Evaluation of the UNEP Sub-programme Environment under Review

EVALUATION REPORT
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Abbreviations

COP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCPI	UNEP Division of Communication and Public Information
DELC	UNEP Division of Environmental Laws and Conventions
DEPI	UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation
DEWA	UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessments
DRC	UNEP Division of Regional Cooperation
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EC	European Commission
EOU	Evaluation Office (of UNEP)
EU	European Union
EUR	Environment Under Review
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FE	Final Evaluation
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GHO	Global Health Observatory
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
IEG	International Environmental Goals
ILO	International Labour Organisation (UN)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRP	International Resource Panel
IW:LEARN	International Waters – Learning Exchange And Resource Network
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
MTS	Medium-term Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIMS	Programme Information and Management System
REIN	Regional Environment Information Networks
POW	Programme of Work
RO	Regional Office
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	Sub-programme
SPI	Science Policy Interface Officer
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWAP	Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
WHO	World Health Organization

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Executive Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Office (EOU) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has carried out an evaluation of the Environment under Review (EUR) Sub-programme (SP). The evaluation assessed the performance of the Sub-programme against the Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017 and reflected on the (MTS) period 2018-21 in terms of looking forward to the EUR's potential contribution during the period.

The EUR SP was examined against the standard **evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact,** and the factors and processes which have affected the Sub-programme delivery. The objective of the evaluation was to fulfil two main purposes: a) supporting **accountability** by analysing the performance of the Sub-programme, and b) contributing to **institutional learning** by providing formative reflections based on the evaluation findings.

The evaluation used multiple data collection and analysis methods and took an iterative approach to gather and analyse diverse perspectives to assess UNEP performance. Evidence has been obtained and triangulated from document reviews, meetings at UNEP offices in Nairobi and Geneva, remote interviews, case studies, surveys, and web metrics.

2. KEY FINDINGS

Relevance (Responsive to UNEP and global situation, needs and design/formulation)
The evaluation assessed relevance through consideration of the EUR SP formulation process (the logic of the design, the strategic intent), and positioning of the EUR SP services and products against UNEP's stated comparative advantages. It examined the relevance of the major areas of work undertaken within the sub-programme.

Sub Programme 7 - Environment Under Review (EUR SP) is highly relevant to the current global environmental agenda and needs, including: UNEP's evolved mandate as per UNEA, (Rio+20 and recent global policy directives concerning UNEP's mandate, OIOS 2019 Report)[i], post 2015 and Agenda 2030 mandate, the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the existential threats due to climate change and biodiversity loss and highlighting other emerging priorities such as zoonotic diseases.

According to the 2014-17 MTS, EUR SP products and services (science-based work: assessments, monitoring and data collection) aimed at providing guidance to member governments on reporting commitments to international environmental goals (IEGs) including the Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Since 2017, countries and the UN agencies have fully adopted the 2030 Agenda and monitoring the SDGs. UNEP *is the Custodian Agency for reporting data on 26 SDG indicators* and ensuring that the narrative of the SDGs captures the environmental dimension of sustainable development. Of these 26 SDG indicators, 20 required methodology development. Developing SDG indicator measurement methodologies enables UNEP to fulfil its international obligations toward the follow-up and review of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

The SDGs present an unprecedented opportunity for UNEP to support the 2030 agenda. UNEP plays an important role in the follow-up and review of the progress in implementing the environmental dimension of sustainable development through assessment processes, such as the Global Environment Outlook, as a contribution to the Global Sustainable Development Report and to the annual Sustainable Development Goals Report, all of which should support the overall

High-level Political Forum (HLPF) follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These include the provision of policy-relevant information.

This relevance has been highlighted more recently by the Secretary General's (SG's) July 2019 High-Level Policy Forum (HLPF) on SDGs in which the persistent data *gap* in developing countries was emphasized and which reflected on the ongoing limitation of the Least Developed Countries' (LDC) ability to monitor and report on SDGs[ii].

EUR SP needs assessments and targeting
However, while the EUR SP portfolio is highly relevant for positioning UNEP to realize its comparative advantages, there are divergent views of the relevance of the portfolio content with respect to actual needs. The evaluation team assessed relevance to the identified target audiences and reaffirmed that target audiences for the different products/services and the thematic focus (technical assistance and capacity-building support to national government on assessments, data and information management/monitoring systems including SDGs) are not sufficiently identified or entirely fit for purpose. Low levels of use of EUR SP outputs were reported by evaluation respondents. Along these lines, the evaluation identified *disconnect between the initial intent and the operationalization of the portfolio*.

The surveys to National Focal Points (NFP) and Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) members disclosed divergent views on utility and fit of EUR SP. Among CPR survey respondents, 60% are of the view that the EUR SP is strongly or slightly relevant and fit for its purpose. The NFP survey, as might be expected, revealed a demand for focus and concentration on national work/data/assessment and focus on national strategies and programs.

There is a strong consensus that the EUR SP services should influence UNEP's strategic planning and respond to raise emerging issues. The actual EUR SP formulation process was neither needs-based nor fully mapped against the Rio+20 mandate (OIOS 2019). During the last two MTS formulations, for instance, whilst the EUR SP portfolio was subject to alignment processes and, as such, subject to continuous improvement towards integrating the Future We Want mandate (OIOS 2019), there have been no major amendments to EUR SP in response to the Rio+20 mandate or Agenda 2030. The evaluation verified that the audiences, the demand and expectations for EUR SP work and fitness for purpose have not been adequately assessed.

While EUR SP purportedly hosts "enabling" work, with a mix of tools, products and thematic support, these have not been targeted or piloted based on a needs assessment. The EUR SP portfolio is constrained by a lack of organizational clarity on a number of issues, including on regional and country-level work on capacity-building (in key areas of-assessment, data, information monitoring [data science]), and SDGs (monitoring support). EUR SP work should be developed based on needs assessments and in close collaboration with Science-Policy Interface Officers (SPIs) in regions and keeping in mind UNDAF/UNSDCF processes in regions and countries.

The evaluation has shown the EUR SP flagship projects, many based on recent UNEA resolutions are in a development stage (Environment Live, GEO-6, SDGs work) and need institutional clarity and management support for budgets, country / regional presence as well as cross-cutting support areas: communications, results monitoring, capacity-building and knowledge management work.

A key observation is that the EUR SP portfolio of projects are largely focused on upstream and normative work i.e. methodologies for SDG monitoring and global evidence for policy needs, but less on technical support and capacity building needs in the regions at the national level. A central challenge highlighted by the evaluation is thus concerned with EUR SP engagement with, and

technical support to regions and countries. EUR SP is said to be less active in regions and countries and providing ad hoc responses to demands for technical assistance and capacity development (largely through ad hoc financing and the former GEF CCCD portfolio; a funding stream recently discontinued).

While EUR SP is framed as the "enabler" in MTS documents the evaluation finds the understanding of this term is variable among staff. The cross-cutting nature of evidence for policy work was not reflected in planning documents, sub-programme setup and/or resourcing operations. The "enabling" elements of EUR SP (capacity building, knowledge management, environmental monitoring) however, should support corporate level results including capacity building and monitoring SDGs and International Environmental Goals. Often the capacity building and cross Sub-Programme learning activities seemed to be ad-hoc, benefitting from opportunities provided by specific earmarked funding. A more coordinated approach to capacity building, knowledge management and learning across UNEP would make EUR SP more effective and efficient. The downstream coordination could, for instance, include facilitation of EUR SP services by the SPCs who have a good collective overview of the capacity building needs and services across SPs.

Knowledge management is a cross-cutting "enabler" and EUR SP work includes key services such as: maintaining a UNEP knowledge repository, supporting UNEP SPs in research-related queries, managing UNEP's journal subscriptions, contributing to publishing guidelines and serving the UNEP Publications Board. The publishing work might be expanded as part of an EUR SP knowledge management strategy as an "enabler" that can build on progress made in providing access to research both within UNEP and among developing country member states, and support strengthening of the outreach and quality of UNEP's science. However, whilst this work is considered as cross-cutting, there is no established knowledge management framework to help focus and foster collaboration on the knowledge assets across the organization, and the support provided across UNEP is not optimally reflected in POW.

The need for a very a clear vision on what and who the Sub-programme is designed to support and how it can serve as an 'enabler' across the PoW is highlighted as a fundamental imperative. The EUR SP is developing a systemic and more technologically savvy approach to providing the evidence to shape policy through its focus on developing globally revealing and interactive platforms, and work on flagship assessments and monitoring projects. The evaluation found the EUR SP needs a 'whole of UNEP' inclusive design and consultations with external partners, including technology providers, to secure the necessary resources to get the UNEP global environment monitoring system for keeping the environment under review up and working.

EUR Performance measurement systems
The EUR SP has a unique global product and thematic offer to support governments in developing environmental monitoring systems including data collection, indicator frameworks (SDG-IEGs), and assessment. However, the EUR SP Portfolio has been missing linkages to higher-order UNEP results. The EUR SP Theory of Change (TOC), Log frame and performance monitoring system needs further work to improve; institutional accountabilities for results, identify clear pathways towards change, develop 'smarter' targets and clarity on expected results. The EUR SP should play a stronger role in helping define higher-level indicators for UNEP and, where appropriate, in measuring the baselines for these indicators. UNEP should set long-term environmental objectives for each sub-programme with indicators, baselines and long-term targets.

UNEA, Strategic Planning and Priority Setting Processes -Science based decision making
The *planning and priority setting processes of UNEP have unique needs from EUR SP with regards to science-based decision making. The link* to the Policy and Programme Division (PPD) *was a*

platform for mainstreaming EUR SP across the other SPs. The EUR SP *Coordinator lost that platform when the SPs were delinked* from the PPD (2016). While EUR SP staff were still involved in planning to some extent, the evaluation found that the EUR SP portfolio was lacking a mechanism for joint monitoring and a more systematic link to the UNEP-wide planning, decision-making fora and priority setting processes. The hosting of SPCs within the PPD, was an important internal mechanism for SP Coordinators to interact and plan inclusive EUR SP POW work (this arrangement has recently been re-enabled by the re-positioning the SPCs back in PPD).

UNEA is the central UNEP platform for policymakers and is a *global audience* i.e. for *decisions and setting priorities at the global level*. EUR SP services and products (GEO for planning, Foresight and early warning, and the EUR SP work on SDGs as a UN-wide mandate) should be better positioned internally to support, and raise UNEA decisions: integrating them into the work program and monitoring them, in addition to raising visibility and credibility of UNEP as a leader on environmental agenda setting. EUR SP services and tools also need to be better formatted and targeted to enhance their uptake by across UNEP.

Effectiveness
The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the EUR SP in delivering the outputs presented in the Theory of Change.

UNEP Live
The UNEP Governing Council requested the establishment of a digital platform 10 years ago[1]. Over the MTS 2014-2017, *UNEP Live* has grown as a portal providing access, or links, to various types of information resources and applications, including world data, assessments, SDG information, communities of practice, geospatial applications, mapping tools, ontology, multimedia resources, news and stories, and publications. However, the evaluation noted a range of shortcomings and gaps. Maintenance of the content and functionalities of the platform has been uneven during evaluation period, leading to a significant number of pages being outdated. Furthermore, the platform installed data flows from organizations or from countries through third party organizations (World Bank, FAO, etc.), but not directly from countries as intended in the original project document. Furthermore, evaluation informants indicated a moderate to low usefulness of some of the indicators reported in the UNEP Live Global database. The usability of the platform was also assessed as being poor by most UNEP staff informing the evaluation. The site architecture, navigation metaphor, content metadata, and taxonomy were reported to lack a robust and logical integration, making data access and information retrieval difficult and thereby reducing the end-user experience. The evaluation also noted a lack of reference to UNEP Live in the global GEO-6 or in publications from the Emerging Issues project. Consultations indicated a disconnect between UNEP Live and the needs stemming from the GEO process, and an absence of use of UNEP Live by GEO Authors despite their apparent level of satisfaction in a 2017 survey. Evaluation informants perceived the scope of UNEP Live as being broad with limited added value, failing to concentrate on a small range of services on which it would be "best in class". In sum, the platform has been moderately used and limited evidence was found of its value proposition being turned into concrete benefits.

Thematic and Integrated Mapping Services
Over the MTS 2014-2017, EUR SP has delivered a range of integrated and thematic assessments and mapping services. This includes atlases, such as the *Energy Atlas*, the *Africa Mountains Atlas*,

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[1] In 2009, the **twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum** held in Nairobi requested the Executive Director to elaborate on the requirements for a migration to targeted assessments on thematic priority areas supported by a **UNEP-Live** enabling framework.

or the *Uganda Wetlands Atlas*. The evaluation noted a limited access to these reports, owing most likely to the geographic scope and thematic foci of the atlases, and bearing in mind the restricted potential for uptake and re-use outside of the region they cover. Nevertheless, the evaluation found evidence of use of these reports. The *Uganda Wetlands Atlas* for example was reported having a major impact, with the President of Uganda making a visit to personally check what was highlighted in the Atlas. The Government of Uganda secured USD 24 million to implement a restoration programme guided by the recommendations of the report. However, the evaluation found differing quality and overlaps in what different units are doing. There are no agreed organizational standards, review process, etc. for assessments. There is a missing oversight role that could sit with the Chief Scientist; the capacity to handle this role is currently lacking.

Integrated Environmental Assessments

As part of the GEO-6 process, six *GEO-6 Regional Assessments* were prepared and published for the Science-Policy forum just prior to UNEA-2 (May 19−20, 2016). Some evidence was gathered of the GEO-6 regional reports being used and cited by different platforms, policy processes, or publications. The IPBES for instance has used the regional assessments conducted through the GEO process in 2015/16 as a foundation for their most recent regional assessments and their assessment of land degradation. The development of the *GEO-6 report* and *Summary for Policymakers* relied on extensive consultations with a range of partners. GEO-6 was launched at UNEA 4 in March 2019. Products to increase GEO-6's reach included an interactive story (8,369 views), press release, launch video (over 1.1 million views across digital platforms), and infographics. Within the first month, the GEO-6 report was downloaded 10,241 times. As of August 2019, the report had been downloaded 17,178 times. Although the launch of the sixth Global Environment Outlook was deemed successful in comparison to launches of previous GEO's, it was found lower key and less influential, in terms of citations, than launches of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 1.5 degree report (Oct. 2018) and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Global Biodiversity Assessment (May, 2019). Several issues or shortcomings were commonly highlighted about the use of the GEO reports, including the time required for its development, the size of the report that made it demanding to read but also limited the capability to identify overarching environmental priorities, the lack of a data platform to collect and provide access to GEO data, which together with changing methodologies prevented the determination of a baseline upon which users could monitor environmental trends.

Emerging Environmental Issues

The Emerging Environmental Issues reports leverage scientific networks and attempt to contribute to strengthening the science-policy interface through coherent identification of emerging issues, analysis and reporting, and providing direct input into the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process. Several deliverables produced by the Emerging Issues project relied on a well-established process to identify and select emerging issues of interest (e.g. *Frontiers* reports), involving a literature review, an external survey, expert screening, ranking criteria, etc. Key project outputs include:

- The **Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms** published in September 2016. Findings were presented at the side events on sand and dust storms at the UNEP Science-Policy Forum on 19 May 2016, and during UNEA-2 on 26 May 2016.
- The **UNEP Frontiers 2016** report launched on 20 May 2016 and publicized at the press events and media roundtables during UNEA-2. In the first month, the report had been quoted nearly 1,000 times by the global press. The threat of microplastics to marine ecosystems and to human health was the focus of a *Frontiers* report chapter and the *Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics* report. The issue of marine plastic was mentioned in nearly 400 articles in prominent global media.
- The **Emissions Gap Report 2016** was launched at a global press release and press conference in London on 3 November 2016. By December 2016, the global media had published at least 4,764 articles, including feature

stories, blog posts and opinion pieces, which referred to the 'Emissions Gap' Report. The report became one of UNEP's most cited publications in global and regional media.

- The **Emissions Gap Report 2017** and the **Frontiers 2017** report were launched on 31 October 2017 and 5 December 2017, respectively. By June 2018, the Frontiers 2017 report's webpage had been accessed by 14,935 unique visitors.

Despite this successful outreach, the evaluation noted a lack of clarity about the level of contribution of these reports to policymaking and limited monitoring and analysis of their use and influence among policy makers and assessment practitioners.

Data and Indicator Frameworks for SDG Monitoring and Reporting
The SDG Unit in the Science Division, created in 2015 to work on the SDG global monitoring framework, has published several guidelines manuals such as *Environment Statistics: Diagnostic Tool for Strategic Planning*; *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGS*; *Gender and environment statistics: unlocking information for action and measuring the SDGs*; and *Measuring Fossil Fuel Subsidies in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals.* A full SDG strategic web page has been set up also on UNEP Live to show the status of the methodologies and a global learning platform as a 'one-stop shop' for governments and users of SDG information. Furthermore, national and regional workshops have been conducted across five UN regions in partnership with the UN Commissions to promote the importance of monitoring the environmental dimension of the SDGs. Country assessment missions or training were reported as having been completed in 34 countries. This is a high priority area for the EUR SP that has performed well since its inception, it has suffered from limited allocation of core resources with a considerable percentage of staff time being diverted to resource mobilisation efforts.

GEF portfolio
During the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 MTS periods, nine GEF-funded projects were identified to contribute to EUR SP. These included six projects from the CCCD funding portfolio, two phases of IW-LEARN and the Transboundary Water Assessment Programme (TWAP). The Programme Framework documents do not identify the contribution of GEF-funded projects towards specific EUR SP result statements or indicators, thus making it difficult to assess the contribution of the projects towards EUR SP expected results.

Likelihood of Impact
The evaluation assessed the likelihood of impact of the EUR SP and contribution to the outcomes presented in the Theory of Change.

The evaluation found various streams of evidence coinciding to indicate that *EUR SP has contributed to enhance the capacity of many countries to report on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development*. Nevertheless, projects do not have resources and means to respond to all country requests on capacity development. The evaluation found indications of capacity development activities in EUR SP being largely determined by earmarked funding and donor priorities. The EUR SP (and UNEP as a whole), lacks an overarching capacity development strategy, however, there is a demand for more normative products and for knowledge development in relation to data collection, data policies, environmental analysis, and integrated assessments.

Different sources of evidence converge to indicate that *Governments use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes delivered by the EUR SP in policy making processes*. There are some examples of uptake of EUR SP products/services in *national policymaking* processes. The evaluation survey, for instance, showed that NFPs used the methods, tools, and technical support to environment-related SDG monitoring and review quite frequently in policy planning processes. EUR SP outputs were reported by NFPs as used in the

preparation of reports on SDGs and related indicators with a view to inform National Reports on the State of Environment. Another avenue for EUR SP products/services to be taken up and used by Governments is through *global policymaking* processes. For example, evaluation informants referred to the *Frontiers 2017* report that was provided to Member States in preparation for UNEA-3. A key topic analysed by the report was Antimicrobial Resistance, an issue on which the Assembly adopted a resolution (UNEP/EA.3/Res.4). Similarly, informants mentioned the *Frontiers 2016* report and its chapter on marine plastic and microplastics, a topic on which UNEA-4 adopted a resolution (UNEP/EA.4/Res.6). While such examples indicate a likely contribution of the EUR SP reports to informing global policy processes, it is not possible to specify a level of influence.

EUR SP's intention is to support other SPs and parts of UNEP, i.e. to encourage collaboration, provide enabling science and knowledge in support of lesson learning, capacity building, and knowledge building. However, it appears that EUR SP inputs into programming were limited. Staff recounted perceived barriers to collaboration and uptake of EUR SP services resulting from a combination of interlinked structural, institutional and management issues, rooted in the prevailing culture, weak accountabilities and low level of UNEP Senior Management inputs and guidance on EUR SP results (Highlighted in the Relevance and Efficiency sections- also see OIOS 2019). Whilst EUR SP should inform UNEP strategic planning, there has been limited traction with the Policy and Programme Division to take up EUR SP outputs for strategic planning and programming. There was limited collaboration, for instance, between the GEO Unit and PPD when developing the 2018-2021 MTS despite this link being regularly mentioned in documentation. On the other hand, there was also limited contribution of the other UNEP Divisions/SPs to setting the agenda of work of EUR SP and making it more demand and service oriented. In general, *EUR SP products/services were seldom used to inform UNEP programming at global or regional levels*.

There was evidence of *academia using environmental data, information, and knowledge to inform new research and policy*. The Emerging Issues team identified close to 300 journal articles and other research papers that have referred to or made use of the findings from the Emerging Issues reports. Similarly, GEO reports are cited in research papers and grey literature close to 500 times per year according to Google Scholar, however, still much less frequently than IPCC Assessment Reports. Another notable contribution of EUR SP, and GEO-6 especially, has been to take scientific literature out of the research and academic community and bring it to policymakers. The GEO process has harnessed academic research outputs and helped to underline, validate or strengthen their message. The GEO-6 Summary for Policymakers was negotiated by 95 Member states (251 participants, including 26 participants from Major Groups and Stakeholders) before being disseminated to ministers and other policymakers at UNEA-4.

One EUR SP indicator in the MTS 2014-2017 referred to increasing "the number of United Nations agencies and multilateral environmental agreements using data on environmental trends, identified through UNEP, to influence their policy". This objective was reported as partly achieved, with 12 out of 18 targeted UN agencies and MEA secretariats being found citing UNEP online information platforms and documents/reports containing data on environmental trends in their policy statements and documents. Altogether, uptake by UN agencies was found more frequently at global than at country level. In addition, the evaluation identified a consensus around the challenge that faces UNEP more generally and the EUR SP in being taken up by UNCTs. With a lack of country presence, little or no room in the UNDAF/UNSDCF, and limited regional capacities, the use of EUR SP products/services at country level was relatively low and not meeting the demand, including from the RCO. This pointed out the need for UNEP to consider its country engagement at corporate level and for the EUR SP to align with it.

The evaluation did not find significant evidence of uptake of EUR SP outputs by private sector actors. One promising approach to address this shortcoming is the Science Policy Business Forum (SPBF), an initiative launched by the Chief Scientist to provide swifter access to data, shorten the time to policy engagement, foster change in consumption and production models and encourage industrial implementation. The forum has grown to 3,000 affiliated members since December 2017, involving other SPs as well as the ROs with assessments moving from platform model to incubator. This initiative is not anchored in a standalone project but incorporated under the GEO project. The SPBF has helped to inform the UNEA agenda, for example the UNEA 4 resolution[2] on big data was influenced by the SPBF.

Efficiency (Value for Money, Cost Effectiveness)

The Evaluation has assessed efficiency in terms of cost-effectiveness and timeliness of delivery. This includes how efficiently the EUR SP (including SP and UNEP management considerations) has been able to harness its capacities and implementation approaches individually and in synergistic ways to optimize its ability to achieve targeted results. Generally, this analysis covered three aspects: value for money, resource-saving measures, and evidence and scrutiny of the SP delivery modalities (project versus a programmatic approach).

The cost effectiveness is a measure of the EUR SP portfolio's effectiveness and efficiency. While the EUR SP program is somewhat effective and efficient, this statement has to be considered against the fact that although the EUR SP program has had some notable successes, it has not fully benefited from the greater structural changes envisaged in terms of developing a coherent global environmental monitoring system geared to specific audiences and clarity on the EUR SPs cross-cutting thematic offer for keeping the environment under review as well as building capacity for keeping the environment under review.

It has been challenging for the evaluation to assess the concentration of the EUR SP portfolio resources and the value-added against the expected results. The differing perceptions of EUR SP's value added is indicative of need for more inclusive design work and cost-benefit analysis.

Many of the core EUR SP projects and services are still in design and development mode including the data sharing systems, the SDG -IEGs monitoring approaches and the global reporting infrastructure. The EUR SP thematic offer / strategic focus needs both greater clarity and more supportive institutional arrangements. The analysis of efficiency was also challenging due to lack of disaggregated data on use and uptake and actual costs, i.e. what the uptake is versus cost of the products. As Results-Based Budgeting has yet to be implemented this remains unknown, thereby limiting the possibility for comparisons with other initiatives.

In terms of assessing the EUR SP value for money (the relative importance of investing in the work), the products and thematic services are still evolving, are not sufficiently well-targeted, and need stronger institutional alignment to corporate results to promote accountability for results. The moderate uptake of the EUR SP thematic work, products, tools and services by other SPs reduces efficiency. While there were many efficiency/effectiveness related challenges found in portfolio generally linked to design and budgeting issues, the portfolio has had made positive contributions and *has contributed to systems, normative guidelines and learning about the need for better data, assessment and monitoring systems at global, regional and national level.*

Despite the difference between planned and secured resources, EUR SP projects were generally found to have delivered well. For instance, Environment Live delivered well with only a portion of

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[2] Link UNEP/EA.4/Res23.

the resources specified in the design documents. Despite this limited funding, the project was able to deliver, inter alia, data flows from 193 countries sourced from third party data providers, a global database with 1,419 indicators, 292 datasets available on the Global Data page, 861 maps and a mapping page that grouped spatial content by theme and region, etc. (see section of Effectiveness). Similarly, EUR SP was referred as cost efficient when considering the staffing structure; for example the IPCC relied on a team of 15 staff and IPBES on 10 staff, while GEO relied almost entirely on one staff member with consultants and interns.

Budget Issues
The evaluation found that a lack of stable funding makes it difficult for EUR SP to develop its products and tools. There was an apparent trend of under-resourcing of some of the core EUR SP projects. Project managers have been under pressure to mobilize resources in order to finish projects on time. Project managers reported spending time on lobbying for institutional buy-in, adjusting the project timelines, and staffing and prioritizing planned activities. These measures were coordinated directly by the projects, and not at the programme level. This has taken staff time away from delivery and decreased efficiency. This evaluation raised questions on whether there might not be efficiency gains by fully funding unfinished core work - especially the developing ones that are instrumental to the results of others, e.g. Environment Live and SDGs monitoring. That is financing these key areas with core funding until these projects are fully functioning.

Outsourcing and /or Partnering
In terms of efficiency, whether to outsource and / or partner strategically was a key question. The extent to which EUR SP projects systematically considered outsourcing and or partnering as a means to deliver outputs in cost-efficient manner was often not clear. In-house web design and development of Environment Live, for example, did not lead to delivery of a platform consistent with current industry standards. These activities are not part of the core competencies of UNEP. Outsourcing some of the tasks required for the development and maintenance of a web platform would be an option deserving further exploration. Similarly, a lack of formal assessment to consider whether the GRID Centres were the best entity on the WESR for certain types of measurement and whether a thorough analysis was done to consider the pros and cons of using these Centres versus new entities. Savings may be gained by increasing the outsourcing of parts of the work and concentrating on the comparative services that UNEP may like to promote.

GEO questions
A central question that emerged as a theme throughout the EUR SP evaluation was concerning the efficiency of the GEO products and process. The evaluation found differing understandings and varying opinions regarding the efficiency of the GEO in terms of its costs and benefits. On one hand, the independent experts/academia contribute *pro bono* to GEO. On the other hand, GEO centres (institutionalized set-up in the GEOs predating GEO-4) ensured institutional memory and higher efficiency due to prior exposure to the process. The extent to which the past GEO centres supported UNEP-related assessments at the national level is not clear. While the global GEO process continues to be relevant as a UNEP flagship product and process, the degree of ambiguity on what the GEO "process" is and the utility of GEO at global, regional and country-level showed a need for clarity on exactly how GEO adds value for its various audiences. The governance of GEO with policy makers who are also involved in UNEA agenda-setting is a positive bridging influence. 50% of CPR members said that EUR SP was effective at informing the UNEA agenda and resolutions. Most staff perceived the GEO as a global product and process geared to informing policy, whilst some perceive the GEO intergovernmental process as having less institutionalization of knowledge and capacities and less access to the science network (i.e. less useful for quick and

nimble foresight work). The evaluation team learned there had been recent aspirations to better link GEO with other major global assessments (IPBES and IPCC assessments) as an efficiency gain, a welcome development. Finally, a key question has been around the provision of normative guidance on conducting assessments and monitoring and whether there is scope to take GEO to the regional and national level- i.e. national GEOs following GEO-6? Whether the new GEO-6 methodology is conducive for national GEOs or whether this was more effective with the original methodology remain open questions perhaps to be answered by the 'future for GEO' assessment[3].

Additionally, the Regional and Global GEOs can be assessed through the lens of efficiency. The Regional GEOs were supposed to provide input into the Global GEO, but some informants in the regions implied that this did not really serve their needs. In fact, GEO-6 delivered an entire section summarizing the findings from the regional Outlooks (section 23.10 GEO Regional Assessment synthesis), indicating opportunities for better integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches to developing scenarios. Regional GEOs were regarded as needing to be better framed and anchored in guidelines / consistent / comparable approaches, as they were very different from one region to another and this variation constrained their aggregation into the global one.

Factors affecting sub-programme performance
This section focuses on findings related to design, monitoring and reporting and overall EUR SP coordination.

Design, Monitoring and Reporting
The evaluation highlights findings regarding EUR SP results statements and indicators, and how this affects the coordination for, and the monitoring of, EUR SP results. The EUR SP results framework and reporting are incomplete and not entirely coherent. They do not capture success stories and higher-level results but revolve around individual deliverables. The EUR SPC role was found to mainly coordinate reporting, but in effect it had limited influence on actual portfolio management, coordination and priority setting, re-integration of the role into the PPD may help resolve this.

There is a need for a simple coherent articulation of EUR SP's strategic focus (thematic offer) which will require joint ownership among the Senior Management Team (SMT) and across the other SPs. Progress towards the results and the contributions of EUR SP to the MTS and POW need to be more systematically and transparently monitored in real time.

Ensuring adaptive management in implementation and working beyond silos
The evaluation identified a need to ensure the EUR SP does not work in isolation but finds mechanisms to better work beyond the boundaries defined by the SP. In this sense, the evaluation identified a need for mechanisms to support EUR SP adaptive management and cross sectoral inputs into monitoring for results.

EUR SP projects were generally designed based on an assumption that they would be synergistic and integrating. The projects within EUR SP generally conform to the strict definition of a portfolio i.e. they share thematic commonalities but lack the synergies and operational interconnections across the individual interventions needed for a truly programmatic approach.

While the 'SP' provides a results construct and has a SP Coordinator in place, the implementation of the work is dispersed and lacks a common team ethos with a shared understanding of higher level results. As highlighted above, the cross-cutting areas are not well defined and or funded (e.g. learning and knowledge management and this somewhat limits the utility of the sub-program construct as its main purpose is mainly for planning and reporting of results.   The results

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[3] CPR document "Update on the future of the GEO" February 2020

framework for EUR SP reporting needs to be strengthened, currently it presents limited evidence of achievements and in cases the link between EUR SP indicators and the corresponding reporting is difficult to establish.

Budget constraints
Despite the proportion of EF funds allocated to the EUR SP having increased over the MTS periods, the overall decrease in EF funds led the actual amount received to be lower compared to earlier years prompting related resource mobilization efforts and an increasing EUR SP reliance on extra-budgetary resources (softly earmarked and earmarked funds, GEF, etc.). Resource scarcity and an increasing reliance on extrabudgetary resources (in absence of strategic partnerships) was further analysed. The evaluation was unable to access project level financial records that provide consolidated information on core and XB income / expenditure. The connection between the work of the EUR SP FMO and the project managers needs strengthening to address this. The lack of financial information on the budget and expenditure issues limited the ability of the evaluation either to support or challenge the opinions of EUR SP staff that resources are scarce. This lack of comprehensive financial information needs to be rectified.

The evaluation does however highlight the need for prioritization processes. The resource scarcity will continue and considering the current global situation is likely to worsen. Attracting more resources is not the main issue, but prioritization and strategic alignment is.

A related finding has been the lack of planning/coordination regarding how extrabudgetary funding is expected to contribute to the global EUR SP expected results in the EUR SP planning and progress documents (e.g. GEF CCCD portfolio). As more projects are developed with extrabudgetary funding, a programmatic approach and monitoring is needed with concerted efforts to ensure new funds are built around and contribute to the expected results of EUR SP.

The current situation appears to be inefficient and unsustainable with many staff said to be aggressively seeking extrabudgetary funding ('siloed entrepreneurship') in the absence of a more coordinated, strategically aligned and synergistic approach that ensures such project funding contributes to higher level EUR SP results. This is a small SP with a specific niche. The efficiency losses are problematic and key initiatives such as Science Policy Business Forum (SPBF) are 'hidden' under the GEO project and the corporate work on knowledge management related to publishing board, library etc. were embedded under UNEP-Live.

Communications
The evaluation identified the need for stronger operational linkages between EUR SP and the Communication Division to enhance results, particularly policy level results. The current ad hoc engagement was recognized as a limiting factor as, in essence, the EUR SP is a science-to-policy bridge and communication is essential in that process. Organizational dissonance and need for continuous UNEP reforms (OIOS 2019) has negatively influenced the relevance of the EUR SP services and tools (perceived utility and uptake). Additionally, good communication was needed to make the language used in science communities more suited to the achievement of policy results. Such strategic communication is needed to change mindsets across the house to achieve the expected results of the EUR SP in the science to policy interface.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were formulated in response to the evaluation key questions:

Conclusion 1: The EUR SP is highly relevant *to global environmental challenges and aligned with UNEP's mandate, but faces design issues that hamper its fitness for purpose vis-à-vis different types of stakeholders.* Making quality science available and providing global platforms for

decision-making is highly relevant to global environmental challenges. *However*, the important question of scoping and targeting data and information for use is not entirely addressed by EUR SP. The EUR SP does not fully *leverage UNEP's comparative advantages and lacks thorough needs assessments of target users and more systematic co-design of interventions with target users*.

Conclusion 2: The EUR SP has pursued the achievement of an ambitious but loosely defined Theory of Change that omits several expected outcomes and intermediate states and overlooks some of the target stakeholders. In lieu of a programmatic approach, the construct of the EUR SP was largely based on housing flagship projects designed with few, but some, potential synergies and complemented with cross-cutting projects aimed at strengthening reach and joint influence through communications, knowledge management, and capacity development. However, resource constraints have prevented the implementation of most of these cross-cutting projects and have not lead to adaptive management / redesign of the sub-programme. Furthermore, opportunities for EUR SP to guide UNEP strategic planning were limited. Similarly, EUR SP outputs rarely served other UNEP SPs in helping to; define their programmatic agenda, set baselines and targets, and monitor achievements at the impact level. EUR SP outputs have contributed to the normative work of UNEP but with little influence and contribution to the normative work of other SPs. Regional and country level operational capacity building work has also been overlooked in articulation of the EUR SP results framework.

Conclusion 3: The EUR SP should be cutting across other UNEP SPs / Divisions, but in practice cross-Divisional collaboration was found to be reliant on the initiative of individuals and lacking financial and institutional incentives. UNEP Divisions have not markedly informed the EUR agenda of work and EUR data was reported to be of limited use for programme planning and results monitoring except for SDG indicators. The recruitment for the position of Chief Scientist, ongoing in early 2020, may help to set the organization's agenda according to the findings of EUR SP data and assessments. Furthermore, this may establish mechanisms to keep track of scientific assessments across UNEP to improve coordination and quality and reduce overlaps. At regional level, Regional SPCs were recruited between 2015 and 2016 but the transfer of Regional SPC posts from Science Division to Regional Offices has sometimes resulted in differences in the perceived roles of the Regional SPCs as well as having influenced their ability to effectively contribute to the delivery of the EUR SP.

Conclusion 4: Despite a range of constraints, the EUR SP contributes to strengthening the statistical capacity of developing countries to measure, monitor, and report on the SDGs. The work of EUR SP on SDGs is consistent with the UN mandate, it is significant and comes with high political visibility and responsibility. However, several factors reduce the EUR SP's ability to better deliver against the SDG commitments, including underfunded EUR SP work on SDGs; lack of integration of SDGs into the broader EUR SP programme of work; insufficient coordination, monitoring and integration of SDG work across UNEP; limited institutional linkages in several regions to service the needs and demands for technical support; and room to strengthen strategic partnerships with other UN agencies to grow environmental statistical capacity.

Conclusion 5: Alignment of the EUR SP and contribution to delivering to UNEA resolutions is effective but partial. EUR SP products and services are, to a large degree, aligned to UNEA resolutions, but not in all cases (yet) delivering against them. Furthermore, EUR SP has not yet fully configured the process through which science is presented to UNEA to enable decisions. UNEA resolutions generally stem from UNEP Divisions individual initiatives not from systematic environmental or SDG-related monitoring systems.

Conclusion 6: The establishment of a dedicated Sub-programme on EUR has not yet significantly helped UNEP to better respond to its mandate. The relationship between the Science Division/EUR SP and Law Division/Environmental Governance is rather weak and there was limited cross-Divisional collaboration and mainstreaming of the EUR SP in other SPs. The visibility of the EUR SP has improved but without notable outcomes in terms of resource mobilization. The evaluation also found little evidence of UNEP Divisions (through other SPs) supporting countries in adopting EUR SP scientific information and knowledge and using it in their decision making.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The EUR SP should develop a TOC that presents strong and robust causalities between intended outcomes, intermediate states and long-term objectives. The TOC should be anchored in UNEP's strategic planning process, the post-Rio+20 mandate and UNEA governance, and the support to the SDGs[4]. It should leverage UNEP's comparative advantages with a view to addressing the needs and to influencing specific types of target users of EUR SP outputs, including other SPs and Divisions, regions and countries, and different groups of external partners and stakeholders. The EUR SP should develop the TOC to articulate the causal pathways that reflect a forward-looking programmatic approach (rather than flagship projects), making room for synergies and cross-cutting capacity development, knowledge management, and communications and outreach. EUR SP indicators should be strengthened and consider reflecting relevant SDG targets and indicators to elicit a contribution to their achievement. Accordingly, EUR SP monitoring should be improved and take a programmatic approach rather than focusing largely on monitoring parts from individual projects. Furthermore, EUR SP should play a stronger role in helping define higher-level indicators for UNEP and, where feasible, measuring the baselines for these indicators across SPs.

Recommendation 2: EUR SP Management should strive to improve institutional effectiveness and organizational efficiencies of the SP. At a strategic level, EUR SP management and the Chief Scientist should better ensure coherence of assessments across UNEP and support senior managers in setting the organization's agenda according to the findings of EUR SP data and assessments. EUR SP management should explore performing a cost-benefit analysis on EUR SP products and flagship projects to support decision making to maximise overall programmatic impact. UNEA-4 resolutions could provide a basis from which to begin assessing resource allocation priorities. Furthermore, the EUR SP should continue exercising adaptive management to align its strategic intent with the evolving international agenda and resources availed for operationalization. At an operational level, strong attention should be given to; clarifying the means by which SP results and performance are validated and verified; ensuring that PIMS reporting is accurate, comprehensive, and reliable; and reducing the time to fill vacant positions. Furthermore, EUR SP management should consider more actively utilizing outsourcing as a cost-saving or value for money strategy.

Recommendation 3: The EUR SP should strengthen its capabilities and delivery modalities by developing and implementing cross-cutting strategies and enabling frameworks. EUR SP should formulate capacity development, communication / outreach, and knowledge management as core components of the SP. The EUR SP should develop and implement a programme wide strategy for capacity building that covers inter alia the three focus areas linked to IEG and SDG monitoring. The SP should also develop and implement a knowledge management strategy or framework that fosters the collection and sharing of technical knowledge, both explicit and tacit,

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[4] Whilst the draft MTS 2022-2025 presents only three TOCs for the new 'pillars' each SP should develop a TOC to articulate the causal pathways that lead to higher level results.

but also the development of new normative and organizational knowledge such as standard operating procedures and other directives and/or instructions for a EUR SP portfolio needs assessment and delivery in regions or countries. Furthermore, EUR SP should design and implement a resource mobilization strategy that enhances synergies between projects, maximizes the expertise of staff, and minimizes inefficiencies (aligned entrepreneurship).

Recommendation 4: The EUR SP should improve the usability and use of flagship outputs. Products and services developed by EUR SP projects should systematically be designed based on needs assessments that capture expectations of target users and help tailoring deliverables to different audiences. EUR SP should consider involving sample groups of target users in the definition as well as the development and pilot testing of products and services, adopting innovative methodologies such as design thinking to product development. The EUR SP should allocate resources to and adopt more rigorous processes for monitoring the use of EUR products and services to draw lessons learned and continuously improve reach, and engagement efforts to influence key target users. Furthermore, EUR SP should consider marketing its service lines and indicate to various target audiences which types of products and services they can expect and benefit from.

Recommendation 5: EUR SP cross-cutting work should be better reflected in planning documents, institutional setup and/or resources plans. EUR SP should increase synergies and institutional alignment with other SPs and Divisions, Branches and Units. The EUR SP should devise institutional and organizational mechanisms that foster the delivery of products/services that respond to the needs of other UNEP Divisions/SPs and inform UNEP programming at global or regional levels. The EUR SP coordination function should pursue opportunities to influence programming, including cross-cutting issues, beyond providing inputs into project design documents. UNEP should ensure there is a strong internal forum and mechanism for cross-portfolio results monitoring. This should take the form of a technical cross thematic/divisional team that regularly meets to promote synergies across the programme; a role that was formerly played by the global SPCs within the PPD that needs to be reinstated and revitalised. Such joint technical "cross thematic" monitoring on the science to policy interface and assessment, data and monitoring of the EUR "thematic offer" would support coherence, external financing, and resource mobilization. The engagement and joint ownership would improve links to the GEF, GCF, and across resources mobilization/strategic partnerships. EUR SP indicators should be defined to help better align and focus efforts to develop capacities to collect, manage, and use environmental information for keeping the environment under review and therefore should inform other SPs' indicators and guide SPs' work on thematic policy influence and results monitoring. The EUR SP should also strengthen planning and collaboration with the Communications Division. Furthermore, the EUR SP should clarify its thematic focus and relevance with respect to regions and countries. The EUR SP portfolio could be further targeted to provide or leverage technical support and capacity-building tailored to regional / country needs, including on integrated assessments, data and information management and SDGs.

Recommendation 6: **EUR SP should assume a stronger leadership role and provide increased momentum within UNEP to work with UN sister agencies and MEA secretariats to increase coherence across the UN system in relation to environmental assessments, and particularly in ensuring the utility of its findings to the work of agencies within the UN system**. The EUR SP should spell out more clearly its focus on normative thematic guidance and elicit the support to be provided to UNCTs and UNSDCFs, and consider furthering its partnership with the UN regional commissions and with UNDP to strengthen technical cooperation and programme delivery at national and sub-national levels, including in relation to capacity development, statistics, and SDG

monitoring. The EUR SP should also consider increasing its partnerships with the private sector as a key target user of EUR SP outputs and key actors of uptake and implementation of policy changes. This would involve, inter alia, strengthening engagement on private sector reporting and monitoring, i.e. how to measure and report private sector action and results. Partnerships with technology companies are urgently needed to support the massive scale of SP services and to support building EUR SP systems including Information Management data collection and infrastructure development, UNEP Live (or WESR), real-time data and monitoring.

1. Introduction

1.   This report outlines the main findings and conclusions from an evaluation of the Environment under Review (EUR) sub-programme (SP). The Environment under Review became a stand-alone Sub-programme of UNEP in 2014 and was defined in the 2014-2017 Medium-Term Strategy document. Prior to 2014, this work was implemented under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme. The Environment under Review Sub-programme is the seventh Sub-programme of UNEP [5].

2.   The EUR SP was founded on the precept that emerging environmental issues must be tracked to help ensure early action is taken where needed since inadequacies in the links between policy and science communities could hinder decision-making. The MTS 2014-2017 stated for the EUR SP that "*The objective of the environment under review sub-programme is to empower stakeholders in their policy and decision-making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under Review*". The MTS 2018-2021 included a slightly reformulated objective for the EUR SP as "*Governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development*"[6]. This statement acknowledges that the expanding coverage of information systems and networks can provide unique and cost-effective opportunities to link science and information to enhance capacities for decision-making.

3.   The scope of the evaluation was the Environment under Review Sub-programme during the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 MTS periods. Since the work carried out under the SP has its roots in the previous MTS periods, and since related work is likely to continue in the future, the evaluation looked back as needed to capture the history of the SP and also looked forward to provide recommendations for the future. The EUR SP was examined against the standard evaluation criteria; relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact and examined the factors and processes which have affected the Sub-programme delivery. The objective of the evaluation was to fulfil two main purposes: a) support accountability by analysing the performance of the Sub-programme, and b) contribute to institutional learning by providing formative reflections based on the evaluation findings.

4.   This report starts by further presenting the scope of the Evaluation, the evaluation questions, and methodology. The report explores the historical background of the sub-programme with reference to the global environmental agenda and UNEP's mandate. The sub-programme objectives are reviewed and analysed, informing the reconstruction of a theory of change and analysis of the main assumptions and drivers. The sub-programme is then assessed through its strategic relevance, its design and structure, and its overall performance. A critical review and assessment of the factors that were found affecting the sub-programme performance is also provided. On the basis of this assessment and following consultations with UNEP, the report presents conclusions and recommendations.

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[5] 1) Climate Change; 2) Disasters and Conflicts; 3) Ecosystem Management; 4) Environmental Governance; 5) Chemicals and Waste; 6) Resource Efficiency; 7) Environment under Review.
[6] In the MTS 2014-2017, the EUR SP objective was stated as "empower stakeholders in their policy and decision-making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review".

2. Evaluation Methods

2.1. Objectives and scope of the evaluation

5.   The scope of the evaluation was the Environment under Review Sub-programme during the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 MTS periods. EUR SP performance was assessed against the 2014-2017 MTS. However, since the respective project durations did not, in all cases, fully match with the MTS cycle, some of the projects assessed in more detail were initiated prior to 2014. Data to assess project performance, and other supporting evaluation data was collected for the period up to October 2019. Since the work carried out under the SP has its roots in the previous MTS periods, and since related work is likely to continue in the future, the evaluation looked back as needed to capture the history of the SP and looked forward by providing recommendations for the future.

6.   The EUR SP was examined against the standard **evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact,** and examined the factors and processes which have affected the Sub-programme delivery. The objective of the evaluation was to fulfil two main purposes: a) supporting **accountability** by analysing the performance of the Sub-programme, and b) contributing to **institutional learning** by providing formative reflections based on the evaluation findings. Furthermore, the evaluation sought to be **forward-looking**. It identified problems faced by the SP and addressed those problems by providing options on how they can be solved.

7.   In accordance with the evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR) (see also Annex 10), the evaluation assessed the following:

- **Strategic Relevance of the Sub-Programme**: The relevance of the SP objectives and strategy was assessed in the context of the mandate of UNEP and the international recognition of the need to keep the world's environment situation under review. The evaluation assessed the relevance of SP objectives and strategy and alignment with: a) the global environmental challenges, b) global, regional and country needs, c) the international response[7] and d) UNEP's evolving mandate and capacity in this area. Assessment of the adequacy and appropriateness of the geographical scope of the Sub-programme and the strategy behind this selection. The analysis considered the three main intervention areas: (i) environmental assessments; (ii) early warning on emerging issues; (iii) information management.

- **Sub-Programme Design and Structure**: The evaluation assessed the internal coherence and logic between Expected Accomplishments (EAs), Programme of Work (POW) Outputs, and project outcomes. Furthermore, the evaluation assessed the appropriateness of performance indicators to measure progress towards planned achievements. With reference to the Theory of Change of the SP, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the intermediate states, drivers and assumptions underlying the Sub-programme change processes have been well thought through and articulated.

- **Overall Sub-Programme Performance**: The evaluation assessed of the effectiveness, likelihood of impact, sustainability of results, and efficiency of the EUR Sub-programme during the evaluation period.

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[7] i.e. including scientific and policy response.

- *Effectiveness*: The evaluation assessed the achievement of the EUR with respect to the reconstructed Theory of Change. The evaluation also considered the extent to which UNEP's work has facilitated the creation of an enabling environment where key stakeholders are involved, and the investment of the SP in targeted communication/awareness activities is adequate.
- *Likelihood of impact*: The evaluation assessed the likelihood that results achieved by the SP either have, or will in the future, contribute to long-term impact on environmental benefits and sustainable development, including the identified SDG targets. This included an assessment of the extent to which the SP intermediate states as identified in the ToC were met and the SPs key drivers and assumptions were in place. The SP's key drivers and assumptions were analysed against their influence on the POW Outputs and on sustainable, higher-level results.
- *Sustainability*: The evaluation identified and assessed the key conditions and factors that have contributed to, or constrained, sustainability of results, *i.e.* the persistence of benefits resulting from the implementation of Sub-programme activities.
- *Efficiency*: The evaluation assessed the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of delivery, and efforts by the EUR SP team to make use of pre-existing methods and data sources, as well as to exploit complementarities and synergies between related internal and external initiatives.

- **Factors Affecting Sub-Programme Performance**: Factors that were assessed by the evaluation assessed included:
  - *Organization and Management*: The overall efficiency and effectiveness of the SP organization, coordination and management arrangements, including senior management, considering the change from becoming its own Sub-programme in 2014.
  - *Human and Financial Resources Administration and Efficiency*: The number of staff managing the EUR SP activities and overall HR management within the SP. The evaluation analysed the distribution of funding according to funding source, the adequacy and stability of the funding base; as well as the quality, transparency and effectiveness of the systems and processes used for financial management.
  - *Cooperation and Partnerships*: The effectiveness of information sharing and cooperation with other UNEP Sub-programmes, external stakeholders and partners; coordination with ROs, other UN agencies, MEAs, and other stakeholders including the private sector.
  - *Monitoring and Reporting*: The extent to which the SP has been monitored, reported and evaluated, and recommendations implemented.
  - *Human Rights and Gender*: The level of application of the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Adherence to UNEP Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment, including the incorporation of gender-related issues into the design and delivery of SP outputs.
  - *Communication*: The effectiveness of internal and external communication. Special attention was paid to knowledge management and the dissemination of information, concepts, approaches and tools generated by the SP.

2.2. Evaluation audience and use of the evaluation

8.   The Evaluation aims to help UNEP identify key lessons on strategic positioning, portfolio planning, management arrangements and programme implementation that will provide a useful basis for improved Sub-programme design, coordination and delivery. The immediate and priority users of the Evaluation include: UNEP senior management (including Division Directors and Regional Directors), sub-programme coordinators and all UNEP units and staff involved in the EUR SP, the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives and the UN Environment Assembly.

9.   Interest in the evaluation is likely to be shown by other stakeholders and partners, including the UN Secretariat, UN or other international bodies working in the area of keeping the world environment situation under review, commissions and committees, NGOs and civil society groups, research centres and academia.

2.3. Evaluation key strategic questions

10.   Several broad questions were raised during the planning of the evaluation, which the evaluation attempted to address. These specific questions and corresponding assessment criteria are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Matrix Evaluation Questions-Evaluation Criteria

Key Evaluation Questions	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Likelihood of Impact	Sustainability	Influencing factors
a) To what extent are the Environment under Review Sub-programme objectives and strategy relevant to the global challenges, global, regional and country needs, the international response and UNEP's mandate and capacity?	X					X
b) What lessons can be learned for future planning in regards the EUR SP organization and the design of its results frameworks based on how the SP has evolved?	X	X	X	X	X	X
c) To what extent does the EUR SP organization support the delivery against the UNEP mandate in relation to keeping the environment under review?	X		X			X
d) To what extent is the Environment under Review Sub-programme organized to deliver against the UNEP commitments related to the SDGs?		X	X	X	X	X
e) To what extent is the Environment under Review Sub-programme aligned to, and delivering, in accordance to UNEA resolutions?	X		X	X		
f) Has the establishment of a dedicated Sub-programme on EUR helped UNEP to better respond to its mandate, and has the design of the Sub-programme been conducive in this regard?	X	X	X	X	X	X

2.4. Evaluation approach and methods

11. The evaluation collected and analysed data from a range of sources as described below. The data was triangulated and analysed by the evaluation team. The following mixed methods of primary and secondary **data collection were used**:

- **Desk review:** A review of secondary resources was carried out to analyse the EUR SP (Annex 4). These included UNEP and EUR SP strategic planning documents and progress reporting, external documents thematically related to the EUR SP, documentation related to EUR SP projects, including their Theory of Change, planning and progress documents, and documents related to project outputs, as well as relevant completed evaluation reports. Secondary resources also included online data and users' surveys, such as access to or number of downloads of EUR publications, access to Environment Live, etc.

- **Evaluation visits:** The evaluation visited the UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi and the Regional Office in Geneva for data collection. For data collection, these visits have included the below-mentioned interviews and participatory focus groups with appropriate stakeholders, and observation.

- **Interviews:** The evaluation interviewed a broad range of stakeholders (Annex 3). These included UNEP Senior Management, UNEP staff involved in the planning and implementation of the Sub-programme, UNEP staff in support functions, and other resource persons at UNEP. The interview protocols were individually designed in accordance with the evaluation matrix and tailored to the role of the interviewee and their relationship with the SP. In each interview, the evaluation attempted to establish an understanding of the context/dynamics/complexities, linked to the Theory of Change, assessment strengths/opportunities and lessons learned, and exploration of future implications. Interviews were conducted with 65 informants.

- **Case studies:** Four case studies were developed of projects identified as key interventions for the Theory of Change of the SP. The purpose of the case studies was to enable a focused assessment of the selected projects in relation to the standard evaluation criteria. The following projects were selected (see annex 3) as evaluation case studies:
  - Environmental information dissemination and outreach to different audiences (focus on Environment Live)
  - Global and regional integrated environmental assessments (focus on GEO-6)
  - Strengthening data and indicator framework for monitoring and reporting on the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs
  - Environment under Review: Emerging Issues

  Performance of the case study projects was assessed based on document review, interviews, focus group sessions, and surveys:
  - *Focus group sessions*: The evaluation organized participatory focus group sessions that allowed engagement with the project teams to gain a better understanding of the selected projects. This included deepening understanding of the context and project management arrangements, and exploring the theory of change of the projects including specific contribution to the EA of the SP. These sessions also served to identify whether EUR projects deliver activities that are not properly reflected in the result statements of the SP as well as helping to draw lessons and provided indications for future priorities.

- **Surveys:** The evaluation carried out two types of surveys. A questionnaire was disseminated to UNEP National Focal Points with a view to gather an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and perceived impact of the EUR POW Outputs. The questionnaire included open ended questions to collect qualitative insights, including pending needs and possible future directions for the SP. The questionnaire was made available in English, Spanish and French. Responses were collected from 51 target participants. A questionnaire was also disseminated to CPR members for mapping information on the functioning of the EUR SP, their participation in the SP, and their perceptions on SP implementation and possible future directions for the SP. The survey questionnaire was made available in English. It collected responses from 13 CPR members. Survey data was analysed both quantitatively (multiple-choice questions) and qualitatively (open-ended questions).

- **Observation:** The evaluation team used opportunities throughout the evaluation process to attend in-person or online meetings and events relevant to the EUR SP (e.g. webinars, CPR meetings, presentations etc.). This helped the evaluation to gain a better sense of the SP context, dynamics and complexities.

12.   The evaluation assessed the overall performance of the Sub-programme through a combination of complementary tools for **data analysis**.

- **Qualitative analysis** of data according to the evaluation matrix designed following the evaluation criteria (Annex 2)
  o   An analysis of the Theory of Change and the results reported in the Programme Performance Reports, PIMS and other sources;
  o   Case studies of projects identified as key projects for the Theory of Change. Performance of the case study projects was assessed based on document review, interviews and surveys as required;
  o   Analysis of the findings of the project-level evaluations undertaken during the evaluation period;
  o   Analysis of the 'contribution' made by the Sub-Programme to high level sectoral or global change (using the Theory of Change and the other evaluation methods described).
  o   Evaluation Interviews
  o   Open-ended questions of the two evaluation surveys.

- **Quantitative analysis** of data
  o   An analysis of the multiple-choice questions of the two surveys with selected cross-tabulations (e.g. according to the respondents' profile);
  o   Web metrics and citation analysis (e.g. using Google Scholar).

The evaluation team convened virtually on a regular basis throughout the data collection phase in order to perform a joint analysis of the findings and draft formulation of the conclusions.

2.5.   Limitations to the evaluation

13.   The evaluation approach and methodology faced the following limitations:

- **Sample of projects**: The evaluation could carry out a detailed assessment of each EUR project.

- **Evaluation visits**: The evaluation was not able to visit countries but depended on the surveys to gather national level perspectives.
- **Survey language**: The survey to CPR members was distributed in English and the survey to the National Focal Points in English, French and Spanish. This may have reduced the opportunity for some respondents to contribute.
- **Limited number of partners and stakeholders**: The evaluation was able to interview only a limited number of partners to the EUR project portfolio. The evaluation was not able to seek views of portfolio stakeholders or users of EUR products and services beyond the National Focal Points who were approached with the survey.
- **Limited availability of online data**: Web metrics, usability testing, and other online data are more comprehensively analysed by commercial packages (e.g. Altmetric, Meltwater), which the evaluation was not able to contract and purchase.

3. The EUR Sub-programme

14.   This section introduces the EUR SP and sets the efforts to keep the environment under review in context. It also provides a description of the EUR SP objectives.

3.1.   Context

15.   The world environment is rapidly changing under the pressure of large, transformative global forces that produce pressures and affect everyone on the planet and there is a need to track these changes, along with their effects, over time. According to the latest GEO report (UNEP, 2019), the total world population is projected to reach 9.77 billion by 2050 and the urban proportion of this population is expected to rise to 66.4%. By the same date, total agricultural production is projected to increase by 60% compared with 2005 levels. Global human water demand is projected to increase by around 25-40% this century. Even if global greenhouse gas emissions are cut to the level required to keep the rise of global temperature below 2°C, climate change is expected to have major and unprecedented social and economic implications on where people can settle, grow food, build cities and rely on functioning ecosystems for the services they provide. Biodiversity decline is another major concern, with an annual loss in ecosystem services resulting from the cumulative loss of biodiversity estimated to reach nearly 14 trillion Euros by 2050 (Braat & Brink, 2008). Pollution remains a critical issue. Today, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and other non-communicable diseases, many of which are associated with air and water pollution, are on the rise. For 2012, WHO reported 7 million premature deaths annually linked to air pollution (WHO, 2014). A recent study by the OECD found that the cost of the health impact of air pollution in OECD countries (including deaths and illness) was about USD 1.7 trillion in 2010 (OECD, 2014).

16.   Assessing the extent to which these environmental patterns and trends worsen over time or are impacted by policies, normative and legal instruments[8], financial resources, and actions from a wide range of stakeholders is of prime importance. There is a need for 'sound science' to track progress on the implementation of the existing frameworks and to measure and analyse their achievements. Data collection efforts can help governments to; assess their progress towards international goals, improve the focus of their policies, monitor their impact, and direct scarce resources to address the most critical environmental challenges (UNEP, 2012). Keeping the environment under review is required to inform policies and practices,

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[8] UNEP has estimated that more than 500 international treaties and other agreements related to the environment were adopted between 1972 and 2002 (UNEP, 2006).

provide guidance on global norms and standards, to strengthen science-policy partnerships and to ensure prompt action on emerging issues and thematic follow-up and reviews (UNEP, 2016f).

3.2.   Milestones

17.   UNEP's mandate to provide global environmental information is long-standing and has evolved gradually over time. When establishing the United Nations Environment Programme in 1972, the United Nations General Assembly gave its Governing Council the mandate, *inter alia*, "*To keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments*" (UN, 1972b). In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) released the *Rio Declaration*, which highlighted in its Principle 10 the importance to make environmental information effectively communicated and widely available (UN, 1992a). The *Agenda 21*, a non-binding but global consensus document, also adopted during this *Earth Summit*, further elaborated the relevance and mandate of UNEP while specifying an extensive list of programmatic actions including for environmental monitoring and reporting and informed decision-making (UN, 1992b).

18.   In 1997, the *Nairobi Declaration* (UN, 1997) redefined and strengthened the mandate of UNEP by declaring that the role of UNEP 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*". The Declaration further stressed that one of the core elements of UNEP should be "*To analyse the state of the global environment and assess global and regional environmental trends, provide policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats, and to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available*".

19.   More recently, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development adopted the Outcome document *The Future We Want* (UN, 2012), which reaffirmed the commitment to implement the *Rio Declaration* and *Agenda 21*, and emphasized the importance of the role of science, the use of information for decision-making, raising the awareness of the public on critical environmental issues, strengthening the science-policy interface, building on assessments, engaging civil society and other stakeholders, and assessing progress in the implementation of all sustainable development commitments.

