Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project Environment Management Group (2018-2022) (UNEP-PoW 01141)

Evaluation Office of the
United Nations Environment Programme

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The evaluation consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, and the formulation of the next phase.

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ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Joint Evaluation: No
Report Language(s): English.
Evaluation Type: Terminal Evaluation
Brief Description: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) project implemented between 2018 and 2022. The overall objective of the EMG project is to promote consideration and integration of environmental issues in the policies, programmes, and management of the United Nations system and its coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation had two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to provide feedback and recommendations that could assist with the design of future phases of the EMG project.

Key words: Environment Management Group, sustainability, collaboration, Issue Management Group, Nexus Dialogue

Primary data collection period: November 2021- February 2022

Field mission dates: No field mission was undertaken.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
DCO	UN Development Cooperation Office
DRI	Directly Responsible Individual
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EMG	Environment Management Group
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
FMO	Financial Management Officer
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HLCM	UN High Level Committee on Management
HLCP	UN High Level Committee on Programmes
HQ	Headquarters (of UNEP, Nairobi)
IACSD	Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development
ICA	Internal Cooperation Agreement
IMDIS	Integrated Management and Document Information System
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMGS	Issue Management Groups
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
MEA	Multi-lateral Environmental Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid Term Review
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy (UNEP)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIMS	Programme Information Management System
PoW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee (internal UNEP committee that approves new projects)
ProDoc	Project Document (must be reviewed by PRC before any project can be undertaken, with the approval of the managing division director)
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
SSFA	Small Scale Funding Agreement
SUN	Sustainable United Nations (Facility)
SWFS	System-Wide Framework of Strategies
ToC	Theory of Change

ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN SDG	United National Sustainable Development Group
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Table 1: Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID:	02004		
Implementing Partners	**N/A**		
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	Mainly SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals Target 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development		
Sub-programme:	(SP4) Environmental Governance Executive Direction and Management	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	EA A: The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development EA A: Integration of environmental issues in the United Nations system in its implementation of internationally agreed goals, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals
UNEP approval date:	Programme of Work Output(s):		
	Advisory services on system-wide coherence on the environment and secretariat services to interagency mechanisms on environment and sustainable development issues. Information and knowledge management products on the coherent and synergistic implementation of MEAs, the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and on legal and institutional responses to emerging environmental issues of international concern		
***Expected* start date:**	01 January 2018	**Actual start date:**	20 April 2018
***Planned* completion date:**	31 December 2021	**Actual operational completion date:**	19 April 2022
***Planned* project budget at approval:**	USD 3,516,772 (includes RB post)	**Actual total expenditures reported as of 31 December 2020:**	USD 1,632,413
***Planned* Environment Fund allocation:**	USD 1,518,696	**Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of 31 December 2020:**	USD 1,050,895
***Planned* Extra-Budgetary Financing:**	USD 968,276	**Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:**	USD 383,220 USD
		Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing	USD 220,524

		expenditures reported as of 31 December 2020:		
Date of first project expenditure:	-	**Planned date of financial closure:**	19 April 2022	
No. of formal project revisions:	1	**Date of last approved project revision:**	1 December 2021	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	0	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	Last: -	Next: -
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	-	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	-	
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	2nd quarter of 2021	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	1 October 2021	
Coverage - Country(ies):	N/A	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Global	
Dates of previous project phases:	2014-2017	**Status of future project phases:**	New project document to be developed for 2022-2025	

Source: ProDoc (Final_Revised_Approved), Project Revision 1, December 1, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. This report is a Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment Management Group project implemented between 2018 and 2022.

2. Established in 2001, the Environment Management Group (EMG) is an inter-agency mechanism within the United Nations (UN), which aims to enhance environmental coordination and cooperation across the UN system. The EMG promotes the recognition, integration and operationalization of the UN's environmental issues by facilitating policy dialogue, strategic and integrated thinking, information exchange and joint action among the UN agencies. It also helps place core and emerging environmental issues at the centre of the UN's action. The work of the EMG Secretariat in furthering the aims of the EMG is administratively structured as a project within UNEP's Programme of Work.

3. The project forms a part of the UNEP Programme of Work under Subprogramme 4: Environmental Governance, Expected Accomplishment A) The international community increasingly converges on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Executive Direction and Management; and, Expected Accomplishment A) Integration of environmental issues in the United Nations system in its implementation of internationally agreed goals, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021 promoting "policy coherence and strong legal and institutional framework to achieve environmental goals in the contexts of sustainable development."

4. The EMG Secretariat is hosted by UNEP, and is composed of a Head of Secretariat, a Programme Management Officer and an Administrative Assistant. The EMG Secretariat is based in Geneva, and reports to the Head of the UNEP New York Office, and to the UNEP Executive Director, who chairs the EMG. As indicated in the previous paragraph, it is anchored in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme, whose Lead Director is the Director of the Law Division. The Director of the Policy and Programme Division is the UNEP Representative or Principal Focal Point in the EMG. It should be noted that the Principal Focal Point has no administrative or oversight responsibilities for EMG. The immediate administrative oversight of the EMG Secretariat is with the New York Office, and the Secretary, who heads that Office is known in UNEP parlance as the Directly Responsible Individual (DRI). The Secretariat provides support in preparation, facilitation and reporting of the EMG meetings, in line with the EMG plan of work approved by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM).

5. The EMG reports on its cooperation and achievements to the United National Environment Assembly (UNEA), and to the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP. It also informs other intergovernmental bodies for specific issues, as appropriate. The progress reports of the EMG have been regularly provided by its chair to the Governing Council of UNEP (now UNEA) and through UNEP to the UN General Assembly.

This evaluation

6. The purpose of this Terminal Evaluation was threefold: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements; to provide inputs to the design of the next phase of project implementation (2022 – 2025); and, (iii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge through results and lessons.

7. The scope of the terminal evaluation was the UNEP project, "*Environment Management Group*", which was carried out on behalf of UNEP, and covered the implementation period from January 1st, 2018 to April 19th, 2022.

8. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, and the UNEP Programme Manual, this Terminal Evaluation has been carried out using a set of nine commonly applied evaluation criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance; (2) Quality of Project Design; (3) Nature of External Context; (4) Effectiveness (including availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact); (5) Financial Management; (6) Efficiency; (7) Monitoring and Reporting; (8) Sustainability; and, (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.

9. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation lists three 'key strategic questions' to be addressed in the evaluation. These are as follows:

   (i) Should the EMG be a project, considering that it provides a fundamental corporate service to UNEP? Are there alternative arrangements that would still provide results focus and substantive accountability?

   (ii) EMG governance within UNEP – are the project and Secretariat correctly placed in within the PoW and UNEP organigram from the point of view of maximizing the project's potential and resource mobilization?

   (iii) What possible functions should/could the EMG shoulder with a view to the next phase?

      (a) To what extent has the full potential of the EMG been utilized?

      (b) To what extent has UNEP's coordination mandate been effective and influential through the soft EMG mechanism that focuses on ad-hoc information and knowledge exchange, and coordination meetings and dialogues?

Key findings and Conclusions

10. Based on the findings from this evaluation, the project demonstrates performance at the **Highly Satisfactory** level (a table of ratings against all evaluation criteria is found in the Conclusions section).

11. The EMG's effectiveness, the Group's convening/coordinating mandate is highly regarded, and it has exceeded on delivering on nearly all its planned outputs and outcomes. On the whole, stakeholders believe that the EMG has fulfilled its potential. However, low levels of resourcing were consistently identified as a problem during interviews, and in the questionnaire responses. In addition, the way in which EMG's budget is derived and allocated was not perceived to be sustainable for continuing activities and longer-term plans. Too many activities were supported by ad hoc donor grants.

12. Assessing the likely impact of the EMG's work was difficult. It has produced some significant pieces of work, but it did not have the means nor resources to measure whether or not its work was having an impact.

13. The EMG was perceived by stakeholders to be very "busy" and would undertake new initiatives on a regular basis. In some respects, these initiatives appear to be put forward on an ad hoc basis by EMG members. A number of interview and survey respondents suggested that the EMG should focus on fewer activities.

14. A tighter focusing of the EMG's future activities was explored further in interviews, with consensus emerging around four main areas where the EMG and its Secretariat could have a long-term impact:

    (i) Assisting the UN system to respond to the implementation of the environmental aspects of the sustainable development goals (SDGs);

    (ii) Continue interacting with the UN Sustainable Development Group to create a dialogue aimed at assisting countries to meet the environmental aspects of the SDGs;

    (iii) Assisting the UN to establish and meet internal sustainability goals. This would extend the work already undertaken by the EMG and its Secretariat on a UN Environmental Management System, and build on Phase 2 of the UN Sustainability Strategy; and,

    (iv) Linking the EMG's work with coordination mechanisms such as the UNSDG, the High-Level Committee on Programmes, the High-Level Committee on Management, and UN programmes such as UN Energy, UN Water, and UN Oceans.

15. The three key strategic questions posed by the evaluation, raised questions about EMG's administrative arrangements. There were divergent views on this issue. Some interviewees and survey respondents were in favour of the EMG's current administrative architecture. Others, however, perceived the institutional positioning of the EMG to be both confusing and inefficient. Concerns were also expressed by some members about whether there was a conflict of interest in UNEP both chairing the EMG and being a participating member.

Lessons Learned

16. The following 'lessons learned' from the evaluation are presented as having the potential for wider application in similar contexts.

Lesson Learned #1:	**There is a definite and growing need for an interagency body with a convening/coordinating mandate to promote the integration of environmental issues within UN agencies**
Context/comment:	During the implementation period of the evaluated project (2018 – 2022) there has been a significant expansion of interest from UN agencies in how to support the SDGs, and meet the requirements of the Paris Agreement. UN agencies need a separate forum where they can discuss these issues.

Lesson Learned #2:	**Convening bodies such as the EMG have an important informal role to play. This aspect was lost during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, which prevented in-person interactions.**

Context/comment:	In 2020 and 2021, the Senior Officials Meetings and all Nexus Dialogues and Issue Management Group meetings were held via video conferencing. While interviewees considered this approach to be reasonably effective, there was a concern that the informal, interpersonal aspects of EMG meetings had been lost, and that this was a significant handicap.

Lesson Learned #3:	**Convening bodies such as the EMG need to have appropriate communications expertise and budget to establish the visibility of their work.**
Context/comment:	The contemporary policy climate is awash with information. Establishing the visibility of a convening body such as the EMG requires a commitment to effective communication. This should not be an afterthought but built into the design of a convening agency's terms of reference.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	The Terms of Reference for the EMG and the EMG Secretariat should be reviewed with a view to ensure that their objectives, modus operandi and rules of procedure are up to date. The review could consider alternative mechanisms, arrangements and activities that could enhance the work of the EMG and the Secretariat in view of developments over the past twenty years since the EMG was created. The findings of the review should be presented to the EMG membership for reflection.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The initial ToR for EMG was developed in 2000, and then reviewed and updated in 2017. Since then, the EMG and environmental governance issues have further matured. Phase II of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020 – 2030, points to important gaps, some of which can be addressed by the EMG and its Secretariat. Links could be strengthened with similar coordination mechanisms such as the UNSDG, the High-Level Committee on Programmes, the High-Level Committee on Management, and subsidiary mechanisms such as UN Energy, UN Water, and UN Oceans.
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management, EMG Secretariat

Proposed implementation time-frame:	Reporting to the SOM 2023.

