Evaluation of the UNEP Environmental Governance Sub-Programme

Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

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Front cover: The resumed in-person (hybrid) segment of the First Global Meeting of National Focal Points to the Fifth Montevideo Programme in Nairobi, Kenya from 6-9 June 2022. ©UNEP/Stephen Teng'o

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Environmental Governance Sub-Programme
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific (countries)
ANUBIS	UNEP Biosafety Information System
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCH	Biosafety Clearing House
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Common Country Assessment
COMIFAC	Central African Forest Commission
COP	Conference of the Parties
DaRT	Data Reporting Tool for MEAs
DELC	Division of Environmental Law and Conventions
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EC	European Commission
EG	Environmental Governance
EMG	Environment Management Group
EROL	Environmental Rule of Law
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
IEG	International Environmental Governance
IoA	Indicator of Achievement
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LEO	Law and Environmental Outlook
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NBF	National Biosafety Framework
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Government Organization
ODS	Ozone Depleting Substance
PD	Progressive Development of International Environmental Law
PEA	Poverty-Environment Action

PEI	Poverty Environment Initiative
PoW	Programme of Work
PPD	Policy and Programme Division
PPR	Programme Performance Reviews
PRC	Project Review Committee
SCAF	Seed Capital Assistance Facility
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SICCEL	Strengthening Institutional Capacity in Environmental Law
SMT	Senior Management Team
SP	Sub-Programme
SPC	Sub-Programme Coordinator
SPEG	Sub-Programme for Environmental Governance
SPSP	Sub-Programme for Science-Policy
SUN	Sustainable United Nations
ToC	Theory of change
U4E	United for Efficiency
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

1. This evaluation assessed the Sub-Programme on Environmental Governance (SPEG) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) over the period 2014-2021. The evaluation contributes to accountability and learning objectives to inform future planning and programming.

2. The SPEG is one of seven UNEP sub-programmes. The SPEG has consistently targeted three areas over the evaluation period, i) a normative approach focused on preparing and developing laws and standards, ii) supporting and striving for coherence of global environmental governance with Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations system; and iii) supporting active environmental governance capacity building within UNEP, more broadly within the UN system and also across Member States. In UNEP's latest strategies, the SPEG is recognized as a foundational sub-programme that is an important contributor to activities and results of other sub-programmes and that aims to support the thematic sub-programmes.

3. The evaluation addressed identified key evaluation questions and followed internationally recognized evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact as well as the UNEP-specific criteria of factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues including gender and human rights mainstreaming and impacts on vulnerable groups to guide the assessment. The evaluation analyzed evidence from three data sources, i) review of relevant strategic and operational documents, ii) the Project portfolio through a sample selection and analysis of available evaluation ratings, and iii) interviews with key stakeholders.

4. **The evaluation rates[1] the SPEG as Relevant**. At a global level, the SPEG responds to an increasing focus on environmental governance issues. At the strategic level, the SPEG is intrinsically linked to UNEP's other sub-programmes with governance instruments identified as fundamental to achieving other environmental goals. The UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 takes this link further and identifies the SPEG as a foundational sub-programme. However, these strategic documents do not include a clear definition of environmental governance (EG) or practical guidance for programming or coordination that can shape the approach across the organization. As a result, there is variance in the understanding of environmental governance across UNEP and difficulty in articulating the added value of EG activities. A shared understanding of the concept is required and should be promoted across UNEP.

5. The SPEG portfolio is fragmented and does not reflect a clear strategic direction or pathway towards articulated goals. The portfolio does respond to United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and funding partner priorities; however, the relevance at the national level for individual Member States is less clear. The portfolio, as a whole, does not operate on systematic country needs assessments or prioritization although there are some positive approaches by some individual projects and programmes. Nonetheless, specialized environmental law expertise, regional environmental governance activities and support to MEAs are considered highly relevant as a means for achieving EG-related results.

6. **The SPEG is assessed as Effective.** Over the evaluation period, the SPEG demonstrates a high degree of achievement of expected accomplishments as outlined in the Programme Performance Reviews. Similarly, the Project Portfolio also supports a Moderately Satisfactory or Satisfactory performance rating. Most projects demonstrate achievement of positive results that contribute to improved EG outcomes. Three key categories of activities contributing to these higher-level outcomes have been identified, namely, i) legal support, ii) MEA support, and iii) EG capacity building to enable direct benefits in environmental governance.

7. The work under the Montevideo Programme, as part of the legal support category, over the years has generated spin-off effects contributing to the legal aspects of international agreements on mercury and the management of transboundary freshwater resources as well as training programmes. MEA Secretariat representatives and NGOs consider the "InfoMEA" information portal, established as part of the MEA Support categories, a good step forward with better chance of success than previous

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[1] For full rating scale, see methodology section.

information consolidation and sharing efforts. An example of the positive results under the EG capacity building category is the SICCEL[2] project which supported capacity development for government officials on environmental law and policy as well as MEAs. The UN reform process, which has been ongoing since 2017[3], is a key factor that could positively affect results going forward if UNEP engages with the common country programming process as an important forum to understand country priorities and integrate EG activities as well as enhance collaboration with the broader UN system for key environmental outcomes. The reform process represents an opportunity for progress towards outcomes outlined in the 2022-2025 MTS for EG mainstreaming in planning documents and approaches at the national regional and global level.

8.   However, a lack of shared organizational understanding of EG contributes to a lack of focus within the SPEG and undermines coherent programming. There is insufficient synergy and some duplication of effort between sub-programmes. This leads to a dilution of EG-related activities across UNEP sub-programmes and monitoring of results and progress towards expected accomplishments for EG is difficult. Of particular importance, is the link between the SPEG and the Science-Policy Sub-Programme (previously the Environment Under Review SP) and the essential link between these two sub-programmes is not adequately acknowledged, fostered or supported by institutional processes. The linkages to other sub-programmes expected of the SPEG (especially going forward as a foundational sub-programme) is not adequately reflected in organizational and strategic tools such as Programmes of Work or Results Frameworks which should specifically identify targets for expected results, and include the level of coordination required with individual sub-programmes. Further, current management structures and processes focus mainly on the divisions and branch activities through individual projects or programmes, rather than towards results of the Sub-Programme as a whole. Stronger SPEG management processes are required to influence key design and resource allocation decisions for improved SPEG outcomes.

9.   **The SPEG is assessed as Moderately Efficient.** Overall, the SPEG has generated positive results but not to an optimum level. Challenges related to resource availability have been reported at both the project level within the SPEG portfolio and at the sub-programme level. Other efficiency considerations include project timeframes that are too short and do not recognize the value of prolonged engagement required to build sustainable EG results.

10.   **The sustainability of the SPEG is assessed as Moderately Likely.** There are good practice examples of sustainability within the SPEG portfolio of projects where there is evidence of institutional change and capacity that has been built. However, common threats to sustainability across the Sub-Programme include limited systematic identification of and responsiveness to country priorities and insufficient engagement of decision-makers to generate ownership for longer-term results. Missed opportunities for coordination with other UN bodies for increased engagement and understanding of country context were also noted to impact on the likelihood of sustainability. This is another important reason for UNEP and the SPEG to link with broader UN common country programming processes to ensure that activities are tailored to context.

11.   This evaluation did not rate the SPEG in terms of impact because the expected contribution of EG activities to longer term impact was not clearly traced. While the expectations regarding impact were not clearly articulated across the Sub-Programme, there is some evidence to suggest that projects within the SPEG have contributed to longer-term impact. Projects targeting institutional change, which were able to engage over a longer time period, were most likely to achieve impact-level results. Other evaluations highlighted positive long-term results that suggest that there is greater potential for impact of SPEG activities than is currently being recognized. This finding raises an opportunity for UNEP to generate learnings from successful SPEG approaches which can be used more broadly, both within and beyond UNEP. Generation of such knowledge is an important part of UNEP's leadership role in the environment space. However, establishing processes and tools to appropriately capture results is an essential step to build this learning.

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[2] Strengthening Institutional Capacity of Countries in Environmental Law through Training, Sharing Expertise and Legal Guidance Materials
[3] United Nations, *United to Reform*, https://reform.un.org/

12.   Overall, the SPEG has not generated strong evidence to confirm contribution to mainstreaming of human rights, gender and considerations of vulnerable populations into SPEG activities, although some positive progress towards this is evident. Some good practice examples of consideration and mainstreaming of human rights and gender are available at the individual project level. However, these are not explicitly or systematically applied. Nevertheless, there is increasingly available evaluation data related to these topics suggesting that they are receiving more attention in recent years. In addition, the work of the SPEG officers to support efforts within the Human Rights Council and UNGA to adopt a human right to the environment has a significant impact potential worldwide.

13.   In conclusion, the SPEG has generated positive results and most projects have made a contribution to EG outcomes; although this is not always captured in formal reporting. Key EG gains have been in support for improved environmental policies and laws, and institutional changes to strengthen environmental governance, including support for MEA's priorities, progress towards environmental-related SDGs and the Human Rights Council and UNGA adopting a human right to the environment. Challenges and opportunities exist for the SPEG to fulfil a greater potential. Revising reporting tools is an important step for the SPEG to demonstrate its contributions to enhancing EG. In addition, changes to management structures and implementing processes for enhanced coordination both within UNEP and with the UN more broadly through the reform process are other key activities for the SPEG to achieve its potential. This evaluation identifies emerging lessons in relation to five key questions to focus findings on strategic aspects of the SPEG.

14.   **Evaluation question 1**. Is the concept of environmental governance clearly understood and applied in the design and implementation of the Sub-Programme? Despite the stipulated importance of EG in UNEP strategic documents and a broad recognition of the value of the SPEG, there is limited shared knowledge and understanding more broadly within UNEP about EG. As such the value of the Sub-Programme is somewhat undermined and there are insufficient guidelines and tools to set specific goals, identify intended results or prioritize activities accordingly. This contributes to a fragmented approach to the design and implementation of the Sub-Programme.

15.   **Evaluation question 2.** How can the synergies between the SPEG and other thematic, foundational, and enabling UNEP sub-programmes be made tangible and effective? There is little evidence of tools or processes in place for cross-sub-programme coordination despite a focus at the strategic level for UNEP. Providing additional clarity about the concept and value of EG would encourage coordination and assist with identifying EG activities currently being implemented by other sub-programmes. In addition, practical processes for coordination such as regular interdivisional meetings and an increased role of the Sub-Programme Coordinators in design, programming and resourcing decisions would also facilitate increased coordination for work towards UNEP's three thematic priorities (addressing the 'three planetary crises') across all SPs, programmes and divisions.

16.   **Evaluation question 3.** How can the programmatic cooperation and synergies be enhanced between UNEP and the UNEP-administered MEAs? What is the role of the SPEG and other sub-programmes in MEAs related work? The support to MEA priorities is of significant importance for global and national EG. The work of the SPEG in supporting common priorities of MEAs such as information management through InfoMEA, collaborations through the MEAs focal point network and the MEAs gender network and the coordination work through the regional offices is highly valued but under-staffed and can be strengthened. The Law Division is currently reviewing its approach to MEA support in collaboration with the MEAs and this will inform future arrangements. This evaluation found that a more strategic approach is needed to overcome the fragmented nature of these efforts and that the SPEG needs to agree a clear and distinct approach in collaboration with the MEAs.

17.   **Evaluation question 4.** Are the institutional structures and management arrangements for delivery of EG work conducive to effective management at the level of the Sub-Programme and the achievement of desired EG results? The approach to programming expected through the sub-programme modality framed around themes (e.g. environmental governance, climate action, etc.) is not reflected in current management structures which continue to be driven by divisional processes and structure focused on individual projects. Changes to these structures, including creating 13 programmes, situating the SP Coordinators in the Policy and Programme Division and developing a new 'delivery model' aim to address these challenges but are likely to take time to have a real impact.

In line with the evaluation findings to improve clarity of SPEG priorities as a foundational sub-programme, the structure and management require new focus in line with the MTS 2022-2025.

18.   **Evaluation question 5.** *To what extent has the SPEG contributed to the UN Reform process and how can its role be enhanced in the future?* To date, engagement of the SPEG in UN reform processes has been limited in terms of the capacity of the regional development coordination officers, working with the wider regional UNEP teams to engage in all countries in a timely manner, given the small number of staff for the extent of country coverage. Where engagement has occurred the outcomes are positive. There is a huge potential for this involvement to increase with several benefits for UNEP and the SPEG. Firstly, enhanced engagement of the SPEG in common country programming processes would allow for increased knowledge and understating about contextual factors and priorities. If the SPEG can effectively respond to these priorities, then increased country-ownership and approaches that are contextualized and relevant are likely. Engaging more intensively with the UN reform process would allow UNEP to link more strongly with other UN agencies which would further encourage the integration of environmental governance considerations in the work of other agencies, enhance synergies and decrease duplication of efforts.

19.   In summary, the evaluation proposes five key recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Critical	UNEP's leadership role and approach to environmental governance needs a clearer focus, strategic priorities and more specific outcomes.

The SPEG should develop, in collaboration with other SPs/Divisions and MEAs, an improved overall strategy and mechanisms to strengthen its approach to EG across UNEP in line with the MTS 2022-2025 UNEP thematic priorities. This needs to include a clear, working definition of EG to inform the SPEG's scope and activities. This will require a stronger statement of UNEP's role in EG and a more coherent, organization-wide commitment to coordinated EG.

In the same way as the MTS 2022-2025 has identified thematic priorities, the SPEG needs a targeted results framework (especially immediate outcomes, direct indicators and units of measure) to help guide the SPEG, as a foundational and cross-cutting SP, in relation to the UNEP thematic priorities and facilitate more effective communication of its impact, relevance and effectiveness across UNEP.

Adopting a SPEG Theory of Change (ToC), nested with the three corporate ToCs, in line with current initiatives of the SPEG towards stronger links with the MTS thematic priorities, would promote effective management, development of more concrete and focused indicators and units of measure for the SPEG would aid design and implementation. More training on ToC and related issues would promote effective management and enhance opportunities to apply ToC approaches to normative EG contexts.

Recommendation 2: Critical	Environmental Governance requires a more cross-cutting and mainstreamed approach to developing its PoW to achieve the MTS 2022-2025 vision of SPEG as a foundational sub-programme.

The SPEG should undertake a strategic review across UNEP to improve programming. This would include understanding what activities of relevance to EG are being pursued in other SPs and where synergies may be best realized. There is a need to promote awareness of the benefits of more strategic EG action and synergies across the SPs.

The actions arising need to be applied through an integrated PoW with stronger links with other SPs to capitalize on opportunities to strengthen EG collaboratively across SPs. This may be particularly important for cross-cutting governance issues such as gender and human rights. Such an initiative would generate useful lessons for other SPs.

The SPEG workplan should be linked with and demonstrate the added value of the SPEG to the three UNEP thematic priorities (climate action, chemicals / pollution action and nature action) across all divisions. The current SPEG set up is not central to the new thrust of UNEP MTS. The workplan needs to show how SPEG adds value to cross-house EG. SPEG-related results in other divisions and budgetary applications need to be acknowledged to feed into future programming.

Recommendation 3: Critical	Environmental Governance key functions require an amended structure, linked to the Theory of Change and outcomes identified in Recommendation 1.

Clearer distinction is required between the three functions of EG, (i) Legal support, (ii) MEA support and (iii) strengthening EG capacity more broadly within the UNEP, the UN and Members States, is required so that these functions can be more clearly addressed within the portfolio and through collaboration.

Consideration of these functions could lead to structural changes, for instance, cooperation with MEAs needs to be pursued at all levels. A dedicated branch for MEAs support is warranted for this purpose and a greater focus on the importance of capacity development as a cross-cutting function of the legal and MEA support work, as well as national and institutional capacity strengthening. Similarly, while the importance of the regional work is already being emphasized in MTS implementation, this needs to be more clearly supported through the SPEG.

Recommendation 4: Critical	The SPEG needs to be proactive in its supporting role across UNEP and clarify and seek the specific expertise required to fill roles in support of cooperation, skills enhancement activities and establishing specific coordination mechanisms.

Closer cooperation between the SPs, MEAs and partners in EG capacity strengthening on the development of joint indicators, units of measure for coordination and support would enhance cooperation and outcomes.

Improving SPEG function and structure should include a skills review to identify the distinct skills required for each function e.g. facilitation and communications for MEAs. Coordination and improved communication lines for SPEG with other SPs should be given attention, as well as budget tracing in line with performance assessment to better understand where greatest value is being achieved. These can include more active coordination mechanisms between the activities of SPEG, between SPEG leadership team and other SPs and between SPEG and the MEAs. Coordination issues and potential improvements need to be explicitly discussed.

Recommendation 5: Critical	UNEP should make more of the opportunity of UN Reform to mainstream EG initiatives as well as other UNEP activities at the national level. This requires a more active initiative to engage with key countries in the CCA and UNSDCF to leverage activities in EG and build learning to support future UNCT, MEA and MS initiatives.

The potential for UNEP, through the SPEG to catalyze EG through technical, multi-lateral and bilateral agencies and local actors in the current UN Reform process is substantial. Countries are actively researching and reconsidering their priorities through the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

Clearer, more systematic pathways for identifying country priorities for EG to link with the UNCT processes for the CCA and the UNSDCF would provide a substantial opportunity to enhance the mainstreaming of environmental governance to the entire UN programme of support across each country. This could also provide greater strategic focus at the regional level for both normative and strategic support.

Resources to support greater UNEP engagement are warranted, particularly as the new processes occur. This includes both links with the UNSDCF processes centrally as well as regional and country level support and greater collaboration with the MEAs to create strategic links between actions to support MEA compliance and broader strengthening of EG.

20. **Introduction**. This report details the findings and conclusions of an evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) Environmental Governance (EG) Sub-Programme from 2014-2021. The Evaluation is expected to support accountability and 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.

Focus of the Environmental Governance Sub-Programme

21. **Strengthening Environmental Governance is a foundational aim of the establishment of UNEP.** UNEP was established in 1972 to promote and enable good environmental governance. Environmental governance is the institutional and legal architecture needed to make environmental goals and commitments a reality. Supporting countries in developing and implementing environmental policies in an integrated manner and abiding by strong legal and institutional frameworks that effectively achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development is part of UNEP's core work. Mounting scientific evidence of the seriousness of environmental threats highlight the importance of and create opportunities for developing environmental governance. Coherent decision-making towards more effective legal and institutional frameworks that underpin the achievement of internationally agreed goals for climate, biodiversity and pollution in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the UN Reform process that places more attention on integrated national planning is now more important than ever. The dynamic context of global efforts to tackle these goals with the new UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2022-2025 and institutional changes within UNEP highlight the importance of the evaluation of UNEP's approach to environmental governance.

22. The Sub-Programme for Environmental Governance (SPEG) was established in 2009 in response to a call from the UNEP Governing Council to "set a normative agenda for international environmental governance (IEG) and a functional IEG system that provides the international framework to support governments in successfully addressing environmental challenges and meeting their commitments and as a precondition to carry out other UNEP activities effectively."[4] "Vision 2030" in the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2021 aimed to develop and enhance integrated approaches to sustainable development and "demonstrate that improving the health of the environment will bring social and economic benefits". It noted the role of UNEP in supporting the 2030 Agenda, particularly in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are related to natural resources protection and management. The latest MTS now explicitly places the SPEG as a foundational programme that underpins UNEP's activities.

23. **A consistent focus on three main thrusts for environmental governance.** The MTS 2018-2021 emphasizes a "need to … set up effective laws, policies and institutions to govern actions that affect the environment."[5] Throughout the MTSs covered by the evaluation period, continuing from previous periods, there has been a consistent focus on three key elements of environmental governance (i) the need for a normative approach to environmental governance focusing on the preparation of laws and standards, (ii) coherence with and support to the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs), and (iii) a support for active capability building to enable direct EG benefits within UNEP, within the UN and across the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Member States.

24. **The UNEP approach to environmental governance has evolved with each subsequent MTSs, from stand-alone to cross-cutting.** In 2009, environmental governance was defined as "the processes and institutions that guide and restrain the collective action of Governments, organizations, major groups and civil society to address collective environmental issues at all levels, from local to national, sub-regional, regional and global".[6] Through the SPEG, UNEP aimed to strengthen legal and institutional arrangements for international cooperation on environmental issues and supporting national policies and actions related to environmental governance.

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[4] UNEP Annual Report, 2009.
[5] UNEP MTS 2018-2021, page 2.
[6] UNEP Sub-Programme on Environmental Governance, 2009.

25.   The SPEG had originally included a focus on environmental policy and the scientific aspects of knowledge and learning in improved environmental governance. During the MTS 2014-2017 a new sub-programme on "environment under review" (now the Science-Policy Sub-Programme) was introduced, aiming to leverage information as an agent of change and ensure a coherent approach in dealing with the science-policy interface. The new sub-programme shifted a range of activities relevant to the science-policy interface from environmental governance to the new sub-programme. These portfolio changes sharpened the focus on environmental governance as a cross-cutting requirement across the implementation of other sub-programmes and tended to shift attention to legal requirements of environmental governance. This shift is reflected in the selection of the Law Division as the lead for the SPEG.

26.   The SPEG was expected to focus on facilitation across sub-programmes. The vision statement in the MTS 2014-2017 was "Facilitating the development, implementation and evolution of laws, norms and standards and developing coherent interlinkages among multilateral environmental agreements." The unifying nature of environmental governance internally was highlighted "…the organization will integrate governance-related activities within all its sub-programmes, taking into account the links between national, provincial and local levels." It also highlighted the need to align "…governance structures to the challenges of global sustainability and, in particular, to integrate social, environmental and economic objectives in sustainable development policies at all levels of governance". The strategic focus on EG brought a heightened focus on how the SPEG is supported in an integrated manner, globally, regionally, nationally and locally. The MTS 2018-2021 reinforced and further expanded this approach by "Recognizing that effective environmental governance influences the achievement of results in all environmental fields, the Sub-Programme draws upon and contributes to the implementation of all other sub-programmes."

27.   The newly adopted integration approach underlined the need for the SPEG to be aligned with the performance indicators in other sub-programmes to optimize outcomes and to facilitate and underpin the achievements of other sub-programmes. The approach has now been clearly presented in the most recent MTS 2022-2025, that was released just before the commencement of this evaluation. As shown in Figure 1, the SPEG is no longer seen as a separate pillar but is now clearly portrayed as a cross-cutting and foundational sub-programme, supporting achievements in other foundational, enabling and thematic sub-programmes as well as adding value to the three UNEP thematic priorities.

Figure 1. UNEP MTS Strategic Framework
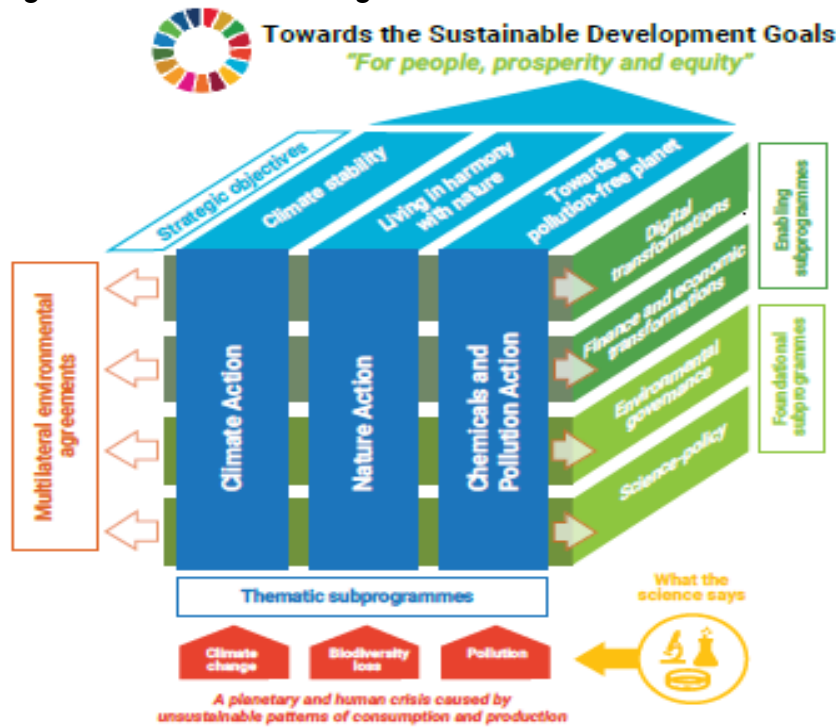
Source: UNEP MTS 2022-2025.

Structure and scope of the Environmental Government Sub-Programme

28.   The Law Division is the lead division in UNEP for the SPEG, although all UNEP Divisions and Regional Offices have some involvement in EG-related activities. The Division has three Branches as shown in Figure 2. The central branch focuses on Environmental Law and has a clear and specialized global leadership function in legal matters for EG. The Environmental Governance and Conventions Branch has a broad range of functions. This Branch has recently carried out a strategic review of its functions and highlights the importance of the work in supporting MEAs, as well as a range of other environmental governance support. The third Branch is dedicated to the implementation of the Montreal Protocol as a specialized MEA.

Figure 2. SPEG structure and function
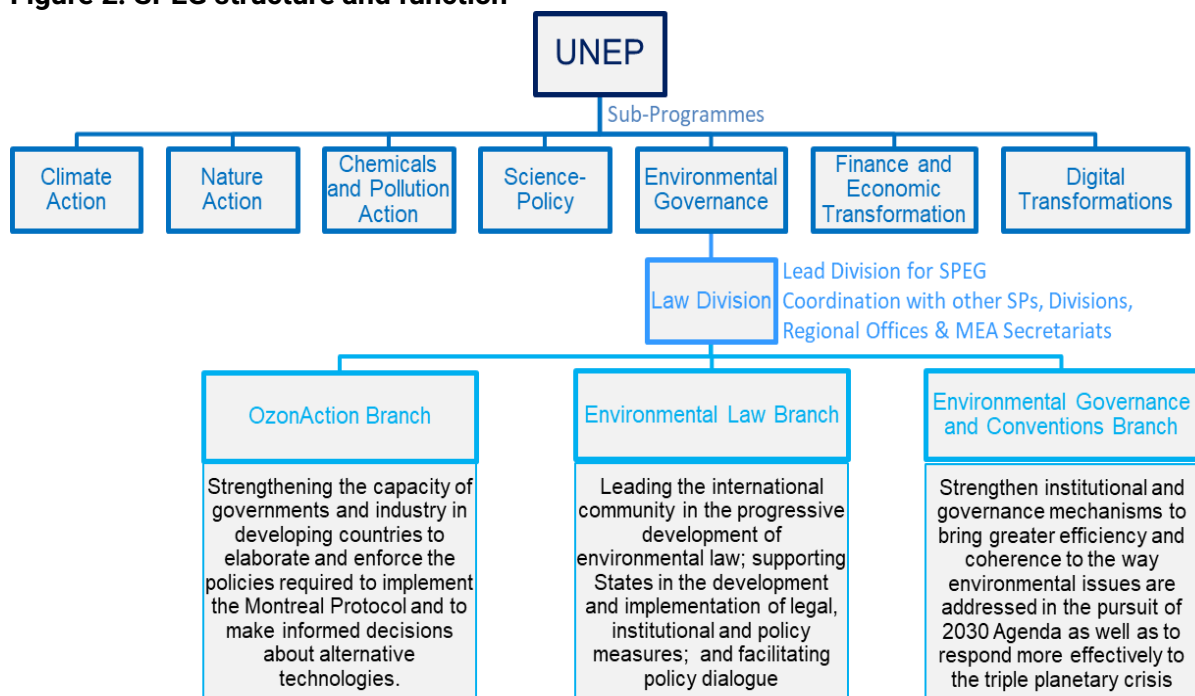
Source: UNEP Organizational Structure, UNEP Website (adapted).

29.   The broad scope of EG is reflected in the SPEG's partnership arrangements. The achievement of the results set out in Programme of Work (PoW) documents (Annex 1) requires the involvement of UN entities, government institutions, MEA Secretariats, development organizations, civil society organizations – including expert organizations and networks, think tanks, and scientific and academic organizations.

30.   The SPEG is financed through a range of sources. Table 1 presents an overview of the budgets for the SPEG during the period covered by the evaluation. This shows the core allocation from the Environment Fund and regular budget plus other Trust Funds, earmarked, Project Support Funds and Global Funds for each biannual PoW. The total budget for the period of eight years was USD 281 million.

Table 1. SPEG Budget USD '000

PoW	Environment Fund	Trust Fund earmarked	Global Funds	Project Support Costs	Regular Budget	Total
2014-2015	21,895	27,346	-	-	10,653	**59,893**
2016-2017	25,443	28,577	-	998	9,735	**64,753**
2018-2019	35,900	32,800	-	2,400	6,900	**78,000**
2020-2021	26,200	42,000	500	2,100	7,705	**78,505**
TOTAL	**109,438**	**130,723**	**500**	**5,498**	**34,993**	**281,151**

Source: PoW 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021
Note: this data is not reflective of expenditure which varied and was not available in a coherent format during the evaluation for comparison of budgeted amount to actual expenditure.

Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Methodology

31.   **Evaluation purpose**. The evaluation fulfils two main purposes to:

1.   *Support accountability by analyzing, at a meta level, the performance of all the Sub-Programme projects evaluated during the evaluation period, and*

2.   Contribute to institutional learning by providing formative reflections based on further analysis of the Sub-Programme's effectiveness as a coherent and coordinated unit within UNEP's results framework and considering lessons that are relevant to its role in the 2022-2025 Medium-Term Strategy.

32.   **Evaluation Scope**. The Evaluation Team evaluated the SPEG during the first quarter of 2022 with an evaluation scope that covered the SPEG activities and results from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2021. The Evaluation was tasked to consider the extent to which UNEP was able to meet its objective as stated in MTS 2014-2017: *"to strengthen synergies and coherence in environmental governance, with a view to facilitating the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development",* and in MTS 2018-2021: as *"Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development",* an objective that continued into the MTS 2022-2025. Please see Annex 8 for Terms of Reference.

33.   The evaluation scope included all projects and programmes under the SPEG PoW for each year in the evaluation period, including consideration of the forward PoW for 2022-2023. The evaluation did not cover the work of Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) Secretariats but did cover SPEG activities that support the work of MEAs such as MEA secretariat support, joint projects, support for Conference of the Parties (COP)-preparations and trainings for negotiators.

34.   The evaluation period includes POWs 2014/2015, 2016/2017, 2018/2019 and 2020/2021 and MTSs 2014-2017 and MTS 2018-2021. The portfolio of activities in the SPEG during the evaluation period covered 103 projects spanning across a wide variety of themes. In addition to 57 EG sub-projects, there were 46 projects that covered biosafety under the Cartagena Protocol (Table 2). This includes 10 projects[7] that provided support to the activities of specific MEAs as well as 3 projects[8] that provided general MEA support. For the full portfolio for the evaluation period, please see Annex 2.

Table 2. Summary of SPEG Portfolio 2014-2021

Project Type	Number
EG Projects (excluding Biosafety)	**57**
Completed (with evaluation)	*16*
Completed (without evaluation)	*19*
Ongoing (with evaluation)	*1*
Ongoing (without evaluation)	*21*
Biosafety Projects	**46**
Completed with evaluation	*25*
Completed without evaluation	*0*
Ongoing	*21*
Total	**103**

35.   The portfolio in scope for the evaluation consists of 99 distinct projects as well as 4 follow-on phases of longer-term projects. Figure 3 shows the number of projects commenced during the evaluation period and average value of these projects included in the portfolio. The highest average value of projects during the evaluation period (2014-2021) was in 2020 with an average new project value of USD 6.72 million and lowest in 2017 (USD 0.76 million) and 2021 (USD 1.01 million), showing the variability within the portfolio.

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[7] Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions, Effective Border Control Enforcement to Address Transboundary Environmental Crime, Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions, Support for implementation of the biodiversity and ecosystems and the chemicals and waste clusters of multilateral environmental agreements, Addressing the Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products, UN Peace Operations Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance Facility, Secretariat services to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) for the Member Countries of the Central African Forests Commission COMIFAC

[8] Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries, InfoMEA Phase II, (InfoMEA Phase III) –Collective Intelligence for Environmental Governance

Figure 3. Projects included in the 2014-2021 SPEG Portfolio (including Biosafety)
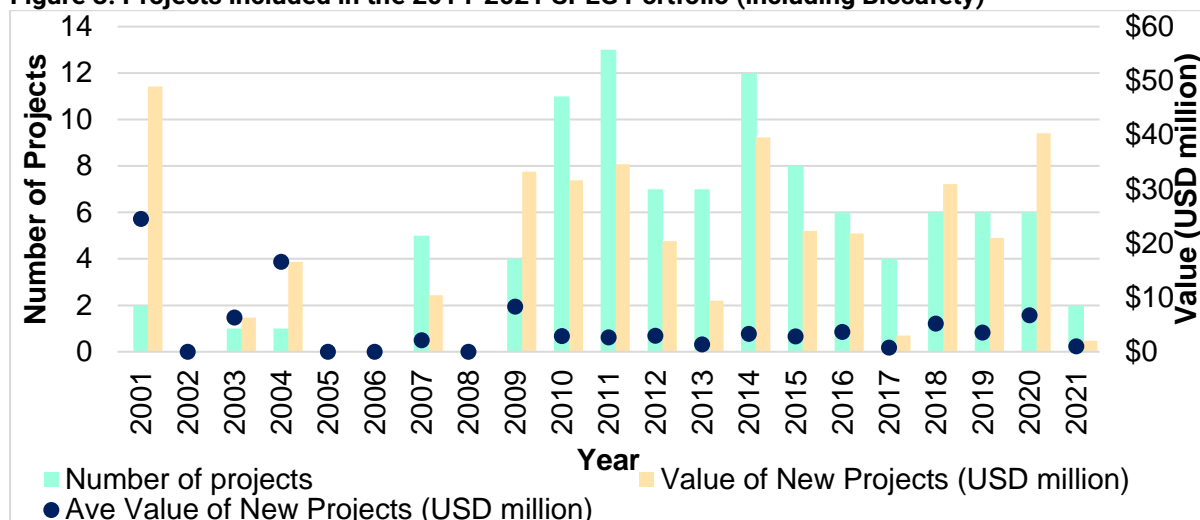
Source: SPEG Evaluation database compiled from PIMS and SP data, 2022.