3.3.   Sub-programme Objectives and Components

20.   As set out in 1972, a core function assigned to the UNEP Governing Council was to "keep under review the world environmental situation", the purpose of such ongoing activity being to "*ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments*" (United Nations, 1972b). Efforts in this respect have expanded tremendously since 1972 along with the growing awareness of the need to understand how society interacts with the environment. The conceptual approach to understanding environmental problems has evolved from a global environmental assessment programme (i.e. *Earthwatch*) to a focus on understanding the dynamic society-environment interactions and the risks and opportunities that lay therein. Such an approach is needed to facilitate a more effective mainstreaming of the management of environmental risks – such as climate change and degradation of ecosystem services – and opportunities – such as use of ecosystem services – into sectoral policies and strategies which can help

abate adverse impacts. Understanding the society-environment interactions requires data, expertise and knowledge from many sources. Furthermore, efforts to keep the environment under review are not confined to the technical level alone. Science and policy communities need to mutually inform each other through formal and informal processes and this dialogue can be helped through a well-structured science-policy interface[9] (United Nations, 2011).

21. Building on this conceptual approach, UNEP's Science Strategy 2011-2013 (UNEP, 2011) was formulated as an input to the 2014-2017 MTS. The Strategy proposed four goals to strengthen the scientific base of UNEP and to reinforce its work on the science-policy interface[10]. The first goal was to better anticipate the future by implementing a *Global Environmental Alert Service* for keeping the world informed in a timely fashion about critical environmental developments, and by sponsoring a regular *Foresight Process* for ranking the most important emerging issues and conveying this information to a wide audience. The second goal intended to make UNEP a major global player in developing "solution-oriented" sustainability scenarios, and to support the development of scenarios both internally and externally. The third goal was for UNEP to take a lead in formulating and advocating a worldwide sustainability science agenda that meets the critical needs of sustainable development. The actions for achieving this goal were to: (i) carry out "reverse" integrated assessments"[11] in order to identify key questions from the policy arena that should be dealt with by the scientific community; (ii) make contact with Science and Research ministries in order to expand the area of the science-policy arena in which UNEP operates; and (iii) play an "honest broker" role in supporting climate and biodiversity negotiations. The fourth goal stated in the strategy aimed to bolster UNEP's scientific credibility and increase the impact of its scientific assessments and publications by; improving their coherence and scientific rigor, establishing new scientific partnerships, strengthening the scientific competence of its staff by providing goals and incentives for them to engage with the scientific community, and improving the coherence by which science is used in the various scientific advisory committees in the UNEP family. Components of UNEP's Science Strategy 2011-2013 informed the design of the MTS 2014-2017 (e.g. Foresight Process) and some EUR SP projects (e.g. Emerging Issues)[12].

22. The EUR SP aims to inform policymaking with robust data and assessments to fully integrate the environmental dimension of sustainable development into policy action. This implies a need for evidence-based tracking of progress towards global environmental goals, commitments and frameworks. GEO and other data and indicator-based assessments, supported by biennial regional environmental information network conferences and Environment Live, intend to inform global and regional processes, guide policy debates and help to set the global environmental agenda to facilitate policymaking that integrates environmental information. From a conceptual standpoint, the SP was originally anchored in

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[9] IPCC, GEO, IPBES are examples of structures and initiatives that make strong use of such interfaces.

[10] Note: Although not dedicating a goal to fostering action through the science-policy interface.

[11] The term "reverse integrated assessments" comes from the flow of information – from the policymaking community to the scientific community – which is opposite to that of conventional integrated assessments.

[12] However, in a recent discussion paper prepared to inform the development of UNEP Science Strategy 2018- 2030, the Science Division noted that scenarios as envisioned in the Strategy 2011-2013 were mostly performed on an ad hoc basis and not instituted across the PoW. The discussion paper further noted that "the Science Strategy 2011-2013 included an element to direct assessments toward gaps in policy which required scientific input, or reverse assessments. This enjoyed at least partial success […]". UNEP. 2018. *Discussion Paper: UN Environment Science Strategy: 2018- 2030. Draft*. Internal document. Nairobi.

three main work areas -or "service lines"-, i.e. environmental assessments, information management, and early warning on emerging issues.

- **Environmental assessments:** This service line aims to enable the integration of environmental, economic and social information in decision-making and to facilitate policymaking at the global, regional and national levels through the development of assessments based on sound science. It covers, inter alia, the development of online platforms; the production process and delivery of global, regional and thematic assessments and reports; the provision of technical support and methodologies, standards and tools to generate, validate, access, understand and use environmental information.

- **Information management:** This service line relates to the development and delivery of capacity development activities to empower target users (e.g. governments, major groups, and other stakeholders) to better utilize environmental information. It also implies that the participation of major groups and stakeholders in information needs assessments and the generation and collection of data and information will be facilitated, as will the dissemination and sharing of information at the national and local level.

- **Early warning on emerging issues**: This service line concentrates on the processes and tools for the identification, analysis and reporting of emerging environmental issues, and actions to inform and alert stakeholders to emerging environmental issues. It implies the provision of scenarios on environmental trends by identifying data available in different localities and filling information gaps to provide early warning of emerging problems.

23.   As noted above, the MTS 2014-2017 defined the EUR SP objective as "*to empower stakeholders in their policy and decision-making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review*". The strategy indicated that "*UNEP will set the global environmental agenda by delivering assessments that integrate environmental, economic and social information to assess the environment, identify emerging issues and track progress towards environmental sustainability in consultation with multilateral environmental agreement secretariats.*" (UNEP, 2015a). The strategy further aimed for UNEP to support capacity-building efforts in developing countries that commit themselves to environmental monitoring and the posting of environmental data and information on public platforms[13]; to work towards the increased participation of stakeholders in environmental decision-making processes, including the generation, analysis, packaging, availability and dissemination of integrative environmental information; and to disseminate the information in the relevant working languages and strive to make UNEP official documents available in all official languages of the United Nations. The MTS (2014-17) articulated three Expected Accomplishments under the SP:

(i)   Environmental assessments and making environmental information available on open platforms to facilitate global, regional and national policy-making;

(ii)   Early warning to inform global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning by emerging environmental issues; and

(iii)   Information or enhancing the capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge.

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[13] Not properly captured in the EUR SP Theory of Change

24.   Thirteen Programme of Work Outputs were formulated for the period 2014-2017 (Table 2). Guided by Vision 2030 and a strengthening of Results-based Management in UNEP, the MTS 2018-2021 anchored the EUR SP in a Theory of Change (as did the other SPs) and shifted towards indicator-based reporting in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, as there was perceived to be a strong interplay between Environment Live, assessments and capacity development, the number of Expected Accomplishments for the EUR SP were reduced from three to one in the MTS 2018-2021, with the aim to foster further coherence and continuity in the delivery of outputs and outcomes as well as in the prioritization of interventions and resources. The following six key focus areas were defined for the EUR SP in the 2018-2021 MTS, which were translated into a reduced number of Programme of Work Outputs for the SP (Table 2 and Annex vi).

1. Tracking progress towards internationally agreed environmental global goals and targets
2. Timely delivery of integrated environmental assessments at global and regional levels
3. Demand-driven thematic assessments
4. Identification and analysis of emerging issues
5. Enhanced online access to data and knowledge on open platforms
6. Strengthening of countries' statistical data and reporting capacity

Table 2. Environment under Review Sub-programme result statements for 2014-17 and 2018-21 MTS

Environment under Review - MTS 2014-2017		Environment under Review - MTS 2018-2021	
Objective: To empower stakeholders in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review		**Objective:** Governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development	
Expected Accomplishments	**Programme of Work Outputs**	**Expected Accomplishment**	**Programme of Work Outputs**
(a) Assessment: Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by making environmental information available on open platforms	1. Operational online platform(s) open for the public to access environmental data and information at global, regional and national levels, contributed by UNEP and partners to satisfy the needs of different user communities; 2. Integrated assessment reports, including a Gender and Environment outlook, atlases, online information and regularly produced data on core indicators provide sound science and integrate environmental, economic and social information as a basis for decision-making; 3. Environmental information identified by UNEP is presented and disseminated to different target audiences, in languages, including governments, academia, United Nations entities, media and the general public; 4. Methodologies, standards, tools and approaches are developed and disseminated to help different target audiences to generate, validate, access, understand and use environmental information; 5. Technical support to enhance accessibility by UN entities, including Country Teams and MEAs to use data on environmental trends identified through UNEP to catalyse discussions on environmental sustainability at high level to influence policy and programme development; 6. Major Groups and Stakeholders are provided with targeted information, knowledge, tools, methodologies and technology support to effectively access, generate and disseminate environmental information to contribute towards improved decisions in global, regional and national policy making	Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action	1. Global web-based knowledge platform providing up-to-date data, information and knowledge to keep the environment under review (UNEP Live) 2. Integrated environmental assessment at global and regional levels (Regional Environmental Information Networks and GEO process) 3. Thematic environmental assessments and information and early warning services 4. Continuous emerging issues identification, analysis and Communications 5. Capacity development and indicator support to Sustainable Development Goal follow-up and review, including environmental inputs to United Nations reports and policy forums National and regional reporting systems based on shared environmental information system principles generating open access to information
(b) Early warning: Global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning are informed by emerging environmental issues	1. Structured processes and tools for the identification, analysis and reporting of emerging environmental issues of global and regional significance are developed and support provided for their application; 2. Technologies developed, and capacity enhanced to keep abreast of and use information on emerging environmental issues for decision making and policy development;		

	3. Targeted outreach actions to inform and alert stakeholders to emerging environmental issues		
(c) Information: The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced	1. Global best practices are identified and/or developed to build capacity and catalyse access by governments, Major Groups, and other stakeholders to information tools, and provide technology support to generate, validate, contribute to, access and communicate integrated environmental data and information; 2. Capacities of regional fora, national institutions, major groups and other stakeholders are enhanced to better utilize environmental information, knowledge and assessment findings in regional and national policy and planning processes; 3. The capacity of Major Groups and Stakeholders to assess and utilize environmental information and knowledge is enhanced by identifying global best practices for information access and utilization and by providing target trainings and capacity building activities; 4. Customised communication and outreach tools, methodologies, mechanisms/networks and products developed to increase capacity nationally, regionally and globally		

Source: UNEP, 2015 and 2018

25.   In 2016, the UN Environment Assembly committed UNEP to being fully engaged in the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. The UNEA Resolution 2/5 (UNEA, 2016a) requested the Executive Director of UNEP to ensure, among others, that the Global Environment Outlook process, products and assessments *"take into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the SDGs and targets"*. The Resolution further requested the Executive Director to ensure that early warning activities provide information on emerging issues and risks that may have an impact on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and that the Environment Live platform ("UNEP Live") provide information to support the follow-up and review of progress towards achievement of the SDGs.

26.   About half of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted in the 2030 Agenda are directly environmental in focus or address the sustainability of natural resources: poverty, health, food and agriculture, water and sanitation, human settlements, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, oceans, and terrestrial ecosystems. UNEP is the custodian of 26 SDG indicators and co-custodian of six indicators related to environment, with the Environment under Review Sub-programme holding a central role in this monitoring. Focal points have been identified within UNEP for each indicator. Methodologies and partnerships for monitoring the indicators have been established or were in progress as of October 2019 (see section on Effectiveness).

3.4.   Target Stakeholder Groups

3.4.1. Stakeholder analysis

27.   The EUR Programme Framework for 2018-2021 presents a 'stakeholder analysis', which identifies some of the envisaged partner institutions/ groups but does not explicitly identify stakeholders beyond partners, nor clarify their roles and position in regards the SP delivery. Complementary resources were reviewed by the evaluation (e.g. MTS 2014-2017, POW 2014-2015/2016-2017/2018-2019, EUR Project Portfolio 2017) to fill this gap for the key stakeholder groups identified as having a contribution to or interest in the EUR SP. The stakeholder analysis -Annex 5- presents the main stakeholders and their role in the EUR SP as assessed by the evaluation.

3.4.2. Partnerships in delivering the EUR SP

28.   Partnerships have been at the core of work within the Science Division well before the creation of the SP, reflective of the local and multi-dimensional nature of environmental data. International development frameworks have stressed the importance of partnerships in generating and making use of environmental data and assessments. The Agenda 2030 calls specifically for a global partnership that will be key at realizing the implementation targets under each SDG and will bring together "*Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources*" (United Nations, 2015), which was acknowledged by the SP.

29.   From its inception, the EUR SP has emphasised the importance of partnerships, as reflected in the POW documents. The POW 2014-2015 further presents for each POW Output the partners per region or type of involvement, inclusive of public institutions, UN agencies, development banks, research centres and universities, the private sector, press and media organizations. The POW 2016-2017 maintains this emphasis and the criticality of partnerships for EUR is similarly recognized in the MTS 2018-2021. The POW 2018-2019 states that

partners for the EUR SP range from non-governmental organizations and citizens (e.g. through citizen science) to governments, the scientific community and the private sector.

3.4.3. Linkages and collaboration with other sub-programmes

30.　As mentioned earlier, one of the rationales to create a standalone EUR SP was to foster initiatives across all the subprogrammes that improve access to 'sound science' to inform decision-making. This is reflected from the outset in the POW 2014-2015 that indicates that "*Given the interdisciplinary nature of its subprogrammes, activities in every subprogramme will be undertaken in close collaboration with all the UNEP divisions*", and later in the POW 2016-2017 that noted for instance that the EUR SP "*will ensure the coherence of assessments carried out across all other UNEP subprogrammes*". From the POW 2014-2015 to the POW 2016-2017, the number of contributing divisions for each POW output is expanding, including through a more systematic reference to the Regional Offices in the second period. The trend continues in the POW 2018-2019, which notes that "*the responsibilities for environmentally relevant data and policy action are currently fragmented, the subprogramme will involve all relevant partners and pursue a strong outreach and stakeholder engagement strategy to deliver coherent messaging*".

31.　From an organizational standpoint, collaboration between EUR SP and the other subprogrammes is facilitated by the SP Coordinator. From a financial standpoint, the allocation of funding within SPs is recommended by Division Directors and cleared by the Director, Corporate Services Division whilst the authority rests with the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director. Some sources of funding, however, may be 'softly' or more rigidly 'earmarked' to specific initiatives.

3.4.4. Linkages and collaboration with MEAs

32.　Collaboration between EUR SP and the MEAs is emphasised. The POW 2014-2015 indicates that "*UNEP will also work with United Nations sister agencies and MEA secretariats to increase coherence across the United Nations system in relation to environmental assessments, and particularly in ensuring the utility of its findings to the work of agencies within the United Nations system*". More recently, the POW 2018-2019 mentions that "*UNEP will contribute to joint outputs with MEAs and relevant United Nations agencies, such as thematic reviews of the integration of the environmental dimension across goals and the development of the Global Sustainable Development Report, with the aim of informing Governments and stakeholders of key environmental priorities and emerging issues, so that these can be fully considered and integrated in policy-making*". The review of the project portfolio for the EUR SP under the MTS 2018-2021 shows that most project concepts relate to one or more MEAs.

3.5.　Sub-programme Financing

33.　According to the POW Document 2018-2021, EUR SP work represents a core area of work for UNEP, responding to a central mandate of the Programme to keep the environment under review. Therefore, according to the POW Document, the EUR SP should "*benefit from a strong core of Environment Fund resources*". The POW document also states that traditionally, the EUR SP has not attracted large volumes of extra budgetary resources.

34.　The budget estimates for the EUR SP were presented in the UNEP Programme of Work document 2018-2019. The estimated overall budget for 2018-2019 was US$ 51,300,000. The overall estimated budget for the EUR SP has increased from the 2014-2015 projections. Similarly, the estimated number of staff positions in the SP have increased, from the 56 staff

posts in the 2014-2016 POW period to the 72 posts in the current 2018-2021 POW (see section on Financial Management).

4. Theory of Change

35.   The **Theory of Change** for the EUR SP was first introduced in the EUR Programme Framework[14] as a narrative without diagram, reducing its utility as a communication tool. The TOC recalled the objective of the SP and the EAs, which were unpacked through a short description of the POW Outputs. The narrative did not formulate intermediate states. The TOC mentioned, inter alia, that the SP aimed "*to help bridge the gap between the producers and users of environmental information, and to link science with policy*". The Programme Framework Logic described EUR as aiming "*to contribute to sustainable development and improved well-being through empowering stakeholders at global, regional and national levels in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the environment under review",* therefore linking the SP objective to longer term development outcomes. The Programme Framework Logic further mentioned that *"[EUR] aims to do this by (a) providing open web platforms, services and access to timely, substantiated knowledge about the environment and emerging issues and (b) strengthening capacities to generate and make use of substantiated knowledge in decision-making.*" This part introduced a slight variation compared to the MTS and POW by indicating that the SP focused on two areas instead of the three EAs referred elsewhere. One characteristic of the SP evidenced by the TOC and Programme Framework Logic was to concentrate on the production and dissemination of information and assessments and on building capacities for making use of those, but without explicitly making room to assess the needs of the different target user communities and therefore raising a risk of a limited demand- and client-orientation. According to the EUR Programme Framework 2014-2017, the key **drivers** underpinning the success of the SP were bound to the mandate and international agenda of the organization, i.e. the *specific mandates agreed by member states in the MTS 2014-2017*; *Governing Council/UNEA decisions, and commitments made by UNEP's Executive Office post Rio+20*; and *priorities emerging from global and regional intergovernmental fora, member states, Major Groups and Stakeholders and the research community*. **Assumptions** were conveyed at the level of the EAs. Assumptions for EA (a) were formulated as risks, such as: *necessary data to undertake analyses may not exist for all countries; data may have gaps or lack credibility; data may be inaccessible because of incompatibilities in format, confidentiality rules, un-usability, or institutional reasons*. Referring to those risks as assumptions in lieu of drivers may not have been entirely appropriate. Similarly, EA (c) mentioned several assumptions including that "*Once information is available and accessible, the assumption is also that it will influence policy making and that stakeholders will use it in policy making processes*"; these should be articulated as drivers.

36.   In the POW 2018-2021, UNEP introduced Theories of Changes for each SP. The causal pathway presented in the EUR TOC appears logical, but rather simplified; leaving out possible intermediate states, partnerships, and enabling actions (e.g. capacity development). Three drivers were provided with the TOC, *Ability to harness environmental issues in policy-relevant socioeconomic contexts; Data management capacity;* and *Strong outreach and stakeholder engagement*. These drivers echo the Outputs dedicated to capacity development and outreach under the previous MTS, for which few projects were funded and developed. One assumption

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[14] UNEP. 2014. Programme Framework for Subprogramme 7 Environment Under Review 2014-2017. Nairobi.

comes with the TOC in the form of *Governance arrangements are in place to ensure that partners are able to provide data.* Altogether, the TOC is found to depict a more focused context and a more robust causal chain than under the previous MTS, but with a stronger recognition of the projectization of the SP.

37. With these observations in mind, a Theory of Change of the Sub-programme was reconstructed by the evaluation team in order to explore how projects are expected to have a collective or aggregated effect at the level of Programme of Work results (Expected Accomplishments and Programme of Work Outputs) and specific SDGs and targets. It is hoped that this work will be of use in future planning processes. This analysis focused heavily on the effectiveness and sustainability of the Sub-programme efforts. Results reported in the Programme Performance Reports, PIMS and other sources were analysed and aggregated, supported by other information sources including focus groups with EUR SP key informants (Figure 2).

38. At the output level, the reconstructed Theory of Change considers key EUR SP initiatives; the Global Environment Outlook, the thematic and integrated mapping assessments, the emerging issues, UNEP Live, and capacity for SDG monitoring. The reconstructed TOC places the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) as a component of UNEP Live as formulated across the POWs of the MTS 2014-2017.

39. At the outcome level, the reconstructed TOC formulates programme outcomes per types of users, partners or stakeholders. The following outcomes can be highlighted:

- *Countries have capacity to report on the environmental Dimensions of sustainable development*: this outcome reflects both the delivery of EUR products (data, information, assessments) that enable capacities as well as the capacity development component included in most of the EUR projects, being capacity to monitor and analyse data, to develop assessments, etc.

- *EUR data, assessments, and foresight used in UNEP programming*: this regards the expected outcome that EUR outputs are reviewed internally by UNEP Divisions and SPs and inform their programming as well as inform the overall strategic prioritization of UNEP.

- *Academia use environmental data, information and knowledge to inform new research and policy*: this outcome derives from the expected reuse by the scientific community of quality data and assessments availed or delivered by the EUR projects.

- *MEA secretariats and UN agencies use environmental data, information and knowledge in their programming*: this covers the dissemination of EUR outputs to the UN and multilateral communities.

- *Governments use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes in policy making processes*: this presents governments as expected direct users of EUR SP outputs as well as joint or indirect users through several enabling outcomes such as other UNEP SPs.

40. At the intermediate outcome level, the reconstructed TOC presents UN agencies and MEAs as contributing to national environmental planning with guidance from EUR outputs. The role of the private sector is also highlighted as complying with environmental policy/ regulation.

41.   At the development impact level, a feedback loop informs governments and EUR SP outputs (data, information, assessments) about the achievements of policy and programme implementations.

42.   Accordingly, the reconstructed TOC presents three main causal pathways for the EUR SP. One causal pathway concentrates on building the data, information and assessment base and capacities of countries and jointly with UNEP SPs and the scientific community (science-policy interface) to enable Governments to formulate and implement scientifically informed policies. A second pathway involves UN agencies and MEAs by informing and making contributions to provide direction to thematic and development programmes that support Governments with environmental policies, programmes and strategies. The third pathway involves private sector actors that are positioned as users of EUR SP outputs and adopters of environmental policies, but not as sources of environmental insights, influencers of policies, or contributors to setting the scientific agenda.

43.   Among the drivers formulated in the reconstructed TOC:

- *Data, information and knowledge on UNEP Live and other sources used to inform development*: this reflects mutual leverage and some expected synergies between EUR SP projects.

- *National policies, strategies and programmes are developed and implemented for environmental data management (open data policy, big data, GIS, etc.)*: this driver implies the ability to support governments to develop cross-sectoral policies for environmental data management.

- *Governments are willing to provide access to the key environmental and related socio-economic data*: EUR SP strives to mitigate policy or socio-economic sensitivity of data disclosure.

- *Key stakeholders participate actively and when required in the analysis and ready availability of scientific data to support the assertion of issues deemed to be of environmental concern*: mechanisms such as face-to-face meetings or online collaboration allows active participation of key stakeholders in environmental analysis.

- *Countries have sufficient capacity to manage and provide access to data, including information and technology to allow for the discovery and use of environmental information*: capacities including cross-sectoral and at sub-national level enable collection and use of environmental information.

44.   The reconstructed TOC presents several assumptions, including "*Data and information that is available and accessible influence policymaking and stakeholders will use it in policymaking processes*". As indicated earlier, this assumption was formulated in the EUR Programme Framework 2014-2017. Such statement should rather be positioned as a driver, but as an assumption it strongly accounts for the local context and acknowledges the constraints and limitations that the EUR SP may face vis à vis competing priorities and policy arbitration -e.g. around People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace-.
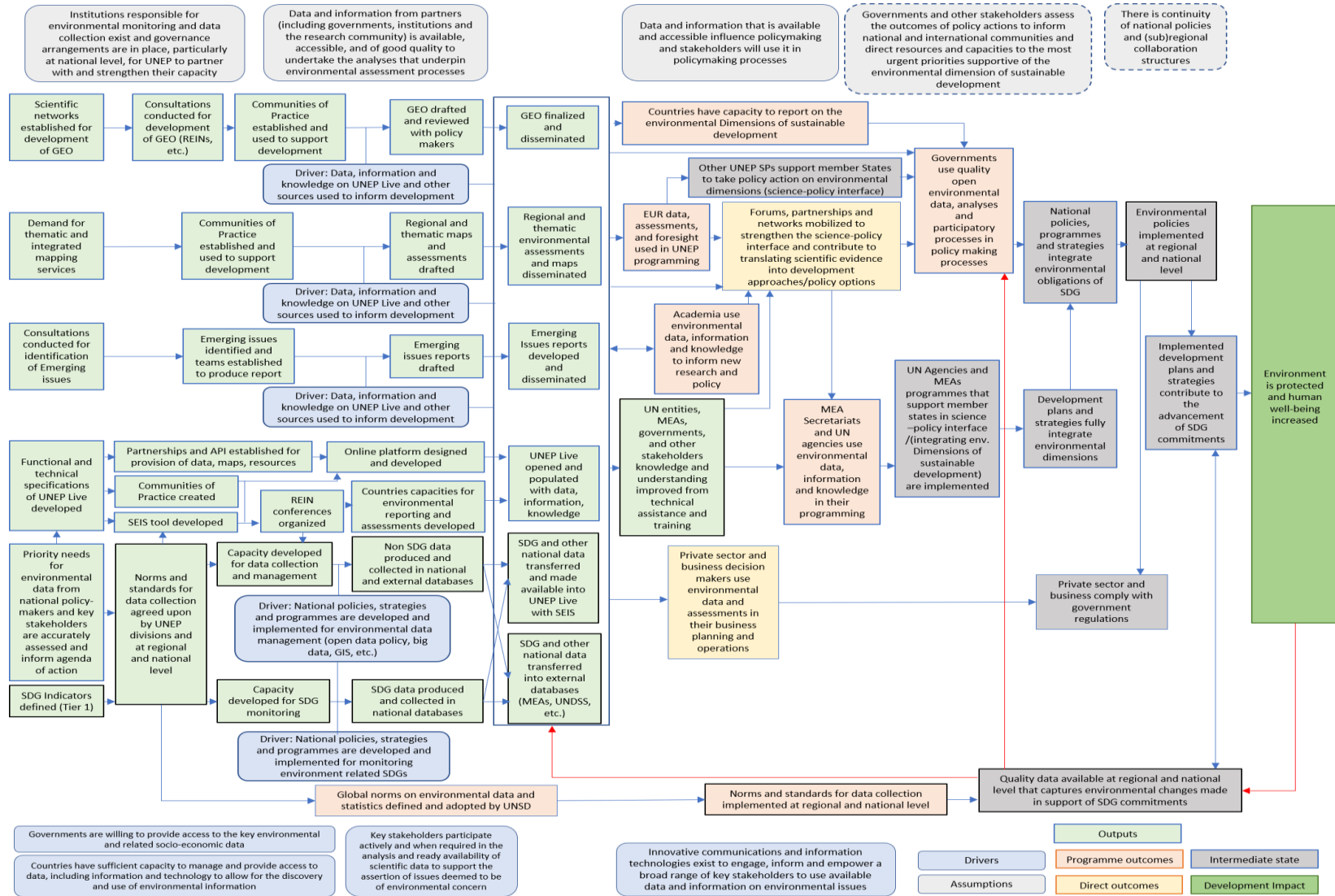
Figure 2. The reconstructed theory of change of the Environment under Review Sub-programme

5. Evaluation Findings

45.   This Chapter presents the overall findings of the evaluation. It covers the Strategic Relevance of the Sub-programme, the Sub-programme Design and Structure, the Overall Sub-programme Performance, and the Factors Affecting Sub-programme Performance.

5.1.   Strategic Relevance of the Sub-programme

46.   This section discusses the evaluation findings related to the relevance of the *Environment Under Review Sub Programme (EUR)* including portfolio responsiveness to the current global environmental agenda which includes SDGs, emerging priorities such as those regarding climate change and biodiversity, and UNEP's evolving mandate as per UNEA and General Assembly resolutions. The evaluation assesses relevance through consideration of the EUR formulation process (the logic of the design, the strategic intent), and positioning of the EUR services and products against UNEP's stated comparative advantages. It examines the relevance of the major areas of work undertaken within the sub-programme.

5.1.1. EUR Alignment with Global Environmental Challenges

47.   According to the 2014-17 MTS, EUR products and services are aimed to provide guidance to governments on developing national environmental management/monitoring systems to support national data collection on SDGs and international environmental goals (IEGs), decision-making, and integration of international laws they have committed to, including the Multilateral Environmental Agreements. EUR SP products and tools are relevant to the current global environment context, the post 2015 mandate as per Rio+20 and UNEA, and the current global environment and development policy context responding to existential climate change and biodiversity threats (see Rio+20 and recent global policy directives concerning UNEP's mandate).[15]

Additionally, since 2017, countries and the UN agencies have fully adopted the 2030 Agenda and task of monitoring the SDGs. UNEP *is the Custodian Agency for reporting data on 26 SDG indicators* and ensuring that the narrative of the SDGs captures the environmental dimension of sustainable development. Of these 26 SDG indicators, 20 required methodology development in 2016. Developing SDG indicator measurement methodologies enables UNEP to fulfil its international obligations toward the follow-up and review of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. UNEP plays an important role in the follow-up and review of the progress in implementing the environmental dimension of sustainable development through assessment processes, such as the Global Environment Outlook, as a contribution to the Global Sustainable Development Report and to the annual Sustainable Development Goals Report, all of which should support the overall High-level Political Forum (HLPF) follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These include the provision of policy-relevant information.

48.   The SG's July 2019 High-Level Policy Forum (HLPF) on SDGs highlighted the persistent data *gap* in developing countries and reflected on the ongoing limitation of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) ability to monitor and report on SDGs. The report reflects that the *lowest* amount of donor funding to support countries goes to develop their environmental

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[15] OIOS Report 2019-Endnote, including Rio + 20, Future We Want outcome document, post-2015 SDGs and Agenda 2030, the Climate Change Paris Agreement, Sendai, and IEGs.

data. For instance, the report stated that *while considerable effort has been made to address these data gaps over the past four years, progress has been limited*. Increased investment is urgently needed to ensure that adequate data are available to inform decision-making on all aspects of the 2030 Agenda. To that end, the Dubai Declaration launched at the second World Data Forum in October 2018, outlined a demand-driven funding mechanism under the Member States' oversight that will respond quickly and efficiently to the priorities of national statistical systems. The report highlighted a mismatch on global donor support on SDG monitoring related to Environmental Data collection and methods. Another gap the SG report emphasized was LDC's need for support for data collection.

49.   UNEP staff and survey respondents, including, staff, government focal points, and CPR members recognised the global relevance of integrated and thematic environmental assessments, data science, information technologies, and environmental monitoring linked to SDGs, the MEAs, and international environmental goals. Surveys (Annexes 8 & 9) and interviewed stakeholders considered *UNEP EUR knowledge products and tools*, notably the *Global Environment Outlook (GEO),*[16] *Environment Live,*[17] *Emerging issues including the Emissions Gap Reports,*[18] *SDG support, including monitoring and reporting, statistics and capacity building, and methodological support and specific analyses and assessments on the interface between science and policies* (such as green and circular economies and energy efficiency), to be highly relevant and had been influential in the adoption of many current global environmental policies (global policy directives since Rio+20, climate change, biodiversity, etc.).

5.1.2. Relevance of EUR to UN Reform

50.   The 2017 Secretary General's Reform Agenda[19] [20] requires UNEP to play a key environmental role in a reinvigorated United Nations Resident Coordinator system including UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs)[21] through targeted and intentional support to UNSDCFs and SDG monitoring. The multitude of global policy events and agreements since 2012 strengthen the relevance of UNEP's mandate to exert a more central and enabling role in the sustainable development system.

51.   According to the 2019 OIOS evaluation report[22], UNEP has not engaged systematically to date on the UN reform efforts. Furthermore, an internal review[23] and the OIOS evaluation

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[16] https://www.unenvironment.org/global-environment-outlook

[17] https://environmentlive.unep.org/foresight

[18] https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/climate-change/what-we-do/mitigation/emissions-gap-report

[19] General Assembly resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) establishes key system-wide strategic policy orientations and operational modalities for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UNDS.[19] It describes how agencies of the United Nations system should support countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda and related agreements, and provides a set of guiding principles and mandates for agencies of the UNDS, including UNEP. A process to reform the UNDS is currently underway, which will provide further guidance on strengthening coordination and effectiveness. The outcome of that reform process will have direct bearing on the work of UNEP in the coming years.

[20] SGs report on UN Reform 2017

[21] Formerly known as UNDAFs

[22] Https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6

[23] Evaluation Office Review of the UNEP Sub-Programme Coordination Function 2017 (unpublished)

(ibid), noted that UNEP's operational role in countries and regions should be clarified. This finding was again validated during this evaluation. Needs were expressed by interviewees in regions and countries for EUR SP support for environmental mainstreaming into UNSDCF processes. Normative guidance on thematic assessments was highlighted as suited to UNCTs. UNEP as a normative technical organization has not been traditionally present in UNCTs as it is not a country-based UN organization.

52. Key interviewees put forth the view that when the EUR work was a part of the Environmental Governance SP, the normative thematic guidance focus was stronger. The 2010-2013 MTS, for instance, included: EA (3) POW Output (i) "The capacity of UNCTs to integrate environmental sustainability into UNDAF and other national planning processes are strengthened through provision of environmental information and data (20 UNCTs in One UN pilot and roll-out countries)."The support provided to UNCTs and UNDAFs was still explicit in the EG PoW for 2014-2015 (EA 3; PoW Output i) but the reference to supporting this through the provision of information and data was lost.

53. Key interviewees stated the demand for the EUR SP's technical and comparative advantage (science, assessments, data and information management, and foresight) exists for UNCT country common assessment processes. While some interviewees (in the regional office) reported not being very involved in the regional and country programming processes, other stated they were actively involved. Varying views were raised during evaluation on how to engage. Several respondents suggested that a UNEP /UNSDCF specialist might be recruited for each UNEP regional office and in key country offices. Respondents suggested targeting 10−12 priority country offices where there is a major carbon footprint on the environment. Another view included having an environment specialist in selected countries. Interviewees put forth a consensus that the needs for EUR SP themes, services and products of each country and regions, are different and difficult to serve in the absence of EUR SP standard guidance (normative guidance on the products, tools and thematic content). In addition, to assess needs for technical assistance and finally, to establish firm partnership with the strong environmental networks regionally that might be systemically tapped.

54. Few of the regional and country office staff interviewed mentioned active involvement in UNDAF work, in contrast to the numerous mentions of work on SDGs and support to the Global GEO. Interviewees generally noted insights about UN reform, UNDAF, CCA, and capacity development work as follows: 1. UNEP country-level presence is needed for CCA assessment. 2. The National State of the Environment Report is an opportunity, and UN country-level planning and the environment reporting need to be in line. 3. Data collection and data sharing agreements also must be in place. The evaluation team agree generally that the EUR SP might assess needs and ways to support regional and country level UNDAF work.

5.1.3. Relevance to UNEP's Evolving Mandate and Capacity

55. UNEP has mandates to (i) support UNEA, (ii) be custodian or co-custodian for 26 SDG indicators, (iii) provide science-policy interfaces and consideration of the environment in many areas, and (iv) support MEAs. Furthermore, the 2017 Secretary-General's Reform agenda requires UNEP to play a key environmental role in a reinvigorated United Nations Resident Coordinator system. The multitude of global policy events and agreements since 2012, summarized below, strengthened the relevance of UNEP's mandate to exert a more central and enabling role in the sustainable development system. EUR plays an important support role based on UNEP's comparative advantages particularly around leveraging science

for policy and tools including, data, analysis, assessment for decision making. The areas of UNEP's stated comparative advantages are the following:[24]

· Leveraging sound science for policy and decision-making,
· Providing technical assistance for environmental law, policy, and planning,
· Promoting UN system-wide coherence on environmental matters,
· Raising awareness and outreach,
· Testing innovative solutions and technologies and upscaling results through partnerships,
· Facilitating access to funding for the environment (UNEP, 2015b).

56.   A challenge unique to this Sub-programme has been how to best highlight the key problems that perhaps all UNEP sub-programmes are expected to address, including how best to present evidence and analysis of the root causes and their most significant consequences on the environment and human living conditions. The EUR SP has important role in informing strategic planning and influencing UNEP governing bodies' policy decisions on how to plan and best to respond. Beyond references in the MTS, how EUR products (e.g. GEO, Foresight, and Emissions Gap reports) feed into UNEP priority-setting processes, including in projects and global policy priorities is unclear.

While the EUR is highly relevant to UNEP's mandate and comparative advantages, it is not well-focussed. Questions were raised about the design and purpose of the SP. Evaluation informants reported that key EUR initiatives (such as GEO, Environment Live, SDGs umbrella project) are evolving but were not needs-based, and/or integrated (planned in conjunction with) other UNEP initiatives. These core initiatives are also not sufficiently well resourced and positioned to support UNEP's needs and comparative advantages or for leading and promoting the emerging environmental agenda (including as a lead actor on the environmental dimension of SDGs within UN).[25]

57.   UNEP's convening power is considered one of the organization's greatest assets. This is supported by its work on Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) negotiations and the formation of scientific panels such as International Resource Panel IRP. Interviewees generally show a consensus that the *EUR themes, products and services are not well positioned as per UNEP's comparative advantages.* The EUR SP should play a central role in highlighting several areas of UNEP's comparative advantage mentioned above.

5.1.4. Relevance to Global, Regional and Country Needs

58.   The evaluation identified an observed/reviewed *disconnect between initial intent and operationalization of the portfolio*. The evaluation team assessed relevance to the identified target audiences (and reaffirmed the point that the target audiences for the different products/services and thematic areas of focus were not adequately identified). The relevance of EUR SP is perceived differently by different audiences. Interviewees reported current low utility of EUR SP outputs. As highlighted above, interviewees pointed out that many of the EUR SP portfolio projects are still in development or design stage (Environment Live, GEO-6

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[24] The comparative advantages referred here come from UNEP's formative evaluation of the MTS 2014–2017 (UNEP, 2015). The evaluation noted slight variations in the number and the formulation of UNEP's comparative advantages according to the sources reviewed (e.g. UNEP MTS 2010–2013, UNEP Science Strategy 2011–2013, UNEP POW 2016–2017, UN Environment—Resource Mobilisation Strategy 2017, UN Environment MTS 2018–2021, etc.).
[25] Governing Council in its decision 19/1, adopted in February 1997.

(network, process, products, SDG umbrella- methods and capacity development) and highly dependent on UNEP institutional and management reforms and clarity regarding country / regional presence as well as cross cutting areas: south-south cooperation, capacity-building and knowledge management work.

59. The evaluation identified different audiences as well as perceptions regarding the EUR SP utility and value-added. Questions were raised about whether the EUR SP has been providing the right inputs in the relevant form and to the right audiences. The EUR SP formulation process was neither needs-based nor fully mapped against the Rio+20 mandate (OIOS 2019). During the last two MTS formulations, notably, the EUR SP portfolio was subject to alignment processes, and as such, subject to continuous improvement toward integrating the Future We Want mandate (OIOS 2019). However, there have been no major amendments to EUR SP in response to the Rio+20 mandate or Agenda 2030.

60. While the Post 2015 (UNEA) mandate is highly relevant to the current global environmental challenges and policy directives, the EUR SP is not fully positioned to support leading and promoting the environmental agenda and environmental dimension of SDGs within the United Nations.[26] The consensus from interviewees and surveys was the EUR SP thematic focus, products and tools can be better targeted and reflective of the needs of internal and external audiences.

61. The absence of a needs assessment raises the question of the extent to which the EUR SP is fully fit for purpose. The evaluation found that transitionally since Rio+20, UNEP has been subject to a variety of change initiatives and many senior staff have left since that time. This, and the fact that many core EUR SP products and services (Environment Live, GEO, and SDGs support work) are ongoing initiatives being adapted to support UNEP in becoming fit for purpose as commissioned by various resolutions and directives since Rio+20. (list of resolutions in Annex 10)

62. It might be time to reflect on institutional mandate, the current installed EUR SP capacities and resources against the EUR SP expected results. For instance, statistical support for the SDGs. Statistical capacities in regions to support SDGs monitoring should be growing. Such internal capacity is needed for UNEP to adequately support SDGs monitoring, supporting countries with environmental statistical development. Science Policy Interface Officers (SPIs) in regions clearly expressed need for this capacity. Many references were made to partnership with UN commissions who have such capacity, but such partnerships have yet to be made explicit.

63. Generally, the evaluation believes that the EUR SP portfolio, including GEO, should be strongly linked to UNEP's strategic planning process, the post-Rio+20 mandate and UNEA governance. [27] The question of EUR SP links to the Post 2015 agenda was frequently raised by respondents. The focus on "for whom and for what," extends deeper into this subprogramme than other SPs because EUR SP's three areas of focus are inherently linked to international policy setting and UNEP's internal planning, priority setting, and decision-making.

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[26] Governing Council in its decision 19/1, adopted in February 1997.
[27] 1) Climate Change; 2) Disasters and Conflicts; 3) Ecosystem Management; 4) Environmental Governance; 5) Chemicals and Waste; 6) Resource Efficiency; and 7) Environment under Review.
The 2018-19 OIOS evaluation questioned the fit per integrating it with the post-Rio + 20 UNEA mandate.

64.   A key finding has been that EUR SP content is largely focussed on normative (upstream) work and geared to global policy needs, not directed to regional, national, or local needs. A central challenge highlighted by the evaluation is thus concerned with the EUR SP's engagement with, and support to regions and countries. The EUR SP is said to be less active in regions and countries and providing ad hoc responses to demands for technical assistance and capacity development (largely through ad hoc financing and the GEF CCCD portfolio, a funding stream recently discontinued).

65.   The UN System reform is currently asking for comparative support to regions and countries by UN agencies, including UNEP to support on SDGs and support to IEG obligations i.e. technical assistance and through engagement in UNSDCF planning and assessments. The SDGs umbrella project intends UNEP wide coordination and strategically targeted technical assistance including around data collection, information, and assessments. The SDGs capacity-building work requires institutional clarity on capacity building. It might therefore be timely to set up a strategic capacity-building program on the three focus areas linked to IEG and SDG monitoring through the EUR SP. The EUR SP provides a great platform to consistently and strategically support the SDGs and the UNSDCF country work.

Links to UNEA, Strategic Planning and Priority Setting Processes

66.   Additionally, while all SPs are engaged to a degree in raising science and joint coordination, the *planning and priority setting processes of UNEP have unique needs from this SP that is primarily geared towards science for policy*. With the *SPC* roles having previously been delinked from the **Policy** and **Programme Division** PPD (2016), the evaluation found the EUR SP portfolio was lacking a systematic link to the planning, decision-making fora and priority setting processes (also refer to Section 5.4). The hosting of SPCs within the PPD, was regarded as an important internal platform for SP Coordinators to interact and plan inclusive EUR work. This arrangement has recently been re-enabled by the re-positioning the SPCs back in PPD. The need for stronger operational linkages with the Communication Division became apparent during the evaluation process. The current ad hoc engagement was recognized as a limiting factor for relevance as, at its essence, the EUR SP is a science-to-policy bridge and communication is pivotal in that process. Organizational dissonance (and need for continuous UNEP reforms (OIOS 2019) has negatively influenced the relevance of the EUR SP services and tools (perceived utility and uptake).

67.   *UNEA* is the central UNEP platform for policymakers and is a *global audience* i.e. for *decisions and priorities setting at the global level*. Interviewees say EUR SP scientific services and products (GEO for planning, Foresight and early warning, and the EUR SP work on SDGs as a UN-wide mandate) might be better positioned internally to better support monitoring the environmental outcomes of UNEA decisions and support the work programming processes in addition to raising visibility and credibility of UNEP as a leader on environmental agenda setting. Respondents questioned the uptake of EUR SP services and tools by UNEP senior management, stating that they might be better formatted and targeted to senior managers.

Divergent view by stakeholders of the relevance of EUR SP core products and services*

68.   The evaluation surveys show divergent views on the perceived relevance of the EUR SPportfolio. Based on NFP survey results concerning relevance, 53% of respondents believe UNEP Live is relevant or very relevant; and 89% find relevant or very relevant the support to environment related SDG monitoring and review. Among CPR survey respondents, 38% said

support to the national and regional reporting system, based on shared environmental information system principles generating open access information is very relevant, and 31% of CPR respondents said the delivery of thematic environment assessment and information and early warning, such as the hotspots atlas, are very relevant.

69.   Among CPR survey respondents, 60% strongly or slightly agreed that the EUR SP is fit for its purpose; 40% strongly or slightly agreed with the statement that the EUR SP contributes to setting the direction of and influencing programming priorities of the other SPs. 50% CPR find that the EUR SP is informing UNEA, a rather positive assessment; 60% slightly or strongly agree with the statement that the EUR SP has a clear purpose and goals. 30% surveyed do not know if the projects are adequately funded from the Environment Fund, indicating there might be a need for more transparency, strategy, and communication on those aspects.

70.   The surveys to National Focal Points (NFP) and CPR members disclosed divergent views on the utility and fit of the EUR SP. The NFP and CPR do not have the same needs; the NFP survey shows need to concentrate on national work/data/assessment and focus on national strategies and programs (Figure 3). The CPR, at the global level, needs platforms, assessments, etc. to see the picture from all the countries together (Figure 4). There are stated gaps in the EUR SP's ability to deliver and meet its full potential. Interviewed SPIs shared this thinking. Consensus was that the EUR SP services should influence the strategic planning and respond to raise emerging issues.
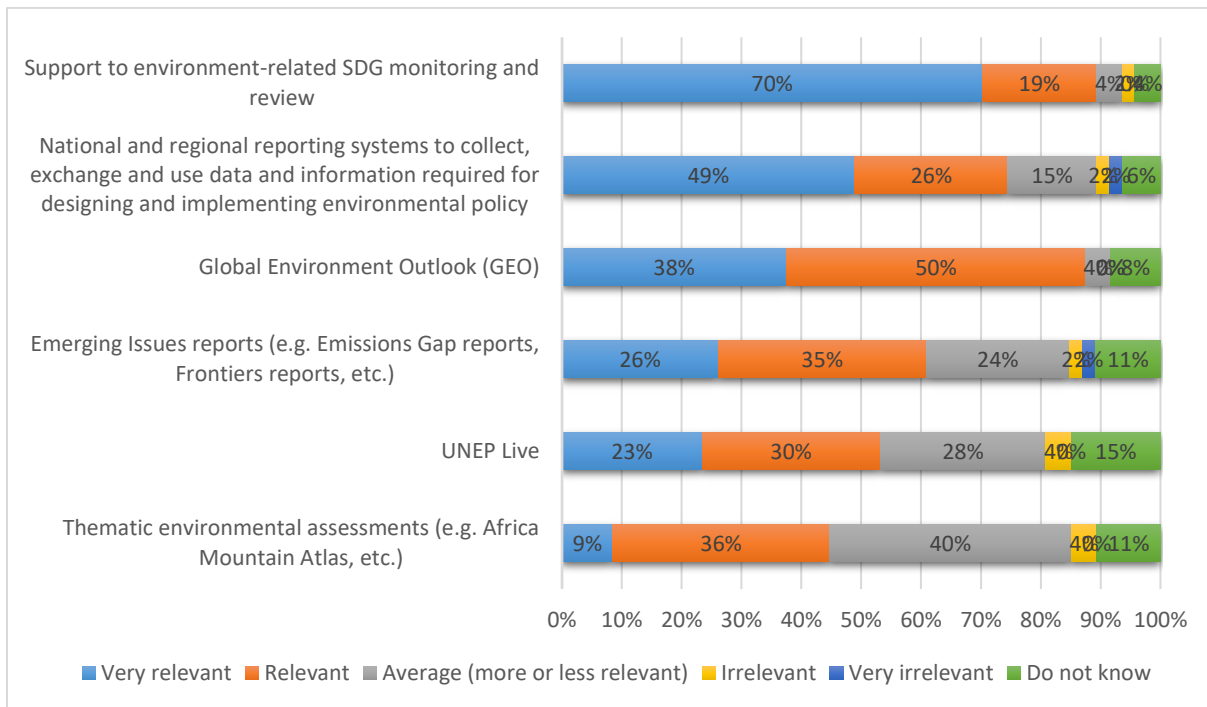
Figure 3: NFPs' perceived relevance of EUR outputs to their needs and national policy processes.
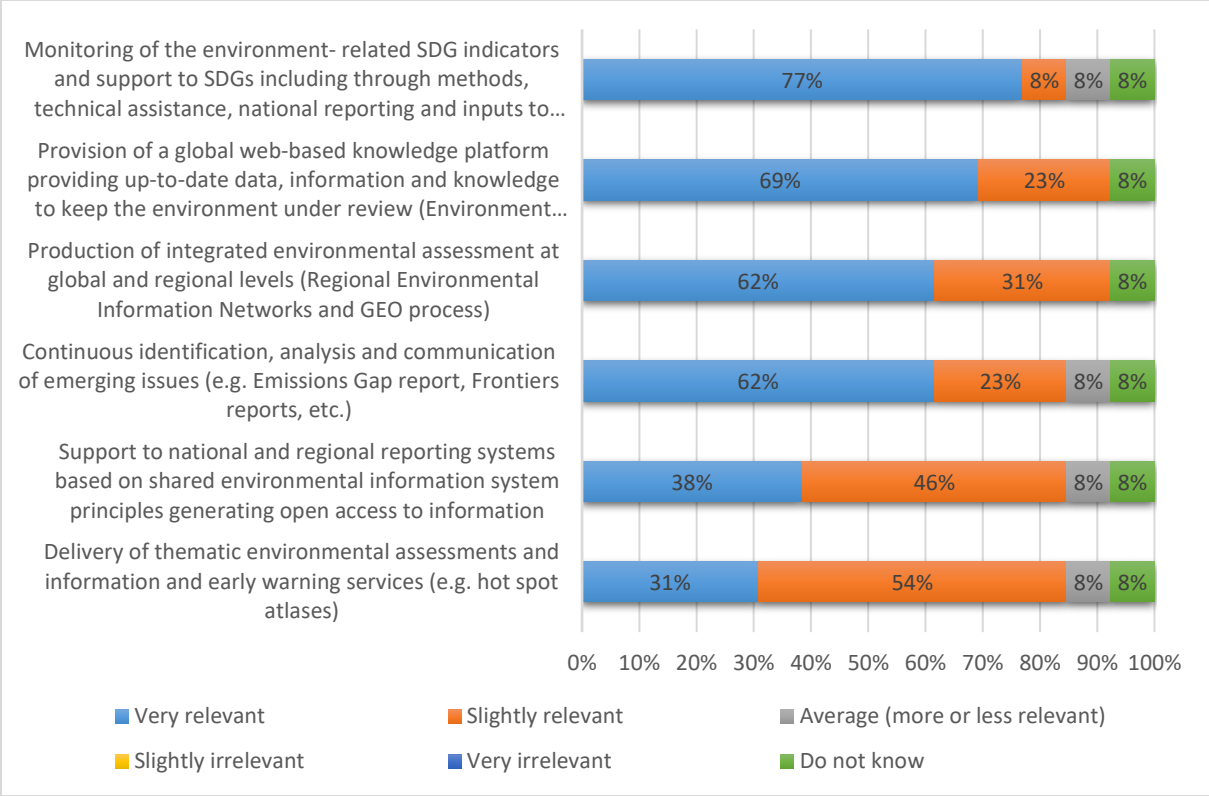
Figure 4: CPR's perceived relevance of EUR areas of work to UNEP mandate

Geographical targeting

71.   The evaluation examined the geographic coverage, scope of services, and targeting of EUR SP. Thematic support, such as the support of the EUR SP to the SDGs regarding methodologies and capacity development, is generally perceived as being driven by donor requests and vertical funding. While targeting was noted as important by interviewees, based on the composition of the project portfolio it appears, collectively, to be weakly targeted when viewed from a geographic perspective. Respondents shared consensus that more data on the countries where SPIs are working would support planning and understanding of the current demand for technical EUR SP 'thematic' services. The EUR SP portfolio might be further targeted to provide technical support and capacity-building tailored to regional / country needs.

5.2.   Sub-programme Design and Structure

The EUR SP rationale, objective, expected accomplishments, and indicators of achievement were first conveyed to the UN General Assembly in March 2012[28]. The creation of the EUR SP was one of the few significant changes formulated during the MTS 2010-2013 with the aim to bring environmental scientific information and knowledge to policy and decision-makers. Previously, this objective was considered *within* all sub-programmes, not as a stand-alone objective. According to the Formative Evaluation of the MTS 2014-2017: "*The addition of the seventh sub-programme was somehow justified in the MTS document by the foresight process,*

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[28] UNGA. 2012. Proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015. Part two: Biennial programme plan. Programme 11: Environment. A/67/6. 23 March 2012. New York.

but seemed to have been driven mostly by internal politics i.e. the desire within UNEP to give more budgetary autonomy to DEWA and DCPI, who under the MTS 2010-2013 were not leading any sub-programme and were therefore largely dependent on resource sharing arrangements under the DELC-led Environmental Governance sub-programme for their budget allocations. The struggle to fund the UNEP flagship publication GEO-5 was a frequently mentioned example to argue for a separate sub-programme."[29] This was further verified in evaluation interviews. In 2014, EUR became a stand-alone Sub Programme of UNEP in the 2014–2017 MTS.

72.   The stated intent of the EUR SP was that its scientific based products and services would 'cut across' all other Sub programmes. From a logical point of view, a decision to separate it from the thematic Sub programmes: climate change, disasters and conflicts, chemicals and waste, and resource efficiency came with limitations. However, the rationale was that the move gave the mandated role much more visibility and provided a stronger incentive to donors to support it (support had been previously less visible within the Environmental Governance sub-programme).

73.   The EUR SP strategy, structure, resources, outputs and results framework were developed in greater detail in November 2012, in the POW 2014-2015. In January 2015, the MTS 2014-2017 anchored the SP in UNEP's broader corporate vision with the aim "*to leverage information as an agent of change and ensure a coherent approach in dealing with the science-policy interface*". The SP then became closely embedded in the *vision statement* of the strategy 2014-2017, that comprised four interrelated areas:

- *"Keeping the world environmental situation under review*
- *Providing policy advice and early warning information, based on sound science and assessments*
- *Catalysing and promoting international cooperation and action, including strengthening technical support and capacity in line with country needs and priorities*
- *Facilitating the development, implementation and evolution of laws, norms and standards and developing coherent interlinkages among multilateral environmental agreements*"

74.   From 2012 to 2017, the **Objective** set to the SP was "*To empower stakeholders in their policy and decision-making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review*". The formative evaluation of the MTS 2014-2017 noted that, while the objectives assigned to most other SPs indicated "a behavioural change among stakeholders in the form of a transition or move towards some environmental aspect of sustainable development e.g. towards climate resilience; lower emissions pathways; sustainable use of natural resources […]", the objective of the EUR SP "was at a somewhat lower level akin to enhanced capacity ("empowered" stakeholders in their policy and decision making), emphasizing what UNEP intends to provide (scientific information and knowledge) rather than what specific behavioural change it seeks to promote among stakeholders."[30] This shortcoming was only partly addressed in the MTS 2018-2021, which states the objective of the EUR SP as "*Governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development*". As with all other SPs, EUR does not come with indicators, targets, and baselines at the level of the SP Objective. The POW results and monitoring framework stops at the level

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[29] UNEP. 2015. Formative Evaluation of the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2014-2017. Evaluation Office. Nairobi.
[30] Ibid.

of the Expected Accomplishments and does not measure the level of realisation of the SP objective per se. The articulation of a robust TOC provides an opportunity to better understand and articulate the extent to which the intermediate and longer-term outcomes materialise, but also to strengthen the analysis of the overall construct, coherence, and targeting of the SPs.

75.   The Formative Evaluation recommended in 2015 that: "*UNEP should set long-term environmental objectives for each sub-programme with indicators, baselines and long-term targets. The Environment under Review Sub-programme should play a stronger role in helping define higher-level indicators for UNEP and measuring the baselines for these indicators.*" Various other organizations have improved their monitoring threshold in the past few years to link their goals with global development indexes or measure their contribution to the SDGs[31]. However, this approach has not been taken up in UNEP's most recent POWs. Together with the fact that the EUR SP Objective is directed towards shaping the global debate and policy narrative rather than at delivering effects at the development impact level, and that no bridges were specified with other SPs among the indicators and targets of the results and monitoring framework, this creates a slight separation between the EUR SP and the other SPs.

76.   The MTS 2014-2017 formulated three **Expected Accomplishments** for the EUR SP:

a. *Assessment: Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by making environmental information available on open platforms*
b. *Early warning: Global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning are informed by emerging environmental issues*
c. *Information: The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced*

77.   Conceptually, the three EAs are found to be logically linked to the SP objective. However, EAs are supposed to be the direct outcomes that UNEP wants to achieve through its outputs, "direct" meaning here directly attributable to UNEP's efforts, which in the above cases may be difficult to ascertain (e.g. "*The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced*" may stem from other interventions or factors). Furthermore, the formulation of the EAs in the MTS was somewhat imprecise, with "*Assessment*" being anchored in information and open platforms (i.e. UNEP Live) but overlooking the assessment process, and with "*Information*" being used in lieu of a more straightforward "Capacity development". Altogether, the EAs described an articulation consistent with the Division's organogram of 2012, which featured three main sections: Scientific Assessment, Early Warning, and Capacity Development[32]. Alternative formulations and architectures for strengthening the SP internal coherence and logic could have considered, for example, singling out data and information management (e.g. UNEP Live), to bind assessments and early warning, and to assign an EA to cross-cutting Outputs such as capacity development, communications, and knowledge management.[33]

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[31] UNDP for example integrates in its corporate development results framework and monitors several impact indicators such as the *Human Development Index (HDI)*; *Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI); Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural) [SDG indicator 1.1.1]; Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age [SDG indicator 1.2.1]; CO_2 emission per unit of value added [SDG indicator 9.4.1]; etc.*

[32] UNEP. 2013. *Annual Report 2012*. Nairobi.

[33] While the MTS 2014-2017 referred to the need of "*ensuring that UNEP is responsive and client-driven*" , it could be noted that the description of the EAs and SP Outputs -for EUR SP and most SPs- is largely based

78.   The MTS 2018-2019 has reduced the Expected Accomplishments of the SP down to one, stated as *"Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action"*. In addition to not being very clearly formulated, the EA appears positioned at a higher level than the SP objective (use vs. empowered). Furthermore, it may be difficult as noted earlier to attribute the achievement of this EA specifically to UNEP. In addition, from the point of view of having a solid TOC for the SP, moving to one EA might be challenging as it aggregates different outputs and their associated causal pathways into a single results statement.

79.   The POW 2014-2015 identified 13 **Outputs** under the EUR SP. A review of these Outputs and their corresponding projects as presented in the POW 2014-2015, POW 2016-2017, Programme Framework, and in PIMS (Annex 6) leads to the following comments:

- In the POWs 2014-2015 and 2016-2017, several Outputs were formulated in ways that were not specific enough to attribute a distinctive intent to each one and ensure that programmatic synergies were sought, overlaps avoided, and efficiencies maximized. Outputs that seem to be closely related if not partly overlapping include 714, 716, 732, and 734.
- Logic and coherence of the SP at the project level were not found to be entirely clear, or robust. For example:
    o Project 712.2 seems rather related to Output 711 than 712;
    o Project 713.1 seems to partly overlap with other projects (716.1 and 734.1);
    o Outcomes of projects 712.1 and 712.2 are pitched at a higher level than the corresponding SP Output *712*.
- Another limitation in the MTS 2014-2017 was a general lack of reference to other UNEP SPs among target users of EUR SP Outputs, despite being an expectation mentioned in the narrative of the EUR Programme Framework and in the POWs.
- During the execution of the MTS 2014-2017, the overall logic of the SP was further weakened by the fact that only six Outputs out of 13 were effectively resourced through funded projects to support their realisation (Table 3). Out of the remaining seven Outputs, five were left without any project enabling a delivery (716, 722, 723, 731, 733) and two were referred as incorporated in other Outputs and projects (714 in 712.1 and 715 in 711.1), but without any significant changes in the scope and resources of those projects. Altogether, the seven Outputs for which no proper project was implemented tend to concentrate on communication and outreach, capacity development, and knowledge management.

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on the services delivered and projects implemented rather than approached as cohesive offerings targeting specific client communities -e.g. UNEP staff, UNEA, UNCT, policy-makers, academia, etc.-. Professional firms, among others, tend to articulate their capabilities and delivery across several dimensions -e.g. services, sectors, regions-, to present under each one a comprehensive portfolio of services bundled and tailored to facilitate their accessibility and maximize client-experience.

