1973 up until today.

Why focus on the Environment Fund, aren't all funds important?

The Environment Fund is our only source of flexible funding that is not tied to specific projects. It allows for delivery on our core mandate and an efficient, effective and balanced implementation of our Programme of Work. It helps us plan and allocate funds to where they are needed most and where we make the biggest difference on global environmental challenges.

How can Member States contribute to the Environment Fund?

Payment against an invoice: Member state sends a written request specifying the amount and currency to be invoiced and makes a payment based on the invoice provided by the UN Environment Programme Secretariat.

Direct payment: Member State makes a direct payment to the Environment Fund bank account including a reference to the Fund (40FEL), the year for which the contribution is made and the name of the Government.

Payment based on a written agreement: the Member State and the Secretariat prepare a written agreement to define the amounts and frequency of the contribution to the Environment Fund.

UN Pledging Conference: the Member State pledges to the Environment Fund at the annual UN Pledging Conference in New York which normally takes place towards the end of the year. The pledges made are for the following year.

For more details, please see [Guidelines for Contributing to the Environment Fund](#) (several language versions).

Number of member States contributing their fair share to the Environment Fund (2014-2019)

Fair share Contributions	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
100% and above of fair share/VISC	38	30	37	37	48	27
90-99% of fair share/VISC	9	2	2	1	1	11
50 to 89% of fair share/VISC	11	16	16	17	8	9
1-49% of fair share/VISC	39	44	38	39	34	34
Total contributors	97	92	93	94	91	81
Number of Member States with no contributions	95	100	99	98	101	111

as at 02/03/2020

Who can we contact regarding the Environment Fund?

For more information on the Environment Fund, please send an email to kati.autere@un.org and joanne.maina@un.org, with a copy to lucy.wahome@un.org.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/funding-and-partnerships>