Recommendation #2:	The functionality of the EMG Secretariat with regards to the UNEP organigram and mechanisms should be enhanced to ensure organisational effectiveness, clear reporting lines, synergies with MEAs, and adequately equipping the Secretariat in terms of resources and expertise.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The location of the EMG Secretariat in Geneva is advantageous as it is physically close to many of its UN member agencies and is in line with the assessments made in the past on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG's work. In that regard, the EMG's function can be further enhanced by improving its working relationship with UNEP Headquarters, regional offices and liaison offices, and especially the New York Office, which can support the alignment and integration of the EMG's work with the high-level sustainable development policy-making coordination mechanisms of the UN, such as the UN Sustainable Development Group, and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Reporting to the SOM 2023

Recommendation #3:	A resource mobilization plan should be developed that is tied to the work plan and targeting both bilateral donors and EMG member agencies, including UNEP, providing opportunities for engagement, visibility, donor funding and demonstrating impact – the resource mobilisation plan should accommodate raising funds for ad hoc activities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The way in which EMG's budget for activities is derived is not sustainable for continuing activities and longer-term plans. Important activities are supported by ad hoc donor grants and the work associated with searching for grants to undertake agreed activities reduces the limited staff time of the EMG Secretariat to implement activities. The EMG Secretariat does not have the resources to follow-up and assess the effect of work undertaken and to demonstrate impact. Such information is critical to ensure

	the engagement of EMG members and generate donor interest.
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Prior to SOM 2023

Recommendation #4:	Engagement with EMG members should aim to increase effectiveness, build stronger ownership, unlock win-wins and secure buy-in from agencies. This would include leveraging of expertise (e.g. secondment of staff to the EMG Secretariat) and sharing of communication and outreach with other UN agencies, and use of rotational co-chairs.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The success of the EMG and the work of the EMG Secretariat is significantly reliant on strong outreach and communication. The EMG is often perceived as an afterthought and delegated to lower-level technical staff of EMG member agencies. EMG members struggle with elevating the EMG's profile internally. This is in part due to the lack of visibility of the EMG's work and limited resources that makes it difficult to mobilize expertise and affects the interest of EMG members to chair different types of activities.
Priority Level:	Important
Responsibility:	UNEP Management, EMG Secretariat
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Prior to SOM 2023

Recommendation #5:	The modus operandi of the EMG should be reviewed to identify criteria for prioritization of work and stronger focus on fewer activities, including agenda setting in EMG meetings, and then be discussed with the EMG members. The Peer Review activity should cease. This would follow the review of the EMG ToR and possible amendments made to the ToR.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	With so many EMG activities, it is difficult for EMG members to take ownership stake in all of them as effective engagement and representation take a considerable amount of time. Issue Management Groups, the Nexus Dialogues,

	and Task Teams are considered to be effective by stakeholders. The combination of the pandemic, financial constraints, and the need for a more engaging and streamlined format appear to lessen the effectiveness of Peer Review. The peer reviews do not go into enough depth, and the information produced is already known and could be folded into the work programme of the UN Sustainability Strategy. There is, however, need for follow-up after the peer reviews, but the Issue Management Group (IMG) on Environmental Sustainability Management under EMG neither has the mandate nor resources to do it.
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management, EMG Secretariat
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Reporting to SOM 2023

Recommendation #6:	A monitoring framework should be developed for the EMG's work plan that enhances measurement and data collection from EMG members and donors on change (at outcome level) and impact. This would include indicators that assess inclusion of gender and human rights considerations. This recommendation is linked with Recommendation 1 and proposed review and possible adjustment of the ToR. Given the difficulty of attributing final impacts (as presented in the Theory of Change) to EMG outputs and outcomes, it is also recommended that the ToC impact statements be re-visited and causal pathways made more explicit.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The implementation of EMG's work is the responsibility of the member UN agencies, and most of the outputs and outcomes result in suggested policy reforms, but the current outcome indicators do not adequately measure success of policy reform integration, nor do they include gender and human rights considerations. Further, the EMG (and the EMG Secretariat) does not have the resources to assess whether or not its work is having an impact.
Priority Level:	Important
Responsibility:	EMG Secretariat
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Prior to SOM 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

17. This terminal evaluation of the UNEP project, "*Environment Management Group*" (UNEP-PoW 01141, PIMS no. 2004) was carried out on behalf of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and covered the implementation period from January 1st, 2018 to April 19th, 2022, hereafter referred to as the 'latest phase', whereas work undertaken by EMG before 2018 is referred to under 'previous phases'.

18. Established in 2001, the Environment Management Group (EMG) project is an inter-agency mechanism within the United Nations (UN), which aims to enhance environmental coordination and cooperation across the UN system. The EMG promotes the recognition, integration and operationalization of the UN's environmental issues by facilitating policy dialogue, strategic and integrated thinking, information exchange and joint action among the UN agencies. It also helps place core and emerging environmental issues at the centre of the UN's action.

19. The project responds to the UNEP Programme of Work, primarily to Sub-programme 4: Environmental Governance, promoting the strengthening of "synergies and coherence in environmental governance to facilitate the transition towards environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development." The project is directly implemented by the EMG Secretariat.

20. The EMG engages 51 EMG member agencies in environmental cooperation. EMG members have wide-ranging and diverging mandates working at global, regional and national levels. EMG works mainly through Issue Management Groups (IMGs), Consultative Processes and Task Teams to which EMG members are invited to contribute. IMGs are regarded as the backbone of EMG activities; IMGs are time bound groups established by Senior Officials Meetings (the senior level decision-making body comprised of the Heads of UN entities) that bring together a sub-set of EMG members interested in working on a specific issue. IMGs tend to have a Terms of Reference of their own and produce a knowledge product or guidance to be endorsed by members attending the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM).

21. The EMG Secretariat is hosted by UNEP, and is composed of a Head of Secretariat, a Programme Management Officer and an Administrative Assistant. The EMG Secretariat is based in Geneva, and reports to the Head of the UNEP New York Office, and to the UNEP Executive Director, who chairs the EMG. The EMG Secretariat is anchored in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme, whose Lead Director is Director of the Law Division. The Director of the Policy and Programme Division is the UNEP Representative or Principal Focal Point in the EMG. It should be noted that the Principal Focal Point has no administrative or oversight responsibilities for EMG. The immediate administrative oversight of the EMG Secretariat is with the New York Office. The Secretariat provides support in preparation, facilitation and reporting of the EMG meetings, in line with the EMG plan of work approved by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM).

22. The EMG reports on its cooperation and achievements to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), and to the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP. It also informs other intergovernmental bodies for

specific issues, as appropriate. The progress reports of the EMG have been regularly provided by its chair to the Governing Council of UNEP (now UNEA) and through UNEP to the UN General Assembly.

II. EVALUATION METHODS

A. Evaluation Model

23. In line with the Terms of Reference (see Annex III), the UNEP Evaluation Policy, and the UNEP Programme Manual, this Terminal Evaluation has been carried out using a set of nine commonly applied evaluation criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance[1]; (2) Quality of Project Design; (3) Nature of External Context; (4) Effectiveness (including availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact); (5) Financial Management; (6) Efficiency; (7) Monitoring and Reporting; (8) Sustainability; and, (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.

24. Most evaluation criteria were rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

25. The UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements required to demonstrate performance at each level (i.e. Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) for each evaluation criterion. The Evaluator has considered all the evidence gathered during the evaluation in relation to this matrix in order to generate evaluation criteria performance ratings.

[1] This criterion includes a sub-category on Complementarity, which closely reflects the OECD-DAC criterion of 'Coherence', introduced in 2019. Complementarity with other initiatives is assessed with respect to the project's design. In addition, complementarity with other initiatives during the project's implementation is assessed under the criterion of Efficiency.

B. Evaluation Process

26. Figure 1 presents an outline of the process applied for evaluation of the EMG project.

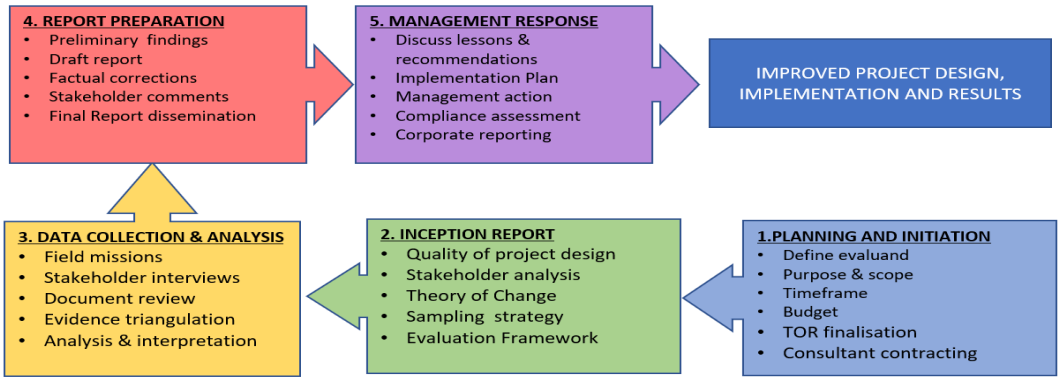


Figure 1: The Evaluation Process

27. This evaluation adopted a participatory approach, consulting with the EMG Secretariat, members of the UNEP Senior Management Team, EMG Focal Points, Technical Experts, Donors, Consultants, and other Partners at various stages throughout the process.

28. Central to the evaluation was the analysis and reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change (ToC). Consultations were held during the evaluation inception phase to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The reconstructed Theory of Change, supported by a graphic representation and narrative discussion of the causal pathways, was discussed further with respondents during the data collection phase, and refined as appropriate. The final iteration of the Theory of Change is presented in this final evaluation report and has been used throughout the evaluation process.

C. Key Strategic Questions

29. The ToR listed three 'key strategic questions' to be addressed in the evaluation. These were as follows:

(i) Should the EMG be a project, considering that it provides a fundamental corporate service to UNEP? Are there alternative arrangements that would still provide results focus and substantive accountability?

(ii) EMG governance within UNEP – are the project and Secretariat correctly placed in within the PoW and UNEP organigram from the point of view of maximizing the project's potential and resource mobilization?

(iii) What possible functions should/could the EMG shoulder with a view to the next phase?

(a) To what extent has the full potential of the EMG been utilized?

(b) To what extent has UNEP's coordination mandate been effective and influential through the soft EMG mechanism that focuses on ad-hoc

information and knowledge exchange, and coordination meetings and dialogues?

30. Findings related to the strategic questions have been nested within the assessment of performance related to the evaluation criteria.

D. Evaluation Criteria and Related Questions

31. For each evaluation criterion, the evaluation sought to address a number of evaluation questions which were aligned with possible sources and key stakeholder groups who were expected to provide answers or information for each of the questions. The approach sought multiple sources for each evaluation question, so as to triangulate as much as possible (see Annex VIII. Evaluation Questions and Possible Supporting Sources).

32. The sources included desk review of documentation and reaching out to stakeholders. Key stakeholders were identified as the EMG Secretariat, EMG focal points, technical experts, consultants working on or having previously been engaged in EMG activities and partners. Donors were included as a supporting source of information.

E. Data Collection Methods and Sources

33. Data collection was undertaken using the following methods: (a) desk review; (b) interviews; and, (c) a questionnaire survey.

Secondary data sources: Desk review

34. The UNEP Evaluation Office and the EMG Secretariat provided a long list of documents available for review. A number of these were accessed as part of the development of the Inception Report. They included, among others: project design documents; resolutions; strategies; key reports on the EMG or delivered by the EMG; and, the EMG website (see Annex II. Key Documents Consulted).

Primary data sources: Interviews

35. The EMG Secretariat provided a full list of stakeholders. During the inception phase, the Evaluator reviewed this list in consultation with EMG staff. The EMG provided background on the roles and experience of each person. Stakeholders were grouped into one of seven categories: (i) EMG Focal Points; (ii) EMG Secretariat staff; (iii) Technical Experts; (iv) Donors (v) Consultants; (vi) Partners; and, (vii) other global contacts.

36. From the list, nineteen were selected by the Evaluator, the main aim being to interview at least one person from each of the identified stakeholder groups, and to focus on those with either significant length of involvement with EMG's work, or with a recognized responsibility for part of the work programme (see Annex I. People consulted during the Evaluation).

Primary Data Sources: Questionnaire survey

37. In order to obtain a broader coverage of views, a questionnaire survey was designed and delivered using Google Forms (the questions are appended as

Annex VII). The survey was sent to the members of the EMG Secretariat “long list” who were not personally interviewed, as follows:

* Focal points: 13
* Technical experts: 3
* Donors: 2
* Consultants: 10
* Partners: 11

38. Of these thirty-nine, eighteen responded, resulting in a response rate of 46%. Twelve respondents were female and six were male. Interviews were held in January and February of 2022.

F. Evaluation Limitations

39. The strategic relevance evaluation questions put to interviewees asked about perceptions of alignment to the MTS and POW. These were difficult questions for non-UNEP interviewees to answer, without appropriate background. As a consequence, a similar question was not included in the questionnaire survey. However, the eight face-to-face interviews undertaken with UNEP staff did allow for conclusions to be reached about EMG alignment with the MTS and POW.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

40. The EMG is an ongoing inter-agency mechanism that works across the UN system. It is considered a project that is renewed at regular intervals, rather than a timebound intervention. The latest project period covered just over four years from 2018 to early 2022. The EMG's mandate covers a range of areas, including support of coordination, information exchange, and promotion of joint action by United Nations agencies, as well as synergy development among and between the activities of the United Nations agencies on environment and human settlement issues.