36.   Projects with follow-on phases are the Integrating Environmental Sustainability in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and UN Common Country Programming Processes Project, the Sustainable UN (SUN) Facility, the InfoMEA Project, and the Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol for the member countries of the Central African Forests Commission Project. In addition, the portfolio includes the second phase of the joint UNDP/UNEP initiative PEI / PEA. There are also several related but distinct projects with a shared focus on Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals across different regions.

37.   The average project size was USD 3.9 million, with an average expected project duration of four years but with 17 projects expected to be 2 years or less. Completed projects had an expected average duration at design of 3.6 years with an average actual duration of 2.8 years, indicating that a number of projects were closed prior to their planned completion. The projects that are still noted as ongoing have an expected average duration of 4.7 years. This suggests that the average implementation period for projects is extending. It is, however, not clear if this is a strategic intent of programming or an effect of an *ad hoc* approach to project design/approval.

38.   **Evaluation Methodology.** This evaluation assessed the Sub-Programme against the standard, globally accepted evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact as well as in relation to cross cutting issues such as gender, human rights and vulnerable groups. Each criterion was rated on a six-point scale.[9] Ratings were guided by the sub-criteria and respective weighting as provided in the evaluation tools of the Evaluation Office of UNEP. In conducting this assessment, the evaluation considered the extent to which performance against these criteria were impacted by the design and structure of the Sub-Programme, organization and management, human and financial resources, communications, cooperation and partnerships, monitoring and reporting and equity, diversity and inclusion.

39.   The key questions for the evaluation to probe were:

Evaluation question 1. Is the concept of environmental governance clearly understood and applied in the design and implementation of the Sub-Programme?

Evaluation question 2. How can the synergies between the SPEG and other thematic, foundational, and enabling UNEP sub-programmes be made tangible and effective?

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[9] UNEP evaluation rating scale; 6 – Highly Satisfactory, 5 – Satisfactory, 4 – Moderately Satisfactory, 3 – Moderately Unsatisfactory, 2 – Unsatisfactory, 1 – Highly Unsatisfactory. This scale was applied to each criterion, e.g., a Satisfactory (5) rating for relevance means that the sub-programme was relevant.

Evaluation question 3. How can the programmatic cooperation and synergies be enhanced between UNEP and the UNEP-administered MEAs? What is the role of the SPEG and other sub-programmes in MEAs related work?

Evaluation question 4. Are the institutional structures and management arrangements for delivery of EG work conducive to effective management at the level of the Sub-Programme and the achievement of desired EG results?

Evaluation question 5. To what extent has the SPEG contributed to the UN Reform process and how can its role be enhanced in the future?

40.   The evaluation generated evidence from three lines of inquiry: (i) review of global evaluation and relevant documents. A complete list of documents reviewed is available in Annex 3; ii) interviews with key informants across a wide range of stakeholders both within the SPEG and those in other roles across UNEP with direct strategic experience of the SPEG. A full list of stakeholders met is available in Annex 4, and (iii) assessment of Sub-Programme performance. Assessment of performance was based on three strategic analyses of the available evidence.

41.   *Portfolio analysis*: a desk-based, systematic review of the findings from completed project-level evaluations between 2014 and June 2021. The analysis provided aggregated findings against standard evaluation criteria and identified trends in the factors contributing to particularly high or low performance. The methods used by the Sub-Programme to track performance and aggregate and report on project and programme level achievements were assessed. A sample of 26 project evaluations were selected to assess different forms of portfolio investment and their relative levels of coherence with Sub-Programme objectives and detailed level of performance. The findings from the projects were also considered in the light of key documents such as the MTSs, PoWs and Programme Performance Reviews (PPRs) covering the evaluation period, the previous SPEG evaluation and evaluations of other sub-programmes. The stratified project sample was selected based on (i) the availability of evaluative evidence, (ii) the range of projects supported (legal, support to MEAs, EG capacity building) and biosafety, (iii) funding source, and (iv) size of project by time period or financing. The sample selected is summarized in Table 3 and available in detail in Annex 2.

Table 3. Composition of Project sample

Project Type	With evaluation	Without evaluation	Total
Completed (excluding biosafety)	14	1	**15**
Ongoing (excluding biosafety)	0	4	**4**
Completed Biosafety	3	0	**3**
Ongoing Biosafety	0	2	**2**
Programme evaluations	3		**3**
Total	**20**	**7**	**27**

Source: EG Sub-Programme evaluation (2022)

42.   *Contribution analysis*: analysis of the extent and nature of UNEP's contribution to expected accomplishments at SP, sectoral and global levels. The analysis focused on the effectiveness of the Sub-Programme project efforts in achieving its goals and contributing to organizational results through its various PPRs, global evaluation reports of other SPs, reports to the General Assembly and other flagship reports of UNEP such as *GEO6*, *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and *Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future: A contribution to the dialogue on the Science-Policy Interface*. The review included the previous evaluation of the SPEG in 2013 that assessed the relevance and overall performance of the SPEG from 2006 – 2012. The 2013 Evaluation concluded that the SPEG had been well managed and recommended improving or clarifying its results framework (EAs and PoW outputs) to better reflect the intended causality of UNEP work and developing more precise guidelines to improve design, budgeting, coordination, monitoring and reporting practices. Many of its findings and recommendations remain relevant for the period of this Evaluation and an analysis is provided in Annex 5. Accordingly, this Evaluation also notes the importance of the adoption of a Theory of Change (ToC), improved results framework and more training on related issues to be considered in stronger tracking of performance.

43.   *Theory-based analysis*: The Sub-Programme had an articulated ToC in the UNEP 2018-2019 PoW that was slightly amended in the 2020-2021 PoW (see Annex 6) A new approach is articulated in the MTS 2022-2025. The Evaluation Team reconstructed a ToC that was based on the available documentation for the SP across the evaluation period and summarizes the causal pathway of how EG activities are expected to contribute to the objectives in the 2018-2021 MTS[10] (See Figure 4).

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[10] The ToC key development challenges were based on the 2013 'Evaluation of the UNEP Environmental Governance Sub-Programme', validated through the document review. The interventions included are identified in the indicators for the PoW and the Sub-Programme Project Portfolio for the MTS 2018-2021.

Figure 4. Reconstructed Theory of Change

STRATEGIC IMPACT
- Climate Stability
- Living in harmony with nature
- A pollution-free planet

THEMATIC OUTCOMES
- Sustainable use of resources
- Carbon neutrality & resilience
- Biodiversity protected
- Pollution controlled
- Biosafety

FOUNDATIONAL IMPACT
- Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development

OUTCOMES
- Common and integrated approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Enhanced Institutional Capacities to achieve international agreed environmental targets

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES /DRIVERS
- Enhanced institutional capacity
- Strengthened accountability frameworks
- Collective action by the UN system
- Enhanced environmental commitments and actions
- Science-based decisions
- Integrated regional and national policy

OUTPUTS
- Environmental Conventions and Laws
- Environmental Policy Advice
- National capacity for planning for implementation of conventions and laws
- Improved standards and practices: Pollution Nature Climate

INTERVENTION
- Integrating environmental policy within the UN
- Approaches for coherent multilateral action
- Policy action mainstreaming environmental sustainability
- Partnerships for joint environmental goals

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES
- Fragmentation of International Environmental Governance Efforts
- Insufficient coordination & cooperation in international responses
- Need for inclusiveness of approach

Source: SPEG Evaluation 2022 – drawn from strategic documents and SPEG Work Plan 2022.

44.   **Limitations.** There were three main limitations faced by the evaluation: (i) the scope and coverage of the SPEG is broad so that causal links and contribution are not clearly defined which led to challenges in assessing relevance. The reconstructed ToC is highly aggregated and generic however, it assisted in analysis of causal linkages and drivers of successful performance; (ii) the indicator frameworks and extent of performance data available was limited, so consolidated assessment of effectiveness across the portfolio was limited; furthermore, the short timeframe of some projects precludes any impact assessment (iii) from a practical perspective, the methodology was constrained by budget and the available timeframe as well as restrictions faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. limited range of interviews, sample of portfolio reviewed, no field work or primary data collection possible). To address this concern, meetings with key stakeholders with strategic roles were prioritized to be triangulated with review of key data for the portfolio.

II. Evaluation Findings

A. Relevance

> Overall Assessment [11]
>
> The SPEG has remained critical and relevant to UNEP's MTS and POW at the strategic level, although the emphasis has evolved. The SPEG responds to funding partner priorities through the guidance of UNEA and in response to available funding. The activities supported are in strong alignment and cooperation with international, organizational, and national priorities in general, but the SP objectives are sufficiently broad for relevance to be easily addressed at the strategic level.
>
> However, the extent to which the Sub-Programme responds to country priorities is not systematic and the strategic intent of the Sub-Programme is not well communicated or clearly reflected in the results framework. This leads to a lack of shared understanding of how UNEP is addressing EG goals at the operational level.
>
> Given the importance of the SPEG work at the strategic level and the positive strategic alignment, despite the moderate relevance operationally, the evaluation assesses the Sub-Programme as Relevant (Satisfactory - 5).

45. **Alignment with the global importance of environmental governance**. There is increasing focus and recognition of the importance of environmental governance in global forums and in frameworks for coordinated action. The past decade has seen unprecedented environmental change that has significant economic and social consequences. Improving environmental governance has been debated in academic and policy-making circles ever since environmental issues entered national and international agendas. The urgency of issues such as climate change as well as the inclusion of environmental matters in several global frameworks has increased focus on the mechanisms to achieve environmental progress. An effective EG regime has been outlined in multiple frameworks, but usually very broadly and often without much depth. A stronger system-wide coherence has been called for in the context of ongoing UN reform, in terms of enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation, better treaty compliance, and better integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity development. UNEP's related activities through the SPEG have been relevant to this global demand and progress.

46. **Relevance of the SPEG to UNEP's strategic vision.** UNEP's dynamic strategic approach to EG, has contributed to maintained relevance in relation to global environmental achievements and frameworks. Environmental threats have increased in number and complexity. Assessments on the state of the environment such as *GEO 6*, UNEP's *Emissions Gap Reports*, the IPCC and IPBES and the *Second World Ocean Assessment* point to the very limited results in terms of environmental impacts. Yet there have been successes, such as the Montreal Protocol, on substances that deplete the ozone layer and its Multilateral Fund, which is recognized as the single most successful international agreement.[12] UNEP's partnership efforts to ban lead in petrol is another widely recognized success.[13] These initiatives have resulted in continued support for UNEP and its EG work and has required broad and integrated approaches to governance beyond the SPEG.

47. **SPEG's alignment with the MTS has evolved and remained relevant.** EG is an evolving concept and process in pursuit of a coherent institutional framework and effective system to protect and improve the environment. The stated objectives of UNEP's SPEG have changed slightly over the course

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[11] Assessed in line with the UNEP relevance rating sub-criteria of alignment with: UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities; funding partner priorities; global, regional and national priorities; and complementarity with existing interventions.

[12] Sands, P. (2018) Principles of international environmental law / Philippe Sands, University College, London; Jacqueline Peel, University of Melbourne; with Adriana Fabra, Universitat de Barcelona; Ruth MacKenzie, University of Westminster. Cambridge University Press. Available at: https://discovery.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=65e50514-4a35-3335-97d6-237f69a6ca4b

[13] https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1098792.

of the evaluation period, reflecting ongoing shifts in global thinking on environmental governance and internal shifts within UNEP.

48.	The **2014-2017 MTS** strongly linked the SPEG to UNEP's broader vision and was based on a foresight process. The process to develop the 2014-2017 MTS identified the need to align "…governance structures to the challenges of global sustainability and, in particular, to integrate social, environmental and economic objectives in sustainable development policies at all levels of governance". This is reflected in the articulation of the unifying nature of EG identified in the MTS, "…the organization will also integrate governance-related activities within all its sub-programmes in the 2014–2017 Medium-Term Strategy, taking into account the links between national, provincial and local levels." The SPEG was most clearly aligned with "Facilitating the development, implementation and evolution of laws, norms and standards and developing coherent interlinkages among multilateral environmental agreements."

49.	The **2018-2021 MTS** focused on stronger coordination, both internally and with global frameworks, and underlined the need for integration of EG across sub-programmes. The importance of internal coherence was reinforced by the MTS "Recognizing that effective environmental governance influences the achievement of results in all environmental fields, the Sub-Programme draws upon and contributes to the implementation of all other sub-programmes." The MTS 2018-2021 also included "Vision 2030" which presented a shift towards aligning UNEP work to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and an explicit emphasis on UNEA resolutions as well as stronger integration of gender at sub-programme level. The vision statement formulated for environmental governance, which was aligned to Agenda 2030, aimed for environmental issues to be "…handled in an inclusive, sustainable and coherent manner through integrated policy and effective norms and institutions at all levels of governance." This MTS included a clearer articulation of EG relevance beyond UNEP than previous strategies.

50.	The latest **MTS 2022-2025** brings a significant, strategic shift for EG in UNEP as a foundational programme to underpin organizational objectives. Continued areas of focus include, i) enhanced cooperation with MEAs, ii) supporting countries in sustainable development, iii) leading the UN system and supporting national governments in development and implementation of environmental rule of law with added emphasis on UNEA, iv) supporting the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme, and v) strengthening environmental rights. These focus areas are built on strengths during previous MTS periods and continue to be relevant. There is also sufficient articulation of relevant mechanisms to implement these focus areas including the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and the SDGs implementation architecture[14] to facilitate national level implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. A more explicit focus was also placed on promoting the Environmental Rights Initiative, in line with the integrated nature of the SDGs and the need to integrate social issues more strongly in environmental management. The importance of improved knowledge management was also emphasized.

51.	These shifts are not only reflected in UNEP's organizational objectives but are also embedded into the SPEG expected accomplishments (EAs) listed in Table 4 that show an increasing alignment with emerging global frameworks including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development as well as the MEAs.

Table 4. MTS Expected Accomplishment (EA)/Outcome Indicator (OI) Adjustments

2014-2017 MTS EG Sub-Programme	2018-2021 MTS EG Sub-Programme	2022-2025 MTS EG Sub-Programme
EA1 Coherence and synergies: The United Nations system and the multilateral environmental agreements, respecting the mandate of each entity,	EA1. The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental	OI 1. Number of countries supported by UNEP under the Montevideo Programme in developing and implementing environmental rule of law and

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[14] The MTS 2022-2025 envisages use of national environmental law focal points nominated by governments in response to UNEA Resolution 2/19 on the Mid-term review of the fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme IV), which will provide strategic direction on emerging environmental priorities under a new generation environmental law programme developed in response.

2014-2017 MTS EG Sub-Programme	2018-2021 MTS EG Sub-Programme	2022-2025 MTS EG Sub-Programme
demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of actions on environmental issues;	objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.	related technical and institutional capacities to address internationally agreed environmental goals
EA2 Law: The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations is enhanced;	EA2. Institutional capacity and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.	OI2. Number of international legal agreements or instruments advanced or developed with UNEP support to address emerging or internationally agreed environmental goals
EA3 Mainstreaming environmental sustainability: Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans.		OI3 Number of plans, approaches, strategies, policies, action plans or budgeting processes of entities at the national, regional and global levels that include environmental goals as a result of UNEP support
		OI4. Number of entities at the national, regional or global levels that UNEP has supported in developing integrated approaches and tools for enhanced coordination, cooperation and synergies for the coherent implementation of multilateral environmental agreements

52.   **Expected Accomplishments and Results Frameworks do not highlight relevance of causal pathways**. The MTSs and PoWs in the period 2014-2021 provided a detailed narrative on the focus of UNEP's activities under each Expected Accomplishment and listed key intervention areas corresponding to PoW Outputs. The Expected Accomplishments have not always provided a clear and coherent results framework for the SPEG. The causal logic linking activities, PoW Outputs and EAs are not very clear on how they connect with "key deliverables", planned outputs, indicators of achievement and units of measures. Attribution issues curtail the validity of many of the indicators used in the Programme of Work. For example, the EA (A) in the PoW for 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 seeks synergistic improvements within the UN System processes, and within and among MEAs. Expected Accomplishments should capture sets of closely related project outcomes. As was pointed out in various evaluations, since the substantive work to achieve "improvements in UN system processes" is likely quite distinct from the work needed to achieve "synergistic improvements within and among MEAs", the EAs (now Direct Outcomes) for the EG Sub-Programme would be better if this single results statement were split into two: one promoting synergies and coherence with the UN system, and the other among MEAs.

53.   **Clarity of concept for EG.** The evaluation key question 1 raised concern regarding the clarity of concept around environmental governance as part of relevance and this was explored further through the interviews. This observation was first made in the 2013 Evaluation. Management and staff responses to the question "what is environmental governance?" vary considerably and, as a result, there not much of a shared vision of what this entails across UNEP and the Sub-Programme. The perspectives vary from "Institutional arrangements to deal with a particular matter" where the environment is a foundation of sustainable development to "enabling, policy and law setting" or is "focused on law as the key achievement of UNEP". The 2021 Multilateral Organization Performance

Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of UNEP had similar findings noting that "UNEP's comparative advantages are primarily its ability to make science/policy linkages and promote improved environmental governance although … UNEP has not explicitly articulated its comparative advantage in all its MTSs and PoWs."[15]

54.   During the evaluation interviews, the majority of stakeholders highlighted that the approach to environmental governance is not sufficiently defined for relevant operations. EG is defined in the MTS 2022-2025 as "the institutional and legal architecture needed to make environmental goals and commitments a reality." While this definition is clear, it is very broad and in combination with a portfolio that lacks a clear focus does not provide sufficient guidance for a relevant organizational approach to EG.

55.   **Operational relevance is positive but fragmented**. To achieve the SPEG objectives, the Sub-Programme aimed to support several aspects of environmental governance as outlined in Table 4 above: i) coherent international decision-making processes, ii) the development and implementation of laws, norms and standards, strengthened institutions, and iii) mainstreaming environmental sustainability in governance processes at all levels from sub-national to regional to global. Yet the reality of the portfolio is more complex.

56.   **Relevance of the portfolio.** The SPEG project portfolio is heterogeneous and encompasses different levels of intervention. SPEG clearly supports international environmental law that governs environmental protection and control. The Projects included in the SPEG are diverse and the articulated relationship of the activities to EG objectives varies in strength and clarity. Some Projects have clear links to EG and are good examples of how to illustrate the potential of good quality EG interventions. Such activities include the Montevideo Programme (that operates as a politically-agreed programmatic framework for legal support), the Sustainable United Nations Facility and the Integrating Environmental Dimensions of the SDGs project. However, there are also several projects where the link between the Project and EG is not clear or articulated. The ratings of relevance across the portfolio by year (see Figure 5) demonstrate a positive level of performance.

Figure 5. Portfolio ratings for relevance by year (based on year of evaluation).
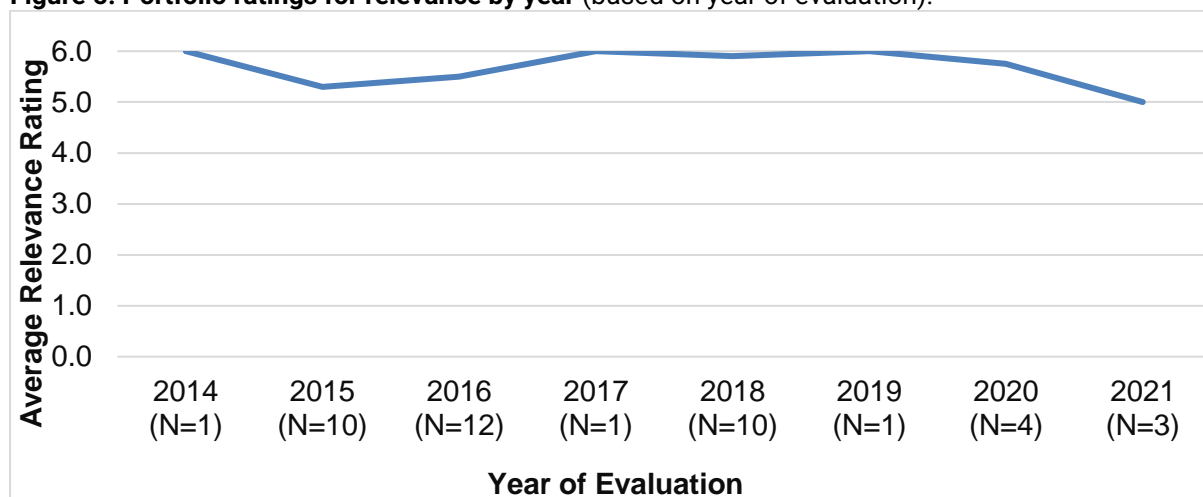
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021

57.   The central role of countries is part of the UNEP's EG vision, "evidence-based and coherent policy direction, adequate normative frameworks, effective institutions, the engagement of stakeholders and the principles of good governance that are enshrined in the concept of rule of law… including rights-based and participatory approaches, as well as gender-sensitive policies, legislation and capacity development." The SPEG has taken a demand-driven approach in many instances, particularly through the important work of the regional UNEP teams and the SPEG Coordinators, which has resulted in a strong alignment with expressed national priorities for individual projects. This adaptability reflects both an evolving mandate and changing perceptions of priority that are moving towards greater

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[15] MOPAN, 2021, MOPAN Assessment Report: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), pg. 86

country-level engagement for EG generally and IEG in particular. These shifts are evidenced in many of the MEAs latest outcomes with the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) implementing the Paris Rule book and its emphasis on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the attention on national level actions in the CBD's emerging Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the emphasis on National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) being prominent examples.

58.   However, the approach of the SPEG to identification and prioritization of national demand across multiple countries is not clearly outlined and reflected in the SPEG design and implementation arrangements. Interviews during the evaluation with staff engaged in SPEG implementation highlighted efforts to identify and raise priorities but this does not appear to occur in a systematic manner. Projects are largely responsive to the interests of funders rather than based on a clear national and regional needs analysis without a clear rationalisation as to how various regional efforts such as Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) for the Member Countries of the Central African Forests Commission COMIFAC were chosen over other regions which place much more priority on ABS such as the ASEAN region. There were few references, beyond specific projects or programmes, to nationally determined priorities or particular countries or even the outcomes of strategic national prioritisation processes in the various MEAs such as the GBF and NBSAPs. It is therefore difficult to identify the most relevant countries or the highest priorities in those countries and as such it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the overall relevance of the SP at the national level.

59.   MEAs are a central part of the EG regime. SPEG PoW outputs aim at enhancing coherence in MEA, and other global frameworks, implementation with enhanced cooperation between UNEP and MEAs and aligning the policies of governments and UN agencies. UNEP has been active in supporting MEAs with many of the projects being evaluated providing technical advice and capacity building for MEA implementation at the country level. The outstanding example of this is the work of the OzonAction Branch and its implementation of the Montreal Protocol. Projects supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), such as the National Biosafety Framework (NBF) and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) projects, directly contribute to implementing MEAs at the national and regional levels.

60.   An unclear approach to EG across UNEP means that there are gaps in understanding of the relevance, results, both expected and actual, and value of EG across the organization. Limited understanding of the EG concept has meant that expected implementation arrangements are not clear, for example, the 'Strengthening Law Enforcement Capabilities for Combat Wildlife Crime for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Species in South Africa' Project, was originally envisioned to operate under the Wildlife Information Management Unit within the Biodiversity and Conservation Branch. However, after a period of implementation, it was recognized that the Project was targeting governance, in terms of enforcement and compliance, rather than biodiversity outcomes. This lack of coherence affects the ability of the SPEG, and of UNEP more broadly to demonstrate its contribution to global outcomes as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. The cause and effect of an unclear approach to environmental governance
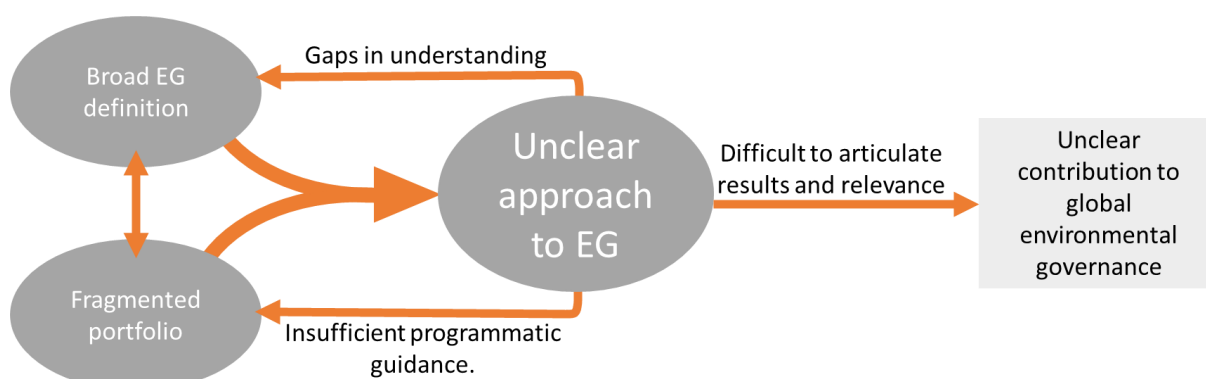
Source: SPEG Evaluation, 2022

61.   In summary, UNEP's approach to guiding EG through its portfolio relating to EG is not obvious and a conclusive assessment of relevance is difficult without a clear ToC and tracing of causal pathways. Yet, the importance of EG globally emphasizes the relevance of a specific Sub-Programme on Environmental Governance. The basic assessment of the evaluation in relation to relevance of SPEG activities is that the overall response of the SPEG to key stated priorities for environmental governance is Satisfactory. The vague definition of environmental governance allows relevance to be demonstrated at a broad scope and does not provide adequate guidance to programming. The SP responds well to donor and UNEA priorities. The scope of potential priorities at the global, regional and national levels is wide. The regional level is critical for identifying national priorities, but the process of identifying priorities at the national level could be improved.

B.   Effectiveness

Overall Assessment [16]

The SPEG is Effective (Satisfactory - 5) at the portfolio level, with investments assessed through the PPRs as largely achieving expected targets for each MTS period during the evaluation scope.

The performance in relation to the key outputs of contribution to environmental conventions and laws, environmental policy advice, national capacity for planning and implementation of conventions and laws, and improved standards and practices related to pollution, nature and climate, as identified in the reconstructed ToC are all demonstrated in the project portfolio. The performance of projects is variable but largely rated as Effective.

The factors affecting effectiveness, discussed in the following section, included the design focus and the importance of the regional level to provide support to the Member States across the span of the SPEG activities. Support to MEAs in cooperation with MEAs was successful but the quality of efforts for mainstreaming environmental governance was less evident. The engagement of stakeholders in projects was seen as a potential area for improvement, particularly in relation to human rights and gender, as well as environmental safeguards processes. See section G Cross-cutting issues (including gender, human rights, vulnerable groups) for further discussion of these topics.

Overall, the Sub-Programme is assessed as Effective at the output level, but with insufficient attention to adequately demonstrate contribution to the outcome level.

62.   The achievement of SPEG portfolio outcomes is assessed using performance in attaining SPEG outputs as expressed through Programme Performance Reviews (PPR) targets and intermediate outcomes as defined in the reconstructed Theory of Change presented in Figure 4. This provided a quantitative approach to measuring achievement. The Evaluation also assessed contribution of the SPEG intervention towards wider outcomes through a qualitative analysis.

63.   **The SPEG has achieved or exceeded most targets throughout the evaluation period.** Portfolio analysis through the PPRs over the 2014-2020 period indicates a high level of achievement of the SPEG targets (Figure 7) although it has not been possible to verify these outputs which may represent outputs that are not attributable to UNEP. This demonstrates that on average for each PPR period, the level of achievement of targets has exceeded 100%, with an increasing performance over each subsequent PPR period.

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[16] Assessed in line with the UNEP effectiveness rating sub-criteria of achievement of outputs, intermediate outcomes and contribution to organizational and global outcomes. The factors affecting effectiveness are provided in section C.

Figure 7. Average Level of SPEG Achievement of Targets 2014-2020
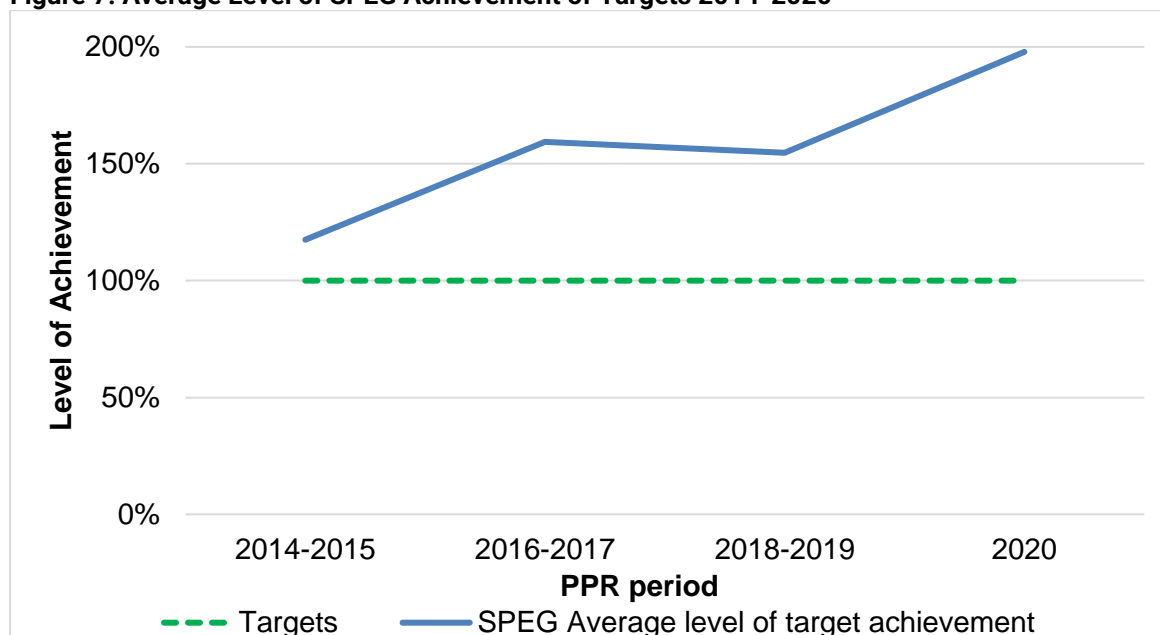
Source: Programme Performance Report 2014- 2020

64.   **The indicators used to measure sub-programme performance changed significantly over the period in line with changing EAs in the MTSs** (Table 5 & Table 6). Nonetheless, the majority of targets were met with no achievement lower than 85% of the target recorded for any indicator. In 2014-2015 the SPEG met or exceeded 7 of its 8 indicator targets with the exception of target "(c) i) a", Increase in the number of UNDAFs in targeted countries that incorporate the principles of environmental sustainability with the assistance of UNEP "which just missed the target". The targets were just achieved (between 100% and 115%) except for "the number of initiatives taken by countries to monitor and achieve compliance with, and enforcement of, international environmental obligations" (row 8) which achieved double the targeted amount.

65.   **In 2016-2017, the SPEG achieved all targets across the 11 indicators agreed to measure programme performance for the biennium.** A higher level of achievement across more indicators was reported, compared with the previous assessment period, with only one indicator (number of countries that advance by at least one level in the UN Environment Programme results measurement framework) (Table 5 row 13) achieving 100% and all other indicators achieving more than 125% of the target. Notably, the number of UNDAFs incorporating environmental sustainability principles achieved 230% of its target whereas in the previous PPR period, only 88% achievement was recorded (Table 5 Row 11).

66.   Yet, there are weaknesses with the indicators that make assessment of performance challenging, for instance, in Indicator 2, it is not clear what counts as a substantive collaborative arrangement and continuing collaboration may be as valuable as new collaborations. Indicator 3b may include any policy instrument or action plan adopted in a country even if there is not clear attribution to SPEG support. This suggests that there is further work required on identifying the indicators for expected results for the SPEG in line with a refreshed SPEG Theory of Change that aligns with the MTS 2022-2025 and that more rigorous work is required to validate the means of verification of performance.