Table 3: EUR SP Programme of Work Outputs 2014-2017

POW Outputs with project(s) during MTS 2014-2017	POW Outputs without a project during MTS 2014-2017
711. Operational online platform(s) open for the public to access environmental data and information at global, regional and national levels, contributed by UNEP and partners to satisfy the needs of different user communities 712. Integrated assessment reports, including a Gender and Environment outlook, atlases, online information and regularly produced data on core indicators provide sound science and integrate environmental, economic and social information as a basis for decision-making 713. Environmental information identified by UNEP is presented and disseminated to different target audiences, in languages, including governments, academia, UN entities, media and the general public 721. Structured processes and tools for the identification, analysis and reporting of emerging environmental issues of global and regional significance are developed and support provided for their application 732. Capacities of regional fora, national institutions, major groups and other stakeholders are enhanced to better utilize environmental information, knowledge and assessment findings in regional and national policy and planning processes 734. Customized communication and outreach tools, methodologies, mechanisms/networks and products developed to increase capacity nationally, regionally and globally	714. Methodologies, standards, tools and approaches [including those used for the internationally agreed environmental goals identified in GEO-5 are refined,] developed and disseminated to help different target audiences to generate, validate, access, understand and use environmental information 715. Technical support to enhance accessibility by UN entities, including Country Teams and MEAs to use data on environmental trends identified through UNEP to catalyse discussions on environmental sustainability at high level to influence policy and programme development 716. Major Groups and Stakeholders are provided with targeted information, knowledge, tools, methodologies and technology support to effectively access, generate and disseminate environmental information to contribute towards improved decisions in global, regional and national policy making 722. Technologies developed, and capacity enhanced to keep abreast of and use information on emerging environmental issues for decision making and policy development 723. Targeted outreach actions to inform and alert stakeholders to emerging environmental issues 731. Global best practices are identified and/or developed to build capacity and catalyse access by governments, Major Groups, and other stakeholders to information tools, and provide technology support to generate, validate, contribute to, access and communicate integrated environmental data and information 733. The capacity of Major Groups and Stakeholders to assess and utilize environmental information and knowledge is enhanced by identifying global best practices for information access and utilization and by providing target trainings and capacity building activities

80.   In the MTS 2018-2021, the EUR SP has been streamlined to six POW Outputs and one EA. On the one hand, this appears reflective of the lessons learned from the previous MTS, i.e. to account for unfunded projects. On the other hand, the articulation has become even more project and resource based, therefore underutilising the synergistic and programmatic logic of the SP. Furthermore, the evaluation viewed maintaining just one EA as undesirable since that EA combines many different outputs and indicators and does not facilitate the articulation of clear causal pathways in the SP TOC.

81.   **Performance indicators** for the EUR SP have evolved across the POWs. From the POW 2014-2015 to the POW 2016-2017, indicators for EA (a) and EA (b) were revised, with three indicators being added to monitor EA (a), and with one indicator refined and another one removed for EA (b). The formative evaluation of the MTS 2014-2017 pointed out several weaknesses common to many indicators in the POW 2014-2015, such as indicators requiring expert judgement to be measured, making them either prone to risks of bias (as the experts will often be UNEP staff) or too complex and expensive to be regularly monitored; or indicators being an inadequate proxy for the EA, assuming that there is a direct causal link between the

indicator and the EA; or indicators being partly beyond UNEP's control[34]. A review of EUR SP indicators for EA (a) and EA (b) corroborates these earlier findings (Table 4). The formative evaluation pointed out several shortcomings also in the performance indicators designed for EUR SP EA (c), including their vagueness, overlaps, or gaps in linking measurements of change to UNEP. Regardless of these limitations, a logical link was found between the EA indicators and EUR project indicators. For example, *UNEP Live* defined two outcome indicators that are a direct reference to EA (a) indicators. Similarly, the *Global and Regional Integrated Environmental Assessments* project used outcome indicators that link directly to EA (a). As for the *Environment under Review: Emerging Issues project*, its outcome indicator is the one set for EA (b).

Table 4. PoW 2014-15 and 2016-17 EAs and indicators

EA	Indicators	Comments
(a) Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by environmental information made available on open platforms	i) Increase in the number of UN agencies and MEAs using data on environmental trends, identified through UNEP, to influence their policy.	The indicator is at a results level above the EA. While the EA refers to policymaking being facilitated, the indicator refers to using data and influencing policy.
	ii) Increase in the number of relevant global, regional and national forums and institutions using data on environmental trends identified through UNEP to influence their policy	The performance measurement for this indicator is vague, referring to "Number of global, regional and national forums and institutions that cite UNEP documents, reports, speeches and press releases on in their documents and policy statements". Establishing a causal relationship between UNEP environmental trends cited in a document and policy influence requires expert judgment.
	(iii) Level of accessibility and ease of use of UNEP environmental information through open platforms measured against internationally recognized standards for open access to information	The indicator is vague. It is not clear what the internationally recognized standards are?
(b) Global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning are informed by emerging environmental issues	(b) Increase in the number of stakeholders surveyed that acknowledge the uptake in assessment and policy development processes of scenarios and early warning on emerging environmental issues identified by UNEP	The indicator is likely to measure a contribution but is not specific enough to attribute achievements to UNEP. Scenarios and early warning on emerging environmental issues identified by UNEP are also disseminated by academia,

[34] As the POW 2016-2017 was designed before the formative evaluation, such findings were not leveraged to make adjustments and SP indicators kept these limitations over the MTS.

		think tanks, UN agencies, etc. The indicator measures an absolute number while a percentage would be more meaningful (the number of stakeholders acknowledging uptake may increase when expanding the size of the sample). The indicator did not come with a list of individuals / institutions who will be regularly surveyed as means of verification. Unless the target group is always the same, the indicator is not able to measure change.
(c) The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyze, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced	i) Increase in the number of countries that take the lead in generating, analysing, managing and using environmental information in comparable formats and making the information and knowledge available to the public and policy makers	The indicator is at a results level above the EA. While the EA refers to country capacity, the indicator refers to using that capacity. The latter may not happen due to external factors, even if substantial progress was made on the EA. The indicator is also vague: Number of countries taking the lead - what does taking the lead mean? What is meant by a "country" here? How many "leaders" can there really be? The indicator measures a change without specifying how UNEP is linked to it.
	ii) Increase in the number of countries making available credible nationally generated data and access to country specific environmental information in comparable formats available on public platforms	There is an overlap with the previous indicator both for the generation of data and making it available to the public. The indicator requires an expert judgment to ensure that the data is reliable. The indicator measures a change without specifying how UNEP is linked to it.
	iii) Increased number of Major Groups and stakeholders surveyed that acknowledge their involvement in the generation, access to and use of environmental information available on public platforms	The indicator measures an absolute number while a percentage could be more meaningful. Registered major groups are limited in number and can be surveyed comprehensively. But if the survey is voluntary, there might be a confirmation bias. A

| | | confirmation bias might also creep in already through the accreditation process: don't they have to show some engagement on environment info to become accredited? Besides, are "stakeholders" here also meant to be accredited?
The indicator measures a change without specifying how UNEP is linked to it. |

82.   Under the MTS 2018-2021 and related POWs, several indicators formulated to monitor the EUR SP showcase similar weaknesses to the ones mentioned earlier -Table 5-.

Table 5. PoW 2018-19 and 2020-21 indicators

Indicators 2018-2019	Indicators 2020-2021	Comments
(i) Increase in the number of tagged and maintained datasets available in the United Nations system data catalogue enabling systematic user access to relevant data on the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals	(i) Increase in the number of SDG indicators for which UNEP is Custodian Agency, for which UNEP reports data to the Global SDG Database	2018-19: This indicator cannot be directly attributed to UNEP, other agencies may have a contribution. The rationale for measuring datasets in UN data catalogue but not in Environment Live is not clear. 2020-21: The indicator measures an absolute number while a percentage could be more meaningful.
(ii) Increase in the number of countries reporting on the environmental dimension of sustainable development through shared environmental information systems with country-level data made discoverable through UNEP	(ii) Idem	This indicator is not specific enough. Countries already collaborate with MEAs and use SEIS to report on the environmental dimension of sustainable development. UNEP Live can use what countries report on other platforms without any sort of contribution from EUR SP or UNEP to this reporting.
(iii) Strengthening of the science-policy interface by countries based on the use of data, information and policy analysis in the areas of air quality, water quality, ecosystems, biodiversity, waste and hazardous chemicals, the marine environment and emerging issues	(iii) Strengthening of the science-policy interface by countries based on the use of data, information and policy analysis	The science-policy interface is a notion that is vague and can be interpreted in various ways. It assumes a common definition for the organisation and might require expert judgement depending on what that definition is. Also, 'strengthening' is a vague measure – what constitutes that something has been strengthened?
(iv) Increase in the number of indicators to **measure the environmental dimension of sustainable development** made	(iv) Idem	Since there is a specific number of indicators for the SDGs with environmental dimensions that can be disaggregated, it would be

through UNEP Live that are disaggregated by vulnerable groups, especially by gender, geography and age		possible to use a percentage, instead of 'number of'. Also, many of the environment indicators cannot be disaggregated since they are measuring changes in environment, such as size of protected areas, etc. The extent to which the indicator covers other IEG that are within UNEPs core mandate is unclear.
(v) Increased number of people belonging to different major groups and stakeholders acknowledging the relevance and usefulness of data and environmental information made available by UNEP	Indicator removed from POW	This indicator is not specific enough. By surveying higher number of people, one may get an increase in acknowledgement of the relevance and usefulness of data and environmental information made available by UNEP. A percentage and using a scientifically representative sample or a predefined group of people may be more appropriate -who will be surveyed? This indicator was dropped from the POW 2020-2021, despite having the potential of gathering useful client-oriented assessments.
(vi) Increase in the number of relevant global, regional and national forums and institutions using data on environmental trends identified through UNEP for environmental assessment, early warning on emerging issues and/or facilitation of policy action	(v) Idem	The indicator is vague; what determines 'relevant'. The 'global, regional and national forums and institutions' is broad and needs to be defined.
(vii) Level of accessibility and ease of use of UNEP environmental information through open platforms measured against internationally recognized standards for open access to information	(vi) Idem	This indicator is not specific enough; The internationally recognized standards need to be specified. Which are the platforms and what information is being measured against the standards?

83. Overall, the construct of the results and monitoring framework for the EUR SP in the POW 2020-2021 shows a strong anchor to the indicators in the EUR projects, but with the establishment of several indicators (iii and v) that link more specifically to the Expected Accomplishment[35]. One dimension of the EA that remains only partially covered regards the "*other stakeholders*" referred as expected users of EUR SP outputs. Unpacking and specifying such list of stakeholders could equip the EA with more specific indicators and targets, help to

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[35] "Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action."

establish a clearer programmatic platform, facilitate the targeting of project initiatives and outputs, and better evidence the client-orientation of the SP either being towards the other UNEP SPs, or private sector actors, UN agencies and MEAs, academia, etc. For example, one indicator could assess the extent to which EUR SP outputs are used in UNEP programming. Furthermore, in the MTS 2018-2021, the link of EUR SP work to SDG targets and indicators seems to have been overlooked, i.e. not closely embedded or explicitly referenced in the design of the Expected Accomplishment and reflected eventually in the formulation of the overall EUR SP objective. SDG targets that could be considered in the design of EUR SP include for example:

- **Target 17.6**: Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.
- **Target 17.9**: Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation
- **Target 17.14**: Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- **Target 17.16**: Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
- **Target 17.18**: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
- **Target 17.19**: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

84. EUR SP indicators should relate to influencing policy and having an impact in countries. Indicators should be explicit in capturing the intentionality to develop capacities to collect, manage, and use environmental information for keeping the environment under review. The EUR SP/Science Division should work more with the GEF, GCF, Law Division/Environmental Governance SP. EUR SP should inform other SPs' indicators and guide SPs' work on thematic policy influence. Furthermore, EUR SP policy influence should be on data related policies, which is currently not covered by the results framework.

85. The reconstructed **Theory of Change** at evaluation (refer to Section 4) built on the previous EUR SP TOCs, on reviews of TOCs for EUR SP projects, and on consultations (e.g. focus groups) with EUR SP project staff. One of the proposed adjustments in the reconstructed TOC is to feature more clearly and prominently the stakeholders of the SP and, through outcome statements, their expected contribution to the results of the SP. As indicated earlier in Section 4, the reconstructed TOC does not aim to present an ideal but be reflective of what the EUR SP has achieved or sought to achieve at the time of the evaluation. An analysis of the reconstructed TOC leads to the following comments:

- The normative work of the EUR SP is not prominently featured in the EUR SP TOC. Additionally, the regional and country level 'operational (regional and country level) capacity building type' work is not defined. Strategies and narrative versions of the TOCs are not fleshed out and articulating the various pathways towards the changes desired. These need to be accompanying the programme logic
- The cross-cutting elements such as capacity development, communication and knowledge management are not considered
- Private sector(s) actors are largely not considered among the users of EUR SP outputs and there is not much visibility for initiatives such as the science-policy-business forum
- Donors are not represented in the TOC nor positioned in narrative or visual as target users of the EUR SP outputs
- Governments are considered broadly but a more granular analysis of the expected contribution of public actors (environment, agriculture, infrastructure, statistics, finance, etc.) to the EUR SP would help to focus and tailor or bundle products and services
- Use of EUR SP outputs in UNEP programming aggregates SPs but could eventually single out SP4 (Environmental Governance) and other SPs to specify the interplay and expected contribution and synergies between SPs to enable the science-policy interface and policy change
- There seems to be a generally held assumption that all EUR SP projects map to the 'science-policy interface', but this is not defined in narrative and or explicitly articulated
- GEF projects do not seem to be captured in the EUR SP TOC
- Limited consideration was found across EUR SP projects for two drivers formulated by the evaluation, i.e. *"National policies, strategies and programmes are developed and implemented for environmental data management (open data policy, big data, GIS, etc.)"*, and *"National policies, strategies and programmes are developed and implemented for monitoring environment related SDGs"*;
- Two assumptions formulated by the evaluation did not seem to hold strongly or fully, i.e. *"Governments and other stakeholders assess the outcomes of policy actions to inform national and international communities and direct resources and capacities to the most urgent priorities supportive of the environmental dimension of sustainable development"* and *"There is continuity of national policies and (sub)regional collaboration structures"*;
- As indicated earlier, the assumption that *"Data and information that is available and accessible influence policymaking and stakeholders will use it in policymaking processes"* should rather be referred as a driver of the SP and is closely related to the EA itself. But as an assumption, this statement introduces plausible limitations to the SP, for example if policymakers are confronted with competing local priorities. This assumption could be further unfolded and analysed to help articulating the expected accomplishment of the SP (e.g. influence vs. inform, use vs. consider) and reconcile it with the SP objective (empower).

86. The evaluation also observed a lack of common understanding among UNEP staff about the positioning and construct of the SP and various expectations regarding the boundaries of the TOC. For example, one key informant noted that the TOC presented by the evaluation described the TOC of the entire UNEP and not just the EUR SP. Another key informant described the EUR SP as a loop going across "*data (on SDG, environmental performance) -> assessments reports -> synthesis -> policy recommendations -> policy formulation -> action by governments -> impact of the EUR SP -> -> feedback loop back to data on environmental performance*" while indicating simultaneously that "*The SPs should be*

restructured. Environmental Governance SP should be the foundation of UNEP. The EUR SP should be the enabler and other SPs should be the implementers." Key informants conveyed therefore the perspective that the EUR SP TOC remained in the making, with such development being compounded by the lack of robust TOC or conceptual framework of action for UNEP as a whole.

87.   Accordingly, the evaluation found that the formulation of the EUR SP objective, outcome statements, and indicators were not entirely robust, and that the development of the EUR SP TOC was still in progress. Furthermore, capacity development, communication, outreach and knowledge management have been, for the most part, reduced to drivers or at best, feature only as components within some projects, while they should be key contributors to uptake and "empowerment" to achieve the level of change expected by the SP. The design of the SP was lacking when it comes to assessing the needs of countries and target users and to being concretely demand-based and client-oriented as envisioned in the MTS 2014-2017. Similarly, the uptake of EUR SP outputs across UNEP and the use of EUR to drive strategic management and programming across SPs appeared to have little prominence in the EUR SP's architecture.

88.   The evaluation concluded that the establishment of a dedicated Sub-programme on EUR has helped UNEP to increase the visibility of UNEP's mandate to *Keep the environment under review* but slightly isolated this service from the thematic sub-programmes. The section on 'Factors affecting programme performance' will discuss the extent to which the EUR SP has provided a stronger incentive to donors to support this important role.

5.3.   Overall Sub-programme Performance

89.   This section presents the evaluation findings on the effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, likelihood of impact of the EUR SP.

5.3.1. Effectiveness

90.   This section provides an assessment of the effectiveness of the EUR SP in delivering the outputs presented in the Theory of Change. Case studies were developed by the evaluation on four EUR SP flagship projects to review and analyse the achievements of the EUR SP on its EAs and POW Outputs. The following paragraphs are partly based on the findings conveyed in these case studies (see Appendixes 1 to 4).

UNEP Live

91.   UNEP Governing Council requested the establishment of a digital platform 10 years ago[36]. The call for its development has been reaffirmed. For instance in October 2014, the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the Sixth Global Environment Outlook noted that project *called Environment Live* would be used by the Secretariat to enhance capacity development and to support GEO-6 by providing the platform for the GEO-6 Communities of Practice and the Nominations Portal.

92.   From the review of the project document and based on findings from the case study, UNEP Live came with great expectations for results linked to the EUR SP. It aimed to support GEO global, regional and national analyses, through relevant data collection related to *inter*

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[36] In 2009, the **twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum** held in Nairobi requested the Executive Director to elaborate on the requirements for a migration to targeted assessments on thematic priority areas supported by a **UNEP-Live** enabling framework.

alia UNSEEA and indicator development. It was also to play a role in encouraging sharing and access to national data and information, linking to peer-reviewed literature from various language domains, and providing access to indigenous and local knowledge and information drawn from attributable public sources. Information was to be provided for countries, the MEAs and UNEP PoW.

93.   As an important aspect of Environment Live, it aims to provide a platform at the science-policy interface and to support policy influence through contributions to intergovernmental platforms and mechanisms, *inter alia*, the IPBES, IRP[37], and IPCC. The tool is potentially useful for the delivery of policy guidance and capacity-building. The UNEP Live platform, aims to support UNEPs convening function and role as a neutral 'broker', including around Environmental SDGs, MEAs and IEGs. The UNEP Live platform also aims to enable increased access to scientific networks, and foster connections to environmental focal points at country-level. Connections in and between MEAs, environmental assessments, and policymakers define a distinctive niche for UNEP Live.

94.   The UNEP Live platform is aligned with the UNEP mandate. UNEP has been slowly building experience on environmental databases, portals, and mapping applications. Through the Environment Live platform, the EUR SP can aspire to convene the scientific community and provide a digital 'home' for the network of scientists. This evaluation did not perform a comprehensive scan of the global environment data context. However, based on the evaluation consultations, few players provide global environment data in parallel with UNEP. The World Bank, for example, provides access to data on the World Development Indicators[38], which contains more than 140 indicators related to the use of natural resources and changes in the natural and built environment. They encompass the availability and use of environmental resources (forest, water, cultivable land, and energy) and cover environmental degradation (pollution, deforestation, and loss of habitat and biodiversity). However, the scope of the datasets does not appear identical to that of Environment Live. Similarly, other international organizations concentrate on subsets of indicators, such as FAO with FAOSTAT, WHO with the GHO data, or the Regional Economic and Social Commissions that publish relevant and comprehensive data portals, which include environmental data with a regional focus[39], etc. Environment Live taps into and harnesses these sources, making it a different platform at the aggregate level.

95.   Over the MTS 2014-2017, **UNEP Live**[40] has grown as a portal providing access, or links, to various types of information resources and applications, including world data, assessments, SDG information, communities of practice (see below), geospatial applications, mapping tools, ontology, multimedia resources, news and stories, and publications. The main outputs of this project feature a global database with 1,419 indicators (as of December 2018), data flows from 193 countries sourced from third party data providers, 292 datasets available on the Global data page (as of June 2016), 861 maps accessible from UNEP Live and a mapping page that grouped spatial content by theme and region, site pages available in 103 languages, SDG Synergies portal with links to MEAs and data for all SDGs and MEAs, a web

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[37] The Secretariat of the IPBES is hosted, and that of IPCC co-hosted by the Science Division, whereas the IRP Secretariat is hosted by UNEP Economy Division.

[38] http://wdi.worldbank.org/tables

[39] Confer for example http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/portada.html?idioma=english

[40] UNEP Live contributes to EA (a) as POW Output 1.

intelligence portal that collected over 10 million documents monthly, and 18 Communities of Practice reaching a total of 3,031 members.

96.   Another cluster of achievements reported to the evaluation has been delivered by the Publications and Knowledge Management Unit in the Science Division. During the MTS 2018-2021, UNEP Live has been revised and expanded to become the *World Environment Situation Room* (WESR), a project approved in May 2019. Among the adjustments, the project has embedded an output covering the activities of the Publications and Knowledge Management Unit. The Unit maintains partnerships with the main publishers and UN Agencies under the network "Research for Life" and since 2006 its environmental component OARE, which provides developing countries with access to 11,500 scientific journals, 27,000 e-books, 40 databases. Over the course of one year -July 2018 to June 2019-, OARE was accessed by 2,215 users from 96 countries for a total of 31,733 logged-in sessions. The MOUs funding OARE will remain active until 2025, but further expansion will depend on whether publishers will continue providing open-access resources. The unit has contributed also to the development of a "Publishing Toolkit".

97.   Some evidence was found of UNEP Live being accessed and used. Web statistics show that there were 17,270 visits to UNEP Live and 51,062 page-views from January to June 2017. Furthermore, as reported by the project[41], datasets for 97 graphics and maps in the GEO 6 regional assessments were sourced from UNEP Live and 52 Indicators in the UNEP Live database were referenced in the GEO 6 regional assessments, while 50 of these indicators were used at least three times. In addition, nine UN agencies and MEAs were reported as citing the UNEP Live platform and documents/reports containing data on environmental trends in their policy statements and documents. The project identified 20 UN agencies and secretariats of MEAs that linked their data and information systems to UNEP Live. Using Google Scholar, the evaluation retrieved 76 articles from academic and grey literature citing UNEP Live. A survey of GEO Authors in February 2017 showed that 65.5% of the respondents were overall satisfied with UNEP Live and the Communities of Practice, and the level of accessibility of the platform as measured by usability test has improved by 86% since its launch. As reported by a CPR member through the evaluation survey, the platform was able to deliver some useful services: "*SDGs - Global MEAs synergies in Environment Live is a very useful and informative tool - thank you for that*!".

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[41] UN Environment. 2019. UNEP Live PIMS Report. Internal document. Nairobi

98. However, the evaluation noted a range of shortcomings and gaps qualifying this picture. In particular, maintenance of the content and functionalities of the platform has been uneven during evaluation period, leading to a significant number of pages being outdated[42]. For example, graphs and data present outdated time series (e.g. ITU's data for Fixed-telephone subscriptions available until 2018 on ITU but 2016 on UNEP Live); the "Latest Resources" page lists publications until 2016, while more recent resources are available both on the "UNEP Resources" and "Partner Resources" pages; the "News and Stories" page features four articles, the most recent one being from May 2017; the "Inclusive Wealth Index" table relies on the 2014 edition of the report while new data was published in 2018; etc. As indicated in the WESR project document, UNEP Live *"data was solicited by staff within the UNEP Live team by visiting various open access sources including the United Nations Statistics Department country websites. […] The shortcoming with this was that when data was updated at the sources (e.g. country Open data portals, UNSD country websites etc.), the updates were not reflected automatically on UNEP Live".* Another unrealized objective of the platform regarding data flows, which were from organizations or from countries through third party organizations (World Bank, FAO, etc.), but not directly from countries as intended for some parts in the original project document. Evaluation informants indicated a moderate to low usefulness of some of the indicators reported in the UNEP Live Global database. The usability of the platform was also assessed as being poor by most UNEP staff informing the evaluation. The site architecture, navigation metaphor, content metadata, and taxonomy were reported to lack a robust and logical integration, making data access and information retrieval difficult and degrading end-user experience. The evaluation also noted a lack of reference to UNEP Live in the global GEO-6 or in publications from the Emerging Issues project. Consultations indicated a disconnect between UNEP Live and the needs stemming from the GEO process, and an absence of use of UNEP Live by GEO Authors despite their apparent level of satisfaction in the 2017 survey mentioned above[43]. Evaluation informants perceived the scope of UNEP Live as being broad with limited added value, failing to concentrate on a small range of services on which it would be "best in class". The number of visits to UNEP Live (17,270 visits between January and June 2017, i.e. close to 3,000 on average per month) was low compared to other platforms. For example, the GGKP project that was launched end of 2013 recorded on its platform a total of 28,928 visits (19,506 unique visits) for the third quarter of 2016, i.e. close to 10,000 per month after a comparable period of implementation[44]. Similarly, benchmarks indicate that the UNEP Live site did not generate high internet traffic

Figure 5: Use of UNEP Live by National Focal Points for Policy Planning
Source: Evaluation, 2019

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[42] UNEP Live reviewed on 20 Setpember 2019.

[43] This is consistent with the findings from the evaluation of GEO-5, pointing out the lack of use by GEO Authors of the Environmental Data Explorer, despite such platform being developed for this target audience.

[44] UNEP. 2017. Evaluation of the UN Environment Project "Green Growth Knowledge Platform". Evaluation Office of UNEP. Nairobi.

and engagement[45]. According to the PPR 2016-2017[46], 50% of surveyed users were satisfied with the information available on the open platform compared to a target of 80% by December 2017. The evaluation also noted that despite the number of referred users, UNEP Live Communities of Practice were mostly inactive. The evaluation survey also showed that a low to moderate 31% of the responding National Focal Points indicated a high or frequent use of UNEP Live for policy planning (Figure 5).

99.   In sum, the platform has been used to a moderate degree and limited evidence was found of its value proposition being turned into concrete benefits. Simultaneously, although environmental data and information is available on other sites (World Bank, FAO, Regional Commissions, etc.), they offer a narrower scope and are dispersed, which makes it difficult to aggregate and compare. UNEP's mandate, UNEA decisions, consultations with informants and evaluation surveys highlight that there is a rationale and demand for a UNEP Live -or WESR- platform. However, this initiative is confronted by the challenges of its ambitions, i.e. to compile the world's entire datasets on environment -including national datasets for some part-, while delivering unique value-added services to many different user communities, each one with specific needs -e.g. UNEA, UN agencies, UNCT, UNEP SPs, national ministries and policy-makers around the world, academia, etc. All this is to be delivered with resources and capacities below those required for UN flagship publications -for example less than 70% of the resources committed to GEO-6. Accordingly, stronger alignment between the project scope or level of effort and the capacities availed to the project is necessary. Possible responses may include:

- Increasing the number of partners and funding committed to the project

- Prioritising specific communities of target users to which deliver a unique and compelling experience

- Growing the user base and enlarge service delivery progressively, building on successful staged implementations

Thematic and Integrated Mapping Services

100. Over the MTS 2014-2017, the EUR SP has delivered a range of integrated and thematic assessments and **mapping services**. This includes atlases, such as the Energy Atlas, the Africa Mountains Atlas, or the Uganda Wetlands Atlas. The Africa Mountains Atlas for example was successfully launched in March 2015 during AMCEN 15th session. It received significant attention from the delegates, especially from the Ministers, who took time to discuss some of its key findings during the Ministerial segment. In their

Atlases	Number of downloads	
	August 2019	**December 2019**
Africa Mountains Atlas	26	194
Africa Energy Atlas	391	8732
Uganda Wetlands Atlas		(Vol I) 272; (Vol II) 97

Source: DCPI, 2019

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[45] The website www.uneplive.org is ranked at the 4,135,955th position by Alexa (https://www.alexa.com/) and has 28 sites linking to it. In comparison, UN Environment website ranks 72.957 in internet engagement and has 10.053 sites pointing to it. The World Bank website ranks 2.785 in terms of internet engagement and has 31,880 sites linking to it.

[46] UNEP. 2018. Programme Performance Report 2016-2017. UNEP/CPR/142/8. Nairobi.

Declaration (12 – 13 under Natural Capital of Africa), the African Ministers agreed to use the Africa Mountains Atlas to take national and regional action to strengthen sustainable mountains development, including development of institutions, policies, laws and programmes, as well as strengthen existing trans-boundary and regional frameworks on sustainable management of African mountain ecosystems. They further agreed to establish and strengthen institutional arrangements for sustainable mountains development, including centres of excellence, and to strengthen the Africa Mountains Forum as a forum of knowledge, information exchange and policy dialogue. As for the Uganda Wetlands Atlas, it was reported having a major impact, with the President of Uganda taking a visit to personally check what was highlighted in the Atlas. The Government of Uganda secured USD 24 million to implement a restoration programme guided by the recommendations of the report.

101. The limited access to these reports, as illustrated by the small number of downloads, is most likely due to the geographic scope and thematic foci of the atlases, bearing in mind the limited potential for uptake and reuse outside of the region they cover. This was illustrated also by the evaluation survey, with only 29% of the NFPs finding these reports to have a good level of usability and 26% indicating that they have been highly or frequently used in policy planning processes by countries of survey respondents. However, the Uganda Wetlands Atlas provides a clear example of the risk and limitation of measuring success solely per the number of downloads. Informants further pointed out that the effectiveness of such products also depends on building countries capacities to effectively use them.

102. Nevertheless, informants pointed out that there is no single place to find information of all EUR SP thematic assessments, atlases etc., let alone those of UNEP as a whole. Interviews indicated that this is a problem that leads to differing quality, differing standards used, and overlaps in what different units are doing. Informants perceived that there was an oversight role missing that could sit with the Chief Scientist, but that there was no capacity currently to handle it. Furthermore, the evaluation found that there were no agreed organizational standards, review process, etc. for assessments. All Divisions seem to do what their units regard as best. The EUR SP has reportedly developed tools and guidelines but is not promoting their use. While the EUR SP can help to mainstream these tools and standards across UNEP, this requires leadership and should be driven by the Chief Scientist[47].

Integrated Environmental Assessments

103. The UNEA resolution 1/4 on the science-policy interface requested the Executive Director to undertake the preparation of the sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), supported by UNEP Live. The overarching objective of GEO-6 was to provide a comprehensive integrated assessment of the effects and implications of environmental change on human well-being. While there is no question that GEO-6 lies at the heart of the mandate of UNEP, the key question that arose during the evaluation was whether the evolving GEO process is relevant to the UNEP expected results given the updates in technology and science delivery (this is further elaborated in Efficiency section). The evaluation found that GEO is evolving (also see Effectiveness section) and its future is being reassessed. Concerning EUR SP's intention, GEO is widely perceived to be a globally focused project, serving the regional and national needs linked to the SDGs to a lesser degree. GEO might be better aligned to support UNEP with work planning, monitoring, integrating UNEA resolutions and leveraging a global

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[47] It is not clear whether the provisions set out in the new Publication Policy approved in early 2019 would help address this problem.

scientific practitioner networks for emerging priorities and foresight (2015 Paris Agreement, Sendai, MEAs). In terms of global assessments, a preliminary scan indicates the absence of periodic publications equivalent to the GEO reports, indicating the relevance of its niche.

104. As part of the GEO-6 process, six **GEO-6 Regional Assessments** were prepared and published for the Science-Policy forum just prior to UNEA-2 (May 19–20, 2016). The reports were launched at a press event, and communications and outreach were conducted with UNEA delegates, governments and other stakeholders. Major newspapers announced the launch and electronic and print publications were distributed. A formal information document (INF) was prepared and translated for all UNEA delegations. The INF document contained summaries of the main findings and policy messages from the six assessments. From 2017, regional offices received funding to conduct

| GEO-6 regional reports	Number of downloads (August 2019)
Africa	1,399
Latin America & Caribbean	1,002
North America	710
West Asia	687
Asia & the Pacific	1,932
Europe	1,688

Source: UNEP Communications Division, 2019

outreach activities and actively undertake efforts to disseminate the findings of the reports to regional and national fora. Outreach activities focused on creating derivative products and translations of the regional assessments in order to target specific government audiences and Ministerial meetings (e.g. Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment, European Council of Environment Ministers). Outreach relied also on conducting "Science-Policy Seminars" with different governments (e.g. Germany, Czech Republic, Poland). The impact of these seminars was reported to be significant in terms of being able to speak directly to government decision-makers about the scale of the challenge and the possible pathways to reaching key environmental targets. There was some evidence of the GEO-6 regional reports being used and cited by different platforms, policy processes, or publications. The IPBES, for instance, has used the regional assessments conducted through the GEO process in 2015/16 as a foundation for their most recent regional assessments and their assessment of land degradation. As another example, the first edition of the Global Land Outlook produced by UNCCD has cited GEO-6 Regional Assessments for Latin America and the Caribbean, and for North America. Another source of evidence is Google Scholar that retrieved 98 articles citing GEO-6 Regional Assessments. Despite not being specifically attributable to the GEO-6 Regional Assessments, informants reported similar GEO assessments as underway at country level (e.g. Madagascar, Honduras, Costa Rica, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia) including several assessments at the city level (e.g. Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo, Bogota, Santa Clara, Santiago, among others).

105. The Global Environment Outlook report stands as a UNEP 'flagship' publication. The development of the **GEO-6 report** and **Summary for Policymakers** relied on extensive consultations with a range of partners. Peer-reviews to support the scientific credibility of the GEO-6 report involved, for instance, over 4,000 review comments from approximately 159 reviewers received in January 2018 on the second order draft of chapters. As for the Summary for Policymakers, a meeting was convened in Nairobi in January 2019 to review the draft text. 95 Member states (251 participants, including 26 participants from Major Groups and Stakeholders) gathered to make amendments that resulted in a text that was scientifically sound, negotiated and credible, and more relevant and readable for policymakers. GEO-6 was

launched at UNEA 4 in March 2019. The Assembly gathered 4,000 delegates from 170 countries and was attended by 388 journalists from 52 countries. UNEA 4 was covered in 26,500 news articles in 49 languages and 160 countries. Products to increase GEO-6's reach included an interactive story (8,369 views), press release, launch video (over 1.1 million views across digital platforms), and infographics. Within the first month, the GEO-6 report was downloaded 10,241 times. As of August 2019, the report has been downloaded 17,178 times. Since the launch, several governments (e.g. Germany, Czech Republic, China, Japan) have invited UNEP to speak to them about the findings of GEO and the implications for their future policy development. In addition, several authors have been able to speak at key fora about the findings of GEO and also publish in recognized academic journals. Finally, webinars spread the word about the findings of GEO (e.g. North America) to larger audiences. The evaluation survey showed that a moderate 38% of the responding National Focal Points reported using GEO reports 'frequently' or 'highly' the (Figure 6). Anecdotal evidence of use was mentioned
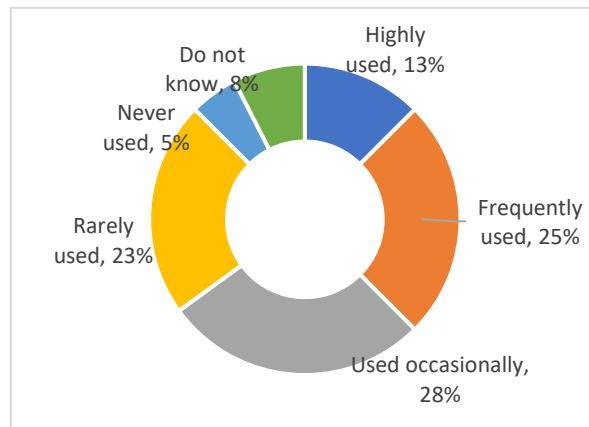
Figure 6: Use of GEO by National Focal Points for Policy Planning
Source: Evaluation survey, 2019

by National Focal Points, such as "*The GEO reports and tools related to the SDG monitoring and reporting are helping to re-shape and re-structure the national state of the environment report for Trinidad and Tobago*", and by CPR members "*UNEP through EUR Sub-programme can bring technical assistance and financial contribution for Regional Environmental Outlook. Outcomes of regional meetings are shared at national level for the purpose their implementation.*"

106. Although the launch of the sixth Global Environment Outlook was deemed successful in comparison to launches of previous GEO's, it was found to be lower key and less influential in terms of citations than launches of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 1.5 degree report (Oct. 2018) and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Global Biodiversity Assessment (May, 2019). Altogether, the uptake of the GEO among academia and the

Figure 7: Number of articles retrieved by Google Scholar
Source: Evaluation, 2019

research communities and in grey literature is not comparable to the one of the IPCC assessments. A search on the number of articles retrieved yearly by Google Scholar with mention of "Global Environment Outlook" finds between 400 and 500 results whereas a search for IPCC "Assessment Report" receives 40 times more results (Figure 7). Within UNEP, informants reported a moderate use of the GEO, and primarily referred to contributing to set the scope and describe the context to programming rather than driving programmatic directions. Several issues or shortcomings were repeatedly pointed out by UNEP staff when consulted about the use of the GEO reports, including the time required for its development, the size of the report that made it demanding to read but also limited the capability to identify overarching environmental priorities, the lack of data platform to collect and provide access to GEO data, which together with changing methodologies prevented the determination of a baseline upon which users could monitor environmental trends. Some informants suggested that the GEO reports should be produced more frequently, be shorter, focus on the SDGs, and stress 2 or 3 key messages behind which the entire organization would align for a few years.

107. Responses to the MTE 2018 survey on the effectiveness and results of GEO-6 were also mixed. Some voices concluded that the GEO-6 process worked best for individual governments at the multilateral scale, where policy makers use GEO as a credible source of information to push their agendas in multilateral forums. The GEO-6 Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) in 2018 reported that US and Norway recorded using findings of GEO products for setting policy and international agendas. At the regional scale, Africa; Asia/Pacific; LAC; and West Africa, reported use of the regional assessments for agenda setting. At the country level, where GEO could theoretically be used for country decision-making, the GEO-6 MTE 2018 reported that national uptake was far less. This is consistent with the findings of this evaluation.

108. Overall, EUR SP assessments were accessed and used but to varying degrees according to the type of stakeholder. EUR SP assessments have enhanced understanding about the global context when performing country level assessments and national policymaking. Some rare but anecdotal evidence was found of the assessments having a concrete effect on

government action. However, influence or contribution of the GEO-6 to policymaking for example is still too early to assess. Even so, the lack of a robust monitoring mechanism to measure the level of uptake and influence of EUR SP assessments on policy making and environmental governance prevents a more detailed review and analysis of impact contribution and lessons learning. Even though these linkages are likely to be 'indirect' and there are likely to be multiple pathways making such monitoring a real challenge, nevertheless more frequent use of survey instruments could be considered.

109. At global level, there are many thematic assessments and more precise/focussed assessments than GEO (e.g. IPBES, IPCC, IRP, GBO, etc.[48]). But GEO is the meta-assessment that shows interlinkages and takes a systemic approach. GEO-6 has evolved to consist of a global assessment as well as a set of six regional assessments, developed with partners and "using the integrated environmental assessment (IEA) methodology" to produce scientifically credible and policy-relevant information on the current state and trends of the environment. There is no other singular integrated thematic assessment that has the potential to articulate well-integrated policy recommendations using the cross-cutting themes. The value added by GEO should be the ability to make cohesive and cross-sectoral recommendations.

110. A significant change in UNEP GEO work process occurred following the completion of GEO-4. This was reported as being controversial[49]. The change indeed altered the process in three significant ways: 1. Introduction of a global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation at the beginning of each cycle, 2. a new process for the nomination and selection of experts to participate in GEO (different from earlier model with GEO collaborating centres and a more stable network of scientists); and 3. a negotiated summary for policy makers (SPM). The shift has raised GEO to a formal inter-governmental process and according to this evaluation and the GEO-6 MTE 2018, prior to these changes, GEO and the associated processes were assisted by a *network of collaborating*

> **The assessment landscape mirrors the thematic environmental governance approach.**
> "In their analysis of the 40-year history of GEA-making, Jabbour and Flachsland (2017) conclude that the way assessments are conducted is related to the way they are embedded in political and institutional processes. …… we can take the assessment landscape to reflect the dominant approach to environmental governance. From the relatively large number of thematic assessments, this would suggest a predominance of thematic environmental governance approaches in which there is limited attention for other themes. For broad assessments, this implies they may find it challenging to address a suitable audience. The foremost example of this is GEO. While one of the longest-running regular GEAs, it lacks a clear governance forum as target audience." GEO-6 was linked to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), but by being launched during UNEA itself the assessment could not directly contribute to any of the resolutions discussed there. A core contribution of the various GEOs seems to be the spin-off they have generated through informing the production of domestic and regional reports for local environmental governance (Bakkes et al., 2019)."
> "Improved coordination within the assessment landscape. Coordination between assessments can be a way to address their specific niche while taking key interrelations into account, as well as help to communicate why different messages may arise between assessments. Since production processes for different assessments usually run in parallel to each other, coordination takes place during assessment cycles. Thus far, formal coordination has proven difficult to achieve, largely due to a lack of budget for shared work as well as competition by assessment bodies. Informal coordination at the working level may thus be more feasible. UNEP is organizing a 'Global Assessment Dialogue' which is meant to provide an ad-hoc formalized collaboration between five assessments (GEO, IPBES, IPCC, IRP and GSDR)."
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> P 32, KEEPING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS FIT FOR PURPOSE

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[48] E.g. the Global Biodiversity Outlook; the Global Waste Management Outlook; the Global Chemicals Outlook; the assessments of the IPCC, IPBES, and IRP; World Oceans Assessment; Protected Areas Monitoring coverage; Adaptations Gap Pilot Report; Emissions Gap; World Water Quality Assessment; Regional Black Carbon Assessments; the global Transboundary Waters Assessment of Five Water Systems; the Global Assessment on Disaster Risk Reduction; and the Natural Capital Assessments.
[49] From Insights from the Intellectual history of the GEO leaflet - book in progress and MTE 2018.

centres from around the world. The network development was reported as "*stemming from the recognition that the cross cutting, multi-level and constantly evolving nature of environment and development issues requires the contribution of experts with stable institutional presence*". In this sense, evaluation informants raised the question as to whether the GEO process (including the GEO-6 project) has not become a *victim of its own evolution and success*. Perhaps the GEO is at a cross roads - requiring a reflection on the benefit of both models i.e. to be a formal intergovernmental process but one that also enables a partnership and services of a stable credible global network of science practitioners on standby to support UNEP and UNEA with a credible assessment and a nimbler network to aid specific processes as the foresight work. In addition, the GEO assessment could be linked to UNEP's work on international environmental governance, to monitor and frame resolutions from UNEA i.e. if monitoring a global 'environmental metric' is required and reporting on results of policy influence.

111. Additionally, the GEO has improved on integrated assessment monitoring tools which might be made more readily available to countries to support them with their own environmental assessments and data collection, finding synergies and linkages with SDGs and MEAs, solidifying UNEP's leadership role to support governments to report on all MEAs and other international environmental agreements. The evaluation noted that an *Options Paper on the Future of the Global Environment Outlook* was in the making, with a Steering Committee that was established during 2019 and a first inception meeting to be held end of October 2019.

112. Finally, members of the steering committte subsequently shared a recent study[50] on the question how Global Environmental Assessments (GEAs) in a changing policy context might retain their value, recognizing the important role they play in global environmental governance. The document analysed the logics underlying the design of GEAs and how these may need revision (See Box above). In addition, there is emerging evidence showing how GEO-6 and other major GEAs are influencing Policy in e.g. Holland and Germany[51].

Emerging Environmental Issues

113. The EUR SP emerging issues project builds on well-identified comparative advantages of UNEP concerning convening credible science. Science is the bedrock for identifying critical global and emerging environmental issues facing society and, through its convening efforts, UNEP can provide access to science for policy and action. The emerging issues project leverages scientific networks and attempts to contribute to strengthening the science-policy interface through coherent identification of emerging issues, analysis and reporting, and providing direct input into the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process.

114. Service lines have been developed over the years within UNEP regarding emerging issues analysis; the UNEP foresight process, Global Environmental Alert Service (GEAS), and the UNEP Year Book series. Since 2014, UNEP has produced annual Emissions Gap Reports based on requests by countries for an independent scientific assessment of how actions and pledges by countries affect the global greenhouse gas emissions trend, and how this

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[50] Draft report KEEPING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS FIT FOR PURPOSE Challenges and opportunities for a changing context Timo Maas, Marcel Kok, Paul Lucas, 02 April 2020 p 25
[51] Jacob K and Wolff F, Implications of the 6 global environmental Outlook for German environmental and sustainability policy accessed October 2019

compares to emissions trajectories consistent with the long-term goal of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

115. The process for 'convening science' at UNEP has changed since 2010. Formerly, emerging issues identification was linked to the GEO network of scientist in collaborating centres as shorter Outlooks. The Emerging Issues-project has, instead, established emerging issues at UNEP as a discrete initiative, not linked to the GEO network but convening a new gathering of scientists each time. While the new process is said to be rigorous including a literature review, survey, internal screening of key issues, etc., the scientists are generally volunteers and tasked to develop a publication, each time. The idea of UNEP convening a global network of scientists is an area needing further thought and attention. The emerging issues and foresight initiatives go hand in hand with the current discussion on the future of the GEO process vs GEO product. It is linked to the idea of continuous reporting on the states and trends of the environment at any given moment. Expectations that the project UNEP Live is to be a 'one stop shop' for scientific practitioners and 'keeping the environment under review' is linked to this discussion.

116. Several deliverables produced by the Emerging Issues project relied on a well-established process to identify and select emerging issues of interest (e.g. *Frontiers* reports), involving a literature review, an external survey, expert screening, ranking criteria, etc.

117. The **Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms** was published in September 2016. Findings were presented at the side events on sand and dust storms at the UNEP Science-Policy Forum on 19th May 2016, and during UNEA-2 on 26th May 2016. The report was made available at UN General Assembly in September 2016. The findings were also presented at several international meetings, including (a) the Africa Drought Conference – Enhancing resilience to drought events on the African continent in Windhoek, August 2016, (2) Expert Workshop on Economic Impact Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms in Songdo, Korea, September 2016, and (3) the International Workshop on Meteorology, Sand and Dust Storm, Combating Desertification and Erosion in Istanbul, October 2016.

118. The **UNEP Frontiers 2016** report was launched on 20 May 2016 and publicized at the press events and media roundtables during UNEA-2, 23-27 May 2016. News agencies citing UNEP Frontiers 2016 in their articles include, for example, AP, ABC News, Al Jazeera, Reuters, BBC, Daily Mail, the Washington Post, CBS News, NBC, NDTV, Globo, EFE, Xinhua, China Daily, Huffington Post, NPR, The Independent, The Hindu, Deutsche Welle, The Hill, and People's Daily. These news articles were published in at least 9 languages in 69 countries. In the first month, the report had been quoted nearly 1,000 times by the global press. The threat of microplastics to marine ecosystems and to human health was the focus of a *Frontiers* report chapter and the *Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics* report. The issue of marine plastic was mentioned in nearly 400 articles in prominent global media, such as *AP, the Guardian, the Independent, Bloomberg, CNBC, the Huffington Post, the Christian Science Monitor, Al Ahram, ANSA*.

119. The **Emissions Gap Report 2016** was launched at a global press release and press conference in London on 3rd November 2016, by the UNEP Executive Director and Chief Scientist, along with partners from the private and public sectors and the civil society. At least 25 representatives of prime UK and global media were present, including AP, AFP, Reuters, BBC, the Independent, Le Monde, the Telegraph and others, in addition to around 200 participants from the civil society, business and public sector. The press conference was streamed live on UNEP's YouTube channel. The UNEP Executive Director and the Chief

Scientist gave one-on-one interviews to the Associated Press. By December 2016, in addition to direct access to the Emissions Gap report, the global media had published at least 4,764 articles, including feature stories, blog posts and opinion pieces, which referred to the 'Emissions Gap' Report. That was over 1,200 more mentions than the 2015 edition. The report became one of UNEP's most cited publications in global and regional media. More than 2,800 premium media outlets in 115 countries published articles about the Emissions Gap report in at least 30 languages with a potential viewership of several tens of millions.

120. The **Emissions Gap Report 2017** and the **Frontiers 2017** report were launched on 31 October 2017 and 5 December 2017, respectively. By June 2018, the Frontiers 2017 report's webpage had been accessed by 14,935 unique visitors.

121. Table 6 shows the number of downloads of the Emerging Issues reports on UNEP website and the number of academic articles citing emerging issues reports.

Table 6: Number of downloads on UNEP website and citations in academic and scientific journals

Emerging Issues Reports	Date published	Number of downloads (August 2019)	Number of articles retrieved citing the report (April 2019)	Number of downloads (December 2019)
Loss and Damage: The role of Ecosystem Services	May 2016	78	14	19
The Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms	September 2016	313	27	446
The Emissions Gap Report 2013	November 2013			602
The Emissions Gap Report 2014	November 2014			796
The Emissions Gap Report 2015	November 2015			563
The Emissions Gap Report 2016	November 2016	4,641	75	5,103
The Emissions Gap Report 2017	October 2017	14,730	82	65,549
The Emissions Gap Report 2018	November 2018			120,037
The Emissions Gap Report 2019	November 2019			97,197
Frontiers 2016	May 2016	495	32	3,046
Frontiers 2017	December 2017	5,397	19	16,572
Frontiers 2018-2019				22,063

Source: Communications Divisions & Emerging Issues Project Team, 2019

122. The Emerging Issues project had considered implementing an activity to assess the effect of the reports and track "to what extent its outreach and engagement efforts on emerging issues have been successful in influencing decisions (including policies) aimed at sustainable development and improved human well-being". However, due to budgetary constraints, this activity could not be implemented. According to the evaluation surveys,

responding National Focal Points mostly reported using the emerging issues reports 'occasionally' (Figure 8), while 60% of participating CPR members indicated that UNEP was effective in informing global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning with emerging environmental issues.

123. Anecdotal evidence of policy uptake of the emerging issues reports was conveyed to the evaluation, such as:

- The UNEA-2 Resolution on Sand and Dust Storms (2/21) was adopted by the UNEA following the global assessment report on Sand and Dust Storms.
- The UNEA-3 Resolution 4 Environment and Health, Section IV Antimicrobial Resistance (UNEP/EA.3/Res.4). Antimicrobial Resistance was a key topic analysed by the Frontiers 2017 report. The embargoed report was provided to Member States in preparation for the UN Environment Assembly and its resolutions.
- The UNEA-4 Resolution on marine plastic and microplastics (UNEP/EA.4/Res.6). Marine plastic was one of the emerging issues presented in Frontiers 2016.
- The Emissions Gap report 2016 gained universal recognition from UNFCCC Parties and key stakeholders as a policy-making support tool, particularly in support of the increase of ambition of the current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in order to close the emissions gap further.

Figure 8: Use of Emerging Issues for Policy Planning by NFPs
Source: Evaluation, 2019

- The Nitrogen cycles that were identified in the Frontiers report 2018/2019 were put on the agenda of the Science-Policy-Business Forum with the aim of influencing different sectors to take up this issue. UNEA-4 adopted a Resolution 4/14 on sustainable nitrogen management.
- At national level, some evidence of use was identified with the response from the Government of Iran that called for regional cooperation to mitigate the sand and dust storms, or with earlier issues of the Emissions Gap reports that were used in the 2015 Urgenda Climate Case against the Dutch Government, which was the first in the world in which citizens established that their government has a legal duty to prevent dangerous climate change[52].

124. Overall, the evaluation found that the EUR SP early warnings were highly visible and accessed, with stronger likelihood of influence on international policymaking processes than on national ones. The topics covered by some of the emerging issues reports being on the agenda of the UNEA meetings and the launch of such reports coinciding with these events,

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[52] On 24 June 2015, the District Court of The Hague ruled the government must cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by the end of 2020 (compared to 1990 levels). The ruling required the government to immediately take more effective action on climate change. https://www.urgenda.nl/en/themas/climate-case/

the evaluation assessed as *very likely* their contribution to informing international policymaking processes. However, it was not possible to attribute a more specific level of influence on such processes. As an example, the *Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms* followed thousands of research papers[53] and a policy process that started before the dissemination of the report (e.g. UNGA Res.70/195 in 2015). Similarly, the article on *Microplastics: Trouble in the Food Chain* published in *Frontiers 2016*, which was referred as having contributed to informing UNEA resolutions, followed hundreds of research articles produced on this topic since the 2010's and a policy process that started well before 2016 (Figure 9).
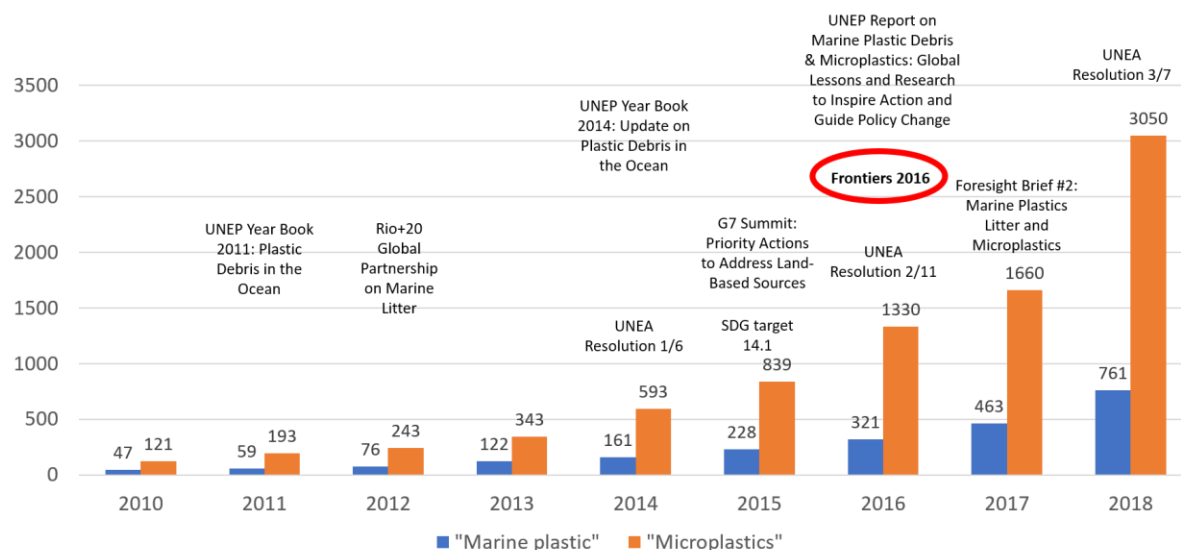
Figure 9: Number of articles that contain "Marine plastic" or "Microplastics" produced per year as retrieved by Google Scholar, and highlights of key events related to the topic

125.   Accordingly, it does not seem feasible to define the extent to which the emerging issues would *lead* to international and national policy and planning action or would rather *follow* it. In other words, are these reports mainstreamed into *existing* policy and planning processes as an informing factor or did they contribute to *trigger* such actions? Are these "*emerging*" issues per se, or rather issues already *"well-acknowledged"* and then taken-up in the UNEA process thanks to their key position at the science-policy interface? A related consideration could be formulated when looking at the work on microplastics, for which a foresight brief was sequenced after the emerging issues (Figure 9). Conceptually, a foresight process would rather draw attention to issues that may emerge, which would then inform strategic planning and programming across SPs, in support of policymaking.

126. Possible areas of work to clarify the level of contribution of these reports to policymaking and to improve their impact could involve the monitoring and analysis of the use and influence among policy makers and assessment practitioners and identification of barriers to uptake (e.g. capacities, resources, partnerships, etc.). Efforts are needed to mainstream findings from the emerging issues reports into the work of the other SPs through

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[53] E.g. Google Scholar returns close to 17,000 research articles on the topic published from 2010 to 2015.

UNEP planning processes and to target the donor community to inform and influence their strategic priorities.

Data and Indicator Frameworks for SDG Monitoring and Reporting

127. UNEP, as a mandated global authority, plays a key role in the Interagency and Expert Working Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDG), shaping the work to develop environment-related indicators and influence and support the broader work of the UN Statistical Commission to improve environmental monitoring and to develop and implement statistical standards. UNEP is positioned to work with its technical experts, partners, and countries to develop solid methodologies for each indicator for which UNEP is the Custodian Agency. Pilot testing in countries and global endorsement of the methodologies and data collection plans are included. UNEP, with its global network has a key advantage and role in promoting the production, dissemination, and capacities for use of environment statistics and the SDGs. UNEP draws on an extensive network of partners in the regions, sub regions and countries including the public and private sectors, civil society and academia, to deliver. Increased regional and country engagement, facilitated by UNEP's Regional Offices, play an important role in ensuring that the project is well anchored and responds to the regional and country priorities. Close engagement with regional bodies, economic commissions, and UN agencies is essential.

128. Many institutional, political, and practical barriers impede effective use of data to inform policy. Certainly, a global window of opportunity for UNEP is that sound statistics are a key component of evidence-informed policymaking and as such support the science to policy interface.

The uniqueness of EUR SP thematic work, products and services to support SDGs (Agenda 2030 targets), i.e. methods, coordination and capacity-building, including through UNEP Live was recognised. However, it was not evident that internal activities on coordination and network building, knowledge facilitation, the coherence of the EUR SP in regions or countries are viewed as relevant to these goals. UNEP does not have statistical support capacities in regions. Currently, the EUR SP is working to engage formally with UN Commissions for this but in the absence of strategic partnership negotiation and clarity on such it currently does not have sufficient capacity for servicing countries and regions.

129. The effectiveness of the EUR SP was further assessed through a review of key deliverables produced under POW Output 732. This output is led by the SDG Unit in the Science Division, created in 2015 to work on the SDG global monitoring framework and to coordinate the support and inputs to be provided by UNEP to the work of IAEG-SDG. For each indicator, the IAEG-SDG has assigned a custodial agency, i.e. a UN Agency that is responsible for developing and testing the methodology for an SDG indicator and then submitting it to the IAEG-SDG. As a custodian, UNEP and other agencies provide and propose draft methodologies, but ultimately decisions are taken by member states. UNEP was identified as the custodian for indicator development and monitoring of 26 of the SDG indicators and is working in partnership to support governments and partners with 93 other indicators with environmental dimensions[54]. The 732.1 project (and all its component projects) was

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[54] Of the 93 environment-related SDGs indicators, there are 22 (23 per cent) for which good progress has been made over the last 15 years. If this progress continues, it is likely that these SDGs targets will be met. However, for the other 77 per cent of the environment-related SDGs indicators, there is either not sufficient

developed to contribute to UNEP EUR SP Output 732[55] with the objective "*to strengthen the national, regional, and global data and indicator frameworks for monitoring and reporting on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.*"

130. The project was designed with three components that delivered the following outputs:

1. **Support the follow-up and review of the environmental dimension of sustainable development through improved statistical methods and processes**: The SDG unit has published several guidelines manuals such as *Environment Statistics: Diagnostic Tool for Strategic Planning*; *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGS*; *Gender and environment statistics: unlocking information for action and measuring the SDGs*; and *Measuring Fossil Fuel Subsidies in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals* (indicators 12.c.1). Other manuals under finalization cover SDG indicators 8.4.1/12.2.1 (material footprint), 8.4.2/12.2.2 (domestic material consumption), 14.1.1 (ocean eutrophication and floating plastic) and 14.2.1 (ecosystem-based approaches).

2. **Ensure full and open access to UNEP and stakeholders with all data and information on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the synergies with MEAs**: This work entails networking, SDG outreach, and visualization in collaboration with Environment Live. A full SDG strategic web page has been set up on Environment Live to show the status of the methodologies and a global learning platform as a 'one-stop shop' for governments and users of SDG information. For component 1, Methods and Statistics, the world can see the work UNEP has accomplished on methods on the Environment Live web page on SDGs. The work under this component is about networking the indicators through methods, tools, and guidance dissemination. It is largely internal to UNEP, including setting up the back-end work, the network, and the database. It is about understanding linkages and creating a system for downloading the data and making sure it is all done with synergies. The team has reported working with DESA on Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) processes which enhance knowledge management, data sharing and global coordination.

3. **Support countries upon request in their efforts to develop national capacity on environment statistics and reporting mechanism on the environmental dimension of the SDGs**: National and regional workshops have been conducted across five UN regions in partnership with the UN Commissions to promote the importance of monitoring the environmental dimension of the SDGs. Country assessment missions or training were reported as having been completed in 34 countries. Working subgroups have been established for development of data structure for SDG, national accounts, and statistical working groups, etc. Capacity development was noted as being required to cover the frequent lack of coordination between the ministries of environment and the national statistical agency or other agencies (e.g. forestry agencies). Since there is also no capacity on geodata, spatial data, etc., for the SDGs, there is a need to build capacity. The SDMX group/roadmap work also includes capacity building to share data in ISO format.
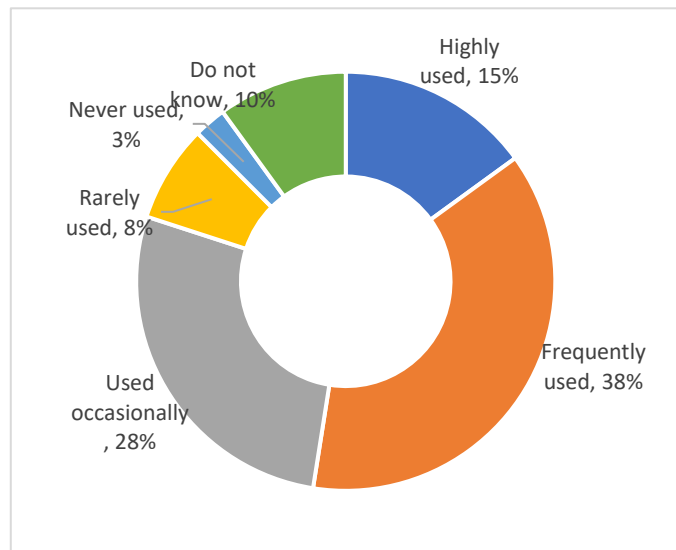
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data to assess progress (68 per cent) or it is unlikely that the target will be met without upscaling action (9 per cent).