41. According to its most recent ToR[2], the EMG's objectives should be:

* To identify, address and promote the application of cross-sectoral solutions in order to collectively resolve specific problems, issues and tasks on the environmental and human settlements agenda requiring enhanced inter-agency cooperation in a given time-frame through facilitating effective and collaborative involvement of the relevant United Nations system agencies, programmes and organs and of other potential partners, as appropriate;

* To provide a forum for a structured and timely exchange of relevant knowledge and information on emerging problems and issues in the field of environment and human settlements geared at finding collectively the most effective approach to the solution of the new tasks;

* To assist in the promotion of system-wide policy coherence, synergy and collaborative and flexible approaches to environmental and human settlements issues in the United Nations system, including through the implementation of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS), and to enhance the environmental and human settlement perspectives, in particular their normative analytical and operational aspects, in the work of United Nations system organizations;

* To facilitate, in this vein, the work of UN agencies in carrying out their responsibilities to support the integration and implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;

* To bring the contributions of EMG Members to the UN Environment Assembly of UN Environment and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) as appropriate;

* To support the deepening of synergies and system wide collaboration in the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements;

[2] The original ToR were endorsed by IACSD at its 15th session (ACC/2000/1), and subsequently by the ACC at its first Regular Session of 2000 (ACC/2000/4). The Terms of Reference were subsequently updated in 2017.

* To promote mainstreaming of environmental considerations in the work of UN agencies and support UN system-wide cooperation to enhance the environmental sustainability performance of UN agencies at the policy-, programmes- and operational levels

42. Along with the "key strategic questions" presented in Section 6.1, this evaluation examined whether the EMG met the expectations of its original ToR, and delivered its programme as outlined in the Project Document.

43. According to the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, a project is subject to a Terminal Evaluation upon completion, or in this instance, phase of operation. Terminal Evaluations assess a project's performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the project's outcomes and impacts (actual and potential). The purpose of this Terminal Evaluation is threefold to: (i) Provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements; Provide inputs to the design of the next phase of project implementation (2022-2025); and, (iii) Promote operational involvement, learning and knowledge through results and lessons.

44. The evaluation has been conducted by an independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the Evaluation Office of UNEP. The target audience for the findings of the evaluation is as follows:

* UNEA;
* UNEP Senior Management Team;
* EMG Secretariat itself;
* EMG focal points;
* EMG donor agencies; and,
* Technical experts, consultants, and other Partners involved with the implementation of EMG activities.

B. Historical Background

45. The EMG was established in 2001 pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 53/242 in July 1999. The resolution supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an environmental management group "for the purpose of enhancing United Nations system-wide interagency coordination related to specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements" as suggested in his report on Environment and Human Settlements (A/53/463).

46. The EMG would enable the UN bodies and their partners to share information, consult on proposed new initiatives, contribute to a planning framework, and agree on priorities and on the respective roles of agencies in the implementation of those priorities in order to achieve a more rational and cost-effective use of resources. The EMG was envisaged to provide a forum and a mechanism to enhance complementarity between the analytical/normative activities and the operational role of the UN system agencies through adopting a problem-solving, results oriented approach. It was further envisaged that the reports of the Group

would be made available to relevant intergovernmental bodies to enhance intergovernmental policy coherence.

47. The original Terms of Reference (ToR) of the EMG were approved in 2000 by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which has since been replaced by the Chief Executives Board on Coordination (CEB). The adoption followed a process of consultation carried out through the ACC's Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and UNEP's Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi. The ToR was presented in a report from the 8th Special Session of Governing Council of UNEP to the General Assembly. The EMG eventually started functioning in January 2001 with a secretariat established in June 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. The ToR was updated at the Senior Officials Meeting 23 in 2017.

C. Results Framework

48. The project's overall outputs and outcomes for the latest phase (2018-2021) were presented in the Final Approved Project Document, Logical Framework in Section 3.3. Overall outcomes were:

* Outcome 1: more coherent policies and action are taken by UN agencies collectively to achieve environmental objectives of the 2030 agenda; and,
* Outcome 2: UN entities are to an increased extent working together to address and enhance corporate environmental sustainability in the UN system.

49. Table 3 presents an overview of outcomes and outputs as approved by the December 2021 revision.

Table 2:Overview of Planned Outcomes and Outputs, 2018-2021

Outcomes	Indicators	Outputs	Indicators
Outcome 1: More coherent policies and action are taken by UN agencies collectively to achieve environmental objectives of the 2030 agenda.	**Subprogram 4 (SP4)** Number of environmental nexus areas addressed for which recommendations are made for more coherent and effective policies Baseline 3, Target 9 **SP4** Number of environmental issues for which UN Agencies/ EMG Members agree to take more coherent action or spearhead more coherent policies Baseline: 17, Target: 25 **SP4** Number of inter-agency partnerships/ coalitions agreed Baseline: 0 Target: 2	Interagency reports, statements, strategies and analyses have been prepared addressing thematic issues and tasks on the environmental agenda that require integrated approaches and enhanced interagency cooperation.	**SP4** Number of reports documenting a system-wide analysis, statements, framework and/or strategy. (Baseline: 34, Target: 54) **SP4** Number of inputs provided to the interagency synthesis report of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment. Baseline: 31, Target: 38

Outcome 2: UN entities are to an increased extent working together to address and enhance corporate environmental sustainability in the UN system.	**Executive Direction and Management (EDaM)** Number of corporate environmental sustainability aspects/themes addressed jointly by EMG members (Baseline: 0, Target: 3) **EDaM** Number of occasions/meetings where UN entities have come together to share good practices in environmental sustainability management. (Baseline: 0, Target: 8)	Common approaches, implementation tools, guidance and support have been developed/compiled and provided to facilitate the implementation of environmental sustainability measures in the UN system.	**EDaM** Number of tools and/or common approaches developed in support of the implementation of the Sustainability Framework (Baseline: 0, Target: 4) **EDaM** Number of agencies that are peer reviewed for their corporate environmental management (Baseline: 11, Target: 13)

Sources: EMG ProDoc (Final_Revised_Approved); Project Revision 1, December 1, 2021

D. Stakeholders

50. The EMG Secretariat supports UNEP in its work toward facilitating increased participation of stakeholders in environmental decision-making processes.

51. The stakeholder analysis section of the Pro Doc presents a detailed examination of stakeholders, by analysing the power that they hold over the project implementation; their level of interest; whether they participated in project design; their roles in project implementation; and, changes in their behaviour expected through implementation of the project. The analysis categorised stakeholders into one of four categories:

    * Type A: High power/high interest over the project = Key player
    * Type B: High power/ low interest over the project =Meet their needs
    * Type C: Low power/ high interest over the project= Show consideration
    * Type D: Low power /low interest over the project= Least important

52. High power/ high interest (Type A) stakeholders were considered to be UNEP, UN agencies and MEA Secretariats, UN Governing Bodies, and other interagency mechanisms such as Sustainable UN and the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination. High power/ low interest (Type B) stakeholders consisted of national governments, and low power/ high interest (Type C) stakeholders were considered to include NGOs, academics, and regional and national UNEP offices. Finally, low power/ low interest (Type D) stakeholders were considered to be vulnerable groups and indigenous peoples.

53. Clearly, stakeholders would be expected to provide different views on the EMG project when participating in its evaluation. Consequently, the evaluation questions were tailored for each stakeholder group, as per Table 2.

E. Project implementation structure and partners

54. Based in Geneva, the EMG Secretariat is provided by UNEP and is composed of a Secretary (who is an Assistant Secretary General, based in New York serving at the same time as the Head of the UNEP New York Office, which is responsible

for interagency and intergovernmental affairs), a Head of the EMG Secretariat, a Programme Management Officer, and an Administrative Assistant. The Secretary of the EMG reports on EMG issues to the Executive Director of UNEP as Chair of the EMG. The Secretariat serves all EMG members on an equal basis. It is hosted, administered and financed by UNEP, with occasional in-kind support from the EMG Members, and funding from donors for specific activities. The Secretariat provides support in preparation, facilitation and reporting of the EMG meetings and those of its Issue Management Groups and Consultative Processes in line with the EMG plan of work approved by the EMG Senior Officials. The current Principal Focal Point of the EMG Secretariat within UNEP is the Director of the Policy and Programme Division, although the EMG project as a whole is anchored in the Environmental Governance Sub-programme whose Lead Director is the Director of the Law Division.

55. Due to the time-bound nature of the project activities, external expertise is often needed to address specific issues. Where substantive expertise is required, Special Service Agreements (SSAs) consultancy contracts are used. Collaboration with experts through partnerships is conducted through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), Internal Cooperation Agreements (ICAs) and Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs).

56. The EMG Secretariat works with 51 UN Member Agencies. These are listed in Annex VI. The member agencies assign focal points to the project, whose role is to promote coordination of EMG-related activities at agency level. Focal points are also assigned to each Issue Management Group (IMG) by member agencies who wish to do so, depending on the thematic topic and expertise required. Heads of Agencies represent the members in the EMG Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) who convene annually to address emerging issues of high importance to the global environmental and human settlements agenda, and to integrate knowledge available in the UN system.

57. During the latest phase of the project, the SOM has met on four occasions. In-person SOMs took place in New York, with the Technical Segment being undertaken virtually for the first time at SOM 24 in 2018. SOM 26 and 27 took place entirely by web conference.

F. Project activities

58. The activities that EMG planned to undertake in the latest phase of the project are listed in Project Document, Annex C. These were organised within four “activity groups”, with two groups for each Output. As indicated in the reconstructed Theory of Change (Figure 4), these activity groups were:

* Group 1: Facilitate the work of interagency working groups. Support and coordinate the development of system wide strategies, tools, nexus analyses, stock takings and reports on environmental issues. Arrange meetings with UN agencies and other stakeholders as a basis for joint planning, cooperation and synergy in the UN system.

* Group 2: Further the cooperation among EMG members on the development of joint system-wide policies, review progress and report on its work to the Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) and UNEA.

* Group 3: Facilitate a consultative process on environmental and social sustainability in the UN system, promote the implementation of an ESS Framework.
* Group 4: Undertake peer-reviews of UN agencies on their corporate environmental management.

59. Group 1 consisted of ten specific activities. Group 2 consisted of three activities, and Groups 3 and 4 contained four activities. The EMG's activities could roughly be divided into the following two categories of work:

* *Processes contributing to specific substantive environmental issues*

  This area of work focuses on coordination issues related to specific environmental topics, such as biodiversity, drylands, green economy, sound management of chemicals and wastes; e-waste; and, sand and dust storms. It often entails the programming and mainstreaming of the environmental considerations across the UN system, including those arising from the MEAs.

* *Processes contributing to advancing internal environmental sustainability of UN operations*

  This aspect of the EMG's work has an internal UN focus and seeks primarily to advance the environmental sustainability of the UN. Issues under consideration have included advancing the environmental and social sustainability of UN operations, facilities, programs, projects and policies; and improving the environmental management of UN agencies.

60. The activities were implemented through one or more channels. These were:

* Issue Management Groups (IMGs);
* Nexus Dialogues;
* Agency Peer Reviews;
* Consultative Processes; and,
* Task Teams

61. **Issue Management Groups** have been the backbone of EMG activities since its early years. IMGs are time-bound groups established by the Senior Officials Meeting of the EMG that bring together a sub-set of EMG members interested in working on a specific issue. IMGs usually have a Terms of Reference, a defined membership, and produce a knowledge product or guidance for endorsement by the Senior Officials Meeting.

62. UNEP is often the lead agency and chairs the ad hoc IMGs. However, the EMG Secretariat or an any EMG member agency(ies) may serve as chair of the established work streams. The lead agency is responsible for preparing the documents, organizing and chairing the meetings, and preparing the report on the results of the group's deliberations, with organizational and substantive support from the Secretariat of the Group.

63. IMGs are normally established to operate for a set period of time, usually one year, but they may occasionally have extended mandates of several years. The following IMGs have concluded their deliberations during the latest phase:

* IMG on Tackling E-Waste;

* IMG on Environment and Humanitarian Action
* IMG on Biodiversity
* IMG on the Green Economy;
* IMG on Global Drylands; and,
* IMG on Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes.