Table 5. 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 PPR Sup-Programme Performance against targets

Indicator	% Achievement	
	2014-2015	2016-2017
MTS 2014-2017 EA 1: Coherence and Synergies		
1. Increase in the number of joint initiatives to handle environmental issues in a coordinated manner across the UN system and MEAs.	100%	150%

Indicator	% Achievement	
	2014-2015	2016-2017
2. Increase in the number of collaborative arrangements with the secretariats of selected MEAs which result in increased coherence and synergy between the UNEP programme of work and the programme of work of those agreements	100%	125%
3. Increased number of policy instruments or action plans adopted by Governments and UN bodies pursuant to the post-2015 development framework, [1] including the sustainable development goals, that incorporate environmental objectives		
3a. • Number of policy instruments or action plans adopted by Governments pursuant to the post-2015 development framework that incorporate environmental objectives, as a result of UN Environment Programme efforts		140%
3b. • Number of policy instruments or action plans adopted by UN bodies pursuant to the post-2015 development framework that incorporate environmental objectives		133%
4. Increased number of UN entities implementing emissions reduction strategies and/or environmental management systems		160%
5. Increased number of environmental policy issues or approaches emerging from UNEP policy advice or from UN system-wide strategies for the environment that are referred to bodies		125%
MTS 2014-2017 EA 2: Law		
6. Increase in the number of legal and institutional measures taken by countries to improve the implementation of internationally agreed environmental goals and objectives	117%	
7. Increased number of legal and institutional measures taken by countries to enforce the rule of law and improve the implementation of agreed objectives and goals, with the assistance of UNEP		250%
8. Increase in the number of initiatives taken by countries to monitor and achieve compliance with, and enforcement of, international environmental obligations	200%	
9. Increased number of countries that undertake a review of, and adopt recommendations for, enhanced compliance with, and enforcement of, international environmental obligations, with the assistance of UNEP upon the request of the countries		200%
10. Increase in the number of initiatives and partnerships of major groups and stakeholders in support of the development and implementation of national and international environmental law	100%	150%
MTS 2014-2017 EA 1: Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability		
11. Increase in the number of UNDAFs in targeted countries that incorporate the principles of environmental sustainability with the assistance of UNEP	85%	230%
12. Increase in the number of national development plans that incorporate the principles of environmental sustainability with the assistance of the joint UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI)	124%	
13. Increased number of countries that advance by at least one level in the UNEP results measurement framework for assessing public sector engagement in strengthening and applying financial planning instruments for pro-poor growth and environmental sustainability as a result of UNEP Support		100%
14. Increase in the number of policies and plans from sub regional and regional forums that incorporate the principles of env. sustainability	114%	150%

Source: Programme Performance Report 2014-2015 and 2016-2017

67.   **SPEG performance also increased between 2018-2019 and 2020.** The indicators to measure Sub-Programme effectiveness changed significantly between the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 PPRs (Table 6). The latter period has two distinct categories of indicators "Policy coherence and SDGs" and "Legal and institutional frameworks" aligning with the Expected Accomplishments outlined in the MTS. In 2018-2019 the SPEG met or exceeded 7 of its 8 indicator targets and partially met target EA (b) (iib) Integration of Environment in planning and budgeting (countries) — Target: 20 Attained: 18; and in 2020 the SPEG met or exceeded 7 of its 8 indicator targets and partially met 1, which was target EA (a) (ii) Coherent implementation of MEAs (countries) Target: 24 Attained: 21.

68.   In both the 2018-2019 and 2020 PPR periods, a higher level of achievement was recorded for "policy coherence and SDGs" than for "legal and institutional frameworks." In both periods, particularly high performance was reported in relation to the number of issues with concerted policy action. However, the basis of target setting and level of SPEG contribution to achievements is not clearly articulated in the evaluations. Integration of environment in planning and budgeting recorded relatively low performance across both periods compared with other indicators but still was reported as achieving 90% of the target in 2018-2019 and 100% of the target in 2020.

Table 6. 2018-2019 and 2020 PPR Sup-Programme Performance against targets

Indicator	2018-2019			2020		
	Target	Actual	% Achieved	Target	Actual	% Achieved
MTS 2018-2021 EA1: Policy coherence and SDGs						
1. Integrating environment into planning for global action (organisations and forums)	12	19	**158%**	7	24	**343%**
2. Integrating environment into planning for regional action (organisations and forums)	8	20	**250%**	12	38	**317%**
3. Number of countries with coherent implementation of MEAs	16	18	**113%**	24	21	**88%**
4. Number of issues with concerted policy action	2	6	**300%**	2	8	**400%**
MTS 2018-2021 EA1: Legal and institutional frameworks						
5. Number of countries with capacity to implement global goals	20	21	**105%**	28	30	**107%**
6. Integration of environment in UN country programming	70	75	**107%**	100	103	**103%**
7. Integration of environment in planning and budgeting (countries)	20	18	**90%**	28	28	**100%**
8. Partnerships between UNEP and Major Groups and stakeholders	13	15	**115%**	16	20	**125%**

Source: Programme Performance Report 2018-2019 and 2020

69.   **The Project level evaluation ratings also indicate a moderate to high level of effectiveness.** The 39 projects within the evaluation period (2014-2020) with evaluations have an average effectiveness rating of 4.61 or Satisfactory (Figure 8). This is compared with the average effectiveness ratings of other sub-programmes such as Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality (4.59), Climate Change (4.58) and Healthy and Productive Ecosystems (4.47).[17]

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[17]Data for other sub-programmes is only available by year of evaluation not year of completion as available through the SPEG data.

Figure 8. Average Portfolio Rating for 'Effectiveness' by Year of Project Evaluation
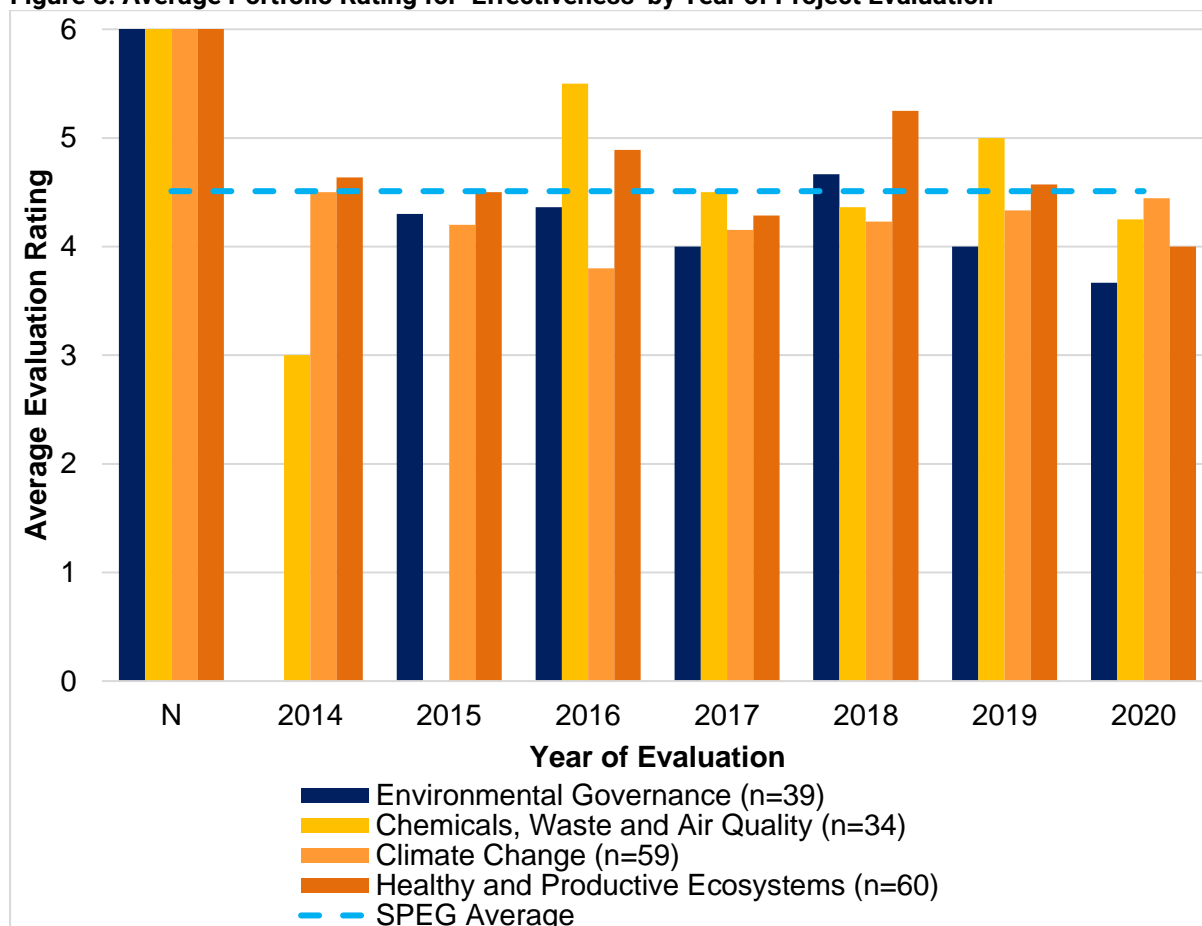
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021
Note: Resource Efficiency, Cross-Cutting, Resilience to disasters and conflict and Environment Under Review Sub-Programmes are not included due to the small number of projects with evaluation ratings available.

70.   The average effectiveness rating was highest in 2018. Since then, based on the range of evaluations conducted, there has been a drop in the average effectiveness rating of the portfolio. Of the projects with evaluations, 33% are rated Moderately Satisfactory (4) and 41% Satisfactory (5) with the most projects receiving a rating of Satisfactory (5) (Figure 9). Compared with the other sub-programmes, Environmental Governance has a higher proportion of the portfolio (21%) that received an effectiveness rating in the Unsatisfactory range compared with 6% of the Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality SP, 19% of the Climate Change SP portfolio and 10% of the Healthy and Productive Ecosystems Sub-Programme. Nonetheless, this data should be considered with caution given the variability of the portfolio and the range of evaluations that are conducted.[18]

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[18] Projects funded through GEF are required to conduct an evaluation so the average ratings are heavily influenced by the GEF evaluation scope and process.

Figure 9. Distribution of Effectiveness Ratings of each Sub-Programme's Portfolio
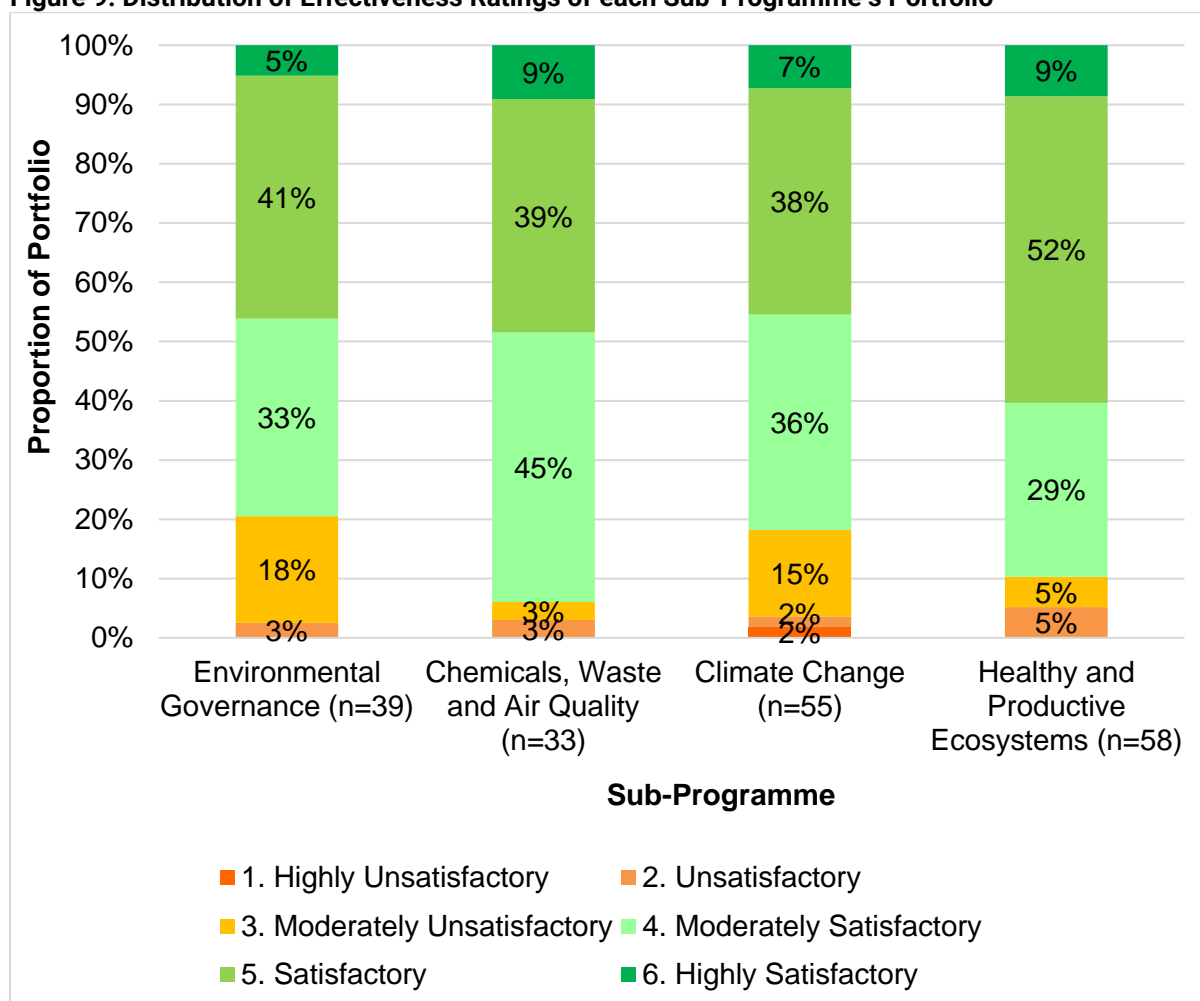
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021, Evaluation Office
Note: Resource Efficiency, Cross-Cutting, Resilience to disasters and conflict and Environment Under Review Sub-Programmes are not included due to the small number of projects with evaluation ratings available.

Contribution analysis

71.   The Evaluation has identified three categories of projects implemented in line with the EAs outlined in the MTS at the beginning of the evaluation period and based on review of the portfolio. In line with the UNEP definition of effectiveness, contribution considers interventions where actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, where there is evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' and/or 'credible association' established between UNEP efforts and the outcomes realized. The three categories applied in the analysis with examples of effective strategic initiatives from evaluated projects are:

   i)   *Legal support:* refers specifically to activities designed to build the legal frameworks in countries and increase compliance and use with laws and regulations. Activities undertaken in this category include the development of common compliance and enforcement tools, convening legal forums (e.g. courts, tribunals, etc.), engaging stakeholders in legislative processes and tailored training for legal and policy processes.

   ii)   *MEA Support:* Secretariat or project support to specific conventions and issues covered by MEAs. This category encompasses strategic data collection, analysis and reporting, knowledge management, UNEP coordination efforts for input to COPs, facilitation of the MEA Focal Points Network and integration of MEA key issues into broader policies of UNEP.

iii)   *Environmental Governance Capacity Building:* this refers to activities to integrate environmental sustainability into other SPEG and wider UNEP programmes and policies as well as support the implementing and enforcement agencies and institutions at the national, regional and global levels. including the integration of environmental governance issues in UNCTs.

72.   Specific achievements and contribution of each of these categories of activities is discussed using examples below. The avenues through which the contribution of these results to higher level outcomes are reported, are then discussed and assessed. An important aspect of the analysis was that while each project demonstrated contribution to outcomes, the strategic causal linkages were not consistently reported in relation to expected outcomes. Biosafety projects are considered separately because they follow clear and standard processes through the GEF financing. The SPEG is most effective when these categories are linked and a combination of activities from each category are implemented. That is where coherence, supporting national priorities, integration and common approaches are utilized. The most evident cross-over between categories is in the use of capacity building as an aspect of MEA or Legal Support (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Strategic SPEG Initiatives Contribution towards Outcomes
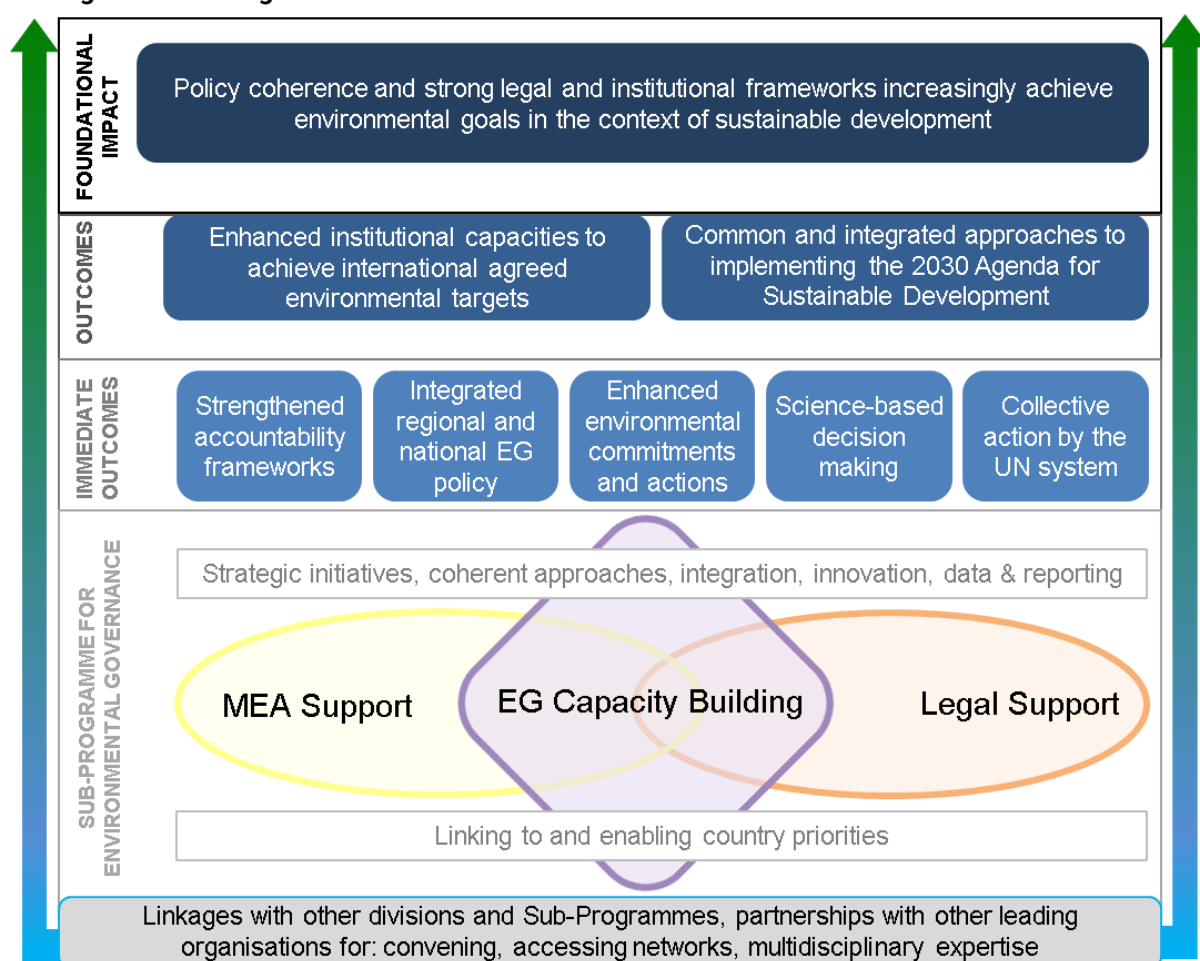
Source: SPEG Evaluation 2022.

73.   The meetings that UNEP has organized through EG projects, as an aspect of EG capacity building, have been critical in crystallizing areas for focus and in mobilizing support for the concept of EG among Member States and within the environmental compliance community. UNEP's unique convening power has brought together actors who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to meet and exchange knowledge and best practices. Project-level reporting that emphasizes reporting on expected outcomes articulated in results frameworks, which are sometimes over-ambitious given project timeframes, does not provide space for reporting of broader or supplementary contributions. As such the benefits of engagement that do not result in achievement of the intended outcomes, but

which create an enabling environment that could facilitate the future achievement of outcomes, such as increased capacity, participation and engagement, are often not captured in the Project level evaluations. This results in lower ratings for results-related evaluation criteria.

74.   **Projects focusing on support to MEAs and building environmental governance capacity are most effective.** MEA support and EG capacity building projects generated the highest ratings for effectiveness, outputs and outcomes at an average effectiveness rating of 4.8 and 4.7 respectively (Figure 11). This is compared with an average effectiveness rating of 4.2 for biosafety projects and 4.0 for law projects. At the output level, MEA support, EG capacity building and biosafety projects all have an average evaluation rating of above 5 indicating an average 'Satisfactory' rating. Law projects have an average rating of 4.3 or Moderately Satisfactory. At the outcome level, there is the greatest difference in ratings. MEA support projects have an average rating of 4.8 whereas the next highest average rating is 4.1 for capacity building projects.

Figure 11. Results-Related Evaluation Ratings by Project Type
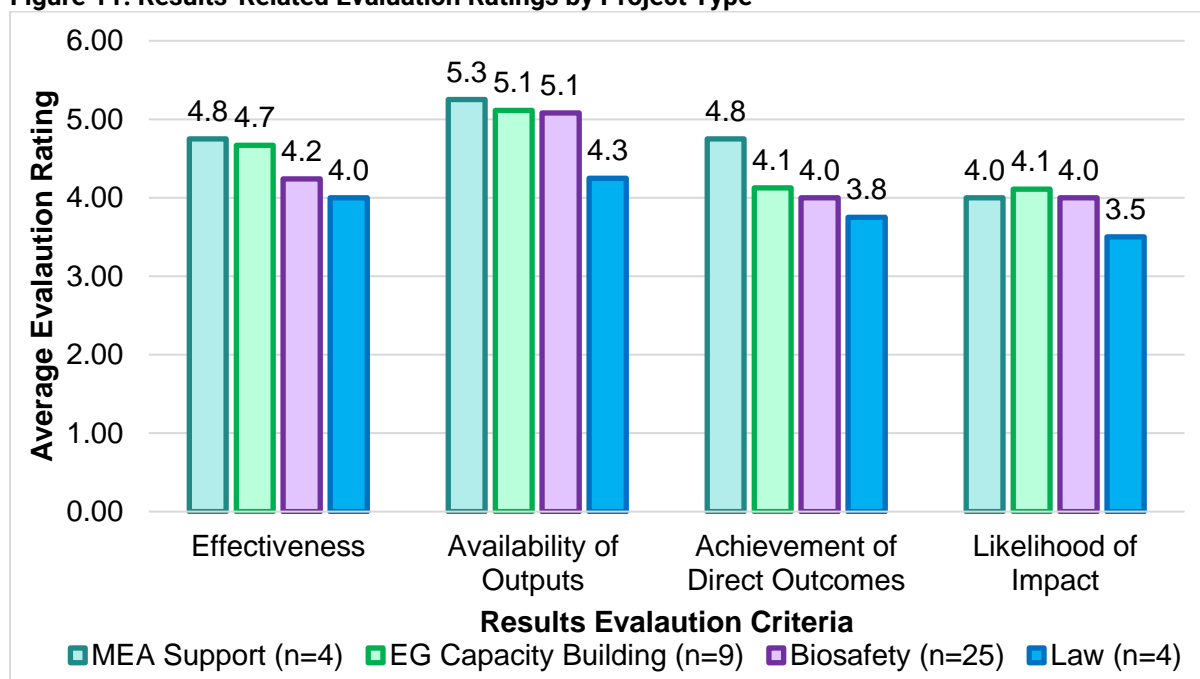
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021

75.   **From a qualitative perspective, the contribution to outcomes is more complex to assess.** All of the projects reviewed for this Evaluation made important contributions to EG often through capacity strengthening or engagement outcomes that were supplementary to the actual objective of the project. For instance, the Montevideo Programme[19], the Environmental Rule of Law (EROL) Programme, "Strengthening Institutional Capacity in Environmental Law" (SICCEL) and "Progressive Development of International Environmental Law" (PD) have strengthened the capacity of government policymakers, judges, prosecutors and the police to more effectively advance environmental governance objectives in different spheres of government in addition to other stated outcomes such as legal support and development.

76.   **Broad indicators, reporting of activities and results related to support to MEAs does not allow for robust assessment of effectiveness.** There is uneven reporting of the contribution of different SPEG activities at the sub-programme level and there are not adequate avenues to report the contribution of all SPEG activities resulting in unclear reporting about the Sub-Programme's contribution. For example, the emphasis on capacity building in the sub-programme level indicators means that the positive performance of these indicators is adequately captured and is the main driver of high effectiveness at

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[19] An assessment of the Montevideo Programme was conducted in 2018. A full evaluation was not possible because the indicators of performance were not properly evaluable. This prevents learning in relation to success factors for EG implementation.

the SP level as reported in the PPRs. However, the high performance of MEA support activities cannot be captured to the same extent in current SPEG level reporting given the relatively few related indicators.

77.   For example, the support provided by UNEP to bring together actors in cooperation for chemicals and hazardous waste MEAs as discussed in paragraph 80 cannot be as completely captured in results reporting at the SPEG level. The indicators at the sub-programme level in the PPR would not allow for this work to be recorded unless it results in a collaborative arrangement for an MEA. In 2020, the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) established a consultative process to prepare a UN system contribution for the framework, resulting in a compilation of UN system inputs to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework but the influence this had on the negotiations for the Framework is not considered.[20] Thus, based on the information available, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the reported results are due to UNEP or to the other partners involved.

78.   **Laws are a fundamental aspect of EG and there is evidence that law projects make significant contributions beyond the actual development of laws**. Several projects have high-level aims to strengthen/develop laws. While these high-level outcomes are sometimes not achieved, the processes undertaken towards achievement of these outcomes are often useful and generate positive results, but these are not clearly articulated at the SPEG programme level. The process of engaging national stakeholders in legislative processes is important for building national capacity. The prolonged nature of this engagement has demonstrated the value of concerted engagement efforts to generate additional benefits beyond those expected by a Project. However, only outcomes included in results frameworks are used in assessment of the projects, such that important contributions along the causal chains towards outcomes are under-reported.

79.   For example, SICCEL which aimed to provide knowledge and skills for government officials on environmental law and policy as well as MEAs has been generally highly valued by participants in the annual course assessments. In 2018, the course received an overall participant assessment grade of 4.6 out of 5. The course has not tracked the ways in which the participants have acquired and used the skills gained in the course. The course organizers acknowledge that this is an important performance measure that should be tracked in the future. Therefore, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about the overall effect of the course. The Environmental Rule of Law had a similar impact, in that there was emerging anecdotal evidence to suggest that the environmental rule of law is contributing to enhanced implementation and enforcement of environmental laws. However, reporting and performance measuring were unsatisfactory and did not support definitive conclusions about the overall effect of the project.

80.   **The support for MEAs through secretariat support, InfoMEA and other initiatives is rated as Satisfactory**. One example of this effectiveness is the cooperation developed on chemicals and hazardous waste MEAs such as the simultaneous extraordinary Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions, which now have adopted decisions on joint services, joint activities, synchronization of the budget cycle, joint managerial functions, review arrangements and program coordination. This cooperation was fostered with support from UNEP. This cooperation set a valuable precedent for other groups of MEAs. It is, however, not at all clear how the SPEG contributed to this important success or whether it has used this success to help its own work. Other important examples include IPBES and IPCC, where there have been important achievements in the development of MEAs and cooperation between MEAs where links to the work of the SPEG are unclear.

81.   Despite a stipulated focus on MEAs for "actions on environmental issues" included in EA1 in the 2014-2017 MTS, only one of the 14 indicators used to measure the progress of the Sub-Programme over this period includes reference to MEAs. In contrast, capacity of countries and institutions are highlighted in EA2 in the 2014-2017 MTS. This is reflected in the indicators used to assess Sub-Programme performance in the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 PPRs where five of the fourteen indicators refer to such capacity. The Law category has a similarly aligned representation between the MTS EAs and the PPR indicators.

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[20] Ibid.

82.   **Mainstreaming environmental government through capacity development.** The foundational nature of EG is being recognized in future organizational documents which will allow for broader contributions beyond specific EG outcomes to be captured. MOPAN highlighted that an encouraging development is that the internal assessment of the results of the PoW for 2022-2023 will seek to "capture" them at three different levels: (i) those that can be attributed to UNEP's direct support; (ii) those for which UNEP provides "enabling" interventions; and (iii) those for which it provides "influencing" interventions. There is potential to reflect these aspects more coherently in a SPEG ToC and strengthened results framework.

83.   All projects have made significant advances in relation to their outputs and intermediate outcomes although several are assessed as being over-ambitious in scope. The evaluations note that documentation of outputs and outcomes is poor but that results are positive overall. The strongest areas of performance are where there are institutional changes (whether legislative, policy or implementation practices) that are mainstreamed into institutional processes. A clear definition for EG itself is a pre-requisite for a well-formulated strategy and SP design to guide activities and provide information about expected results. The lack of an agreed definition and the inclusion of "orphan" projects and in the past some corporate functions in the Sub-Programme have blurred the strategic focus and compromised accountability for work that cannot readily be captured within the existing SP results framework. Even beyond the Sub-Programme, UNEP engages with EG work that is not recorded or noted as part of UNEP's accomplishments on EG and yet, these are important contributions that UNEP should be recording.

C.   Factors affecting Sub-Programme Results

84.   The key factors affecting SPEG results were synthesized from the review of projects, the portfolio, supporting documents and interviews which were guided by the key evaluation questions 2-5 and then also factors emerging from the analyses. A range of cross-analyses were conducted to identify any patterns emerging. These are provided in Annex 7.

85.   **Unclear concept of EG.** Conceptual ambiguities, as discussed in paragraph 60 in   Relevance, have influenced the structure and programmatic content of the SPEG. Environmental governance is broad and crosscutting, bearing relation to practically all of UNEP's work. It is to be expected that there are overlaps with all the other SPs. While connections and linkages among SPs offer opportunities for collaboration and synergy across organizational structures, the absence of clearly defined planning processes, guidelines, tools and incentives to explicitly support such collaboration, restrain and sometimes undermine this potential. Given the SPEG's positioning in the MTS 2022-2025 as a foundational Sub-Programme, this is a major impediment to effective implementation that needs to be strategically addressed to support the setting of specific goals, identification of intended results and prioritisation of activities.

86.   **A coordinated approach to SPEG**. The limited level of coordination, both within the SPEG and with other sub-programmes, is a key factor in determining performance. Coordination practices and group dynamics at the sub-programme level appear to need more attention. As noted in previous evaluations this is essentially an issue of organization and management yet bears on SP design and structure as well.[21] Despite some positive examples of collaboration through individual projects or programmes, the provisions for periodic interaction between staff working on related EAs or SPs are lacking. Another example of this somewhat siloed approach being still strongly evident within the SP is the OzonAction Branch that, while successful in its activities, appears to operate separately from the SP, the Law Division and other MEA coordination efforts.

87.   **Support for MEA Success.** As pointed out in several project reporting documents and evaluations (e.g. Law and Environmental Outlook (LEO)), in the quest for collaborative arrangements UNEP needs to be more responsive to MEA secretariats, including respecting and responding to their autonomy and collaborative priorities and actions. This requires maturity, adequate consultation and

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[21] See paragraph 235 of 2013 Evaluation

shedding perceptions of divisive attitudes. Promoting synergies among MEAs is a complex process that is influenced by external factors beyond UNEP's control. Efforts to promote synergies within MEAs, develop shared information and knowledge sharing platforms, synchronize events and harmonize reporting formats have had limited success against the larger scope of needs and the strong sense of autonomy of the MEA Secretariats.

88. For example, efforts to streamline reporting among UNEP administered MEAs have not seen much progress. The eight biodiversity conventions rejected proposals to integrate reporting due to limited interest among government parties and secretariats. Likewise, the issue of harmonizing reporting schedules and formats has made slow progress. The recently developed Data Reporting Tool (DaRT) for MEAs is a positive step towards harmonization as the first tool supporting parties to use synergies in the field of knowledge management for national reporting to biodiversity-related conventions and is widely recognized as a recent development of interest. Realizing synergies within the more complex and politically sensitive MEAs (such as the CBD) has been particularly challenging. An important development in this direction is the launching of "InfoMEA", an information portal on treaty decisions that was created to facilitate collaboration within MEAs, namely the biodiversity, chemicals and waste and climate change clusters. MEA Secretariat representatives and NGOs consider the info portal a good step forward with better chance of success then previous information consolidation and sharing efforts.

89. The terminal evaluation of LEO posed the question of how UNEP can assist with MEA implementation, which generated answers that are concrete, effective and that would significantly improve implementation. Collaboration on supporting stronger laws to combat poaching of rare and endangered species is another good example. The joint UNEP-CBD workshop on synergies was a positive example of overcoming barriers. Joint programming is an institutional collaborative arrangement that requires dedicated time and effort to succeed. The regular meetings between the Director of the Law Division and the heads of the MEAs, the direct engagement of the Executive Secretaries of the UNEP MEAs in UNEA and Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings and the MEA Focal Points Network are positive steps aligned with the mutual supportive programming supported by the UNEA resolution. Nonetheless, these important efforts, though, are not captured in the PoW. The absence of strategic and integrated programming and little systematic mechanisms for adaptive management practices at sub-programme level as opposed the project level is a symptom of an insufficiently coherent approach to SPEG planning and implementation.

90. As far as resources are concerned, the PoW Strategy[22] contains the statement that "The Sub-Programme, through its cross-cutting nature, will be able to take on board new priorities established by future UN Environment Assembly sessions, and to contribute to the implementation of relevant Resolutions within the approved budget, unless additional resources are made available." This statement demonstrates the quandary between increasing potential and expectations for EG priorities, but the challenges in resourcing these and the need for a stronger prioritization process. There are several important resourcing issues to be considered in that coordination implies the availability of resources to firstly to engage with MS and other partners to identify strategic priorities and then to adequately fund these priorities. The extent and level of success of coordination is affected by the resources available. Further, there is no clear system for SPEG prioritization and targeting of strategic initiatives with partners. Additionally, portfolio investment is largely in project design and implementation with minimal resources available for strategic SPEG work.