[55] EUR Output 732: "Capacities of regional fora, national institutions, major groups, and other stakeholders are enhanced to better utilize environmental information, knowledge and assessment findings in regional and national policy and planning processes."

To get country level results, the SDG unit reported working through the UNRC and UNDAF when it can. The Unit has drafted a forward-looking strategy, but this has not yet been implemented.

131. A particular challenge was the nonstandard nature of each SDG indicator. Some indicators deal with performance, some with policy, and others with science, for example water quality (SDG 6.3.2); water management (SDG 6.5.1); change in water ecosystem (SDG 6.6.1); material flow account (SDG 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 12.2.1 and 12.2.2); action plan, policy coherence (SDG 12.1.1, 17.14.1 and others). In addition to science-based indicators, there are indicators that measure the progress of a government's performance. The challenge is not like most social statistics, in which there is straightforward work with questions and consultation. Economic indicators are additionally a completely different area of inquiry, but methodologies have existed since the 1940s and are now well developed. However, linkages between the environment and the economy are difficult to measure. To deal with this complexity, the SDG team tried to combine the indicators by theme and then create expert teams. The work involves developing extensive methodologies, particularly the metadata summary of methodologies. The nature of the work is cross-cutting and through partnerships, where the EUR SP was effectively serving as a bridge. The SDG Unit has established a systematic way to work with partners to develop methodologies. For example, the Unit develops contracts to do work on thematic areas, e.g. oceans, developing working groups, or for instance, to develop the water indicators. They have worked with the Freshwater Unit in the Ecosystems Divisions on 14.1 oceans and on 14.2.1 with WCMC. For all the SDG 12 indicators, the team worked with Economy Division. For 12.1.1, they worked on national action plan SCP 10 YR framework. In terms of results, the unit has completed work on 4/7 indicators, fully developed to date. Out of the 26 indicators for which UNEP was assigned as Custodian Agency in 2016, 7 have progressed to an upper Tier since 2015, including 4 graduating to Tier 1. More than half of

Figure 10: Use by NFPs of Methods, Tools, and Technical Support for Environment-related SDG Monitoring and Review in Policy Planning
Source: Evaluation, 2019

the National Focal Points that responded to the evaluation survey regularly used the methods, tools, and technical support provided on SDG monitoring (Figure 10), citing contribution to the production of SDG indicators as a positive outcome of using EUR SP products and services. The evaluation attempted to find a correlation between the countries in which the EUR SP has conducted (SDG) capacity building missions and countries reporting on SDGs. As a proxy, the evaluation used the delivery of Voluntary National Reviews over the years and the SDG Unit country missions to tentatively investigate the influence of the SP on policy making and development planning through VNRs submitted by countries. One of the purposes of the VNRs is to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs. At the time of the evaluation,

out of 195 UN Member States, 142 (73%) have submitted one or more Voluntary National Reports. In comparison, when considering the 34 countries supported by the UNEP SDG project, 27 (80%) have submitted a VNR. It is clearly not possible though, to attribute much causality or ownership of this slight positive difference. VNRs are a state-led voluntary reporting process and countries may have decided before receiving UNEP support to submit a VNR.

GEF portfolio

132. During the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 MTS periods, nine GEF-funded projects were identified to contribute to the EUR SP. Five of these projects spanned both MTS periods, two (TWAP and IWRM III) were finalised during 2014-2017 period, and two new projects on the CCCD portfolio were included for the 2018-2021 period. These included six projects from the CCCD funding portfolio (REF Financial Section), two phases of IW-LEARN and the Transboundary Water Assessment Programme (TWAP). The Programme Framework documents do not identify the contribution of GEF-funded projects towards specific EUR SP result statements or indicators, thus making it difficult to assess the contribution of the projects towards EUR SP expected results. Evaluative evidence is only available for the IW-LEARN Phase III and the TWAP as the other contributing GEF projects were still under implementation in 2019.

133. The TWAP was designed to address information gaps, help to strengthen baselines and to guide the GEF and other donors on the status and factors affecting global transboundary waters, including aquifers, lakes, rivers, large marine ecosystems and open oceans. This was expected to contribute to enhanced financial strategies for strengthening transboundary governance and management of international waters[56]. The terminal evaluation of the TWAP project (2018) found that the project was highly relevant to UNEP PoW and MTS and consistent with the EUR SP to facilitate global, regional and national policy making. TWAP contributed to EA (a) (*Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by environmental information made available on open platforms*) and PoW Output (a)2 (*Production of integrated assessment reports, including a gender and environment outlook, atlases, online information and regularly produced data on core indicators to provide sound science and integrate environmental, economic and social information as a basis for decision-making*).

134. The TE found that TWAP had delivered detailed and high-quality scientific waterbody assessments, supported by summaries to policy makers. The TE found evidence of TWAP methodologies having been used by the GEF and other agencies/donors, for example in the draft GEF Strategy for International Waters. Other examples of uptake included the use of TWAP to assist agencies and countries with SDGs related to freshwater (Goal 6) and oceans (Goal 14). The TE also found that the establishment of formalized partnerships had led to an association of organizations able and willing to undertake assessments at global, regional and basin levels to assist with national assessments. One of the evaluation recommendations related to maintaining and updating the digital resources for instance, through Environment Live.

135. The IW-LEARN phase III aimed to strengthen global portfolio of experience sharing and learning, dialogue facilitation, targeted knowledge sharing and replication in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of GEF International Waters projects to deliver tangible

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[56] An indicator-based assessment methodology for 5 waterbody types had been developed during an earlier phase of the project.

results. The evaluation report did not assess contribution to EUR SP expected results. According to the terminal evaluation, the project had met most of its targets. In regards information and knowledge management and utilisation of the IW resource centre (IWLEARN.NET), the evaluation found that there was room for improvement in the platform functionality

136. The six CCCD portfolio projects were all mapped against the EUR SP indicator ii "*increase in the number of countries reporting on the environmental dimensions of sustainabe development through shared environmental information systems with country-level data made discoverable through UNEP*". Based on the projects' self reporting (PIRs) the projects have supported countries in establishing national data portals and indicator reporting tools. For some projects, more specific support has included suppport in accessing information, supporting a national environmental data center, support in developing a national MEA strategy and action plan… The projects have provided capacity building support at different levels, including on the deployed indicator reporting system or regarding specific MEA reporting, . According to the self-reporting, several countries have adopted the Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS)[57].

5.3.2. Likelihood of Impact

137. Impact assessment is frequently a difficult exercise confronted by many well-known challenges many of which apply to the EUR SP. These include, for instance, the increased influence of a range of factors, partners and stakeholders along the, often quite long and indirect, causal pathways towards development outcomes, reducing the possibility of attributing achievements to any single initiative. A second common constraint relates to the time span required to move from science to policy use, and then implementation, and then to environmental benefits. Another key limitation is the lack of adequate indicators, baselines and targets to measure progress at the outcome level, e.g. on the EUR SP intermediate states. Bearing such limitations in mind, this section builds on anecdotal evidence, analysis, and expert judgement to deliver an assessment of the likelihood of policy changes contributed by the EUR SP. The section is articulated around the outcome statements and/or levels formulated in the EUR SP reconstructed TOC (Section 4).

Outcomes of the EUR Sub-Programme

138. This section was partly informed by EUR SP reporting on the achievements of the MTS 2014-2017 and POW EAs (Annex 7).

Countries capacity enhanced to report on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development

139. Earlier sections (e.g. SP Design & Structure, Effectiveness) reported that capacity development (CD) had been a key objective of the EUR SP. This is illustrated by the range of projects forming the POW 2014-2015 -e.g. 714, 715, 716, 722, etc.- as well as by other EUR SP projects -e.g. UNEP Live, SDGs monitoring, GEO, GEF projects (CCCD), and air and water quality monitoring- where capacity development was given as one of the expected results. Various streams of evidence coincide to indicate that **EUR SP has contributed to enhance the**

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[57]In the Europe region the RC reports the demand for IRIS was low and deployment was unsuccessful in targeted countries (e.g. Belarus and Montenegro). The only experience with a CCCD project, in Bosnia, where IRIS was promoted ended up not being used due to reasons extraneous to UNEP

capacity of many countries to report on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The range of reports delivered by the EUR SP (GEO-6, Emerging Issues, thematic assessments) has provided countries with increased access to data, information and knowledge on the state of the environment. Normative products such as those developed by the SDG project and the air and water quality monitoring programmes have equipped countries with scientific approaches and knowledge to monitor the SDGs. According to the evaluation survey, 56% of the participating CPR members rated the EUR SP as somewhat effective in "*empowering stakeholders in their policy and decision-making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review*". Trainings and technical assistance delivered by the SDG project have also enabled countries to improve data collection and statistical reporting. The support provided by the SP on *environmental data collection and monitoring*, and on *environmental information sharing* was found useful by close to 50% of the NFPs responding to the evaluation survey, i.e. by more than 70% of those that requested such support (Figure 11). These findings are further corroborated by the monitoring reports provided by the SDG project. All 35 target countries that received support from that project developed or improved an existing strategy for environment statistics based on national policy priorities[58].
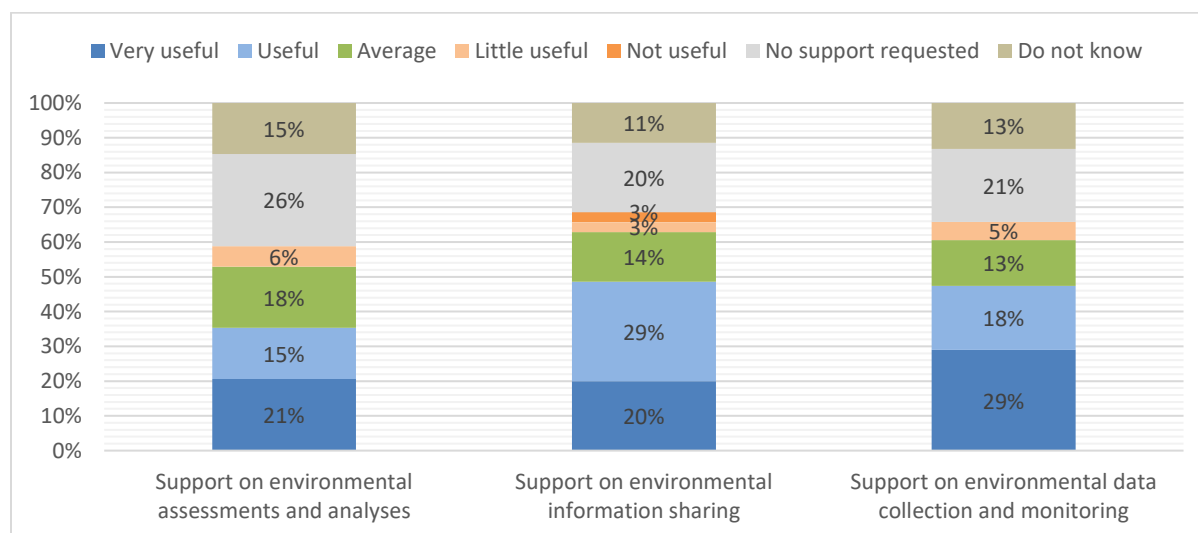
Figure 11: NFPs' perceived usefulness of the technical assistance provided by UNEP since 2014

140. Despite these achievements, ample evidence was found of constraints and shortcomings faced by the EUR SP when it comes to building the capacity of countries to report on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In the first place and as noted earlier (under Sub-programme Design and Structure), despite capacity development being an objective well positioned in the design of the MTS 2014-2017, the resources were lacking to implement many CD related projects -e.g. 714, 715, 716, 722, etc.-. Furthermore, within the projects that were implemented, capacity development activities and outputs were

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[58] For instance, more in-depth environment statistics strategies on specific fields were developed in Cameroon on Satellite Accounts of the Environment; in Tanzania on Framework for Environment Statistics; in Kenya on SDG 14.1.1 marine litter; in Burkina Faso and Guyana on SDG 17.14.1 -mechanisms for policy coherence for sustainable development-; in the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan on environment-related SDG Indicators; and in Bosnia and Herzegovina on waste indicators.

sometimes underprioritized or did not realise their outcomes -e.g. GEO MOOC not delivered, online Communities of Practice dormant, Country Reporting Toolkit implemented in only two countries, best practices manual on emerging issues identification replaced by a short internal note, etc.-. Projects do not have resources to respond to all country requests for capacity development. The evaluation found indications of capacity development activities in the EUR SP being largely determined by funding and donor priorities. Under the overall umbrella of a missing capacity development strategy for the EUR SP -and for UNEP as a whole, evaluation informants pointed out a demand for more normative products and for knowledge development in relation to data collection, data policies, environmental analysis, and integrated assessments. For example, informants referred to trainings for SDG monitoring that would require scaling. Over the successive POWs, EUR SP projects -including GEF projects in particular - have complemented their global scope with initiatives targeting national partners and institutions, but support at the sub-national level has remained scarce. According to the NFPs respondents, the top priority for the EUR SP in the coming years should be to "*Build capacity in countries for data collection, analysis, and development of national assessments and early warnings*" (Figure 12).

141. There is a priority organisational-wide need to gain clarity on capacity development approaches linked to EUR SP work. It is particularly important to link these to the EUR SPs thematic focus and resource mobilization efforts. This need has been amplified by the growing demand for country focused work on SDGs. Capacity development will require clarity about the EUR SP role across SPs, regional and country work - management and support.
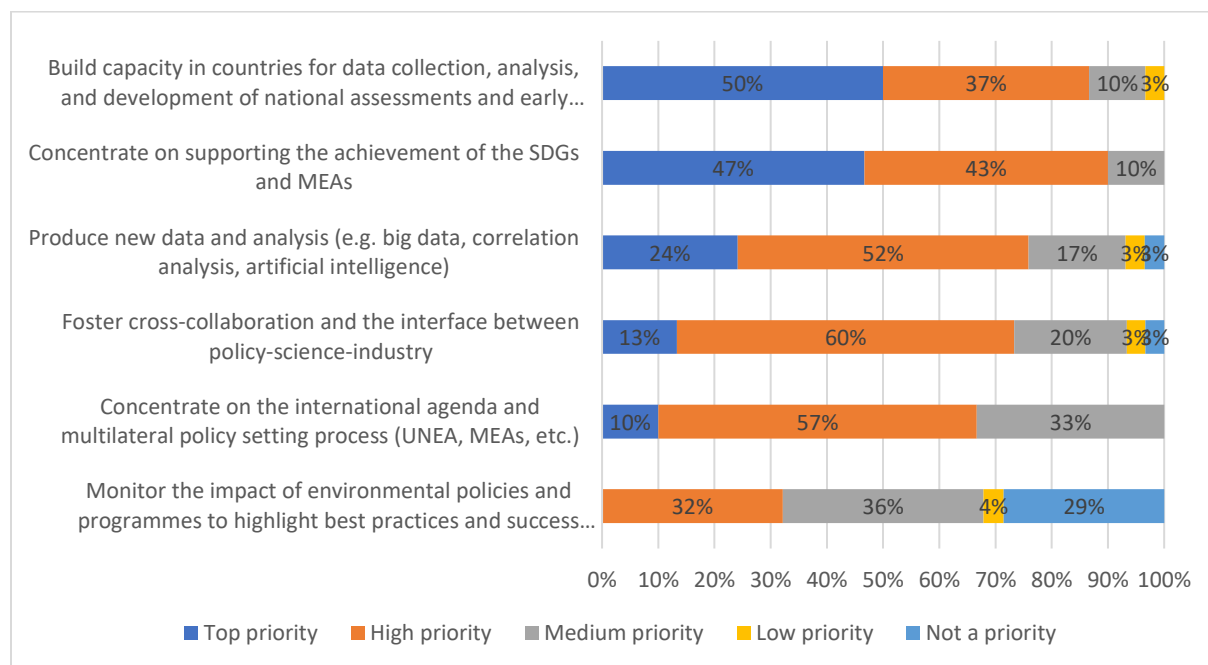
Figure 12: NFPs' perceived priorities for the EUR SP in the coming years

Governments use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes in policy making processes

142. Different sources of evidence converge to indicate that Governments use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes delivered by the EUR SP in policy

making processes. Previous sections provide some examples of uptake of EUR SP products/services in *national policymaking* processes. The evaluation survey, for instance, showed that NFPs used the *Methods, tools, technical support to environment-related SDG monitoring and review* quite frequently in policy planning processes (Figure 13). EUR SP outputs were reported by NFPs as used in the preparation of reports on SDG and related indicators with a view to inform National Reports on the State of Environment. EUR SP products/services have also reportedly contributed to the incorporation of issues related to the broader environmental situation, including institutional frameworks and governance, into the development of scenarios to inform policymaking. NFPs also referred to EUR SP outputs in global or regional context sections of reports on the national environmental agenda. Some NFPs also reported using the EUR SP products in the development of the National Strategy and Strategy for Environmental Management, and in the National Sector Development Plan. As shared also by NFPs, "*The GEO reports and tools related to the SDG monitoring and reporting are helping to re-shape and re-structure the national state of the environment report for Trinidad and Tobago*". Another NFP also indicated using GEO Reports when assessing risks and vulnerability to climate change in national environmental policy making.
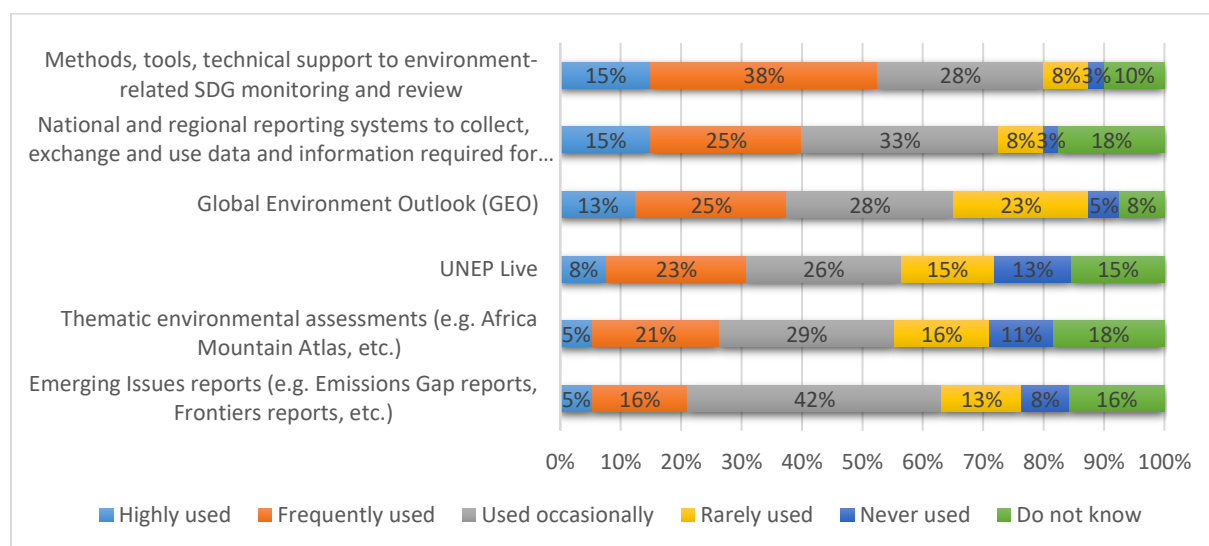
Figure 13: NFPs' perception of the level of use of the EUR SP outputs in their country's policy planning processes

143. Research on references to EUR SP outputs in national policies or policymaking processes returned few findings; the evaluation reviewed a random sample of 30 Voluntary National Reviews[59], and UNEP was cited in nine reports with two references having some relationship to the EUR SP (Armenia VNR cites UNEP Live; Kuwait VNR cites UNEP/UNDS 2013 Environment Data Questionnaire). But a review of the environmental legislation recorded in ECOLEX[60] did not allow identification of references to EUR SP products or processes among the 39 laws, decrees or regulations citing UNEP since 2014. Simultaneously, national legislation sometimes refer to international treaties and conventions -i.e. binding agreements-, but rarely invoke and cite UN, scientific or technical reports. As a matter of fact, policy

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[59] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/
[60] https://www.ecolex.org/

documents seldom hold science citations but the documents that supported the development of the final policy, however, often do.

144. According to the NFPs survey, 41% of the respondents agreed that since 2014, UNEP has enhanced the capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge (Figure 14). Fewer NFPs (28%) perceived national policymaking being facilitated by information made available on UNEP Live, or informed by emerging environmental issues (27%).
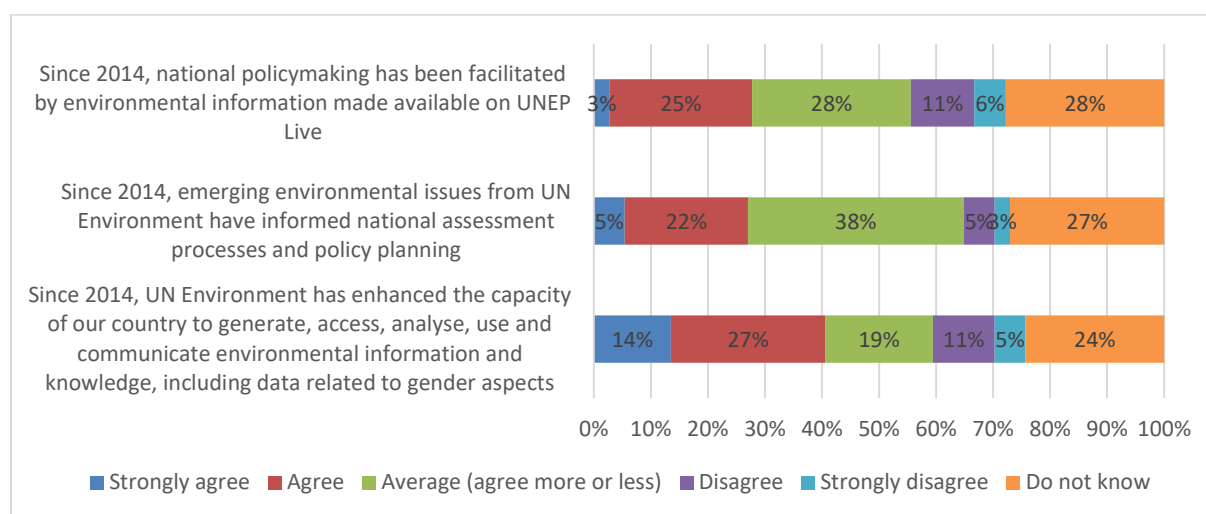
Figure 14: NFPs perspectives on EUR SP EAs

145. Another avenue for EUR SP products/services to be taken up and used by Governments is through *global policymaking* processes. For example, evaluation informants referred to the *Frontiers 2017* report that was provided to Member States in preparation for UNEA-3. A key topic analysed by the report was Antimicrobial Resistance, an issue on which the Assembly adopted a resolution (UNEP/EA.3/Res.4). Similarly, informants mentioned the *Frontiers 2016* report and its chapter on marine plastic and microplastics, a topic on which UNEA-4 adopted a resolution (UNEP/EA.4/Res.6). While such examples indicate a likely contribution of the EUR SP reports to informing global policy processes, it is not possible to specify a level of influence. Other examples of uptake include UNEA-4 welcoming with appreciation the GEO-6 report and its summary for policymakers and requesting to continue providing "*information from existing and ongoing assessments to guide future policy debates at the United Nations Environment Assembly*"[61]. GEO-6 was also cited in the resolution on innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production (UNEP.EA.4/Res.1). Several evaluation informants also reported that GEO-6 had been adequately aligned with the agenda of UNEA-4, probably benefiting from the governance of the GEO process that included an Intergovernmental Group representing 25 governments countries involved in UNEA agenda setting and in the identification of GEO-6 topics. Other evidence of uptake was provided by

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[61] United Nations. 2019. United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme. Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 15 March 2019 4/23. Keeping the world environment under review: enhancing the United Nations Environment Programme science-policy interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook. Nairobi.

the *Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms* report that made its way to UNEA decisions[62] and to the UNGA[63], contributing to the establishment of a global coalition to combat sand and dust storms created through the UN Environment Management Group.

146. The evaluation survey corroborated a modest level of uptake of EUR SP outputs at global level, with CPR members reporting the EUR SP especially effective at *facilitating global, regional and national policymaking by making environmental information available on open platforms (e.g. "UNEP Live")* and at *informing global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning with emerging issues* (Figure 15).
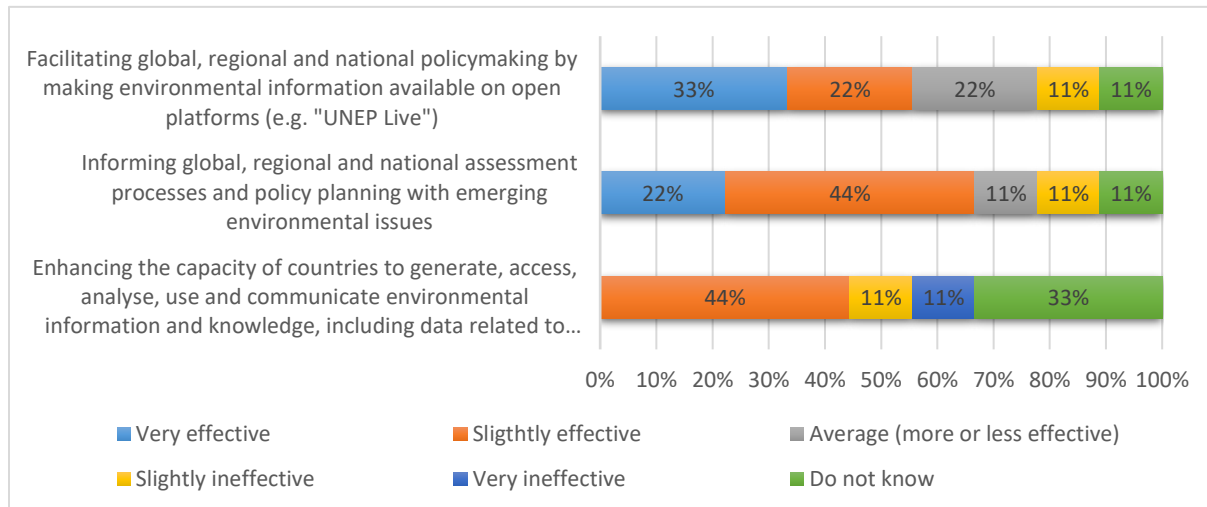
Figure 15: CPR members perspectives on EUR SP EAs

147. When comparing the assessments of EUR SP EAs returned by NFPs and CPR members, it is interesting to note that their ratings come in inverse order -bearing in mind methodological differences. While NFPs attribute a more positive rating to the contribution of the EUR SP on EA (c) (Figure 14), CPR members favour EUR SP achievements contributed under EA (a) (Figure 15)[64]. Basically, both communities of senior civil servants (NFPs and CPR members) seem to indicate a level of uptake of EUR SP products/services reflective of their respective national or global needs, and use. NFPs emphasize using products/services from the SDG monitoring and data management streams of work, while the CPR members stress the effectiveness of GEO, UNEP Live, and Emerging Issues. Both groups perceive also varying

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[62] UNEA. 2016. Resolution 2/21. Sand and Dust Storms. Nairobi. The resolution requested, inter alia, "the Executive Director to, within the programme of work and available resources, support Member States, in collaboration with relevant United Nations entities and other partners, in addressing the challenges of sand and dust storms through the identification of relevant data and information gaps, policy measures and actions, building on the "Global assessment of sand and dust storms" under General Assembly resolution 70/195 of 22 December 2015, and in connection UNEP/EA.2/Res.21 2 with the ongoing efforts on air quality monitoring and assessment in response to United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/7;"

[63] UN General Assembly. 2018. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017. 72/225 Combating sand and dust storms. New York.

[64] This is also consistent with the priorities suggested by both groups for the EUR SP in the years to come. While NFPs proposed to focus the SP on building capacity in countries for data collection, analysis, and development of national assessments and early warnings (Annex 8), CPR members called for improving the GEO as UNEP flagship to provide credible support to the international environmental agenda (Annex 9).

levels of contribution of the EUR SP products/services to policymaking processes. Overall, CPR members returned a more positive assessment of EUR SP EAs than NFPs, i.e. NFPs appear to value slightly less the achievements of the EUR SP since 2014 than CPR members. Several informants indicated that EUR SP global outputs made available on the UNEP website or UNEP Live were informative for general audiences but lacked advice on effective ways to address environmental challenges and to prescribe which policies should be adopted. Another modality conveyed by informants to make EUR SP outputs more impactful and used by national policymakers would be to focus GEO reports on the SDGs and the Paris agreement, and UNEP Live on the 26 SDG indicators that UNEP is the custodian of, prior to opening up to the set of 93 environmental related ones, before embedding MEA indicators, and then FDES[65] ones.

EUR data, assessments, and foresight used in UNEP programming

148.   The other six thematic SPs are an important part of the EUR SP's internal audience. The EUR SP's intention is to support other SPs and parts of UNEP, i.e. to encourage collaboration, provide enabling science and knowledge in support of lesson learning, capacity building, and knowledge building. Interviews supported by document review found that EUR SP inputs into programming were limited (See also Likelihood of Impact section). Staff recounted perceived barriers to collaboration and uptake of EUR SP services resulting from a combination of interlinked structural, institutional and management issues, rooted in the culture, weak accountabilities and lack of UNEP Senior Management inputs and guidance of EUR SP results (Highlighted in the Relevance and Efficiency sections- also see OIOS 2019). Whilst EUR SP should inform UNEP strategic planning, there is a limited traction with the Policy and Programme Division to take up EUR SP outputs for strategic planning and programming. There seems to be limited collaboration, for instance, between the GEO Unit and PPD when developing the MTS despite this link being regularly mentioned in documentation. On the other hand, there was also a limited contribution of the other UNEP Divisions/SPs to setting the agenda of work of the EUR SP and making it more demand and service oriented.

149.   Consultations carried out by the evaluation showed a low level of use of EUR SP data, assessments and foresight in UNEP internal programming. In a few cases, Sub-programme informants referred using the GEO and Emerging Issues reports when developing a project document or during the development of the MTS to inform the context analysis. The EG SP also indicated that a staff had been in charge of analysing GEO-6 to identify how it could be used and highlight relevant sections of the report for the EG SP. Some findings from the Emerging Issues reports were also mentioned as being used in the programming of the Ecosystems Division (e.g. in relation to antimicrobial resistance or microplastics). Collaboration between SPs and the SDG Unit to develop the methodology to monitor SDG indicators has been a source of uptake of SDG normative work, while measurement of the SDG indicators was referred as effectively informing Divisions and SPs. However, use of UNEP Live either as a source of data, or to populate the platform with data and information collected or developed during the implementation of projects of their respective SP was low. Little contribution was reported from other SPs to supporting the dissemination of EUR SP outputs.

150.   In general, EUR SP products/services were not often used to inform UNEP programming at global or regional levels. Several factors were highlighted or identified to explain the lack

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[65]Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics

of uptake of EUR SP products/services across the organization (refer also to section on Factors affecting Performance). This includes:

- the lack of MTS/POW indicators across SPs that would be monitored by EUR SP initiatives,

- the presence within Divisions/SPs of experts conducting their own data gathering and assessments,

- limited institutional mechanisms and reportedly leadership -e.g. clarity of Chief Scientist's role in setting the organization's agenda according to the findings of EUR SP data and assessments,

- the lack of process to collect and publish the underlying datasets generated by EUR SP assessments (GEO, Emerging Issues) and by the projects from the other SPs,

- limited outreach from EUR SP staff when a new output is delivered,

- lack of financial incentives to foster cross-SP collaboration,

- limited interactions between the EUR SP and the Policy and Programme Division promote use of EUR SP outputs for strategic planning and programming (affected by changes to the reporting lines and locus of SPCs)

- limited collaboration between GEO unit and PPD when developing the MTS,

- limited contribution of the Divisions/SPs to setting the agenda of work of the EUR SP and making it more demand and service oriented.

151. The most prominent factor, however, was the lack of adequate definition of the EUR SP services and thematic offers to its different audiences both internally but also externally. It appears that there is a lack of clarity within UNEP in regard to what was on offer either as EUR SP products, platforms, learning services or thematically i.e. data and information management, assessments, global SDG monitoring, etc. and that the 'marketing' of these has been 'ad-hoc' instead of being systematic.

152. Altogether, the low to moderate uptake by UNEP SPs and PPD of EUR SP outputs to inform programming, project design, and delivery is a significant organisational shortcoming. As indicated in the Theory of Change, the contribution of the EUR SP to policy change gravitates primarily around data related policies, i.e. (i) open data policies and related strategies, programmes, partnerships and capacities, including big data, etc., and (ii) policies, strategies, programmes, partnerships etc. for SDG monitoring. As for policies related to technical/thematic domains (biodiversity, SCP, etc.), direct influence is primarily the sphere of other SPs. For example, "*Institutional capacities and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals*" is an Expected Accomplishment of the Environmental Governance Sub-programme. The EUR SP is not the primary accountable SP for results on policy development. The EUR SP intends to inform and influence other SPs, and to empower policymaking, but it is not the role of Science Division staff to go, for example, to a country and support a government official developing a policy on SCP -e.g. after an article on SCP in *Frontiers*. EUR SP staff would be better placed to support a country in designing a policy on open data or advise a National Institute of Statistics and/or Ministry of Environment on SDG monitoring. One would assume though that if the technical assistance to be provided relates more specially to SDG SCP/13 indicators for

example, such support would (also) involve a staff from Resource Efficiency Sub-programme. Limited uptake of EUR SP outputs throughout UNEP reduces the likelihood of the EUR SP fostering policy change through other SPs and decreases the opportunities for systemic solution development.

153. Finally, no evidence was found of EUR SP outputs having a direct contribution to supporting resource mobilization from other divisions, i.e. to influencing donors to allocate new or increased funding to projects from the thematic SPs. However, an exception was the GEF-funded TWAP project that was found to have influenced future GEF funding decisions on transboundary water issues.

Academia using environmental data, information and knowledge to inform new research and policy

154. The previous section has presented contrasting findings about the uptake of EUR SP outputs by academia. On one hand, uptake and use of UNEP Live by research and academia appeared extremely limited. Google Scholar for example retrieved 28 papers citing UNEP Live or Environment Live in 2016 compared to 12.700 articles for FAOSTAT. This is perhaps because researchers prefer to rely on original datasets or data and information they have already compiled, or alternatively on platforms that provide more specialized, up-to-date, or comprehensive information on a given domain e.g. FAOSTAT, WHO/GHO, regional commissions, etc. On the other hand, the Emerging Issues team identified close to 300 journal articles and other research papers that have referred to or made use of the findings from the Emerging Issues reports. Similarly, GEO reports are cited in research papers and grey literature close to 500 times per year according to Google Scholar -this is still a much lower frequency than IPCC Assessment Reports. Another notable contribution of the EUR SP, and GEO-6 especially, has been to take scientific literature out of the research and academic community and bring it to policymakers. The GEO process has harnessed academic outputs and helped to underline, validate or strengthen their message. The GEO-6 Summary for Policymakers was negotiated by 95 Member states (251 participants, including 26 participants from Major Groups and Stakeholders) before being disseminated to ministers and other policymakers at UNEA-4.

MEA Secretariats and UN agencies using environmental data, information and knowledge in their programming

155. One EUR SP indicator in the MTS 2014-2017 referred to increasing "the number of United Nations agencies and multilateral environmental agreements using data on environmental trends, identified through UNEP, to influence their policy". This objective was reported as partly achieved, with 12 out of 18 targeted UN agencies and MEA secretariats being found citing UNEP online information platforms and documents/reports containing data on environmental trends in their policy statements and documents. Examples of uptake cited in the Programme Performance Report 2016-2017[66] include the United Nations Secretary-General's Sustainable Development Goals progress report 2017 using indicator data coming from UNEP for the content of the Chapters on SDG 12 (SCP), 14 (oceans) and 15 (land); the Basel Convention's decision (BC-13/16) on international cooperation and coordination on the collection of data relevant to the indicators of the SDGs, that requested the Secretariat to

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[66] UNEP. 2018. *Programme Performance Report 2016-2017*. UNEP/CPR/142/8. Nairobi.

continue to cooperate with UNEP and the secretariats of other chemicals and waste-related multilateral environmental agreements to ensure a coordinated approach to the implementation of the methodology; and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia that used also the outcome of the regional GEOs to identify regional priorities for Sustainable Development Goal action plan on enhancing environmental protection in the Arab Region. More recently, a discussion paper from the IACG on Antimicrobial Resistance cited data sources and exposure pathways for AMR and AMU in the environment identified in Frontiers 2017 as possible entry points for integrating environmental surveillance into existing systems[67].

156.   Several other avenues were identified as having facilitated the uptake of EUR SP outputs by other UN agencies. The UNDA 10 programme on Data and Statistics for example has included the creation of a UN Secretariat-wide community on environment statistics and, through regular DA project meetings and online exchanges, UNEP, UN Statistics Division, and all of the Regional Commissions have strengthened their approach in partnership toward building the capacity of countries to monitor the environmental dimension of the SDG globally and across the regions. Related collaboration was noted with UNSD on the methodology to monitor SDG indicators (12.4.2. and 12.5.1) or with FAO (12.3.1). Another EUR SP initiative that was mentioned aims at strengthening coherence, consistency, and synergies between five global integrated assessments -GEO, IPBES, IPCC, IRP and GSDR- to provide a bigger picture on the environment. This initiative, which is led by the Chief Scientist, appears to have the potential of giving higher visibility to EUR SP data, information and knowledge.

157.   The evaluation recognised a consensus around the challenge that faced the EUR SP in being taken up by UNCTs. With a lack of country presence, little or no room in the UNDAF/UNSDCF, and limited regional capacities, the use of EUR SP products/services at country level was relatively low and not meeting the demand, including from the RCO. However, successful examples of UNEP initiatives being scaled through national partnerships were provided. MapX[68] for instance, was mentioned as having partnered successfully with UNDP which, after proper training and provision of on-going support and guidance, was in charge of carrying out user needs assessments and supporting the implementation of the platform at country level, allowing the MapX team to avoid direct client interactions but concentrate on its comparative advantage at scale. Similar arrangements were not perceived applicable as such by EUR SP informants, considering the number of countries to cover. To achieve UNEP's guidance appearing in UNDP country work, it was perceived that a much higher level of buy-in would be required, i.e. a strategic partnership between HQs from where guidelines are produced and cascade.

Private sector and business decision-makers use environmental data and assessments in their business planning and operations

158.   It did not prove feasible for the evaluation to gather significant evidence of uptake of EUR SP outputs by private sector actors. As mentioned by an informant, "*UNEP's mandate is*

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[67] IACG (2018). Surveillance and Monitoring for Antimicrobial Use and Resistance. Discussion paper by the Interagency Coordination Group for Coordination on Antimicrobial Resistance. WHO, Geneva.
[68] MapX was developed by UNEP, the World Bank and the Global Resource Information Database (GRID-Geneva) to capitalize on the use of new digital technologies and cloud computing in the sustainable management of natural resources. One of the founding principles was to equalize information held by different stakeholders as a prerequisite to better dialogue, decision making and monitoring.

by Governments for Governments. Having the private sector complying with government regulations is a valid statement but far away from EUR reach". Since 2014 -and well before-, the private sector has been a partner of the EUR SP, but primarily as data provider or more recently data co-manager (e.g. Google, Microsoft, etc.). The role of the private sector as user of EUR SP data, information, and knowledge has not been fully embedded in the design of the SP.

159. Good practices identified by the evaluation include non-state actors sections in Emissions gap reports, the mini GEO-6 for Industry in Asia-Pacific[69], a range of outreach and dissemination activities conducted by the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, such as presentations of GEO-6 during the G20 in Japan to 300 companies or members of Japanese industry associations. Another commendable modality is the Science Policy Business Forum (SPBF), an initiative launched by the Chief Scientist to provide swifter access to data, shorten time to policy engagement, foster change in consumption and production models and encourage industrial implementation. The forum has grown to 3,000 affiliated members since December 2017, involving other SPs as well as the ROs with assessments moving from platform model to incubator. This initiative is not anchored in a standalone project but incorporated under the GEO project. The SPBF has helped to inform the UNEA agenda, for example the UNEA 4 resolution on big data was influenced by the SPBF. If sustained, this initiative could grow into a collaboration built around common sectoral objectives that could become new foci of work for the EUR SP and its projects. However, challenges and opportunities remain. One potential area of work for the EUR SP would be to strengthen private sector reporting and monitoring, i.e. how to measure and report private sector action and results. There are no tools to measure such results and there is a need to align market indicators and investment indicators[70]. Currently, government reporting is not accurate since market indicators are weak. Investment in data availability, transparency (through better monitoring and reporting) and closer collaboration with governments to foster such voluntary reporting is needed.

Intermediate Outcomes

160. Significant evidence can be found indicating that national policies, development plans, programmes and strategies better integrate environmental obligations of SDGs. The latest annual SDG report[71], for instance, points out that nearly 100 countries were actively adopting policies and measures to promote sustainable consumption and production, with 303 policies and instruments reported to be in place globally in 2018. UNEP noted also in 2019 the overall "*progress in terms of putting in place policy, financial, and institutional processes in support of achieving the environmental dimension of development.*" The report further noted that "*Progress has been made on all 11 environment-related SDGs indicators related to policy, financial and institutional processes with available data. […] Although there is not sufficient data on the other SDGs indicators related to policy, financial, and institutional mechanisms, there have been a number of global actions in many of these areas*"[72]. Similarly, several reviews of the Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) submitted by member states to highlight national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda showed increased mainstreaming of the SDGs into

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[69] UNEP 2019. *GEO-6 for Industry in Asia-Pacific*. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya.
[70] One informant reported that work had recently been initiated to address such gaps.
[71] United Nations. 2019. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019. New York.
[72] UNEP. 2019. Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs. Nairobi.

national development plans, including for the environmental dimension of the goals[73,74]. This positive picture needs to be viewed cautiously as attribution back to the work of the EUR SP is uncertain at best. As also indicated by UNEP: "*For the indicators without enough data to assess the trend at the global level, it is likely that there is a negative trend in terms of the state of the environment due to the fact that these areas are still receiving less attention in terms of policy interventions and investment in monitoring. This includes the indicators related to land degradation and land use (SDG target 15.3 and 11.3); coastal eutrophication, marine litter and ocean acidification (SDG targets 14.1 and 14.3); water quality and water stress (SDG target 6.3 and SDG target 6.4); and mountains (SDG target 15.4).*[75]"

161. Policy change and implementation is a long process and the EUR SP needs to be realistic about what it can contribute. Furthermore, most other SPs already embed policy change and environmental benefits in their own Expected Accomplishments. One pathway by which the EUR SP contributes to such achievements is through the normative work being done on the 26 SDG indicators for which UNEP is a custodian, with seven of them having progressed to an upper Tier since 2015, including four graduating to Tier 1. This work allows the establishment of baselines for measuring progress on development frameworks, including the SDGs. Ultimately, this means that policymaking is informed by adequate data, and that the effects of policies can be more adequately monitored. Anecdotal evidence of a contribution to national policymaking leading to environmental benefits was also mentioned earlier with the Uganda Wetland Atlas bringing the Government of Uganda to secure USD24 million to implement a restoration programme guided by the recommendations of the report. Another pathway for EUR SP outputs to be taken up by policymakers and bring about environmental benefits is through UNEA. Half of the surveyed CPR members agreed that the *EUR SP contributes to UNEA ability to make decisions i.e. setting UNEA resolutions*. EUR SP products such as the GEO-6 report and its Summary for Policymakers, or the Frontiers reports, developed in conjunction with the UNEA agenda are likely to have some influence on global policymaking processes. Anecdotal evidence of uptake was also reported earlier with the Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms report that found its way to UNEA decisions[76] and the UNGA[77], contributing to the establishment of a global coalition to combat sand and dust storms, created through the UN EMG.

162. Nonetheless, in general it remains difficult to assess the extent to which the EUR SP effectively *steers* national and international policy or whether it *follows* and *informs* these processes. As indicated in the previous section (see 5.2. Emerging Issues), the topics covered

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[73] United Nations. 2019. Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - The 46 countries that presented voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum in 2018. DESA. New York.

[74] OECD. 2018. Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development 2018 - Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies. Paris.

[75] UNEP. 2019. Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs. Nairobi.

[76] UNEA. 2016. Resolution 2/21. Sand and Dust Storms. Nairobi. The resolution requested, inter alia, "the Executive Director to, within the programme of work and available resources, support Member States, in collaboration with relevant United Nations entities and other partners, in addressing the challenges of sand and dust storms through the identification of relevant data and information gaps, policy measures and actions, building on the "Global assessment of sand and dust storms" under General Assembly resolution 70/195 of 22 December 2015, and in connection UNEP/EA.2/Res.21 2 with the ongoing efforts on air quality monitoring and assessment in response to United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/7;"

[77] UN General Assembly. 2018. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017. 72/225 Combating sand and dust storms. New York.

by EUR SP outputs tend to convey more confirmatory than paradigm-shifting science. A slightly provocatively evaluation informant stated "the *Science Division is not science because they do not create science. They were the Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) but now could be a Data division. DEWA was a better reflection of what they could do.*" Another factor that limits the ability to gauge whether the EUR SP helps shape policy relates to the lack of monitoring and assessment instruments to assess whether international or national policies are influenced by EUR SP outputs. The Emerging Issues project planned in 2014 to conduct a study to "*track the impact of the project and to what extent its outreach and engagement efforts on emerging issues have been successful in influencing decisions (including policies) aimed at sustainable development and improved human well-being*". However, this did not prove feasible due to budgetary constraints. Informants from the GEO-6 project indicated a very high interest in monitoring the policy influence and impact of the report but stressed a lack of resources to justify the delay of such study -with the associated risk of weak baseline. Other informants pointed out also the need to better gauge the impact of the EUR SP, including eventually to aid course corrections, but the monitoring framework does not support the analysis.

Longer-term Outcomes

163. Altogether, the evaluation found that there was a reasonable likelihood that results achieved by the EUR SP either have, or will in the future, make a low to moderate contribution to long-term impact on environmental benefits and sustainable development, including the identified SDG targets. GEO-6, GEO-5, and the report measuring progress on the SDGs all recognize that there is a lack of data and that such a deficit yields "*a negative trend in terms of the state of the environment due to the fact that these areas are still receiving less attention in terms of policy interventions and investment in monitoring*". The work that is being done by the EUR SP contributes to mitigate these shortcomings. However, overall, the latest global SDG report pointed out also that "*The natural environment is deteriorating at an alarming rate: sea levels are rising; ocean acidification is accelerating; the last four years have been the warmest on record; one million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction, and land degradation continues unchecked*." As put into perspective by an evaluation informant: "*While IPCC intergovernmental process has been successful in moving the policy process forward, emissions have not gone down.*" It is quite unsure that, as it stands, the EUR SP can make a significant contribution to curbing unfavourable trends unless stronger collaboration with and influence of several key actors is scaled up, including other SPs, the private sector(s), the donor community, and UN agencies on the ground. The EUR SP should continue to develop capacities and work on near real-time and local data and integrated assessments in order to facilitate the identification of contextual priorities and swifter responses, for example from private sector actors[78] or at sub-national level from provinces and cities[79].

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[78] E.g.: Global Compact Network South Africa. 2019. Private Sector Contribution to South Africa's 2019 Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals. South Africa. http://globalcompactsa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/GCNSA-VNR-July-Report-2019-20190711-digital-version.pdf
[79] E.g.: Voluntary Local Reviews. https://iges.or.jp/en/projects/vlr

5.3.3. Sustainability

164. The evaluation assessed the sustainability of the EUR SP through conditions and factors that have contributed to, or constrained sustainability of results.

Sustainability of EUR SP Outcomes

165. The evaluation highlighted questions about the potential longer-term use of reports, such as the Emerging Issues and GEO in terms of influencing action. While it is very likely that the "attention span" of the media may be rather short due to the amount of news to process and bring to the public, the timeframes for use by scientific communities and policymakers are quite different. This can be illustrated with the *Emissions Gap Report 2016*. Media coverage of the report peaked on the day of its launch, 3 November 2016, with nearly 1,700 articles published worldwide. November 4th saw the Emissions Gap findings quoted in over 1,000 articles dealing with the entry into force of the Paris Agreement. November 7th, the opening day of the Marrakech climate conference (COP 22), resulted in another spike of articles, totalling over 400. The media coverage after November 8th resulted mostly from post-election commentaries on Donald Trump's climate policies -Figure 16a-. In comparison, the number of scientific articles and grey literature citing the report peaked in 2017 but was still significant in 2018 -Figure 16b-. While most of the media coverage of the report was exhausted in a couple of weeks, there was more than a couple of years of use for academia, think tanks, UN organizations and NGOs.
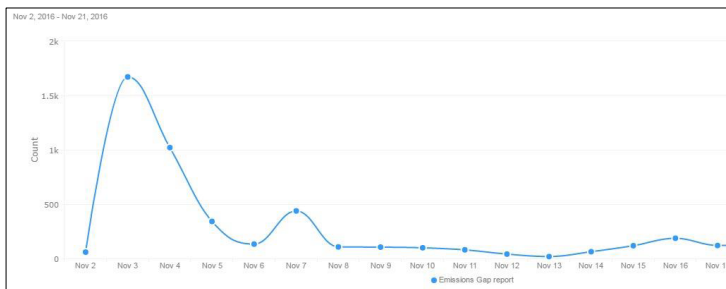
Figure 16a: Conversation Volume of Emissions Gap Report 2016.
Source: UNEP Newsdesk, 2016.
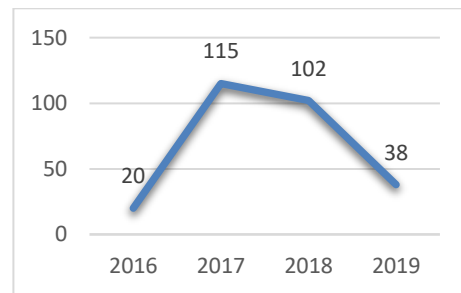
Figure 16b: Articles retrieved by Google Scholar citing Emissions Gap Report 2016.

166. As indicated earlier, several **key drivers** underpinning the influence and success of the EUR SP were identified in the POWs stemming from the MTS 2014-2017 and MTS 2019-2021. In the PF 2014-2017 and POWs 2014-2017, a first set of drivers was put forward including "*Governing Council/UNEA decisions*". Significant evidence was found of the supportive role of UNEA in ensuring the sustainability of EUR SP outputs and outcomes, more specifically

through UNEA resolutions 1/4[80], 2/5[81], and 4/23[82]. Another driver referred by the PF 2014-2017 was that "*commitments made by UNEP's Executive Office post Rio+20, notably the commitment to produce, within five years (June 2012), a global gender and environment outlook (assessment)*". The GGEO was produced and disseminated in 2016, with some evidence of sustainable outcomes (e.g. UNEA resolution 4/17 in 2019). Additionally, the PF 2014-2017 and POWs 2014-2017 mentioned a driver on selecting EUR SP activities and outputs taking into consideration the "*priorities emerging from global and regional intergovernmental fora, member states, Major Groups and Stakeholders and the research community."* Several EUR SP initiatives utilised this driver to increase likelihood of sustainable (i.e. enduring) outcomes, for example emerging issues were identified through surveys of external stakeholders, and emerging issues articles developed in conjunction with the UNEA agenda. Similarly, the development of GEO-6 was referred to as being informed by the agenda of UNEA 4, which, by welcoming the report and its summary for policy makers, has anchored its findings in work processes. Accordingly, it seems that EUR SP 'global' products that are pinned to a global decision-making process or global agreements (SDG project) are more likely to be to have enduring effects among global policymakers. The sustainability of the effects from regional products -e.g. Regional GEOs- is also likely to depend on regional decision-making bodies or networks. According to several informants, regions in which there was a wide disparity among countries found regional products to be less usable at national level. Sustainability at the level of countries depends on the usefulness of the result/product with respect to country needs and its translation into policy/regulatory frameworks. Along that line, the sustainability of effects from UNEP Live might be stronger if it would have a more specific niche.

167. Several factors were identified as constraining the sustainability of EUR SP outcomes (see also section on *Factors affecting Performance*). This includes the limited uptake of EUR SP outputs by other UNEP SPs to inform their programming and priorities. For example, informants from other divisions implementing initiatives with partners from industry sectors indicated that EUR SP products were not written for private sector audiences but for policymakers, or that some reports were data rich, analysed the problems well but did not focus much on solutions. The recent evaluation of Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme offered another example when noting, inter alia, that "*At a Sub-Programme [6] level, to increase effectiveness there is a need to integrate work more closely between the different components of the Sub-Programme and also across the house on science knowledge generation, sharing and management, (Science Division – UN Environment Live, Sustainable Development Goals Unit, Global Environmental Outlook, Frontiers to work with Green Growth Knowledge Platform, International Resource Panel, 10 Year Framework Programme, Partnership on Action for Green*

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[80] UNEA resolution 1/4 in June 2014 on the science policy interface requested for instance the Executive Director to undertake the preparation of the sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO 6), supported by UNEP Live.

[81] UNEA resolution 2/5 in August 2016 requested early warning activities to support relevant decision makers, as well as the HLPF on Sustainable Development, through the provision of information on emerging issues and risks that may have an impact on the achievement of the SDGs. UNEA-2 further requested to ensure that UNEP Live provides credible, up-to-date information to support the follow-up to and review of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

[82] UNEA-4 resolution 4/23 in March 2019 endorsed the GEO-6 report and formulated several requests, such as to further develop and prioritize a long-term data strategy, or to strengthen the policy relevance of the GEO process by measuring progress towards the achievement of internationally agreed environmental goals.

Economy)"[83]. Other factors possibly acting to reduce the sustainability of EUR SP outcomes include limited involvement of end-users (e.g. policymakers) in the design, development, and testing of products and services; limited partnerships at country level, e.g. with UNDP or other national actors; limited influence on UN policy processes -e.g. EMG-; and limited financial resources committed to communication.

Socio-political Sustainability of the EUR SP

168. The external context offers ground to assess a high likelihood of the sustainability of the EUR SP as a modality for UNEP to keeping the environment under review. The earlier section on Relevance exposed many reasons why there is a robust rationale, clear mandate, and long-term need for such initiatives -e.g. 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement; informing policymaking with scientific evidence and priorities, and assessment of policy impact; etc. The socio-political context is likely to support the sustainability of the EUR SP in the decades to come. As illustrated by a key informant, "*For the best performing MEA, the Montreal protocol, it will take 80 years from initial research (1970) to ozone depletion addressed (2050). There is urgent need to shorten that. For Climate Change, how long will it take? There is a need for data faster and to shorten policy engagement*."

Institutional Sustainability of the EUR SP

169. As previously noted, the EUR SP is not perceived as significantly contributing to the programming and agenda setting of other SPs. The changing arrangements for matrix implementation of the PoW and the increased devolution of programming to the regions are other institutional factors that affect the sustainability of EUR SP outcomes.

170. The review of the EUR SP project documents also identified essential factors for a sustainability strategy at project level. Partnerships for example were one element of the sustainability strategy put forward by the SDG project and the Emerging Issues project. The SDG Unit for instance has established a systematic way to work with partners to develop methodologies. The Unit has developed contracts to do work on thematic areas, e.g. oceans, or working groups to develop indicators, e.g. on water management. As another example, UNEP Live project document stated the initiative as "*based on partnerships*" and listed more than 130 key partners at the global and regional levels (i.e. excluding national partners). Nevertheless, the selection of partners appeared sometimes more opportunistic than strategic (e.g. AGEDI funding), while also lacking a transparent decision-making process when it came to arbitrate between in-house development and externalization (e.g. web design and development, geospatial maps, etc.).

171. Partnerships were key also to ensuring the development of the GEO-6 report, such as with GRID centres, European Environment Agency, IGES, IIASA, PBL, IISD, SEI, UNEP-WCMC, several universities and environmental research and policy institutes, and others. The MTE of GEO-6 noted however that after GEO-4, the global assessments moved to a new, independent, author-led process shifting away from UNEP-contracted centres located mostly in the developed world. This networking type of development was reported as "*stemming from the recognition that the cross cutting, multi-level and constantly evolving nature of environment and*

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[83] Crul. M., Van Beers. D., Eaton. D. 2018. *Evaluation of the UN Environment Programme: Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme*. Evaluation Office of UNEP. Nairobi.

development issues requires the contribution of experts with stable institutional presence"[84]. While the GEO Unit has leveraged the new approach to develop a roster of 1200+ experts, informants questioned the institutional sustainability of the new arrangement, i.e. its ability to build lasting knowledge, organizational capacities, processes, and efficiencies up to the levels of former GEOs (see also section on Efficiency).

172. Another key element of sustainability considered in various ways by the EUR SP flagship projects regards capacity development. For example, UNEP Live implementation was to be supported by a programme of training and capacity building within UNEP and for countries, enhancing awareness and capacity to use the approach/products at regional and national scales. The GEO, SDG, and Emerging Issues projects expected to build on UNEP Live's capacity development activities and online platform to ensure greater sustainability to their respective outputs. However, funding constraints faced by UNEP Live drastically hampered the reach of this approach. Other capacity development activities aiming to contribute to sustainable outcomes but with no (or very limited) implementation under the MTS 2014-2017 include the creation of MOOCs[85], the establishment of active Communities of Practice[86], the leverage of CCCD GEF projects[87], or supporting governments with their own assessment and policy changes processes[88]. Many other Capacity Development related initiatives were reported as being successful, such as the capacity building activities rolled out in 34 countries by the SDG project; the SDG Unit's contribution -with the UNDA 10 programme- to the development of e-learning and e-training packages; or capacity development of GEO authors and reviewers, as well as policymakers involved in the revision of the Summary for Policymakers: but the evaluation could not assess the extent to which the effects of these initiatives have endured.

173. Normative work has been an additional enabling factor for the sustainability of the EUR SP by institutionalizing procedures, methodologies, and knowledge. This includes for example the development of the *Guidelines for Conducting Integrated Environmental Assessments* by the GEO project, or the development of the SDGs methodologies and indicators, including *Environment Statistics: Diagnostic Tool for Strategic Planning*; *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGS*; *Gender and environment statistics: unlocking information for action and measuring the SDGs*; and *Measuring Fossil Fuel Subsidies in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals*. The evaluation noted, however, limited knowledge management within the EUR SP and more broadly throughout UNEP, but a KM strategy was referred to as in the making (section 5.4.9).

Financial Sustainability of the EUR SP

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[84] UN Environment. 2018. *Evaluation Report - Mid-Term Evaluation of the UN Environment Project: Global and Regional Integrated Environmental Assessments ("GEO-6").* Evaluation Office of the UNEP. Nairobi.

[85] As originally planned by the GEO project.

[86] As intended by UNEP Live and GEO.

[87] As intended by the SDG project.

[88] The intent in the GEO-6 project document was to establish a programmatic service line in UNEP and support governments with their own assessment and policy changes processes, build capacities for improved integrated assessments and or linkages to SDGs, i.e. for upgrading the assessment process and building a global network for ongoing integrated assessment and policy outreach. Per original design, the capacity development approach would build upon the assumption that the "improved methodology" would be shared as a tool to support national policy changes. However, the GEO-6 was implemented as a global project after a global product-full stop.

174. The financial setup of the EUR SP is presented and assessed in the section on *Factors affecting the performance of the sub-programme*. Whilst some of the EUR SP outcomes, such as emerging issues being elevated into international discourse, do not require a continued flow of financial resources to sustain the effect, the evaluation nevertheless noted that the sustainability of EUR SP outcomes was very much bound to the resources that EUR SP projects mobilized. The review of EUR SP projects and consultations with evaluation informants indicate that the reliance on intermittent funding has led EUR SP project teams to engage in much adaptive management/mitigation, and prioritization of activities based on available, often limited, funding rather than in response to global and regional priorities. Drivers provided under the MTS 2018-2021 and POW 2018-2019 emphasized the need to deliver contextual and "*policy-relevant*" products and services[89], which remained subordinate to available resources and dropped on several occasions -e.g. Emerging Issues project-. Similarly, collaborative processes to jointly develop products with internal and external partners and stakeholders were often underfunded -e.g. Environment Live, Emerging Issues-. Communication and dissemination activities were also regularly downscaled -e.g. GEO, Emerging Issues-. Assessment of the uptake of EUR SP products to learn from past experiences and increase likelihood of outcomes were also parked or postponed *sine die* -e.g. Emerging Issues, GEO-. In other words, the financial challenges faced by the EUR SP have likely impeded the sustainability of EUR SP outcomes.