64. **Nexus Dialogues** were established during the previous phase of the EMG project. They focus on discussing the thematic and institutional interlinkages between environmental issues, frameworks, and agendas, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Their purpose is to provide collaborative opportunities for UN agencies to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

65. Pre-2020, the EMG held three-to-four Dialogues per year, in person. These were often preceded by, or immediately followed, a scheduled intergovernmental meeting. They were held over half or full days in Geneva or at another UN site. They were closed meetings with 20-40 attendees. Post-2020 there have been eight Dialogues, hosted on Zoom, and consisting of either panel discussions, roundtable workshops, or webinar discussions. Figure 4 lists the Nexus Dialogues held over the last five years.

66. IMGs and Nexus Dialogues are designed to be time-limited.

67. **Agency Peer Reviews** are also time-limited. The environmental peer review process was launched in 2013 as a mechanism to review the environment portfolio and management procedures of UN agencies. To date, the following agencies have undergone environmental peer review: United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), UNEP, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), UNDP, World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Childrens' Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women, and World Health Organisation (WHO).

68. **Consultative Processes** prepare system-wide frameworks or heads of agency statements or long-term coordination, cooperation or collaboration. An example is the process that was established at SOM 19 in 2009 to focus on outlining options for a common UN system approach to environmental and social safeguards. An initial report was followed by the preparation of a "Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN". From SOM 19 onwards, UN entities have been encouraged to move ahead in implementing the Framework.

69. **Task Teams** consist of more limited membership, assigned to deliver short-term outputs.

G. Changes in design during implementation

70. No information was presented to the evaluator that would suggest that any significant changes were made to the design of the project during implementation.

71. This project is a continuation of EMG activities that have been underway in different forms for nearly 20 years. In addition, the second phase of the project,

being evaluated here, was developed towards the end of the first phase. The design of the project was finalized by the time that implementation of the latest phase began.

H. Project financing

72. Table 4 presents the budget at design and expenditure by components, including planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing.

Table 3: Budget Summary[3]

Overall Budget	Amount
A: Previously approved planned budget (from the last revision)	**USD 3,516,772**
B: Previously secured budget (from UMOJA)	**USD 2,324,850**
C: Total change of secured budget [sum of (i)+(ii)+(iii)+ (iv)+(v)+(vi)+(vii)+viii……+(x)]	**USD 460,010**
i) Source of newly Secured budget (Switzerland Grant 2018)	USD 75,301
ii) Source of newly Secured budget (Sweden SIDA 19)	USD 62,885
iii) Source of newly secured budget (Norway Marin Litter)	USD 109,444
iv) Source of newly Secured budget (Finland)	USD 32,380
v) Source of newly Secured budget (Switzerland Grant 2020)	USD 55,000
vi) Source of newly secured budget (Norway 2021)	USD 100,000
vii)UNICEF contribution for Peer Reviews	USD 15,000
viii) UNHCR contribution for Peer Reviews	USD 10,000
ix) Environment Fund (post +activity costs)	
x) Regular budget (post costs)	
D: Total revised secured budget (B+C)	**USD 2,784,861**
E: Unsecured budget (F-D)	**USD 602,072**
F: New total for proposed planned budget	**USD 3,386,933**
G: In Kind contributions- Previously Secured	**-**
H: Revised total in kind secured contributions	**-**
I: Total revised planned budget: Planned + In Kind (F+H)	**USD3,386,933**

[3] December 2021, Project Revision

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

73. An initial Theory of Change (ToC) was developed as part of project conceptualisation and presented in the Pro Doc. The Pro Doc also presented a Logical Framework that was somewhat aligned with the intervention logic as outlined in the ToC. The original Theory of Change is reproduced in Figure 2.

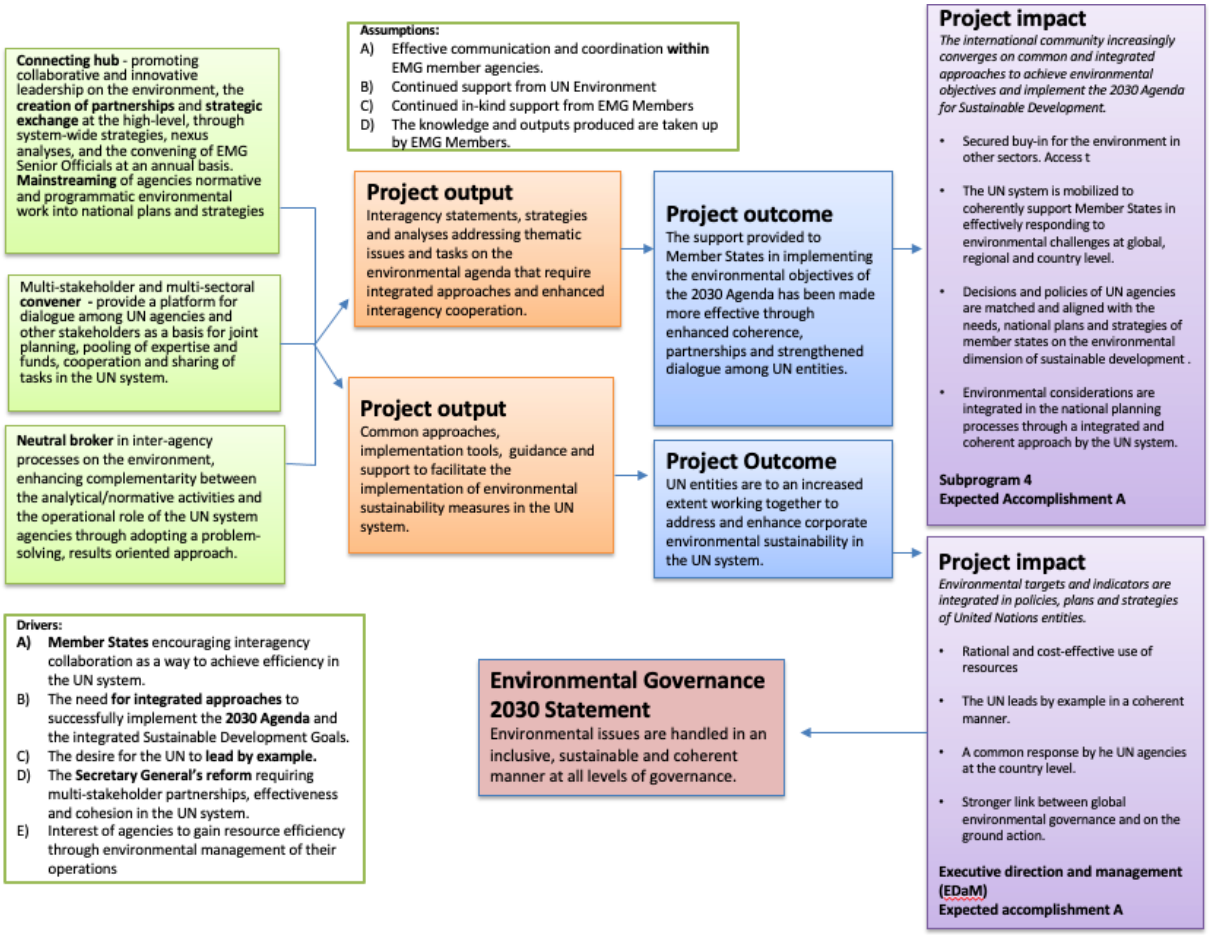


Figure 2: Original Theory of Change

74. Whilst a Theory of Change was included in the ProDoc, certain elements that would be expected for a robust ToC according to current UNEP requirements were missing, although the UNEP template for a ToC has changed since the ProDoc was approved and now also include gender and vulnerable groups as a standard consideration. The logical framework, and by extension the ToC, did not explicitly include certain key results areas. The logical framework and ToC presented project outcomes, outcome milestones, outputs, output milestones, indicators and output 'drivers'.

75. Missing results areas included:

* Explicit project-level 'activities';
* Intermediated states; and,
* Assumptions (listed in the ToC but not logical framework).

76. A reconstructed Theory of Change is presented in Figure 3.

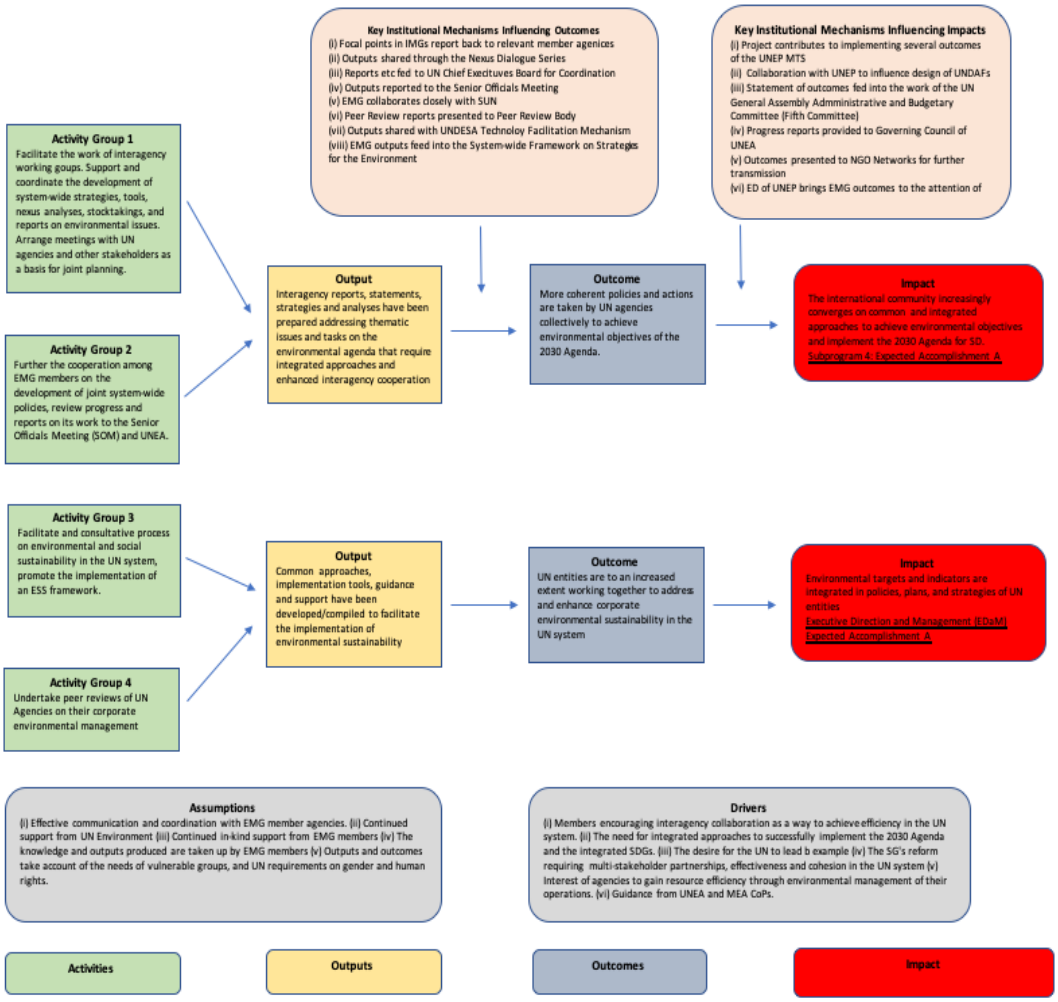


Figure 3: Reconstructed Theory of Change

77. Neither the logical framework nor the original ToC in the project document presented clear "activities"[4], although it is important to note that the EMG's workplan was prepared and approved annually in line with Senior Officials Meeting decisions.

78. As part of reconstructing the ToC, "activities" were formulated from the "Project outputs", as well as drawing on the "project outcome milestones" where necessary (both of which were listed in the logical framework but not in the original ToC). The issues around what constitutes an "activity" within the architecture of the Pro Doc was complicated by the fact that the ProDoc Annex C ("Project workplan/Activities") included a list of outputs and activities that were not listed or captured in the project's logical framework or its original ToC. It was unclear to the Evaluator how the activities listed in ProDoc's Annex C have

[4] Noting that activities are required for the delivery of outputs but also activities are needed to drive the change processes beyond outputs towards higher-level results.

been derived from the ToC/logical framework. Further narrative/explanation on this issue in the Pro Doc would have been useful.