91. **Integration with other SPs.** Beyond the SPEG, there is also a need to enhance coordination but tools to facilitate this are not available. There is an EG dimension to the many activities that are implemented through other sub-programmes. As a result, there are intrinsic SPEG linkages to these SPs as well. However, there were examples raised during the evaluation of where duplication with other SPs occurred, for instance in duplicate recruitment of expertise that was available internally, or preparation of materials that was already available. Inter-divisional meetings are infrequent, and few seem to be devoted to environmental governance. The work under the Montevideo Programme over the years has generated spin-off effects contributing to international agreements on mercury and the management of transboundary freshwater resources (relevant to Sub-Programme work on harmful

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[22] UNEP, 2019, Proposed Programme of Work and Budget for the Biennium 2020-2021

substances and ecosystems management) in addition to training programmes that include improved negotiation skills of Parties to the UNFCCC (supporting climate change agreements).

92.   Furthermore, UNEP's involvement in EG processes has combined inputs from different Divisions and, indirectly, cut across SPs through parallel (if not coordinated) initiatives that aim to mainstream resource efficiency, clean production, and early warning and risk assessment toolkits. UNEP's participation in this process at the country level has strengthened the organization's presence and strategic positioning at the country level, leading to project and funding opportunities as well. However, few of the projects reviewed by this Evaluation referred to any linkage with other sub-programmes.

93.   **Outcome-based Results framework.** Even with evidence of EG activities in other division and although the current Strategy notes in places that the SP will "will complement the work of other sub-programmes" and the MTS 2022-2025 explains the relationship between the SPEG and other SPs, no resources or indicators are provided in the PoW to guide how this is meant to happen or measure whether it has happened. So, for example, the MTS says that "UNEP will contribute to climate stability by promoting the environmental rule of law to help achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement. National Governments will be supported through the promotion of information and data exchange, education, capacity-building and technical assistance, to strengthen national environmental governance systems and improve the rule of law, with the aim of fully implementing the Paris Agreement." But there are no indicators in the PoW for the SPEG that speak to this contribution.

94.   Further challenges with the results frameworks include indicators that do not adequately reflect the realities and actual results of the SPEG and further undermine opportunities for demonstrating the value of EG to facilitate further coordination and collaboration. As noted in the relevance section, the PoW (2014-2015 & 2016-2017) Expected Accomplishment (a), as well its related indicators of achievement and outputs are beyond UNEP's direct control and are not 'immediate outcomes' as per the UN Secretariat definition. Some of the PoW units of measure or outputs are aspirational outcomes that require effective partnership and cooperation to make headway e.g. "environmental priorities of MEAs are identified and mainstreamed to ensure coherence across the UN system". The PoW describes key EG intervention areas and activities for each Expected Accomplishment but does not look at causal links or the relationship of EAs to PoW outputs. Likewise, there is no cross-referencing to outputs from other sub-programmes, nor are opportunities for collaboration with other SPs mentioned. Greater clarity in the strategic focus and its translation into a well-organized results framework will lead to improvements in operational terms as noted in paragraph 114.

95.   Another issue is that many of the Indicators of Achievement (IoAs) are quantitative measures of performance and refer to an "increased number of" some variable. The qualitative dimensions of the results of UNEP's work for example, the relevance, utility, quality, timeliness or coherence are seldom captured in performance indicators. As such, monitoring tends to focus on 'counting' outputs rather than on more substantive aspects of performance towards attributable and contributory outcomes. The SPEG has a direct role in defined projects but also plays an enabling, supporting, and influencing role across various loci of intervention - Global, regional, national, sub-national/sectoral. Of critical importance is the enabling work within institutions to move beyond legal and policy instruments into direct implementation and progress to tangible environmental benefits. A stronger focus on tracking tangible outcomes is required if the SP is to take a foundation role, mainstreaming and driving towards scalable outcomes. The on-going programmes such as the Montevideo are a good example of this potential.

96.   For example, POW 2020-2021 IoA "(i) Uptake by UN entities, international organizations and forums of environmental policy issues or approaches emerging from UNEP policy advice" The unit of measure includes a tacit assumption that policy issues addressed in a complementary manner are simply due to UNEP targeting them. In certain cases, some UN agencies or MEAs might be the 'prime movers' in achieving policy coherence. In any case, what constitutes 'a complementary manner' needs to be defined. Which common environmental policy issues and which UN agencies (the most relevant) should be specified, or "(iii) Number of partnerships between UNEP and major groups and stakeholders for promoting the achievement of internationally agreed environmental goals, including the SDGs" larger number of partnerships and joint initiatives are considered better than a smaller number of the same. This may be true to a certain level, but very large numbers of different interagency

partnerships/initiatives could also be indicative of a lack of coherence unless such partnerships and joint initiatives all work in a synergistic manner. The indicator could be improved if partnerships were tied to the Environment Management Group (EMG), which is a high-level forum to help foster coherence across UN agencies on environment issues. An Evaluation of the EMG is underway, and the results are likely to contribute to clearer understanding of performance and strategic contribution to outcomes. The unit of measure attempts to improve the indicator by placing emphasis on the role of UNEP in such joint initiatives. The Unit of Measure would need to specify defined substantive partnerships / initiatives planned in the PoW period.

97. The EAs, indicators of achievement and units of measure would benefit from being further reframed and redefined in-line with the UN Secretariat definition as 'immediate outcomes' that UNEP can more readily achieve and be more accountable for. The gap between UNEP's contribution and the high level defined for expected accomplishments limits the utility of the SPEG results framework for both monitoring and evaluation of UNEP's performance. There is an inherent assumption in the indicators (results framework) regarding environmental agreements' that 'more is 'better' without reference to quality and substantive targeted results. This logic runs against a key observation, well understood and acknowledged within the Law Division, that proliferation of MEAs and institutional arrangements has created obstacles to implementation with, among other issues, multiple reporting required of countries.

98. UNEP staff have had difficulty in developing results frameworks for normative interventions. Whereas UNEP's role is often centered on facilitation and advisory support, the desired outcomes may depend on actions taken by governments. It is undoubtedly more challenging to develop results frameworks based on causal logic, process-driven initiatives that support consultation and consensus-building and advocacy platforms, than it is for interventions that take more direct action 'on the ground'. Nevertheless, it can and should be done.

99. **Management processes.** In addition to limited tools to guide SP coordination such as clear results frameworks, this evaluation found little evidence of integrated management practices that would be expected and would encourage such integration. Such management practices could include periodic group meetings, review and forward planning sessions, or other forms of adaptive management. This was apparent from the most recent TORs for an SP Coordinator (SPC) – the Digital Transformations SPC – where none of these management tasks were listed in the TORs for the position. It also flows from what appears to be main means of management the SPC has over project implementation was to "persuade" and "influence" the divisions and their staff. The only real authority this Evaluation found was the SPC role in project monitoring where they were able to alert senior management if the project was falling behind. This limited influence is not a new issue and was also highlighted in the 2013 Evaluation,[23] and the 2017 Review of the SP Coordination Function. The SPC influence over projects and staff involved in the SP may be about to change with the introduction within the Project Review Committee (PRC) process of their approval before a project may be allowed to proceed.

100. Law Division respondents, especially the Environmental Governance Branch of the Division, emphasized the need for more reciprocal – and if possible, integrated - approaches to project planning, budgeting and management that goes beyond implementation by multiple divisions to instead strategic coordination for achievement of organizational thematic priorities as identified in the 2022-2025 MTS. This underscores the fundamental need for clear "rules of the game" and operational guidelines that are specific to the SP modality and clearly articulate the intentions for foundational, enabling and thematic sub-programmes as categorized in the 2022-2025 MTS. In the case of the SPEG, it seems that engrained division and project practices (and attitudes) override the changes that the sub-programme approach based on separate but related themes was intended to promote. On the other hand, a more siloed approach results in the SP having limited influence and capacity to coordinate with other divisions. While there is an overall sharing of responsibilities among divisions, it remains unclear to what extent the Law Division, as lead division, is responsible for strategically linking and ensuring effective progress towards these results for example coordination with other SPs / Divisions on issues.

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[23] See SPEG Evaluation 2013, page 13, paragraphs 235 and 238

101.   Projects implemented by a regional office generate higher effectiveness rating, achieving a Satisfactory (5) rating, the average rating for projects managed by the other divisions is Moderately Satisfactory (4) (Figure 12). There is, overall, higher ratings across all divisions for the availability of outputs, compared with the achievement of outcomes with ratings varying between 5.5 for projects managed by the Regional Office for Europe and 4.4 for projects managed by the Law Division. There is a high degree of variability in the outcome ratings depending on managing division. The Regional Office for Europe once again has the highest rating and the Law Division the lowest.

Figure 12. Results-Related Evaluation Criteria by Managing Division
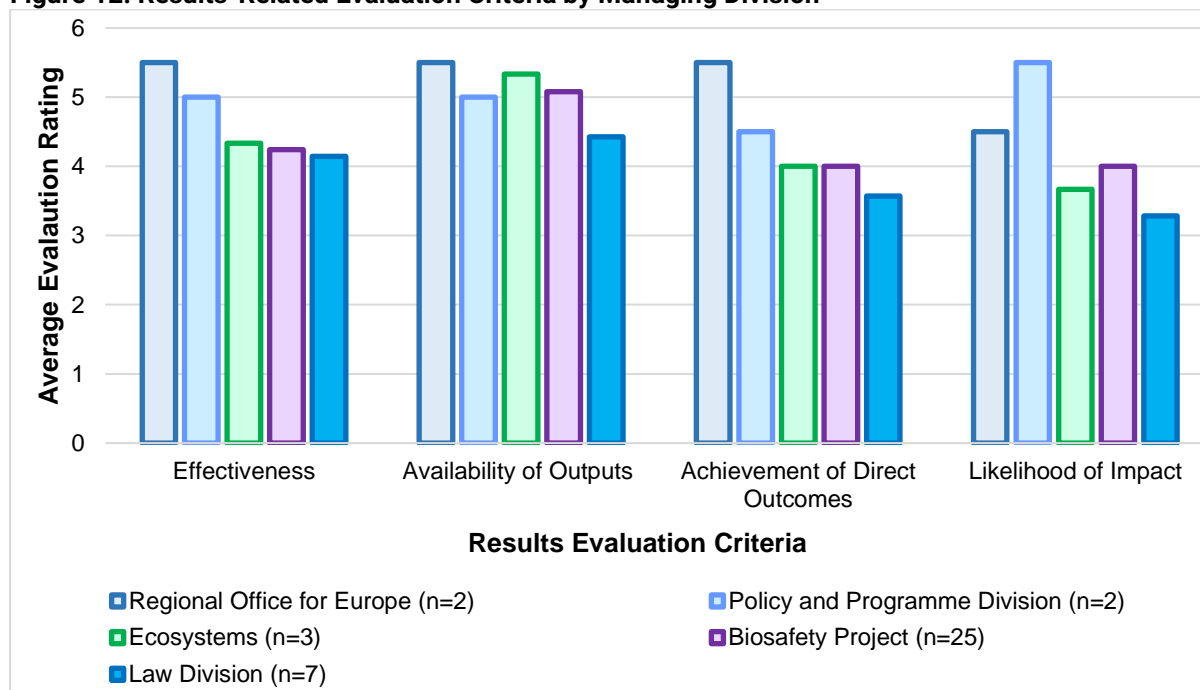
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021
Note − Projects managed by Economy and Governance affairs removed as only one project per division biasing average calculations. The Policy and Programme Division no longer implements (EG) projects

102.   **Use of Science and Evidence: a key area for coordination.** The MTS for 2022-2025 states that the UNEP and the SPEG in particular will use the science-policy interface to support strong environmental governance. National governance frameworks will be strengthened through the promotion of information and data exchange, education, capacity-building and technical assistance, all to strengthen national environmental governance systems and improve the environmental rule of law based on proven scientific evidence. EG plays a critical role in ensuring that the evidence base is used for policy uptake. The SPEG and MEAs in particular work closely with intergovernmental panels and a range of actors, coalitions and expert stakeholders to ensure the best quality and timeliness of science, while embracing different knowledge systems.

103.   The MTS also states that UNEP, and the Sub-Programme for Science-Policy (SPSP) in particular, will put science at the centre of sound environmental governance. Access to the latest environmental information, horizon scanning and informed analysis of the interconnections between the three mutually reinforcing crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution will drive coherent, more system-level decision-making towards more effective legal and institutional environmental frameworks at the national and regional levels, including the agreed post-2020 frameworks, and stronger human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all. Other SPs also have a role in this support, but it is not well coordinated across the organization. Despite the stipulated linkages in strategic documents, the operational and practical links between the SPEG and SPSP are not evident in either sub-programme. The SPEG should take a lead role in this as a foundational programme but there is as yet no clear mechanism for this.

104. None of the four indicators for the **SPEG** measuring governance support, along with their related baselines and targets, units of measure, data sources and relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators for the Environmental Governance foundational Sub-Programme, provide a means of assessing the extent of the collaboration between the SPSP and the EG Sub-Programme. The PoW for 2022-2023 in

105. Indicators for measuring governance support are:

i. Number of countries supported by UNEP under the Montevideo Programme in developing and implementing environmental rule of law and related technical and institutional capacities to address internationally agreed environmental goals

ii. Number of international legal agreements or instruments advanced or developed with UNEP support to address emerging or internationally agreed environmental goals

iii. Number of plans, approaches, strategies, policies, action plans or budgeting processes of entities at the national, regional and global levels that include environmental goals as a result of UNEP support

iv. Number of entities at the national, regional or global levels that UNEP has supported in developing integrated approaches and tools for enhanced coordination, cooperation and synergies for the coherent implementation of multilateral environmental agreements

106. Interestingly, two of the four indicators for the **SPSP** along with their related baselines and targets, units of measure, data sources and relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators for the science-policy foundational Sub-Programme provide a means of assessing the extent of the interface between the Science-Policy SP and the EG Sub-Programme. These are:

ii. Number of relevant … Governments using data, statistics, scientific assessments and early warning and foresight systems provided by UNEP for catalyzing policymaking and action

iii and iv Number of UN agencies, MEAs and UNCT using data and statistics on environmental trends and assessments identified through UNEP to catalyze policy recommendations.

107. There are many challenges with achieving a more foundational and coherent approach. An important aspect is highlighted in the UNEP @50 Report - Reflecting on the Past and Imagining the Future: A contribution to the dialogue on the Science-Policy Interface - is the evidence of a gap between the uptake of a policy and its implementation. Addressing the gap requires new mechanisms that go beyond the diagnosis of challenges and recognize the interdependency and shared values between science and decision-making. The core questions to be answered, therefore, centre on how Science-Policy Interfaces can help policy-making and programme development be more solution-focused, implementable and effective.

UN Reform Process

108. From 2018 onwards the PPRs reflected on the SPEG opportunities and challenges. Interestingly, the top challenge for both PPRs is the need to expand UNEP's resource base. The importance of the Secretary-General's UN Development System Reform process was also emphasized in both PPRs. This process presents opportunities which include increasing coherence for system-wide mandates and further integrating environmental governance in United Nations Country Teams' (UNCTs) ground operations, guided by the UN 2020−2030 sustainability strategy and provides important opportunities for collaboration between the SPEG, UNEP and the MEAs and as such should be highlighted as a priority in the SPEG workplan and budget.

109. Regional perspectives have not been sufficiently considered in the design of SPEG priorities. This is a systemic constraint that is not limited to the SPEG. This constraint undermined the substantive input and "reality checks" to be gained from the regional office network. The efforts of the regional teams are constrained by limited staff numbers compared with the scope of the regional potential. The

UN Reform process presents a time-critical opportunity for UNEP to strengthen its regional and national dimension in EG if a proactive and well-supported programme of work is applied. The Reform process presents UNEP with a unique opportunity to work more effectively at the country level as part of the UN family, in order to mainstream environment issues both in the work of UNCTs and the operations of national authorities, as relative to the EG outcomes identified in the 2022-2025 MTS to mainstream EG at the national, regional and global level. The UN support to country analyses, and the preparation of the draft UNDAFs/UNSDCFs, its results matrices by the UNCT and its inter agency thematic working groups, represent important entry points for UNEP in the UN common country programming process.

110. **Projectization.** The "projectization" of normative activities is a critical design issue that has repercussions on SP monitoring and accountability. Corporate functions in supporting internal capacity development and generating tools and formats for wide use are not well-determined or specifically funded and reported against. For instance, much of the normative work performed by the Law Division and its predecessor, the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELC), was not designed in a project format, leading to difficulties in monitoring progress (and expenditure) against tangible benchmarks. This situation has prompted debate on the merits of project modalities for normative work. The Law Division recognizes that projectizing normative processes into more structured 'blocks' is technically feasible, yet still there seems to be some difficulty to actually do this. Normative work must have clear intentionality – a project modality for normative work provides a unit of financial and results accountability but is not clearly tracked when embedded in more technical project work and hence the value and priorities for this important aspect is largely hidden.

111. MOPAN for example noted that "operational versus normative role is not clearly understood or universally implemented across the organization" and although senior management is clear on UNEP's overarching normative nature, the "application across the organization is not universally observed." It also observed that "Continued reliance on donor funding influences project selection and complicates an internal and external understanding, and appreciation of, the complementary nature of normative and operational roles and thus UNEP's ability to deliver on its broader mandate."

112. UNEP should retain the project modality across the entire PoW but must link the projects more to programmatic outcomes. Since much of UNEP's work is of a normative nature this cannot be regarded as an exception. This speaks to the need for UNEP staff to receive more training and support in results planning and "Theory of Change" approaches in order to become familiar with this approach and are able to apply it to normative contexts for increased understanding and clearer reporting of the value of this work.

113. **Strategic design faces problems of focus and cross-programmatic linkage.** SPEG performance is affected by design challenges that are both specific to the Sub-Programme as well as intrinsic to the broader UNEP sub-programme modality. They are a consequence of UNEP's tension between Division-based staffing and programming towards the thematic and/or sub-programme modality and highlight the need to adapt and improve management mechanisms to help this modality function. Some projects were retrofitted from previous cycles and for EAs that no longer exist. A current example of this is the Faith for Earth Initiative. However, such retrofitting has been an issue for a while with it being highlighted in the 2013 Evaluation.[24]

114. Project design continues to be led by Divisions. The Policy and Programme Division (PPD) and the SP Coordinators having unclear influence over these decisions makes it hard to understand and assess the extent that cross-programme linkages can be promoted at the design stage or modify design to partner with other projects during implementation – a key potential role for SPs. This may change as it was suggested in the interviews that in future the approval of the SPCs will be a prerequisite for approvals of any new projects. SPCs will need to champion programmatic approaches that 'integrate' the efforts of foundational and enabling SPs to deliver against the MTS/PoW higher level results in line with a more explicit SP causal chain and results framework.

115. Many of these issues were highlighted in the first evaluation of the SPEG in 2013. The 2013 Evaluation recommended adopting a clearer more focused overall strategy with a formal definition for

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[24] See SPEG Evaluation 2013 Page 11, Paragraph 224 and 233 and 266.

"environmental governance" that can underpin future strategy development, a clear problem focus, a new results framework (EAs and PoW outputs) that better reflects the intended causality of UNEP work for the MTS and a more developed causal logic at programme level." This remains an issue for the SPEG with attempts to define EG resulting in broad statements that are insufficient to guide activities or the development of a clear results framework and associated tools (see paragraph 54 in the Relevance section). Adopting a formal definition for EG is challenging due to its dynamic nature. Accordingly, this Evaluation recommends adoption of a ToC for the SPEG, and more detailed Indicators and Units of Measure all of which will support an improved strategy for the SPEG.

D. Efficiency

Overall Assessment [25]

The SPEG is assessed as Moderately Efficient (4) at the portfolio level, with investments achieving positive results but not to optimum levels. Implementation of projects experienced some delays for a range of issues, some related to factors beyond the control of the SPEG but others due to procurement or implementation issues. There is insufficient integration across the portfolio and across other sub-programmes leading to duplication of effort on environmental governance activities.

116.   Efficiency is a challenging criterion to assess as UNEP's financial information is frequently unavailable at the level of disaggregation necessary to determine cost-effectiveness. Due to the lack of disaggregated financial information suited to analyzing the costs associated with specific results areas, assessment of project performance in terms of actual economic efficiency is necessarily constrained. Instead, UNEP assesses project efficiency based on implementation timeliness, the sequencing and arrangement of activities, and the extent to which they have built on existing structures and institutions. UNEP does not specifically assess efficiency at the overall sub-programme level, although its overall performance (assessed as the extent to which its PoW targets are met within the biennium of reference), is reported to have been high in 2018-19 and to have improved significantly on the previous one.

117.   The efficiency reported for the 62 projects in the SPEG was on average Moderately Satisfactory. Over time efficiency ratings have decreased – with 2014 average being 5 or Satisfactory; 2015 being 4 or Moderately Satisfactory; 2016 being 4 or Moderately Satisfactory; 2017 being 5 or Satisfactory; 2018 being 4 or Moderately Satisfactory; 2019 being 4 or Moderately Satisfactory; 2020 being 4 or Moderately Satisfactory; and 2021 being 3 or Unsatisfactory. However, more stringent assessment of efficiency by applying a standardized approach (criterion ratings description matrix) to the award of ratings may also be a factor contributing to an apparent decline in performance.

118.   Frequent causes of inefficiencies identified in the PIMS and by the evaluations of projects included (i) insufficient funding; (ii) unpredictable availability of funds; (iii) insufficient coherence/co-ordination with other interventions; (iv) preparation and implementation delays; and (v) insufficient or inadequate human resources. The COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted the efficiency of ongoing operations with delays to implementation and required reallocation of funds. Various evaluations also identified some elements that have helped to improve efficiency, such as more flexible management. Recent evaluations also show that implementation delays were mainly due to unrealistic project implementation planning, delayed start-up, co-ordination issues between executing and implementing agencies, and/or slow signature of legal agreements by countries included in multi-country programmes.

119.   A specific example is the Terminal Evaluation of the Progressive Development of International Environmental Law, which found that the project manager would take a proactive approach to accessing emerging funding streams from emerging donors. The project appeared to be cost-effective because there is a strong emphasis on internal information gathering and using in-house expertise. The

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[25] Assessed in line with the UNEP effectiveness rating sub-criteria of achievement of outputs, intermediate outcomes and contribution to organizational and global outcomes. The factors affecting effectiveness are provided in section C.

project has strong links to other projects as described above, which it complements and feeds into. This could certainly help to enhance overall project efficiency. This project and other UNEP projects on environmental law together form a coherent programme to achieve UNEP's objectives in the field of environmental law, particularly as part of its Environmental Governance Sub programme. The Capacity Building for Participation in the BCH Terminal Evaluation concluded that despite initial delays and technical problems, project implementation was very effective and demonstrated good adaptive management practices. Administrative and financial arrangements were adjusted in ways that departed from standard practice yet facilitated implementation considerably. Some have pilot value and could be replicated in future projects. Effective administrative and financial arrangements (MOUs, retainer contracts, simplified disbursements) were applied and use of project resources was generally efficient. The Terminal Evaluation of the Carpathian Convention Project concluded that UNEP Vienna – ISCC had efficiently managed the project activities, both in terms of cost-effectiveness and timeliness, successfully contributed to all planned objectives and increased project efficiency by using synergies with other ongoing programmes and initiatives.

120.   Nevertheless, some issues have been highlighted as common problems undermining efficiency. For example, the Terminal Evaluation of the NBF Project concluded that Project design (overambitious objectives and modalities of implementation) was not the most conducive to efficiency. The use of financial and time resources has not been optimal despite the huge effort made by the Management Team in ensuring monitoring, transparency and accountability through an innovative Information System (ANUBIS) for the GEF projects, and hence largely outside of the SPEG processes. High management costs and excessively protracted timeframes also seriously challenged its cost-effectiveness and time-efficiency. Several projects were seriously underfunded. Others did not receive the funds that were originally budgeted and required *post facto* significant adjustments as a result. For example, in the EROL Project none of the activities related to 2 of the 4 Outputs were executed which meant that activities had to stop or proceed at a slower pace which affected the time efficiency of the Project. SICCEL faced similar problems.

121.   **Greater efficiency is noted in longer term investments.** The higher-level aims articulated in EAs require longer term engagement to be achieved and generate benefits as previously discussed in paragraph 75. The 2013 Evaluation notes, "…changes in EA performance indicators that relate to recent UNEP initiatives are very unlikely to materialize within the biennium, are difficult to attribute to the organization and unlikely to yield information of use to managers in terms of providing feedback on progress with PoW implementation". Table 7 demonstrates the expected to actual duration of projects in the portfolio. This shows an actual duration that varies from that expected and with a moving mean from 2-5 years to 5-8 years. This is further reflected in Figure 13 with projects with an expected duration between 2 and 5 years most commonly extended and with the longest extensions.

Table 7. Project Expected and Actual Durations

Duration	Expected duration (# Projects)	Actual Duration (# Projects)
0-2 years	14	9
2-5 years	34	28
5-8 years	7	16
8-10 years	1	1
More than 10 years	3	5

Source: SPEG database based on PIMS and portfolio data, 2022

Figure 13. Project Extensions

Project Duration and Extensions
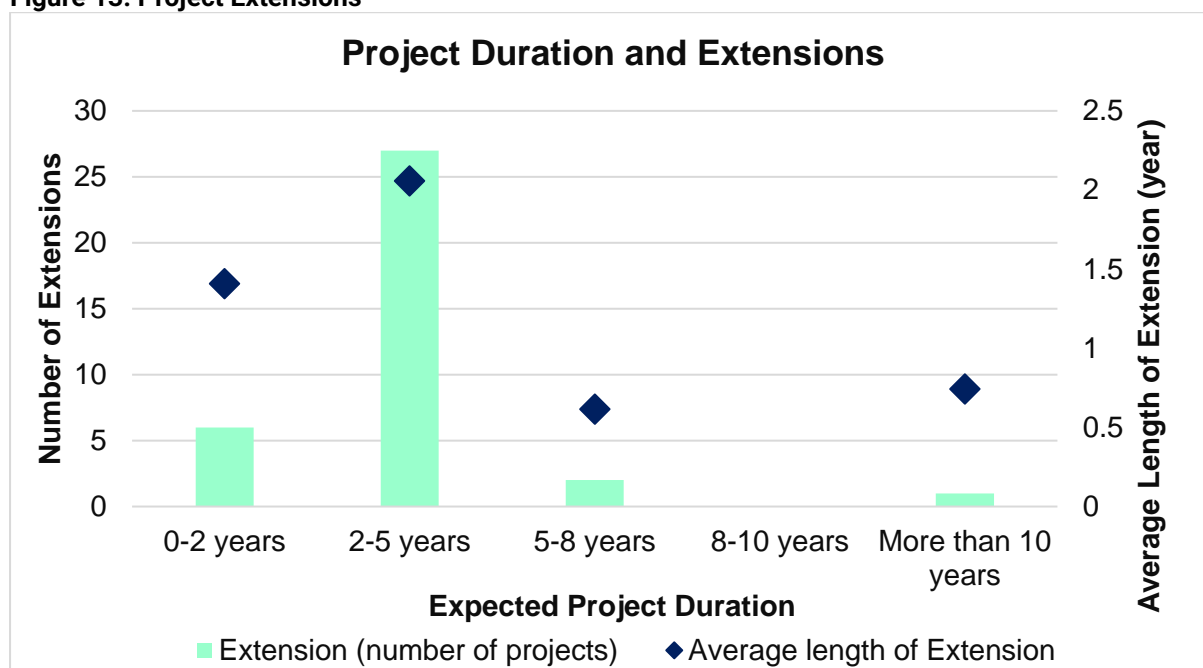
Source: SPEG database based on PIMS and portfolio data, 2022

122.   Overall, projects use an average of 80% of available resources with 91% of the projects with disbursement data available using between 80 and 100% of available funds (Table 8). Notably, only 7% of projects spent beyond the expected budget and 22% spent less than 50% of available resources.

Table 8. Extent of project disbursements 2014-2020

Disbursement	
Average	80%
less than 50%	9
50-65%	3
65-80%	1
80-100%	25
Over expended	3
Total	**41**

Source: SPEG database based on PIMS and portfolio data, 2022

123.   **The Sub-Programme has traditionally relied on a combination of extrabudgetary funding and the Environment Fund for its core activities** (Table 9). The latter has not fully materialized but has been complemented by extrabudgetary resources provided by member States to support the SPEG at large, or specific priorities within it. EG remains central to delivering on the UNEP core mandate and on a growing number of Environment Assembly resolutions. Thus, in addition to its regular budget, the Sub-Programme must be able to rely on stable and predictable resources from the Environment Fund and on an increased overall budget to be able to support the implementation of Agenda 2030 and address specific areas of global concern. Accordingly, this Sub-Programme was subject to a lesser proportion of the reduction brought by the overall decrease of the Environment Fund envelope from USD 271 million in 2018–2019 to USD 200 million in the programme of work for 2020–2021. Project level reporting on efficiency does not include detailed efficiency analysis but a recurring theme was lower than expected budgets that determined the scope of Projects and limited success in raising extra-budgetary funds for work of a more normative nature.

Table 9. Budget forecast/ USD'000

PoW	Environment Fund	Trust Fund and earmarked	Global Funds	Programme Support Costs	Regular Budget	Total
2014-2015	21,895	27,346	-	-	10,653	**59,893**
2016-2017	25,443	28,577	-	998	9,735	**64,753**
2018-2019	35,900	32,800	-	2,400	6,900	**78,000**
2020-2021	26,200	42,000	500	2,100	7,705	**78,505**

Source: PoW 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021
Note: Based on the Resource projection by category: environmental governance) Posts in PoW 2014-2015 =0, 2016-2017 PoW - 5 posts, 2018-2019 PoW – 6 posts,2020-2021 PoW – 3 posts

124.   There are added efficiency benefits in relation to the ability of some projects to leverage substantial funding beyond the direct investment. For example, the Gulf Green Initiative helped to develop concepts for projects that were then funded through PEI and other projects. Table 10 presents an overview of actual funds spent for the SPEG. Over the period, the Sub-Programme has not received contributions for general SP activities from the GEF but has recorded expenditure of USD 68,364,852.67 for biosafety projects funded by GEF. In addition, for PoW 2020-2021 the SP EG received USD 500,000 in global funds.

Table 10. Actual spent/ USD'000

PoW	Environment Fund	Trust Fund and earmarked	GEF Trust Funds/Global Funds	Project Support Costs	Regular Budget	Total
2014-2015	21,895	27,346	-	998	6,512	**56,751**
2016-2017	25,000	29,020	-	998	6,900	**61,918**
2018-2019	35,900	32,800	-	2,400	7,705	**78,505**
2020-2021	26,200	42,000	500	2,100	9,094	**79,894**

Source: PoW 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, MTS 2022-2025 Annex I: Programme of work and Budget for 2022-2023

125.   The SPEG receives the second smallest amount of funding compared to other SPs. Climate Change; Healthy and Productive Ecosystems; and Chemicals, Waste, and Air Quality together are expected to receive close to 70% of all resources for sub-programmes in 2020-21 (Table 11). SPEG funds will be decreased further in 2022-2023 from USD 78million or 9.4% of the total SP budget in 2020-2021 to USD 63 million and 7.9% in the 2022-2023.

Table 11. Estimated budget allocations by sub-programme, 2018-19 and 2020-21

Sub-programme/Period	2018-2019		2020-2021	
	USD (million)	Share (%)	USD (million)	Share (%)
Climate Change	181.3	25.2	261.4	31.1
Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts	51.1	7.1	39.4	4.7
Healthy & Productive Ecosystems	169.7	23.6	189.4	22.5
Environmental Governance	78.8	10.9	78.5	9.3
Chemicals, Waste & Air Quality	100.4	13.9	136.5	16.2
Resource Efficiency	86.3	12.0	95.9	11.4
Environment under Review	52.2	7.3	40	4.8
Total for all sub-programmes	**719.9**	**100.0**	**841.2**	**100.0**
Total for entire PoW	**788.6**		**917.1**	
Sub-programmes/total for PoW		**93.0**		**93.6**
UNEP Overhead Costs				**6.4**

Source: MOPAN, 2021, MOPAN Assessment Report: UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

126. According to MOPAN this trend is projected to continue in 2022-23 and most likely for the entire MTS 2022-25 period. This reflects the importance of global and other earmarked sources, including other UN agencies, the European Commission (EC) individual developed country donors, and the private sector. The funds from all these sources are in most cases earmarked for the projects that comprise the bulk of UNEP's operational activities. Moreover, most of these donor-funded projects fall under the Climate Change, Ecosystems, and Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality sub-programmes.

127. The Environment Under Review (now Science-Policy) and Environmental Governance Sub-Programmes receive some of the smallest amounts. These sub-programmes are responsible for many of UNEP's normative outputs. According to MOPAN this suggests that donors consider these sub-programmes to be less important, even though the quality of UNEP's scientific and governance work is an important reason for them to work with the organization. This problem is not new with the 2013 Evaluation observing that it is a frequently held opinion of the main donors to UNEP that core activities should be funded by core funds and that donors and recipient countries are generally unaware of the SP modality and continue to view UNEP assistance through project modalities or only through their own priorities. There is potential for UNEP to more strongly promote the resourcing requirements for SPEG by more clearly demonstrating the current value and potential for significant outcomes.