5.3.4. Efficiency

175. The Evaluation has assessed efficiency in terms of **cost-effectiveness and timeliness of delivery**. This includes how efficiently the EUR SP (including SP and UNEP management considerations) has been able to harness **its capacities and implementation approaches individually and in synergistic ways to optimize its ability to achieve targeted results.** Generally, this analysis covered three aspects: value for money, resource-saving measures, and evidence and scrutiny of the SP delivery modalities (project versus a program approach).

Value for Money (the relative importance of investing in the work)

Many tools, products and services in the EUR SP portfolio are still evolving, need better targeting, and to be aligned institutionally with needs. Moderate uptake of the EUR SP thematic work, products, tools and services by other SPs decreases efficiency.

176. It was challenging for the evaluation to assess the value-added and the concentration of the EUR SP portfolio resources against the expected results, i.e. science for policy, assessments, data monitoring, capacity building platforms, etc. The differing views of the EUR SP value-added and audiences was indicative of need for additional design work and cost-benefit analysis. Many of the EUR SP projects and services are still in design and development mode.

177. The utility of the EUR SP science-based products, tools, services and thematic offerings have been one of the main focuses of the evaluation. The EUR SP had been framed as the "enabler" in MTS documents. Cross-cutting support activities are a core aspect the EUR SP work however, this was not well reflected in planning documents, institutional setup and/or resources plans. These are the enabling elements of the EUR SP (and by extension other SPs)

that help implementation for jointly held results. These problems were compounded with the separation of the EUR SPC from the PPD.

178. Perceptions vary on utility, collaboration and uptake. While several evaluation informants stated that the EUR SP products, e.g. GEO-6 and Environment Live, were in general having a limited uptake and utility regarding their respective work, other informants highlighted their use of the EUR products. In general, respondents to the CPR survey indicated that the GEO was important to them, but perhaps it should be shorter and more focused on policy recommendations with a concise and clear presentation of global priorities. Other informants saw the value of the GEO as supporting the planning in cycle with UNEA. Focal points in countries, for example, expressed a need for GEO country assessments and more support on policy prescriptions -e.g. comparative examples of policies. This was a similar finding from the Environment Live case study. Varying needs and demands were expressed for Environment Live services depending on the different audiences. Expectations from the EUR SP work vary by audience.

179. EUR SP work on publications and knowledge management includes maintaining UNEP knowledge repository, supporting UNEP SPs in research related queries, managing UNEP's journal subscriptions, contributing to publishing guidelines and serving the UNEP Publications Board. This function was transferred from the Communication Division to Science Division in 2015, yet it was not explicitly reflected in the PoW until 2019 where it was represented as one output under the WESR project. The evaluation found differing views on whether this function should be delivered and funded under the EUR SP. The work can be considered as an 'enabler' since it is a service that provides access to research both within UNEP and among developing country member states, but also supports to strengthen the quality of UNEP's work on science. However, whilst this work is considered as cross-cutting, there is no established framework to collaborate across the organization, and the support provided across UNEP is not optimally reflected in PoW.

180. The the Science-Policy Business Forum is a multi-sectoral collaboration addressing selected environmental and finance issues. It was conceived in 2017 following directions from the Executive Office and is now embedded in the PoW under the EUR SP as an output under the Global and regional integrated environmental assessments-project. The initiative is new and evolving and the evaluation found some promising indications of the value of this work in driving the environmental agenda forward. The value proposition of SPBF has not been optimally communicated nor has its position in PoW been optimally thought through to adequately embed it in the PoW as a cross-cutting service to UNEP. Since the initiative is being implemented from the Office of the Chief Scientist, it is likely that this initiative will move to the Executive Office in accordance with the reporting line of the Chief Scientist position but, at least until 2021, remain a part of the EuR SP.

181. The evaluation found that the audiences, the demand and expectations for EUR SP work and its fitness for purpose have not been adequately assessed (See also Relevance section). The portfolio is unique with content suited to different audiences. While the EUR SP hosts "enabling" work, with a mix of tools, products and themes, these however, have not been targeted or piloted based on a needs assessment. The thematic focus of the EUR SP is constrained by a need for organizational clarity, including on regional and country-level work on capacity-building (in key areas of-assessment, data, information monitoring (data science), and SDGs (monitoring support). Interviewees say this work must be developed based on

needs and in close collaboration with SPIs in regions and UNDAF/UNSDCF processes in countries.

182. ***Less stable funding makes it difficult for the EUR SP to develop its products and tools for performance. Under-resourcing of the EUR SP is not efficient.***

183. The demand for and relevance of EUR SP content has increased (See also Relevance section). While the EUR SP is small, it is a strategic portfolio containing corporate work of UNEP that enables it to plan and deliver on its comparative advantages. The EUR SP results are linked to its primary function: coordination and the ability of the EUR SP activities to support learning, knowledge sharing and continually garner cross sector inputs into planning and programming but also thematic support to Members States. The portfolio thus serves both internal and external audiences. The evaluation found a trend of under-resourcing of some of the core EUR SP projects. Interviews with project staff, supported by the case studies, showed that project managers had been under pressure to mobilize resources to finish projects on time. Project managers reported spending time on lobbying for institutional buy-in, adjusting the project timelines, and staffing and prioritizing planned activities. These measures were coordinated directly by the projects, and not at the programme level. This has taken staff time away from delivery and decreases efficiency.

184. ***Need for Synergies and Institutional Alignment (between EUR SP projects and other SPs and Units) including for Planning and Monitoring, Resource Mobilization, and Communications.***

185. EUR SP projects aim to be synergistic and integrating. While in some cases, this was so (also see factors affecting performance section), in others it was less evident. The evaluation found a disconnect between the EUR SP portfolio intention and the operationalization of a portfolio approach. With the 2017 delink of the SP Coordination function from the Programme and Policy Division, the cross-Sub-programme collaboration (expected result) was institutionally less well supported; EUR SP cooperation and synergies were largely dependent on informal staff relationships and liaison.

186. As such, the evaluation identified synergies but with some critical opportunities. Examples of synergies included the GEO-6 supporting Emerging Issues and the foresight work. The Environment Live provided a knowledge sharing and content platform for the SDGs methods and capacity building, outreach and dissemination. Environment Live provided platforms for the GEO Regional Communities of Practice discussions (a time-bound project exercise, not continuous). The EUR SP also hosts a GEF-funded umbrella of capacity development projects (CCCD). While Environment Live attempted to employ links to CCCD project tools, IRIS for example, was expected to be a national application, there were no concrete linkages established i.e. indicators to collect data that informs Environment Live.

187. There are unrealised opportunities for synergies in communicating EUR SP results. While the interviews reflected on good relationships and planning between the EUR SP and Communications Division, the practical collaboration was guided by urgency, and not so much by the prepared plan or budget. The Programme Framework for 2014-2017 included projects focused on EUR SP-level communication, but since these projects were not funded or implemented, communicating on results became the responsibility of each individual EUR SP project. Here, the evaluation found issues with resourcing. When resources for projects were scarce, interviewees reported that the communication work plan was the first to get put aside

from budget. Communication activities were carried out in all projects but in an ad hoc manner rather than with a coordinated approach.

188.   The issue of under-resourced EUR SP projects and activities has come up time and time again throughout the evaluation. The approach to portfolio synergies has currently not been sufficient to create a seamless package of services that might encourage uptake including for policy level results and also to provide a system of consistent knowledge flows for results across the organization.

Resource Savings Evidence

189.   The evaluation examined the extent the EUR SP delivers efficiently. It discusses what the extent of EUR SP implementation was in ways that sought for time savings (e.g. making use of pre-existing methods, data sources, collaborating institutions, and making use of complementarities and synergies. ***The analysis of efficiency was challenging due to lack of disaggregated data on use and uptake as well as actual costs, i.e. what the uptake is versus cost of the products. As this is unknown, it becomes difficult to make comparisons with other initiatives.***

Despite scarce resources much has been achieved

190.   Despite the difference between planned and secured resources, the EUR SP projects were generally found to have delivered relatively well. For instance, Environment Live delivered well with only a portion of the resources specified in the design documents. Despite this limited funding, the project was able to deliver, inter alia, data flows from 193 countries sourced from third party data providers, a global database with 1,419 indicators, 292 datasets available on the Global Data page, 861 maps and a mapping page that grouped spatial content by theme and region, etc. (see section of Effectiveness). Similarly, the EUR SP was referred as cost efficient when considering the staffing structure; informants reported for example that IPCC relied on a team of 15 staff and IPBES on 10 staff, while GEO relied almost entirely on consultants and interns.

Outsourcing was infrequently utilised as a cost-saving or value for money strategy

191.   The extent to which EUR SP projects considered outsourcing options as a cost-efficient and cost-effective modality to deliver outputs was unclear. Web design and development of Environment Live, for example, did not lead to delivery of a platform consistent with current industry standards. Nevertheless, these activities are not part of the core competencies of UNEP. Outsourcing some of the tasks required for the development and maintenance of a web platform would be an option deserving further exploration. Similarly, informants mentioned a lack of formal assessment to consider whether the GRID Centers were the best entity on the WESR for certain types of measurement and whether a thorough analysis was done to consider the pros and cons of using these Centres versus going to new entities. Savings may be gained by increasing the outsourcing of parts of the work and concentrating on the comparative services that UNEP may like to promote.

Collaborating centers versus independent experts for GEO production.

192. A central question that emerged as a theme through the EUR SP evaluation was concerning the efficiency of the GEO products and process. The evaluation found differing

understandings regarding the efficiency of the GEO in terms of its costs and benefits. On one hand, the independent expects/academia contribute pro bono to GEO. On the other hand, GEO centers (institutionalized set-up in the GEOs predating GEO-4) ensured institutional memory and higher efficiency due to prior exposure to the process. The extent to which the past GEO centers supported UNEP-related assessments at the national level is not clear. While the global GEO process continues to be relevant as a flagship UNEP product, the debate around what the GEO "process" is and the utility of GEO at global, regional and country-level showed a need for clarity on exactly what value GEO adds for its audiences.

193. The engagement of GEO with policy makers who are also involved in UNEA agenda setting is a positive bridging influence. 50% of CPR members said that the EUR SP was effective at informing the UNEA agenda and resolutions. Most staff perceived the GEO as a global product and process geared to informing policy, whilst some perceive the GEO intergovernmental process as having less institutionalization of knowledge and capacities and reduces access to the science network (useful for quick and nimble foresight work). The evaluation team learned there had been recent aspirations to better link GEO with other major global assessments (IPBES and IPCC assessments) as an area for efficiency gains, a welcome development.

194. Finally, a key question has been around the provision of normative guidance on conducting assessments and monitoring and where there is scope to take GEO to the regional and national level- i.e. national GEOs following GEO-6? Questions were raised whether the new GEO-6 methodology is conducive for national GEOs or whether it was more effective with the original methodology. These remain open questions to be answered by the 'future for GEO' assessment.

195. The Regional GEOs were supposed to provide input into the Global GEO, but some informants in the regions implied that this did not really serve their needs. In fact, GEO-6 delivered an entire section summarizing the findings from the regional Outlooks (section 23.10 GEO Regional Assessment synthesis), indicating opportunities for better integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches to developing scenarios. According to key informants, Regional GEOs needed to be better framed and anchored in guidelines / consistent / comparable approaches, as they had been very different from one region to another and could not be effectively aggregated into the global one.

Resource scarcity was considered.

196. Due to diminishing Environment Fund contributions, there has been increasing EUR SP reliance on extra-budgetary resources (softly earmarked and earmarked funds, GEF, GCF etc) and related resource mobilization efforts. As more projects are being developed with extrabudgetary funding, more emphasis on building a programmatic approach with related results-based monitoring is needed to ensure extrabudgetary funds are built around the expected results of the EUR SP.

197. The current situation appears to be inefficient and unsustainable with many staff said to be aggressively mobilizing extrabudgetary funding in the absence of a strategic approach and fully ensuring how such project funding contributes to EUR SP results. The efficiency losses are compounded by staff spending considerable time on implementing and monitoring small stand -alone projects.

5.4.   Factors Affecting Sub-programme Performance

198.   The evaluation examined factors that were found to affect EUR SP performance. These factors included organization and management of the EUR SP, human and financial resources administration, cooperation and partnerships, monitoring and reporting, incorporation of the principles of human rights and gender equality, and communication and knowledge management.

5.4.1. Sub Programme Organization and Management

199.   The Evaluation reflected on the *extent to which the organization and management of the EUR SP have been conducive to the achievement of the planned results*.

200. The EUR SP (as all other SPs) is an organizational construct for results-based management.[90] (See Relevance section). In part, the rationale to create a standalone EUR SP was to foster initiatives across all the Sub Programmes that improve access to 'sound science' to inform decision-making. This is also reflected in the POW 2014-2015 that indicates that "*Given the interdisciplinary nature of its Sub Programmes, activities in every Sub Programme will be undertaken in close collaboration with all the UNEP divisions*", and later in the POW 2016-2017 that noted for instance that the EUR SP "*will ensure the coherence of assessments carried out across all other UNEP Sub Programmes*". Additionally, the EUR SP was, in part, developed based on need to capture financing for the Science Division's core science work. While this was not reported in negative terms, the formulation was not intentionally planned or positioned to its content, target audiences and needs.

201. Several informants stressed also the lack of a cohesive mechanism within the organization to bind foresight, emerging issues, assessments, change champions, strategic programming, project design, and policy processes, despite examples of prior successes -e.g. mercury assessments and foresight were put into policy processes that led to the Minamata Convention. The matrix arrangements were often discussed in the context of SP implementation.

EUR SP Management Structures

202.   The Science Division is the lead division of the EUR SP. The responsibility of the EUR SP leadership rests with the Director of the Science Division. The Science Division changed management in 2018. Whilst the EUR SP, like all other SPs should be cutting across all UNEP Divisions, in practice, EUR SP projects have been, and currently are, largely managed and delivered by the Science Division. During the 2014−2017 MTS period, two communication-related projects were managed by the Communications Division, but these were discontinued due to lack of funding, one project, managed by the Ecosystems Division and one project, managed by the Regional Office for West Asia. During the 2018−2021 MTS period, *all EUR SP projects were to be delivered by the Science Division.* From the POW 2014-2015 to the POW 2016-2017, the number of contributing Divisions on each output has however expanded, including with a systematic reference to the Regional Offices in the second period. The trend continued in the POW 2018-2019 which noted that "*the responsibilities for environmentally relevant data and policy action are currently fragmented, the Sub Programme will involve all*

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[90] Results based management was originally instituted at UNEP in 2008 (See OIOS report, 2008: Results Based Management) with full implementation, beginning with the design of six SPs in 2010−2013 MTS. The EUR SP was instated in the 2014−2017 MTS. See formulation history in relevance section.

relevant partners and pursue a strong outreach and stakeholder engagement strategy to deliver coherent messaging". For instance, the SDG and Emerging Issues projects collaborate with the Ecosystems Division, GEO receives contributions from all thematic Divisions and WESR has recently established a structure of supporting focal points in all Divisions, Regional Offices and UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats. There were differing perceptions of the fluency of cross-Divisional collaboration. The financial and institutional incentives to foster cross-SP collaboration is rather limited. On the other hand, the evaluation found numerous examples of close cross-Divisional collaboration generally driven by the initiative of individuals. There is a need to develop new approaches and mechanisms, that go beyond a reliance on individual staff initiatives that enhance the collaboration of the EUR SP with other divisions and sub-programmes (and vice versa).

EUR SP Coordination

203. The EUR SP Coordinator is tasked with coordinating the SP and leading the planning and design of the portfolio to deliver against the set of expected accomplishments as well as reporting on progress at the Sub Programme level.

204. A full-time Coordinator for the EUR SP, as for most other SPs, was recruited in 2014 with a first reporting line to the Programme Strategy and Planning Team (PSPT) (which later became a part of the PPD) and second to the respective Lead Division Director (UNEP 2014 – Memorandum on Strengthening Programme Strategy and Coordination). Since the creation of the EUR SP in 2014, there have been two SP Coordinators. A management decision in 2018 moved the SP Coordinator reporting lines to the Divisions, with the EUR SP Coordinator thus reporting to the Director of the Science Division with an additional reporting line to the PPD. Since the incumbent for the EUR SP Coordinator role also changed during this time, it was not possible to compare how this change affected the EUR SP Coordination and the ability of the EUR SP Coordinator to perform the expected duties. However, the change of reporting lines was regarded as a key factor influencing the expected results of EUR SP coordination. The work within the EUR SP is very closely aligned with that of the Science Division. The link between the SPC, the PPD and the Division had been central to joint work and relations for programming through close work proximity as the PPD provided a formal arrangement and space for all SPCs to work together(OIOS 2019 report). The decision to move SPCs to the Divisions was particularly troublesome for the EUR SP, as EUR SP results are especially dependent on uptake of products by other UNEP SPs. How the mechanism of SP planning and coordination of implementation is functioning was reported as central for achieving results, particularly facilitating EUR SP cross-cutting areas, namely capacity development, communication, knowledge sharing and learning activities. In 2020, a management decision was taken to move the SP Coordinators from the Divisions back to PPD. From an organizational standpoint, consideration of the linkages between the EUR SP and Policy and Programme Division is essential. When the SPCs were located in the Divisions, the collaboration between the EUR SP and the other Sub Programmes was voluntarily coordinated among the SP Coordinators although the PPD still convened meetings with the SPCs on specific topics, such as annual reporting or planning of the next MTS cycle under the Divisional SPC arrangement. The cross-SP collaboration in terms of information exchange on EUR SP services and products seemed to be more limited under the Division-based configuration.

205. The SPCs do not have management authority, albeit that the second reporting line of the SPIs are to the EUR SP Coordinator. Coordination and management are currently through

soft skills rather than institutional setup i.e. relationships instead of structures and processes. The EUR SP coordination function seems to currently focus on reporting, with limited opportunities to influence programming, including cross-cutting issues, beyond providing inputs into project design documents. There is room to improve communication across the EUR SP.

206. Regional SPCs were recruited between 2015 and 2016 to work closely with the SP Coordinator in Nairobi and to support regional coordination, horizon scanning and communication among all SPs. In addition, until 2018, the Science Division, through the former Country Outreach Branch had hosted 'out posted' staff in the regions, working at each UNEP Regional Office. Generally, this consisted of two Environment Fund posts in each region; a Regional Development Coordination Officer (P-5) and an Administrative Officer[91]. These individuals were in charge of communication and outreach of Science Division products in their respective regions/countries, including workshops, partnership mobilization, intelligence gathering, validation of content, resource mobilization and collaboration with expert centers, with a main focus being support to GEO. In order to differentiate between the Regional Sub-programme Coordinator and the Regional Development Coordination Officer, the Regional SP Coordinators for the EUR SP were called the 'Science-Policy Interface Officers' (SPIs).

207. However, following the Policy on Strengthening Regional Presence in 2018 (per interviews) these 'out-posted' staff posts were transferred to the Regional Office, moving the first reporting line of the Regional Development Coordination Officer to the respective Regional Office, with the second reporting line to the Science Division in Nairobi. The Science Division did not recover these EF funded posts. This seems to have considerably weakened the regional implementation focus of the Science Division as fundamental roles in the regions were lost, particularly related to GEO and Environment Live. Even though liaison was still said to take place between these regional staff contributing to the EUR SP and the Science Division in Nairobi, the collaboration was often perceived as complicated, particularly due to weakening of oversight and changed accountabilities The former regional staff were generally of the opinion that their ability to act as the regional implementing arm for the Science Division has been weakened due to the new alignment[92]. Also, some SPIs felt they have become somewhat disconnected from the EUR SP following the changes. It was clear that these changes resulted in some frustration and confusion related to their role among the regional staff. However, experiences were not uniform across regions and coordination work in Europe was perceived to be working well.[93]

208. The Science-Policy Interface Officers support the EUR SP in the identification of regional and country needs for the products and services of the EUR SP through a variety of

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[91] With the exception of North America due to the different nature of work being undertaken in the region.

[92] In ROWA the RC (P5) and the SPI (P3) positions were vacant for a long time. The SPI officer covered the RC role for one year before taking another role. In January 2020, the RC position was filled while the SPI remained vacant (Jan 2019 to date -November 2020). ROLAC reports that EuR RCs (P5) and SPCs (P4) are supposed to perform essentially the same work plan, though with some distinctions related to their participation RO management and decision functions. In ROLAC, this resulted in a limited participation of the SPI/SPC in key discussions and decisions within the RO. This hampered communications and interactions between the EUR SPC, fellow SPCs and RO leadership reducing the coordination capacity of the SPC,

[93] In Europe, the RC reports that ROE has solid institutional linkages with relevant regional organizations (e.g. UN ECE and European Environment Agency) and its processes aimed at serving countries' needs and demands for technical support.

mechanisms, including direct requests from countries. However, there are no standard operating procedures, clear directives and/or instructions for an EUR SP portfolio needs assessment in regions or countries. Regional Offices participate in Regional Environment Information Networks (REINs). REIN composition is different according to each region, REIN focal points normally being part of the ministries of environment or come from the statistical agencies. These bodies report to the environmental conventions. REIN meetings are reported as a starting point for assessing needs and demand for UNEP services in some regions. It is during these conferences, where UNEP guidelines, lessons learned and tools, etc. are, and can be, shared. In Europe, however, REIN is replaced with the UN ECE (Geneva) that convenes the member states. These regional 'convenings' involve sharing and determining future collaboration for member states. The REIN and other relevant regional networks offer a platform to engage in mutual support, including south-south cooperation and KM. The EUR SP has been successfully tapping into and engaging in the REINs for assessing needs and identifying emerging issues.

209. The SPIs are faced with increasing demand for support on assessments, data, monitoring and reporting and would benefit from clarity on EUR SP capacity development and technical cooperation work including the EUR SP's role in countries, regions, and in UNDAF/UNSDCF planning. Approved EUR SP projects were planned outside the UNDAF/UNSDCF, the main UN priority-setting framework at country-level, and that there is need to ensure that coordination at the regional and country level fits in current UN priorities. The EUR SP arrangements for project planning, but also implementation seemed to be top-down—not inclusively planned or executed. Organizational clarity on regional and country presence including UNDAF/UNSDCF engagement as per UN reform, is now essential and a priority.

Chief Scientist

210. UNEP has held a position of a Chief Scientist since 2009, this function being situated in the Executive Office with a reporting line to the Executive Director. However, since 2014, the Director of the Science Division has also acted as the UNEP Chief Scientist and therefore the role has been temporarily housed in the Science Division. This function is currently under recruitment and will revert to the Executive Office. The evaluation findings support this decision. The current arrangement has not allowed a clear Chief Scientist role to be defined nor allowed adequate resources to perform this role. The Chief Scientist could increasingly support setting of the organization's agenda according to the findings of EUR SP data and assessments. Furthermore, the evaluation found areas that could be supported by the Office of the Chief Scientist. For instance, UNEP does not currently have a clear overview of the full scope of organisation's work on scientific assessments. There are indications that a lack of overarching scientific oversight contributes to varying quality of UNEP assessments and adds to the risk of overlaps and missed opportunities for synergies. The evaluation sees importance in establishing a mechanism to keep track of scientific assessments across UNEP to improve coordination. Moreover, the evaluation found that whilst scientific assessments are delivered across UNEP, there does not seem to be institutionally adopted standards on assessment processes. For instance, the rigor of peer review processes varies across UNEP and might affect the uptake of UNEP assessments since the quality cannot be ascertained. The evaluation sees that the work conducted by the EUR SP on developing tools and guidelines for the preparation of scientific assessments could be better integrated across the organisation through the efforts of the Chief Scientist.

5.4.2. Sub Programme Human Resources Administration and Efficiency

211. The evaluation considered the adequacy of human resources available for the planning and implementation of Sub Programme activities. This included an assessment of the number of staff managing the EUR SP activities, staff turn-over and factors influencing the morale of staff and their degree of satisfaction in the management of their daily activities and working in teams with colleagues from other functional units in UNEP and with partners.

212. According to PoW documents, the EUR SP staff resources increased from 2014-2015 (52 staff) to 2018-2019 (72 staff) but are projected to decrease for the 2020-2021 PoW period (67 staff) (Table 7). These figures however only include staff members, excluding UNVs, Consultants and Individual Contractors and thus not providing the full status of human resources of the EUR SP.

Table 7. number of staff contributing to the EUR SP (source: PoW documents)

EUR SP Staff posts	2014-15	2016-17	2018-19	2020-21
EF	43	41	47	45
Trust and Earmarked	2	2	9	8
GEF + other global funds	0	0	1	1
Programme support costs	1	1	3	1
RB	6	12	12	12
Total	52	56	72	67

213. There does not seem to be a single source where accurate information across all staff, regardless of their contract type, who primarily contribute to the EUR SP is readily available. Since human resources are monitored and administered by Division, the evaluation was not able to verify the total staff time dedicated to the EUR SP, nor the gender or geographic representation across staff. The closest entity for which such data is available is the Science Division. As it currently stands, the Science Division comprises of 78 staff members from G-3 to D-2 level (36% male, 64% female) in addition to 13 consultants (including consultants and individual contractors), 10 UNVs and 8 interns (data from 2019).

214. The staff contributions at the level of specific EUR SP projects were also difficult to discern, with varying information found in different sources with regard staff contributions. Project documents present a list of staff contributing to the delivery of a project with a certain percentage of their time calculated as UNEP in-kind contributions. However, the evaluation was informed that these calculations are estimates and are not entirely reliable. No workplan for the EUR SP (nor the Science Division) was provided to the evaluation that shows how staff time is distributed.

215. Some core products of the EUR SP are delivered largely by short-term staff and consultants. For instance, the GEO team currently includes one staff member managing the process, one JPO, one temporary P-3, one UNV and four consultants. This level of staffing was considered by the Division as unsustainable. A decision has subsequently been taken to strengthen the GEO team with three additional P-posts, (one in 2019 and one per year in the next two years). On the other hand, the Environment Live seems to have been well supported by the Science Division, with all 35 staff of the managing Branch, from which 15 were from the Regional Offices, supporting the implementation of the project during 2014-2018.

216. Delays in filling vacant positions and the consequent shortfalls in staff numbers are reported to have also influenced the delivery of some core products. For instance, the Environment Live project was running without a full-time project manager from late 2016 to 2018, with the Chief of Branch acting as a manager in addition to other duties. An executive decision halted the recruitment in 2017. Similarly, delays in recruitment were reported to have affected the Emerging Issues project.

217. In general, the turn-over of staff contributing to the EUR SP has been relatively high during the evaluation period, both in terms of management and other staff. The EUR SP Coordinator changed in late 2015 but the evaluation confirmed that there had been an appropriate hand-over. The evaluation found indications that staff turn-over, together with gaps in knowledge management, contributed to some loss of institutional memory but this was not significant. Perhaps more importantly, the evaluation found that the constant shortage of funds diverts attention from implementation towards adaptive management and fund-raising. There is a disconnect between the programmatic results expectations, the available installed staff capacity, and the levels of support the EUR SP receives from UNEP's EF allocations. The need for clarity regarding the EUR SP's vision and differing staff views on the core purpose of the EUR SP affect staff motivation.

5.4.3. Sub-programme Financial Resources Administration and Efficiency

218. The evaluation examined the EUR SP financial projections and actual resources, and their allocation across the EUR SP portfolio from 2014 to mid-2019. In addition, the evaluation considered the quality, transparency and effectiveness of the systems and processes used for financial management; the link between financial and programme management and the degree of financial responsibility that EUR SP staff have and any other administrative processes facilitating or inhibiting the fluid execution of EUR SP activities.

219. The EUR SP was created in the MTS 2014-2017. In the MTS 2010-2013 which followed UNEP's move to the thematic sub-programme structure, the Science Division work had been mainly implemented under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme. The major changes made in 2010 were said to have most benefitted the Economy, Ecosystems, and the Regional Cooperation Divisions[94], whilst the (now) Science and Communication Divisions experienced reductions in their resource base (UNEP 2013, Evaluation of the EG SP). As described in previous sections, this reduction in funding was said to have contributed to the desire to propose the establishment of the EUR SP in the 2014-2017 MTS, as it was perceived to better position the work of Science Division to attract funding for its core products, such as the GEO.

220. Since work undertaken by the Science Division during the 2010-2013 MTS period does not fully overlap with the EUR SP portfolio, a comparison of resources can only be made at the level of Divisions. The comparison of financial resources indicates that Science Division resources did indeed increase from the 2010-2013 MTS period to the 2014-2017 MTS period, as did the allocations to the Communication and Law Divisions (Figure 17). However, since information regarding financial resource projections by Division was only available for the evaluation for the 2014-2015 PoW period, the evaluation was not able to perform a comparison across a longer temporal scale.

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[94] The Division for Regional Cooperation was later dissolved
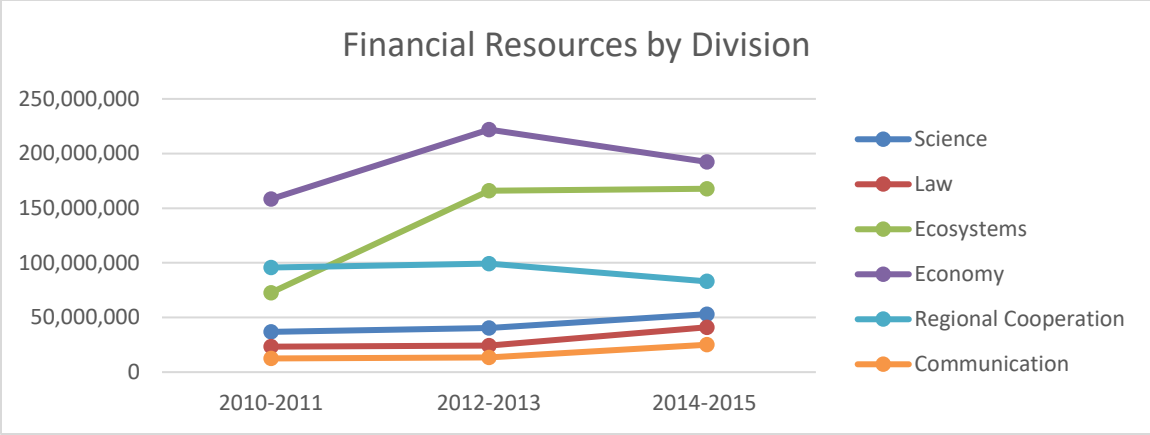
Figure 17. Financial resources (EF and other funds) by Division. Figures for 2014-2015 present projections (Source: PoW documents)

221. Resource projections by Sub-programme can be extracted from PoW documents. Figure 18 shows the financial resources by funding source for the EUR SP from the establishment in 2014 to projected resources for the 2020-2021 PoW period. The financial resources allocated to the EUR SP increased from 2014-2015 (US$ 38,134,000) to 2018-2019 PoW periods (US$ 52,224,000) but are projected to reduce for the 2020-2021 PoW period (US$ 40,024,000).
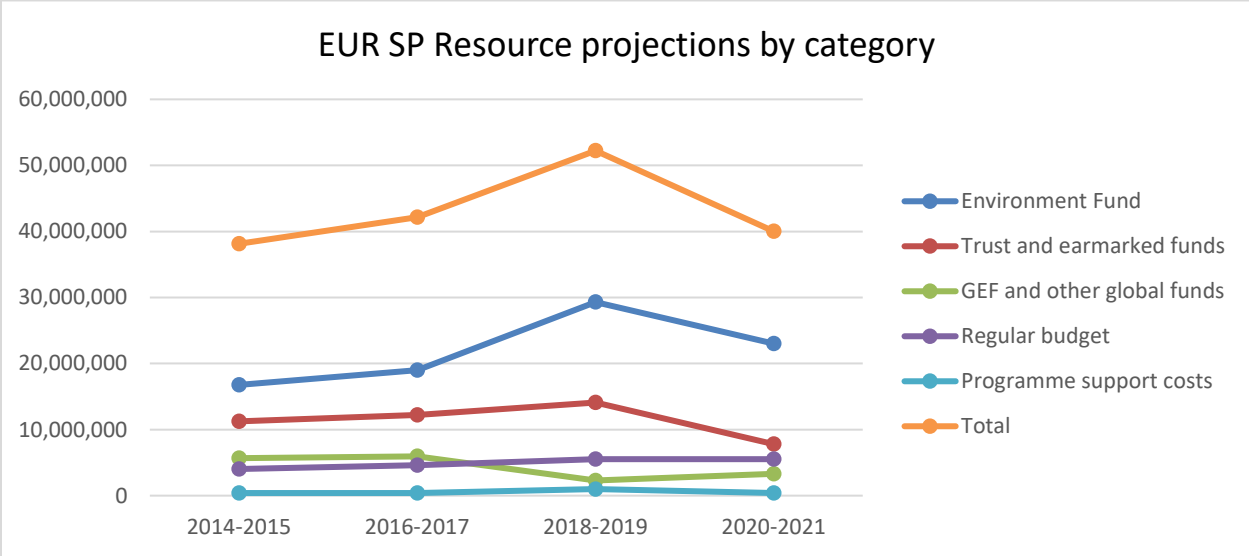
Figure 18. EUR SP financial resource projections by funding source

222. Environment Fund is the single largest source of funding for the EUR SP (Figure 18 - above). This is in line with the views of Member States that all core functions, including much of work of the EUR SP, should be mainly funded through core resources. The overall financial resources of the EUR SP are largely influenced by the Environment Fund allocation which is projected to reduce in the 2020-2021 PoW period. This is said to be attributed to the overall reduction of EF contributions to UNEP from Member states and is projected to affect all UNEP SPs (Figure 19 - below). However, if EUR SP Environment Fund projections are calculated as

a percentage of the UNEP total Environment Fund resources, the proportion of Environment Fund allocated to the EUR SP is projected to increase from 10.8% in 2018-2019 to 11.5% in 2020-2021 (Table 8).
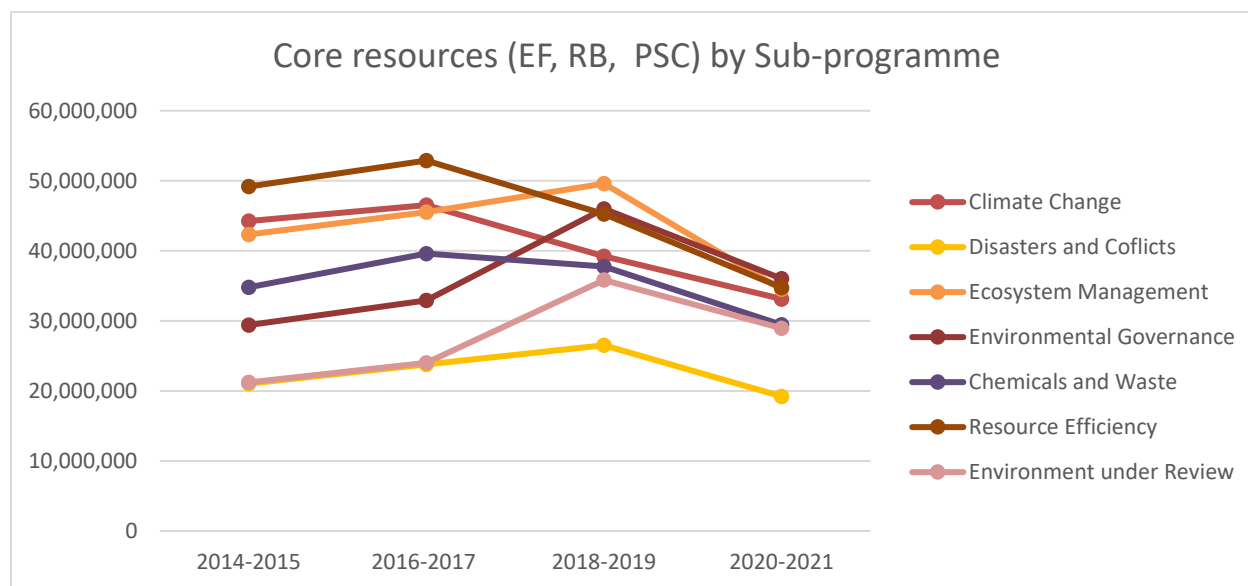
Figure 19. Core resources (EF, RB, Programme Support Cost) by Sub-programme across four PoW periods. Figures for 2020-21 present projections (Source: PoW documents)

Table 8. EUR SP Environment Fund resources projected against total UNEP Environment Fund resources

	2014-2015	2016-2017	2018-2019	2020-2021 (Projected)
UNEP total EF resources	221,894,000	271,000,000	271,000,000	200,000,000
EUR SP EF resources	16,768,000	19,000,000	29,300,000	23,000,000
% of EUR SP EF from total UNEP EF	7.56	7.01	10.81	11.50

223. It was, however, a commonly shared concern among evaluation informants, both in Nairobi and in the Regional Offices that resources, (both financial and human) are not sufficient to deliver against the mandate and expected results of the EUR SP. It was commonly noted that EUR SP work is increasingly being requested by member states but that the financial and staff resources are decreasing and the buy-in within the wider UNEP for this work was perceived to be limited. The 'political will' of the organization to support the EUR SP was questioned. The expected budget reduction for 2020-2021 might affect the EUR SP's ability to deliver against some of the core products such as the GEO. The UNEP Budget Committee, established by the DED, takes decisions on the allocation of core resources across the Sub-programmes; the committee includes two Division Directors and two Regional Directors. [95].

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[95] The Director of the Science Division has not been a member of this committee since it was founded.

224. Implications of budget shortfalls are visible and might have long-lasting implications. For instance, as discussed in section on Efficiency, communication and outreach were often the project elements that were cut or reduced due to budgetary constraints. However as discussed, this might have negative implications on uptake of products and services and communicating on results and therefore tends to constrain results to the output level.

225. A key issue raised by staff was the time spent on project level resource mobilization activities (See also section on Efficiency). In an increasingly resource-strapped environment, cost sharing partnerships and extra budgetary resource mobilization are likely to become increasingly important. What seems to be the issue was lack of clear, supported approach to resource mobilization. Many informants held the opinion that the EUR SP should be mainly funded through UNEP's core funding (RB or EF resources) due to the nature of the work (core mandate, flagship activities, that need stable consistent funding). Member States see the EUR SP as being funded by core resources with views expressed in meetings of the CPR as well as a UNEA-4 decision to increase the core funding for the EUR SP. However, some staff hold that due to reduced EF contributions in recent years, the EUR SP should more actively seek to mobilize extrabudgetary funding and regarded the shortfall as an indication of inadequate resource mobilization efforts; the EUR SP has the lowest levels of XB funding among the UNEP Sub-programmes (Figure 20). Whereas the Climate Change SP attracts approximately $1.8 XB funding for every dollar of core funding, the amount for the EUR SP is $0.8. The reasons were generally attributed to the 'scientific and data-oriented nature of the SP' with work on data, statistics, and assessments regarded as less attractive to donors compared to the thematic issues that form the focus of other SPs.
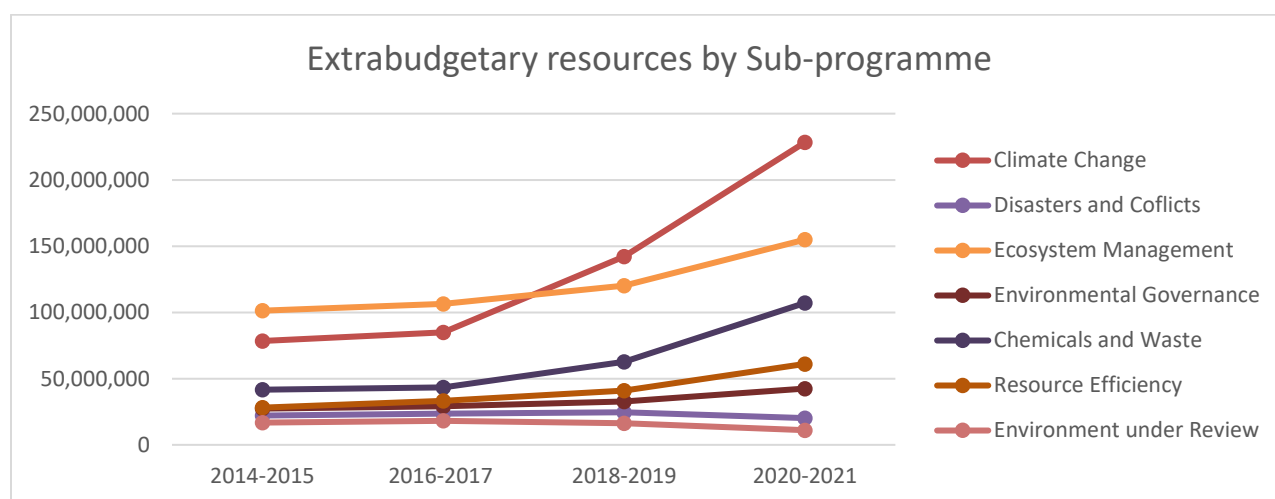
Figure 20. Extrabudgetary resources in USD (trust and earmarked funds, GEF and other global funds) by Sub-programme across four PoW periods. Figures for 2020-2021 represent projections (Source: PoW documents)

226. The evaluation found that EUR SP projects are taking a proactive role in addressing the challenges related to financial resources but that this can divert considerable attention away from implementation. For example, the SDG project team leader devotes up to approximately 70% of her time, and a team member up to 30% of her time on resource mobilization efforts that are, however, often unsuccessful. The evaluation sees this as an indication that despite SDGs being a globally agreed framework, it is not reflected in donor priorities to support UNEP

work on the environmental pillar. The 26 SDG indicators for which UNEP is the custodian, were found to have very different funding situations; some indicators have little or no funding and their development is delayed, whereas the development of indicators that are perceived as more important by donors, such as marine litter, receive more resources. This could be also partly driven by UNEA and GA priorities, which might partly explain the better funding situation for marine litter indicators compared to some others. There is however, no funding currently available from UNEP's core resources that could be allocated for the development of indicators that are not attracting extrabudgetary funding. It seems that advocacy is required at the level of senior management to secure the required funds that will enable UNEP to successfully deliver against the agreed indicator framework. Some informants also saw room for improvement in the internal value proposition of the EUR SP and the way it makes the case for greater EF support.

227. The EUR SP does not seem to have a fully coordinated approach to mobilizing resources. It appears that Project Managers / Unit Heads often approach donors directly in efforts to mobilize funding for specific initiatives under their responsibility. This might make the resource mobilization efforts scattered and somewhat disconnected from the overall vision of the EUR SP (siloed entrepreneurism), whereas ideally, resource mobilization would be more strongly driven by EUR SP priorities and funding deficits. The UNEP Resource Mobilization Strategy approved in 2017 could provide further guidance on this.

228. The EUR SP donor base is currently limited. The main donors of extrabudgetary funding for the EUR SP have recently been Switzerland, Norway, Denmark and Italy. However, more recently China has also provided some funding through the China Trust Fund. The EUR SP also receives funding through UNDA and the European Commission, particularly for the work on SDGs and the regional work on Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) Principles. Recently, private companies, mainly based in the USA have been providing funding, albeit small-scale and was reported to generally come with high transaction costs.

229. In terms of the Global Funds, resources to support EUR SP work are mainly coming from the GEF. The EUR SP is leading UNEP's GEF Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) portfolio with the Portfolio Manager situated at the Science Division. There is currently a portfolio of 11 projects (6 under implementation, 4 being initiated and 1 under development) covering 24 countries of GEF CCCD projects contributing to EUR SP work on building capacities at regional and national level to monitor MEA implementation. The total value of GEF grants for the projects under implementation was US$ 9,925,681 with the Science Division acting as the Implementing Agency and partnering with government agencies or a regional body. In one case, the project was internally executed by a UNEP Regional Office. This work currently constitutes the major part of EUR SP work at the country level supporting in capacity development. However, the CCCD funding stream has been discontinued by the GEF and most CCCD projects will close within the next three years.

230. There are positive examples in the past of UNEP's advocacy with funding partners. For instance, marine litter was identified as an emerging issue in the EUR SP Frontiers-series (Reference to Effectiveness section) and was included as an area receiving funding in GEF 7. Similarly, as Frontiers-series identified the antimicrobial resistance, as an emerging environmental problem, with UNEP's advocacy, a bilateral partner is beginning to show interest in terms of resources. Similarly, the Frontiers piece on zoonotic diseases is likely to lead to resource mobilisation opportunities in aftermath COVID 19 pandemic. The value and

position of the GEF CCCD portfolio for UNEP could be regarded, similarly to knowledge management and science which seem to receive less global funding compared to the past.

231. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) may increasingly become an important source of funding to support the work of the EUR SP. The EUR SP currently has no projects funded though the Green Climate Fund (GCF) but since August 2018, five concept notes have been developed for the GCF Climate Information and Early Warning (CIEW) window. This might be a strategic window for the EUR SP that could be further explored. The GCF CIEW window may offer opportunities for the EUR SP as it focuses on supporting countries to establish and enhance their climate information systems. There would be opportunities, among others, to link EUR SP work on data and foresight on disaster risk reduction.

Project – based resources

232. The evaluation attempted to examine financial situation of the four 'case study' projects in closer detail. The evaluation found that some, but not all, of these projects experienced differences between the planned budget as presented in the project document and approved by the Project Review Committee (PRC) and the actual secured resources (Table 9).

Table 9. planned versus actual secured budgets for selected EUR SP projects (US$)

	Project	Planned	Actual
Emerging Issues		Planned (November 2014)	As of December 2018
	EF	65,000	101,898
	RB	400,000	0
	XB Secured	55,000	1,454,850
	XB Unsecured	1,560,000	0
	UNEP In-kind	2,293,194	1,322,942
	Partners In-kind	700,000	700,000
	Total	(Total planned) 5,073,194	(Total secured) 3,579,690
UNEP Live		Planned (November 2014)	Actual (June 2016)
	EF	200,000	1,109,435
	RB	800,000	414,006
	XB Secured	3,502,000	5,811,589
	XB Unsecured	4,236,918	1,000,000
	UNEP In-kind	9,121,652	9,085,900
	Partners In-kind	0	0
	Total	(Total planned) 17,860,570	(Total secured) 16,420,930
GEO		Planned (November 2014)	As of 2018
	EF	0	0
	RB	687,794	1,235,180
	XB Secured	2,197,903	6,306,775
	XB Unsecured	1,235,137	
	UNEP In-kind	6,837,780	6,062,075
	Partners In-kind	0	0
	Total	(Total planned) 10,958,614	13,604,030[96]
SDGs		Planned (2016)	Secured (July 2019)
	EF	0	

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[96] The actual secured budget also includes funding for the SPBF that was incorporated as a component of the GEO project with USD 583,782.

	RB	0	
	UNDA	2,454,000	2,454,000
	XB Secured	0	1,952,600
	XB Unsecured	2,042,600	2,062,600
	UNEP In-kind	4,686,861	
	Partners In-kind	0	0
	Total	(Total planned) 9,183,461	

233. It was a commonly expressed view that the sampled EUR SP projects were not able to fully deliver against result expectations due to funding constraints. Environment Live was a common example, with the perception that Member States are increasingly requesting real time data but the resource allocation decisions of UNEP are not aligned with this request. Similarly, all expected SDG project activities, such as participation in the Technical Working Group on Indicators, cannot be fully implemented with the current funding situation even though these were perceived as having great potential for the EUR SP and UNEP in general. It was also indicated that the demand from countries for EUR SP support on SDGs is greater than what the SP is currently able to deliver due to funding constraints.

234. Several project teams indicated that the unpredictability of funding was particularly challenging as this made implementation planning difficult and diverted attention from implementation to resource mobilization. Since financial data regarding secured budgets per year was not available, the evaluation was not able to fully verify this. However, some findings do point to this direction including project delivery relying to a large extent on XB resources, with a considerable proportion still unsecured at the project onset. Some of the EUR SP work is not receiving core funding, such as the work on knowledge management and publications and the SPBF, but rely on extrabudgetary funding which, if resource mobilisation remains fragmented, presents challenges for long-term planning and resource continuity.

235. The projects however, adopted ways to manage the financial insecurity. The GEO project responded by developing a funding strategy which proved successful in mobilizing resources, such as from the European Commission. GEO was also able to attract in-kind co-financing that was realized e.g. by hosting meetings in cities that were willing to sponsor the events by covering a venue and even travel costs. UNEP Regional Offices also covered some of the costs, e.g. ROAP mobilized resources in 2017 to fund a regional GEO meeting. In addition, the SDG project has been able to gradually attract funding, but with the investment of considerable staff. The Emerging Issues project tried to overcome some of the challenges by 'piggybacking' on the GEO process, for example by using the initial GEO consultations to gauge ideas for emerging issues. The evaluation found that a common adaptive strategy among the sampled projects was to implement many of the planned activities internally with a small core team, often utilising junior staff. This was perceived as efficient but often came with a hidden cost of team member's work-life balance.

236. The lower than planned project budgets often resulted in changes in project design or prioritization of activities. For instance, the 2016 UNEP-wide reduction in funding base resulted in the EF funding for Environment Live component IRIS being removed. This component was then later funded through co-financing from a partner, but according to staff, the license for IRIS became costed and might have limited the potential uptake of the tool. The most common project aspects that were left without sufficient attention was generally communication and outreach. Among the EUR SP projects, GEO was also most often referred to as one with lost opportunities in regards communication (Also see section 5.4.7). The original planned communication budget of $1.2 million was reduced to $200,000 caused by a

need to allocate existing resources towards the actual delivery of the product. This reduced the communication activities to web stories, social media entries and videos and it was commonly agreed that this was not optimal. In addition, the Emerging Issues project plan included a specific component on communication and outreach to be delivered by the Communications Division but because the project was not successful in securing funding for this, it was not implemented.

237. Even though the resource constraints were a generally acknowledged limitation, differing opinions were evident. The GEO project was commonly cited as struggling with a shortage of resources, it was also perceived by some as 'hugely costly' with respect to its perceived benefits whilst other informants, referred to it as a product that could be twice as expensive considering the magnitude of work embedded in it. There needs to be a new approach to resource mobilization for GEO.

238. Since EUR SP is delivering against UNEP's core mandate, the EUR SP projects generally come with high expectations of UNEP in-kind co-financing in the form of staff time. As an example, from the Environment Live planned budget of $17 million, $ 9 million was expected to be in-kind co-financing as UNEP staff time. The evaluation found that this co-financing did not materialize as expected. The Big Data Branch has now developed a new strategy for a team of 26 formally appointed Environment Live Focal Points across UNEP Divisions, Regional Offices and UNEP administered MEA Secretariats. These Focal Points would contribute 5-20% of their time to Environment Live content development and outreach. The Focal Points were appointed in September 2018, and this structure was presented to the UNEP Senior Management Team for endorsement in August 2019 (Briefing paper to the SMT, 26 August 2019).

Financial Management

239. The financial management of projects takes place at the level of Divisions. There is one Fund Management Officer (FMO) at the Science Division, supported by a team of Finance Assistants. Every expenditure item must be signed by the Project Manager, the FMO, the Deputy Division Director and the Division Director. The Science Division FMO has a reporting line to the Science Division Director, who holds the authority over resource use by the Science Division, and largely that of the EUR SP and has authority to overrule FMO decisions as defined in Delegation of Authority Framework. The evaluation considers this as a potential accountability issue and recent changes to create another reporting line for Divisional FMOs to the Corporate Services Division Director will help to strengthen accountability. The Corporate Services Division keeps track of resources at the SP level and keep the EUR SP Coordinator informed.

240. The financial data that was available to the evaluation with regards to the Sub-programme was limited. Receiving financial information for EUR SP projects was cumbersome and the evaluation was not able to confirm allocations and expenditures against EAs. These are organizational issues that are beyond the EUR SP, but negatively affected the EUR SP delivery.

241. It is a commonly known challenge that Umoja does not yet support mapping expenditure against the project results framework, nor does it allow directly mapping EF, RB, UNDA, GEF and other contributions to a specific project Umoja code. Resources from different sources remain scattered in UMOJA and the system does not provide a straightforward way to distribute, view distribution, view expenditure or balances for specific PRC-approved

projects (PIMS entries) thus making it challenging to gain an overall picture of the financial situation of the project portfolio under the EUR SP and making it impossible for the FMO to ascertain expenditure when it is not possible to link the actions to specific items in a results framework. As an example, one EUR SP project had no UMOJA identification that corresponded to the project PIMS entry, but instead had a number of UMOJA identifications for the different funding agreements within the project but that were not explicitly linked to the 'mother project' or PIMS entry. This makes it challenging to establish a complete picture of the project financial situation. Overall consolidation is greatly needed. Ideally, the mapping expenditures against result frameworks across the different funding sources should be done with the close involvement of Project Managers.

242. The evaluation also found challenges related to financial knowledge management. The loss of financial records that took place during the transition from IMIS to UMOJA affected the EUR SP, creating difficulties in establishing accurate budget and expenditure records for projects. This problem is now slowly fading as it does not apply to new projects created in UMOJA and the Science Division FMO and the team of Financial Assistants have made a major effort to realign the records. This has taken a considerable amount of staff time. Moreover, it was noted that the Science Division has no standard method for storing financial data and that this is being left to the discretion of individuals. This approach is affected by staff turnover and was reported to have contributed to limitations in the way financial data has been stored over the years.

Resource Allocation

243. The EUR SP focus has changed over time following senior management decisions on resource allocation. For example, under the previous EUR SP management, a greater proportion of resources were allocated to the work related to data and information needs, whereas efforts to support capacity development at the country level were practically discontinued and work related to assessments was weakened. Some interviews indicated that resource allocation decisions had been made in the past that prioritized certain initiatives and resulted in insufficient resources to fully implement others.

244. If EUR SP financial resources are projected to decrease, resource allocation priorities need to be re-assessed. Some informants were of the view that the current resource allocation priorities of the EUR SP are no longer corresponding to global environmental needs. It is also clear that countries are requesting further support related to SDGs and on indicator-based assessments, but with the current funding situation and resource allocation, the EUR SP is not able to fully deliver against that. Several informants suggested that a cost-benefit analysis should be performed on EUR SP products to support decision making. UNEA-4 resolutions could provide a basis from which to begin assessing resource allocation priorities.

5.4.4. Cooperation and External Partnerships

External partnerships

245. Partnerships are essential for the multidisciplinary nature of the core work within the EUR SP and have been so since before the creation of the SP (See also Design section). This is reflective of the local and multidimensional nature of environmental assessments and data science work including partnership work of the GEO process i.e. establishing a network of collaborating institutions and centres. Over the years, UNEP has relied on more than 70 data

providers (UNEP, 2012). International development frameworks have stressed the importance of partnerships in generating and making use of environmental data and assessments. The Agenda 2030 calls specifically for implementation through a global partnership for realizing the implementation targets under each SDG such that it will bring together "*Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources*" (United Nations, 2015).

246.   From its inception, the EUR SP has put forward the importance of science, government, and NGO-CSO partnerships, reflected in the POW document. As described in section 3.4.2. the main partners identified by the EUR SP range from nongovernmental organizations and citizens to governments, the scientific community, and the private sector. The consensus on the need for a partnership approach to the work from the EUR SP is clear.

247.   The partnerships with academia are in terms of academics (scientists) contributing to EUR SP assessments and reports, and of academics using EUR SP scientific publications. The "Research for Life" partnership umbrella between publishers and five other UN Agencies was rarely mentioned. However, this MoU could be regarded as an important aspect of EUR SP capacity building for developing countries through its OARE-component where developing countries are provided with an access to scientific research on environmental sciences that would otherwise only be available through subscriptions.

248.   The UNEP Private Sector Engagement Strategy, approved in September 2019, provides a framework for UNEP's engagement. The need for the EUR SP to increasingly engage with the private sector was commonly expressed. Most interviewees mentioned the private sector and industry associations as contributing inputs to EUR SP (data, technologies, knowledge, etc.) but few informants referred to such partners as target users of the EUR SP outputs and key actors of uptake and implementation of policy changes. However, the EUR SP, through the SPBF has succeeded in engaging several private sector actors, together with academia and civil society into a dialogue around selected environmental priorities with an objective of engaging the business in sustainable practices. However, a challenge that UNEP is facing in relation to private sector cooperation is the difficulty of measuring results when it comes to actions taken by the private sector. Interesting work is currently being undertaken by the EUR SP to develop indicators to measure private sector results and that would also enable UNEP to better communicate its contribution to changes in private sector actions. The evaluation sees the potential of SPBF to be increasingly used to drive forward UNEP's key messages to the private sector but the initiative would benefit from a stronger integration into UNEP's PoW.

249.   Partnerships with other UN Agencies commonly relate to EUR SP work on environmental data and monitoring and reporting against SDGs. For instance, the SDG project and the Global Monitoring Programmes for Water and Air have established close collaboration with specific UN Agencies. However, there is room to further develop partnerships across the UN. Several informants referred to UNDP as an under-utilized partner to enhance the delivery and scaling of EUR SP outputs[97]. UNEP has signed MoUs with several UN agencies, but the interviews indicated that there does not seem to be coordination / oversight of what is being implemented under the MoUs of how to make best use of them in the context of the EUR SP. There might thus be an opportunity for the EUR SP and UNEP as a whole, to assess whether

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[97] The ROE RC reports having been able to regularly partner with UNDP Country Offices for in-country capacity building activities on Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and environmental SDG indicator methodologies and related data collection.

the existing MoUs continue to be relevant and to consider whether they are being optimally utilized.

5.4.5. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

250. The evaluation assessed the extent the EUR SP activities and achievements have been monitored, reported and evaluated. This included an examination of the adequacy of the way roles and responsibilities have been defined and adequate resources allocated for these functions. While UNEP results-based management practices have been on a positive trajectory since 2010 (OIOS Evaluation 2019), challenges to improving EUR SP results-based-management were frequently mentioned by respondents: (i) cumbersome project reporting requirements to multiple donors/funding sources; (ii) underinvestment in assessing completed project outcomes; and (iii) inadequacy of information in PIMS (UNEP Project Information Management System) to monitor portfolio level EUR SP outcomes because of the poor indicator alignment between strategic goals and projects.

Monitoring

251. The EUR SP monitoring system was found to be disjointed, due to a lack of clear definition of roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis, and information-sharing as well as lack of adequate resources and organizational tools and structures to support these functions. The evaluation thus did not get assurance that the EUR SP monitoring data is being fully captured at appropriate levels and used for adaptive management and/or for enhancing EUR SP performance. Many interviewees stated the EUR SP monitoring was weak, emphasizing the need for a programmatic *approach rather than a focus on monitoring parts* by individual projects. One key staff member stated, 'when a project ends, the story generally ends'. Reporting was minimal.   This is emblematic of the challenges UNEP faces with monitoring at a corporate level; the unreliable and heterogeneous information captured in PIMS and the lack of a corporate 'dashboard'[98] capable of aggregating information from activity levels up to divisional, regional, sub-programme or whole of UNEP levels.

252. The evaluation found the current formulation of EUR SP indicators to be overlapping, confusing and challenging to measure. The way EUR SP indicators are formulated does not necessarily support fluent monitoring and subsequent reporting on results and a lack of adequate tools to measure results is considered a challenge. This particularly related to monitoring results stemming from private sector actors, but also included those of governments. Whilst the EUR SP disseminates information to academia, it does not have a mechanism to track citations of EUR SP publications in academic journals, and generally the monitoring of the use of EUR SP products relies on counts of website hits and downloads which are of limited usefulness.

Reporting

253. The EUR SP Coordinator is responsible for compiling the sub-programme-level progress reporting. Reporting against EUR SP indicators is based on PIMS reporting at project level where projects are mapped against EUR SP indicators and those projects are used to compile the EUR SP indicator-based reporting. The evaluation found that there is a sub- optimal integration between project indicators and the overall EUR SP indicators, i.e. the way in which

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[98] The evaluation is aware that a new dashboard to allow project level information to be aggregated to different organisational levels is under development.

project-level indicators have been aligned to EUR SP results framework (See section 3.3). Compounded by the weaknesses identified in the formulation of EUR SP indicators, PIMS records (which exclude GEF-funded projects), do not include accurate information on financial resources, and quality of project-level information entered into PIMS is highly variable, resulting in weaknesses in overall EUR SP reporting. It is challenging to compile robust EUR SP-level reporting on results.

254.   Currently, the reporting presented in PPRs was found to present limited evidence of the achievements and, in cases, the link between EUR SP indicators and the corresponding reporting was difficult to establish. The PPR reporting does not seem to effectively capture actual EUR SP results. Evaluation informants stated they perform their activities based on project *reporting requirements, PIMs. They do not necessarily have the holistic view of what EUR SP is aiming to achieve.* Interviews with staff and CPR survey confirmed that progress reports on EUR SP work did not strongly link activities, results, and financing utilized. This was in part a function of weak links between strategy and funding and the lack of systems to support effective links between results-based-budgeting, strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting in the organization.