79. In the reconstructed ToC, activities are represented by four "activity groups". For the purposes of this exercise, these have been taken from Annex C of the ProDoc. Each group has a list of specific activities, but there being too many to present in full in this reconstructed ToC. Figure 3 also includes Assumptions, and revised Output and Outcome statements as specified in the December 2021 Project Revision.

80. The project "Impact" results areas for the UN EMG project have been derived from the indicators for Executive Direction and Management EA (a), and SP 4 EA (a):

    * Integration of environmental targets and indicators in policies, plans and strategies of UN entities;

    * Increase the number of UN entities, international organizations and forums integrating environmental policy issues or approaches emerging from UNEP policy advice into policy documents, strategies or plans on sustainable development.

81. The necessary preconditions are that the outputs need to be successfully delivered in order to contribute to the planned outcome areas. In order for impact to occur, the Evaluator has identified a set of key institutional mechanisms and assumptions that must hold/occur within the framework of the project.

82. If results are to be achieved at the outcome-level, (i.e. with regards to '*more coherent policies and actions being taken by UN agencies collectively to achieve the environmental objectives of the 2030 agenda'* and '*UN entities are to an increased extent working together to address and enhance corporate environmental sustainability in the UN system'*) it is anticipated that the key institutional mechanisms listed in the reconstructed Theory of Change would need to be present.

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

83. Within the Environmental Governance "priority area", the 2018-2021 UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) makes specific mention of the potential role of the Environment Management Group. Page 35 includes the following statement: *"The comparative advantage of UNEP lies in its leading role on the environment; its capacity to convene and build consensus at all levels of governance; and its key role in interagency mechanisms, including the Environmental Management Group (sic) and in promoting the progressive development of environmental law"*.

84. The project was designed to respond primarily to the UNEP Programme of Work, Subprogramme 4: Environmental Governance, Expected Accomplishment A, *promoting increasing convergence in the international community on common and integrated approaches to achieve environmental objectives and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and to Executive Director and Management, Expected Accomplishment A *Integration of environmental issues in the United Nations system in its implementation of internationally agreed goals, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals*.

85. Interviewees pointed to the importance of EMG as a convening agent, indicating that the project supports UNEP in the forming of partnerships in promoting the environmental dimension of sustainable development and in enhancing collaboration between UNEP and other organizations. It catalyses efforts of the UN, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other partners, promoting UNEP's lead role in the UN system in coordinating environmental issues, supporting the development of coherent environmental governance and synergies in the UN system and beyond.

86. This perception was also supported by the "achievement of results" discussion presented in Section D. In conclusion, the project is in full alignment (i.e. consistency) with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities, as represented in the Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work under which the project was approved.

87. As a consequence, this criterion is rated as **HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**.

Alignment to UNEP/Donor Strategic Priorities

88. Interviewed representatives of donor countries were interested in the outputs and outcomes of the EMG's work if it either: (i) prompts sustainable practices and decision-making within the UN system, whereby the UN "leads by example"; or, (ii) it leads to outputs that countries find to be usable.

89. On an ad hoc basis, funding has been solicited from the Governments of Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Interviews with bilateral donor countries and EMG participants indicated that activities undertaken using ear-marked funding, and activities supported from recurrent sources, both aligned with donor priorities. Examples were provided as to how the Model Approach to UN Environmental and Social Standards in UN Programming has influenced the

design of environmental and social safeguards systems within UN agencies, and some international NGOs. This has made donor engagement on safeguards with implementing partners more consistent and efficient. In general, the interviewed donors see positive impacts from enhanced and coherent normative guidance on thematic environmental issues.

90. While the project's implementation strategies and delivered contributions show full alignment with the priorities of donors, it was not possible to verify that anticipated identifiable contributions were included in donor reported results indicators. The criterion is therefore rated as **SATISFACTORY**.

Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

91. The project is primarily a global initiative, and … as indicated in the Theory of Change … activities and outputs are aimed at producing outcomes that will result in better consistency and collaboration between UN agencies. As such, the influence of EMG activities on regional sub-regional, and national policy is less of a priority.

92. The Project Document, however, indicates a strong intention to respond to needs other than the global. One of the project's professed aims is to …"*respond to country needs by facilitating and promoting a One UN approach to the implementation of the SDGs at country level and bridging the gap between global, normative support and country level application*". In a practical sense, the Project Document indicates that the EMG will aim to strengthen and formalize the relationship to the UNDG, and to ensure that the environment is properly taken into account in the preparation of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). According to the Theory of Change, this is one of the "*key institutional mechanisms influencing impact*".

93. Building relationships that will have an influence at the country level takes time, and is not within the sphere of influence of the EMG alone. The EMG Secretariat collaborates with the Secretariat of the UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its high-level committees. The EMG Secretariat is also in the process of establishing modalities for closer collaboration with the Development Cooperation Office (DCO) which serves as the secretariat of the UNSDG. It is clear that the intention is not for the EMG to engage directly at the country level, but instead to ensure vertical and horizontal policy coherence through the DCO and the CEB Secretariat respectively. What is agreed at the global level needs to be taken forward to the country level, where appropriate. The criterion is rated as **MODERATELY SATISFACTORY.**

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

94. This criterion assesses how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives being undertaken by UNEP, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution, that address similar needs of the same target. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency (Section G).

95. Complementarity with other interventions is the main driver for EMG's activities, according to the Project Document. It is clear that both project Outcomes are

contingent on the EMG providing a forum and mechanism to enhance complementarity between the analytical/normative activities and the operational role of the UN system. This aspect was rated as "Highly Satisfactory" in the review of the quality of project design in the Inception Report.

96. Of the 19 people interviewed, only four had been directly involved in the design of the project. However, all indicated that complementarity and a desire not to duplicate the activities of other agencies were uppermost considerations during project formulation. In the view of the Evaluator, a lack of awareness and a missing overview of "who is doing what" in the UN system can lead to duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources.

97. The latest project phase was, by and large, a continuation of EMG activities that have been underway in different forms for nearly 20 years. As a consequence, the EMG is perceived to be experienced at bureaucratic "horizon scanning". Given that the EMG and its Secretariat are reliant on UNEP and donors for ongoing operational support, it is sensitive to the ongoing and planned initiatives of other members.

98. Because of its unique role, and the need to be especially sensitive to the initiatives being undertaken by its Members, the project design showed full complementarity and no duplication with other interventions by UNEP or other organisations, and the design was based on the EMG anticipating future benefits to collaboration.

99. One key challenge raised was the potential need to start linking the work of the EMG to other similar coordination mechanisms such as the UNSDG, the High Level Committee on Programmes, the High Level Committee on Management, UN Energy, UN Water, and UN Oceans.

100. This criterion is rated as **HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: SATISFACTORY

B. Quality of Project Design

101. The quality of the project design is based on the completed assessment undertaken as part of the inception report[5].

102. The main identified strengths of the project design included:

* The Pro Doc provides a clear statement of approach and relevance to the UNEP PoW. It supports several strategic goals defined in the UNEP MTS 2018 - 2021.
* There is a comprehensive stakeholder analysis, as the involvement of stakeholder partners is crucial for the implementation of the project.
* Gender issues and gender analysis is well covered, but as an interagency project that focuses on the coordination of environmental activities between UN agencies, the project generally has no direct gender-specific impacts.

[5] Annex C of the Inception Report for this terminal evaluation.

* The logical framework captures key elements of the Theory of Change. Baseline indicators and targets are clearly presented in the Pro Doc, and in the December 2021 Project Revision.
* The success of the project is significantly reliant on strong outreach and communication. The Pro Doc makes this clear.
* The design points to the importance of complementarities, as the project aims to ensure … 'pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc.' align with UNEP's environmental agenda.

103. No major project design weaknesses are evident. The PRC provided a number of recommendations, and most have been reflected in the ProDoc.

104. One aspect that required attention was the Theory of Change. The roles of key actors/stakeholders were not described for each casual pathway, and this was in good part due to the large number of stakeholders involved. Certain key elements were missing from the logical framework and the ToC, although it was noted that the UNEP template for a ToC has changed since the ProDoc was approved.

105. Missing results areas included: explicit project-level 'activities'; intermediated states; and, assumptions (listed in the ToC, but not in the logical framework). Another issue related to the presentation of assumptions and drivers. Ideally, assumptions and drivers should be made clear at the following steps of the ToC: from outputs to direct outcomes; from direct outcomes to project outcomes; from project outcomes to Intermediate states; and, from Intermediate states to Impact. These issues were addressed in the reconstructed Theory of Change presented in Section IV of this report.

Rating for Project Design: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY

C. Nature of the External Context

106. In the Project Document, conflict, natural disaster, and change of government were not identified as factors that could affect project performance. In good part, this was due to the fact that most of the EMG member agencies are based in politically stable countries, and in cities where natural disasters can be attenuated.

107. The project could not have predicted the onset of the SARS-COV-2 induced pandemic. Fortunately for the EMG, its work is not field-based, but disruption caused by government-mandated lockdowns and travel bans did affect the organisation and delivery of meetings. In 2020 and 2021, the Senior Officials Meetings and all Nexus Dialogues and Issue Management Group meetings were held via video conferencing; Heads of agencies attended Senior Official Meetings through this virtual set-up. While interviewees considered this approach to be reasonably effective, there was a concern that the informal, interpersonal aspects of EMG meetings had been lost, and that this was regarded as a significant handicap.

Rating for Nature of the external context: MODERATELY UNFAVOURABLE

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

108. The project included 21 activities that were designed to deliver two outputs that would contribute to two outcomes. Table 5 provides an overview of targets and achievement of outputs.

Table 4: Output Targets and Level of Achievement

Output 1	Indicator(s)	Target	Level of Achievement
Interagency reports, statements, strategies and analyses addressing thematic issues and tasks on the environmental agenda that require integrated approaches and enhanced interagency cooperation.	1. Number of reports documenting a system-wide analysis, framework and/or strategy.	54	Achieved (54)
	2. Number entities that have reported on their environmental activities under the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment.	38	Exceeded (49)
Output 2	**Indicator(s)**	**Target**	
Common approaches, implementation tools, guidance and support to facilitate the implementation of environmental sustainability measures in the UN system.	1. Number of tools and/or common approaches developed in support of the implementation of the Sustainability Framework	4	Exceeded (6)
	2. Number of agencies that are peer reviewed for their corporate environmental management	20	Not achieved (13)

109. Delivery for Output 1 has been rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. Table 6 presents a summary list of specific Output 1 results, mapped against the two output indicators.

Table 5: Output 1 Performance

Output 1
Indicator: Number of reports documenting a system-wide analysis, statements, framework and/or strategy.

December 2021	The Second Edition of the Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure was finalized and approved by the 27th SOM to be launched at UNEA 5.2 in February 2022.

June 2021	Draft Report on marine litter and microplastics was developed to be finalized in September 2021; Draft report on COVID19 and environment was elaborated and will be finalized by the end of July 2021.
December 2020	Report: Supporting the Global Biodiversity Agenda – A United Nations Commitment for Action to assist Member States delivered on the post-2020 global biodiversity network. Outcome document: COVID-19 and the Environment: A 3-Part Series of Nexus Dialogues Outcome document: Human Rights and the Environment: A 3-Part Series of Nexus Dialogues. Outcome document: Nexus Dialogue on Mineral Resource Governance
June 2020	The EMG Consultative Process on Biodiversity provided consolidated input to the Open-Ended Working Group to support preparations of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The UN Coalition on Sand and Dust Storms has prepared a strategy for its continued work, finalized in January 2020.
December 2019	A PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW OF UN SYSTEM INPUTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK
June 2019	Key Messages: Nexus Dialogue on Environment, Peace and Security: The environment as an entry point to implementing SDG 16 ; 6) Outcome Statement: Nexus Dialogue on Sustainable Infrastructure; Outcome document: High-Level Panel Discussion on Sustainable Consumption and Production of Electrics and Electronics; Outcome Statement: Sustainable Food Systems: ensuring food security for future generations; Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System; Report: A New Circular Vision for Electronics, Time for a Global Reboot
December 2018	Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards (draft for public consultation) Key Messages: Nexus Dialogue on Law for Environmental Sustainability 4) Key Messages: Greening with Jobs: A Just Transition to Sustainability
June 2018	Nexus Dialogue 5 Summary Report

Indicator: Number of inputs provided to the interagency synthesis report of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment

December 2021	Representatives from 51 entities came together to provide coordinated inputs across the UN system to the preparation report “Supporting the Global Biodiversity Agenda”.
June 2020	49 UN entities provided input to the 2nd report (thematic report on biodiversity) under the SWFS
December 2019	2nd report (thematic report on biodiversity) under the SWFS is under preparation.
June 2019	2nd report (thematic report on biodiversity) under the SWFS is under preparation.
December 2018	38 agencies provided input to the draft 2nd Synthesis Report under the System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment.
June 2018	The collection of data for the 2nd Synthesis Report under the System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment has not yet started.