128. It is not clear how UNEP, the various SPs and Divisions arrive at budget decisions, but the lack of resources for the SP have been identified as a restriction on the operation of the SPs. SPCs have a limited role in discussions with UNEP's large donors or in resource allocation decisions. The end result is a supply-side dynamic to budgeting that is largely ad hoc and dependent on the availability of funds for Division-implemented projects, rather than fostering of a shared strategic vision well aligned with SP priorities.

129. The SPEG Coordinator does not have direct authority over resources allocated to the Sub-Programme or over its implementation. The Divisions are the locus of all management decisions and actions. The relationship between Divisions and the SPEG has been characterized as a "matrix without matrix management". Resource management at SP level remains, to some extent, a systemic issue common to all SPs, with the SPEG, it contributes to fragmented programming. In the absence of guidelines or criteria for allocating funds to EAs / programme frameworks or for identifying priorities and goals, funding decisions throughout the period continued to be Division-driven rather than programme-based. The problems that arise from the SPEG's structural arrangements are reflected in the difficulty of the Lead Division to assume a true coordinating role for the Sub-Programme as intended for a foundational and cross-cutting SP. The lack of coherence of the full scope of activities that fall within the EG results framework leads to a situation where the Lead Division faces considerable challenges in retaining an overview of the collective performance or delivery of the Sub-Programme. This lack of tools for adequate coordination of resourcing decisions is not specific to efficiency but also impacts on the results of the Sub-Programme as discussed in paragraphs 91 and 92 as does the limited influence of SPCs (see strategic design discussion in section C Factors affecting Sub-Programme Results).

130. More generally, UNEP has struggled to implement a business model that adequately funds the core normative and knowledge generation work needed to support its leadership role.[26] UNEP continues to rely heavily on earmarked funding which is less likely to support normative activities with a preference for projects. The limited resources of the Environment Fund constrain UNEP's ability and flexibility to respond to Member States' requests for new or additional activities, including areas related to its science-policy expertise and capacity-building support. Competition for funding within UNEP and between UNEP and other UN agencies has likewise contributed to broader systemwide inefficiencies and insufficient coherence, according to the 2019 Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation. Limited core funding is a systemic problem for most of the UN. The challenge of a lack of core funding that is unlikely to change, is a reality that will persist and needs to be taken into consideration in future planning. Yet, UNEP also implements seven Green Climate Fund (GCF) Full Proposals worth USD 170 million and a further 83 Readiness Proposals worth over USD 70 million that directly contribute to UNFCCC implementation, none of which are reflected in the framework for the SPEG.

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[26] MOPAN, 2021, MOPAN Assessment Report: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), pg 72, 162 and 163.

131.   These issues have been a continuing pressure for the SP with the 2013 Evaluation concluding that it was not clear how Divisions agreed on a budget for the SPEG programme for the 2010-11 PoW and highlighted a lack of internal cohesion, as well as the practical difficulties of coordinating diverse interests in a manner that encourages collective "buy-in" to the Sub-Programme. Although there are very limited resources for these activities, and an increasingly important workload given the engagement with the UN Reform, the regional actors are providing an important means of coordination and technical support in EG.

E.   Sustainability

The assessment of sustainability across the SPEG portfolio is based on the longevity/ 'endurance' of SP outcomes. The Evaluation considered sustainability at the project level based on available evaluations and good practices reported in relation to MEA support.

The benefits achieved through the legal aspects are likely to endure, however the benefits of other aspects of EG are less clear. Based on this analysis, the Evaluation assesses sustainability of the SPEG as Moderately Likely (4).

132.   As noted in the relevance section, the entire Sub-Programme initiatives target contribution to long term change for EG. As such, the entire reason for the Sub-Programme relates to the need to build sustainability and governance processes to underpin the global pathways for sustainable development across a wide range of laws policies and institutions.

133.   The portfolio ratings for sustainability based on the available evaluation ratings, are shown in Figure 14. This shows that sustainability rates only Moderately Likely, apart from one project in 2017. This Project, the 'Completion and Strengthening of the Cuban National Biosafety Framework for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol' was noted to have been given a high rating for sustainability because of an alignment of activities with national priorities and policies, a focus on the development of forward-looking tools such as Action Plans and engagement with public sector entities and local networks.

Figure 14. Rating of sustainability in the SPEG portfolio by year 2014-2021.
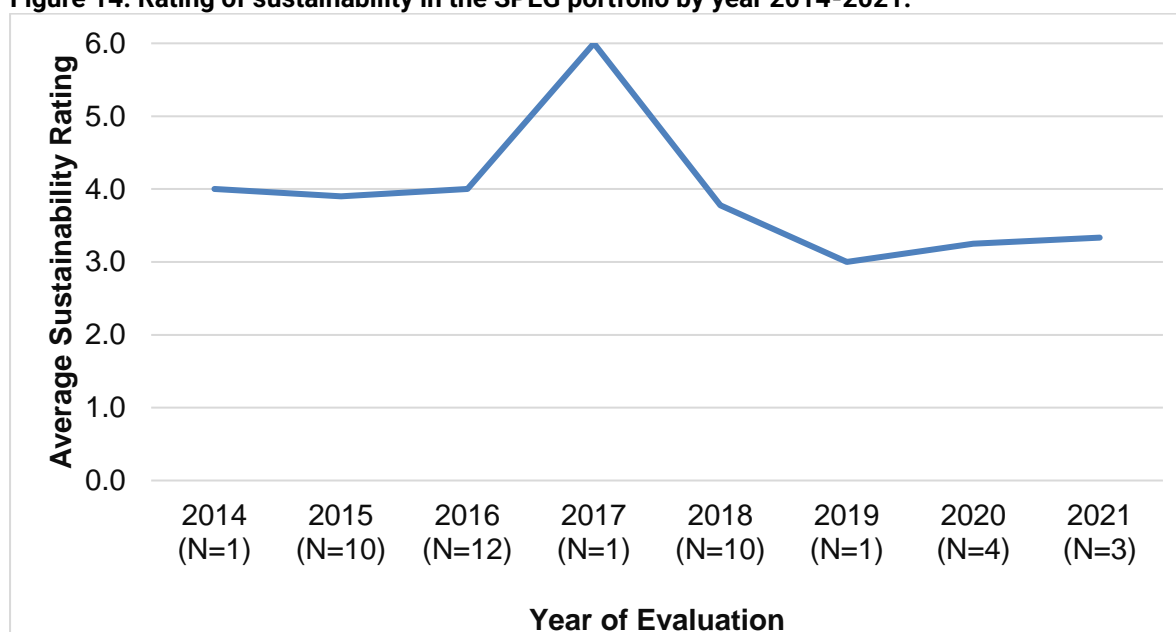
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021

134.   Throughout these evaluations, the strongest element of sustainability related to the extent that capacity was strengthened, leaving social capital and mainstreamed processes that were likely to continue. Another aspect for consideration that has the potential to reduce the longevity of the effect is staff turnover within institutions supported through EG activities. In addition, missed opportunities for cross-SP coordination was noted as a factor affecting sustainability. The PEI Project Evaluation noted that "UNEP staff members also included some shortcomings, like the lack of a clear knowledge management system to enhance learning within the organization and across UNEP sub-programmes and divisions. It was noted that different parts of the organization do not learn enough from one another and do not always make sufficient use of the science produced by the organization itself."

135.   At the operational level, the sustainability pathways are not clear for much of the EG portfolio and ongoing funding beyond each Project is a key threat to sustainability. The evaluation of the Building Capacity for Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) - Phase I noted that in most countries biosafety issues are a low priority and the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and related BCH obligations is project-driven and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Under present conditions, biosafety capacity development cannot be sustained without external support. Continued technical and financial assistance are required over the medium term. It is also evident in the projects that the SP and Law Division have implemented on the topic. The Evaluation of the Development of National Biosafety Frameworks project noting that in "retrospect, UNEP has not shown a clear Biosafety Management Strategy, which is leading to a rather unsustainable management situation, as far as biosafety is concerned (see 4.4.5). The overall capacity of UNEP to respond to project implementation and management challenges has been rated Moderately Unsatisfactory". This further highlights the importance of demonstrating alignment with country priorities for relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. See previous discussions about country needs assessments in paragraphs 57 and 58 and the opportunity presented by current UN reform processes to strengthen these aspects for improved effectiveness and sustainability in section C Factors affecting Sub-Programme Results.

136.   The importance of effective synergies and coordination in country support for implementation of MEAs was also emphasized. A country support system that bridges the growing gap between the global treaties and the country realities is a key issue being raised in most MEAs and other fora. Having clear pathways to localize and contextualize the larger issues and approaches outlined in MEAs is a key driver of sustainability and impacts on the likelihood of countries adopting measures. For example, the evaluation of the LEO project noted that the project had "paid too little attention to country level use of information on environmental law and conventions for strengthened national law, enforcement and institutions. The project is ready for additional outreach to both country level target users and internal audiences of partner organizations. The next phase would benefit from an up-to-date outreach strategy that clarifies the intended clients and accelerates outreach to both internal audiences within MEA secretariats and specific users such as national focal points for MEAs on how the integrated information can assist them in their work."[27]

137.   Having MEA focal points in the regions is a good step forward, but clearly insufficient. Strengthening UNEP and clarifying its specific normative role at the regional and country level would address a well identified need, greatly improve international environmental governance and be a measurable outcome for the SPEG. Clarifying expected outcomes, partnerships and reach are more likely to build stronger and joint understanding between UNEP and country-level stakeholders for future activities. The current UN reform process presents a time-critical opportunity for UNEP and the SPEG to link with existing discussion around these topics.

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[27] Ghanimé, L, 2016, "Final Evaluation Report "Support for Implementation of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem and the Chemicals and Waste Cluster of Multilateral Environmental Agreements", "Law and Environment Outlook: Web-Tools for the Implementation and Enforcement of International Environmental Law and Internationally Agreed Goals and Targets", "Improving the Effectiveness of and Cooperation among Biodiversity-Related Conventions and Exploring Opportunities or Further Synergies", pg 64.

F.   Impact

The impact of the SPEG should be assessed with respect to the objective statements in the MTS documents 2014-17 and 2018-21 articulated as long-lasting outcomes in the MTS and the reconstructed ToC. The SPEG reconstructed ToC as shown in Figure 4 provides an impact statement "policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development."

The likelihood of the SPEG achieving impact in this regard is uncertain. As noted in the relevance assessment and in the methodology limitations, the SPEG pathways toward impact are not clearly articulated. The portfolio can be assessed as achieving intermediate outcomes but the extent to which those lead to the achievement of impact cannot be readily ascertained. For this reason, this evaluation does not rate impact. Clearer causal pathways and articulation of the expected impact of SPEG activities are required in order to robustly assess and rate impact.

138.   Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects have impact statements that reflect such long-term or broad-based changes and evidence of impact is limited but there are positive indications of progress towards impact. There are three major pathways towards impact. The greatest contributions of EG activities to institutional impact occur through three major pathways (Figure 10): i) Law strengthening, ii) building governance capacity at all levels and, iii) support to the MEAs. An approach to EG that combines all three of these pathways by tailoring proven practices to the local context is likely to build the key immediate outcome required to achieve longer term impact. This includes contributions to strengthened accountability frameworks, integrated policy at all levels, enhanced commitments, science-based decision making and collective UN action. The processes undertaken to pursue the three pathways mentioned are likely to also build institutional capacities and coherent understanding and approaches for furthering the EG agenda globally. A combined approach that acknowledges and integrates the importance of all three aspects of EG is essential for UNEP to take the lead in IEG.

139.   Projects that focus on institutional development have the greatest likelihood of impact. For instance, the LEO project focused on development of web-based knowledge tools in partnership with MEA secretariats, host agencies and major groups: a one-stop InfoMEA portal providing access to COP/MOP decisions, national reports and plans; an internationally accepted semantic standard for environmental law and policy (Law and Environment Ontology) and, an e-learning portal providing access to a series of short courses on MEA topics. The project addresses components of environmental governance that are critical to advancing MEA implementation: systematizing information on international environmental laws and conventions and demystifying the possibilities of synergies for more effective implementation of biodiversity-related MEAs.

140.   Project level successes and tools and systems developed in these projects have an added potential for broader impact if they are effectively used by SPEG to leverage influence and show leadership and progress. Drawing broader lessons from approaches that work in different contexts and across the SP can be used to develop coherent, integrated and tailorable approaches to EG that can be useful in several contexts and demonstrate UNEP's leadership role in the field. Presenting products that more clearly articulate the expected pathways to success for EG initiatives could also facilitate sharing across the SPEG and with partners for more positive longer-term outcomes.

141.   Positive indicators of progress towards impact include a greater commitment to conventions and protocols coupled with demonstrated inclusion of environmental indicators in national planning and reporting and enhanced knowledge and capacity of critical staff. The improved access to information and training regarding EG is an additional benefit of EG activities that further reinforces the enhanced knowledge and capacity of critical staff. Some aspects of impact are less strong including access to resources, on-going coordination and slower than expected changes to decision-making processes.

142.   The length of engagement for a project, including a phased approach is a key determinant of the performance. Larger initiatives, implemented over longer time periods have increased potential for transformational change (Figure 15). For example, the Montevideo Programme, the Poverty

Environment Initiative (PEI), and the Sustainable UN Facility, have all been implemented in multiple phases over longer time periods and have produced positive results including strengthened capacity. These projects have demonstrated the potential for transformative shifts in how environmental governance is conducted. These shifts generated normative, or at least replicable instruments that have the capacity to shift policy attention and processes to improved environmental governance.

Figure 15. Influence of Project Duration on Short-, Medium- and Longer-Term Results
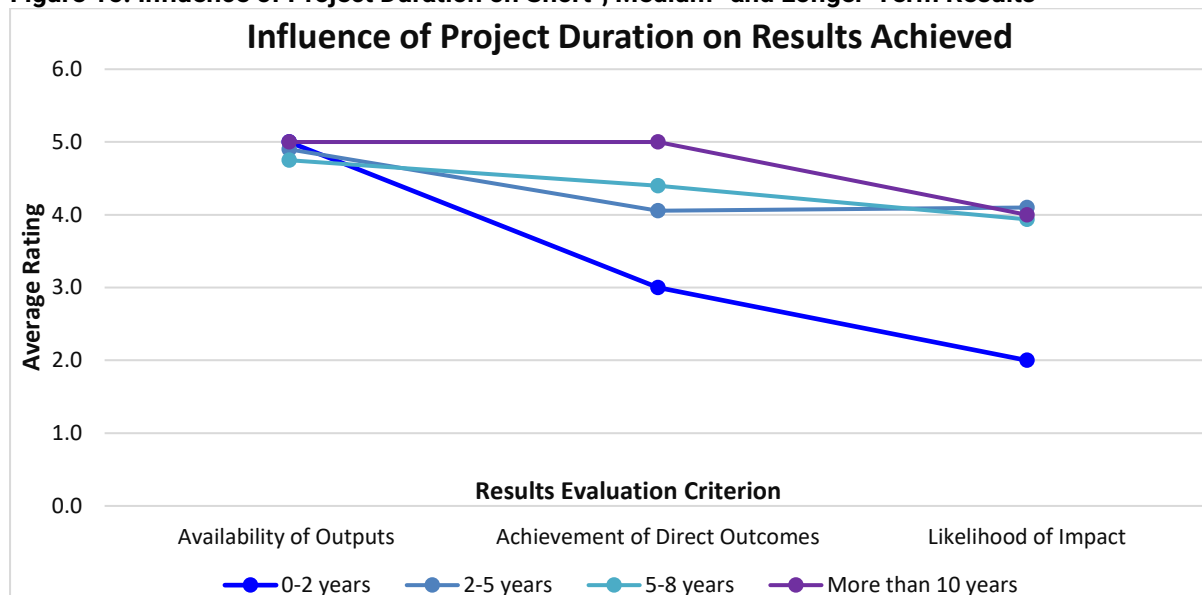
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021

143. There is a demonstrated need for prolonged support to enable legal and institutional change that can enable future change. Projects that engage over multiple phases demonstrate more strategic shifts in environmental governance at regional and global scale. Links to other on-going initiatives or funding for scaling up are also important to widen the extent of impact.

144. However, there are also substantial barriers to evaluating impact. The evaluation of the UNDAF Project concluded that "While respondents were relatively confident that capacities had been developed, they were less certain that these enhanced capacities have actually been applied to the formulation of "science-based policies". The evaluation of the EROL project noted that one of the challenges in advancing the environmental rule of law around the world was supporting citizens in designing litigation strategies, collecting evidence, dealing with scientific uncertainty, using citizen science, structuring remedies and conducting negotiations.

145. Performance measures that can only be determined through evaluation are clearly not appropriate for regular SP monitoring purposes. For example, in the 2020 PPR, UNEP reported that it "worked with 33 countries to enhance institutional capacities and policy frameworks to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals" but no details were provided about what it did and how influential its work was. Similarly, UNEP reported that during 2020 in the context of the preparations for the Global Biodiversity Framework, UNEP "worked with 13 MEAs to facilitate cooperation among them and the coherent implementation of the conventions and the outcome of this process was submitted as INF document to SBI of the CBD" but how this contributed to the Framework negotiations is not outlined. The projectization of these activities is a positive for the tracking of results of these activities and an important part of strengthening governance capacity.

146. Ultimately, most project results manifest at the country level and depend on the policy decisions and actions of governments. This links strongly to the effectiveness of the portfolio in terms of national capacity development. Determining whether UNEP support has caused or substantially influenced, governments to draft policies and legislative proposals and then proceeded to implementation can only be established through an evaluative approach. Another issue with the UNEP Expected Accomplishments in the PoW is they have and are often set at too high of a level, well beyond UNEP's control and far beyond its means. For example, UNEP may not always be the only, or indeed the main,

actor behind the formulation of international and national environmental policies and laws, in particular considering the organization's technical normative role and modest level of engagement at the country level. Nonetheless, the projects with evaluation ratings over the timeframe showed a performance that was rated as Moderately Satisfactory or lower for the likelihood of impact, and a declining trend albeit with a small sample size (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Rating of likelihood of impact in the SPEG portfolio by year 2014-2021.
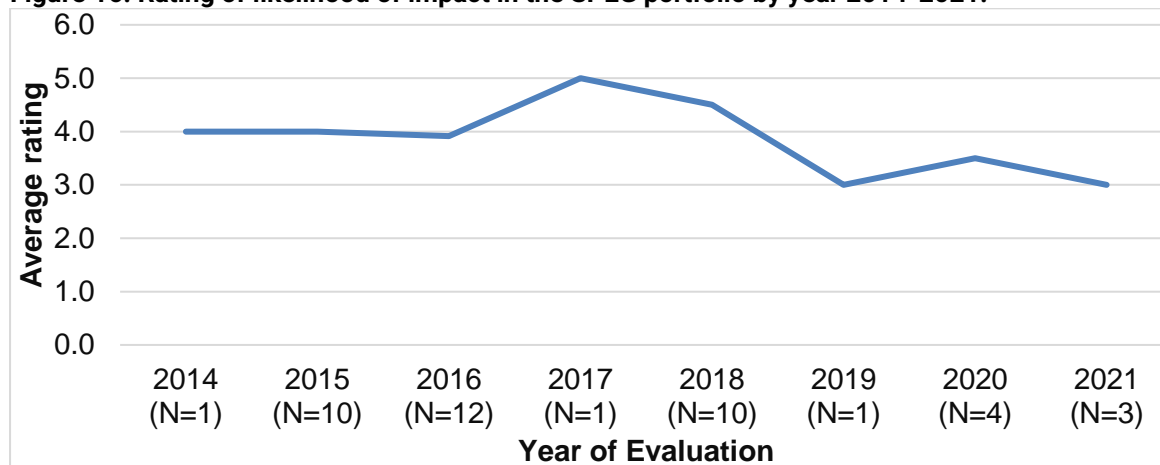
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021

G. Cross-cutting issues (including gender, human rights, vulnerable groups)

147.   Overall, human rights and gender are not adequately mainstreamed in SPEG activities although human rights have been more explicitly identified as a focus in the upcoming 2022-2025 MTS for the SPEG. The upcoming MTS, 2022-2025, makes the linkage between the environment and human rights much more explicit than previous strategies. The MTS links the importance of governance structures and processes to protecting these rights, with one of the six identified actions reading, "Advancing human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment". Gender still remains an area where focus can be enhanced, and activities and responsiveness improved.

148.   Most project level evaluations do not discuss human rights or gender equity although some good practice examples are available. The availability of evaluation rating data for human rights and gender equity has improved over the period as indicators have become more explicit but robust analysis of overall performance is difficult due to data gaps. Figure 17 shows the increasing availability of evaluations that rate 'responsiveness to human rights and gender equity". In the first half of the evaluation period (2014-2017), of the 24 evaluations completed, no evaluations rated human rights and gender equity. This improved from 2018 onwards, in line with a more explicit stipulation of focus in the 2018-2021 MTS, with 16 of the 18 evaluations conducted providing a rating. However, of these 16 evaluations, only 4 are not GEF biosafety projects suggesting that the focus on these cross-cutting issues beyond stipulated evaluations is not sufficient. From these ratings, a general improvement is visible in the average ratings.

Figure 17. Rating Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity in Evaluations.
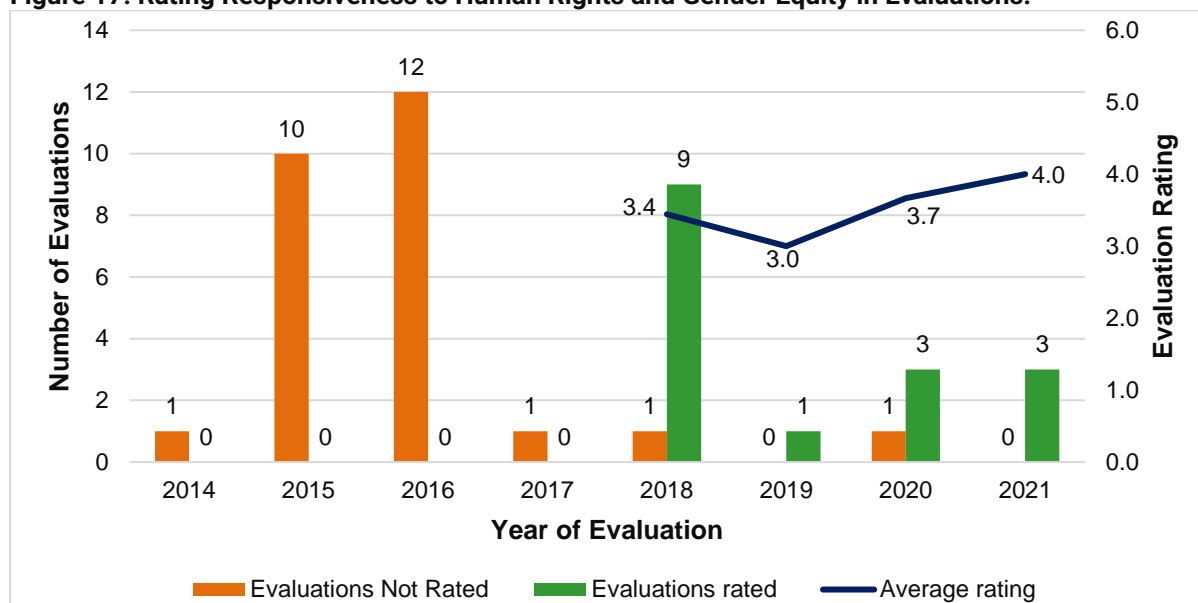
Source: Project Evaluations ratings 2014-2021

149.   The limited explicit consideration of human rights in many projects means that the evaluations are not able to discuss in detail activities that were responsive to human rights. For example, the terminal evaluation of the "Capacity Building for Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in India Phase II" conducted in 2018 noted that "project design was blind to Human Rights and Gender Equality, and possible vulnerable groups were not identified". The evaluation of the "Addressing the Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products" Project noted variation in the consideration of human rights between Project components with the policy component aiming to "enhance a human rights-based approach" but with the legal and communications components not including specific activities.

150.   However, projects with a stipulated focus on human rights were more likely to be responsive. For example, "human rights were a central feature of the environmental rule of law and human rights and environment project activities" as noted in the terminal evaluation of the "Progressive Development of International Environmental Law" Project. "This is reflected for example in the extent to which substantive and procedural environmental rights were addressed in the various colloquia and the first global report on EROL."

151.   The Human Rights and the Environment: Good Practices project as well as the Montevideo Programme have helped to stimulate UNEP's efforts to mainstream the integration of human rights dimensions into MEAs and national capacities. Several MEAs already recognize the link between the environment and human health and well-being, and many MEAs include provisions regarding civil liability and compensation for damage caused by environmental degradation. Despite all these successes there is more that UNEP can do to deepen this work, especially in the context of the UNFCCC and CBD processes. The activities of the Montevideo Programme have contributed to the consideration of environment in key human rights forums such as the Human Rights Council resolution. The work of the SPEG officers to support efforts within the Human Rights Council and UNGA to adopt a human right to the environment has a significant impact potential worldwide.

152.   Some attempts to respond to gender equity have included encouraging equal gender balance in project processes as in the case of the "Addressing the illicit trade in wildlife and forest products" project or using gender disaggregated data. Facilitation of the MEA Gender Officers Network which exchanges information and aims to identify possible collaborative areas on gender mainstreaming among MEAs through a dedicated Microsoft Teams page is conducted by the Environmental Governance and Conventions Branch of the Law Division under the SPEG.

153.   However, these approaches are not applied systematically and there is similar variation in the portfolio about the level of responsiveness to gender equity. Nonetheless, there are some isolated

examples of positive responsiveness to gender equity such as the "Secretariat Support to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Minamata Convention on mercury" which identified numerous pathways for promoting gender equity including "anchoring gender considerations in prescribed legally binding text" and "looking out for unbalanced situations and working out solutions…to ensure participation." Where responsiveness to gender equity is recorded, it is often in general terms but not considered in an integrated or mainstreamed way and responsiveness is not always evident. For example, the terminal evaluation of the "Progressive Development of international Environmental Law" Project reports that "there is no evidence of gender considerations being factored into project design and implementation."

154. As with human rights and gender, the extent to which vulnerable groups are considered in project design and implementation varies greatly across the portfolio. This variation includes strong focus on vulnerable groups at the outcome level of project intended results as in the UNDP-UNEP PEI Project. The project identified vulnerable populations as a key beneficiary of project activities and was responsive to evaluation findings to increase focus on these groups as the Project progressed. The articulation of these groups in the project outcome encouraged consideration and responsiveness to these groups compared with other projects. In other projects, such as SICCEL, there was insufficient data collection disaggregated for marginal groups to make any assessment of responsiveness to the needs of these groups. Very few of the evaluations reviewed for this evaluation report on the impacts of projects on vulnerable groups suggesting an overall lack of available data and recorded activities related to these groups to inform reporting.

155.   These conclusions draw on the preceding findings to summarize the assessment in terms of the evaluation criteria ratings and lessons learned emerging in relation to the key evaluation questions posed during evaluation design.

A.   Evaluation Criteria Ratings

156.   The SPEG has remained critical and **relevant (Satisfactory - rating 5)** to UNEP's MTS and PoWs at the strategic level, although the emphasis has evolved. The SPEG portfolio reflects a responsiveness to funding partner priorities, through UNEA and through necessity, in portfolio alignment with available funding. The activities supported, through individual projects or programmes, are in strong alignment and cooperation with international, organizational, and national stated priorities in general, but the extent to which the SPEG identifies and responds to country priorities is not systematic and the strategic intent of the Sub-Programme is not well communicated or clearly reflected in the results framework. This leads to a lack of shared understanding of how UNEP is addressing EG goals.

157.   The SPEG is **effective (Satisfactory - rating 5)** at the portfolio level, with investments assessed through the PPRs largely achieving expected targets for each MTS period during the evaluation scope but with insufficient attention to adequately demonstrate contribution to the outcome level or capture all benefits of EG-related activities. The PPRs over the period describe an impressive array of important outcomes and achievements. Performance across the portfolio is generally positive. The performance of projects is variable but largely rated as effective. Support to MEAs in cooperation with MEAs was successful but the quality of efforts for mainstreaming environmental governance was less evident. The engagement of stakeholders in projects was seen as a potential area for improvement, particularly in relation to human rights and gender, as well as environmental safeguards processes.

158.   Efficiency is assessed as **Moderately Satisfactory (4)** with investments achieving positive results but not to optimum levels. Implementation of projects experienced some delays for a range of issues, some related to factors beyond the control of the SPEG but others due to procurement or implementation issues. There is insufficient integration across the portfolio and across other sub-programmes leading to duplication of effort on environmental governance activities.

159.   The assessment of sustainability at the Sub-Programme level was difficult to accomplish given unclear basis for assessment. Based mainly on the assessment of project level sustainability of intervention and feedback from good practice activities to support MEA sustainability, the Evaluation assesses sustainability of the SPEG as **Moderately Satisfactory (4).**

160.   Impact is even more difficult to evaluate because the SPEG pathways toward impact are not clearly articulated. For this reason, this evaluation did not rate impact.

B.   Response to Evaluation Questions

Evaluation question 1. Is the concept of environmental governance clearly understood and applied in the design and implementation of the Sub-Programme?

161.   Environmental Governance is a foundational concept and of strategic importance to UNEP and its partners. UNEP is considered the principal body of the UN in the field of environmental governance that "sets the global environment agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment."

162.   However, the definition of EG in UNEP remains a broad concept with many legitimate and different understandings and interpretations. EG is more of a visionary concept than a planning paradigm. The EG Sub-Programme therefore spans a very broad mandate and has not reached a level of clarity that engenders corporate engagement and support towards clear, common outcomes.

163. The lack of an agreed definition and strategic approach to programming has resulted in a fragmented portfolio approach that cannot readily be tracked. The SPEG has sometimes been regarded as a "parking lot" for functions and initiatives that have been placed there by default, because they do not 'fit' anywhere else in UNEP's planning framework. Ultimately, most project results manifest at the country level and depend on the policy decisions and actions of governments.

164. All of the projects reviewed for this evaluation made important contributions to progressing the key concepts of EG among Member States and within the environmental community. UNEP's unique convening power has brought together actors. There have been significant successes; the Montreal Protocol, on substances that deplete the ozone layer and its Multilateral Fund, is recognized as the single most successful international agreement. UNEP's efforts to ban lead in fuel is another widely recognized success. However, these successes are very varied reflecting a fragmented programming approach which dilutes understanding about the key thrusts of EG.

165. The normative function is both insufficient and not adequately relevant to stakeholder needs which creates a tension with operational activities that attract resources. The UNEP approach to EG implies a strong normative function, yet the projects in the portfolio are largely operational focusing on small scale and specific interventions with clear effects on the ground, in response to available funding. Many projects do generate knowledge products and tools, yet these are specific to the project and there are few examples where tools have been replicated and scaled-up. At the same time, feedback from the regions suggests that some normative tools that are generated through the SPEG are not sufficiently tailored to the needs of the specific Member States.

166. The MTS and PoW provide a detailed narrative on the focus on UNEP's activities under each Expected Accomplishment and lists key intervention areas corresponding to PoW Outputs. However, the Expected Accomplishments have not always provided a clear and coherent results framework for the SPEG within the broader SP results framework as an explicit contribution to corporate results. Monitoring tends to focus on 'counting' rather than on more substantive aspects of performance. The unclear causal logic, expected attribution and ambitious targets for PoW Outputs and EAs curtails the validity of many of the indicators used in the PoW. These unclear monitoring tools that are not fit for purpose obscures the actual value of the SP in relation to expected accomplishments by not providing adequate opportunity for reporting achievements.

167. There are potential new spaces opening up for EG reform that are strengthening the importance of the SPEG. Yet the SPEG is not adequately set up or resourced to respond to these opportunities. Increased political recognition of environmental risks and consequences of climate change and value of ecosystems are leading to new areas of focus for environmental governance, such as new resources for implementing MEAs. For example, the Readiness Funds from the GCF for implementing broad holistic climate change action recognize the complexity and varied nature of responding to EG and appropriately support a wide range of activities. The global response to COVID-19 is another example that opens up significant possibilities to implement EG due to the links with zoonotic diseases and the work of the CBD on these issues[28]. This means that the SPEG has to improve its response to external and internal influences and strengthen both its relevance and operations if it is to enhance its relevance and capitalize on these opportunities.

Evaluation question 2. How can the synergies between the EG SP and other thematic, foundational, and enabling UNEP sub-programmes be made tangible and effective?

168. SPEG covers a broad range of issues and has important theoretical, substantive and potentially practical links to the other SPs for adding value to efforts related to UNEP's three thematic priorities, yet there is limited tangible realization of synergies with other SPs. Links between SPs have been described in the MTS, but these are generic and collaborative approaches to planning and implementation that are not clearly programmed or resourced. Consequently, limited linkage occurs. There is a need to work more closely across Divisions and thematic areas. Other SPs are engaged in critical EG work such as the Chemical MEAs, UNFCCC, IPCC and IPBES, but this takes place outside of the SPEG and there is no clear connection with the SPEG PoW. Furthermore, regional perspectives have

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[28] See https://www.cbd.int/article/Preventing-Zoonotic-Disease-Spread.

not been sufficiently considered in the design of SPEG priorities, which were mostly driven by UNEP Headquarters.

169.   There is little joint programming, collaborative projects or co-design, and this constrains the establishment of effective linkages. For example, the Montevideo Programme has contributed to international agreements on mercury and the management of transboundary freshwater resources. However, few of the projects reviewed by this evaluation referred to any linkage with other sub-programmes, cross references to other SPs are absent in programme framework documents and are rarely found in practice. While connections and linkages among SPs offer opportunities for collaboration and synergy across organizational structures, the absence of clearly defined planning processes, guidelines and incentives to explicitly support such collaboration, restrain and undermine its potential.