No SP-level reporting had been completed in PIMS since the 2014-2015 PoW period. The annual progress reports (PPR) are focused on a descriptive narrative of SP achievements but regarding indicator-based reporting, they only provide a simple pie-chart with percentages of achievement against each indicator per SP. There is thus currently no source where one could review the actual values being reported for quantitative indicators, nor is there information on which projects in the SP portfolios contribute towards certain indicators, what does the data that is presented under a certain indicator represent and how is the progress being monitored. This information is only available from the SP Coordinators and the PPD who compile the reporting. The method and means by which SP results and performance are validated and verified is rather unclear. Regardless that the EUR SP is often described as the 'enabler' at UNEP and should underlie the programming of other SPs, the evaluation found no evidence of other SPs using EUR SP outputs e.g. UNEP Live, to monitor some of indicators in their respective results frameworks.

Evaluation

255.   Very few evaluations have been conducted of the non-GEF funded portfolio of EUR SP projects, only the GEO has been regularly evaluated. It is worthwhile to note, however, that the EUR SP portfolio generally has a low number of projects and only a few projects from these exceed the USD 1 million financial threshold for an independent evaluation. The GEF-funded projects have undergone terminal evaluations as these are mandatory. From the nine GEF-funded projects that were implemented as part of the EUR SP during the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 MTS periods, only two had completed implementation and undergone a terminal evaluation by the end of 2019. These included the Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme (TWAP) and the IW-LEARN III[99] Considering the low evaluation coverage and the fact that the non-GEF projects did not generally have steering committees, there has been few opportunities for external observations and recommendations. At the programmatic level, the other six SPs have been evaluated once and the EUR SP is the last one during a first cycle of SP evaluations.

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[99] The IW-LEARN III was jointly implemented by UNEP and UNDP and the Terminal Evaluation was managed by UNDP.

5.4.6. Human Rights and Gender

256. On gender, EUR SP project design in general was guided by the 2014−2017 Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment. As a cross-cutting theme, the attention paid in the EUR SP to gender aspects has grown over time. While it was not referred to in the Programme of Work (POW 2014-2015), it was integrated into the Expected Accomplishments[100] in the POW 2016-2017. This focus was reflected in the agenda of work with the production of a Global Gender and Environment Outlook in 2016 that offers information on gender and environmental management for utilization by its stakeholders in policymaking and implementation.

257. A gender focus has been further articulated in the POW 2018-2019, which states that UNEP will promote disaggregation of data by vulnerable groups, especially by geography, age and sex, and regularly review gender-environment linkages to guide policy action towards gender equality. In 2017, UNEP had met 12 of 15 United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) indicators,[101] appointed gender focal points, and also referenced gender in its MTS and projects.[102]

258. UNEP attention to human rights had also strengthened. More broadly the EUR SP is to adhere to the following: The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution strengthening the mandate of the special rapporteur on human rights and the environment encouraging further coordination with UNEP.[103] High-level and corporate UNEP evaluation reports showed that UNEP had adhered to United Nations-wide principles on human rights. While human rights were not mentioned in 2016 and 2017 annual reports, they were included in the draft proposed for the 2020−2021 POW.

259. The evaluation considered safeguards policy at UNEP, signed in December 2014. It is a relatively new concept for most UNEP staff and interviewees indicated that the process to apply the policy is slow. The safeguarding policy includes a checklist with nine areas or consideration and in accordance with the principled assistance idea to 'do no harm'. Purportedly, while normative science-oriented projects bear few risks, the increasing involvement at the country level and pilot testing are areas where caution might be required.

5.4.7. Communication

260. Good links with the Communication Division are important for EUR SP outreach and dissemination strategies for policy-level results. While collaboration had been planned the intention of the EUR SP of working systematically with the Communication Division did not materialize in practice to the extent planned. The collaboration between the EUR SP and the Communication Division happens on a project by project basis, is seldom adequately resourced even when it is budgeted for, and is often ad hoc and last minute, i.e. when something is pressing and needs outreach. GEO-6 communications activities were a case in point; a robust, ambitious communication plan was budgeted at USD 1.2 million. As it was found too costly, the management requested a revised budget plan at USD 250.000 to 500.000 as a second proposal. The final communication budget was USD 200.000 and with

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[100] POW 2016-2017 EA3: The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge, including data related to gender aspects, is enhanced.
[101] Evaluation Synthesis Report 2016−2017 page 90 para 268.
[102] UNEP Evaluation Office. April 2018. Evaluation Syntheses report 2014−2017. Para 267.
[103] UNEP 2015 Annual Report page 31.

specific outputs, e.g. web stories, social media, videos, etc. This was regarded as being less than optimal and whilst there was collaboration on GEO-6, including publicity, social media, web visibility, and collecting statistics on downloads, it was done at the last minute. Generally, communications-related work had been under-resourced.

261. Managers and project teams need to carefully consider the audience and utility of the EUR SP products and tools and plan upfront with targeting and intention. For instance, while the GEO-6 was oriented largely to an external audience, it was not effectively communicated internally to the colleagues in the PPD for planning and priority setting. Communication for internal use is also a consideration and needs to be well thought through as part of a strategically planned and executed EUR SP strategy for results. The EUR SP requires much better branding and a firm bridge with communications as this is essential when working at the interface(s) between science and policy.

5.4.8. Knowledge Management

262. The evaluation team assessed the EUR SP use of knowledge management in SP implementation. It was found that generally, the EUR SP is performing well in knowledge generation, but less well on knowledge sharing and content management. By its nature, the EUR SP creates knowledge, including reports, tools, templates and guides but some of the challenges in the dissemination and uptake of these products relate to KM as described in 5.4.1.

263. From among the EUR SP projects, Environment Live can be seen to have strong links to KM. The idea was to leverage the discussion forums of Environment Live platform for regional GEO inputs as communities of practice, i.e. in the discussion of the REIN regional priorities. The evaluation found the Environment Live Communities of Practice to be dormant and inefficient. While the EUR SP thematic focus is generally upstream and normative, the evaluation identified demand for increasing technical support on EUR SP thematic areas from regions and countries surveyed.

264. Generally, the concept of KM as a cross cutting function for results beyond GEO (a limited discussion platform) was not evident. It seems that the concept of knowledge management was not thought to be a cross-cutting enabling service for across-UNEP science and knowledge sharing. It can be instrumental as a general cross-SP program implementation approach as well, especially for cross-cutting learning and support needs around the SDGs and the IEGs. Unless actively supported and sufficiently resourced, the mostly dormant, very inefficient communities of practice idea will not serve this function for results.

265. However, as mentioned earlier, the Science Division has hosted UNEP's publication and knowledge management services since 2015, eventually becoming a part of the EUR SP. The Science Division leadership have been supporters of knowledge management in UNEP. The establishment of the KM Committee was an example of this which was said to have created a good momentum around KM issues. The KM Committee has since ceased to convene but the evaluation learned there is interest in its re-establishment, as well as revisiting the outdated UNEP KM Strategy 2014-2017.

266. An aspect of KM which has improved during recent years is UNEP document management with all UNEP documents now published through a UNEP knowledge repository which is now hosted by the EUR SP. This makes all UNEP publications retrievable through a Google or Google Scholar search. It also provides some level of quality control since the repository is now the only way to publish UNEP publications. However, aspects of KM at

UNEP, for instance a global overview of UNEP support in countries, is still weak. A key interviewee however reflected that the searchability of documents could be made more user friendly and that the repository is not optimally placed; to allow relevant units more control over content management.

267.   There is a strong rationale emerging from this evaluation for UNEP to develop a properly resourced knowledge management and communication strategy linked to EUR SP results.

6. Conclusions, Lessons Learned, and Recommendations

268. This section presents the evaluation overall conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

5.5.   Conclusions

269.   The evaluation posed key strategic questions. These are answered below.

270.   ***Question 1: To what extent are the Environment under Review subprogramme objectives and strategy relevant to the global challenges; global, regional and country needs; the international response and UNEP's mandate and capacity? A key question: Is EUR fit for purpose?***

271.   Making quality science available and providing global platforms for decision-making is highly relevant to global environmental challenges. The EUR SP products and tools are also relevant for the additional directives related to international environmental response and management that have emerged during the evaluation timeframe such as SDGs and Agenda 2030. Beyond raising the influence of science on policy, however, the important question of "data and information for what?" has been raised. The role the EUR SP plays in servicing the global needs for environmental data, information and monitoring needs to be defined with greater clarity and clearly linked with the SDGs and UN reform agenda.

272.   In general, the EUR SP was not based on a thorough needs assessment; while the EUR SP focuses on needs of what is to be done, it does not concentrate on how it should be done. Many workstreams in the EUR SP portfolio are based on long-standing 'legacy' projects, albeit ones that serve the core mandate of the organization. In this regard, the key finding is that there seems to be insufficient co-designing of interventions with their intended users. For instance, the global integrated assessment process and Environment Live are at crossroads with questions raised about the form and ability of these products to track trends and present them in a way for decision-makers to understand and use them. GEO did not include enough focus on SDGs and was targeted to a global audience and as such less relevant to the data and policy learning needs in regions and countries. The work on SDGs is somewhat effective, but dependent on countries selected with the RO; countries clearly expressed a need for support on standards for ecosystem monitoring and integrative approaches for assessments. The lack of a thorough needs assessment impairs choices made in the EUR SP's strategy. For instance, in general, data science, tools (including for assessments and standards-setting), capacity building and knowledge sharing are needed by different audiences, including internal and external, and in regions and countries. To be fully responsive, the EUR SP tools should be better targeted. At the regional level, while REIN conferences are being tapped for assessing needs, they are only moderately effective. The country needs assessments are often conveyed to Regional Offices, but after that there does not seem to be systematic escalation of the information to project designs at the level of the EUR SP. This is compounded by factors

at the institutional level; UNEP has been in a transition/reform period and has not fully addressed questions related to country and regional presence. These factors influence the EUR SP functioning and service lines.

273. In order to trigger change, the EUR SP must also focus on the public/private sector engagement bringing data and information to a broader range of stakeholders, to be attuned to questions of what is at stake, the economic value lost and/or the trade-offs. This should be framed more holistically, and should aim at broadening the knowledge of the stakeholders in general as to the state of the environment and with a focus on their involvement and action, including the private sector, communities, youth and gender. Since the organization received a strengthened mandate, upgraded with universal membership in 2013 and clear directives concerning monitoring SDGs as well as directives to support capacity for developing countries with their monitoring and reporting on the multilateral environmental agreements and SDGs, this would be the place to start.

274. The GEO, Environment Live and the SDG work have been largely designed in isolation. Little work has been conducted to assess their role together as a system of monitoring, tracking and reporting on SDGs and responding to capacity development needs in relation to UNEP's strengthened mandate in global environmental governance. While UNEP is not a regulatory body, it has been upgraded with universal membership. The question is therefore what this means in terms of the EUR SP's ability to track data and present data to its Member States for monitoring, reporting and policy action. GEO and Environment Live need to be reviewed together as there are gaps in terms of their coverage of indicators (SDGs or international environmental goals) and global, national and regional needs for capacity building on undertaking integrated assessments and standards on how to monitor and track the state of the environment.

275. The EUR SP work is about assessments, data and information on the environment and human interaction-integrated data and science. Therefore, all other UNEP SPs should, in principle, make use of EUR SP assessments, data and information, as well as Environment Live for capacity building, resource mobilization purposes and knowledge sharing. The EUR SP program has, however, been weak in its strategies for, and ability to resource, cross-cutting areas, including knowledge management, capacity building and resource mobilization/partnerships The PPD should, in principle, make considerable use of the services of the EUR SP for results-based management and longer- and short-term programme planning. The GEO should be an instrumental tool in this regard. However, the linkage between the programming, priority-setting and the EUR SP tools, rather than being systematic, is rather ad hoc.

276. ***Question 2: What lessons can be learned for future planning in regards the EUR SP organization and the design of its results frameworks based on how the SP has evolved?***

277. From the outset, the EUR SP has pursued the achievement of an ambitious but loosely defined Theory of Change. The need for a robust and more explicit TOC with clearer delineation of the sphere of influence of EUR SP project components across intermediate states, expected outcomes, and target stakeholders, appears particularly important as the objective to keep the environment under review still holds different understandings and expectations from a range of actors. The evaluation found that the EUR SP can be perceived as set to deliver quality data and robust assessments, but also considered sometimes as tasked with fostering use and uptake of these outputs, by influencing policymaking or triggering environmentally conscious practices from different stakeholder groups. These

expectations give the EUR SP an increasingly transformative role which would affect collaboration with other SPs, external partnerships, resources, management instruments, processes, etc. A certain confusion/inconsistency is also reflected in the results framework of the MTS 2018-2019 where the EUR SP EA appears positioned at a higher level than v EUR SP objective ("use" vs. "empowered"). A robust TOC should be developed for the EUR SP that would clarify the EUR SP's role and the expected contributions and relationships of all key actors involved in realizing EUR SP objectives.

278. The original construct of the EUR SP has been built upon parallel flagship projects designed with few, but some potential synergies, and cross-cutting projects aimed at strengthening reach and joint influence of these flagships through communications, knowledge management, and capacity development. However, resource limitations have constrained the implementation of most of these cross-cutting projects and have also reduced the capability of the flagships to deliver expected outputs and to maximize synergies. lLittle use was made of adaptive management to adjust EUR SP approach in response to the emerging unfavourable financial context.

279. Within the conceptual framework of the EUR SP, one institutional enabler providing an ability to contribute outcomes is the interplay between the EUR SP and the rest of UNEP. However, limited attention has been given to this articulation and these causal pathways were not explicitly articulated. Opportunities for the EUR SP to guide UNEP strategic planning have been limited. Similarly, EUR SP outputs have rarely served other SPs in defining their programmatic agenda, setting baselines and targets, and/or helping to monitor achievements at the impact level. Regional and country level operational (regional and country level) capacity building type of work has also been overlooked in the EUR SP results framework.

280. The initial stakeholder analysis carried out with the design of the EUR SP has put an emphasis on the role of Governments as well as Academia and Research, with the objective to enable the Science-Policy interface. The position of other actors and their contribution to development outcomes through contribution to and uptake of EUR SP outputs has been considered but with moderate influence on the design and delivery of the EUR SP. This includes for example private sector actors as target users of sectoral data, information and assessments. Such gaps have started to be addressed -e.g. science-policy-business forum; WESR partnerships- but have yet to be translated into the EUR SP's results framework.

281. The EUR projects output and outcome indicators are most often linked to EUR SP EA indicators, but the evaluation noted several weaknesses among EUR SP EA indicators, including vagueness, overlaps, or gaps in linking/attributing measurements of change to UNEP actions. One shortcoming for example relates to the lack of specification of the types of internal and external stakeholders targeted by EUR SP EA indicators -e.g. other SPs, private sector, etc.-. There has been a lack of attention to monitoring the contribution of EUR SP project outputs to outcomes and impact, and to leveraging such information to adjust project activities. The evaluation also noted that few links have been established between the EUR SP results framework and the 2030 Agenda, for example with SDG 17 and related indicators.

282. ***Question 3: To what extent does the EUR SP organization support the delivery against the UNEP mandate in relation to keeping the environment under review?***

283. The Science Division is the lead division of the EUR SP. In practice, EUR SP projects are largely managed and delivered by the Science Division with relatively few interactions with other SPs/Divisions. From the POW 2014-2015 to the POW 2016-2017, the number of

contributing Divisions on each EUR SP output has however expanded, including with a systematic reference to the Regional Offices in the second period. However, cross-Divisional collaboration was found to be reliant on the initiative of individuals and lacking financial and institutional incentives. UNEP Divisions did not markedly inform the EUR agenda of work and EUR data was reported to be of limited use for programme planning and results monitoring except for SDG indicators. Cross-cutting initiatives on capacity development, communications and knowledge management that were highly relevant to ensure the achievement of EUR SP intended outcomes and that were entirely consistent with the objective to "empower" stakeholders were 'parked' due to resource constraints. Emphasis has been placed on production of data, information, and assessments with limited capacities for dissemination, capacity development, and knowledge uptake. In the event of continuing resource scarcity, management decisions are required to assess strategic prioritization.

284. The EUR SP coordination function was mainly focused on reporting, with limited opportunities to influence programming, including cross-cutting issues with other SPs, beyond providing inputs into project design documents. SPC coordination and management depended on soft skills rather than institutional arrangements. The SP coordination function was found to have been further weakened by the transfer of SPCs from PPD to Divisions. There was very little transfer of EUR SP products and services into other UNEP SPs and their programming. These challenges may be addressed as the SPC function has been restored to the PPD.

285. At regional level, Regional SPCs were recruited between 2015 and 2016 to work closely with the SP Coordinator in Nairobi and to support regional coordination, horizon scanning and communication among all SPs. The regional implementation and focus of the EUR SP did materialise as strongly and seemed to largely depend on the individual initiatives of the Regional SPCs. The transfer to SPC posts from Science Division to Regional Offices seems to have resulted in differences in the perceived roles of the Regional SPCs as well as influenced their ability to effectively contribute to the delivery of the EUR SP. There is a need to examine the expected role of the Regional SPCs in relation to their divisional alignment. The transfer of former Country Outreach Branch staff to their respective Regional Offices from Science Division in 2018 weakened the regional implementation focus of the EUR SP; their roles related to communication and outreach of Science Division products in their respective countries seemed to have been critical particularly related to GEO and Environment Live and even though liaison was still said to take place between these regional staff contributing to the EUR SP and the Science Division in Nairobi, the collaboration was perceived by some informants as complicated, particularly due to weakening of oversight and changed accountabilities.

286. The recent organizational changes may have an impact on these identified challenges, but as per the EUR SP organization at the time of the evaluation, several aspects could be strengthened. The EUR SP reconstructed ToC identifies important causal pathways through other UNEP SPs and through UNEP Regional Offices. The EUR SP organization (or insufficiently articulated accountabilities) at the time of evaluation did not fully support the EUR SP delivering against UNEP mandate. The decision to re-establish a dedicated Chief Scientist role and to again position the post into the Executive Office might offer opportunities to address some of the identified challenges.

287. *Question 4. To what extent is the Environment under Review Sub-programme organized to deliver against the UNEP commitments related to the SDGs?*

288. The UNSG's work on UN coherence and reform is aiming to strengthen the statistical capacity of developing countries to measure, monitor, and report on the SDGs, their targets, and indicators. The work of the EUR SP on SDGs is consistent with the UN mandate, it is significant and comes with high political visibility and responsibility. The EUR SP work on SDGs was thoroughly assessed by the evaluation. However, several factors reduce the EUR SP's ability to optimally deliver against the SDG commitments. Firstly, the EUR SP work on SDGs is underfunded and considerable focus goes into resource mobilization instead of actual implementation. Secondly, this work is not fully integrated in the EUR SP programme of work; the SDG work is cross-cutting support work but was not designed at the portfolio level (i.e. with full integration into the EUR SP). For instance, work on SGDs is somewhat limited by a dependence on other EUR SP projects such as Environment Live to support SDGs knowledge services through iterative knowledge platform but this is currently not fully realized. Fourth, while many parts of UNEP are doing SDGs work, this is not sufficiently coordinated, monitored and integrated. Fifth, while the EUR SP has been successful in the normative work i.e. developing indicators and methodology, it has been less successful in building capacity and institutional linkages in the regions in order to service the needs and demands for technical support. UNEP does not have the institutional arrangements or the statistical capacities in the regions to adequately service the growing demand for building capacity on SDG monitoring nor does the EUR SP have capacity at the headquarters to monitor needs at the regional level. To be more effective, the EUR SP should build strategic partnerships particularly, with other UN agencies and to grow environmental statistical capacity in house. The stakes are high and the success is dependent on UNEP senior leadership for vision, coordination and resourcing, as well as full integration of the SDGs work across the organization and the EUR SP for coordinating, technical support and monitoring.

289. Closely linked to UNEP's ability to undertake SDGs work is the priority need for UNEP to garner a better understanding of its capacity-building work and approach – currently, this does not appear to be planned strategically. The SDG indicators offer a harmonized framework and set of environmental related commitments made by member countries to deliver capacity building support on strategic environmental and integrated assessments, monitoring and data management for keeping the global environment under review. It is not capitalizing on this effort.

290. The insufficient resourcing of the EUR SP work on SDGs is also an expression of underutilization of the SDG monitoring platform to influence EUR SP key results for supporting countries' monitor the other international environmental goals. The EUR SP is well-positioned to go beyond work on SDG indicators and also use the SDG platform as a way to also establish linkages and build capacities of countries to monitor and report on their commitments to all international environmental goals. The statistical work at the UN Statistical Commission was a driving program for UNEP work and UNEP's role is well recognized. UNEP's leadership and positioning for the broader work on integrating the environmental domain are recognized but not fully supported by senior management and or funded.

291. *Question 5 - To what extent is the Environment under Review Sub-programme aligned to, and delivering, UNEA resolutions?*

292. Several UNEA resolutions link closely to the EUR SP. Resolutions have, for instance, requested UNEP to undertake GEO supported by a data platform – Environment Live and in 2016, UNEA committed UNEP to being fully engaged in the delivery of the SDGs, requesting UNEP to ensure, among others, that the GEO process, products and assessments *"take into*

account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the SDGs and targets". The Resolution further requested to ensure that early warning activities provide information on emerging issues and risks that may have an impact on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and that the Environment Live platform provide information to support the follow-up and review of progress towards achievement of the SDGs. In 2019, an important UNEA resolution requested for near real-time data.

293. Thus, the EUR SP products and services are, to a large degree, aligned to UNEA resolutions, but not in all cases (yet) delivering against them. For instance, Environment Live has been driven by UNEA demand but generally, Environment Live products are not based on a thorough needs assessment, including those of UNEA level decision making. Additionally, the GEO process has yet to systematically include indicators from SDGs and or international environmental goals as part of a holistic tracking system. The EUR SP work should be better enabled to track trends over time and to link to UNEA resolutions and the needs for monitoring those resolutions.

294. The EUR SP is to be the 'enabler', to present the science through which the UNEA decisions can be shaped. The process of how this can systematic has not been configured. The resolutions UNEA has adopted generally stem from UNEP Divisions individual initiatives but are not based on a clear monitoring system nor is integrated with the SDGs. The policy and action uptake of the science products is not targeted or systematically linked to UNEA and the uptake seems to have been low.

295. ***Question 6: Has the establishment of a dedicated Sub-programme on EUR helped UNEP to better respond to its mandate, and has the design of the Sub-programme been conducive in this regard?***

296. The creation of the EUR SP was one of the few significant changes formulated during the MTS 2010-2013 with the aim to bring environmental scientific information and knowledge to policy and decision-makers. The stated intent of the EUR SP was that scientific based products and services would cut across all other Sub programmes and give the mandated role much more visibility and a stronger incentive to donors to support it. The evaluation did not find strong evidence that the establishment of a dedicated Sub-programme on EUR helped UNEP to better respond to its mandate. The relationship between the Science Division/EUR SP and Law Division/Environmental Governance has been weakened and there was limited cross-Divisional collaboration and mainstreaming of the EUR SP in other SPs. The visibility of the EUR SP has improved but without notable outcomes in terms of resource mobilization. The EUR SP funding did increase slightly immediately following the creation of the SP, but the evaluation is not able to attribute this to the new structure nor examine if this trend has continued due to the change how budgets are reported (from SP-level to Divisional-level). Leverage of GEF projects was found primarily based on the CCCD portfolio, a funding stream recently discontinued. In terms of delivery, most outputs produced by the EUR SP since 2014 have been part of UNEP for years, such as the GEO since 1997, the Emission Gaps Report since 2011, Frontiers that came after a decade of Global Geo Yearbook, UNEP Live that built on GRID and GEO databases. Whilst the EUR SP is increasingly being delivered in collaboration with other UNEP Divisions, the evaluation found little evidence of other Divisions (through other SPs) actually supporting countries in adopting EUR SP scientific information and knowledge and using it in their decision making. The way work delivered by the EUR SP is positioned in the organization neesd to be carefully considered to support better integration.

5.6.   Lessons Learned

297. The evaluation noted with the *Uganda Wetlands Atlas* that EUR products and services can have significant impact when supported by a range of enabling factors, such as a clear business case, well identified needs, high level sponsorship, technical expertise and support, follow-up project interventions. Simultaneously, the low number of downloads of this atlas also shows that such information cannot be used as a strong proxy to measure uptake and influence. More comprehensive indicators and monitoring instruments than the number of page views or downloads are required to assess impact. Examples of causal chains as provided by the atlas can be used to inform the development of more robust results framework.

298. Reliance on intermittent funding has led EUR SP project teams to engage in much adaptive management/mitigation, and prioritization of activities based on available, often limited, funding rather than in response to global and regional priorities. The projectization of the original design of the EUR SP has been reinforced over time to the detriment of catalytic effects. Adaptive management at the project level is necessary but not sufficient to maximize efficiency and outcomes.

5.7.   Recommendations

299. This section presents key recommendations for the EUR SP. The evaluation also collated relevantf suggestions that identify more specific actions that could further inform next steps.

1. EUR SP Design-Strategy

300. **Issue**: The evaluation found that EUR SP has a weak **performance** monitoring system. The need expressed was to define the 'actual' EUR SP indicators, targets, and results. In general, the EUR SP has a weak performance measurement system and results framework and is not needs-based. See (See 36, 162). A needs assessment should canvass perspectives from different audiences – especially the private sector, Civil Society, UNEA, Country, Regional, Partners. More data on the countries where SPIs are working would support planning and understanding of the current demand for technical EUR SP 'thematic services'. Additionally, the EUR SP portfolio should be further targeted to provide or leverage technical support and capacity-building tailored to regional / country needs.

301. In sum, needs assessment and inclusive planning of the portfolio are urgently needed to support related issues with monitoring, attribution of results, and for adaptive management. In line with the Formative Evaluation (MTS) and its recommendation in 2015 (supported by this evaluation) that: "*UNEP should set long-term environmental objectives for each sub-program with indicators, baselines and long-term targets. The Environment under Review Sub-programme should play a stronger role in helping define higher-level indicators for UNEP and measuring the baselines for these indicators*." Clarity on what exactly the EUR SP is seeking change e.g. government action, policy for monitoring and knowledge work at the system level to impact on decision making and, indirectly, environmental change. EUR SP indicators should focus on policy influence and having an impact in countries. Indicators should help to focus efforts to develop capacities to collect, manage, and use environmental information for keeping the environment under review. The EUR SP should inform other SPs' indicators and help guide SPs' work on thematic policy influence. Understanding where the accountability for results lies i.e. policies **for what** for 'system-level changes" (see 194) vs government responsibility for nature and impact level results.

302. Additionally, in terms of design the EUR SP is not "fully" integrated with UNEA mandates and with UNEPs Strategic Planning –MTS (see 193) processes. In the MTS 2018-2021, the link of the EUR SP to SDG targets and indicators seems to have been overlooked, i.e. not closely embedded or explicitly referenced in the design of the Expected Accomplishment and reflected in the formulation of the overall EUR SP objective. The thematic results monitoring is also constrained by weak results framework for both IEGs and SDGs monitoring – joint IEG-SDG indicator framework– (see 67).

Recommendation 1:

303. **The EUR SP should construct a TOC that presents strong and robust causalities all the way from outputs to the long-term objectives**. The TOC should be anchored in UNEP's strategic planning process (i.e.. 2022-25 MTS), the post-Rio+20 mandate and UNEA governance, and the support to the SDGs. It shuld leverage UNEP's comparative advantages with a view to addressing the needs and to influencing specific types of target users of EUR SP outputs, including other SPs and Divisions, regions and countries, and different groups of external partners and stakeholders. The EUR SP should build on the TOC to design EAs that capture different outcomes and their associated causal pathways and reflect a forward-looking programmatic approach , making room for synergies and cross-cutting capacity development, knowledge management, and communications and outreach. EUR SP indicators should be strengthened and consider reflecting relevant SDG targets and indicators to elicit a contribution to their achievement. Accordingly, EUR SP monitoring should be improved and take a programmatic approach rather than a focus on monitoring parts from individual projects. Furthermore, the EUR SP should play a stronger role in helping define higher-level indicators for UNEP and measuring the baselines for these indicators across SPs.

Relevant suggestions collated from the evaluation report

Strategic Planning
- The EUR SP should reassess its design and purpose based on the needs of the target users of its products and services (TOC intermediate outcomes for specific target users)
- The EUR SP should clarify its thematic focus and relevance with respect to regions and countries, including assessments, data, information management, and SDGs
- The EUR SP should strive to position its themes, products, and services strategically to maximize UNEP's comparative advantages
- The EUR SP should be more strongly linked to UNEP's strategic planning process, the post-Rio+20 mandate and UNEA governance
- The EUR SP should consider giving stronger emphasis to the support it delivers to the SDGs
- UNEP should clarify how EUR SP products (e.g. GEO, Foresight, and Emissions Gap reports) feed into UNEP priority-setting processes, including in projects and global policy priorities
- The EUR SP should better position its products and services internally to support, raise and monitor UNEA decisions and better format and target its services and tools to senior managers
- The EUR SP should clarify the extent to which it intends to be forward-looking and engaged in foresight processes versus delivering confirmatory assessments
- The EUR SP policy influence should encompass data related policies, which are not currently covered by the results framework

- The EUR SP should improve its internal value proposition and the way it is able to make a case for stronger EF support
- The EUR SP should address the lack of strategic planning/coordination regarding how extrabudgetary funding is expected to contribute to the global EUR SP expected results

Theory of Change and Results Statements

- The EUR SP should develop a robust TOC and adequately identify drivers and assumptions
- The EUR SP's EAs should be designed to reflect a forward-looking programmatic approach rather than to accommodate long-standing initiatives
- The EUR SP should design a portfolio maximizing synergies to create a seamless package of services that might encourage uptake including for policy level results and also to provide a system of consistent knowledge flows for results across the organization
- The EUR SP should consider unpacking the current single EA so as to elicit different outputs, outcomes, and their associated causal pathways
- The EUR SP should revisit the set of projects that presided over its design in the MTS 2014-2017 and assess the extent to which unfunded ones were optional (i.e. to what extent capacity development, KM, and communications and outreach are optional)

Indicators, Targets and Results Monitoring

- The EUR SP should play a stronger role in helping define higher-level indicators for UNEP and measuring the baselines for these indicators across SPs
- The EUR SP indicators should help to focus efforts to develop capacities to collect, manage, and use environmental information for keeping the environment under review
- The EUR SP indicators should be more specific, better reflect causal chains, and target stakeholder groups.
- The EUR SP should consider incorporating SDG targets and indicators and eliciting a contribution to their achievement
- The EUR SP monitoring should be improved and take a programmatic approach rather than a focus on monitoring parts by individual projects
- The EUR SP should strengthen its capability to monitor the uptake of its Outputs and to what extent they have been successful in influencing decisions (including policies) aimed at sustainable development and improved human well-being

2. Implementation

304. **Issue**: Firstly, and fundamentally linked to gaps in design, the EUR SP portfolio cross-cutting areas are not defined (see 181) and there is a lack of accountability across UNEP for EUR SP results. The cross-cutting implementation support work was not well reflected in planning documents, institutional setup, and/or resources plan. Cross-cutting implementation support areas (coordination, knowledge management, capacity building and monitoring) are the *enabling elements* of the EUR SP (and by extension other SPs) that support jointly held UNEP wide results. Such problems were compounded with the separation of the EUR SP SPC from the PPD. While this arrangement has been re-established by new senior management during the last six months, senior manager involvement and cross SP and divisional technical oversight are needed to support senior management oversight, budgeting decisions and EUR SP action. There is a lack of senior involvement in technical oversight and adaptive management at the SP level. The portfolio is developing new UNEP systems to enable a more intuitive science–policy interface and this needs more attention by senior managers in the

interim. Additionally, the institutional arrangements for coordination of the EUR SP are decentralized to regions and the staff at that level are lacking accountabilities for EUR SP coordination, capacity building - regional and country strategic presence. (Also see 215).

Recommendation 2:

305. **EUR SP and UNEP Management should strive to improve institutional effectiveness and organizational efficiencies of the SP.** At a strategic level, EUR SP Management and the Chief Scientist should better ensure coherence of assessments across UNEP and support senior managers in setting the organization's agenda according to the findings of EUR SP data and assessments. UNEP Management should also consider balancing budgetary constraints with the willingness to sustain legacy projects and have a clear focus in maximising overall programmatic impact. EUR SP Management should explore performing a cost-benefit analysis on EUR SP products to support decision making. UNEA-4 resolutions could provide a basis from which to begin assessing resource allocation priorities. Furthermore, the EUR SP should continue exercising adaptive management to align its strategic intent with the evolving international agenda and resources availed for operationalization. At an operational level, stronger attention should be brought to reducing time to fill vacant positions; to clarifying the means by which SP results and performance are validated and verified; to ensuring that PIMS reporting is accurate, comprehensive, and reliable. Furthermore, EUR SP Management should strive to enhance efficiencies in resource mobilization and consider more actively utilizing outsourcing as a cost-saving or value for money strategy.

Relevant suggestions collated from the evaluation report

Management
- The EUR SP should utilize more actively outsourcing as a cost-saving or value for money strategy
- The EUR SP should enhance the efficiency of resource mobilization
- The EUR SP management should focus attention on filling vacant positions
- The EUR SP management needs to ensure that PIMS reporting is accurate, comprehensive, and reliable
- The EUR SP management should clarify the means by which SP results and performance are validated and verified

Coordination and Technical Quality
- The EUR SP / Chief Scientist should better ensure coherence of assessments across UNEP

Adaptive Management
- The EUR SP should apply adaptive management to align its strategic intent with the resources availed for their operationalization and the evolving international agenda
- UNEP should consider performing a cost-benefit analysis on EUR SP products to support decision making. UNEA-4 resolutions could provide a basis from which to begin assessing resource allocation priorities

- The EUR SP management should reconcile programmatic results expectations, the available installed staff capacity, and the levels of support the EUR SP receives from UNEP's EF allocations

3. Corporate Systems and Arrangements

306. **Issue:** The Evaluation revealed a consensus on the general lack of integration of EUR SP work with the organization-wide systems and arrangements. This disconnect is linked to the lack of cross cutting strategies for implementation and results and has stunted the delivery.

Recommendation 3:

307. **UNEP and EUR SP management should strengthen the EUR SP's capabilities and delivery modalities by developing and implementing cross-cutting strategies and enabling frameworks**. The EUR SP should formulate capacity development, communication and outreach, and knowledge management as core components of the SP. The EUR SP should develop and implement a strategy for capacity building that covers inter alia the three focus areas linked to IEG and SDG monitoring. The SP should also develop and implement a knowledge management strategy or framework that fosters the collection and sharing of technical knowledge, both explicit and tacit, but also the development of new normative and organizational knowledge such as standard operating procedures and other directives and/or instructions for a EUR SP portfolio needs assessment and delivery in regions or countries. Furthermore, the EUR SP should design and implement a resource mobilization strategy that enhances synergies between projects, maximizes the expertise of staff, and minimizes inefficiencies.

Relevant suggestions collated from the evaluation report

Resource mobilization
- The EUR SP should strive to give more focus to communication in resource allocation
- The EUR SP should develop a resource mobilization strategy and identify modalities that enhance the efficiency of resource mobilization and enlarge its donor base

Capacity building
- The EUR SP should specify a capacity development strategy based on UNEP's corporate capacity development strategy (to be developed), set up a strategic capacity-building programme linked to IEG and SDG monitoring as core components of the SP, and mainstream its implementation in flagship projects

Knowledge Management and Communications
- The EUR SP should formulate and resource a Communication strategy, and pursue strong outreach and stakeholder engagement to deliver coherent messaging at project and programme levels
- The EUR SP should establish stronger operational linkages with the Communication Division
- The EUR SP should formulate and resource a Knowledge Management strategy as core component of the SP, including to further bridge science, practice, and policy

4. Improving the Use of EUR SP Products and Services

308. **Issue**: The evaluation found a lack of needs-based uptake and use of EUR SP products and services including GEO and UNEP Live. These products lack targeting and uptake is low. (193, See 78-Data, 102- UNEP Live, 109 –GEO). The EUR SP needs its design and implementation to maximize synergies through a seamless package of services that might encourage uptake including for policy level results and to provide a system of consistent knowledge flows for results across the organization.

Recommendation 4:

309. **The EUR SP should improve the usability and use of flagship outputs**. Products and services developed by EUR SP projects should systematically be designed based on needs assessments that capture expectations of target users and help tailoring deliverables to different audiences. The EUR SP should consider involving sample groups of target users in the definition as well as the development and pilot testing of products and services, and adopting innovative methodologies such as design thinking to product development. The EUR SP should resource and adopt more rigorous processes to monitoring the use of EUR products and services to draw lessons learned and continuously improve reach, uptake, and engagement efforts to influence key target users. Furthermore, The EUR SP should consider marketing its service lines and indicate to various target audiences which types of products and services they can expect and benefit from.

Relevant suggestions collated from the evaluation report

Needs Assessments
- The EUR SP should consider targeting and delivering tailored products and services to different audiences and construct its TOC accordingly
- The EUR SP should develop standard operating procedures, clear directives and/or instructions for a EUR SP portfolio needs assessment in regions or countries, and give room to formal means to assess clients' needs and be demand driven
- The EUR SP mix of tools, products and themes, should be targeted or piloted based on a needs assessment

Design and Delivery of EUR SP Products and Services
- The EUR SP should strive to engage partners and policy makers in the design, development, and testing of products and services

GEO
- GEO reports could be produced more frequently, be shorter, focus on the SDGs, and stress 2 or 3 key messages behind which the entire organization would align for a few years.
- GEO assessment could be linked to UNEP's work on international environmental governance, to monitor and frame resolutions from UNEA i.e. for reporting on results and checking on policy influence
- The GEO Unit should assess the cost-benefits of replacing collaborating centers and institutional partnerships with independent experts/academia for GEO production
- The GEO Unit should assess if the GEO-6 methodology is conducive for national GEOs or was it more effective with the original methodology

- The GEO Unit should assess the efficiency and institutional sustainability of relying on a roster of 1200+ experts, including its ability to build lasting knowledge, organizational capacities, processes, and efficiencies as compared to the previous setup
- UNEP should consider how to ensure GEO is used to support other SPs with work planning, monitoring, integrating UNEA resolutions and leveraging a global scientific practitioner network for emerging priorities and foresight (2015 Paris Agreement, Sendai, MEAs)

<u>UNEP Live</u>
- UNEP Live should revisit its design and modalities of implementation
- The EUR SP should continue developing capacities and working on near real-time and local data and integrated assessments in order to facilitate the identification of contextual priorities and swifter responses, for example from private sector actors or at sub-national level from provinces and cities
- UNEP Live should consider narrowing down its focus so as to deliver unmatched services with strong added value to specific target users
- UNEP Live should consider with other UNEP Divisions/SPs to assess their data and information needs and tailor its services accordingly as well as to collate data/information generated by other UNEP Divisions/SPs
- UNEP Live should consider focusing on the 26 SDG indicators that UNEP is the custodian of, prior to opening up to the set of 93 environmental related ones, before embedding MEA indicators, and then FDES[104] ones
- UNEP Live should adopt a strategic approach towards setting new partnerships

<u>Emerging Issues</u>
- The EUR SP should continue improving the process through which emerging issues are identified by enlarging the base of informants and systematizing surveys

5. Internal Engagement with Divisions, SPs, and Regions

310. **Issue**: The evaluation found a lack of strategic engagement and joint monitoring of results of the EUR SP systems development, services, and thematic offers internally. Joint monitoring is needed to support external partnerships, financing, and resource mobilization (See SP positioning in 162 and 163). Engagement of other SPs and joint ownership will support links to strategic communications (see 193) and environmental financing resources (e.g. GEF, GCF).

Recommendation 5:

311. **EUR SP cross-cutting work should be better reflected in planning documents, institutional setup and/or resources plans**. Together with UNEP Divisions and especially the PPD, the EUR SP should seek to increase synergies and institutional alignment with other SPs and Units. Revised institutional and organizational mechanisms that foster the delivery of EUR SP products/services that respond to the needs of other UNEP Divisions/SPs and inform UNEP programming at global or regional levels are required. The EUR SP coordination function should pursue opportunities to influence programming, including cross-cutting

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[104]Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics

issues, beyond providing inputs into project design documents. UNEP should ensure there is a strong internal mechanism for cross portfolio results monitoring. This should take the form of a technical cross thematic/ division team that regularly meets to promote synergies across the programme; a role that was formerly played by the global SPCs within the PPD and needs to be reinstated and revitalised. Such technical "cross thematic" monitoring on the science to policy interface, and assessment, data and monitoring of the EUR "thematic offer" would support coherence, external financing, and resource mobilization. The engagement and joint ownership would improve links to the GEF, GCF, and across resources mobilization/strategic partnerships. EUR SP indicators should help to focus efforts to develop capacities to collect, manage, and use environmental information for keeping the environment under review and therefore should inform other SPs' indicators and guide SPs' work on thematic policy influence and results monitoring. The EUR SP should also strengthen planning and collaboration with the Communications Division. Furthermore, the EUR SP should clarify its thematic focus and relevance with respect to regions and countries. The EUR SP portfolio could be further targeted to provide or leverage technical support and capacity-building tailored to regional / country needs, including on integrated assessments, data and information management and SDGs.

Relevant suggestions collated from the evaluation report

Other SPs

- The EUR SP should position other UNEP SPs as target users of EUR SP Outputs and reflect this intent in the set of indicators and targets devised for the EUR SP
- The EUR SP should inform other SPs' indicators and guide SPs' work on thematic policy influence
- The EUR SP indicators should help to align and focus efforts to develop capacities to collect, manage, and use environmental information for keeping the environment under review
- UNEP Live should consider with other UNEP Divisions/SPs to assess their data and information needs and tailor its services accordingly as well as to collate data/information generated by other UNEP Divisions/SPs
- The EUR SP should make further efforts to mainstream findings from the emerging issues reports into the work of the other SPs through UNEP planning processes and to target the donor community to inform and influence their strategic priorities
- The EUR SP should consider tightening the collaboration with the PPD for EUR SP outputs to be more systematically taken up in UNEP's strategic planning and programming
- The EUR SP should coordinate more closely with other UNEP Divisions/SPs when setting the agenda of work of the EUR SP to ensure it is more demand and service oriented
- The EUR SP should consider how its outputs can contribute to supporting resource mobilization from other divisions
- The EUR SP needs to develop new approaches and mechanisms, beyond reliance on individual staff initiatives that enhance the synergies and collaboration between EUR SP (and Science Division) with other divisions and sub-programmes (and vice versa)
- The EUR SP coordination function should be provided with opportunities to influence programming, including on cross-cutting issues, beyond providing inputs into project design documents

- The EUR SP should assess the cost benefits of placing technical specialists in a selected number of priority country offices.
- The EUR SP should clarify its thematic focus and relevance with respect to regions and countries, including assessments, data and information management and SDGs
- The EUR SP portfolio might be further targeted to provide technical support and capacity-building tailored to regional / country needs
- The EUR SP should build / develop institutional knowledge and capacities of regions and countries to conduct integrated environmental assessments
- The EUR SP should clarify the role of the SPIs and strive to strengthen the capacity of regional staff to act as the regional implementing arm for the Science Division

6. Partnerships (External)

312. **Issue**: The evaluation found strategic positioning and role of partnerships (See Private Sector positioning in 162 and 163) lacking clarity and the subprogramme level. There is need to assess who the key strategic partners of the EUR SP are and articulate the need (role and niche) for these partnerships for, e.g. technology, jointly monitoring results, communicating and strategically positioning the portfolio for the development of systems and for policy level results (193) as well as leveraging environmental financing resources such as from the GEF and GCF. There is a lack of positioning and strategic partnering with UN agencies, private sector, civil society, GEF, GCF and MEAs for thematic results. There is a lack of joint monitoring and engagement with UN Agencies i.e. UN commission SDGs, UNDP capacity building and MEA for results.

Recommendation 6:

313. **The EUR SP should assume a stronger leadership role and provide increased momentum within UNEP to work with UN sister agencies and MEA secretariats to increase coherence across the UN system in relation to environmental assessments, and particularly in ensuring the utility of its findings to the work of agencies within the UN system**. The EUR SP should spell out more clearly its focus on normative thematic guidance and elicit the support to be provided to UNCTs and UNDAFs, and consider furthering its partnership with the UN regional commissions and with UNDP to strengthen technical cooperation and programme delivery at national and sub-national levels, including in relation to capacity development, statistics, and SDG monitoring. The EUR SP should also consider increasing its partnerships with the private sector as a target user of EUR SP outputs and key actors of uptake and implementation of policy change. This would involve, inter alia, strengthening engagement on private sector reporting and monitoring, i.e. how to measure and report private sector action and results. Furthermore, partnerships with technology companies are urgently needed to support the massive scale of EUR SP services and to support building EUR SP systems including information management, data collection, and infrastructure development, UNEP Live (or WESR), real-time data and monitoring.

Relevant suggestions collated from the evaluation report

Governments

- The EUR SP should consider furthering the support provided at sub-national level

- The EUR SP should exert stronger leadership and provide increased momentum within UNEP to work with UN sister agencies and MEA secretariats to increase coherence across the UN system in relation to environmental assessments, and particularly in ensuring the utility of its findings to the work of agencies within the UN system, and furthering the EUR SP influence on UN policy processes -e.g. EMG-
- The EUR SP should spell out more clearly its focus on normative thematic guidance and elicit the support to be provided to UNCTs and UNDAFs/ UNSDCFs
- The EUR SP should accelerate the development of formal partnerships with UN Commissions to service countries and regions with increased statistical capacities to support the SDGs
- UNEP should review its current MOUs and assess opportunities for increased collaboration with UNDP, including to support EUR SP objectives and further partnerships at country level,
- The EUR SP should consider means to assess the demand from UNCTs and collaborate and/or disseminate products/services at country level so that they are taken up by RCOs and UNCTs
- The EUR SP should seek to improve the clarity of its arrangements regarding regional and country presence including UNDAF/UNSDCF engagement as per UN reform

Private Sector

- The role of the private sector as user of EUR SP data, information, and knowledge should be better embedded in the design of the SP, which should increasingly engage with the private sector as key actors of uptake and implementation of policy changes
- The EUR SP should strengthen its engagement in private sector reporting and monitoring, i.e. how to measure and report private sector action and results, and assess the benefits, lessons learned, and opportunities for scaling the development of indicators that measure private sector results, which would enable UNEP to better communicate its contribution to changes in private sector actions

Other

- The role of the Civil Society in supporting EUR SP objectives should be assessed

UNEP-wide recommendations (not covered supra)

Strategic Positioning and Results

- The Chief Scientist should increasingly support setting the organization's agenda according to the findings of EUR SP data and assessments
- UNEP should resource the EUR SP to position it as a key enabler of its comparative advantages to help position UNEP as the leading institution for promoting the emerging environmental agenda
- UNEP as a whole should consider devising a robust TOC that clarifies the interplay between SPs and (intermediate) outcomes
- UNEP should consider setting indicators, targets, and baselines at the level of the SP Objectives

Management and Coordination
- UNEP should develop and implement in a coordinated way a corporate capacity development strategy
- UNEP should consider developing, adequately resourcing, and implementing a knowledge management strategy
- UNEP should provide the Chief Scientist with the mandate and capacities to oversee assessments developed across SPs and to raise their consistency and quality
- UNEP should establish a mechanism to keep track of scientific assessments across UNEP to improve coordination

Resources and Capacities
- UNEP should strive to make the EUR SP funding more stable
- UNEP management should strive to advocate with the GEF the reconduction of CCCD projects
- UNEP should consider setting up a trust fund for GEO

Partnerships
- UNEP should consider to assess the position / value of the Science-Policy Business Forum in a UNEP ToC to support its institutionalization

Annexes

Evaluation of the
UN Environment Sub-Programme on
Environment under Review

Terms of Reference

Evaluation Office

I.   January 2019Background

A.   Environment under Review

1. In a rapidly changing world, the importance of keeping abreast of emerging environmental issues and understanding the related risks and opportunities is widely recognized. This task has also been at the

core of UN Environment since its formation. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2997[105] from 1972 led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme and set the mandate of the UN Environment, including keeping the global environment under review to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments. Consequently, UN Environment is mandated to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the UN system, serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, provides early warning information on emerging issues for informed decision-making by policy makers and general public, and supports Member States by tracking progress against internationally agreed environmental goals, such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets in consultation with MEA Secretariats, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Furthermore, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, in 2012 adopted the Outcome document *The Future We Want*[106], which emphasized the importance of the role of science, the use of information for decision-making, raising the awareness of the public on critical environmental issues, strengthening the science-policy interface, building on assessments, engagement of civil society and other stakeholders, and assessing progress in the implementation of all sustainable development commitments. The Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration emphasized the importance to enhance the capacities of countries to generate, have access to, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge to work towards a better-informed society.

3. The Environment under Review Sub-programme builds on the core mandate of the organization and the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference. More recently, the Global Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2016, and as mandated by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution 2/5[107], the UN Environment committed to be fully engaged in the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). From the 232 SDG indicators, UN Environment is the custodian of 26 indicators related to environment (Annex IX) and the Environment under Review Sub-programme has a central role related to this task (Annex X). The UNEA Resolution 2/5 requested the Executive Director of UN Environment to ensure, among others, that the Global Environment Outlook process takes into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and particularly the SDGs and their targets. The Resolution further requested the Executive Director to ensure that early warning activities provide information on emerging issues and risks that may have an impact on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and that the Environment Live platform ("UNEP Live") provides information to support the follow-up and review of progress towards achievement of the SDGs. The UN Environment MTS document for 2018-2021 states that the MTS has been aligned with the Agenda 2030 as well as the "Future we Want" document. The MTS also presents a vision 2030 for UN Environment.

4. Work undertaken under the Environment under Review Sub-programme is also used to inform the work done by UN Environment. According to the 2014-2017 MTS document, UN Environment used the Global Environment Outlook series to identify global challenges, weighted the most pressing challenges against regional and MEA priorities and arrived in the focus areas, or the seven Sub-programmes, of the organization. Similarly, the EUR Sub-programme Foresight process, identifying important emerging issues recognized by the science community, was consulted in drafting the MTS. The MTS 2018-2021, on the other hand, has been informed by UNEA resolutions and decisions, the General Assembly and the

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[105] http://www.un-documents.net/a27r2997.htm

[106] http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/rio20_outcome_document_complete.pdf

[107] Resolution 2/5, August 2016: Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11180/K1607143_UNEPEA2_RES5E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

UN Environment Governing Council, as well as MEAs and other internationally agreed environmental goals.

B.   The Environment under Review Sub-Programme (2018-2021)

1.   Strategic Overview

5.   The Environment under Review became a stand-alone Sub-programme of UN Environment in 2014 and was defined in the 2014-2017 Medium-Term Strategy document. Prior to 2014, this work was implemented under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme. The Environment under Review Sub-programme is implemented as the seventh Sub-programme of UN Environment[108]. During the 2014-2017 MTS period, the EUR SP was strongly linked with the four vision statements[109] of the Organization. These vision statements have been replaced with "Vision 2030" in the MTS 2018-2021, which aims to develop and enhance integrated approaches to sustainable development that will "demonstrate that improving the health of the environment will bring social and economic benefits". The MTS 2018-2021 thus presents a shift towards aligning UN Environment work to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, as well as more explicitly to UNEA resolutions. A specific vision statement, aligned to Agenda 2030, has been formulated for each of the seven Sub-programmes.

6.   The Vision 2030 for the EUR SP is that "*Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface (e.g. GEO, SDG, CoPs) to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action*". According to the MTS 2018-2021, the EUR SP thus remains at the core of UN Environment's work by providing policy-relevant environmental assessments, identifying emerging issues, assisting in Goal follow-up and reviews and issuing early warning. The MTS recognizes that evidence-based policymaking needs to be informed by robust data and assessments to fully integrate the environmental dimensions of sustainable development[110].

7.   According to the Programme Framework document 2018-2021, the key focus areas of the EUR SP[111], which were also translated into the Sub-programme's Programme of Work Outputs, were defined as:

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[108] 1) Climate Change; 2) Disasters and Conflicts; 3) Ecosystem Management; 4) Environmental Governance; 5) Chemicals and Waste; 6) Resource Efficiency; 7) Environment under Review.

[109] The MTS 2014-2017 summarized the vision of UN Environment as comprising of four interrelated areas;
   1)   Keeping the world environment situation under review;
   2)   Providing policy advice and early warning information, based on sound science and assessments;
   3)   Catalysing and promoting international cooperation and action, including strengthening technical support and capacity in line with country needs and priorities;
   4)   Facilitating the development, implementation and evolution of laws, norms and standards and developing coherent interlinkages among multilateral environmental agreements.

[110] According to the strategy statement of the 2014-2017 MTS, UN Environment was to set the global environmental agenda by delivering assessments that integrate environmental, economic and social information to assess the environment, identify emerging issues and track progress towards environmental sustainability in consultation with MEA Secretariats. UN Environment was to use its position in the Environmental Management Group to catalyse action based on its findings and to support capacity-building efforts in developing countries that commit themselves to environmental monitoring and the posting of environmental data and information on public platforms, as appropriate, in line with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. UN Environment was also to work towards increased participation of stakeholders in environmental decision-making processes, including generation, analysis, packaging, availability, dissemination and integrative environmental information. The EUR SP aim was to disseminate information in the relevant working languages and make available its official documents in all official languages of the UN.

[111] The key focus areas of the EUR SP, which were also translated into the Sub-programme's Expected Accomplishment statements for the 2014-2017 period, were defined as:
   1)   **Environmental assessments** – where UN Environment facilitates global, regional and national policy making based on sound science and environmental information made available on open platforms.

1) Tracking progress towards internationally agreed environmental global goals and targets;
2) Timely delivery of integrated environmental assessments at global and regional levels;
3) Demand-driven thematic assessments;
4) Identification and analysis of emerging issues;
5) Enhanced online access to data and knowledge on open platforms;
6) Strengthening of countries' statistical data and reporting capacity.

8. The Programme of Work document for 2018-2021[112] identified risks which might negatively affect the delivery of the Sub-programme. These were states as; 1) partners are unable to provide key environmental and related socioeconomic data; 2) countries have insufficient capacity to manage and provide access to data; 3) ability of the Sub-programme to harness environmental issues in policy-relevant social and economic contexts.

9. The EUR SP Programme Framework for 2018-2021 presents a 'stakeholder analysis', which identifies some of the envisaged partner institutions/ group but does not (explicitly) identify stakeholders beyond partners, nor clarify their roles and position in regards the SP delivery (*See also section 6*).

2. Environment under Review objectives

10. The EUR SP is founded on the precept that emerging environmental issues must be tracked to help ensure early action is taken where needed since inadequacies in the links between policy and science communities could hinder decision-making. According to the MTS 2018-2021, the objective of the EUR SP is stated as "*Governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development*"[113]. It is acknowledged, that the expanding coverage of information systems and networks can provide unique and cost-effective opportunities to link science and information to enhance capacities for decision-making.

11. The MTS 2018-2021 presents only one Expected Accomplishment for the EUR SP, formulated as "*Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action*" (Table 1)[114]. Six Programme of Work Outputs have been defined to deliver against the EA. According to the EUR SP Programme Framework document for 2018-2021, these six PoW Outputs are also identified as the six areas of work on which the EUR portfolio focuses (see Section 1).

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2) **Early warning on emerging issues** – to ensure early identification and policy consideration of environmental issues that may affect our ability to achieve sustainable development.

3) **Information management** – to enhance the capacity of countries to generate, access, analyze, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge and track progress towards sustainable development goals (SDGs).

[112] The EUR SP also identified key external factors which UN Environment does not have control over, but which were perceived to present a potential risk to the EUR SP during the 2014-2017 MTS period. These risks were identified as;

i) Willingness of governments to provide access to the key environmental and related socio-economic data necessary for conducting assessments through interactive platforms;

ii) The quality of data and information provided by data owners (including governments, institutions and the research community);

iii) The extent to which governments make active use in their decision-making and policymaking processes of data and information made accessible through the work of UNEP

[113] In the MTS 2014-2017, the EUR SP objective was stated as "*empower stakeholders in their policy and decision-making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review*".

[114] During the MTS period 2014-2017, EUR SP had three Expected Accomplishments and 13 PoW Outputs (Annex IV)

12.   As already mentioned, the MTS 2018-2021 is attempting to align the EUR SP with the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs and to shift towards indicator-based reporting in the context of the SDGs. Through the EUR SP, UN Environment aims to contribute to an 'ultimate impact' of *"by 2030, policymaking and stakeholder action are guided by environmental data and information and fully integrate the environmental dimension of sustainable development, resulting in shared prosperity for all within the ecological limits of the planet"*. From the 232 SDG indicators, UN Environment is the custodian of 26 indicators related to environment and the Environment under Review Sub-programme has a central role related to this responsibility[115]. SDG targets to which, according to the MTS 2018-2021, the EUR Sub-programme is aiming to contribute to are listed in Annex V. The MTS 2018-2021 also attempts to more explicitly align the work to specific UNEA Resolutions, MEAs, and the Strategic Impact Priorities of UN Environment. These linkages have been identified in the EUR SP Programme Framework document for 2018-2021.

13.   According to the 2014-2017 MTS, the three EUR SP Expected Accomplishments were identified to link to the Aichi Targets 17 (NBSAPs adopted as policy instrument) and 19 (knowledge improved, shared and applied). However, the potential contribution of the EUR SP towards the Aichi Targets has not been (explicitly) described in the MTS 2018-2021. The 2014-2015 PoW also stated that the EUR SP will contribute to the UN Environment corporate Expected Accomplishment of increased use of credible science in implementing the UN Environment Programme of Work and budget, and to a number of Expected Accomplishments in other Sub-programmes that depend on the availability and quality of environmental information. Similarly, this has not been (explicitly) stated in the 2018-2021 planning documents.

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[115] General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/313 on Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states the role of Custodian Agencies as follows: Paragraph 7. … international organizations [Custodian Agencies] to provide the methodologies used to harmonize country data for international comparability and produce estimates through transparent mechanisms; Paragraph 11. … the specialized agencies, … to intensify their support for strengthening data collection and statistical capacity-building, including capacity-building that strengthens coordination among national statistical offices, as appropriate and within their mandates, in a coordinated manner that recognizes national priorities and reflects national ownership of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, …

Table 1. Environment under Review Sub-programme Expected Accomplishments and indicators for 2018-2021

MTS 2018-2021	EA Indicators 2018-2021	Programme of Work Outputs
Objective of the organization: Governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimensions of sustainable development		
EA (a) Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action	(i) Increase in the number of tagged and maintained datasets available in the United Nations system data catalogue enabling systematic user access to relevant data on the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (ii) Increase in the number of countries reporting on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development through shared environmental information systems with country-level data made discoverable through UNEP (iii) Strengthening of the science-policy interface by countries based on the use of data, information and policy analysis in the areas of air quality, water quality, ecosystems, biodiversity, waste and hazardous chemicals, the marine environment and emerging issues (iv) Increase in the number of indicators to measure the environmental dimensions of sustainable development made through UNEP Live that are disaggregated by vulnerable groups, especially by gender, geography and age (v) Increased number of people belonging to different major groups and stakeholders acknowledging the relevance and usefulness of data and environmental information made available by UNEP (vi) Increase in the number of relevant global, regional and national forums and institutions using data on environmental trends identified through UNEP for environmental assessment, early warning on emerging issues and/or facilitation of policy action (vii) Level of accessibility and ease of use of UNEP environmental information through open platforms measured against internationally recognized standards for open access to information	1. Global web-based knowledge platform providing up-to-date data, information and knowledge to keep the environment under review 2. Integrated environmental assessment at global and regional levels 3. Thematic environmental assessments and information and early warning services 4. Continuous emerging issues identification, analysis and communication 5. Capacity development and indicator support to Sustainable Development Goal follow-up and review, including environmental inputs to United Nations reports and policy forums 6. National and regional reporting systems based on shared environmental information system principles generating open access to information

3. Project Portfolio

14. Each UN Environment Sub-programme function within the framework of a four-year Medium-Term Strategy, divided into two-year Programmes of Work. These documents define the higher-level results that each Sub-programme aims to achieve. The projects which are designed to deliver the higher-level results of each Sub-programme under a given Medium-Term Strategy period are outlined in four-year Programme Frameworks.

15. The Programme Framework for EUR Sub-programme for 2018-2021 identified six project concepts which were to deliver against the one Expected Accomplishment and six Programme of Work Outputs (Annex II). In addition, the Programme Framework document for 2018-2021 identified 2 projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which are associated with the EUR SP (Annex IV)[116].

16. Whereas under the 2014-2017 MTS, project concepts were presented in line with their planned contribution to a specific EA and PoW Output, in the 2018-2021 framework, alignment is towards specific EA indicators.

17. During the MTS period 2018-2019[117], the EUR SP portfolio included six ongoing projects (*as per August 2018*) and two projects under preparation (project preparatory phase, PPP).

4. Sub Programme Financing

18. According to the PoW Document 2018-2021, EUR SP work represents the core area of work for UN Environment, responding to a central mandate of the Programme to keep the environment under review. Therefore, according to the PoW Document, the EUR SP should "benefit from a strong core of Environment Fund resources". The PoW document also states that traditionally, the EUR SP has not attracted large volumes of extrabudgetary resources.