110. The number of reports produced that documented a system-wide analysis, framework or strategy achieved the predicted target, and interviewees and survey respondents indicated that the products emanating from relevant activities were of high quality. However, concerns were raised about whether recommendations were being acted upon. For example, ten survey respondents indicated that one of EMG’s weaknesses was an inability to follow up on the outcomes of EMG activities. It was therefore difficult to measure the extent of ‘user ownership’. The following quote exemplifies this concern:

"EMG has facilitated a number of important processes, and produced a number of important reports, but these results have often been kept in the shadows (for a number of not always fully understood reasons)."

111. The Evaluator suggest that an answer to the above-posed question would be that the EMG has no mandate to implement the policies that it helps to develop. It was suggested in interviews that implementation plans for products should include partners outside of the EMG membership.

112. Indicator 2 for Output 1 is specifically connected to the number of entities that have reported on their environmental activities under the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment (SWFS). The SWFS is the main vehicle through which EMG contributes to an effective implementation of the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs by collecting data on ongoing activities and initiatives in the UN system on the environment, and analysing this data in terms of progress made, gaps/challenges/and opportunities for further collaboration among the EMG members. A total of 49 UN entities have reported on their activities under the SWFS. This exceeded the target for the latest phase of 38 entities.

113. Delivery for Output 2 has been rated as **Satisfactory**. Table 7 presents a list of specific Output 2 results, mapped against the two output indicators.

Table 6: Output 2 Performance

Output 2
Indicator: Number of tools and/or common approaches developed in support of the implementation of the Sustainability Framework

December 2021	The development of Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy was finalized and approved.
June 2021	The development of Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy continues to be finalized by the end of 2021.
December 2020	The development of Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy continues. Discussions are ongoing regarding the development of a joint training on the application of environmental and social standards in the context of the Model Approach.
June 2020	A wide compilation of references, guidance materials and tools related to the UN Model Approach was prepared and shared on the knowledge sharing platform on ESS.
December 2019	Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy is currently being developed.
June 2019	Phase I of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030 was approved by the CEB in May 2019.
December 2018	The model (common) approach to environmental and social standards in UN Programming has been prepared and shared for public comment.
June 2018	A common approach to environmental and social standards in UN Programming is currently being developed. A common approach to corporate sustainability reporting will be discussed in July.

Indicator: Number of agencies that are peer reviewed for their corporate environmental management

December 2021	No progress on this.

June 2021	A draft of the peer reviews process analysis is available.
December 2020	A draft of the peer reviews process analysis is available.
June 2020	Despite excellent feedback and good results to date as well as general interest in new peer reviews, a number of planned reviews have not gone ahead or are on hold.
December 2019	Discussions have been initiated with regard to a peer review of the environmental management of the UN political mission in Bogota, Colombia.
June 2019	A peer review of the UNECA compound in Addis Ababa was initiated through a fact-finding mission in January.
December 2018	No new peer reviews were undertaken in the second half of 2018.
June 2018	A peer review of the UNHCR refugee camp in Kenya was carried out in May 2018.

114. The number of tools and/or common approaches developed in support of the implementation of the Sustainability Framework has exceeded the target for Indicator 1.

115. The minimum requirements for a common approach to environmental and social safeguards in programming were presented in mid-2019 to the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the document titled, '*Moving towards a Common Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming'*. The Common Approach has seen considerable application on a voluntary basis.

116. At least five agencies[6] have used the Model Approach as a basis for either updating their existing standards, or to introduce and put in place such standards. One organization intends to use the Model Approach for putting in place standards in the future. In addition, seven interagency virtual meetings were organized to exchange information on the implementation of the Model Approach, including the following topics: labour standards, accountability mechanisms, community health and safety, climate risks, organizational structures for standards management, chemicals related standards and human rights due diligence.

117. Output 2, Indicator 2 (*'Number of agencies that are peer reviewed for their corporate environmental management'*), target of 20 agencies was not achieved. A report presented by the EMG Secretariat to the 26th Senior Officials Meeting in October 2020 indicated that, from the beginning of the peer review programme, 140 technical recommendations had been made from 11 peer reviews. It was stated that at least half of those recommendations have been implemented.

118. Despite progress on implementing recommendations, new and planned peer reviews have been on hold. Interviews with the 11 peer reviewed agencies yielded a unanimous view that the reviews should not be performed remotely. The latest phase target of 20 peer reviewed agencies was not met. The Project

[6] UNIDO, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, FAO.

Revision approved on December 1, 2021 revised the target downwards to 13 agencies, but it appears that this revised target has also not been met. The Project Revision reported that Milestone 5 under Output 2 *('Three peer review reports have been presented to the Peer Review Body' by June 2020),* and Milestone 6 *('The peer review concept has been tested and applied to projects and programming in addition to facilities' by December 2020*) were not met.[7]

119. The pandemic has played a significant role in the Output 2, Indicator 2 target not having been met. The minutes of the 26th SOM indicate that financial constraints may also have affected the ability to meet the target.

120. Interviewees for this evaluation also indicated some concern about the value of the peer reviews. There was a suggestion that the reviews did not go into enough depth, and that the information produced was already known. The Sustainable UN (SUN) Facility stated that it is critical to follow-up after the peer reviews, but that the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management neither has the mandate nor resources to do this.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

121. Table 8 provides a summary and ratings for the two Outcomes.

Table 7: Outcome Targets and Level of Achievement

Outcome 1	**Indicator(s)**	**Target**	**Level of achievement**
More coherent policies and action are taken by UN agencies collectively to achieve environmental objectives of the 2030 agenda	1. Number of environmental nexus areas for which recommendations are made for more coherent and effective policies and action	9	Exceeded (11)
	2. Number of environmental issues for which UN Agencies/EMG Members agree to take more coherent action or spearhead more coherent policies	25	Achieved
	3. Number of inter-agency partnerships/coalitions agreed	2	Achieved
Outcome 2	**Indicator(s)**	**Target**	
UN entities are to an increased extent working together to address and enhance corporate environmental sustainability in the UN system	1. Number of environmental sustainability aspects/themes addressed jointly by EMG members	3	Exceeded (>10)
	2. Number of occasions/meetings where UN entities have come together to share good practices in environmental sustainability management	8	Exceeded (>30)

[7] Revised EMG Project Document 02004, 2021, PIMS document repository, Approved_project_revision_Rev_1_01122021

122. Delivery for Outcome 1 has been **Highly Satisfactory**. The targets for the three indicators were either achieved, or exceeded. Table 9 presents a list of specific Outcome 1 results, mapped against the three outcome indicators.

Table 8: Outcome 1 Performance

Outcome I

Indicator: Number of environmental nexus areas for which recommendations are made for more coherent and effective policies and action.

December 2021	Recommendations for more coherent and effective policies and action were provided in one environmental nexus area: Sustainable Recovery and Sustainable Fashion.
June 2021	Recommendations for more coherent and effective policies and action were provided in three environmental nexus areas: 1) Gender and Biodiversity; 2) Green Recovery from COVID19; 3) Food System Resilience through Integrated Natural Resource Management. Six virtual Nexus Dialogues have been completed via Zoom.
December 2020	A 3-Part Series of Nexus Dialogues on Covid-19 and the Environment was organized in July 2020. A 3-Part Series of Nexus Dialogues on Human Rights and Environment was organized in July and September 2020. A Nexus Dialogue on Mineral Resource Governance was held on 17 November 2020..
June 2020	The three nexus dialogues that were planned to take place in the first half of 2020 were postponed or cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
December 2019	No nexus dialogues were held in the second half of 2019. Three new nexus dialogues are being planned to be held in early 2020.
June 2019	A nexus dialogue on Environment, Peace and Security held in Geneva in January considered the environment as an entry point to implementing SDG16. A dialogue on Sustainable Infrastructure (supports UNEP/EA.4/L.6) held in Geneva in February in collaboration with the UN Environment's Sustainable Infrastructure Initiative, contributed to a common understanding on the centrality of infrastructure to the 2030 Agenda. Finally, a dialogue on Sustainable Food Systems (supports UNEP/EA.4/L.3) explored the need for an integrated food systems approach to ensure food security for future generations during UNEA in Nairobi in March.
December 2018	The nexus dialogue Greening with Jobs: A Just Transition to Sustainability, was held on 23 October 2018, at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva. The nexus dialogue on Law for Environmental Sustainability was held on 19 November in Geneva.
June 2018	A nexus dialogue on biodiversity and human security was held in Geneva on May 2-3, 2018. A report summarizing the proceedings and outcomes of the Dialogue is being finalised.

Indicator: Number of environmental issues for which UN Agencies/EMG Members agree to take more coherent action or spearhead more coherent policies.

December 2021	Two new issues were included in the EMG agenda: a Consultative Process on a Pollution Free Planet and a Task Team on UN system-wide input to Stockholm+50 International Meeting.
June 2021	Three new issues on the EMG agenda approved at the 26th annual meeting of the EMG Senior Officials in October 2020 successfully launched in first half of 2021: i) an IMG on human rights and the environment; a Consultative Process on Sustainable Infrastructure; and iii) a Consultative Process on COVID-19 and the environment.
December 2020	Three new issues were approved by the EMG Senior Officials at their 26th meeting: an IMG on human rights and the environment, a Consultative Process on Sustainable Infrastructure and a Consultative Process on COVID-19 and the environment.

June 2020	Two new issues were presented to the EMG for preliminary consideration at the EMG midterm meeting in May including a coordinated response by the UN system to address zoonotic pandemics such as Covid-19, and a new IMG on environment and human rights. The EMG Senior Officials will discuss and agree on these issues at their annual meeting in September/October 2020.
December 2019	At their 25th meeting in September 2019, the EMG Senior Officials decided to establish a Consultative Process to prepare a system-wide contribution to the development and implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
June 2019	A new interagency task team on Marine Littering and Microplastics (Supports UNEP/EA.4/6) was initiated by the midterm meeting of the technical segment of the EMG Senior Officials held in May, gathering 24 UN entities.
December 2018	At their 24th meeting in September 2018, the EMG Senior Officials decided to establish two new inter-agency collaboration initiatives: 1) A UN Coalition to combat sand and dust storms will provide a common platform for technical expertise and resources for strengthening preparedness measures and strategies for risk reduction, consolidated policy, innovative solutions, advocacy and capacity building efforts, and fund-raising initiatives 2) An inter-agency Task Team will seek to strengthen collaboration, dialogue and information sharing in the UN system to ensure that sustainability in the Belt and Road initiative is addressed in a holistic manner, with particular focus on greening.
June 2018	Two new issues are expected to be approved by the EMG Senior Officials in September: a) A response to sand and dust storms – discussion on forming a United Nations coalition b) Green Belt and Road initiative – engaging the United Nations in the environmental dimensions of this initiative

Indicator: Number of inter-agency partnerships/coalitions agreed

December 2021	Discussions with the Agencies on creating a coalition or Steering Group of leading UN entities that will 'own' the Strategy for sustainability management in the United Nations system continued in the second half of 2021.
June 2021	As above.
December 2020	The coordination of the E-waste Coalition was handed over from the EMG to ITU in November 2020.
June 2020	The E-waste Coalition is finalizing its Terms of Reference and preparing for independence following the handover of the Secretariat from the EMG to one of the members in September 2020. The Sand and Dust Storm Coalition has finalized its Strategy and Action Plan and prepared a a Governance Concept Note to define the modalities of the Coalition's work; the structure of the Coalition and other issues relevant to its functioning.
December 2019	The E-waste Coalition has made progress towards developing a joint mechanism for the implementation of UN e-waste work at the country/regional level.
June 2019	Three UN entities (WHO, UN Habitat and ITC) have joined the UN E-waste Coalition through the signing of the Letter of Intent. A TOR was prepared for the UN Coalition to fight against Sand and Dust Storms bringing 15 UN entities together.
December 2018	At their meeting in September 2018, the EMG Senior Officials decided to establish a UN Coalition to combat sand and dust storms.
June 2018	In March 2018, seven UN entities active in addressing the global e-waste challenge, signed a Letter of Intent paving the way for collaboration on UN system-wide support for e-waste management.