170.   The current MTS provides a stronger framework for synergy between sub-programmes, but the detailed mechanisms are still unclear. Although the current Strategy notes in places that the SP "will complement the work of other sub-programmes" and the MTS 2022-2025 explains the relationship between the SPEG and other SPs, no resources or indicators are provided in the PoW to guide how this is meant to happen or measure whether it has happened. Furthermore, it is not clear how SPEG accomplishments link to other sub-programmes and conversely how EG activities under other sub-programmes are linked to the SPEG. If SPEG is to be a foundational sub-programme, the basis of the foundations for legal, policy, institutional and country environmental governance strengthening needs to be clearer both within the SPEG and with other SPs. Improvements such as moving the SPCs to the PPD and involving SPCs more in portfolio development theoretically promotes synergies and joint management of the SPs, but tangible outcomes are not yet apparent and need time to mature.

171.   The pathway from strategy to implementation of projects and contribution of results to expected accomplishments with UNEP, linked through other SPs is not evident. The relationship between the projects and other UNEP initiatives that operate through the other sub-programmes is not reported and therefore is largely undetermined. There were frequent examples raised during the evaluation of where duplication with other SPs occurred, for instance in duplicate recruitment of expertise that was available internally, or preparation of materials that was already available. Consequently, the expected synergies between SPEG and other SPs was found to be marginal. Development of indicators, units of measure for the synergies between SPs and active tracking of what is working and what is not working in EG activities across UNEP would enhance cooperation.

Evaluation question 3. How can the programmatic cooperation and synergies be enhanced between UNEP and the UNEP-administered MEAs? What is the role of the EG SP and other sub-programmes in MEAs related work?

172.   MEAs are a key outcome arising from UNEP since its foundation, but MEA Secretariats are autonomous and independent bodies. MEAs are a central part of the IEG regime that requires attention from the SPEG. The SPEG PoW aims at enhancing coherence in the MEA implementation with enhanced cooperation between UNEP and MEA Secretariats and aligning the policies of governments and UN agencies, as with coherence in other EG activities such as SDG implementation.

173.   The SPEG has been active in supporting MEAs with many of the projects being evaluated highly successful and providing technical advice and capacity building for MEA implementation at the country level. For example, the projects supported by the GEF, such as the NBF and ABS projects, have made many important contributions to MEAs and have directly contributed to implementing MEAs at the national and regional levels. The LEO project focused on development of web-based knowledge tools in partnership with MEA secretariats, host agencies and major groups: a one-stop InfoMEA portal and an e-learning portal that has been established through the SPEG is appreciated and demonstrating promising results for future coordination between MEAs. The Human Rights and the Environment: Good Practices project has certainly helped to stimulate UNEP's efforts to mainstream the integration of human rights dimensions into MEAs. The SICCEL's project supported capacity development for government officials on environmental law and policy as well as MEAs. The DaRT project, although outside the scope of this evaluation is another good example of UNEP facilitating synergistic reporting

among the MEAs. These projects address components of environmental governance in general and enhance critical support for MEA implementation.

174.   Despite the success of specific projects, it is clear that a more systematic approach to support MEAs by UNEP through the SPEG would improve programmatic cooperation and synergies between UNEP and the UNEP-administered MEAs as well as other MEAs. Strengthening linkages and common processes between MEAs contributes to MEA and environmental governance results and is cost-effective but requires a systematic long term and well-resourced focus for SPEG. The relationship between UNEP, its SPs and MEAs is a key and enduring priority but works most effectively when autonomy is respected, the relationship is collaborative, long term and mutually beneficial. Attempts to consolidate, control or coordinate MEAs have limited effect. The regular meetings between the Director of the Law Division and the heads of the MEAs, the direct engagement of the Executive Secretaries of the UNEP MEAs in UNEA and the SMT of UNP and the MEA Focal Point Network are all positive steps in this direction and should be further supported and developed.

175.   There is limited strategic joint programming or funding schemes between SPs and MEAs to enhance cooperation. Current funding arrangements tend to encourage competition for resources rather than cooperation. More leveraging of other successes could improve the profile of the SPEG and programmatic cooperation and synergies between UNEP and the UNEP-administered MEAs. For example, the cooperation, fostered with support from UNEP, between the Stockholm, Rotterdam and Basel Conventions, which now have adopted decisions on joint services, joint activities, synchronization of the budget cycle, joint managerial functions, review arrangements and program coordination sets a valuable precedent for other groups of MEAs. It is however not clear how the SPEG contributed to this important success or has used this success to help its own work. IPBES and IPCC are important examples of where there have been important achievements in the development of MEAs and cooperation between MEAs that has not been clearly linked to the SPEG.

176.   Many of the current indicators and units of measure for cooperation with MEAs are too broad to promote cooperation and inform monitoring of performance. Refinement of these may help improve programmatic cooperation and synergies between UNEP and the UNEP-administered MEAs if done in partnership.

Evaluation question 4. Are the institutional structures and management arrangements for delivery of EG work conducive to effective management at the level of the Sub-Programme and the achievement of desired EG results?

177.   Strategic SPEG arrangements do not adequately support the span of environmental governance, SPEG projects are mostly well managed in terms of implementation but as a Sub-Programme, progress in environmental governance faces key challenges, particularly:

- connecting operational and normative roles,
- identifying strategic priorities for the portfolio, and
- leveraging resources for priorities rather than responding to available resources.

178.   There is currently no ToC or clear results-based management framework for SPEG that is linked to an aligned structure and adaptive management approach. The structure and management processes need to respond to the clear need to focus on international environmental law, with its specialized requirements, but also coordination with and support to MEAs. The other major aspects of environmental governance such as governance processes at national and regional level, capacity development for environmental governance, both within the UN system and with member state and partners, are dispersed across other SPs and management arrangements, leaving gaps and resulting in unclear processes.

179.   The SPEG structure is not sufficiently conducive to internal programme integration as well as EG coordination across other sub-programmes. There is tension between Division-based and SPEG staffing programming and resourcing. While there is an overall sharing of responsibilities of sub-programmes among divisions, it remains unclear to what extent the Law Division, as lead division for SPEG, is responsible for strategically linking and ensuring effective progress towards EG results across

other SPs / Divisions on EAs for environmental governance. The positioning of the SPEG within the Law Division provides strong visibility for the Legal aspects of governance. At the same time, the Law Division, as the SPEG lead, has limited authority beyond its own span of management. Staff assigned to Sub-Programme coordination roles are unable to devote sufficient time, and/or have insufficient budgetary provisions to support meaningful coordination efforts beyond their own projects. Regional SPEG coordinators and legal officers reporting lines are complex and would benefit from simplification. Overall, improved structures and processes for coordination and team dynamics at the Sub-Programme level that facilitate communication appear to need more attention. However, this is difficult within current resources and staffing and would require specifically devoted expertise and roles.

180. There is a demand for more attention for normative functions that can support strategic change on priority matters. SPEG staff expressed difficulty in pursuing normative interventions due to a dependence on donor funding that is earmarked for operational, projectized activities. Finding approaches that can optimize the generation of normative products and approaches whilst continuing to invest in targeted projects would be of benefit. Continued reliance on tied project funding influences project selection and complicates an internal and external understanding, and appreciation of, the normative approaches and thus UNEP's ability to deliver on its broader mandate and fulfil a leadership role in all aspects of EG. Whereas UNEP's role is often centered on facilitation and advisory support, the desired outcomes may depend on actions taken by governments so tools that assist governments to self-govern in critical environmental actions is an important direction for future benefits.

181. The EGSP project portfolio is heterogeneous and encompasses different levels of intervention. The broad scope and mandate and a desire from participating Divisions to retain work from previous biennia contributed to a results framework that lacks full logical coherence. Much of the normative work performed by the Law Division and its predecessor DELC was not designed in a project format, leading to difficulties in monitoring progress (and expenditure) against tangible benchmarks. In addition, some projects retained from earlier planning cycles were influenced more by donor priorities than by a need to align with the current SP results framework.

182. Project-level results are positive and SPEG's targets have been achieved but programmatic pathways and funding for replicability and scaling up are not well identified or achieved. The SPEG does not have sufficient resources to support the scope of work outlined in the MTS or PoW. A disconnect between budgeting and programming leads to reliance on earmarked donor funding. Programme timeframes are clearly insufficient in relation to the level of EAs. As noted in the 2013 Evaluation, "…changes in EA performance indicators that relate to recent UNEP initiatives are very unlikely to materialize within the biennium, are difficult to attribute to the organization and unlikely to yield information of use to managers in terms of providing feedback on progress with PoW implementation". Ambitious - and at times over-optimistic - design has repercussions on SPEG performance, attribution and accountability. There are also additional findings that suggest that the institutional structure and management arrangements are not optimal for supporting EG in UNEP. It has been hard to assess the SP's consolidated impact based on its constituent projects and activities.

183. Lack of authority over project development, implementation and budget control limit the influence of the SPEG Coordinator. This may change as it was suggested in the interviews that in future the approval of the SP Coordinators will be a prerequisite for approvals of any new projects. Promoting the Sub-Programme Coordinator's role in the PRC process is likely to promote institutional structures and management arrangements for delivery of EG work.

184. There are few active management procedures to engage SPs and Division staff in coherent sub-programme delivery. This evaluation did not find management practices that would be expected such as periodic SPEG group meetings, review and consultative forward planning sessions, or other forms of adaptive management. However, these are currently being pursued in an *ad hoc* manner in an effort to improve internal programming. Moving the coordinators to PPD reduces perceptions of their role favoring Divisional interests and promotes management arrangements for delivery of SPEG.

185. There is not a clear results-based management framework for SPEG that is linked to an aligned structure and management approach. Programming for the SPEG largely focusses on securing resources for subsequent phases of core projects that drive the SPEG agenda, such as the Montevideo

Programme. Resources for SPEG are not directly linked to targeted strategic results. One issue is that the scope of the programme is so wide, and priorities are not sufficiently defined. Results-based management indicators and targets are not yet clearly linked to corporate performance indicators. The "projectization" of normative activities is a critical design issue that has repercussions on SP monitoring and accountability. The Law Division recognizes that projectizing normative processes into more structured 'blocks' is technically feasible but finds it challenging. It is undoubtedly more challenging to develop results frameworks based on causal logic, process-driven initiatives that support consultation and consensus-building and advocacy platforms, than it is for interventions that take more direct action 'on the ground'. Nevertheless, it can and should be done, which highlighted the need for more experience and capacity to do this well.

Evaluation question 5. To what extent has the EG SP contributed to the UN Reform process and how can its role be enhanced in the future?

186.   The Secretary-General's UN Development System Reform Process is an important opportunity for the SPEG in all regions. This process presents UNEP with a unique opportunity to work more effectively at country level as part of the UN family, in order to mainstream environment issues both in the work of UNCTs and the operations of national authorities. The Reform Process presents opportunities which include increasing coherence for system-wide mandates, core programming principles and collective results in the context of Agenda 2030, through the development of joint umbrella projects and the consideration of regional country programmes. The Common Country Analysis has potential to strengthen UNEP's relationship with Regional Commissions and other regional institutions through intensive collaboration, stronger engagement with the regional coordinators and increased support to the Regional Sustainable Development Forums and UNCTs.

187.   Regional SPEG coordinators and legal officers have made important contributions to the UN Reform process at the country and regional levels despite the small number of staff and the large scope of the role. The UN support to country analyses, and the preparation of the draft UNSDCF and its results matrices by the UNCT and its interagency thematic working groups, represent important entry points for UNEP in the UN common country programming process, further integrating environmental governance in Country Teams' ground operations, guided by the UN 2020–2030 sustainability strategy. SPEG's participation in this process at the country level has strengthened the organization's presence and strategic positioning at the country level, leading to enhanced project implementation, synergy with MEA implementation and substantial potential for integrating EG concerns and priorities across the UN country support. The resources devoted to this process are extremely limited and more resources would ensure greater opportunities are realized.

188.   **Summary Conclusion.** The SPEG has performed satisfactorily with relevant actions achieving expected outputs and outcomes. Yet, the SPEG is likely to be contributing to wider outcomes than is currently being tracked through the results frameworks. The foundational aspects of the programme span wider than the SPEG itself. Yet, the broader contributions are not being measured and hence are not being optimized. Clearer articulation of the focus of environmental governance through the three main avenues of normative legal and policy instruments and standards, support to MEAs and capacity strengthening for mainstreaming environmental governance would provide greater focus and clarity. It would also build evidence and knowledge on how to strengthen the underpinning of environmental governance across UNEP, UN and with Member States.

IV.   Recommendations

189.   The Evaluation recommendations in relation to the key evaluation questions are:

Recommendation #1: UNEP's leadership role and approach to environmental governance needs a clearer focus, strategic priorities and more specific outcomes.
The SPEG should develop, in collaboration with other SPs/Divisions and MEAs, an improved overall strategy and mechanisms to strengthen its approach to EG across UNEP in line with the MTS 2022-2025 UNEP thematic priorities. This needs to include a clear, working definition of EG to inform the SPEG's scope and activities. This will require a stronger statement of UNEP's role in EG and a more coherent, organization-wide commitment to coordinated EG. In the same way as the MTS 2022-2025 has identified thematic priorities, the SPEG needs a targeted results framework (especially immediate outcomes, direct indicators and units of measure) to help guide the SPEG, as a foundational and cross-cutting SP, in relation to the UNEP thematic priorities and facilitate more effective communication of its impact, relevance and effectiveness across UNEP. Adopting a SPEG Theory of Change (ToC), nested with the three corporate ToCs, in line with current initiatives of the SPEG towards stronger links with the MTS thematic priorities, would promote effective management, development of more concrete and focused indicators and units of measure for the SPEG would aid design and implementation. More training on ToC and related issues would promote effective management and enhance opportunities to apply ToC approaches to normative EG contexts.

Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation[29]:	UNEP has a leadership role in environmental governance already but at present the SPEG is more responsive and reactive than proactive, leading to a fragmented portfolio. There is no clear accepted definition of EG within SPEG, or UNEP more broadly. This has led to many legitimate and different understandings and interpretations. Consequently, the SPEG provides aspirational directions rather than a planning and results-based paradigm. Advocacy for good EG practice is not a clearly stated priority of the SPEG; yet this is essential to achieve wider impact. Catalytic action in EG and leverage through other UNEP and UN processes occurs to a limited extent but is not optimized. Further, the resources and processes for working with regional and national partners are stretched and not systematic. There is insufficient attention paid to a strategic and coherent approach to the SPEG portfolio, that rather tends to be responsive to funding opportunities. There is not a clear link between EG activities and the MTS 2022-2025 thematic ToC. Consequently, the portfolio priorities for the SPEG are not clearly articulated. Furthermore, results of projects within the SPEG portfolio do not explicitly contribute to SPEG causal pathways to expected MTS outcomes.
Priority Level[30]:	Critical
Type of Recommendation[31]	UNEP-Wide
Responsibility:	Law Division, PPD
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2024-25 PoW

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[29] The same challenge/problem can lead to a recommendation of more than one type, i.e. one or more of the following: Project Level, UNEP-wide or Partners recommendation.
[30] Critical, Important or Opportunity for Improvement.
[31] Project Level, UNEP-Wide or Partners recommendation.

Recommendation #2: Environmental Governance requires a more cross-cutting and mainstreamed approach to developing its PoW to achieve the MTS 2022-2025 vision of SPEG as a foundational sub-programme.

The SPEG should undertake a strategic review across UNEP to improve programming. This would include understanding what activities of relevance to EG are being pursued in other SPs and where synergies may be best realized. There is a need to promote awareness of the benefits of more strategic EG action and synergies across the SPs.

The actions arising need to be applied through an integrated PoW with stronger links with other SPs to capitalize on opportunities to strengthen EG collaboratively across SPs. This may be particularly important for cross-cutting governance issues such as gender and human rights. Such an initiative would generate useful lessons for other SPs.

The SPEG workplan should be linked with and demonstrate the added value of the SPEG to the three UNEP thematic priorities (climate action, chemicals / pollution action and nature action) across all divisions. The current SPEG set up is not central to the new thrust of UNEP MTS. The workplan needs to show how SPEG adds value to cross-house EG. SPEG-related results in other divisions and budgetary applications need to be acknowledged to feed into future programming.

Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation[32]:	EG is positioned as a foundational and cross-cutting sub-programme in the new MTS. EG is relevant to all Divisions and all SP. There are governance-related activities being pursued in other SPs that lack proper linkage to the SPEG and, as a result, opportunities for greater coordination and synergy are missed. It is not yet clear how the foundational aspect of the SPEG would be operationalized. Division leadership is understandably focused on division activities rather than SP activities. The boundaries and resource allocations for lead division priorities and SP priorities are unclear. The respective added value of the structure could not be articulated either within or beyond the SPEG, leading to fragmented implementation that has not reached its potential. Environmental governance needs to be considered as a synergistic function across divisions rather than as a separate SP that makes synergy difficult to achieve. Consequently, the SPEG is orphaned rather than embedded and foundational as projected for the next MTS. There is little leadership of SPEG across UNEP to work with other divisions and sub-programs to optimize the opportunities for progressing environmental government across UNEP.
Priority Level[33]:	Critical
Type of Recommendation[34]	UNEP-Wide
Responsibility:	Law Division, PPD
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2022

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[32] The same challenge/problem can lead to a recommendation of more than one type, i.e. one or more of the following: Project Level, UNEP-wide or Partners recommendation.
[33] Critical, Important or Opportunity for Improvement.
[34] Project Level, UNEP-Wide or Partners recommendation.

Recommendation #3: Environmental Governance key functions require amended structure, linked to the ToC and outcomes identified in Recommendation 1.	
Clearer distinction is required between the three functions of EG (i) Legal support, (ii) MEA support and (iii) strengthening EG capacity more broadly within the UNEP, the UN and MSs, is required so that these functions can be more clearly addressed within the portfolio and through collaboration. Consideration of these functions could lead to structural changes, for instance, cooperation with MEAs needs to be pursued at all levels; executive, technical and financially not just on programmatic cooperation. More should be done on all these levels by a dedicated team that works strategically to support MEAs and the synergy with UNEP. This team would contain partnership management, communication and coordination expertise. A dedicated branch for MEAs support is warranted for this purpose as distinct from national and institutional capacity strengthening. Similarly, capacity strengthening for MSs is largely arranged from the regions and due to its importance, needs to be more clearly supported through the SPEG.	
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation[35]:	UNEP leadership in environmental governance has been led through supporting global technical expertise and identifying gaps that need attention. The Law Division is well-established and mature with existing links into other SPs. The Law Division, as the lead division for legal aspects of environmental governance, demonstrates clear alignment but laws are often in place but not sufficiently implemented. This is being addressed through the SPEG, but not in a coherent manner. The structure of the SPEG needs to create clearer strategic and causal lines to improve outcomes.
Priority Level[36]:	Critical
Type of Recommendation[37]	UNEP-Wide
Responsibility:	PPD with SPs
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2023-2025

Recommendation #4:	The SPEG needs to be proactive in its supporting role across UNEP and clarify and seek the specific expertise required to fill roles in support of cooperation, skills enhancement activities and establishing specific coordination mechanisms.
Closer cooperation between the SPs, MEAs and partners in EG capacity strengthening on the development of joint indicators, units of measure for coordination and support would enhance cooperation and outcomes. Improving SPEG function and structure should include a skills review to identify the distinct skills required for each function e.g. facilitation and communications for MEAs. Coordination and improved communication lines for SPEG with other SPs should be given attention, as well as budget tracing in line with performance assessment to better understand where greatest value is being achieved. These can include more active coordination mechanisms between the activities of SPEG, between SPEG leadership team and other SPs and between SPEG and the MEAs. Coordination issues and potential improvements need to be explicitly discussed.	

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[35] The same challenge/problem can lead to a recommendation of more than one type, i.e. one or more of the following: Project Level, UNEP-wide or Partners recommendation.

[36] Critical, Important or Opportunity for Improvement.

[37] Project Level, UNEP-Wide or Partners recommendation.

Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation[38]:	Environmental governance covers legal, policy, institutional and coordination for critical environmental governance decision-making processes. The relationship between the Law Division as lead division for the SPEG needs to be more clearly developed, particularly as a foundational programme. Improved coordination across SPs is required to improve efficiency and to understand where legal expertise in the Division is available to support other SPs, or where other SPs should seek external expertise. More active coordination through PPD to optimize synergy for the SPEG, and potentially other SPs is required. Regional SPEG coordinators' reporting lines are complex and would benefit from simplification. The lack of a SPEG ToC, clear indicators and units of measure undermines effective management arrangements. The current budgetary, monitoring and evaluation processes do not support effective management of the SPEG nor the achievement of desired EG results.
Priority Level[39]:	Critical
Type of Recommendation[40]	UNEP-Wide
Responsibility:	PPD with SPs SPEG with UNEP HR and Communications functions required for detailed implementation.
Proposed implementation timeframe:	2022-2023

Recommendation #5:	**UNEP should make more of the opportunity of UN Reform to mainstream EG initiatives as well as other UNEP activities at the national level. This requires a more active initiative to engage with key countries in the CCA and UNSDCF to leverage activities in EG and build learning to support future UNCT, MEA and MS initiatives.**
The potential for UNEP, through the SPEG to catalyze EG through technical, multi-lateral and bilateral agencies and local actors in the current UN Reform process is substantial. Countries are actively researching and reconsidering their priorities through the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Clearer, more systematic pathways for identifying country priorities for EG to link with the UNCT processes for the CCA and the UNSDCF would provide a substantial opportunity to enhance the mainstreaming of environmental governance to the entire UN programme of support across each country. This could also provide greater strategic focus at the regional level for both normative and strategic support. Resources to support greater UNEP engagement are warranted, particularly as the new processes occur. This includes both links with the UNSDCF processes centrally as well as regional and country level support and greater collaboration with the MEAs to create strategic links between actions to support MEA compliance and broader strengthening of EG.	

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[38] The same challenge/problem can lead to a recommendation of more than one type, i.e. one or more of the following: Project Level, UNEP-wide or Partners recommendation.
[39] Critical, Important or Opportunity for Improvement.
[40] Project Level, UNEP-Wide or Partners recommendation.

Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation[41]:	The UN Reform process has presented important opportunities to leverage EG at the national level. UNEP regional offices have been actively engaged with positive results in gaining responses from countries and development partners to EG approaches and MEA priorities. Yet, the resources to support this work are limited and staffing levels are low. The opportunity is potentially declining as national agendas are established and resources aligned.
	The SPEG is not currently set up to engage sufficiently with the UN Reform process. UNEP does not allocate sufficient resources for the SPEG and other SPs to sufficiently engage with the UN Reform process. This means that the opportunity for delivery of EG work through UN and MS partners is not reaching its potential.
	A contact point between the United Nations Development Coordination Office and the SPEG to engage with on-going UNSDCFs would be a strategic point of contact to align schedules.
	Current SPEG work is active and is generating lessons, but there is no mechanism for harnessing these lessons and mobilizing resources to capitalize on the urgent and important work being carried out in line with the UN Reform process.
Priority Level[42]:	Critical
Type of Recommendation[43]	UNEP-Wide
Responsibility:	2022-2023
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Executive Office with the Sub-Programme and Regional Coordinators

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[41] The same challenge/problem can lead to a recommendation of more than one type, i.e. one or more of the following: Project Level, UNEP-wide or Partners recommendation.
[42] Critical, Important or Opportunity for Improvement.
[43] Project Level, UNEP-Wide or Partners recommendation.

Annexes

Annex 1. SPEG PoW overview, 2014-2021

PoW 2014-2015	PoW 2016-2017	PoW 2018-2019	PoW 2020-2021
Objective: To strengthen synergies and coherence in environmental governance to facilitate the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development. (a) The UN system and multilateral environmental agreement bodies, respecting the mandate of each entity, demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of action on environmental issues (b) The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals, and to comply with related obligations is enhanced. (c) Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans.	**Objective:** To strengthen synergies and coherence in environmental governance so as to facilitate the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development (a) The UN system and multilateral environmental agreement bodies, respecting the mandate of each entity, demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of actions on environmental issues (b) The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations is enhanced (c) Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans.	**Objective**: Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development (a) The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (b) 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.	**Objective:** Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development (a) The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (b) Institutional capacities and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

Annex 2. EG Sub-Programme Projects and Evaluation Sample Projects

In Document Review Sample	Biosafety Project	Evaluation Conducted	PIMS categorized as EG – not in portfolio	Phased Projects

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
1	UNEP/GEF Project on Development of National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF Development project)	Completed	2001-05-23	2004-12-01	2011-11-01	$46,261,174.00	**NA**	Biosafety project
2	Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy including the Organisation of the Budapest "Biodiversity in Europe" Conference	Completed	2001-09-01	2015-01-01	2014-04-30	$2,675,256.00	$893,993.16	Europe
3	Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions	Completed	2003-10-01	2015-01-01	2014-12-31	$ 6,310,246.00	$3,913,629.90	Europe
4	Strengthening Environmental Policy and Management Capacity at the National and Local Levels as a Contribution to Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development in Africa	Completed	2004-04-04	2014-04-04	2014-12-31	$16,580,203.00	$3,935,966.39	Ecosystems
5	UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Tanzania (4951/GEF ID 3012)	Completed	2007-01-05	2010-12-10	2012-12-31	$1,391,600.00	$1,391,600.00	Biosafety project
6	UNEP/GEF project: "Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Egypt – GFL/2328-2716-4954	Completed	2007-01-07	2010-10-29	2017-06-29	$2,297,100.00	$2,297,100.00	Biosafety project
7	UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National	Completed	2007-03-21	2010-12-12	2011-09-30	$635,700.00	$635,700.00	Biosafety project

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
	Biosafety Framework for Mauritius (4952/GEF ID 2822)							
8	Secretariat Services to the African Elephant Fund	Ongoing	2007-06-15		**NA**	$4,352,382.00	$3,076,030.00	Biosafety project
9	UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Tunisia (4953/ GEF Id 2648)	Completed	2007-11-06	2010-12-01	2014-07-21	$1,768,160.00	$1,761,245.21	Biosafety project
10	UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Lao PDR (4A85/ GEF Id 3642)	Completed	2009-01-10	2013-07-09	2014-11-30	$1,500,000.00	$1,500,000.00	Biosafety project
11	Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries.	Completed	2009-03-01	2019-01-01	2018-12-31	$23,599,716.00	$10,504,706.25	Law
12	Geneva Environment Network (GEN)	Completed	2009-06-01	2011-06-01	2014-06-30	$1,715,655.00	$1,751,279.75	Europe
13	(Interim) Secretariat services to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea	Ongoing	2009-08-01	2022-08-24	**NA**	$6,440,797.00	$1,798,458.87	Europe
14	UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Bhutan (4B22/ GEF Id 3850)	Completed	2010-01-07	2014-03-18	2014-10-18	$1,723,000.00	$1,699,000.00	Biosafety project
15	UNEP/GEF projects Capacity building for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework of Albania - GFL/2328-2716-4B76;	Completed	2010-03-01	2014-03-01	**NA**	$864,600.00	**NA**	Biosafety project

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
16	Integrating environmental sustainability in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and UN common country programming processes	Completed	2010-04-08	2014-06-08	2015-12-31	$4,781,000.00	$4,095,008.00	Policy and Programme
17	Integrating environmental sustainability in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and UN common country programming processes.	Completed	2014-07-19	2016-07-19	2017-12-31	$10,939,364.00	NA	Policy and Programme
18	Sustainable UN (SUN)	Completed	2010-04-08	2016-04-08	2014-06-30	$10,000,000.00	$6,187,903.00	Economy
19	Sustainable UN facility Phase II	Completed	2014-10-29	2018-04-29	2017-12-31	$5,745,050.00	NA	Economy
20	Sustainable UN facility (SUN); Phase III	Ongoing	2018-03-15	2021-12-31	NA	$4,196,169.00	NA	Resources and Markets Branch
21	UNEP/GEF Project "Development of Mechanisms to Strengthen the Implementation of the Cartegena Protocol in Guatemala" (GEF ID. 3630)	Completed	2010-08-26	2014-12-30	2015-04-30	$1,300,596.00	$1,273,694.00	Biosafety project
22	Engaging major groups and stakeholders for policy dialogue	Completed	2010-09-28	2011-12-28	2014-06-30	$3,937,080.00	$2,101,275.00	Governance Affairs
23	UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Evaluation Synthesis Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Costa Rica (4B61/ GEF Id 3629),	Completed	2010-10-10	2013-10-10	2014-10-03	$1,481,105.00	$1,481,105.00	Biosafety project
24	Support to regional and subregional ministerial forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues /Environmental Governance	Completed	2010-10-18	2012-10-18	2014-06-30	$4,044,270.00	$3,100,972.00	Regional Presence

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
25	UNEP/GEF project "Completion and Strengthening of the National Biosafety Framework of Cuba for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol"	Completed	2010-11-01	2015-11-30	2016-06-01	$1,918,643.00	$1,877,664.16	Biosafety project
26	BS Completion and Strengthening of the Cuban National Biosafety Framework for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol	Ongoing	2010-11-30	2015-11-30	2016-10-29	$900,091.00	$886,639.96	Biosafety project
27	BS Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework - Ecuador	Ongoing	2010-12-16	2022-01-15	**NA**	$665,818.00	$627,285.51	Biosafety project
28	UNEP/GEF Project on Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Mongolia (4B95/ GEF Id 4010)	Completed	2011-01-05	2014-04-26	2014-04-26	$714,300.00	$714,300.00	Biosafety project
29	BS Support for Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework of Madagascar	Ongoing	2011-01-14	2015-03-31	2017-04-13	$613,850.00	$574,618.89	Biosafety project
30	UNEP/GEF Project" Development and Institution of a National and Control System (Framework) for Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) and Invasive Alien Species (IAS) – Cameroun" – GEF Id 3651	Completed	2011-03-29	2015-03-31	2017-07-28	$11,200,000.00	$11,200,008.00	Biosafety project
31	BS: Support for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Syria	Ongoing	2011-04-14	2015-04-13	**NA**	$875,000.00	$131,250.00	Biosafety project
32	Capacity Building for the Development of the National Biosafety Framework of Macedonia - GFL/2328-2716-4954	Completed	2011-06-28	2014-08-26	2015-01-26	$643,000.00	**NA**	Biosafety project
33	UNEP/GEF project: "Implementation of National Biosafety Framework for Nigeria" GEF ID 3655	Completed	2011-06-29	2015-08-06	2017-08-08	$2,011,000.00	$2,011,000.00	Biosafety project

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
34	BS Support the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework of Lesotho	Completed	2011-07-14	2015-07-14	2018-07-13	$884,806.00	$884,806.00	Biosafety project
35	BS: Support for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Jordan	Ongoing	2011-08-08	2022-09-07	NA	$884,000.00	$575,728.04	Biosafety project
36	UNEP/GEF project: "Implementation of National Biosafety Framework for Liberia" GEF ID 3040	Completed	2011-08-27	2017-03-09	2017-03-09	$1,107,679.00	$1,107,679.00	Biosafety project
37	Regional Project for Implementing Biosafety Frameworks in the Caribbean Sub-Region (4C20/ GEF Id 2967/3735)	Completed	2011-09-22	2015-06-30	2018-12-31	$13,070,075.00	$11,905,330.00	Biosafety project
38	BS Support for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework of the Republic of Tajikistan	Ongoing	2011-10-11	2022-06-10	NA	$840,000.00	$797,963.00	Biosafety project
39	UNEP/GEF projects: Institutional Capacity Building Towards the Implementation of the Biosafety Act 2006 and related obligations to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety – Namibia" GEF Id no 3644	Completed	2011-11-23	2014-11-24	2017-03-15	$936,000.00	$936,000.00	Biosafety project
40	BS Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework - Indonesia	Ongoing	2011-12-01	2016-04-25	NA	$830,196.00	$268,990.04	Biosafety project
41	Support for implementation of the biodiversity and ecosystems and the chemicals and waste clusters of multilateral environmental agreements	Completed	2012-04-11	2017-04-11	2017-12-31	$5,186,120.00	$4,411,419.78	Law
42	UNEP/GEF project: "Implementation of National Biosafety Framework for Ghana" GEF ID 3045	Completed	2012-05-24	2015-05-23	2017-07-31	$1,436,364.00	$1,436,364.00	Biosafety project

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
43	UNEP/GEF Project: Capacity Building for Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in India – Phase II – GEF Id 3751	Completed	2012-05-29	2016-02-05	2017-02-07	$8,727,273.00	$8,727,273.00	Biosafety project
44	UNEP/GEF project "Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework Under the Biosafety Program- Peru"	Completed	2012-06-01	2014-11-01	2016-12-01	$1,879,330.00	$1,840,249.44	Biosafety project
45	UNEP/GEF Projects: Capacity Building for the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework of Swaziland" GEF Id no 4077	Completed	2012-08-17	2016-12-27	2017-06-30	$1,570,000.00	$1,570,000.00	Biosafety project
46	BS: Building National Capacity to Implement the National Biosafety Framework of Islamic Republic of Iran and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	Ongoing	2012-09-28	2015-09-28	2021-06-30	$749,000.00	$749,000.00	Biosafety project
47	BS Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework - Bangladesh	Completed	2012-11-29	2016-11-29	2018-06-28	$884,090.00	$884,090.00	Biosafety project
48	BS Support to the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework for Rwanda	Ongoing	2013-02-18	2017-02-18	2022-11-17	$645,455.00	$521,207.84	Biosafety project
49	BS Implementation of Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety through Effective Implementation of National Biosafety Framework	Ongoing	2013-03-21	2022-07-20	NA	$616,000.00	$199,578.68	Biosafety project
50	**UNEP/UNDP Joint Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) - EC Contr**	Completed	2013-06-15	2015-06-15	2018-12-31	$2,851,062.56	$2,851,062.56	Ecosystems
51	UNEP/GEF projects: Implementation of National Biosafety Framework for Turkey, GEF Id 4067	Completed	2013-09-17	2014-08-30	2017-08-16	$1,292,650.00	$1,292,650.00	Biosafety project
52	BS Consolidation of National Capacities for the Full Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Panama.	Ongoing	2013-10-28	2022-03-27	NA	$954,927.00	$908,926.84	Biosafety project