19. The budget estimates for the EUR SP were presented in the UN Environment Programme of Work document 2018-2019 (Table 2). The estimated overall budget for 2018-2019 was US$ 51,300,000. The projections for 2020-2021 were not yet available at the time of the development of this ToR (*August 2018*). The overall estimated budget for the EUR SP has increased from the 2014-2015 projections. Similarly, also the estimated number of staff positions in the SP have increased, from the 56 staff posts in the 2014-2016 PoW period to the 72 posts in the current 2018-2021 PoW (Table 2).

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[116] The Programme Framework for EUR Sub-programme for 2014-2017 identified 13 project concepts which were to deliver against the three Expected Accomplishments and 15 Programme of Work Outputs (Annex VI). In addition, the Programme Framework document for 2014-2017 identified six projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which are associated with the EUR SP (Annex VIII).

[117] During the MTS period 2014-2017, the EUR SP portfolio had ten projects, which had been approved by the UN Environment Project Review Committee (PRC) and implemented or under implementation at the time of the preparation of these ToRs (Annex VII). These projects had identified an alignment with the three Expected Accomplishments and seven of the 13 PoW Outputs identified in the EUR SP Programme Framework document.

Table 2. Environment under Review Sub-programme resource projections by category

Category	Resources (thousands of United States dollars)					Staff resources (number of posts)				
	2014-2015	Change	2016-2017	Change	2018-2019	2014-2015	Change	2016-2017	Change	2018-2019
A. Environment Fund										
Post	10 288	(153)	10 135	3 465	13 600	43	(2)	41	6	47
Non-post	6 480	2 853	8 865	6 835	15 700					
Subtotal, A	**16 768**	**2 700**	**19 000**	**10 300**	**29 300**	**43**	**(2)**	**41**	**6**	**47**
B. Trust and earmarked funds										
Trust and earmarked funds	11 227	505	12 200	1 900	14 100	2	–	2	7	9
Subtotal, B	**11 227**	**505**	**12 000**	**1 900**	**14 100**	**2**	**–**	**2**	**7**	**9**
C. GEF trust funds										
GEF trust funds	5 695	251	5 946	3 646	2 300	–	–	–	1	1
Subtotal, C	**5 695**	**251**	**5 946**	**3 646**	**2 300**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**1**	**1**
D. Programme support costs										
Programme support costs	410	–	410	490	1 000	1		1	2	3
Subtotal, D	**410**	**–**	**410**	**590**	**1 000**	**1**	**–**	**1**	**2**	**3**

E.	Regular budget										
	Post	2 139	3 295	3 200	-	3 200		6	10	12	12
	Non-post	1 895	813	1 400	-	1 400					
	Subtotal, E	**4 033**	**4 108**	**4 600**	**-**	**4 600**		**6**	**10**	**12**	**-**	**12**
	Total (A+B+C+D+E)	**38 133**	**7 564**	**42 156**	**9 144**	**51 300**		**52**	**8**	**56**	**16**	**72**

Source: UN Environment Programmes of Work 2014-2017 and 2018-2021

Note: Figures may vary slightly owing to rounding off. Posts funded from trust funds and earmarked contributions are indicative. Many such posts are of a temporary nature and their levels are subject to change.

5. *Environment under Review Institutional Arrangements*

20.   The Science Division (formerly called the Division of Early Warning and Assessments – DEWA) is the lead Division of EUR SP and the responsibility of the leadership of the EUR SP rests with the Director of the Science Division. The work of the EUR SP has linkages with all UN Environment Divisions, but in practice, the majority of EUR projects are managed by the Science Division. During the 2014-2017 MTS period, some communications-related projects were planned to be managed by the Communications Division (formerly the Division of Communication and Public Awareness –DCPI), one project by the Ecosystems Division (formerly the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation –DEPI) and one project by the Regional Office for West Asia. However, in all projects, different Divisions were designated to contribute to the delivery of project components in different capacities. During the 2018-2021 MTS period, all EUR SP project appear to be delivered by the Science Division.

21.   The EUR SP Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of the SP, leading the design of the project portfolio to deliver against the expected accomplishment set for the EUR SP and reporting on progress at the Sub-programme level. The authority to allocate funding rests with Division Directors.

6. *UN Environment Main Partners*

22.   The 2018-2021 Programme Framework document identified the key partners of the EUR SP. The document states that partners for the EUR SP range from non-governmental organizations and citizens (e.g. through citizen science) to governments, the scientific community and the private sector. Partners are listed below (Table 3) with the specificity provided in the Programme Framework document. The Programme Framework document also indicated that the EUR SP will put forward an investment proposition to re-invest in collaborating centers networks to deliver on the mandate of UN Environment to keep the environment under review and highlight emerging issues to governments and other stakeholders.

Table 3. The main partners of the Environment under Review Sub-programme for 2018-2021

Area of work	Partner
Development of environmental analyses and assessments	The UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Center, UN Statistics Division, UN Economic Commissions, UN-Habitat, multilateral environmental agreements, the European Commission, the Group on Earth Observation and its Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, which includes the European Space Agency along with other major Space Agencies, Environmental Systems Research Institute, the GRID centers, the European Environment Agency, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, PBL (Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency), the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Stockholm Environment Institute, several universities and environmental research and policy institutes
Science policy linkages	Centers of environmental expertise, various GRID-centers, the World Conservation and Monitoring Center (WCMC), selected centers of expertise formerly known as GEO Collaborating Centers in the regions (such as CEDARE) as well as globally (such as PBL for outlooks)
Professional partners	Thomson Reuters and other media-related organizations
Donors	Specific countries, the European Commission, the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund

II.   The Evaluation

A.   Scope and Objectives of the Evaluation

23.   The scope of the evaluation will be the Environment under Review Sub-programme during the 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 MTS periods. The exact cut-off date up until which data will be collected with regard to the ongoing MTS period will be determined during the evaluation inception phase. Since the work carried out under the SP has its roots in the previous MTS periods, and since related work is likely to continue in the future, the evaluation will also look back as needed to capture the history of the SP and look forward to provide recommendations for the future. The EUR SP will be examined against the standard evaluation criteria; relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact and it will examine the factors and processes which have affected the Sub-programme delivery. The objective of the evaluation is to fulfil two main purposes: a) supporting accountability by analyzing the performance of the Sub-programme, and b) contributing to institutional learning by providing formative reflections based on the evaluation findings.

24.   Some of the specific questions the evaluation will attempt to address include;

- To what extent are the Environment under Review Sub-programme objectives and strategy relevant to the global challenges, global, regional and country needs, the international response and UN Environment's mandate and capacity?

- What lessons can be learned for future planning in regards the EUR SP organization and the design of its results frameworks based on how the SP has evolved?

- To what extent does the EUR SP organization support the delivery against the UN Environment mandate in relation to keeping the environment under review?

- To what extent is the Environment under Review Sub-programme organized to deliver against the UN Environment commitments related to the SDGs?

- To what extent is the Environment under Review Sub-programme aligned to, and delivering, in accordance to UNEA resolutions?

B.   Evaluation Audience

25.   The Evaluation is expected to help UN Environment identify key lessons on strategic positioning, portfolio planning, management arrangements and programme implementation that will provide a useful basis for improved Sub-programme design, coordination and delivery.

26.   The immediate and priority users of the Evaluation include: UN Environment senior management (including Division and Regional Directors), Sub-programme coordinators and all UN Environment units and staff involved in the Environment under Review Sub-programme, the UN Environment Committee of Permanent Representatives and the UN Environment Assembly.

27.   Interest in the Evaluation is likely to be shown by other stakeholders and partners, including the UN Secretariat, UN or other international bodies working in the area of keeping the world environment under review, commissions and committees, NGOs and civil society groups, research centres and academia.

C.   Evaluation approach and methods

28.   Broadly, the evaluation will follow three lines of inquiry to provide a holistic review combining both 'bottom-up' (*i.e.* aggregating project-level findings) and 'top-down' (*i.e.* analysing the evidence informing results reporting in the Programme Performance Report) perspectives.

1)   **Exploration of Theory of Change**: A Theory of Change of the Sub-programme will be reconstructed in order to explore how projects are expected to have a collective or aggregated effect at the level Programme of Work results (Expected Accomplishments and Programme of Work Outputs) and specific SDGs and targets. This analysis will focus heavily on the effectiveness and sustainability of the Sub-programme efforts. Results reported in the Programme Performance Reports, PIMS and other sources will be analysed and aggregated, supported by other information sources;

2)   **Project case studies**: Projects that are recognised as key drivers of the Theory of Change causal pathways will be identified and assessed in greater detail as 'case studies' (if not covered by an ongoing/completed evaluation) against the standard evaluation criteria;

3)   **Project evaluations/reviews:** A desk-based review of the evaluation/review findings of EUR SP projects implemented during the 2014-2017 (extending to 2018-2021 when applicable) MTS period will be conducted. The review will provide findings against standard evaluation criteria and identify and discuss factors contributing to particularly high or low performance. It will include an assessment of the sample of project evaluations/reviews in terms of how they represent the Sub-programme as a whole.

29.   Evaluation findings and judgments will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (*i.e.* verified from different sources) to the greatest extent possible[118]. Analysis leading to evaluative judgments will be clearly spelled out.

30.   The Evaluation will use different methods and tools (Table 4) to assess the EUR Sub-programme, including: desk-based review of UN Environment and EUR Sub-programme strategic documents; examination of external documents thematically related to the EUR SP, meta-analysis of previously evaluated projects; case studies of key Sub-programme projects not evaluated previously and evaluation interviews and focus group discussions. Survey(s) may be used if appropriate.

Table 4: Description of evaluation methods

Type of Activity	Description
Desk based review	Thematic and strategic documents to situate the Sub-Programme within global and sectoral contexts and to articulate UN Environment's position and efforts.
In-person and online Interviews/Survey	Exploration and analysis of the performance and factors affecting the Sub-programme performance.
Review of findings from project evaluations/reviews	Analysis of evaluation findings of EUR SP projects against the standard evaluation criteria used by the Evaluation Office. • Strategic Relevance • Achievement of Outputs • Effectiveness (Achievement of Project Objectives and Results) • Sustainability and Replication • Efficiency • Factors Affecting Performance In-depth exploration of key criteria including:

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[118] Individuals will not be mentioned by name if anonymity needs to be preserved.

	• Project Designs[119] • Gender Equality • Financial Management • Monitoring and Evaluation • Compliance with evaluation recommendations Analysis of this sample of project evaluations as a representation of the Sub-programme itself (*i.e.* magnitude and nature of the evaluation coverage of the Sub-programme)
Reconstructed Theory of Change	Reconstruction of a Theory of Change of the Sub-programme. Case studies of projects identified as key projects driving the change for the Theory of Change. Analysis of the coherence between the reconstructed Theory of Change of the Sub-programme and the ToCs of critical projects within the Sub-programme.
Contributions to Higher Level Results	Analysis of the 'contribution' made by the Sub-Programme to high level sectoral or global change (using the Theory of Change and the other evaluation methods described).

31. The desk review will include:

- Relevant background documentation on the scientific, socio-economic and environmental dimensions of the EUR Sub-Programme in the global context, relevant documentation related to MEAs, SDGs and other relevant global agreements, documentation related to other UN bodies in relation to keeping the environment under review;

- Background documentation on UN Environment's strategy and engagement in EUR, including: relevant UN Environment Governing Council/UNEA resolutions, MTS 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 and the respective PoW and Programme Framework documents, project design documents, and relevant UN Environment policy and strategy documents including the Science Strategy;

- Background documentation on UN Environment partnerships with key actors in the area of Environment under Review;

- Documentation related to the key deliverables of the EUR SP; and

- Environment under Review Sub-Programme reports and monitoring data including: Sub-Programme performance reports, project progress and final reports, financial reports, entries into PIMS, etc.

32. Visits are expected to Nairobi, Kenya where the UN Environment Evaluation Office and Science Division are based. Visits to other UN Environment offices or to EUR SP related events will be considered during the evaluation inception phase.

33. Interviews are expected to be held with UN Environment management and other staff involved in the planning and implementation of the Sub-programme, including: the Executive Director, Division Directors, Chief Scientist, Regional Directors, the EUR Sub-programme Coordinator, relevant project managers and divisional staff, staff from the Policy and Programme Division and others as relevant. In

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[119] Using the Evaluation Office template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design, which is prepared during all project evaluations.

addition, interviews and, if appropriate, surveys will be conducted with key partners and stakeholders, including selected representatives of UN and other external partners; other UN agencies active in areas related to EUR or identified as potential partners by the EUR SP (*e.g.* EMG, Group on Earth Observation), the key donor partners of the EUR SP and other funding mechanisms (*e.g.* GEF, EC); relevant government entities, such as Ministries of Environment and local authorities; academia and relevant research institutions, civil society and major groups such as NGOs, as well as the private sector.

34.   To the extent possible, the evaluation of the EUR Sub-programme will make use of evaluations conducted of projects under the EUR portfolio. The EUR Sub-programme has been to date, relatively under-evaluated, due to factors related to the programme construct, insufficient funding for evaluation, and low number of projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), for which evaluations are mandatory. Therefore, the availability of evaluations as an information source for the EUR SP evaluation is limited. Where possible, the review of previous evaluations of projects related to the EUR SP will be founded on the analysis contained within existing project evaluation reports. Evaluations by the UN Environment Evaluation Office but also by the independent evaluation functions of UN Environment partners (UN and non-UN) and donors will be considered. The portfolio recognized as the EUR Sub-programme was implemented under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme during the MTS period 2010-2013. Therefore, related activities were evaluated as part of the EG SP evaluation covering the period of 2006-2012. In addition, the fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5) implemented from 2010 to 2014, underwent a terminal evaluation in 2014 and the GEO-6 underwent a Mid-Term Evaluation in 2017. From the GEF-funded projects aligned with the EUR Sub-programme during the MTS period 2014-2017, the Transboundary Water Assessment Programme (TWAP) and IW-LEARN III has undergone Terminal Evaluations, but the other projects are still ongoing at the time of the preparation of these ToRs and thus will not be evaluated before the launch of the EUR SP evaluation (*August 2018*).

D.   Evaluation Areas of Focus

1.   *Strategic Relevance of the Sub-Programme*

35.   The Evaluation will assess the relevance of the Sub-programme objectives and strategy in the context of the mandate of UN Environment and the international recognition of the need to keep the world environment under review. The analysis will address the main question of whether the Sub-programme objectives and strategy are relevant to, and aligned with: a) the global environmental challenges, b) global, regional and country needs, c) the international response and d) UN Environment's evolving mandate and capacity in this area? The evaluation will also consider the adequacy and appropriateness of the geographical scope of the Sub-programme and the strategy behind this selection. The analysis will consider the question of relevance and alignment from the perspectives of the three main intervention areas: (i) environmental assessments; (ii) early warning on emerging issues; (iii) information management.

2.   *Sub-Programme Design and Structure*

36.   The evaluation will assess the extent to which the overall performance of the EUR SP has been affected (in terms of effectiveness and efficiency) by the way it is designed and structured. The Evaluation will consider the internal coherence and logic between Expected Accomplishments, Programme of Work Outputs and project outcomes. Particular attention will be paid to how well the Sub-programme's results are formulated and logically organized, including the appropriateness of performance indicators to measure progress towards planned achievements. With reference to the Theory of Change for the Sub-programme the evaluation will assess the extent to which the intermediate states, drivers and assumptions underlying the Sub-programme change process have been well thought through and articulated.

37.   Overall the evaluation will consider whether the establishment of a dedicated Sub-programme on EUR has helped UN Environment to better respond to its mandate, and if the design of the Sub-programme has been conductive in this regard.

3.   Overall Sub-Programme Performance

38.   The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness, likelihood of impact, sustainability of results, efficiency, and potential for large-scale effects of the EUR Sub-programme during the evaluation period.

39.   In terms of effectiveness, the evaluation will assess UN Environment's contribution to the achievement of EUR SP Expected Accomplishments and Programme of Work Outputs. The evaluation will assess the likelihood that results achieved by the Sub-programme either have, or will in the future, contribute to long-term impact on environmental benefits and sustainable development, including the identified SDG targets. Specific questions to be asked include; to what extent has UN Environment, through the Environment under Review Sub-programme, been able to meet its objective as stated in the Medium Term Strategy, and to what extent has the Environment under Review Sub-programme identified and influenced the key drivers, and to what extent are the key assumptions in place, for the outputs delivered by the Sub-programme to lead to sustainable, higher-level results?

40.   The Evaluation will also identify and assess key conditions and factors that have contributed to, or constrained, sustainability of results, *i.e.* the persistence of benefits resulting from the implementation of Sub-programme activities. Some of these factors might have stemmed from the activities' design and/or been direct outcomes of the projects (*e.g.* stronger institutional capacities or better-informed decision-making). Contextual circumstances or developments still relevant to the sustainability of outcomes will also be considered.

41.   The Evaluation will assess efficiency in terms of cost-effectiveness and timeliness of delivery. It will describe any cost- or time-saving measures taken to bring the activities to a successful implementation within the programmed time and budget. The Evaluation will analyse how delays, if any, have affected the execution and the costs of activities. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the EUR teams to make use of pre-existing methods and data sources, as well as to exploit complementarities and synergies between related internal and external initiatives.

42.   Given the global nature of UN Environment's mandate and the challenges it aims to address, particular attention will be given, at all levels, to the approach taken within this Sub-programme to replication, scaling-up and the achievement of catalytic effects. All of these relate to the maximisation of effectiveness (*i.e.* instances of positive results being multiplied). The Evaluation will consider the extent to which UN Environment's work has facilitated the creation of an enabling environment where key stakeholders are involved, and it has significantly invested in targeted communication/awareness for the reproduction of pilot and innovative activities. The Evaluation will look at different factors which facilitate replicability, up-scaling and catalytic effects.

43.   The evaluation will assess the overall performance of the Sub-programme through three main sources for evidence:

a) An analysis of the Theory of Change and the results reported in the Programme Performance Reports, PIMS and other sources;

b) Case studies of projects identified as key projects for the Theory of Change (and which have not been previously evaluated). Performance of the case study projects will be assessed based on document review, interviews and surveys as required.

c) Analysis of the findings of the project-level evaluations undertaken during the evaluation period.

4. *Factors Affecting Sub-Programme Performance*

a) Sub-Programme Organization and Management

44.   The Evaluation will look at the efficiency and effectiveness of the Sub-programme organization, coordination and management arrangements, taking into account the change from a divisional coordination structure to a thematic coordination structure in 2010 and becoming its own Sub-programme in 2014. The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the organization and management of the EUR SP are conductive towards the achievement of the planned results. The Evaluation will consider whether internal lessons can be derived from the experiences of different functional units within the Sub-programme.

b) Sub-programme Human and Financial Resources Administration and Efficiency

45.   The Evaluation will consider the adequacy of human and financial resources available for the planning and implementation of Sub-programme activities. The Evaluation will assess, among other things:

- *Human Resources*: the adequacy in terms of number and competencies of staff managing the EUR Sub-programme activities; personnel turn-over rates and the balance between continuity and new staff in the SP; the ability of managers to plan, coordinate and delegate work, communicate effectively, motivate and reward staff; factors influencing the morale of staff and the degree of satisfaction in the management of their daily activities and working in teams with colleagues from other functional units in UN Environment and with partners;

- *Financial Resources:* the distribution of funding according to funding source and the adequacy and stability of the funding base for the achievement of Sub-programme objectives; the success of the different areas of intervention and functional units in securing funds for Sub-programme activities; allocation of funds and expenditure rate by each type of intervention and by the different functional units in UN Environment;

- *Financial Management and Administration:* the quality, transparency and effectiveness of the systems and processes used for financial management; the link between financial and programme management and the degree of financial responsibility that Sub-programme staff have and any other administrative processes facilitating or inhibiting the fluid execution of Sub-programme activities, including the use of project extensions and the promotion of synergies among Sub-programme components.

c) Cooperation and Partnerships

46.   The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation with other UN Environment Sub-programmes, external stakeholders and partners. The Evaluation will explore cooperation and collaboration at several levels, between different functional units involved in the EUR Sub-programme; different Sub-programmes, divisions and regional or out-posted offices of UN Environment; other UN Agencies; UN Environment Member States, as well as with inter-governmental organisations, technical/scientific institutions, regional bodies, and the private sector etc.

47.   Areas of consideration will include whether key stakeholders and partners are regularly involved at critical stages of the Sub-programme's planning, decision-making, implementation and reporting processes. The evaluation will also assess whether mechanisms are in place and in use to ensure that complementarities are sought, synergies optimized and duplications avoided at all levels of the Sub-programme's planning and delivery. Positive examples of collaboration and the resulting benefits will be recorded where possible.

d) Monitoring and Reporting

48. The Evaluation will assess how well Sub-programme activities and achievements have been monitored, reported and evaluated. This will include a review of whether there is a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and information-sharing as well as adequate resources to support these functions.

- *Monitoring:* The evaluation will consider whether an effective monitoring system is in place that ensures that monitoring data are captured at appropriate levels and used to enhance Sub-programme performance through established and widely-known processes.

- *Reporting:* The arrangements for reporting in ways that support the accurate and reliable reporting of Sub-programme results will be reviewed. With regard to projects within the Sub-programme the evaluation will consider how well results that contribute to Sub-programme outputs are captured and aggregated. The quality, comprehensiveness and regularity of reporting on Sub-programme outputs, outcomes and impact will be assessed as well as whether quality assurance processes are in place to ensure the reliability and accuracy of reporting at the higher results levels.

- *Evaluation:* The extent to which Sub-programme activities are structured in a way that facilitates evaluation and have been independently evaluated will be examined. The evaluation will also assess whether adequate resources are routinely allocated to this purpose and secured until the end of the evaluation process.

e) Human Rights and Gender

49. The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the EUR Sub-programme has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the evaluation will assess to what extent the Sub-programme adheres to UN Environment's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment, including the incorporation of gender-related issues into the design and delivery of Sub-programme outputs. The evaluation should present the extent to which the Sub-programme, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equity and Human Rights are adequately taken into account.

f) Communication

50. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of communication between the units responsible for the implementation of the EUR Sub-programme and the Sub-programme Coordinator, senior management and relevant UN Environment divisions and departments. It will also assess the extent to which clear communication was established with partners and donors, with a view to assessing the extent to which communication has been contributing to the effective implementation of the Sub-programme, establishment of synergies and limitation of duplication of efforts. For example, the evaluation may consider whether Sub-programme activities related to communication and knowledge management are planned and whether adequate effort has been given to follow-up and dissemination of information, concepts, approaches and tools generated by the Sub-programme. The evaluation will also consider EUR SP efforts to communicate with external audiences as part of an outreach strategy in order to exert influence and support advocacy efforts in the relevant sectors.

E.   Evaluation Deliverables

51.   An **Inception Report** will be prepared by the Evaluation Team before it engages in external interviews, surveys and possible project visits. The Inception Report will include: (i) most of the background desk review; (ii) a draft Theory of Change of the EUR Sub-programme (iii) a detailed description of the methods and analytical tools that the Evaluation will use; (iv) an annotated table of

contents for the evaluation report; and (v) distribution of roles and responsibilities related to data collection and analysis and reporting among the Evaluation Team members. The Inception Report will be shared first with the Evaluation Office for review. Once Evaluation Office comments have been addressed in a satisfactory manner, the Inception Report will then be shared by the Evaluation Office with the Sub-programme Coordinator, senior management and heads of functional units for comments.

52.   Following completion of majority of interviews, surveys and possible visits, **Preliminary Findings** will be prepared in PowerPoint and presented to the Evaluation Reference Group through Skype.

53.   The **Main Evaluation Report** will present synthesised findings from the evaluation. Detailed material arising from the case studies will be annexed. It will be relatively brief (approximately 50 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. It must explain the purpose of the Evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings covering all the evaluation criteria, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible.

54.   The draft report shall be submitted to the Evaluation Manager who will share the draft with the Director of the Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will review the report for clarity and comprehensiveness. When found acceptable, the Director of the Evaluation Office will share the report with the EUR Sub-programme Coordinator and Lead Division Director, who will review the report and provide feedback on any factual errors. Once these have been addressed by the Evaluation Team, the report will be circulated to Division and Regional Directors, the Chief Scientist Office, Policy and Programme Division, Corporate Services Division, Senior Managers, and key external stakeholders for review and consultation. They may provide feedback on any errors of fact and highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. The Evaluation Office will then collate all review comments and provide them to the Evaluation Team for consideration in preparing the final version of the report. The Evaluation Team will draft a response to any comments that contradict its own findings and could therefore not be accommodated in the final report. This response will be shared by the Evaluation Office with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

55.   The final report shall be submitted to the Director of the Evaluation Office. The final evaluation report will be widely shared with partners and stakeholders. Innovative ways of disseminating evaluation findings and recommendations (*e.g.* the organization of a workshop where the Evaluation Team illustrates the content of its analysis to UN Environment target audience) will be sought to reach as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. The final evaluation report will be published on the UN Environment web-site ([www.unenvironment.org)](www.unenvironment.org) and may be printed in hard copy.

56.   Consistent with standard Quality Assurance processes, the Evaluation Office will prepare quality assessments of the draft and final reports, which are tools for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the draft evaluation report will be assessed by the Evaluation Office and rated against UN Environment criteria.

F.   Evaluation Recommendations

57.   The Environment under Review Sub-programme Coordinator, assisted by the Evaluation Office, will facilitate the preparation of a Recommendations Implementation Plan in consultation with the relevant offices and functional units in UN Environment. The plan should specify the level of priority of the recommendations and actions to be undertaken to implement them. It should also indicate who would be responsible for implementing the recommendations and what the schedule for their implementation would be. The Sub-programme Coordinator will then be responsible for reporting through the Evaluation Office to the Executive Office on the status of implementations of evaluation recommendations on a six-monthly basis, until the latest deadline in the implementation schedule has been reached.

G.   Management Arrangements of the Evaluation

58. The Evaluation will be managed by the Evaluation Office of UN Environment. It will be an in-depth study using a participatory approach whereby the EUR Sub-Programme Coordinator, Division Directors, Regional Directors, Project Managers, Chief Scientist, Head of the Policy and Programme Division and other relevant staff are kept informed and regularly consulted throughout the process. The Evaluation Manager at the Evaluation Office will provide guidance on the overall evaluation approach and quality assure the evaluation deliverables. (S)he will ensure coordination and liaison with all concerned units and other key agencies and stakeholders. The Evaluation Office will be ultimately responsible for the final evaluation report and for its formal presentation to the UN Environment audience.

59. The Evaluation will remain an independent exercise. The core Evaluation Team will consist of two external Evaluation Consultants and two Evaluation Office staff members, one of whom will be the Evaluation Manager. The Evaluation Team will be responsible for the development, research, drafting and finalization of the Evaluation Report, in close consultation with the Evaluation Manager. The Evaluation Consultants will jointly prepare the evaluation approach, draft the Inception Report and draft the Main Evaluation Report. Detailed roles and responsibilities related to data collection and analysis and reporting will be agreed upon within the Team, and specified in the Inception Report.

60. The Evaluation Office staff members assigned to the Evaluation Team will bring additional substantive expertise. (S)he may also be tasked with making evaluation visits, carrying out interviews and drafting selected sections of the main report in agreement with the two Evaluation Consultants and the Evaluation Manager.

61. An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will provide strategic direction to the evaluation - based on their own experiences and contextual knowledge - and boost buy-in to, and the credibility and legitimacy of, the evaluation process across the range of evaluation stakeholders. The ERG will be composed of: Deputy Division Director and/or Science Division Director, Chief Scientist, the EUR Sub-Programme Coordinator, the Head and a representative from the Policy and Programme Division, a selection of Branch/Unit Heads and up to three representatives from relevant technical institutions.

62. The Evaluation Lead Consultant will be hired for the period 1 December 2018 to 30 September 2019. The Evaluation Lead Consultant will have a minimum of 10 years of relevant work experience in the field of environment and evaluation, and an in-depth understanding of, and familiarity with, evaluation methods and techniques and documented experience in conducting high-level evaluations of large environment-related organizations and programmes. She/he will possess excellent writing skills in English. She/he will possess advanced knowledge and experience in the following fields:

- Environmental science, environmental policy influence, environmental assessments;

- UN policy work and country support and cooperation with the academia and private sector;

- The UN system, in particular UN Environment and partner agencies of the EUR Sub-programme;

- Programme and project management;

- Partnerships development, including with the academia and private sector and knowledge management.

63. The Evaluation Supporting Consultant will be hired for the period 1 February to 30 September 2019. The Evaluation Supporting Consultant will have a minimum of 10 years of relevant work experience in the field of environment and evaluation and familiarity with evaluation methods and techniques. She/he will possess excellent writing skills in English. She/he will possess advanced knowledge and experience in the following fields:

- Environmental science, environmental policy influence and programme and project management;

- UN policy work and country support and cooperation with the academia and private sector;

- Good understanding of the UN system, in particular UN Environment and partner agencies of the EUR Sub-programme is an asset.

64. *Responsibilities for Team Leader:* The Team Leader will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, for overall management of the evaluation and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section *Evaluation Deliverables*. The Team Leader will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered. More specifically: The Team Leader will lead the preparations and delivery of the Inception phase of the evaluation, including: preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff; draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project; prepare the evaluation framework; develop the desk review and interview protocols; draft the survey protocols (if relevant); develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission; plan the evaluation schedule; prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager. The Team Leader will work in close collaboration with the Supporting Consultant to deliver the main evaluation phase.

65. *Responsibilities for the Supporting Consultant:* The Supporting Consultant will make substantive and high quality contributions to the evaluation process and outputs, including data collection and analysis, preparation of assigned case studies and other supporting material as required and drafting of specific sections of the Main Evaluation Report. The supporting consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

66. The Evaluation Team, together, will be in charge of the following duties:

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;

- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected locations. Ensure independence of the evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.

- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;

- keep the main evaluation stakeholders informed of the evaluation progress and engage them in discussions on emerging findings throughout the evaluation process.

- Present preliminary findings to the main evaluation stakeholders.

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;

- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager

- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and

- prepare a summary of the key evaluation findings and lessons;

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;

- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

67. The Evaluation will be conducted during the period November 2018 – October 2019. The Evaluation Office will present a first draft evaluation report tentatively by the end of June 2019 to the Sub-Programme Coordinator. In October 2019 (tentative date) a completion workshop will be held to discuss evaluation findings and recommendations with key stakeholders. Publication of the final evaluation report is also expected by November 2019. The report will be discussed with UN Environment's Senior Management Team. The tentative schedule for the Evaluation is presented in Annex 1.

68. All consultant contracts will be individual Special Service Agreements (SSA) on a fee-only basis. Air tickets will be purchased by UN Environment and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Office and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion. By signing the service contract with UN Environment/UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

69. **Payment schedule**: The Evaluation Consultants will receive 30% of their agreed fee upon Evaluation Office acceptance of the Inception Report; 40% upon Evaluation Office acceptance of a draft main report; and 30% upon satisfactory completion of the work.

70. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these TORs, in line with the expected quality standards by the UN Environment Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UN Environment's quality standards. The Team Leader will advise the Evaluation Office whether the Supporting Consultant has provided satisfactory inputs in the evaluation.

71. If the consultants fail to submit satisfactory products in a timely manner, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize their products on schedule, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

Annex 2: People Consulted

No.	Name	Affiliation	Title
1	Abdelmenam Mohamed	UNEP	SPI, Regional Office for West Asia
2	Alexandre Caldas	UNEP	Chief, Big Data Branch, Science Division
3	Angeline Djampou	UNEP	Head, Publications and Knowledge Management Unit, Science Division
4	Ben Simmons	UNEP	Head of Secretariat, Green Growth Knowledge Platform, Economy Division
5	Brennan VanDyke	UNEP	Deputy Director, Science Division
6	Caroline Kaimuru	UNEP	Programme Officer, Scientific Assessment Branch, Science Division
7	Catherine Beltrandi	UNEP	Traditional Media Manager, Public Advocacy and Communication Section, Communication Division
8	Charles Sebukeera	UNEP	Programme Officer, Regional Office for Africa
9	Christopher Cox	UNEP	Programme Officer, Ecosystems Division
10	Cristina Zucca	UNEP	Subprogramme Coordinator, Environmental Governance
11	Daniel Cooney	UNEP	Deputy Director, Communication Division (currently ai. Division Director)
12	Dany Ghafari	UNEP	Programme Officer, Science Division
13	David Jensen	UNEP	Head, Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding, Policy and Programme Division
14	Dechen Tsering	UNEP	Director, Regional Office for Asia Pacific
15	Ebrahim Gora	UNEP	Strategist, Policy and Programme Division
16	Eddah Kaguthi	UNEP	Programme Officer, Scientific Assessment Branch, Science Division
17	Edoardo Zandri	UNEP	Chief, Big Science Branch, Science Division
18	Elizabeth Mrema	UNEP	Director, Law Division
19	Eric Usher	UNEP	Head, UNEP-Finance Initiative, Economy Division
20	Francesco Gaetani	UNEP	SPI, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
21	Franklin Odhiambo	UNEP	Consultant, Scientific Assessment Branch, Science Division
22	Gary Lewis	UNEP	Director, Policy and Programme Division
23	Grace Odhiambo	UNEP	Intern, Scientific Assessment Branch, Science Division
24	Hartwig Kremer	UNEP	Head, Global Environment Monitoring Unit, Science Division
25	Heidi Savelli	UNEP	Programme Officer, Ecosystems Division
26	Jacqueline McGlade	UNEP	former Science Division Director
27	Jason Jabbour	UNEP	SPI, Regional Office for North America
28	Jian Liu	UNEP	Director, Science Division
29	Jillian Campbell	UNEP	Programme Officer, Science Division
30	Jinhua Zhang	UNEP	SPI, Regional Office for Asia Pacific

31	Jochem Zoetelief	UNEP	Senior Programme Officer, Climate Information and Services Unit, Science Division
32	Josephine Mule	UNEP	Technology Programme Assistant, Foresight and World Environment Situation Room Unit, Science Division
33	Joyce Msuya	UNEP	Deputy Executive Director
34	Judith Akoth	UNEP	Fund Management Assistant, Science Division
35	Kati Autere	UNEP	Head, Donor Partnerships and Contribution, Corporate Services Division
36	Kelly West	UNEP	Portfolio Manager, GEF Coordination Unit, Corporate Services Division
37	Leo Heileman	UNEP	Director, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
38	Ludgarde Coppens	UNEP	Head, SDG and Environment Statistics Unit, Science Division
39	Maarten Kapelle	UNEP	Head, Thematic Assessments Unit, Science Division
40	Maria Elena Zuniga	UNEP	Head of Programme Coherence/Assurance Unit, Policy and Programme Division
41	Matthew Billot	UNEP	Regional Coordinator for Europe, Science Division
42	Monika MacDevette	UNEP	Former Deputy Director, Ecosystems Division, current Chief of the Chemicals and Health Branch, Economy Division
43	Nada Matta	UNEP	Fund Management Officer, Science Division
44	Naysan Sahba	UNEP	Director, Communication Division (former)
45	Nicolien Delange	UNEP	Head of PIME (ai.), Content and Client Services Section - Publishing Unit, Communication Division
46	Niklas Hagelberg	UNEP	Subprogramme Coordinator, Climate Change
47	Pascal Peduzzi	UNEP	Director, GRID-Geneva, Foresight and World Environment Situation Room Unit, Science Division
48	Peter Gilruth	ICRAF	Former Director, Science Division
49	Pierre Boileau	UNEP	Senior Programme Officer, Global Assessment Unit, Science Division
50	Pinya Sarasas	UNEP	Programme Officer, Science Division
51	Pooja Munshi	UNEP	Head of Web, Digital Strategy Section, Communication Division
52	Rosemary Mukasa	UNEP	Senior Programme Management Officer, Policy and Programme Division
53	Rula Qalyoubi	UNEP	Subprogramme Coordinator, Environment under Review
54	Sean Khan	UNEP	Programme Officer, Air Quality Monitoring Programme, Science Division
55	Shari Nijman	UNEP	Public Information Officer, Digital Strategy Section, Communication Division
56	Sharif Shawkey	UNEP	Intern, Scientific Assessment Branch, Science Division

57	Shereen Zorba	UNEP	Head, UNEP Science-Policy Business Forum, Science Division
58	Sonja Leighton-Kone	UNEP	Director, Corporate Services Division
59	Stefan Smith	UNEP	Subprogramme Coordinator, Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts
60	Sylvie Motarad	UNEP	Deputy Director, Europe Office
61	Takehiro Nakamura	UNEP	Chief, Marine and Coastal Unit, Ecosystem Division
62	Tessa Goverse	UNEP	Subprogramme Coordinator, Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality
63	Tomas Marques	UNEP	SPI for Europe Office
64	Ying Wang	UNEP	JPO, Scientific Assessment Branch, Science Division
65	Yunae Yi	UNEP	Safeguards Advisor, Policy and Programme Division

Annex 3: Documents Consulted

1. **Alexandratos, N. & Bruinsma, J**. 2012. *World Agriculture towards 2030/2050 - The 2012 Revision.* ESA Working Paper No. 12-03. FA0. Rome.

2. **Annandale, D**. 2018. *Mid-Term Evaluation of the UN Environment Project: Global and Regional Integrated Environmental Assessments ("GEO-6")*. Evaluation Office of UN Environment. Nairobi.

3. **Barbour, T**. 2010. *Terminal Evaluation - South-South Network of GEO Collaborating Centres for Integrated Environmental Assessment and Reporting to Support Policy Formulation and Informed Decision-Making Processes at National, Regional and Global Levels*. UNEP Evaluation Office. Nairobi.

4. *Processes at National, Regional and Global Levels*. UNEP Evaluation Office. Nairobi.

5. **Braat. L. & Brink. P**. 2008. *The Cost of Policy Inaction: The case of not meeting the 2010 biodiversity target*. ENV.G.1/ETU/2007/0044. Alterra. Wageningen and Brussels.

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Annex 4: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	Power they hold over the implementation and results of the SP and the level of interest	Participation in the design of the SP and how	Potential roles & responsibilities in SP implementation	Changes in their behaviour expected through the implementation of the SP
Type A: *High power / high interest = Key player*				
UNEP Science Division[120]	Main body for the design, governance, and management of the SP. SP coordination.	Development of the EUR components of the MTS and PoW. Governance, direction and monitoring of the SP.	Devise strategic directions. Management and monitoring. Resource mobilization. Partnerships building.	Leverage and amplify projects from all partners. Strengthen the link between policy, research, and practice.
Donors (including specific countries, the EC, the GEF, the GCF)	Critical role to ensure funding and sustainability of the SP. Contribute to expanding country capacity development work. Ability to use Environment Live as the data and knowledge custodian for UN Environment projects they fund.	Sources of funding and therefore may spur new activities. May push the use of Environment Live as common repository and portal for environmental data.	Influence the direction and agenda of work of the SP. Contribute to cascade environmental data and assessments in other partner agencies and projects.	Sponsor and promote the SP and secure its sustainability.
Type B: *High power/ low interest over the Sub-programme =Meet their needs*				
Other UNEP Technical and Corporate Divisions (Communication, Economy, Ecosystems, Law, Policy and Programme, Corporate Services)	Can direct programming towards addressing major environmental gaps identified assessments.	Can contribute through matrix management?	The SP is expected to ensure the coherence of assessments carried out across all other UNEP SPs.	EUR contributes to priority setting. SP initiatives contribute to modify EUR baselines.
Regional and Sub-regional Offices	Regional coordinators implement and monitor the SP.	Contribute to defining the SP PoW.	The SP regional coordinators are the main UNEP's regional interface in	Multi nodal bridge: national/global; inter-regional knowledge

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[120] Previously DEWA

Stakeholders	Power they hold over the implementation and results of the SP and the level of interest	Participation in the design of the SP and how	Potential roles & responsibilities in SP implementation	Changes in their behaviour expected through the implementation of the SP
			areas such assessments, data collection and coordination and science-policy	sharing; regional science-policy interface.
MEAs, Conventions, and other entities to which UNEP provides Secretariat (CBD, MLF, CITES, IPBES, IPCC, etc.)	Indirect involvement in SP design. Internationally agreed environmental goals are utilized to set the scope and assess the state of the environment.	Political outreach and resonate key finding and messages emanating from the programme within their constituencies.	Joint outputs and thematic reviews. Seek complementarity and avoid duplication with UN Environment other major environmental assessments. Can be reached directly by projects and have the potential to amplify the messaging, emphasise priorities and multiply effects	Thematic reviews of the integration of the environmental dimension across goals and the development of the Global Sustainable Development Report, with the aim of informing Governments and stakeholders of key environmental priorities and emerging issues, so that these can be fully considered and integrated in policy-making
UN agencies and programmes (FAO, UNDP, etc.), UN Conventions and their secretariat (e.g. UNFCCC), and the regional Economic and Social Commissions	Critical role to ensure UNDS coherence.	Political outreach and resonating key finding and messages emanating from the programme within their constituencies.	Jointly contribute to monitoring the SDGs. Contribute to data analysis and environmental assessments. Joint outputs and thematic reviews.	Receive policy advice and technical support to increase their ability to generate, access and analyse integrated environmental information. Use UN Environment assessments to inform environmental mainstreaming, policy, and programming in UN organizations.
Expert Centers and Networks (UN Statistics Division, UN-Habitat, MEAs,	Environmental monitoring and Earth observation.	Identification of research topics, partner institutions.	Provide data and contribute to inform UN Environment Live. Help to better	Strengthening of statistics offices, scientific networks, and

Stakeholders	Power they hold over the implementation and results of the SP and the level of interest	Participation in the design of the SP and how	Potential roles & responsibilities in SP implementation	Changes in their behaviour expected through the implementation of the SP
European Commission, Group on Earth Observation and its Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (i.e. ESA and other Space Agencies with Eos programmes), Environmental Systems Research Institute, private sector	Provision of data. Contribute to the definition and use of norms and standards for data and statistics. Global experts representing a mix of representatives from the academic and practitioner communities		understand how new data analysis methodologies and tools such as big data analytics, artificial intelligence, sustainable development modelling and simulation tools can be used. Spread capacity development by adopting common systems in assessments and data collection.	partnerships. Push the frontier of knowledge.
Science Policy Partners (GRID centers, the European Environment Agency, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, PBL, IISD, Stockholm Environment Institute, UNEP-WCMC, several universities and environmental research and policy institutes, Regional development banks)	Critical partners in the development of environmental analyses and assessments. Science policy linkages. Nodes in environmental information networks regionally and/or globally.	Contribute to put forward investment propositions to deliver on UN Environment's mandate. Participation in in development of assessments and the most recent GEOs. Implement activities that amplify knowledge dissemination and uptake.	Help to identify how to generate qualitative insights to ensure that UN Environment's inputs are meaningful, relevant and inclusive of vulnerable or excluded groups. Contribute to the growing body of research and knowledge on environment through multiple channels, including the GEOs.	Cross-dissemination of outputs and research collaboration. Strengthen the link between policy, research, and practice. Highlight emerging issues to governments and other stakeholders for timely action.
Policy makers[121] (including UNEA Ministers, regional Fora of Ministers of	Participation in SP design through UN Environment	Collaboration with policymakers is key to	Capacity to use project outputs. Inform knowledge gaps and research	Policymaking facilitated by the SP at the global, regional and

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[121] Policy makers is a term that groups different types of profiles, leading to assume that policy makers have varying levels of interest for the SP outputs, e.g. in a ministry of environment versus ministry of defense, at national level versus local level, etc.

Stakeholders	Power they hold over the implementation and results of the SP and the level of interest	Participation in the design of the SP and how	Potential roles & responsibilities in SP implementation	Changes in their behaviour expected through the implementation of the SP
Environment, member States, national parliamentarians, sub-national governance and administration, city mayors, etc.)	governing bodies (UNEA) and Regional Fora	understanding their perspectives and ensuring that they are considered in the assessments and that the assessment findings are useful.	and policy agenda. Inform UN Environment with needs for tools and methods to enable the integration of environmental, economic and social information. Contribute to dissemination of information at the national and local levels. Share lessons learned.	national levels through the development of integrated assessments that provide sound science as a basis for decision-making. Receive policy advice and technical support to increase their ability to generate, access and analyse integrated environmental information.
Private sector (e.g. information technology, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, engineering and construction, services, banks, insurance, law firms, etc.)	Low direct power on EUR, but indirect through willingness to adhere to and implement governmental policies.	No involvement in SP design.	Contribute with technical expertise and solutions (e.g., sensors), new data analysis methodologies and tools, e.g. big data analytics, artificial intelligence, sustainable development modelling and simulation tools.	No ample reference to the private sector as a user of EUR outputs.
Type C: *Low power/ high interest over the Sub-programme= Show consideration*				
Practitioners (includes policy and programme/project staff from international organizations, NGOs/CSOs, etc.)	No direct power on EUR, but indirect through willingness to prioritise environmental projects.	No participation in SP design. By strategically embedding stakeholder engagement, communications and impact monitoring upfront in the design of projects, the reach and impact of the	Consult and make use of the EUR data and assessments, and Environment Live. Share lessons learned.	Increased use of project outputs. Establishment of connections between stakeholders. Spillover effect.

Stakeholders	Power they hold over the implementation and results of the SP and the level of interest	Participation in the design of the SP and how	Potential roles & responsibilities in SP implementation	Changes in their behaviour expected through the implementation of the SP
		EUR SP can be further expanded at global, regional, national and city level.		
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs/NGOs, the general public)	Limited power/influence in the design of the SP.	No participation in SP design.	Access, consult and use data, assessments, Environment Live. CSOs advocate for important causes, provide expertise that enriches UN Environment's decisions, and channel the voices of those most likely to be affected by environmental challenges and policies. CSOs promote strong environmental governance. Share lessons learned	Increased awareness for environmental causes and buy-in. Push for increased disaggregation of data by vulnerable groups, especially by geography, age and sex, and to regularly review gender-environment linkages to guide policy action towards gender equality.
Type D: *Low power /low interest over the project= Least important*				
Media (Thomson Reuters and other media-related organizations)	Limited power/influence in the design of the SP but can make EUR data and assessments more visible and amplify the outreach. May contribute to changing beliefs of sceptics.	No participation in SP design	Can amplify the outputs of the SP. May suggest design improvements on Environment Live. Reach out with assessment finding and amplify impact.	Increased use of Environment Live as one-stop-shop.

Source: Evaluation, 2019

Annex 5: UR SP Result Framework for 2014-17 and 2018-21 MTS

Environment under Review - MTS 2014-2017			Environment under Review - MTS 2018-2021			
Objective: To empower stakeholders in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review			**Objective:** Governments and other stakeholders are empowered with quality assessments and open access to data and information to deliver the environmental dimension of sustainable development			
Expected Accomplishments	**Programme of Work Outputs**	**EA Indicators**	**Expected Accomplishment**	**Programme of Work Outputs**	**EA Indicators (2018-19)**	**EA Indicators (2020-21)**
(a) Assessment: Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by making environmental information available on open platforms	1. Operational online platform(s) open for the public to access environmental data and information at global, regional and national levels, contributed by UNEP and partners to satisfy the needs of different user communities; 2. Integrated assessment reports, including a Gender and Environment outlook, atlases, online information and regularly produced data on core indicators provide sound science and integrate environmental, economic and social information as a basis for decision-making; 3. Environmental information identified by UNEP is presented and disseminated to	(i) Increase in the number of UN Agencies and MEAs using data on environmental trends, identified through UNEP, to influence their policy (both PoW) (ii) Increase in the number of relevant[122] global, regional and national forums and institutions using data on environmental trends identified through UNEP to influence their policy (both PoW)	Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action	7. Global web-based knowledge platform providing up-to-date data, information and knowledge to keep the environment under review (UNEP Live) 8. Integrated environmental assessment at global and regional levels (Regional Environmental Information Networks and GEO process) 9. Thematic environmental assessments and information and early warning services 10. Continuous emerging issues	(i) Increase in the number of tagged and maintained datasets available in the United Nations system data catalogue enabling systematic user access to relevant data on the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (ii) Increase in the number of countries reporting on the environmental dimension of sustainable development through shared environmental information systems with country-level data made discoverable through UNEP (iii) Strengthening of the science-policy interface by countries	(i) The number of SDG indicators for which UNEP is the custodian agency, for which it reports data to the Global SDG Indicators Database (ii) The number of countries reporting on the environmental dimension of sustainable development through shared environmental information systems with country-level data made discoverable through UNEP (iii) Countries entacting

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[122] The word 'relevant' was included in the 2016-17 PoW

	different target audiences, in languages, including governments, academia, United Nations entities, media and the general public; 4. Methodologies, standards, tools and approaches are developed and disseminated to help different target audiences to generate, validate, access, understand and use environmental information; 5. Technical support to enhance accessibility by UN entities, including Country Teams and MEAs to use data on environmental trends identified through UNEP to catalyse discussions on environmental sustainability at high level to influence policy and programme development; 6. Major Groups and Stakeholders are provided with targeted information, knowledge, tools, methodologies and technology support to effectively access, generate and disseminate environmental information to	(iii) Level of accessibility and ease of use of UNEP environmental information through open platforms measured against internationally recognized standards for open access to information (2016-17) (iv) Increase in the number of UN inter-agency initiatives and external partnerships catalyzed by UNEP that contribute scientifically credible and policy-relevant environmental data and indicators to UNEP assessment processes (2016-17) (v) Number of partnerships between UNEP and external partners that have		identification, analysis and Communications 11. Capacity development and indicator support to Sustainable Development Goal follow-up and review, including environmental inputs to United Nations reports and policy forums 12. National and regional reporting systems based on shared environmental information system principles generating open access to information	based on the use of data, information and policy analysis in the areas of air quality, water quality, ecosystems, biodiversity, waste and hazardous chemicals, the marine environment and emerging issues (iv) Increase in the number of indicators to measure the environmental dimension of sustainable development made through UNEP Live that are disaggregated by vulnerable groups, especially by gender, geography and age (v) Increased number of people belonging to different major groups and stakeholders acknowledging the relevance and usefulness of data and environmental information made available by UNEP (vi) Increase in the number of relevant global, regional and national forums and institutions using data on environmental	national policies in response to the UNEP Science-Policy Interface that contribute to sustainable development and well-being (iv) The indicators to measure the environmental dimension of sustainable development made through Environment Live that are disaggregated by vulnerable groups, especially by gender, geography and age (v) Relevant global, regional and national forums and institutions using data on environmental trends identified through UNEP for environmental assessment, early warning on emerging issues

	contribute towards improved decisions in global, regional and national policy making	contributed scientifically credible and policy-relevant environmental data and indicators to UNEP assessment processes (2016-17)			trends identified through UNEP for environmental assessment, early warning on emerging issues and/or facilitation of policy action (vii) Level of accessibility and ease of use of UNEP environmental information through open platforms measured against internationally recognized standards for open access to information	and/or facilitation of policy action (vi) Level of accessibility and ease of use of UNEP environmental information through open platforms measured against internationally recognized standards for open access to information
(b) Early warning: Global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning are informed by emerging environ-mental issues	4. Structured processes and tools for the identification, analysis and reporting of emerging environmental issues of global and regional significance are developed and support provided for their application; 5. Technologies developed, and capacity enhanced to keep abreast of and use information on emerging environmental issues for decision making and policy development;	(i) Increase in the number of stakeholders surveyed that acknowledge the uptake of assessment and policy development processes of scenarios and early warning on emerging environmental issues identified by				

	6. Targeted outreach actions to inform and alert stakeholders to emerging environmental issues	UNEP[123] (both PoW) Number of registered participants in organizations for children and young people, sports organizations and World Environment Day that undertake activities on the UNEP website or report through UNEP networks as a result of targeted messaging on emerging environmental issues (2014-15)			
(c) Information: The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced	5. Global best practices are identified and/or developed to build capacity and catalyse access by governments, Major Groups, and other stakeholders to information tools, and provide technology support to generate,	(i) Increase in the number of countries that take the lead in generating, analyzing, managing and using environmental information in comparable			

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[123] In PoW 2014-14, this indicator was formulated as" Increase in the number of stakeholders surveyed that acknowledge the uptake of scenarios and early warning on emerging environmental issues in their assessment and policy development processes"

	validate, contribute to, access and communicate integrated environmental data and information; 6. Capacities of regional fora, national institutions, major groups and other stakeholders are enhanced to better utilize environmental information, knowledge and assessment findings in regional and national policy and planning processes; 7. The capacity of Major Groups and Stakeholders to assess and utilize environmental information and knowledge is enhanced by identifying global best practices for information access and utilization and by providing target trainings and capacity building activities; 8. Customised communication and outreach tools, methodologies, mechanisms/networks and products developed	formats and with a focus on gender-sensitive tools, and making the information and knowledge available to the public and policy makers, as a result of UNEP intervention[124] (both PoW) (ii) Increase in the number of countries making available credible nationally generated data and access to country-specific environmental information in comparable formats available on public platforms (both PoW) (iii) Increased number of major groups			

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124 In PoW 2014-16, this indicator was formulated as "Increase in the number of countries that take the lead in generating, analyzing, managing and using environmental information in comparable formats and making such information and knowledge available to the public and policymakers"

| | to increase capacity nationally, regionally and globally | and stakeholders surveyed that acknowledge their involvement in the generation, access to and use of environmental information available on public platforms (both PoW)

(iv) Increase in the number of major UNEP publications in languages other than English made accessible through UNEP-developed online platforms (2014-15) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Annex 6: EUR SP Outputs and Projects Presented in POWs 2014-2015/2016-2017

MTS 2014-2017			
EUR SP Objective: To empower stakeholders in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review			
Expected Accomplishment **(a) Assessment:** Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by making environmental information available on open platforms			
Programme of Work Outputs (as of November, 2012[125])	**EUR Projects (as of November, 2014[126] & PIMS)**	**Project Outcomes**	**Comments**
711. Operational online platform(s) open for the public to access environmental data and information at global, regional and national levels, contributed by UNEP and partners to satisfy the needs of different user communities	**711.1 UNEP Live** Status[127]: Existing & New Start: 01/07/2014 End: 30/09/2018	a. UNEP's assessment processes strengthened through credible data flows available from countries and organizations to help keep the environment under review b. A knowledge sharing culture shaped as supporting greater collaboration on knowledge co-creation, production and use of data, indicators and findings c. Capacity of countries developed for state of environment reporting and to support assessment processes	• Project transitioned to 711.2 in 2019: World Environment Situation Room - global knowledge platform on the environment (Big Data on the Environment Initiative)
712. Integrated assessment reports, including a Gender and Environment outlook, atlases, online information and regularly produced data on core indicators provide sound science and integrate environmental, economic and social information as a basis for decision-making	**712.1 Global and Regional Integrated Environmental Assessments** Status: Existing & New Start: 28/08/2014 End: 31/12/2019	a. UN, MEA bodies and targeted political forums and environment-related institutions are increasingly using information from integrated environmental assessments in their policy-making processes	
	712.2 Protected Planet Initiative – online platform for protected area information management and analysis Status: New Start: 03/08/2015 End: 30/06/2017	a. Decision makers and the conservation community make use of the available data and analytics from the Protected Planet Initiative to make more informed decisions relating to biodiversity	

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[125] UNEP. 2012. Proposed biennial programme of work and budget for 2014–2015. UNEP/GC.27/10. 13 November 2012. Nairobi.

[126] UNEP. 2014. Programme Framework for Subprogramme 7 Environment Under Review for 2014-2017. November 2014. Nairobi.

[127] *Status* refers to the project context described in November 2014 in the EUR SP Programme Framework, with the attributes of *New* (i.e. new project), *Existing and New* (i.e. project based on an existing initiative with new activities), or *Existing* (project carried forward from previous period).

Programme of Work Outputs (as of Nov. 2012)	EUR Projects (as of Nov. 2014 & PIMS)	Project Outcomes	Comments
	712.3 Thematic and integrated mapping services (including Atlases of environmental Change) Status: Existing & New Start: 17/11/2014 End: 31/12/2016	a. Governments, United Nations Agencies, Major Groups and other stakeholders making decisions underpinned by sound science from integrated environmental assessment reports such as Atlases, among others	
713. Environmental information identified by UNEP is presented and disseminated to different target audiences, in languages, including governments, academia, UN entities, media and the general public	**713.1 Environmental information dissemination and outreach to different audiences** Status: Existing Start: 06/03/2015 End: 31/12/2016	a. Governments, academia, UN entities, media and the public are made aware of and accessing the environmental information on UNEP's open platforms	
714. Methodologies, standards, tools and approaches [including those used for the internationally agreed environmental goals identified in GEO-5 are refined,] developed and disseminated to help different target audiences to generate, validate, access, understand and use environmental information			• Work under this Output was incorporated under Output 712, Project 712.1. • A project 714.1 started in June 2019: *Foresight, emerging issues and strategy for the environment Implementing Pilot Air and Water Quality Monitoring Systems*
715. Technical support to enhance accessibility by UN entities, including Country Teams and MEAs to use data on environmental trends identified through UNEP to catalyze discussions on environmental sustainability at high level to influence policy and programme development			• Former DRC-led Output, incorporated as part of Project 711.1 delivering targeted information to UNCTs and MEAs
716. Major Groups and Stakeholders are provided with targeted information, knowledge, tools, methodologies and technology support to effectively access, generate and disseminate environmental information to contribute towards improved decisions in global, regional and national policy making	**716.1 Providing Major Groups and Stakeholders with targeted information and tools for utilization and dissemination of environmental knowledge** Status: Existing Start: 04/07/2018 End: 30/06/2022		• Not implemented under MTS 2014-2017. • Project 716.1 started in July 2018 as "Capacity building for national and regional environmental information and knowledge management"

Expected Accomplishment
(b) Early warning: Global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning are informed by emerging environmental issues

Programme of Work Outputs (as of Nov. 2012)	EUR Projects (as of Nov. 2014 & PIMS)	Project Outcomes	Comments

Programme of Work Outputs (as of Nov. 2012)	EUR Projects (as of Nov. 2014 & PIMS)	Project Outcomes	Comments
721. Structured processes and tools for the identification, analysis and reporting of emerging environmental issues of global and regional significance are developed and support provided for their application	**721.1 Environment under Review: Emerging Issues** Status: Existing & New Start: 29/10/2014 End: 01/01/2019	a. Emerging environmental issues of global and regional significance are timely and regularly brought to the attention of decision-makers and considered in assessment and policy processes	
722. Technologies developed, and capacity enhanced to keep abreast of and use information on emerging environmental issues for decision making and policy development	**722.1 Clearing house of legal and policy responses to emerging issues** Status: New		• Output removed from POW 2016-2017
723. Targeted outreach actions to inform and alert stakeholders to emerging environmental issues	**723.1 Promoting advocacy on emerging issues through education and research** Status: New		• No project associated to this output in PIMS

Expected Accomplishment

(c) Information: The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge is enhanced

Programme of Work Outputs (as of Nov. 2012)	EUR Projects (as of Nov. 2014 & PIMS)	Project Outcomes	Comments
731. Global best practices are identified and/or developed to build capacity and catalyze access by governments, Major Groups, and other stakeholders to information tools, and provide technology support to generate, validate, contribute to, access and communicate integrated environmental data and information	**731.1 Support to underpin national assessments and policy formulation with scientifically credible data, information and indicators through the application of methodologies, assessment tools and multidisciplinary data** Status: New		• No project associated to this output in PIMS
732. Capacities of regional fora, national institutions, major groups and other stakeholders are enhanced to better utilize environmental information, knowledge and assessment findings in regional and national policy and planning processes	**732.1 Strengthening data and indicator frameworks for monitoring and reporting on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs** Status: New Start: 20/09/2016 End: 30/06/2020	a. National (by countries that have received capacity development), regional and global level reporting on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs includes the environmental dimension	
	732.2 Air quality assessments for health and environment policies	a. Countries are capable of producing evidence-based policy making on air quality and health	

	in Africa and Asia-Pacific Status: New Start: 29/06/2016 End: 31/12/2019		
733. The capacity of Major Groups and Stakeholders to assess and utilize environmental information and knowledge is enhanced by identifying global best practices for information access and utilization and by providing target trainings and capacity building activities	**733.1 Support to Major Groups and Stakeholders for enhanced access and utilization of environmental information and knowledge** Status: New		• Output removed from POW 2016-2017
734. Customized communication and outreach tools, methodologies, mechanisms/networks and products developed to increase capacity nationally, regionally and globally	**734.1 From Research to Policy: Strengthening the Dissemination, Communication and Uptake of Environmental Knowledge through Open-information Platforms** Status: Existing Start: 23/03/2015 End: 31/12/2017	a. Policymakers and other stakeholders are accessing and using environmental knowledge made available through open-information platforms	
	734.2 DOA-Partnership with Zayed International Foundation for the Environment Status: Existing & New Start: 23/03/2014 End: 30/06/2015	a. Increase outreach and capacity building through customized communication and outreach tools to increase awareness of green economy and SCP projects, applications and solutions across the Arab region	

Annex 7: MTS 2014-2017 Report on Expected Accomplishments

Expected Accomplishment (a) Global, regional and national policymaking is facilitated by environmental information made available on open platforms					
Indicator	**Performance measure**	**Baseline 12/2013**	**Targets 12/2017** [128]	**Achieved 12/2017**	**Comments**
(i) Increase in the number of United Nations agencies and multilateral environmental agreements using data on environmental trends, identified through UNEP, to influence their policy	Number of UN agencies and secretariats of MEAs that cite UNEP online information platforms and documents/reports containing data on environmental trends in their policy statements and documents (e.g., UNDAF, UNDG training materials)	0	18	12	Indicator anchored in projects 712.1 and 712.3. Referred in project 711.1 as expected contribution to EA, but not included in logframe
(ii) Increase in the number of relevant global, regional and national forums and institutions using data on environmental trends identified through UNEP to influence their policy	Number of global, regional and national forums and institutions that cite UNEP documents, reports, speeches and press releases on environmental trends in their documents and policy statements	0	20	20	Indicator referred in project 711.1 and 712.1
(iii) Level of accessibility and ease of use of UNEP environmental information through open platforms measured against internationally recognized standards for open access to information	Percentage improvement in the level of accessibility measured by usability tests	0	80%	86%	Indicator used in project *711.1*
	Percentage of surveyed users that are satisfied with the information available on the open platform	0	80%	40%	Indicator used in project 711.1
(iv) Increase in the number of UN inter-agency initiatives and external partnerships catalysed by UNEP that contribute scientifically credible and policy-relevant environmental data and indicators to UNEP assessment processes	Number of UN agencies that have contributed scientifically credible and policy-relevant environmental data and indicators to UNEP assessment processes	0	10	18	Indicator used in project 711.1
	Number of UN agencies and secretariats of MEAs that have linked their data and information systems to UNEP Live	0	8	20	Indicator used in project 711.1
(v) Number of partnerships between UNEP and external partners that have contributed scientifically credible and policy-relevant environmental data and indicators to UNEP assessment processes		0	20	18	Indicator referred in project *711.1* as expected contribution to EA, but not included in project logframe
Expected Accomplishment (b) Global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning are informed by emerging environmental issues					
Indicator	**Performance measure**	**Baseline 12/2013**	**Targets**	**Achieved 12/2017**	**Comments**

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[128] EA targets set for EUR SP in the POW 2014-2015 were revised and, for most, lowered in the POW 2016-2017.