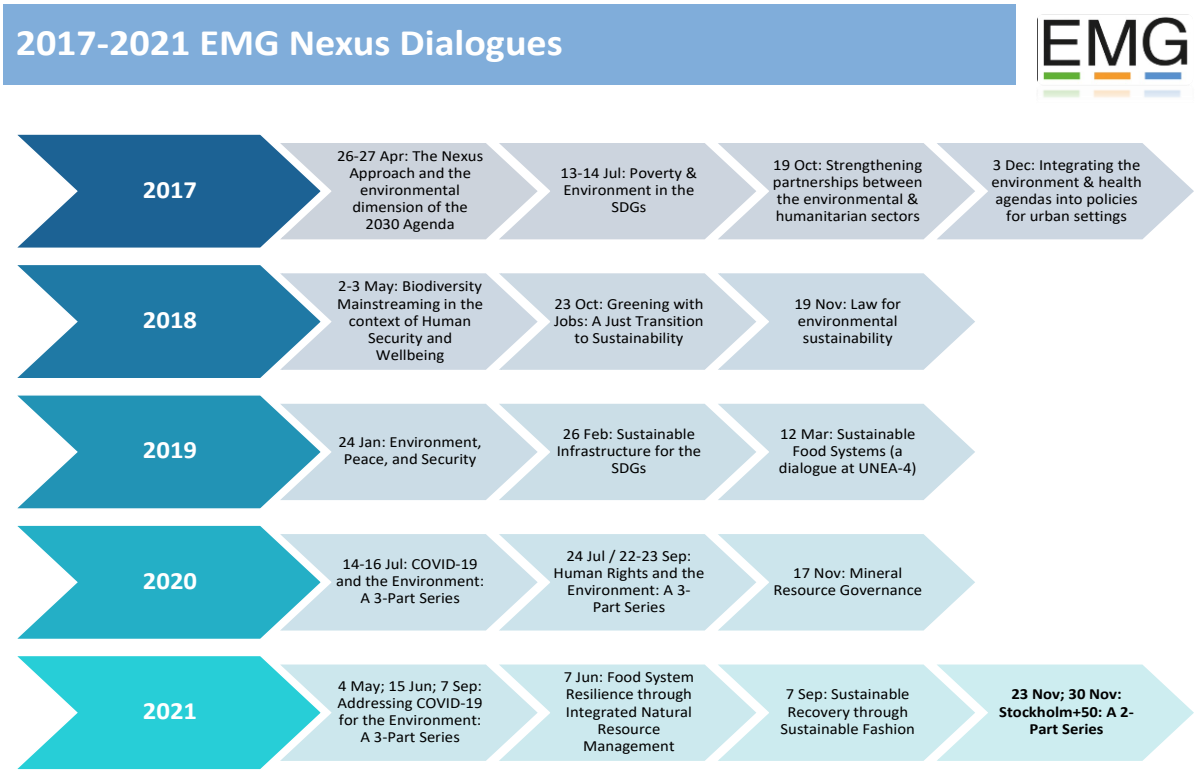


Figure 4: 2017 – 2021 Nexus Dialogues[8]

123. Figure 5 presents an overview of the Nexus Dialogues undertaken between 2017 and 2021. Overall, 145 high/expert level speakers from 83 different agencies led the Dialogues. Over 1400 people participated, from UN agencies, multilateral/bilateral agencies, member states and NGOs.

124. Direct outputs from the Dialogues included: Meeting coordination; recorded playback; outcome documents; and, ongoing moderation.

125. Outputs internal to the EMG included: support for the establishment of IMGs (e.g. Human Rights and Environment); establishment of Task Teams (e.g. Marine Litter); support for the establishment of Consultative Processes (e.g. COVID-19 Environment, Sustainable Infrastructure); and, support for the work of Technical Groups, such as the Sustainable UN Facility.

126. Outputs external to the EMG included: Inputs to existing intergovernmental processes such as the CBD's post-2020 Biodiversity Framework; inputs to new alignment frameworks; new initiatives such as the Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability; and, concrete deliverables such as the Nordic Council's use of Nexus Dialogues as a convening mechanism.

127. Figure 5 provides some examples of the relationship between Nexus Dialogue events and specific outcomes.

[8] The Figure should also include, according to review comments on this report from UNEP staff, the following: (i) Unpacking Linkages with Gender and Biodiversity in UN System Efforts (29 March 2021, 8:00AM - 9:30AM EST); and, (ii) Towards Gender Responsive Biodiversity Action and Outcomes: A Workshop (30 March 2021, 8:00AM - 10:00AM EST).

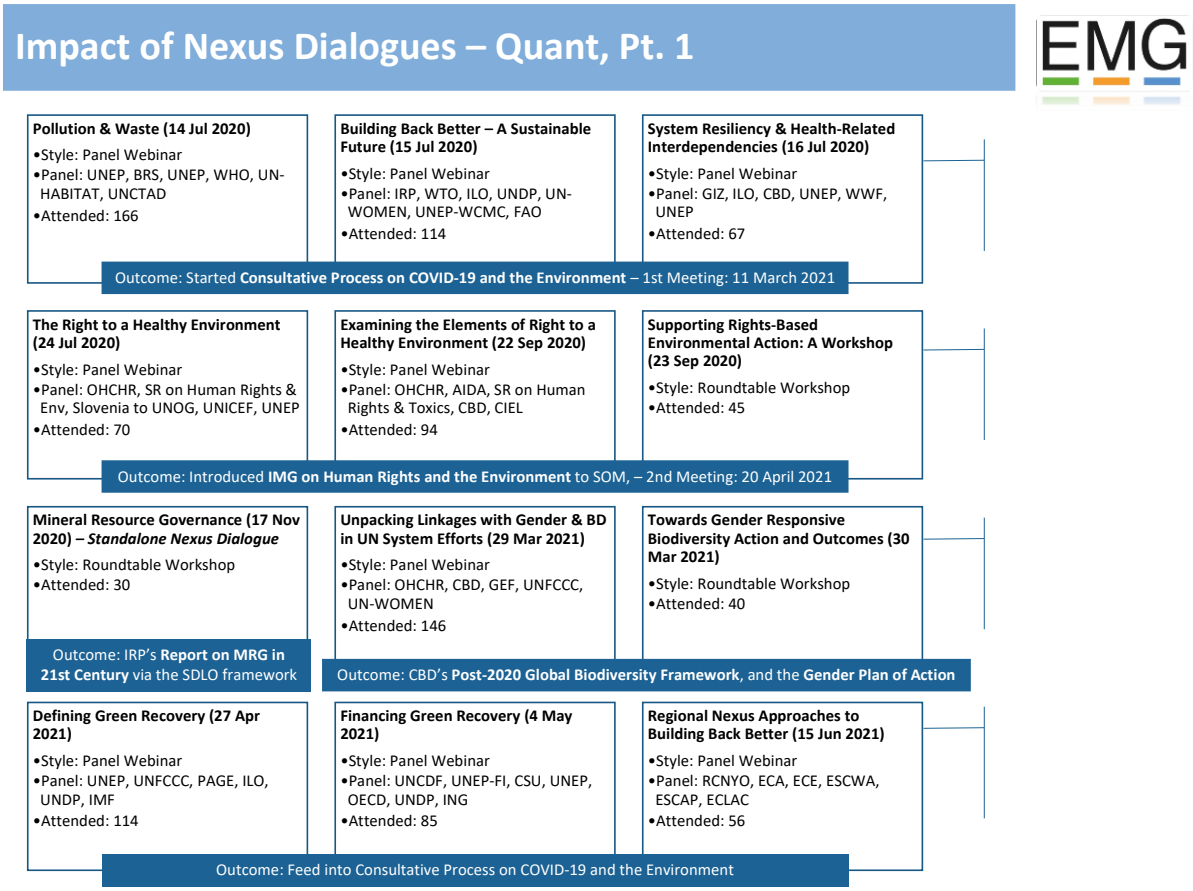


Figure 5: Examples of Outcomes from Nexus Dialogues

128. Figure 6 presents interviewee responses to the question: "What do you believe are the most effective of EMG's activities?". Clearly, Nexus Dialogues and Issue Management Groups rank highly.

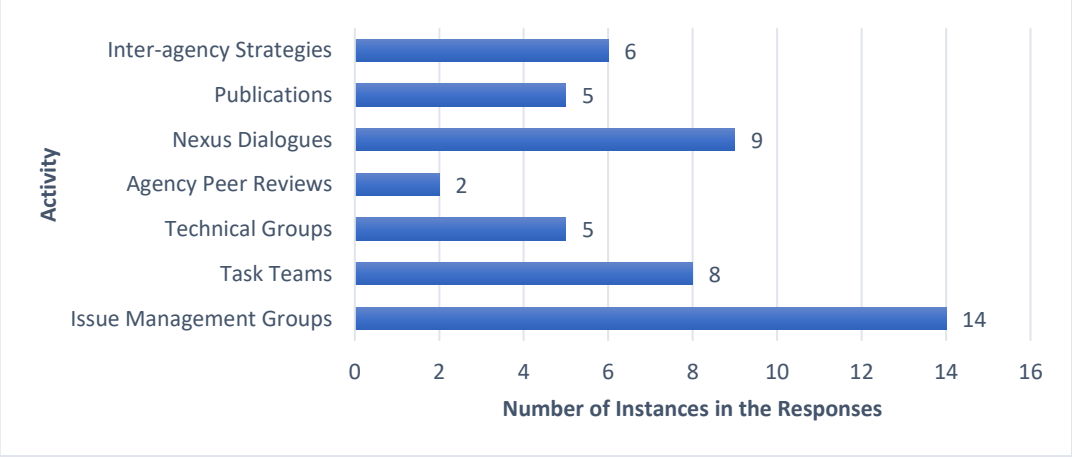


Figure 6: Interview Responses: Activity Effectiveness

129. The interviews and survey results strongly support the continued use of Nexus Dialogues. Comments made by EMG members at Senior Officials Meetings suggest that there might be room for improvement in the Dialogue format. One survey respondent indicated that …" *the Nexus Dialogues should leverage other*

UN and partner webinar series and have greater emphasis on ensuring the participation of a wider audience".

130. At the 25th SOM in late 2019, WMO suggested that the dialogues should be directed towards future follow-up actions, and that the results should be of direct benefit to Member States. The agency further stressed that Dialogues should be limited in number, and should focus on strategic, high-impact issues on the environment agenda. At the same meeting, the UNFCCC representative supported the view that the Dialogues should focus only on a *"…few prioritized topics that link a number of issues"* that support Member States in implementing the SDGs. The UNEP representative stated that the Nexus Dialogues were a useful tool in considering interactions among the SDGs, and how they could be implemented at the national level.

131. Delivery for Outcome 2 has been rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. The targets for the two indicators were exceeded. Table 10 presents a list of specific Outcome 2 results, mapped against the two outcome indicators.

Table 9: Outcome 2 Performance

Outcome II
Indicator: Number of corporate environmental sustainability aspects/themes addressed jointly by EMG members

December 2021	The development of Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy was finalized and it has been approved by the EMG Senior Officials, the UN High Level Committee on Programme, the UN High Level Committee on Management and the Chief Executives Board.
June 2021	First draft of the Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy is ready and submitted to the members for comments. Marine litter report is nearly finalized.
December 2020	Collaboration with the Swedish EPA and DCO has been established to trial collaboration at country level to strengthen sustainability management in the context of the UNSDCFs.
June 2020	The development of Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030, which will expand the Strategy's scope to cover sustainability in programming and policies, are ongoing. The UN 2020-2030 Sustainability strategy is the first attempt of the UN to look at its own corporate environmental and social governance in an integrated manner.
December 2019	The Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming was finalized and published in July 2019. Preparations for the development of Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030, which will expand the Strategy's scope to cover sustainability in programming and policies, started in November 2019.
June 2019	Phase I of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System, covering environmental sustainability in management, was prepared by the EMG/SUN and approved by the CEB in May.
December 2018	The EMG Senior Officials agreed in September to establish a task team to propose a draft UN corporate sustainability vision and strategy beyond 2020.
June 2018	Inter agency collaboration is ongoing to define a common approach to environmental and social sustainability standards in programming.