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
53	Law and Environmental Outlook (LEO) Web-Tools towards the implementation and Enforcement of International Environmental Law and Internationally Agreed Goals and Targets	Completed	2013-11-20	2015-11-20	2016-06-30	$2,084,690.00	$481,358.04	Law
54	Water Law: Supporting the development and implementation of national, regional and global legal instruments and policies for the sustainable use of freshwater resources	Completed	2013-12-02	2017-03-02	2016-12-31	$983,332.00	$150,841.47	Law
55	Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies	Completed	2014-01-14	2017-12-14	2017-12-31	$2,598,500.00	$1,087,411.86	Law
56	Strengthening Institutional Capacity of Countries in Environmental Law through Training, Technical Assistance, Sharing Expertise and Legal Guidance Materials	Completed	2014-01-28	2019-01-28	2018-12-31	$6,429,001.00	$461,817.60	Law
57	Human rights and the environment: good practices	Completed	2014-03-27	2015-06-27	2015-06-30	$670,865.00	$232,404.51	Law
58	Integrating environmental sustainability into the Sustainable Development Goals	Completed	2014-04-11	2016-09-11	2016-06-30	$820,000.00	$869,056.22	Science
59	BS: Support to the Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework of Mozambique	Ongoing	2014-05-06	2019-05-06	2022-05-05	$755,000.00	$702,594.88	Biosafety project
60	Strengthening Law Enforcement Capabilities to Combat Wildlife Crime for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Species in South Africa (Target: Rhinoceros)	Completed	2014-05-26	2016-05-26	2019-12-31	$2,690,455.00	$2,271,934	Ecosystems

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
61	Institutional arrangements for the governance of shared natural resources and transboundary environmental issues: Transboundary Institutional Mechanisms (TIM)	Completed	2014-07-01	2017-02-01	2017-12-31	$5,372,952.00	$1,302,391.31	Policy and Programme
62	Integrated Approach for Environmental Sustainability in Development Planning (DOA)	Completed	2014-10-13	2018-01-13	2017-12-31	$557,775.00	NA	Policy and Programme
63	Environmental Rule of Law: Advancing Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability	Completed	2014-10-29	2018-04-29	2017-12-31	$2,684,127.00	NA	Law
64	Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol for the member countries of the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC)	Completed	2015-07-01	2017-07-01	2021-12-31	$1,692,557.00	$1,692,557.00	Environmental Conventions and Governance Branch
65	Promoting the Progressive Development of International Environmental Law	Completed	2015-03-02	2017-03-02	2018-12-31	$4,713,322.00	NA	Law
66	Stakeholder engagement and participation in environmental agenda setting and decision-making	Completed	2015-03-10	2016-01-10	2016-06-30	$10,936,829.00	NA	Governance Affairs
67	Environmental Crime: Enhancing international cooperation to deal with offences against the environment, in particular trafficking in hazardous wastes, wildlife and illegal timber, and such offences by organized criminal groups (PPP)	Completed	2015-03-18	2016-03-18	2016-06-30	$500,000.00	NA	Europe
68	Development of a review system for the effective national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements	Completed	2015-04-29	2016-04-29	2015-12-31	$861,380.00	NA	Law

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
69	Support to Preparation of the Third National Biosafety Reports to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety - GRULAC and CEE REGIONS	Ongoing	2015-09-09	2019-06-30	2020-06-30	$1,152,950.00	NA	Biosafety project
70	Support to Preparation of the Third National Biosafety Reports to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety - Asia Pacific Region	Ongoing	2015-09-16	2019-06-30	2019-06-30	$1,099,050.00	NA	Biosafety project
71	Support to Preparation of the Third National Biosafety Reports to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety - AFRICA REGION	Ongoing	2015-09-16	2019-06-30	2020-06-30	$1,368,550.00	NA	Biosafety project
72	Stocktaking and Update of National Biosafety Framework of Mauritania	Ongoing	2016-04-28	2019-12-28	2023-01-27	$878,000.00	$798,205.38	Biosafety project
73	Addressing the Illicit Trade in Wildlife and Forest Products	Completed	2016-06-03	2018-11-03	2018-12-31	$4,754,848.00	NA	Ecosystems
74	InfoMEA Phase II	Completed	2016-07-20	2022-01-20	2019-12-31	$1,280,392.00	NA	Law
75	(InfoMEA Phase III) –Collective Intelligence for Environmental Governance	Ongoing	2020-07-01	2022-12-31	NA	$943,525.00	$230,859.49	Director's Office
76	UN Peace Operations Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance Facility - REACT	Completed	2016-07-21	2021-07-21	2021-06-30	$8,669,700.00	NA	Disasters and Conflicts
77	UNEP-GEF Project for Sustainable Capacity Building for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH)	Ongoing	2016-09-01	2022-12-31	NA	$4,699,684.00	NA	Biosafety project
78	Effective Border Control Enforcement to Address Transboundary Environmental Crime related to Chemicals/ Wastes and Others	Completed	2016-09-19	2018-01-19	2017-12-31	$1,549,427.00	NA	Law

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
79	Strengthening of the Caribbean Biological Corridor	Ongoing	2017-05-01	2022-05-22	**NA**	$610,160.00	**NA**	ROLAC
80	Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in Venezuela in Accordance to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	Ongoing	2017-08-09	2021-04-09	2022-08-31	$1,860,000.00	$1,125,293.93	Biosafety project
81	Environmental Treaties Programme – realizing synergies for biodiversity	Ongoing	2017-11-10	2022-12-31	**NA**	$501,852.00	$898,156.66	Law
82	Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations	Completed	2017-11-20	2018-05-20	2018-05-31	$50,000.00	**NA**	Policy and Programme
83	*Towards coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals*	Ongoing	2018-02-17	2021-12-31	**NA**	$608,004.00	$608,000.00	Law
84	*Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals at the Global, Regional and National levels (Project Preparation*	Completed	2018-09-19	2019-08-19	2019-06-30	$1,398,841.00	**NA**	Policy and Programme
85	*Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific at the Regional and National levels*	Ongoing	2019-08-21	2022-11-30	**NA**	$1,500,462.00	**NA**	Asia & Pacific
86	*Coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development goals at the regional and national levels Pan-European region (PPP)*	Completed	2019-10-17	2020-06-17	2020-06-01	$500,000.00	**NA**	Europe
87	*Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals at the regional and national levels in Latin America and the Caribbean*	Ongoing	2019-11-12	2022-12-31	**NA**	$2,295,770.00	$322,445.02	ROLAC

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
88	*Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa*	Ongoing	2020-03-10	2021-12-31	**NA**	$9,236,398.00	**NA**	ROA
89	*Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development goals at the regional and national Levels in the pan-European Region.*	Ongoing	2020-09-30	2023-04-30	**NA**	$1,398,841.00	**NA**	Europe
90	Environment Management Group (EMG)	Ongoing	2018-04-20	2022-04-19	**NA**	$3,760,000.00	$3,120,000.00	Law
91	Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals	Ongoing	2018-08-23	2022-08-31	**NA**	$20,000,000.00	$1,212,060.28	International Ecosystems management Partnership
92	Institutional Capacity to Enhance Biosafety Practices in Malaysia	Ongoing	2018-11-15	2022-11-30	**NA**	$995,000.00	$149,250.00	Biosafety project
93	Addressing Environmental Challenges through the Law	Ongoing	2019-04-11	2022-12-31	**NA**	$11,665,087.00	$3,907,842.61	Law
94	Faith for Earth Initiative	Ongoing	2019-04-15	2022-12-31	**NA**	$2,965,832.00	**NA**	Law
95	Gulf green initiative: delivering on the environmental dimension of SDGs	Ongoing	2019-08-01	2022-05-22	**NA**	$2,089,496.00	$494,108.08	ROWA
96	Strengthening and Expansion of Capacities in Biosafety that Lead to a full Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Guatemala	Ongoing	2020-02-11	2023-07-10	**NA**	$1,369,863.00	$495,445.88	Biosafety project
97	Creation of Additional Biosafety Capacities that Lead to A Full Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Cuba	Ongoing	2020-04-03	2025-04-03	**NA**	$1,826,484.00	$426,015.99	Biosafety project
98	Saudi Arabia Environment Sustainability Programme	Ongoing	2020-06-25	2025-05-31	**NA**	$25,536,000.00	$1,743,543.05	ROWA

#	Title	Status	Start Date	Expected end date	Actual End Date	Budget	Expenditure	Managing Division
99	Framework Project to Strengthen the Environmental Dimensions of One Health	Ongoing	2021-06-06	2022-02-28	**NA**	$ 339,000.00	**NA**	Ecosystems
100	Driving Public and Private Capital Towards Green and Social Investments in Indonesia	Ongoing	2021-07-27	2024-12-31	**NA**	$1,680,800.00	**NA**	Economy
101	Scaling Up Actions to Realize Synergies for Biodiversity	Ongoing			**NA**		$0	Law
102	Costa Rica's Integrated Reporting and Transparency System	Ongoing			**NA**			ROLAC

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Annex 4. List of People Met

Name	Position	Department
Abdul-Majeid Haddad	Deputy Regional Director	West Asia Office
Aini Aini	Head of Unit	Programme Delivery and Management
Alexander Juras	Head of Unit	Head of Civil Society Unit, Governance Affairs Office
Andrea Brusco	Programme Management Officer	Latin America Office
Andrea Hinwood	Chief Scientist	Office of the Chief of the Chief Scientist
Andrew Raine	Head of Unit	International Environmental Law Unit (ILU)
Arnold Kreilhuber	Deputy Director, Chief of Branch	Office of the Deputy Director, Environmental Law Branch
Bruno Pozzi	Regional Director	Europe Office
Catherine Karuiru	Senior Finance and Budget Assistant	Programme Delivery and Management unit
Claudia ten Have	Senior Policy and Coordination Officer, Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and previous Coordinator for the SPEG and EA for ED of UNEP	Minamata Convention on Mercury
Cristina Zucca	Former Sub-programme Coordinator	Pollution and Health Unit, Chemicals and Health Branch, Economy Division
David Cooper	Deputy Executive Secretary	CBD
David Jensen	Acting MTS 2022-2025 Sub-Programme Coordinator	Digital Transformation
Dechen Tsering	Regional Director	Asia & the Pacific Office
Djaheezah Subratty	MTS 2022-2025 Sub-Programme Head	Finance and Economic Transformation
Elizabeth Mrema	Executive Secretary of the CBD and previous Director of the Law Division	Convention on Biological Diversity
Frida Jangsten	Deputy Permanent Representative to UNEP and UN-Habitat	Embassy of Sweden, Nairobi
Georgina Lloyd	Regional Environmental Governance Sub-Programme Coordination and Legal Officer	Asia & Pacific Office
Iyad Abumoghli	Principal Coordination Officer	Faith for Earth Initiative, Law Division
Jacqueline Alvarez	Regional Director	Latin America & the Caribbean Office

Name	Position	Department
James Okonji	Programme Assistant	Environmental Governance Sub-Programme Coordination
Janet Macharia	Head of Unit	Gender and Safeguards Unit
Jim Curlin	Head	OzonAction Branch
Joel Mbothu	Finance and Budget Officer	Ozone CAP Unit, Law Division
Kakuko Nagatani-Yoshida,	Sub-Programme Coordinator	Thematic SP Chemicals and pollution,
Kati Autere	Head of Unit	Resource Mobilisation Unit, Corporate Services Division
Mamadou Kane	Senior Programme Management Officer, Deputy Chief of Branch	Environmental Governance and Conventions Branch African Elephant Fund
Maria Socorro Manguiat	Head of Unit	National Environmental Law Unit (NLU)
Mariana Bolshakova	Regional Environmental Governance Sub-Programme Coordination and Legal Officer	Regional Office of Europe
Marieta Sakalian	Sub-Programme Coordinator	Nature Action Sub-Programme
Michael Spilsbury	Director	UNEP Evaluation Office
Niklas Hagelberg	MTS 2022-2025 Sub-Programme Coordinator	Climate Action Sub-Programme
Patricia Kameri-Mbote	Director	
Paxon Maina	Programme Assistant	Programme Delivery and Management Unit
Reem Al-Qawas	Administrative Officer	Monitoring and Reporting
Rula Qalyoubi	Sub-Programme Coordinator	Science-Policy Sub-Programme
Sami Dimassi	Regional Director	West Asia Office
Sarah Muchiri	Programme Assistant	Office of the Deputy Director
Susanne Bech	Evaluation Officer	UNEP Evaluation Office
Thea Henriette Carroll	Officer in Charge, Governing Bodies Unit	CITES
Tim Kasten	Director	Policy and Programme Division
Tita Korvenoja	Chief of Branch, Head of Unit	Environmental Governance and Conventions Branch, MEAs Support and Cooperation Unit (MSU)
Yassin Ahmed	Sub-Programme Coordinator	Environmental Governance Sub-Programme

Annex 5. Recommendations from the 2013 SPEG Evaluation

The last evaluation of the SPEG was in 2013. The 2013 Evaluation aimed to assess the relevance and overall performance of the SPEG from 2006 – 2012 according to standard evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact). It also aimed to answer the following key questions:

- Has UNEP achieved its objectives in the area of Environmental Governance?
- Have projects and activities been efficiently implemented and produced tangible results as expected? Have human and financial resources been optimally deployed to achieve its objectives?
- Have Sub-Programme objectives, projects and activities reflected both EG priorities defined at global/regional/country level and UNEP comparative advantages, including its convening power, advisory role and sound science data provider?
- Has the Sub-Programme design responded to the international call for a strengthened role of UNEP in Environmental Governance? Has the move to the new Sub-Programme structure in the PoW 2010-11 facilitated coordination of efforts among UNEP divisions and ultimately helped both collegiality and accountability in decision-making and project management in the area of Environmental Governance?

Although much has changed since this 2013 evaluation many of its findings and recommendations remain relevant for the period of this Evaluation. It made the following recommendations under the following headings.

2013 Evaluation Recommendation	Current Evaluation Team Comment
Vision and understanding of Environmental Governance	
1. The Environmental Governance Sub-Programme should agree on and adopt a formal definition for "environmental governance" that can underpin future strategy development.	*This remains an issue for the SPEG. Adopting a formal definition for EG will be challenging due to its dynamic nature. Accordingly, this Evaluation recommends adoption of a ToC for the SPEG, and more detailed Indicators and Units of Measure all of which will support an improved strategy for the SPEG including assisting with specifying a focus, goal and priorities for the sub-programme.*
2. The EG Sub-Programme strategy needs to be improved and reflect the Rio +20 outcome and specify its intervention strategies at national regional and global levels. The strategy must be driven by external realities, should have a clear problem focus and should articulate UNEP's strategic niche and unique identity. The development of a new strategy should be undertaken in consultative manner with a process designed to foster staff ownership.	
Sub-Programme structure and design	
3. The evaluation recommends that the Sub-Programme develop a new results framework (EAs and PoW outputs) that better reflects the intended causality of UNEP work for the 2018-21 MTS as a part of the strategy development process suggested above.	*This remains an issue for the SPEG. Adopting a formal definition for EG will be challenging due to its dynamic nature. Accordingly, this Evaluation recommends adoption of a ToC for the SPEG, and more detailed Indicators and Units of Measure all of which will support an improved strategy for the SPEG.*
Corporate service functions within a thematic results framework - undermining results-based planning	

2013 Evaluation Recommendation	Current Evaluation Team Comment
4. Developing a 'corporate' communication project with a clear results framework as part of the Programme of Work perhaps with its costs spread across existing sub-programmes.	*This Evaluation finds that the PPR, MTS and POW currently communicate this SPEG adequately.*
5. A results framework for the work of Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch needs to be Developed	*This remains an issue for the SPEG. Accordingly, this Evaluation recommends adoption of a ToC and more training on related issues.*
Unapproved projects	
6. The Sub-Programme should ensure that it is compliant with the UNEP requirement for all Environmental Governance work that forms part of the PoW to be undertaken through projects that have received formal UNEP PRC approval.	*This Evaluation found no instances of projects that had not been properly approved.*
Clarifying Sub-Programme linkage and promoting project synergy	
7. The evaluation recommends that the causal logic at programme level be clearly articulated in a revised strategy to provide a framework to improve the design and alignment at project level.	*This remains an issue for the SPEG. As a result, this Evaluation recommends that more detailed Indicators and Units of Measure be developed which will develop and articulate the causal logic at programme level.*
Planning and accountability myths: – 'normative work is different'	
8. The evaluation recommends that RBM / training for all UNEP professional staff be mandatory and encouraged for selected support staff.	*This remains the case and is a recommendation of this Evaluation.*
PROCESSES AND ISSUES AFFECTING SUB-PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE Human and Financial Resources	
9. The evaluation recommends that divisional workplans, or other programming documents, be prepared to show how staff costs and project budgets relate to PoW outputs and Expected Accomplishments.	*This Evaluation was not able to consider staff costs and project budgets. Nevertheless, this Evaluation considers that the PPR does provide adequate information on costs and the PoW and the SPs.*
Monitoring and reporting.	
10. Resource allocation practices should clearly link to the SP strategy and be more transparent. Criteria that guide resource allocation decisions should be clearly articulated.	*This is still a challenge for SPEG and is a recommendation of this Evaluation.*
11. Operational guidelines for the EGSP, and sub-programme modality in general, are needed to ensure that design, budgeting, coordination, monitoring and reporting practices are compatible with SP frameworks to the extent possible.	*This remains the case and is a recommendation of this Evaluation*

Annex 6. Evolution of EG Sub-Programme Theories of Change

Environmental issues are handled in an inclusive, sustainable and coherent manner, at all levels of governance (global, regional, subregional, transboundary and national)

Environmental goals within the context of sustainable development are being achieved through concerted efforts by the international community, at global, regional and subregional levels

Internationally agreed environmental objectives are being achieved based on adequate policy, legal and institutional frameworks and the contribution of all sectors of societies at global, regional, subregional and national levels

Continued support for lead role of UNEP on environment in the United Nations system

Continued support for system-wide integrated approach to environment/SD

Adequate financial means available to national institutions

Sustained political support at country level

Conducive overall governance conditions (rule of law)

The international community increasingly converges on common approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Institutional capacities and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs

Sustained interest in interagency collaboration in United Nations system

Sustained interest among MEA bodies and parties in pursuing synergies in implementation

Full recognition of the role of MEAs in achieving SDGs

Strong partnerships and clear distribution of roles

Adequate spaces for stakeholder engagement

Advisory services to intergovernmental processes on delivering the environmental dimension of SDGs

Capacity development and technical support on legal and institutional matters

Promotion and servicing of interagency collaboration

Technical assistance to countries to promote integrated implementation of sustainable development dimensions

Support to Governments to promote synergies in the implementation of MEAs

Technical assistance in the context of One UN country programming to promote integrated implementation of sustainable development dimensions

Support to standard setting/transboundary cooperation initiatives

Training, tools, information and knowledge products

Key

| Intermediate states | Expected accomplishments | Drivers | = Linkages |
| 2030 impact | Outputs | Assumptions |

Note: Key deliverables in the theory of change are related to either a single output or a group of outputs.

Source: Programme of Works 2018-2019 (2016)

Environmental Governance

Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development

PoW Indicators

- UN bodies & International Organisations integrating environmental policy issues from UNEP policy advice
- Uptake of approaches for the coherent implementation of multiple agreements or other multilateral institutional mechanisms
- Concerted policy action taken by countries on environmental issues of international concern
- Countries with enhanced institutional capacity & legal frameworks to fully implement international environmental objectives
- Integration of the environment in sustainable development planning, including as part of achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs
- Partnerships between UNEP and stakeholders to promote the achievement of internationally agreed environmental goals, including SDGs

SDG Targets

EA(a)–Common & Integrated approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development

EA(b) – Enhanced Institutional Capacities to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals

Concerted multilateral action on the environment

- Environmental Management Group
- Greening the Blue initiatives
- Advancing Governance of environment and natural resources

$17.9M

Environmental conventions

- Environmental Treaties Program
- Collective intelligence for environmental governance

$13.6M

Montevideo Law Programme

- Environmental Rights Initiative
- Law Development and Assistance Programme (Montevideo Law Programme)
- Environmental Crime

$29M

- Biosafety Clearing House Mechanisms
- Nagoya Protocol Implementation

$9m

Integrated implementation of SDGs

- Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals

$39M

- Coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development Goals
- Strengthening institutions in the Caribbean Biological Corridor

$11M

Stakeholder engagement

- All projects in environmental governance
- No dedicated project

Source: Project Portfolio for Environmental Governance Sub-Programme 4: Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021 (July 2017)

Annex 7. SPEG Portfolio Analysis
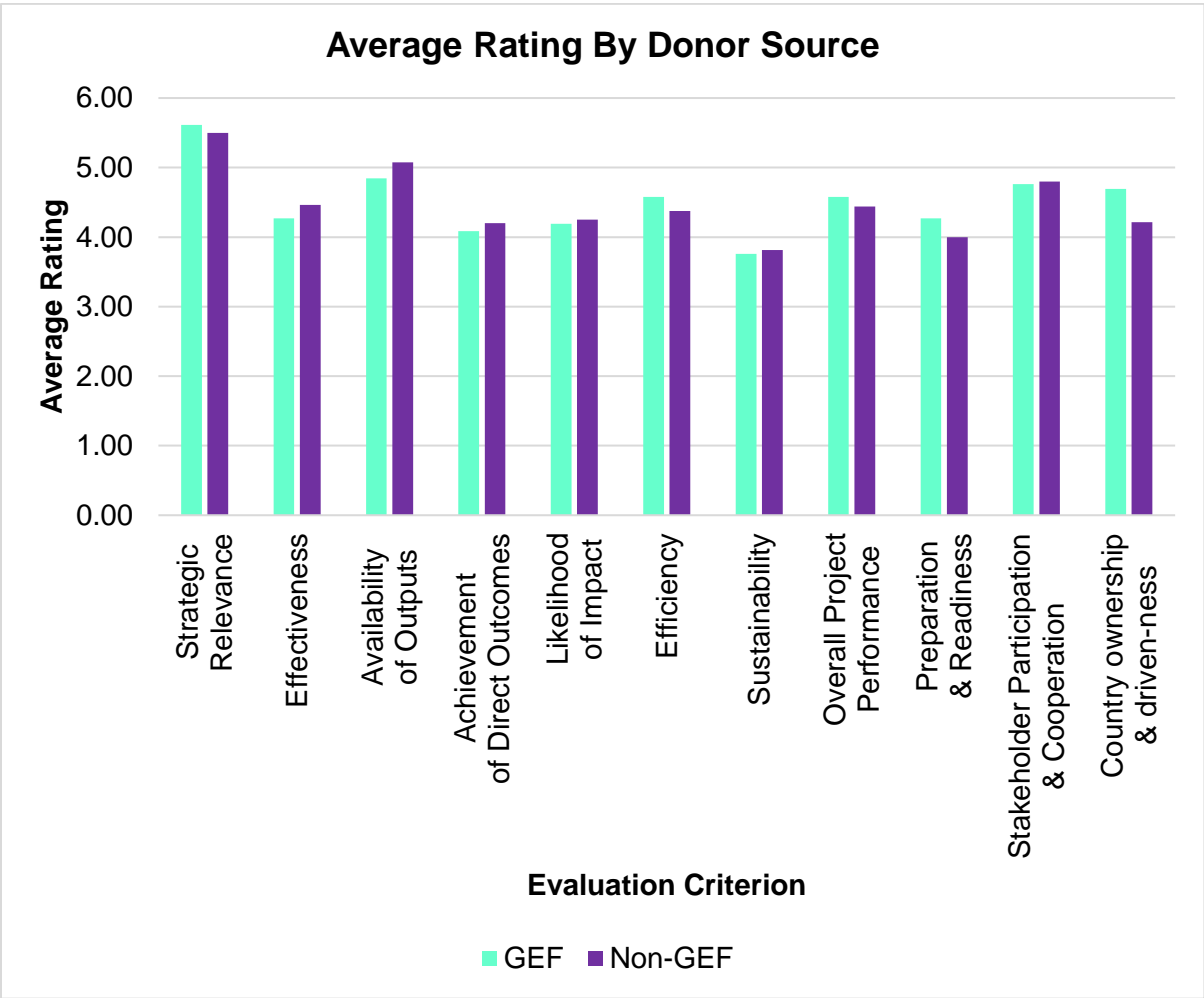
Effect of Project Duration

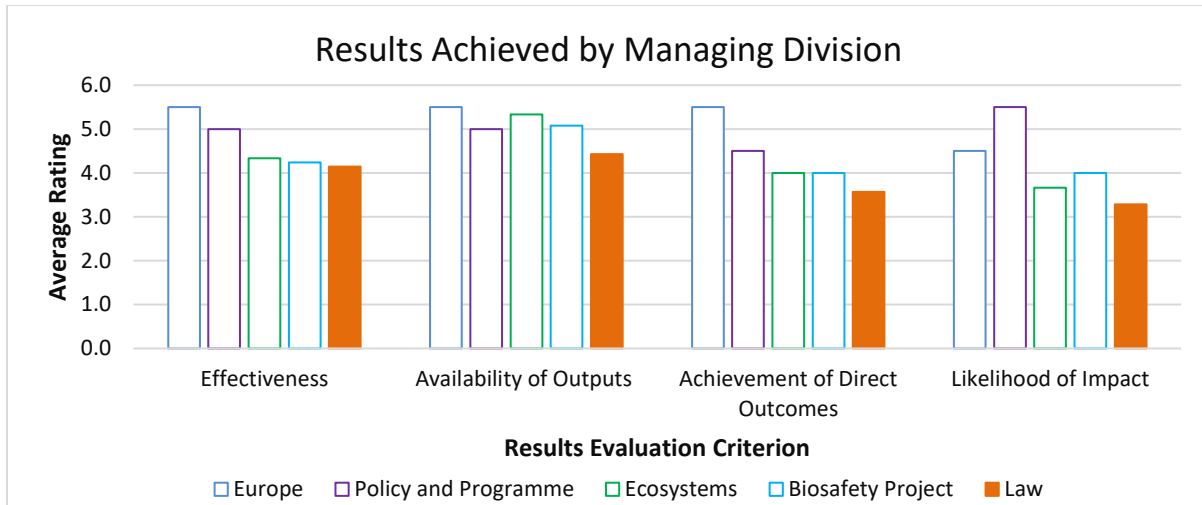| Project Duration	N	Strategic Relevance	Effectiveness	Availability of Outputs	Achievement of Direct Outcomes	Likelihood of Impact	Efficiency	Sustainability	Overall Project Performance	Preparation & Readiness	Stakeholder Participation & Cooperation	Country ownership & driven ness
0-2 years	1	6.0	5.0	5.0	3.0	2.0	5.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	4.0
2-5 years	21	5.4	4.2	5.0	3.9	4.0	4.7	3.8	4.5	4.0	4.8	4.7
5-8 years	15	5.7	4.3	4.9	4.1	3.9	4.2	3.7	4.4	4.3	4.8	4.1
8-10 years	0											
More than 10 years	3	6.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.7	4.3	4.5	5.0
NA	2	6.0	5.0	5.5	5.0	5.0	5.5	4.5	5.5	4.0	4.0	5.5
Total	**42**	**5.6**	**4.4**	**5.0**	**4.1**	**4.0**	**4.5**	**3.8**	**4.5**	**4.2**	**4.8**	**4.5**

Effect of Managing Division

Managing Division	N	Strategic Relevance	Effectiveness	Availability of Outputs	Achievement of Direct Outcomes	Likelihood of Impact	Efficiency	Sustainability	Overall Project Performance	Preparation & Readiness	Stakeholder Participation & Cooperation	Country ownership & driven ness
Policy and Programme	2	6.0	5.0	5.0	4.5	5.5	3.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Governance Affairs	1	6.0	4.0	6.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
Economy	1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	NA
Ecosystems	3	5.0	4.3	5.3	4.0	3.7	4.7	3.7	4.3	3.7	5.0	4.0
Law	7	5.4	4.1	4.4	3.6	3.3	4.3	3.6	4.0	3.7	4.9	3.7
Biosafety	25	5.6	4.2	5.1	4.0	4.0	4.6	3.8	4.6	4.2	4.8	4.7
Europe	2	6.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	4.5	5.5	4.5	5.0	5.0	4.5	5.0

Regional Presence	*1*	6.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
Overall	*42*	5.6	4.4	5.0	4.1	4.0	4.5	3.8	4.5	4.2	4.8	4.5

Effect of Donor Source

Average Rating By Donor Source

Effect of Managing Division

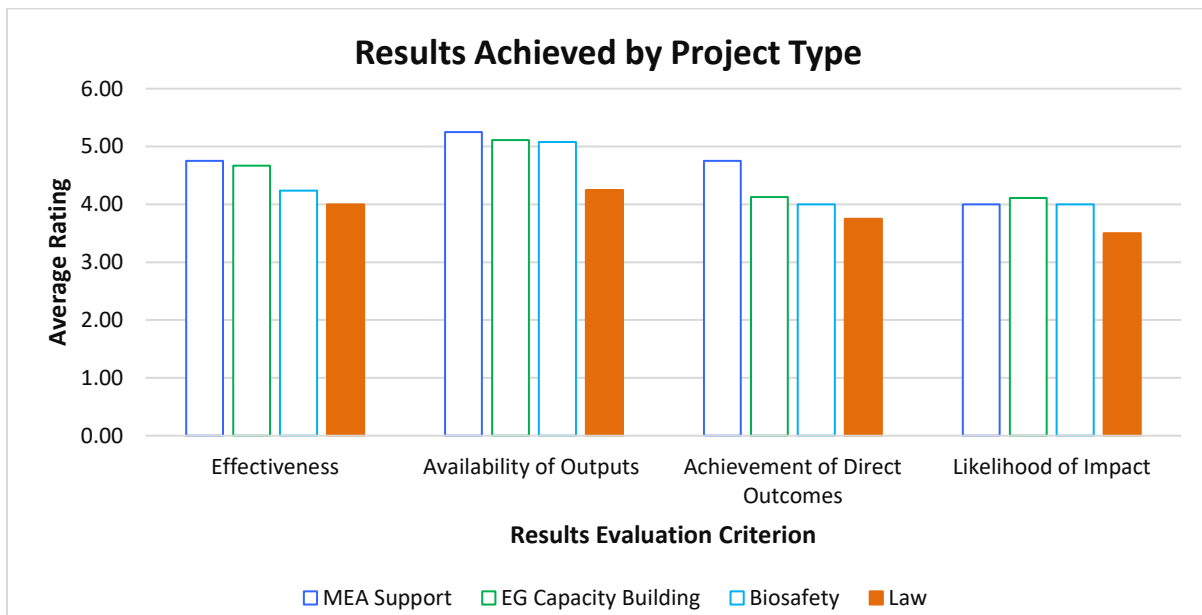Results Achieved by Managing Division

Note – Projects managed by Economy and Governance affairs removed as only one project per division biasing average calculations

Effect of Project Type

Results Achieved by Project Type

Effect of Start Year

Start Year	N	Strategic Relevance	Effectiveness	Availability of Outputs	Achievement of Direct Outcomes	Likelihood of Impact	Efficiency	Sustainability	Overall Project Performance	Preparation &	Stakeholder Participation & Cooperation	Country ownership & driven ness
2001	1	6.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	5.0
2002	0											
2003	1	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
2004	0											
2005	0											
2006	0											
2007	4	5.0	3.5	4.8	3.5	3.5	4.8	3.3	4.3	4.5	4.7	3.8
2008	0											
2009	2	5.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	3.5	4.0	4.5
2010	9	5.8	4.7	5.6	4.6	4.7	5.0	4.7	5.2	4.6	4.7	5.8
2011	8	5.6	4.3	5.0	3.6	3.6	4.0	3.3	4.1	4.1	4.6	4.4
2012	6	5.7	4.3	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.3	3.5	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.8
2013	3	5.7	4.7	5.3	4.0	4.3	5.3	4.3	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0
2014	6	5.8	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.0	4.4	4.0	4.5	4.3	5.0	4.8
2015	1	5.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	5.0	5.0
2016	1	3.0	3.0	5.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	5.0
Total	**42**	**5.6**	**4.4**	**5.0**	**4.1**	**4.0**	**4.5**	**3.8**	**4.5**	**4.2**	**4.6**	**4.8**

Effect of Completion Year

End Year	N	Strategic Relevance	Effectiveness	Availability of Outputs	Achievement of Direct Outcomes	Likelihood of Impact	Efficiency	Sustainability	Overall Project Performance	Preparation & Readiness	Stakeholder Participation & Cooperation	Country ownership & driven ness
2014	1	6.0	4.0	6.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	4.0	6.0
2015	10	5.3	4.3	5.2	4.3	4.0	5.0	3.9	4.6	4.2	4.6	4.6
2016	12	5.5	4.4	5.1	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.5	4.1	4.6	3.9
2017	1	6.0	5.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.0	6.0

2018	*10*	5.9	4.7	4.8	4.2	4.5	4.6	3.8	4.7	4.6	4.9	4.9
2019	*1*	6.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	5.0	4.0
2020	*4*	5.8	4.0	4.3	4.0	3.5	4.5	3.3	4.0	3.5	5.0	5.3
2021	*3*	5.0	3.7	5.3	3.3	3.0	3.7	3.3	4.0	3.0	5.3	3.3
Total	***42***	**5.6**	**4.4**	**5.0**	**4.1**	**4.0**	**4.5**	**3.8**	**4.5**	**4.2**	**4.6**	**4.8**

Annex 8. Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the UNEP Sub-Programme on Environmental Governance 2014-2021

BACKGROUND

Environmental Governance
The term 'governance' has been differently defined according to the scope and locus of decision-making power. As many governance functions influencing individual and collective behaviour are increasingly performed beyond the exclusive remit of governments, the definition of governance has moved from "conducting the public's business" to "the constellation of authoritative rules, institutions, and practices by means of which any collectivity manages its affairs" (Ruggie 2004). Along this same line, Environmental Governance (EG) is defined as "the processes and institutions that guide and restrain the collective action of Governments, organizations, major groups and civil society to address collective environmental issues at all levels, from local to national, sub-regional, regional and global"[44].