				12/2017 [129]		
(b) Increase in the number of stakeholders surveyed that acknowledge the uptake in assessment and policy development processes of scenarios and early warning on emerging environmental issues identified by UNEP	Number of UN agencies, MEAs, other forums and networks, institutions and national Governments surveyed that acknowledge uptake of scenarios and early warning on emerging issues in assessment and policy development processes	0	12	42	Indicator referred in project 721.1 (but omitting the term "*scenarios*")

Expected Accomplishments (c) The capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge, including data related to gender aspects, is enhanced

Indicator	Performance measure	Baseline 12/2013	Targets 12/2017 [130]	Achieved 12/2017	Comments
(i) Increase in the number of countries that take the lead in generating, analysing, managing and using environmental information in comparable formats and with a focus on gender-sensitive tools, and making the information and knowledge available to the public and policy makers, as a result of UNEP intervention	Number of countries developing information systems and documents/reports that include analysed data and information having their origins in UNEP outputs and processes (e.g., citations in documents such as green economy transition plans, climate change and disaster risk reduction action plans	0	12	10	Indicator referred in project 732.1
	Number of countries making available environmentally relevant gender disaggregated data	NA	180	102	Indicator referred in project *732.1* as expected contribution to EA, but performance measure not included in project logframe
(ii) Increase in the number of countries making available credible nationally generated data and access to country-specific environmental information in comparable formats available on public platforms	Number of countries making accessible to the public additional or new environmental data sets and public platforms in comparable formats (e.g., websites, information or data portals	0	200	376 (Reported achievement in PPR 2016-2017 incoherent with "number of countries")	Indicator referred in project *732.1* as expected contribution to EA, but with a focus on "*data on a new environment-related SDG area*"
(iii) Increased number of major groups and stakeholders surveyed that acknowledge their involvement in the generation, access to and use of environmental	Number of accredited major groups and stakeholders acknowledging involvement in the generation, access to and use of environmental information made available on	0	45	100	Unclear EUR project attribution

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[129] EA targets set for EUR SP in the POW 2014-2015 were revised and, for most, lowered in the POW 2016-2017.

[130] EA targets set for EUR SP in the POW 2014-2015 were revised and, for most, lowered in the POW 2016-2017.

information available on public platforms	public platforms, based on surveys				

Annex 8: National Focal Points Evaluation Survey

This annex provides a summary and analysis of the online survey conducted to gather perspectives and feedback on the achievements of the EUR SP.

1.   Background

The survey targeted all the UN Environment National Focal Points. The design of the survey questionnaire used the POW Outputs with a view to assess their relevance and effectiveness. The questionnaire made room to open ended questions to collect qualitative insights, including pending needs and possible future directions for the SP. The questionnaire was made available in English, Spanish and French.

The survey was anonymous and remained open for 5 weeks, from 17 July to 20 August 2019. The survey was disseminated partly by the evaluation and partly by the Regional Offices. The survey was accessed by 104 informants among which 53 dropped out without providing any or sufficient meaningful information to be considered in the results. Altogether, the survey compiled feedback from 51 respondents. A detailed review of the responses did not lead to identify and remove any invalid contribution. As questions and sub-questions were optional, several respondents skipped a few and the results are presented according to the number of respondents per sub-question. The overall response rate to the email survey is circa 28%.

The methodology used to disseminate the survey did not allow to avoid any potential non-response biases. Therefore, the survey does not aim to be statistically representative of the entire target population. While based on a significant number of participants, the findings analyzed below are based on the opinion of 51 respondents that do not necessarily represent the entire population of National Focal Points.

2.   Profile of respondents

2.1.   Type of organization of survey respondents

In which organization do you work?	Responses
Central Government, Ministry, or National Public Agency	39
Local Administration, Local Public Institution	3
Civil Society Organization or NGO	1
UN	1
Other	4
Total respondents	51

Highlights:
- Most respondents are from central government organizations.

2.2. Job function of survey respondents

What is your primary job function?	Responses
Leadership, senior management (e.g. senior executive, senior official, team leader, etc.)	21
Policy maker, policy advisor, environmental governance (developer of new rules, norms, laws, regulations, etc.)	11
Practitioner (e.g. programme coordinator, project manager, etc.)	5
Scientific expertise, thematic specialist, technical expert (research, teaching, engineering, etc.)	6
Other specialties (e.g. communications, IT, administration, etc.)	2
Other	5
Total respondents	50

Highlights:
- The highest number of respondents have senior leadership positions, followed by policy making functions.

2.3. Region of work

What is/are your main region/s of work?	Responses
Global	5
Africa	5
Asia and the Pacific	8
Europe and Central Asia	15
Latin America and the Caribbean	12
Near East and North Africa	0
Other	4
Total respondents	49

Highlights:
- Largest cohort or respondents is from Europe and Central Asia, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean.
- No participants from the Near East and North Africa and few from Africa.

2.4. Gender of respondents

What is your gender?	Responses
Female	23
Male	24
Total respondents	47

Highlights:
- Gender balanced participations.

3. Relevance and usability of the Sub-programme deliverables

3.1. Relevance

How relevant to your needs and to the policy processes of your country are the following outputs of the EUR SP?	Very relevant	Relevant	Average (more or less relevant)	Irrelevant	Very irrelevant	Do not know	Total
Global Environment Outlook (GEO)	18	24	2			4	48
UNEP Live	11	14	13	2		7	47
Thematic environmental assessments (e.g. Africa Mountain Atlas, etc.)	4	17	19	2		5	47
Emerging Issues reports (e.g. Emissions Gap reports, Frontiers reports, etc.)	12	16	11	1	1	5	46
Support to environment-related SDG monitoring and review	33	9	2	1		2	47
National and regional reporting systems to collect, exchange and use data and information required for designing and implementing environmental policy	23	12	7	1	1	3	47

Highlights:
- SDG support perceived relevant by a large number of respondents.
- Thematic assessments -by design focused on specific geographic areas or themes- collect fewer responses.
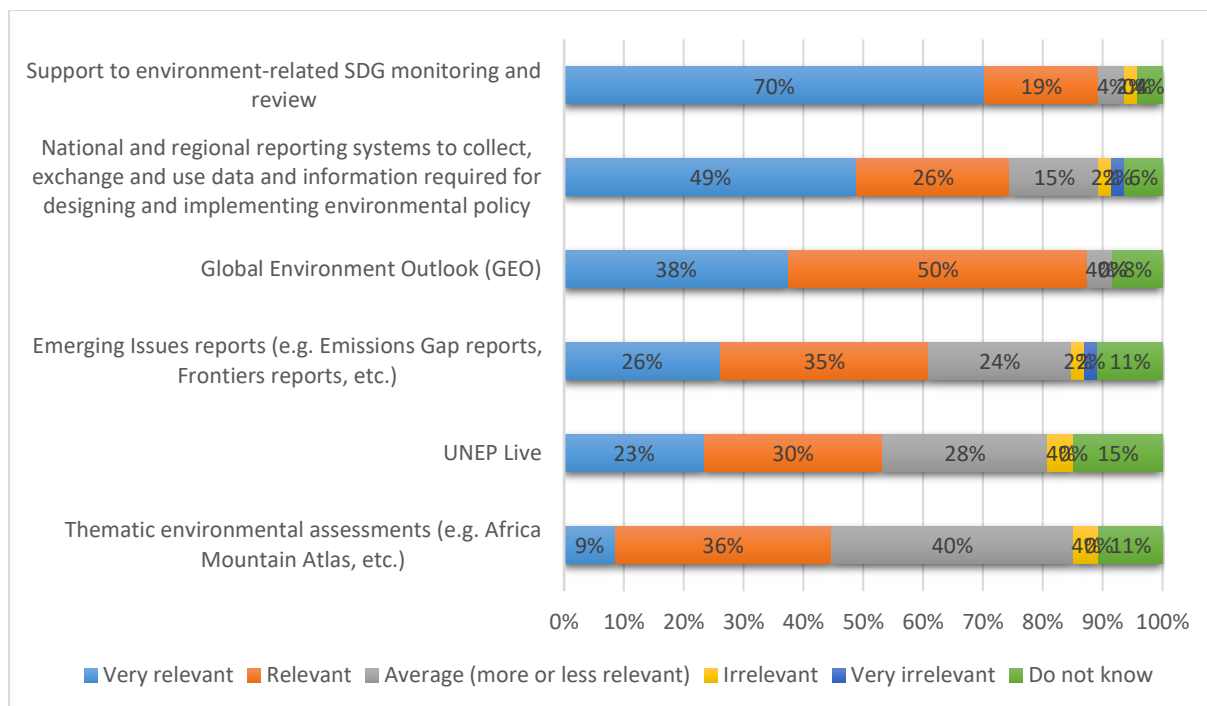
How relevant to your needs and to the policy processes of your country are the following outputs of the Environment under Review Sub-programme?

3.2. Usability

How do you rate the accessibility and user friendliness of the following outputs of the EUR SP?	Very good usability	Good usability	Average usability	Poor usability	Very poor usability	Do not know	Total
Global Environment Outlook (GEO)	10	22	9	1		4	46
UNEP Live	6	20	7	4		8	45
Thematic environmental assessments (e.g. Africa Mountain Atlas, etc.)	3	10	18	4		11	46
Emerging Issues reports (e.g. Emissions Gap reports, Frontiers reports, etc.)	5	19	12	3		6	45
Support to environment-related SDG monitoring and review	12	21	6	3		3	45
National and regional reporting systems to collect, exchange and use data and information required for designing and	6	21	11	2		5	45

implementing environmental policy							
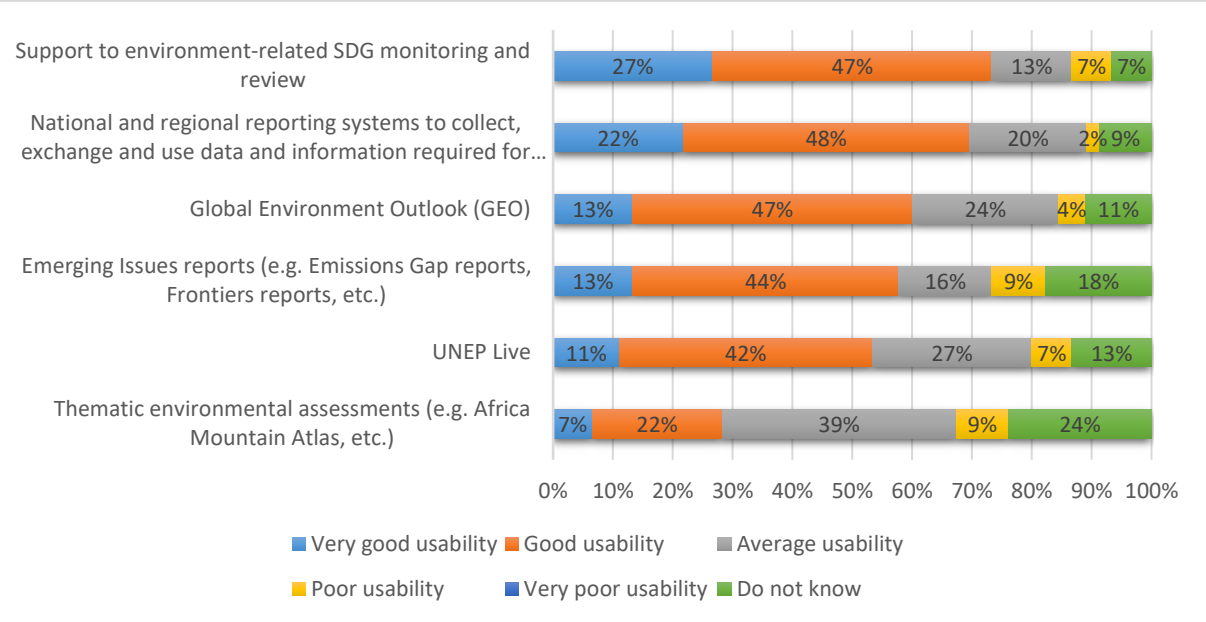
How do you rate the accessibility and user friendliness of the following outputs of the Environment under Review Sub-programme?

Any comments?
- Level of relevancy rest on the coverage which is minimal for SIDs
- A greater separation of Caribbean and Latin American data and information is needed.
- The governments don't effort enough to take the advantage of the information
- Very relevant para la elaboración del informe del estado, perspectiva y tendencias del medio ambiente de Panamá, el cual se ha elaborado en los años 1999, 204, 2009, 2014 y 2019.
  conocer los métodos y herramientas para la elaboración y seguimiento de los ODS ambientales.
  referencias para diseñar e implementar políticas ambientales
- Se recomienda que se pueda tener la mayor parte de metodologías y estudios en español
- Se sugiere que las metodologías e informes se encuentren en su mayoría en el idioma español
- Son productos que contribuyen a la elaboración de los informes de tendencias y perspectivas del ambiente de Panamá.
  Guía para la elaboración y seguimiento de los indicadores ambientales de los ODS.
- Los países de América Latina son de habla hispana, por lo que el idioma es de mucha importancia para poder navegar y acceder a los espacios de las diferentes aplicaciones que tiene la Naciones Unidas, y a los diferentes informes que se desarrollan. Es necesaria la traducción al español.

4. Assessment of the use of the Sub-programme deliverables

To what extent is your country using the following outputs of the EUR SP for policy planning processes?	Highly used	Frequently used	Used occasionally	Rarely used	Never used	Do not know	Total
Global Environment Outlook (GEO)	5	10	11	9	2	3	40
UNEP Live	3	9	10	6	5	6	39
Thematic environmental assessments (e.g. Africa Mountain Atlas, etc.)	2	8	11	6	4	7	38
Emerging Issues reports (e.g. Emissions Gap reports, Frontiers reports, etc.)	2	6	16	5	3	6	38
Methods, tools, technical support to environment-related SDG monitoring and review	6	15	11	3	1	4	40
National and regional reporting systems to collect, exchange and use data and information required for designing and implementing environmental policy	6	10	13	3	1	7	40

Highlights:
- SDG monitoring supporting tools are reported being the most frequently used by responding NFPs.
- Emerging issues reports are less frequently referred by respondents.

Methods, tools, technical support to environment-related SDG monitoring and review	15%	38%	28%	8%	3%	10%	
National and regional reporting systems to collect, exchange and use data and information required for…	15%	25%	33%	8%	3%	18%	
Global Environment Outlook (GEO)	13%	25%	28%	23%	5%	8%	
UNEP Live	8%	23%	26%	15%	13%	15%	
Thematic environmental assessments (e.g. Africa Mountain Atlas, etc.)	5%	21%	29%	16%	11%	18%	
Emerging Issues reports (e.g. Emissions Gap reports, Frontiers reports, etc.)	5%	16%	42%	13%	8%	16%	

Legend: Highly used, Frequently used, Used occasionally, Rarely used, Never used, Do not know

To what extent is your country using the following outputs of the EUR SP for policy planning processes?

Please describe specific examples where the use of the EUR SP products and services led to positive outcomes in your work, institution, or country:

- Malawi has just established the National Environmental Information Network (NEIN) which is proving to be an important national structure in terms of quality data and information generation and sharing
- At the subregional level for subregional issues
- Sorry, I am not able to respond to this - I personally have not used these tools and products since I joined the government, and I have not heard my colleagues mentioned them. However, this does not mean that our country has used them. I am just not aware of which agency or individual has used them.
- EUR products and services should led these outcomes directly through country focal point and regional coordinator.
- Some of the report used in the awareness and information of different institutions and other stakeholders.
- The GEO reports and tools related to the SDG monitoring and reporting are helping to re-shape and re-structure the national state of the environment report for Trinidad and Tobago.
- Our organization does not use the EUR products until now
- Production of SDG indicators
- It is very important and can be used for policy decisions.
- Review of information system enrolment and indicators, in particular SDG national indicators as well as national indicators of Environmental-Economic Accounts.
- Use outputs GEO especially in vulnerable assessments for impacts climate change issues in national environmental policies and use the outputs in increase awareness the decision makers and public
- En general cuando el Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible esta formulando una política pública ambiental, realiza una revisión bibliográfica de todos los documentos especializados sobre el tema

- Mi institucion no ha utilizado estos productos. Pero el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente los utiliza para promover politicas publicas.
  Aunque el Gobierno no le preste la debida importancia.
- Ha contribuido a incorporar temas relacionados al marco institucional y gobernanza analizar los temas ambientales integrales tomando en cuenta el estado, la presión, los impactos y las respuestas que se les ha dado a los diferentes aspectos contenidos en el informe
  Fueron una guía para la elaboración de escenarios
- En nuestra Dirección usamos el Marco de Desarrollo de Estadísticas Ambientales, como una guía para la generación de estadísticas ambientales en nuestro país, de igual manera se usa el Marco SENDAI
- Se utiliza el Marco para el Desarrollo de Estadísticas Ambientales como guía para la generación de estadísticas ambientales en el país y se publica en la siguiente página https://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec//vdatos/
- Elaboración de reportes de indicadores ODS y relacionados.
  Informes Nacionales del Estado de Medio Ambiente.
  Para ambos, los productos son de consulta y de enfoques metodológicos.
- El insumo más utilizado, es para analizar la metodología para la generación de los indicadores de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible ODS y poder replicarlos.
- Elaboración de las secciones de contexto gobal o regional en reportes de temas relevantes de la agenda ambiental nacional.
- Sur l'élaboration de la Politique et Stratégie National pour la Gestion de l'Environnement.
  Sur le Plan National de Développement par secteurs

If you did not make use of the data, information, early warnings, or assessments provided by the EUR SP, what were the main limiting factors?
- Sometimes internet signal is a problem
- Products are large, wordy and not easily matched to current priorities
- Applicability and relevancy of scope and resolution of the data
- For me, I guess it's just not being aware that they have been made available.
- The main limiting factors are 1) miscommunication or delivering direct to right institution/agency through focal point and 2) common understanding how useful all these information are in their institutions.
- Majority of the information, is not applicable in my country due to access of the information.
- The main limited factors are the lack of cooperation between different institutions and civil society
- This is new for our country and for the insecurity the mentioned tools does not use
- No, I did not use the data, information, early warnings or assessment that has been provided by the EUR SP
- No ha habido una divulgacion directa a nuestra institucion - Seguramente la comunicacion de los diferentes ministerios necesitan un poco mas de mejora.
- Existe poca difusión respecto a los diferente productos que ofrece la Naciones Unidas. A través de este medio de captación de información, se está conociendo los diferentes espacios que existen, los cuales serán informado a los colegas que trabajan en el proceso de información estadística y geográfica. Es necesaria una difusión masiva. Una campaña

comunicacional, e invitar a los colegas que asisten a las diferentes reuniones oficiales de las Naciones Unidas su utilización.
- Desconocía al Subprograma como tal.

5. Assessment of the impact of the Sub-programme deliverables

If you have requested and received since 2014 any technical assistance from UN Environment on the following areas, how would you rate the usefulness of this support?	Very useful	Useful	Average	Little useful	Not useful	No support requested	Do not know	Total
Support on environmental data collection and monitoring	11	7	5	2		8	5	38
Support on environmental assessments and analyses	7	5	6	2		9	5	34
Support on environmental information sharing	7	10	5	1	1	7	4	35

Highlights:
- Support on environmental data collection and monitoring perceived as very useful by 29% of the respondents.
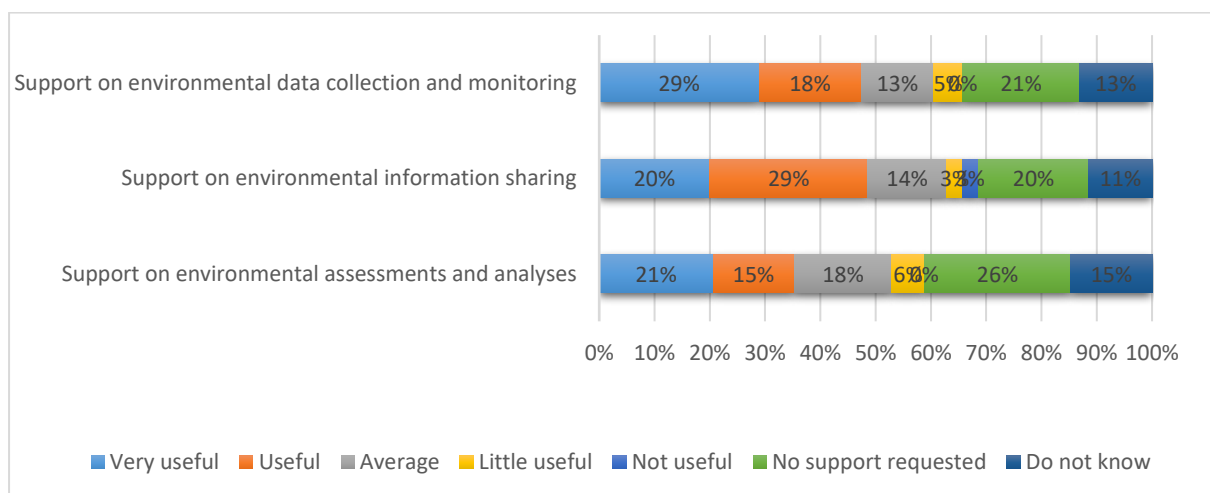
If you have requested and received since 2014 any technical assistance from UN Environment on the following areas, how would you rate the usefulness of this support?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly agree	Agree	Average (agree more or less)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Total
Since 2014, national policymaking has been facilitated by environmental	1	9	10	4	2	10	36

information made available on UNEP Live						
Since 2014, emerging environmental issues from UN Environment have informed national assessment processes and policy planning	2	8	14	2	1	10	37
Since 2014, UN Environment has enhanced the capacity of our country to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge, including data related to gender aspects	5	10	7	4	2	9	37

Highlights:
- Achievements on EUR SP EA (c) more favorably perceived by respondents.
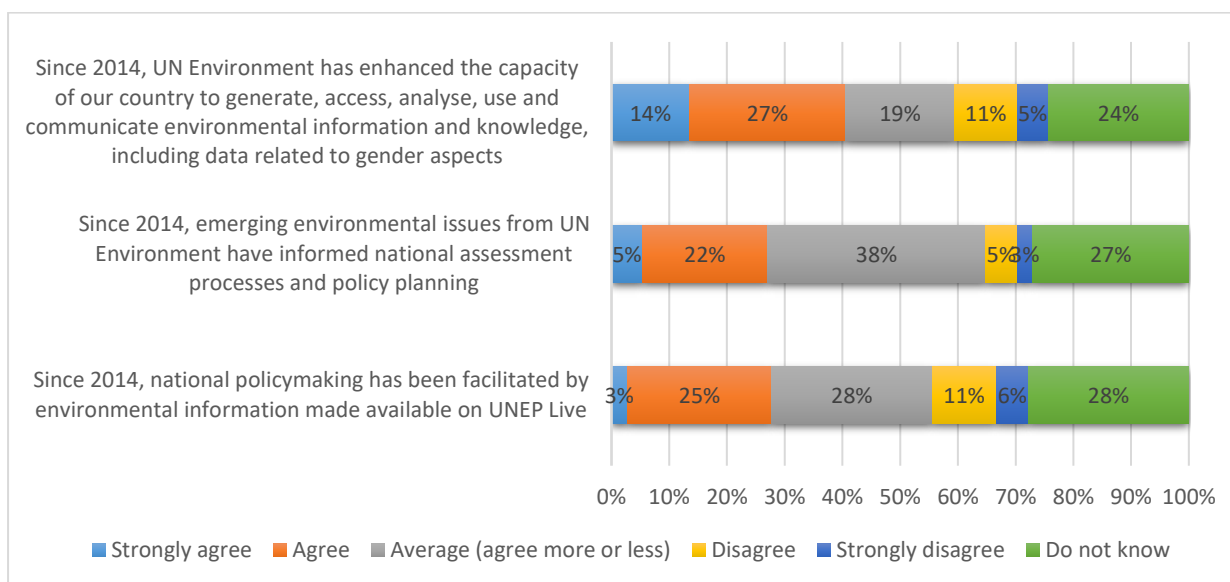
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

6. Looking forward

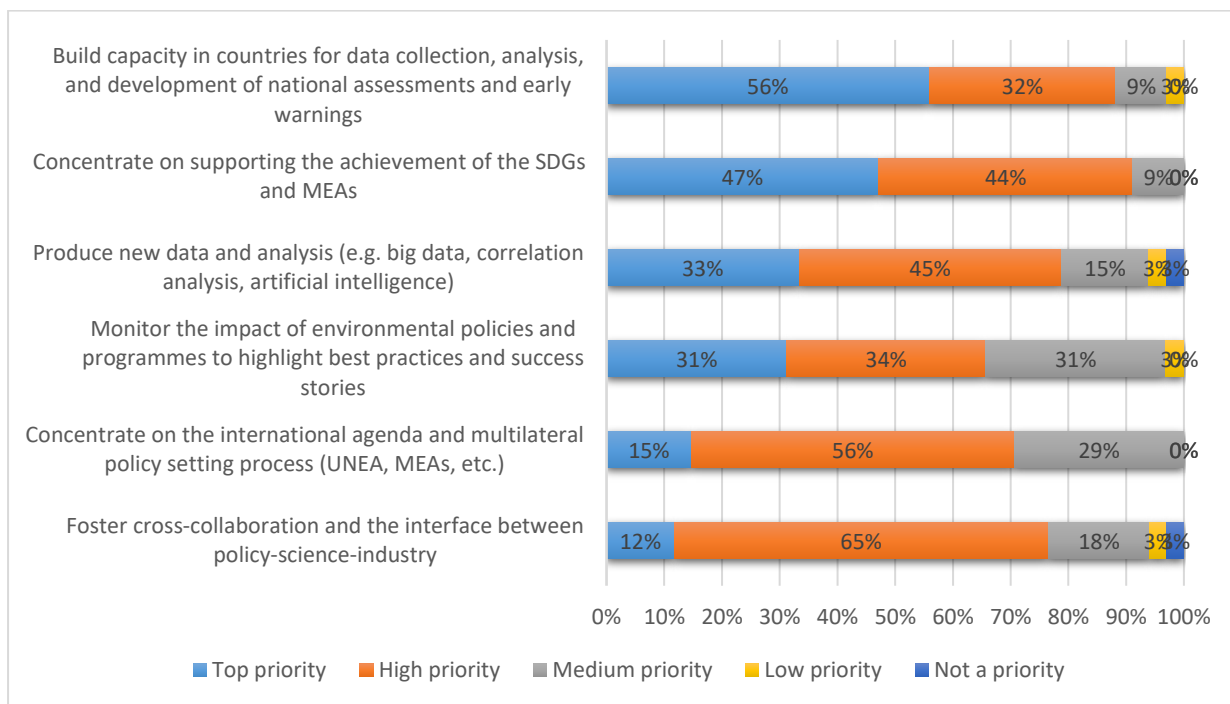| On the basis of the UN Environment mandate and past achievements of the EUR SP, and on your own needs and priorities, what could the EUR SP consider in the coming years to become more relevant and effective?	Top priority	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Total

	Top priority	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Total
Build capacity in countries for data collection, analysis, and development of national assessments and early warnings	19	11	3	1		34
Produce new data and analysis (e.g. big data, correlation analysis, artificial intelligence)	11	15	5	1	1	33
Concentrate on supporting the achievement of the SDGs and MEAs	16	15	3			34
Monitor the impact of environmental policies and programmes to highlight best practices and success stories	10	11	10	1		32
Concentrate on the international agenda and multilateral policy setting process (UNEA, MEAs, etc.)	5	19	10			34
Foster cross-collaboration and the interface between policy-science-industry	4	22	6	1	1	34

Highlights:
- NFPs emphasize national capacity building and SDG/MEA support as possible top priorities for EUR SP.

On the basis of the UN Environment mandate and past achievements of the EUR SP, and on your own needs and priorities, what could the EUR SP consider in the coming years to become more relevant and effective?

Any other initiatives?
- Tools for data assessments and presentation to foster sound policy and action.

- The EUR SP must consider in the coming years engagement thetyouth youth in all EUR SP activities , the youth must participate in all global environmental issues a part of solutions regarding the issues
- Basarse en las practicas y resultados - Considerar la deficiencia y falta de voluntad de los gobiernos en el cumplimiento de acuerdos como las metas ODS. Exigir a EUA, CHINA y OTROS cambiar sus politicas contamintantes (CONTAMINAN MI ENTORNO y MI PLANETA).
- seguimiento de cumplimiento de políticas ambientales vinculándolas con ODS, programas, proyectos, estrategia y acuerdos multilaterales.
- Fortalecer en los Ministerios de Ambiente los procesos de generación de información estadística y geográfica.
  Homologar los indicadores ambientales y de sostenibilidad.
- Financiar fortalecimiento de sistemas de generacion y procesamiento de estadísticas.
- Réanimer le développement culturel lié à la Valeur par rapport à la gestion de l'Environnement

Any final comments?
- No
- Attempts to communicate with UNEP on a working level usually go unheeded. Building capacity in countries should be done in collaboration with countries that have capacity.
- More resources for national assessments especially for SIDs
- UN Environment shall concentrate and work more on harmonization of the donors in environmental agenda at national and regional programs in order to achieve SDGs and MEAs.
- Mucho exito, o nuestro futuro esta escrito a terminar.
- Análisis integral e interrelacionar entre temas ambientales y los ODS
- Desde el 2014 se ha pedido una capacitación en cuentas ambientales y en indicadores de cambio climático pero hasta la presente no se ha recibido, por lo que se solicita por favor nos puedan ayudar con este tema para continuar trabajando por la generación de estadísticas ambientales, gracias.
- Como Instituto de Estadística se ha solicitado capacitaciones en Cuentas Ambientales y en indicadores de Cambio Climático, no obstante nunca se ha recibido respuesta, por lo que se puide de favor se proceda con esta asistencia técnica que es muy útil para el país, muchas gracias
- Promover al desarrollo de las estadísticas, indicadores y cuental ambientales y de sostenibilidad para generar los diferentes informes ambientales nacionales, que sirva a su vez para construir los informes regionales y puedan aportar como base a los informes globales.
- La processus de développement actuel est fondé plus essentiellement sur l'Étude et la recherche mais laissé à coté l'existant et la réalité. Donc il faudrait équilibré le fait pour fonder le future.

Annex 9: CPR Members Evaluation Survey

This annex provides a summary and analysis of the online survey conducted to gather perspectives and feedback on the achievements of the EUR SP.

1. Background

The survey targeted all the members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The design of the survey questionnaire used the POW Outputs with a view to assess their relevance and effectiveness of the EUR SP. The questionnaire made room to open ended questions to collect qualitative insights, including pending needs and possible future directions for the SP. The questionnaire was made available in English.

The survey was anonymous and remained open for 5 weeks, from 16 July to 21 August 2019. The survey was disseminated by the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies. The survey was launched to 122 CPR Members. No information was available on any invalid addresses and messages not delivered to recipients. The survey link was accessed by 56 informants among which 42 dropped out without providing any or sufficient meaningful information to be considered in the results. Altogether, the survey compiled feedback from 14 respondents. A detailed review of the responses led to identify and remove one invalid (i.e. incoherent) contribution, leaving 13 questionnaires to analyze. As questions and sub-questions were optional, several respondents skipped some questions and the results are presented according to the number of respondents per sub-question. The overall response rate to the email survey is circa 11%.

The methodology used to disseminate the survey did not allow to avoid any potential non-response biases. Therefore, the survey does not aim to be statistically representative of the entire target population. The findings presented below are based on the opinion of 13 respondents that do not necessarily represent the entire population of CPR members.

2. Profile of respondents

The first section of the survey intended to collect background information on the projects funded by the Innovation Facility.

2.1. Geographical representation

In which region is the country you represent located?	Responses
Africa	3
Asia and the Pacific	3
Europe	5
Latin America and the Caribbean	1
Total respondents	12

Highlights:
- Slightly higher representation from European countries.
- Only one respondent from Latin America and the Caribbean.

2.2. Gender of respondents

What is your gender?	Responses
Female	6
Male	6
Total respondents	12

Highlights:
- Balanced gender representation.

3. Strategic fit of the EUR Sub-programme

What is your level of agreement with the following statements related to the EUR SP?	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Average (agree more or less)	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know	Total
The EUR SP is fit for purpose	1	5	2	0	0	2	10
The EUR SP informs planning of the UN Environment Programme of Work	2	3	2	2	0	1	10
The EUR SP contributes to set the direction and programming priorities of the other SPs	2	2	3	2	0	1	10
The EUR SP contributes to UNEA ability to make decisions i.e. setting UNEA resolutions	3	2	2	2	0	1	10
The EUR SP projects are adequately funded from the Environment Fund	0	1	4	1	0	4	10
The EUR SP projects should be increasingly funded from extra budgetary resources	2	2	2	1	0	3	10
The EUR SP has a clear purpose and goals	2	4	1	0	0	3	10
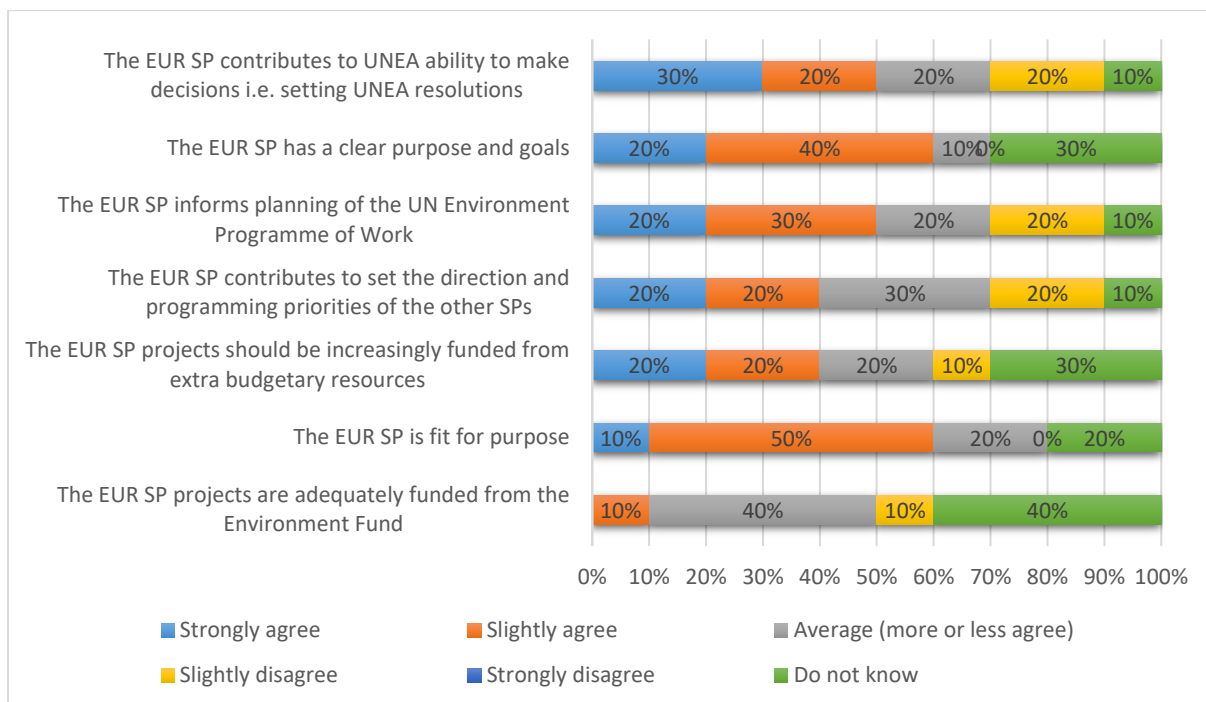
What is your level of agreement with the following statements related to the EUR SP?

> **Highlights:**
> - Half of the respondents agree that the EUR SP contributes to UNEA ability to make decisions, i.e. setting UNEA resolutions.
> - Few respondents agree that EUR SP projects are adequately funded from the Environment Fund.

4. Relevance of the EUR POW Outputs

The EUR SP is implemented primarily through 6 areas of work. How relevant are these areas of work for UN Environment mandate?	Very relevant	Slightly relevant	Average (more or less relevant)	Slightly irrelevant	Very irrelevant	Do not know	Total
Provision of a global web-based knowledge platform providing up-to-date data, information and knowledge to keep the environment under review (Environment Live)	9	3	0	0	0	1	13
Production of integrated environmental assessment at global and regional levels (Regional Environmental Information Networks and GEO process)	8	4	0	0	0	1	13

Delivery of thematic environmental assessments and information and early warning services (e.g. hot spot atlases)	4	7	1	0	0	1	13
Continuous identification, analysis and communication of emerging issues (e.g. Emissions Gap report, Frontiers reports, etc.)	8	3	1	0	0	1	13
Monitoring of the environment- related SDG indicators and support to SDGs including through methods, technical assistance, national reporting and inputs to policy forums	10	1	1	0	0	1	13
Support to national and regional reporting systems based on shared environmental information system principles generating open access to information	5	6	1	0	0	1	13
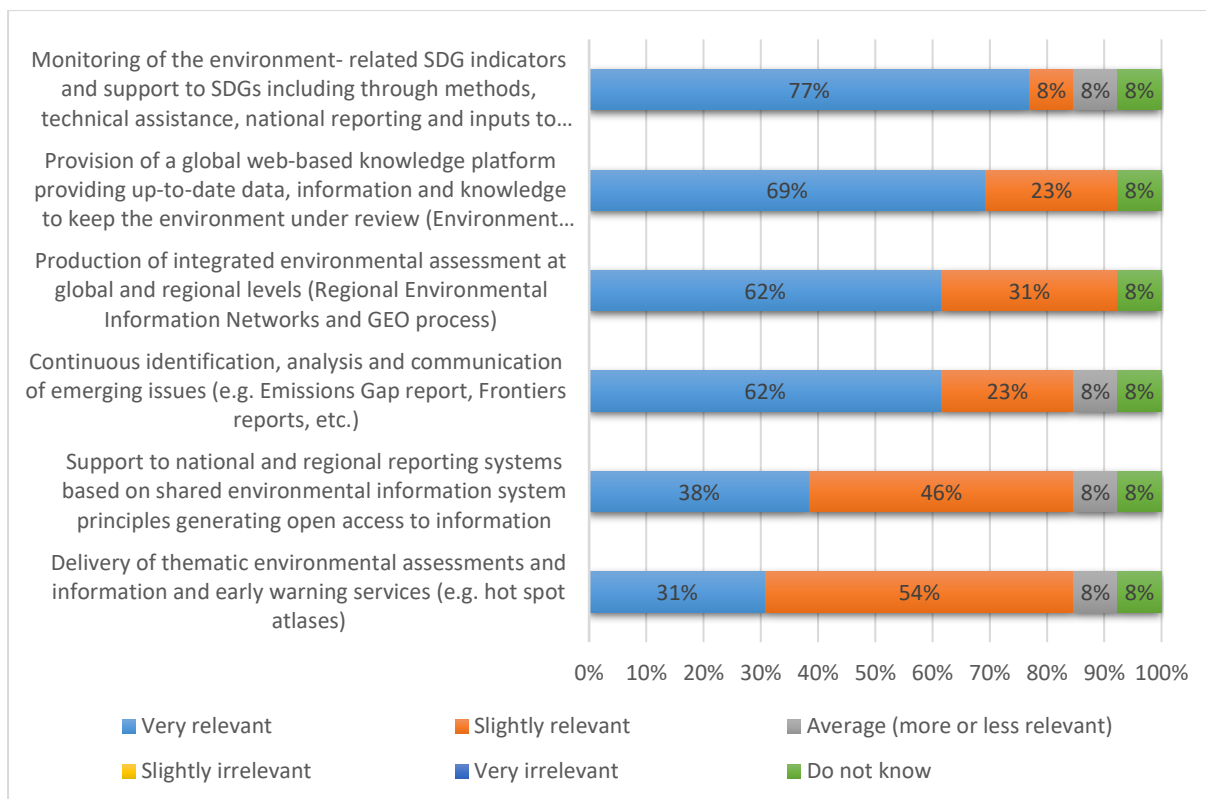
The EUR SP is implemented primarily through 6 areas of work. How relevant are these areas of work for UN Environment mandate?

> **Highlights:**
> - The EUR SP work on monitoring the environment- related SDG indicators and supporting the SDGs is found relevant by most respondents.
> - Support to national and regional reporting systems based on shared environmental information system principles generating open access to information, and delivery of thematic environmental assessments and information and early warning services (e.g. hot spot atlases) are less frequently found relevant.

5. Effectiveness of the EUR SP

5.1. Expected Accomplishments

In your opinion, how effective has the EUR SP been in achieving the following objectives?	Very effective	Sligthtly effective	Average (more or less effective)	Slightly ineffective	Very ineffective	Do not know	Total
Facilitating global, regional and national policymaking by making environmental information available on	3	2	2	1	0	1	9

	Very effective	Slightly effective	Average (more or less effective)	Slightly ineffective	Very ineffective	Do not know	Total
open platforms (e.g. "UNEP Live")							
Informing global, regional and national assessment processes and policy planning with emerging environmental issues	2	4	1	1	0	1	9
Enhancing the capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge, including data related to gender aspects	0	4	0	1	1	3	9
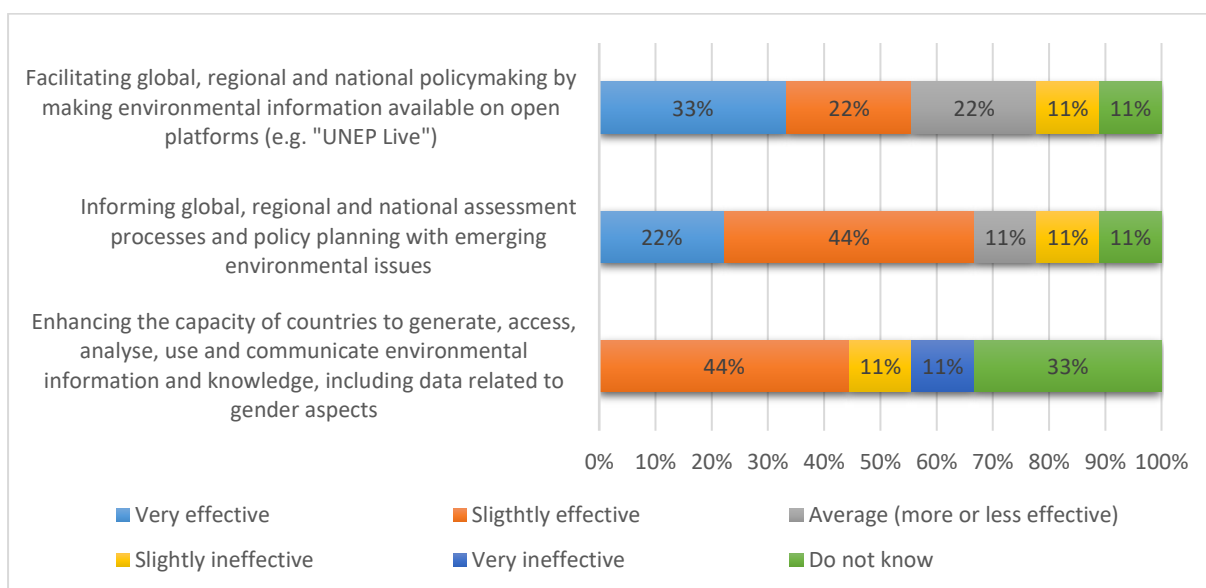
In your opinion, how effective has the EUR SP been in achieving the following objectives?

Highlights:
• The EA on which the larger proportion of responding CPR members find the EUR SP to have been effective is on Facilitating global, regional and national policymaking by making environmental information available on open platforms (e.g. "UNEP Live").
• None of the responding CPR member found the EUR SP very effective on Enhancing the capacity of countries to generate, access, analyse, use and communicate environmental information and knowledge, including data related to gender aspects.

5.2. EUR SP Objective

In your opinion, how effective has the EUR SP been in achieving the following objective?	Very effective	Sligthtly effective	Average (more or less effective)	Slightly ineffective	Very ineffective	Do not know	Total

Empowering stakeholders in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review	1	4	1	0	1	2	9

Empowering stakeholders in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review

- Very effective 11%
- Sligthtly effective 45%
- Average (more or less effective) 11%
- Very ineffective 11%
- Do not know 22%

In your opinion, how effective has the EUR SP been in achieving the following objective?
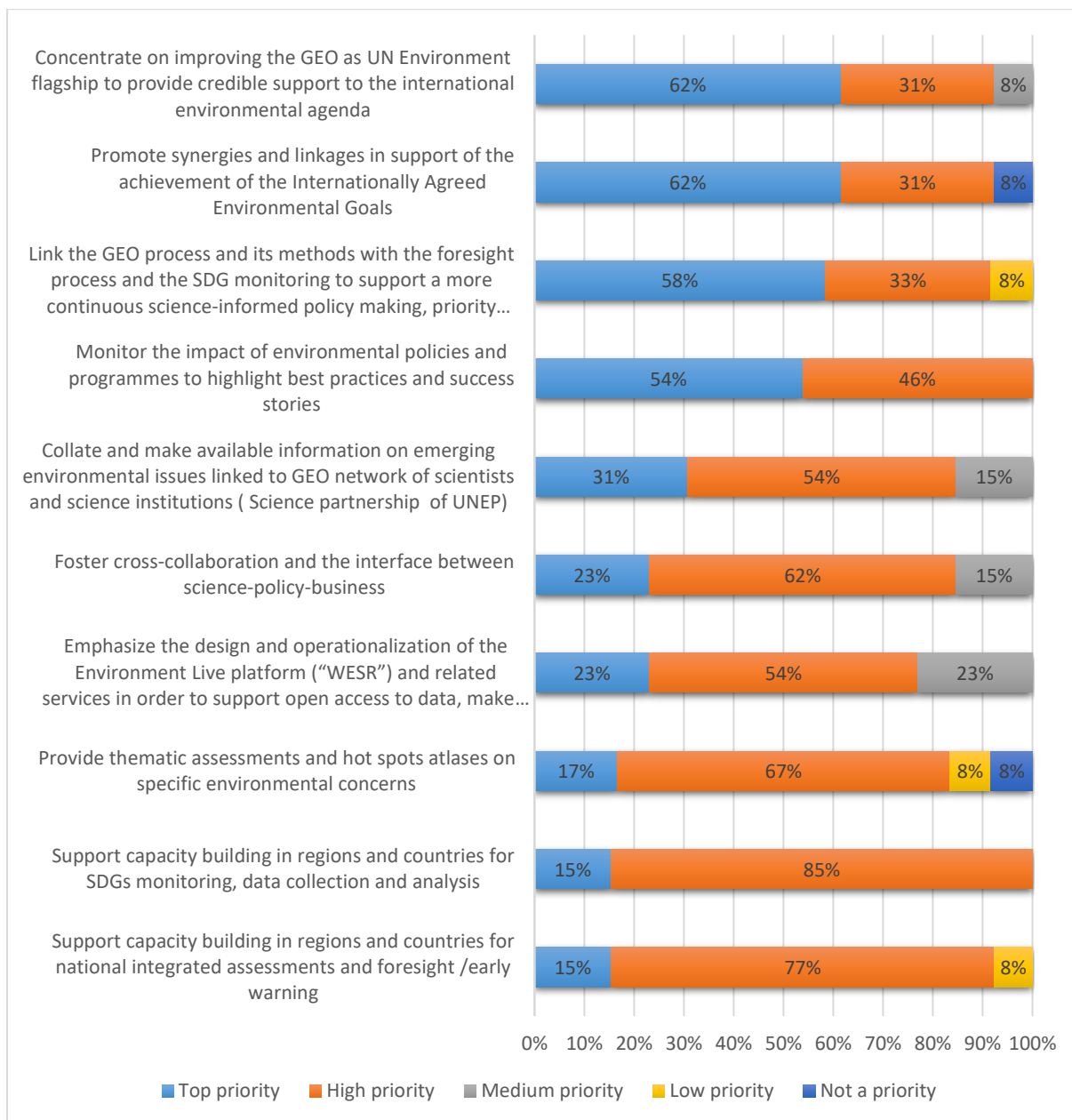
Highlights:
- About 56% of the responding CPR members find that the EUR SP has been somewhat effective in empowering stakeholders in their policy and decision making by providing scientific information and knowledge and keeping the world environment under review.

Please describe specific examples where the use of the EUR SP deliverables led to policy and/or other outcomes:
- UNEPs 2011 reports on black carbon and short lived climate pollutants formed a basis for the CCAC and related action/policy initiatives.
  UNEPs reports on marine litter helped to put plastics on the international agenda
  UNEP/WHO reports on (cost of) air pollution contributed to strengthened action
- 1)Related policy assessments that provides access to data and information that led to quality assessment that led to quality assessment as basis for decision making; 2)studies on BAT and BEP relative to marine litter and its impacts to the environment
- Overall the activities/ efforts led to the success of all programs

6.   Looking forward

On the basis of the UN Environment mandate and past achievements of the EUR SP, and on your own needs and priorities, what could the EUR SP consider in the coming years to become more relevant and effective?	Top priority	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Not a priority	Total
Support capacity building in regions and countries for SDGs monitoring, data collection and analysis	2	10	0	1	0	13
Support capacity building in regions and countries for national integrated assessments and foresight /early warning	2	8	0	1	1	12
Emphasize the design and operationalizing the Environment Live platform ("World environment situation room") and related services in order to support open access to data, make available best and comparable practices, disseminate relevant technical support, and develop more relevant information, data and analysis (e.g. using big data, correlation analysis, artificial intelligence)	3	7	3	0	0	13
Promote synergies and linkages in support of the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Environmental Goals	8	4	0	0	1	13
Monitor the impact of environmental policies and programmes to highlight best practices and success stories	7	6	0	0	0	13
Concentrate on improving the GEO as UN Environment flagship to provide credible support to the international environmental agenda	8	4	1	0	0	13
Link the GEO process and its methods with the foresight process and the SDG monitoring to support a more continuous science-informed policy making, priority setting and action at all levels	7	4	0	1	0	12
Foster cross-collaboration and the interface between science-policy-business	3	8	2	0	0	13
Provide thematic assessments and hot spots atlases on specific environmental concerns	2	11	0	0	0	13
Collate and make available information on emerging environmental issues linked to GEO network of scientists and science institutions (Science partnership of UNEP)	4	7	2	0	0	13

On the basis of the UN Environment mandate and past achievements of the EUR SP, and on your own needs and priorities, what could the EUR SP consider in the coming years to become more relevant and effective?

Highlights:
- According to responding CPR members, four potential areas of work are more frequently found important for the EUR SP going further, in particular improving the GEO as UN Environment flagship to provide credible support to the international environmental agenda, and promoting synergies and linkages in support of the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Environmental Goals.
- Few responding CPR members emphasize national capacity building as a top priority for the EUR SP in the years to come.

What do you think have been the major strengths of the EUR Sub-programme as support for UN Environment wide expected results?

- In areas that had been successful, probably several factors played a role:
  - the findings were scientifically underpinned (credibility)
  - the findings were also providing options on actions that could be taken (that were communicable, sufficiently concrete and within reach) (actionability)
  - communication was targeted and effort was made to build up sufficient international or regional (political) momentum to get support for action
- Pilot Project in the developing countries.
- 1)Related policy assessments that provides access to data and information that led to quality assessment that led to quality assessment as basis for decision making; and 2)studies on BAT and BEP relative to marine litter and its impacts to the environment
- Knowledge sharing and commitment

How do you see the work of the EUR Sub-programme best supporting regions and national governments?

- If the outcomes would be taken forward in developing policies and instruments to achieve the 2030 Agenda, in particular its environmental dimension. UNEP could play a key role in advising on policy tools, whereas implementation should be (in collaboration) with other (UN) programmes or agencies to support regions and national governments.
- Information sharing between country.
- UNEP through EUR Sub-programme can bring technical assistance and financial contribution for Regional Environmental Outlook. Outcomes of regional meetings are share at national level for the purpose their implementation.
- Provision of capacity building on policy impact assessments for better decision-making and more improves performance planning
- Good. Must obtain regular feed back from member countries

Do you have any comments or suggestions for improvements of the EUR Sub-programme?

- Few comments regarding the Environment Live:
  - the World Situation Room is a nice concept, but it doesn't seem to work technically. I've never seen it function properly, the page shows just a grey screen
  - SDGs - Global MEAs synergies in Environment Live is a very useful and informative tool - thank you for that!
- Provide thematic assessments that address the key environmental issues that are relevant for the different regions. In line with the available budget, then prioritize by phasing the subjects/themes in time. Ideally, match with UNEA themes, once/if they are decided for more UNEAs. Keep following emerging issues, but be aware of political agendas.
- Support fund for developing country.
- Same as above (Provision of capacity building on policy impact assessments for better decision-making and more improves performance planning)
- Constant dialogue with stake holders and act on those suggestions/ feedback received
- Communication, communication. GEO6 did not hit major news channels as a big thing - it should've had.

Annex 10: UNEA resolutions

UNEA 1 – 27 June 2014

RES #	
1/1	Ministerial outcome document of the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme
½	Amendments to the rules of procedure
1/3	Illegal trade in wildlife
¼	Science-policy interface
1/5	Chemicals and waste
1/6	Marine plastic debris and microplastics
1/7	Strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality
1/8	Ecosystem-based adaptation
1/9	Global Environment Monitoring System/Water Programme GEMS/Water)
1/10	Different visions, approaches, models and tools to achieve environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication
1/11	Coordination across the United Nations system in the field of the environment, including the Environment Management Group
1/12	Relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements
1/13	Implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
1/14	Revised programme of work and budget for the biennium 2014−2015
1/15	Proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2016−2017
1/16	Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions
1/17	Amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility

UNEA 2 - Nairobi, 23−27 May 2016

RES #	
2/1	2/1 Amendments to the rules of procedure
2/2	Role and functions of the regional forums of ministers of environment and environment authorities
2/3	Investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training
2/4	Role, functions and modalities for UNEP implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
2/5	Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2/6	Supporting the Paris Agreement
2/7	Sound management of chemicals and waste
2/8	Sustainable consumption and production
2/9	Prevention, reduction and reuse of food waste
2/10	Oceans and seas
2/11	Marine plastic litter and micro-plastics
2/12	Sustainable coral reefs management
2/13	Sustainable management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication
2/14	Illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products
2/15	Protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict
2/16	Mainstreaming of biodiversity for well-being
2/17	Enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity- related conventions

2/18	Relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat
2/19	Midterm review of the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environment Law (Montevideo Programme IV)
2/20	Proposed medium-term strategy for 2018-2021 and programme of work and budget for 2018-2019
2/21	Sand and dust storms
2/22	Review of the cycle of sessions of UNEA of UNEP
2/23	Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions
2/24	Combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands
2/25	Application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in the Latin America and Caribbean Region

UNEA 3 - DEC 2017

RESOLUTIONS	
UNEP/EA.3/Res.1	Pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism
UNEP/EA.3/Res.2	Pollution Mitigation by Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Key Sectors
UNEP/EA.3/Res.3	Contributions of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development
UNEP/EA.3/Res.4	Environment and Health
UNEP/EA.3/Res.5	Investing in innovative environmental solutions for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
UNEP/EA.3/Res.6	Managing soil pollution to achieve Sustainable Development
UNEP/EA.3/Res.7	Marine litter and microplastics
UNEP/EA.3/Res.8	Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally
UNEP/EA.3/Res.9	Eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries
UNEP/EA.3/Res.10	Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems
UNEP/EA.3/Res.11	Implementation of paragraph 88 (a)–(h) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want"
FINAL DECISIONS	
3/1	Extension of the delivery date for the sixth Global Environment Outlook report
3/2	Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
3/3	Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions

Draft Resolutions UNEA 4 – For March 2019 Nairobi -*Version: 20 November 2018*

1	Clean Mobility	Argentina	15 November
2	Sustainable Nitrogen Management	Bangladesh	15 November
3	Sustainable public procurement	Chile	16 November
4	Clean Mobility, in particular Electric Mobility	Chile	16 November
5	Resource Efficiency and Waste Management	Chile	16 November
6	Environment and human rights for all	Costa Rica	15 November* intent only
7	Deforestation and agricultural commodity supply chains	European Union & its member States	15 November
8	Sound management of chemicals and waste	European Union & its member States	15 November

9	Sustainable Consumption and Production in a Circular Economy	European Union & its member States	15 November
10	Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities	Indonesia	15 November
11	Sustainable Mangrove Management for Coastal Protection	Indonesia	15 November
12	Share and Scale Up Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Practices on The Ground by Development of National SCP Resource Pool and Promotion of Citizenship of All Stakeholders	Indonesia	15 November
13	Sustainable Peatland Management for Tackling Climate Change through Establishment of International Tropical Peatland Center	Indonesia	15 November
14	Further action on Circular Economy	Japan	15 November
15	Further action on Marine plastic litter	Japan	15 November
16	Impacts of the Syrian crisis and the Syrian refugees on the environment	Lebanon	16 November* intent only
17	Sustainable Infrastructure	Mongolia	15 November
18	Marine litter and micro-plastics	Norway	15 November
19	Sustainable Management of Plastic Waste including Micro and Nano-Plastics through Innovative Solutions	Sri Lanka	15 November
20	Food Loss and Waste Management through Accepted Sustainable Practices	Sri Lanka	15 November
21	Protecting Ecological Balance of Food Chains by Conserving and Sustainable Using the Mangrove Ecosystems	Sri Lanka	15 November
22	Geoengineering and its governance	Switzerland	15 November

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ii OIOS Report 2019-Endnote, including Rio + 20, Future We Want outcome document, post-2015 SDGs and Agenda 2030, the Climate Change Paris Agreement, Sendai, and IEGs.

ii The report reflects that the *lowest* amount of donor funding to support countries goes to develop their environmental data. For instance, the report stated that *w*hile considerable effort has been made to address these data gaps over the past four years, *progress has been limited*. Increased investment is urgently needed to ensure that adequate data are available to inform decision-making on all aspects of the 2030 Agenda. To that end, the Dubai Declaration launched at the second World Data Forum in October 2018, outlined a demand-driven funding mechanism under the Member States' oversight that will respond quickly and efficiently to the priorities of national statistical systems. The report highlighted a mismatch on global donor support on SDG monitoring related to Environmental Data collection and methods. Another gap the SG report emphasized was LDC's need for support for data collection.