Over the past two decades, the debate on International Environmental Governance (IEG) has focused on developing institutional responses to confront the increase of environmental threats faced by all countries and on the need of a more coherent and more effective IEG regime. The growing body of scientific evidence as to the seriousness of environmental degradation has led to a proliferation of legal and institutional arrangements for international cooperation on environmental issues. As a result, the international community has become increasingly concerned with establishing a strengthened framework for coordinated international action and ensuring that the limited resources available are deployed in the best possible manner for optimal effect.

A stronger system-wide coherence has been called for in the context of ongoing UN reform, in terms of enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation, better treaty compliance, and better integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity development.

The UNEP Environmental Governance Sub-Programme
Strategic Overview
The Environmental Governance Sub-programme aims to support coherent international decision-making processes on the environment, support the development and implementation of environmental law, norms and standards, strengthen relevant institutions, and mainstream environmental sustainability in regional, sub-regional and national environmental governance processes, including through engagement in key United Nations coordination bodies. In addition to partnerships within the United Nations system, the subprogramme is characterized by cooperation with the governing bodies and secretariats of other intergovernmental bodies and processes.

Since the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013, UNEP's governance-related activities have been coordinated under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme (EG SP). During the MTS 2014-2017 period, the EG SP was strongly linked with the four vision statements of the Organization. An element of the vision statement 2014-2017 was "Facilitating the development, implementation and evolution of laws, norms and standards and developing coherent interlinkages among multilateral environmental agreements."

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[44] UNEP Sub-programme on Environmental Governance, 2009

The foresight process that fed into the MTS 2014-17 highlighted the need to align "…governance structures to the challenges of global sustainability and, in particular, to integrate social, environmental and economic objectives in sustainable development policies at all levels of governance".

The MTS 2014-2017 introduced a new sub-programme on environment under review aiming to leverage information as an agent of change and ensure a coherent approach in dealing with the science-policy interface, which in the previous MTS had resided within the EG SP. The unifying nature of environmental governance internally was also highlighted "…the organization will also integrate governance-related activities within all its sub-programmes in the 2014–2017 Medium-Term Strategy, taking into account the links between national, provincial and local levels."

The MTS 2018-2021 reinforced this approach by "Recognizing that effective environmental governance influences the achievement of results in all environmental fields, the sub-programme draws upon and contributes to the implementation of all other sub-programmes."

The MTS 2018-2021 also highlighted the "need to … set up effective laws, policies and institutions to govern actions that affect the environment." "Vision 2030" in the MTS 2018-2021 aimed to develop and enhance integrated approaches to sustainable development and "demonstrate that improving the health of the environment will bring social and economic benefits".

The MTS 2018-2021 presented a shift towards aligning UNEP work to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and explicit emphasis on United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions as well as stronger integration of gender at sub-programme level. The vision statement formulated for environmental governance, which was aligned to Agenda 2030, aimed for environmental issues to be "…handled in an inclusive, sustainable and coherent manner through integrated policy and effective norms and institutions at all levels of governance."

To achieve its 2030 vision, UNEP would help countries to implement the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda by partnering with relevant institutions, including United Nations entities, multilateral environmental agreements and other international processes, and by promoting integrated approaches to sustainable development.

UNEP would also support and catalyse efforts to address environmental issues emerging from UNEA resolutions that require international cooperation. UNEP would support the strengthening of countries' capacities and policy, legal and institutional frameworks for implementing multilateral environmental agreements and SDGs. It would promote principles of good governance enshrined in the rule of law, including rights-based and participatory approaches, as well as gender-sensitive policies, legislation and capacity development.

Finally, UNEP would put in place programmes that respond to country and regional priorities, increasing its engagement with countries as part of the United Nations Country Teams, including through the 'Delivering as one' approach. UNEP will also build on successful partnerships, including the Poverty-Environment Initiative, and engage with relevant stakeholders – whether in Government, the private sector, or civil society – who play a key role in delivering effective environmental governance.

Over the period 2014-2021, policy coherence has been a consistent element in UNEP's Environmental Governance Sub-programme as well as emphasis on support to UN system, multilateral environmental agreement bodies and countries. Table 1 provides an overview of MTS and POW EG objective and expected accomplishments.

Table 1. EG SP MTS and POW overview, 2014-2021

POW 2014-2015	POW 2016-2017	POW 2018-2019	Proposed POW 2020-2021
Objective: To strengthen synergies and coherence in environmental governance to	**Objective of the organization:** To strengthen synergies and coherence in	**Objective of the organization:** Policy coherence and strong legal	**Objective of the organization:** Policy coherence and strong legal

facilitate the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development. (a) The United Nations system and multilateral environmental agreement bodies, respecting the mandate of each entity, demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of action on environmental issues (b) The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals, and to comply with related obligations is enhanced. (c) Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans.	environmental governance so as to facilitate the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development (a) The United Nations system and multilateral environmental agreement bodies, respecting the mandate of each entity, demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of actions on environmental issues (b) The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations is enhanced (c) Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans.	and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development (a) The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (b) 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.	and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development (a) The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (b) Institutional capacities and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.
MTS 2014-2017		**MTS 2018-2021**	
Objective: The objective of the environmental governance sub-programme is to strengthen synergies and coherence in environmental governance, with a view to facilitating the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development. EA1 Coherence and synergies: The United Nations system and the multilateral environmental agreements, respecting the mandate of each entity, demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of actions on environmental issues; EA2 Law: The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations is enhanced; EA3 Mainstreaming environmental sustainability: Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans.		Objective: Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development. EA1. The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. EA2. Institutional capacity and policy and/or legal frameworks enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.	

The EG SP in the new MTS 2022-2025, proposes a continuation from previous MTS with focus on enhanced cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements, supporting countries in sustainable development and leading the UN system and supporting national governments in development and implementation of environmental rule of law, with added emphasis on UNEA, supporting the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme, and strengthening environmental rights. As a foundational sub-programme, it is expected to underpin the achievement of UNEP's thematic sub-programmes and the three strategic objectives of the organization towards "Climate stability", "Living in harmony with nature", and "achieving a pollution-free planet".

<u>Project Portfolio</u>
During the period 2014-2021, records held on UNEP's WeCollaborate platform show that, thirty-nine projects have been active within the sub-programme. According to the information presented in UNEP's Quarterly Business Review of April 2021, there were sixteen active projects within the EG SP, implemented across UNEP. An overview of these projects is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Active projects of the Environmental Governance Sub-programme (April 2021)

Project	Managing Division / Office	Implementation Period
Expected Accomplishment A		
Collective Intelligence for Environmental Governance - InforMEA Phase 3	Law Division	2020 - 202
Environment Management Group	Environment Management Group Secretariat	2018-2022
Environmental Treaties Programme - Realizing synergies for biodiversity	Law Division	2017-2020
Secretariat services to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea	Europe Office	2009 - 2021
Strengthening of the Caribbean Biological Corridor	Latin America Office	2017 - 2023
Sustainable United Nations (Phase 3)	Economy Division	2018 - 2021
Towards coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals	Law Division	2018 - 2021
UN Peace Operations Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance Facility - REACT	Disasters and Conflicts Branch	2016 - 2021
Expected Accomplishment B		
Addressing Environmental Challenges through the Law	Law Division	2019-2021
Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals at the regional and national levels in Latin America and the Caribbean	Latin America and the Caribbean Office	2019 - 2021
Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development goals at the regional and national Levels in the pan-European Region.	Europe Office	2020 - 2021
Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific at the Regional and National levels	Asia Pacific Office	2019 - 2021
Coherent Integration of the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals in Regional and National Policy Frameworks in Africa	Africa Office	2020 - 2021
Faith for Earth Initiative	Law Division	2019 - 2021
Gulf Green Initiative: Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals	West Asia Office	2019 - 2022
Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals	Ecosystems Divisions	2018-2022
Saudi Arabia Environment Sustainability Programme	West Asia Office	2020 - 2025

*Categorisation against EAs made with respect to 2018-21 MTS

In addition, there are many Biosafety projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) managed under the Ecosystems Division that are classified under the EG SP. Approximately twenty-six GEF-funded biosafety projects reached completion during the period 2014-2020 and, according to the GEF portal[45] UNEP has a further 23 GEF funded biosafety projects currently ongoing.

<u>Sub-Programme Financing</u>
Table 3 presents an overview of the budget forecasts for the EG SP and Table 2 presents an overview of actual spent for the EG SP. Over the period, the Sub-programme has not received contributions from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), however, for POW 2020-2021 the SP EG was expected to receive USD500,000 in global funds.

Table 3. Budget forecast/ ,000USD

POW	Environment Fund	Trust Fund and earmarked	Global Funds	Project Support Costs	Regular Budget	Total
2014-2015	21895	27346	-	-	10653	**59893**
2016-2017	25443	28577	-	998	9735	**64753**

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[45] Accessed 26/6/2021

| | 2018-2019 | 35900 | 32800 | - | 2400 | 6900 | **78000** |
| | 2020-2021 | 26200 | 42000 | 500 | 2100 | 7705 | **78505** |

Source: POW 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

Table 4. Actual spent/ ,000USD

POW	Environment Fund	Trust Fund and earmarked	Global Funds	Project Support Costs	Regular Budget	Total
2014-2015	21895	27346	-	998	6512	**56751**
2016-2017	25000	29020	-	998	6900	**61918**
2018-2019	35900	32800	-	2400	7705	**78505**

Source: POW 2016-2017, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

<u>UNEP Institutional Arrangements</u>

The bulk of EG work is carried out by the Law Division, although all UNEP Divisions and Regional Offices have some involvement in EG-related activities. Tables 5a and 5b summarise the responsibilities associated with the delivery of Programme of Work Outputs for the two EG Expected Accomplishment in the 2018-2021 Medium Term Strategy.

Table 5a. Institutional delivery arrangements for Expected Accomplishment A: The International Community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieving environmental objectives and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Programme of Work Output	Division Accountable	Contributing Division(s) and Regional offices
Advisory services and secretariat support to global intergovernmental processes and for addressing the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Law Division	Science Division, regional offices
Advisory services on system-wide coherence on the environment and secretariat services to interagency mechanisms on environment and sustainable development issues	Executive Office/ Law Division	EMG Secretariat, Economy Division
Advisory services to Governments to promote synergies in the implementation of MEAs and other multilateral institutional arrangements	Law Division	Ecosystems Division, Economy Division, regional offices
Advisory services to Governments to promote synergies in the implementation of MEAs and other multilateral institutional arrangements	Law Division	Science Division
Advisory services to Governments to promote synergies in the implementation of MEAs and other multilateral institutional arrangements	Law Division	Ecosystems Division, Economy Division, regional offices

Source: PoW 2018-19

Table 5b. Institutional delivery arrangements for Expected Accomplishment B: Institutional capacities and policy and/or legal frameworks are enhanced to achieve internationally agreed environmental goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs

Programme of Work Output	Division Accountable	Contributing Division(s) and Regional offices
Advisory services and capacity development to strengthen institutional capacity and policy and legal frameworks for effectively and inclusively addressing the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development Goals	Law Division	Ecosystems Division, Regional Offices
Advisory services to support countries in applying integrated approaches to the three dimensions of sustainable development in planning and policymaking, including in United Nations common country programming processes and in the context of promoting poverty and environment linkages in countries' policymaking, planning and budgeting	Ecosystems Division,	Regional Offices, Law Division

Advisory services to countries and regions to promote the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Bali Guidelines, including the development of adequate legal instruments and the effective engagement of major groups and stakeholders in environmental decision-making and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals	Law Division	Governance Affairs Office, Policy and Programme Division, Regional Offices

Source: PoW 2018-19

<u>Main UNEP Partners</u>
The broad scope of environmental governance is reflected in the EG SP's partnership arrangements. The achievement of the results set out in Programme of Work documents requires the involvement of United Nations entities, government institutions, MEA Secretariats, development organizations, civil society organizations – including expert organizations and networks, think tanks, and scientific and academic organizations. An extensive list of partners is set out, by results level, in Programme of Work documents.

<u>Evaluation Evidence</u>
The EG SP has, to date, been one of UNEP's under-evaluated sub-programmes. This is primarily due to the relatively low number of projects operating under the Sub-programme compared to those under other sub-programmes such as Healthy and Productive Ecosystems and Climate Change. In recent years, the Evaluation Office has increased the number of evaluations of EG projects, and this evaluation will, as far as possible, build on available evidence. The total number of evaluations completed is shown in Figure 1 below. A full list of available evaluations of Environmental Governance work is presented in Annex 2.

Figure 1. Evaluation coverage by Sub Programme (2010-2019)

Projects Evaluated between 2010-2019 by UNEP Sub-programme

Healthy and Productive Ecosystems 32%
Environmental Governance 21%
Resilience to Disasters and Conflict 2%
Environment Under Review 1%
Chemicals, Waste and Air Quality 10%
Resource Efficiency 5%
Climate Change 29%
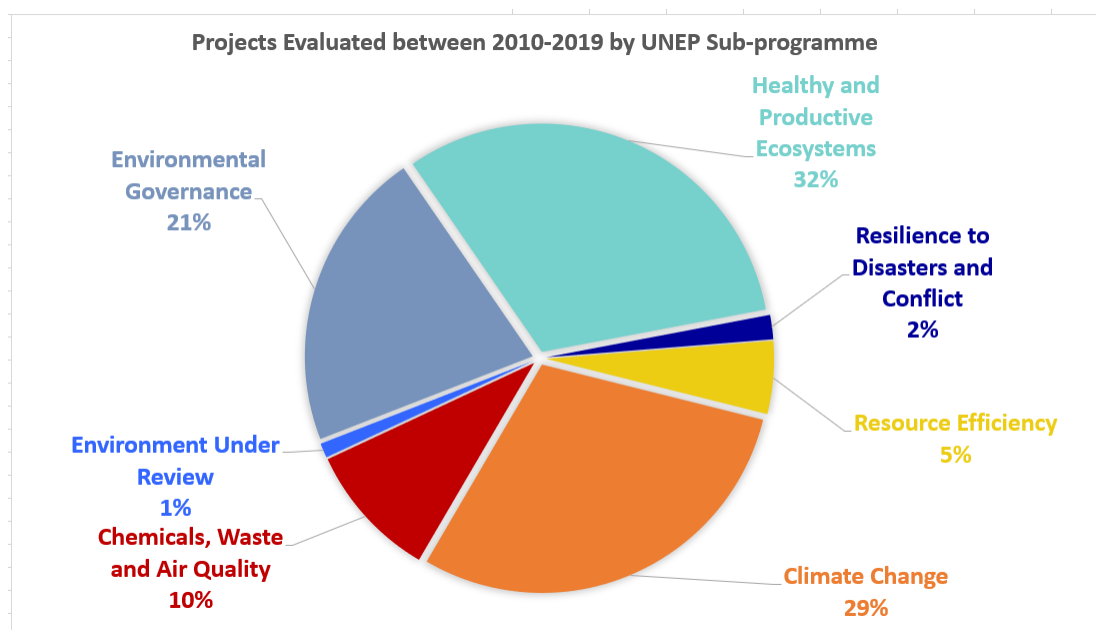
Source: 2018-19 Biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report. January 2020

Whilst the overall level of evaluation coverage of Environmental Governance projects between 2010 and 2019 appears to be substantial (21% of all completed evaluations), the picture is heavily skewed by the large number of compulsory GEF evaluations of Biosafety projects that are classified within the EG sub-programme.

Important evaluation reports for the EG SP evaluation include:

- Assessment of the Fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme IV), 2019

- Terminal Evaluation of the project "Strengthening Institutional Capacity of countries in Environmental Law through Training, Sharing Expertise and Legal Guidance Material (SICCEL)", 2020

- Terminal Evaluation of the project "Promoting the Progressive Development of International Environmental Law", 2020

- Terminal Evaluation of the project "Environmental Rule of Law: Advancing Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability", 2020

- Terminal Evaluation of the project "Poverty Environment Initiative Scale-Up Phase Joint Evaluation UNEP/UNDP 2016", 2020

THE EVALUATION

Evaluation Audience
The Evaluation is expected 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 are UNEP senior management (including Division and Regional Directors), sub-programme coordinators and all UNEP units and staff involved in the EG SP, the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives and UNEA.

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 Environmental Governance, commissions and committees, donors, NGOs and civil society groups, research centres and academia, et cetera.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation
The Evaluation will review UNEP work related to EG from 1 January 2014 up to end of 2021 (PoW 2014/2015, 2016/17, 2018/19 and 2020/2021) against standard evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact). The mandate for evaluation by the UNEP Evaluation Office covers all projects and programmes under the Programme of Work but does not extend to the work undertaken by UNEP MEA Secretariats. EGSP work in support of MEAs, however, does fall within the evaluation scope.[46] The evaluation will fulfil two main purposes:

a) supporting accountability by analysing, at a meta level, the performance of all the sub-programme projects evaluated during the evaluation period, and
b) contributing to institutional learning by providing formative reflections based on further analysis of the sub-programme's effectiveness as a coherent and coordinated unit within UNEP's results framework, and considering lessons that are relevant to its role in the 2022-2025 MTS.

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[46] The evaluation will assess projects and programmes implemented by the EG SP, including on-going work such as support for COP-preparations, trainings for negotiators etc.

The Evaluation will consider the extent to which, in the period under review, UNEP was able to meet its objective as stated in MTS 2014-2017: *"to strengthen synergies and coherence in environmental governance, with a view to facilitating the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development",* and in MTS 2018-2021: as *"Policy coherence and strong legal and institutional frameworks increasingly achieve environmental goals in the context of sustainable development".*

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 (see also Section D. Evaluation Approach and Methods):

1) **Project level performance:** a desk-based, systematic review of the findings from completed project-level evaluation exercises undertaken between 2014 and June 2021. The analysis will provide aggregated findings against standard evaluation criteria and identify and discuss trends in the factors contributing to particularly high or low performance. It will include an assessment of the sample of project evaluations in terms of how well they represent the sub-programme as a whole.

2) **Exploration of key Theories of Change**: Theories of Change will be reconstructed around the main results areas to explore how projects were expected to have a collective or aggregated effect at the level of Programme of Work results (Expected Accomplishments). Projects that are recognised as important contributors to the main causal pathways will be identified and, where possible, used to provide case studies. The implementation and performance of EG work will be evaluated in the context of the TOCs and the analysis will focus heavily on the effectiveness and sustainability of the sub-programme efforts.

3) **Contribution to higher level results and global change processes**: drawing on the reconstructed Theories of Change, but also considering flagship projects and key areas of investment, an analysis will be undertaken to establish the extent and nature of UNEP's contribution to changes at sectoral and global levels. The methods used to aggregate project level achievements and compile results presented in Programme Performance Reports will be explored. This analysis aims to also identify areas of work that would be suited to deeper impact studies in the longer term.

Evaluation Areas of Focus

The areas of focus for the evaluation are set out below. In evaluating these areas, the following key strategic questions will be addressed:

- Is the concept of environmental governance clearly understood and applied in the design and implementation of the Sub-programme?
- How can the synergies between the EG SP and other thematic, foundational, and enabling UNEP Sub-programmes be made tangible and effective?
- How can the programmatic cooperation and synergies be enhanced between UNEP and the UNEP-administered MEAs? What is the role of the EG SP and other sub-programmes in MEAs related work?
- Are the institutional structures and management arrangements for delivery of EG work conducive to effective management at the level of the Sub-programme and the achievement of desired EG results?
- To what extent has the EG SP contributed to the UN Reform process and how can its role be enhanced in the future?

Strategic Relevance of the Sub-Programme

The Evaluation will assess the relevance of the sub-programme objectives and strategy. The analysis will address the main question of whether the sub-programme objectives and strategy are relevant to, and aligned with: a) the global challenges posed by growing demographic pressures and escalating resource use that are exacerbating global inequalities and risk of environmental degradation and conflict, b) the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, c) country needs, and d) UNEP's mandate and areas of expertise in this area.

The evaluation will also consider the adequacy and appropriateness of the geographical scope of the sub-programme and the strategy behind country selection. The analysis will consider the question of relevance and alignment from the perspectives of four main intervention areas: (i) interagency mechanisms; (ii) multilateral environmental agreements and internationally agreed environmental goals; (iii) programmes that respond to countries and regional priorities, and (iv) partnerships such as the Poverty-Environment Initiative.

Sub-Programme Design and Structure
The evaluation will assess the extent to which the overall performance of the EG SP has been affected (in terms of effectiveness and efficiency) by the way it is designed, structured, and integrated with other sub-programmes. The Evaluation will consider the internal coherence and logic between Expected Accomplishments, Programme of Work outputs and project outcomes[47]. 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.

Overall, the evaluation will consider whether a dedicated sub-programme on EG has helped to better define and coordinate UNEP's activities in aligning governance structures to the challenges of global sustainability and, in particular, to integrate social, environmental and economic objectives in sustainable development policies at all levels of governance.

Overall Sub-Programme Performance
The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness, likelihood of impact, sustainability of results, efficiency, and potential for large-scale effects of the EG sub-programme during the evaluation period. Two perspectives will be explored:

> a) <u>Project-level:</u> Based on the findings of the project-level evaluations undertaken during the evaluation period, and information gather from other sources, including Programme Performance Reports, conclusions will be drawn about the performance of the Environmental Governance Sub-Programme project portfolio against each of UNEP's standard evaluation criteria: strategic relevance; achievement of outputs; effectiveness (achievement of project objectives and results); sustainability and replication; efficiency and factors affecting performance (preparation and readiness; project implementation and management; stakeholder participation; communications and public awareness; country ownership; financial management; UNEP supervision and technical guidance and monitoring and evaluation).
> b) <u>Sub-programme level:</u> At the level of the sub-programme itself (i.e., as a vehicle for the delivery of UNEP higher level results) the evaluation will assess the effectiveness and sustainability of the sub-programme's efforts against Theories of Change reconstructed at the level of Expected Accomplishments and against the results reported in the Programme Performance Report.

Given the global nature of UNEP'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 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

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[47] For example, the evaluation will assess whether the results from GEF-funded biosafety projects are adequately captured in the EGSP results framework.

Factors Affecting Sub-Programme Performance

<u>Sub-Programme Organization and Management</u>
The Evaluation will look at the efficiency and effectiveness of the sub-programme organization, coordination and management arrangements. The evaluation will consider the interplay of roles between the different organisational units that are implementing EG work and consider the effectiveness of SP Coordination arrangements between divisions and regional offices. The Evaluation will also consider whether internal lessons can be derived from the experiences of different functional units within the sub-programme.

<u>Sub-programme Human and Financial Resources Administration and Efficiency</u>
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 SP 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 UNEP 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 UNEP;

- *Financial Management and Administration:* the quality, transparency and effectiveness of the systems and processes used for financial management of HQ, regional and any country level operations; 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 extensions and the promotion of synergies among sub-programme components.

<u>Cooperation and Partnerships</u>
The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation with other UNEP sub-programmes, UNEP-administered MEAs, external stakeholders and partners. The Evaluation will explore cooperation and collaboration at several levels, between a) different functional units involved in the sub-programme; different sub-programmes within UNEP; Headquarters and regional or out-posted offices; UNEP and other UN agencies as well as with inter-governmental organisations, regional bodies, the private sector and technical/scientific institutions etc. 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.

<u>Monitoring and Reporting</u>
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.

Human Rights, Gender, and Disability Inclusion

The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the 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 UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment and environmental, social and economic safeguards. The report 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, Human Rights and disability inclusion are adequately taken into account, and the extent to which gender-related issues were incorporated into the design and delivery of sub-programme outputs.

Communication

The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of communication between the units responsible for the implementation of the sub-programme and the coordinator, senior management and relevant UNEP 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 EG 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.

Evaluation Approach and Methods

The Evaluation will be conducted under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office (EO). It will be an in-depth study using a participatory approach whereby the Sub-Programme Coordinator, Division Directors, Regional Directors, Project Managers, Head of the Policy and Programme Division and other relevant staff are kept informed and regularly consulted throughout the process.

The Evaluation will remain an independent exercise. The Evaluation Team will benefit from the leadership and contributions of two independent consultants, supported by Evaluation Office staff, who will liaise with the EO on any logistic and/or methodological issue to properly conduct the assessment in as independent way as possible, given the circumstances and resources provided.

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[48]. Analysis leading to evaluative judgments will be clearly spelled out.

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

The Evaluation will use different methods and tools to assess the sub-programme, including: desk-based review of UNEP strategic documents; meta-analysis of the ratings of previously evaluated projects; trend analysis of evaluation findings and interviews in the reconstruction and exploration of Theories of Change and in analysis the contributions of the sub-programme to higher level results. Survey(s) may be considered if appropriate. A list of evaluation methods to be used are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Evaluation Methods

Type of Activity	Description
Desk Based Review	Reading of thematic and strategic documents to situate the Sub-Programme evaluation within global and sectoral contexts and to articulate UNEP's position and efforts within the global regional and national contexts.
Interviews/Survey	Exploration and analysis of the factors affecting sub-programme performance.
Systematic Review of Findings Project Evaluations	Aggregation and analysis of the findings and ratings across Environmental Governance project evaluations. Analysis of trends in the evaluation findings 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: - Project Designs[49] (under Preparation and Readiness) - Gender, Human Rights and safeguards (under Strategic Relevance) - Financial Management (under Factors Affecting Performance) - Monitoring and Evaluation (under Factors Affecting Performance) - Compliance with evaluation recommendations
Reconstructed Theories of Change	Reconstruction of Theories of Change[50], one per sub-programme results area. Analysis of the coherence between the reconstructed Theories of Change 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 TOCs and stakeholder analysis). Exploration of the way in which sub-programme results are compiled and reported.
Regional Delivery of the Sub-Programme	Exploration of how the sub-programme is articulated and delivered at regional level.

The desk review will include:

- Relevant background documentation on the scientific and socio-economic dimensions of EG, and on current policies, strategies, multilateral agreements, approaches used in EG

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[49] Using the EO template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design, which is prepared during all project evaluations.
[50] These TOCs may or may not reflect either the overall TOC for the sub-programme or TOC(s) from key projects.

- Background documentation on UNEP's strategy and engagement in EG, including: PoW documents (from 2014 onwards); Programme Framework documents; the UNEP MTS 2014-2017, 2018-2021 and 2022-2025 and project design documents;

- Background documentation on UNEP partnerships with key actors in the area of EG; and

- Sub-programme reports and monitoring data including: Sub-programme performance reports, project progress and final reports, financial reports, entries into PIMS, etc.

The systematic review of previous evaluations of projects related to EG will draw on the evaluation ratings scoring and analysis contained within existing project evaluation reports. Evaluations by the EO but also any independent evaluation functions of UNEP partners (UN and non-UN) and donors will be considered;

Interviews are expected to be held with UNEP management and other staff involved in the planning and implementation of the sub-programme, including: the Executive Director, Division Directors, Regional Directors, the Sub-programme Coordinator, project managers and divisional staff, staff from the Strategic Programme and Planning Division and staff of UNEP regional offices and the secretariats of UNEP-hosted MEAs others as relevant. In addition, interviews and, if appropriate, surveys will be conducted with key partners and stakeholders, including selected representatives of UN and e.g., Human Rights Council, the EMG and other external partners; other UN agencies active in promoting EG and funding mechanisms; Ministries of Environment; Bilateral donors; civil society and major groups such as NGOs, local authorities, academia as well as the private sector.

Evaluation Deliverables

An **Inception Report** will be prepared by the Evaluation Team before it engages in external interviews, surveys and regional office or project visits. The Inception Report will include: (i) most of the background desk review; (ii) draft theories of change at the level of the sub-programme's Expected Accomplishments (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. It will then be shared by the Evaluation Office with the Sub-programme Coordinator, senior management and heads of functional units for comments.

Following field visits, **Preliminary Findings** will be prepared in PowerPoint and presented to the Evaluation Reference Group through Teams or Skype.

The **Main Evaluation Report** will present synthesised findings from the evaluation. Detailed material arising from any case or country studies will be annexed. It will be relatively brief (no longer than 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.

The draft report shall be submitted to the Director of the Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will review the report for clarity and comprehensiveness. When found acceptable, the Director of Evaluation will share the report with the Sub-programme Coordinator and Lead Director, who will review the report and provide feedback on any factual errors. Once these have been addressed, the report will be circulated to Division and Regional Directors, the Policy and Programme and Division, the 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 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.

The final report shall be submitted by email to:

>Michael Spilsbury, Director
>UNEP Evaluation Office
>Email: michael.spilsbury@un.org

The 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 UNEP. The plan should specify the level of priority of the recommendations and actions to be undertaken to implement them. It should also indicate who will be responsible for implementing the recommendations and the schedule for their implementation. 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.

After the Recommendations Implementation Plan has been agreed upon, 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 Team illustrates the content of its analysis to UNEP target audience) will be sought to reach as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. The final evaluation report will be published on the Evaluation Office web-site https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/evaluation and may be printed in hard copy. 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 UNEP criteria.

Management Arrangements of the Evaluation

The Evaluation will be managed by the Evaluation Office of UNEP. The Evaluation Manager 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 UNEP audience.

The core Evaluation Team will consist of two external Evaluation Consultants (Team Leader and Evaluation Specialist, respectively) supported by 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, in close consultation with the Evaluation Manager 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 and will draw on the list of roles below.

Specific 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 E. Evaluation Deliverables. Roles will include:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:
- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the EG SP;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for selection of EG initiatives for in-depth study;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

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;
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Evaluation Manager informed of the evaluation progress and engage the Environmental Governance Sub-Programme Coordinator in discussions on emerging findings throughout the evaluation process.

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(s) and indicating the reason for the rejection;

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.

Specific Responsibilities for the Evaluation Specialist:
The Evaluation Specialist will carry out the Systematic Review of existing project evaluations from the sub-programme. The Evaluation Specialist will contribute to the overall preparation of the evaluation report. A more detailed allocation of responsibilities between the Team Leader and the Evaluation Specialist will be specified in the inception report.

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

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). The ERG members 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: a senior manager from the Law Division (Director or Deputy), the Sub-Programme Coordinator, a senior representative from the Policy and Programme Division, a selection of Branch/Unit Heads and up to three representatives from relevant technical institutions and MEA Secretariats.

The Evaluation Consultants will have 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. They will possess excellent writing skills in English.

They will combine advanced knowledge and experience in the following fields:

- Environmental Governance and international law;
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements, regional and national policy processes
- UN policy work and country support;
- The UN system, in particular UNEP and partner agencies of the EG SP;
- Programme and project management;

- Partnerships development, and knowledge management.

The Evaluation will be conducted during the period October 2021 – September 2022. The Evaluation Office will present a first draft evaluation report tentatively by the end of March 2022 to the Sub-Programme Coordinator. In June 2022 (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 3rd quarter of 2022. The report will be discussed with UNEP's Senior Management Team. The tentative schedule for the Evaluation is presented below. Consultants will be hired within the period 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022.

All consultant contracts will be individual Special Service Agreements (SSA) on a fee-only basis. Air tickets will be purchased by UNEP 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 UNEP/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.

Payment schedule: The Evaluation Consultants will receive 30% of their agreed fee upon completion of the Inception Report; and 40% upon delivery of a draft main report that is deemed complete and of acceptable quality to the EO. The remaining 30% will be paid upon satisfactory completion of the work.

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 UNEP 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 UNEP's quality standards. The Team Leader will advise the Evaluation Office whether the Evaluation Specialist has provided satisfactory inputs in the evaluation.

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.

Tentative schedule for the evaluation in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Tentative schedule

Phase	Milestone/deliverable	Timeframe
Inception	TORs	July-August 2021
	Consultant contracts	1 October 2021
	Inception Report	30 October 2021
Data collection & analysis	Further Desk Review	30 November 2021
	Telephone Interviews	30 November 2021
	HQ visit (tentative)	30 November 2021
	Surveys	31 January 2021
	working papers/case studies	31 January 2021
	Draft report to EO	15 March 2022
	Draft report shared with ERG	31 March 2022

Reporting Phase	Draft Report for comment by partners	30 April 2022
	Comments by partners	31 May 2022
	Completion Workshop (Nairobi)	June 2022
	Final Report to EO	31 August 2022
	Circulate Final Report	30 September 2022
	Issue Recommendation Implementation Plan	30 September 2022