Indicator: Number of occasions/meetings where UN entities have come together to share good practices in environmental sustainability management.

December 2021	A deep-dive call on incident reporting was organized with EBRD sharing their experience and lessons learned.

June 2021	Two ESS deep dive dialogues were organized on GBV, PSEA and on GCF standards. Six virtual Nexus Dialogues were held via Zoom on Biodiversity & gender, green recovery and food systems resilience.
December 2020	One teleconference was organized by the Consultative Process for Environmental and Social Sustainability.
June 2020	Eight teleconferences were organized by the Consultative Process for Environmental and Social Sustainability, to exchange knowledge, experience and solutions to common challenges in implementing environmental and social standards in the UN system.
December 2019	Two teleconferences were organized by the Consultative Process for Environmental and Social Sustainability, to exchange knowledge, experience and solutions to common challenges in implementing environmental and social standards in the UN system. The teleconferences focused on the implementation of labour standards and accountability mechanisms respectively.
June 2019	The six-month period has been focused on the development of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030. A task team composed of representatives of 14 UN entities met several times to draft the Strategy.
December 2018	The Consultative Process for Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system met in Rome on 2 July 2018. The meeting discussed strategic directions for environmental and social sustainability measures in the UN system as we move towards 2030, taking stock of accomplishments and lessons learned since the establishment of the Consultative Process in 2009.
June 2018	Agencies shared good practices during the Peer Review mission to the UNHCR refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya. In addition, the work stream preparing a common approach to safeguards has meet 8 times to share views on sustainability standards in UN programming.

132. Interviews indicated that one of the most significant aspects of Outcome 2 performance has been the consistent work of the Consultative Process for Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system to: (i) Finalize the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming; and, (ii) Develop Phase II of the Sustainability Strategy 2020 – 2030, which has now been approved by the EMG Senior Officials at SOM 27, the UN High Level Committee on Programmes, the UN High Level Committee on Management and the Chief Executives Board[9].

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

133. For the project to achieve the intended impacts presented in the reconstructed Theory of Change (Figure 4), the assumptions need to hold, and the '*key institutional mechanisms influencing outcomes*' and '*key institutional mechanisms influencing impacts'* need to have functioned appropriately.

134. The Evaluator finds from the discussion in the preceding sections that almost all outputs and all outcomes have been reached. The assumptions listed in the reconstructed Theory of Change were that:

    - Focal points in IMGs report back to relevant member agencies

[9] In 2021, the Consultative Process on Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the United Nations System and the Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management were merged into one.

- Outputs shared through the Nexus Dialogue Series
- Outputs reported to the Senior Officials Meeting
- EMG collaborates closely with SUN
- Peer Review reports presented to Peer Review Body
- EMG outputs feed into the System-wide Framework on Strategies for the Environment

135. A reading of Senior Officials Meeting records, other background documents, and results of interviews, indicates that on the whole these assumptions hold.

136. The '*key institutional mechanisms influencing outcomes*' are listed in the reconstructed Theory of Change as:

- Effective communication and coordination with EMG member agencies
- Continued support from UNEP
- Continued in-kind support from EMG members
- The knowledge and outputs produced are taken up by EMG members
- Outputs and outcomes take account of the needs of vulnerable groups, and UN requirements on gender and human rights.

137. Apart from the last-mentioned mechanism, which has less relevance for EMG outcomes, evidence from interviews and the survey indicate that these institutional mechanisms also appear to be 'in place'.

138. The only area of uncertainty is in relation to the '*key institutional mechanisms influencing impacts'*. Due to a lack of monitoring data, it was not possible to verify that the project outcomes have fed into the listed mechanisms.

139. Given that assumptions hold, drivers to support transition from outputs to outcomes are in place, and that all outcomes have been met, the rating for this criterion is considered to be **LIKELY**.

Rating for Effectiveness: SATISFACTORY

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

140. The evaluator had access to:

- the original budget of the project;
- the UMOJA extract from April 2018 to December 2021;
- an EMG Budget DOC 2018 – 2021 spreadsheet, which includes an overall budget table, detailed budget by UMOJA class, and detailed budget by donor; and,
- a budget summary in the December 2021 Project Revision Document.

141. Performance against this criterion has been rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. The financial reports and the budget revisions were clear and detailed. As far as can be ascertained, there has been regular analysis of actual expenditure against

budget and workplan, timely submission of regular expenditure reports, and budget revisions made when relevant. In addition, expenditure has been within the approved annual budget.

Completeness of Financial Information

142. Relevant financial information is presented in Table 4 and in Annex V. Table 4 outlines the project's budget as presented in the Project Revision of December 2021. Annex V presents the full financial table.

143. According to the requirements for assessing this dimension, the evaluator was able to view the project expenditure sheet, the detailed project budget for secured and unsecured funds, project budget by funding source, and budget revisions. Based on the information provided, financial management appears to be sound and well-documented. As such, this criterion is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

144. The evaluation was not able to directly assess the level of communication between the Project and the relevant UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO). However, evidence gathered from interviews with EMG Secretariat staff and the UNEP FMO suggest that the Secretariat staff have a strong awareness of the current financial status of the project at any given time, and that the FMO has strong awareness of overall project progress when financial disbursements are made. There also appears to be regular contact between the EMG Secretariat and the FMO. As a consequence, this criterion is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

Rating for Financial Management:	**HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**

F. Efficiency

145. The interviews and survey questionnaire both assessed the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Both sources of information confirmed that the project performed at a high level with low levels of resourcing. When asked about the perceived strengths of the EMG, 44% of survey respondents indicated that … "*Producing important outputs with meagre resources*" was highly ranked.

146. When asked whether EMG's level of resourcing was sufficient, all 19 interviewees indicated that it was not. The majority indicated that the EMG's strength in mobilizing multiple expertise is often hampered by limited resources. When commenting on the role of the UN with respect to the EMG, one interviewee stated that …"*it is inconceivable that such a large organisation so poorly resources the EMG"*.

147. The stakeholder survey asked three additional questions about efficiency: (i) How well collaboration has functioned; (ii) Whether stakeholder ownership has been sufficient, and; (iii) Whether the EMG's efforts at communication have been efficient and effective.

148. With respect to collaboration, Figure 7 indicates that 78% of respondents believed that collaboration has functioned either "very efficiently", or "efficiently".

Specific mention was made of EMG's ability to efficiently organise meetings and prepare materials. A relevant comment along these lines was that "*…the EMG has proven that it can be efficient with a handful of engaged members and sufficient funding along with senior political support*".

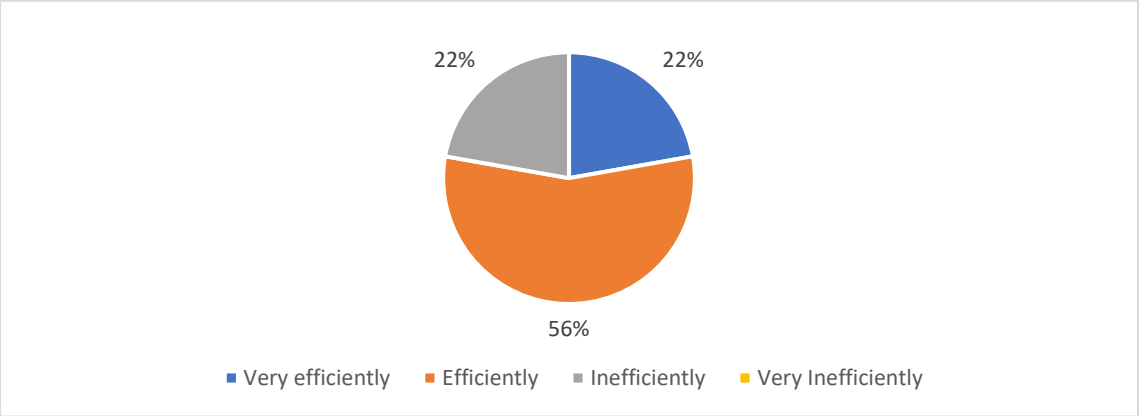


Figure 7: How Well has Collaboration Functioned?

149. When asked whether the level of 'ownership' by the main stakeholders (more so, the end users) is sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained, only 35% answered in the affirmative. Those who answered in the negative offered the following reasoning:

- *too much jumping from one issue to another without proper continuity;*
- *the EMG is often an afterthought and delegated to lower-level technical staff. Often not a priority with Member Agencies;*
- *agencies are happy to participate, but the enthusiasm of EMG representatives does not necessarily translation into complete 'buy-in' for the entire agency;*
- *it is still very much a 'bottom-up' mechanism, but it is not EMG's failure. At agency level we struggle with elevating EMG profile internally;*
- *as there are so many EMG activities, it is difficult to take ownership stake in all of them as effective engagement and representation take a considerable amount of time; and,*
- *to increase the impact of the EMG on countries and communities, there needs to be strong incentives and links to ongoing and pipeline UN policies and programming, as well as more consistent monitoring of results and impact and iterative learning and adaptive management.*

150. With regard to the issue of efficiency of communication, 61% of survey respondents indicated that they believed EMG's efforts at communicating its outputs were efficient and effective. Respondents who were positive indicated that EMG's *'outbound communications' are good considering its tiny size'*, but that most of the major stakeholders have communications functions which should be amplifying the EMG's outputs.

151. At the same time, when surveyed stakeholders were asked to indicate what they perceived to be EMG 'weaknesses', ten respondents stated that 'low visibility' was an issue. One responded wondered why … "*the EMG results have often been*

kept in the shadows". It may be that stakeholders appreciate the quality of the EMG's communication products, but that marketing has been too low key due to lack of a specific budget.

152. Reports to the SOM, and from other presented documents, indicate that the project was implemented within the originally intended (initial approval) timeframe, and against an appropriately revised results framework specified by a formal revision. Evidence suggests that cost-effective approaches supported almost all project targets either being achieved or exceeded.

Rating for Efficiency:	**HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

153. The project followed UNEP standard reporting processes and procedures, with monitoring and reporting taking place through IPSAS and PIMS. Reports are also prepared annually for the Senior Officials Meeting.

154. A comprehensive monitoring plan was presented in the ProDoc. It was designed around output and outcome indicators, and allowed for the collection of data as presented in Table 4 and Table 7. As such, it covered all indicators for both outputs and outcomes, and outlined data collection frequency, data collection methods, budget, and responsibility.

155. While the monitoring system allowed for tracking against targets, there were no monitoring indicators that allowed for an evaluation of the value of outputs to beneficiaries. The system also did not allow for tracking of follow up and enforcement/implementation. The ranking for this criterion is **Satisfactory**.

Monitoring of Project Implementation

156. The design of the project monitoring system enabled the timely tracking of results and progress towards the objectives of the project. The project had access to good baseline data, because it was the continuation of an earlier first phase project with similar objectives. Monitoring indicators were clear, and enabled the tracking of performance against targets.

157. Monitoring data and information was collected regularly in accordance with the monitoring plan presented in the ProDoc, and presented to the Senior Officials Meetings. Examples of the information collected and reported in presented in Tables 5,6,8, and 9. As can be seen from these tables, and from Tables 4 and 7, detailed data by indicators was provided to the evaluator.

158. The monitoring information collected during the course of the project was used to adapt the project, as evidenced by Project Revision 1.

159. The rating for this criterion is therefore **Highly Satisfactory**.

Project Reporting

160. UNEP has a centralized information management system (PIMS), in which project managers upload regular progress reports against project milestones. In the Project Revision 1 document evidence was provided that EMG entered information into the PIMS. This was verified by the evaluator. As a consequence, the rating for this criterion is **Highly Satisfactory**.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	**HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**

H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

161. UNEP defines socio-political sustainability based on the assumption that project outcomes are actionable by governments. This is rarely the case for EMG outcomes, as activities and outputs are focused on influencing UN agency policies, programmes, procedures and projects. It is therefore somewhat problematic to apply this criterion to the EMG project.

162. The criterion does also ask the evaluator to consider the "level of ownership, interest and commitment among stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards". As indicated in Figure 8, survey results indicate that only 35% of respondents believe that the level of ownership by the main stakeholders is sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained.

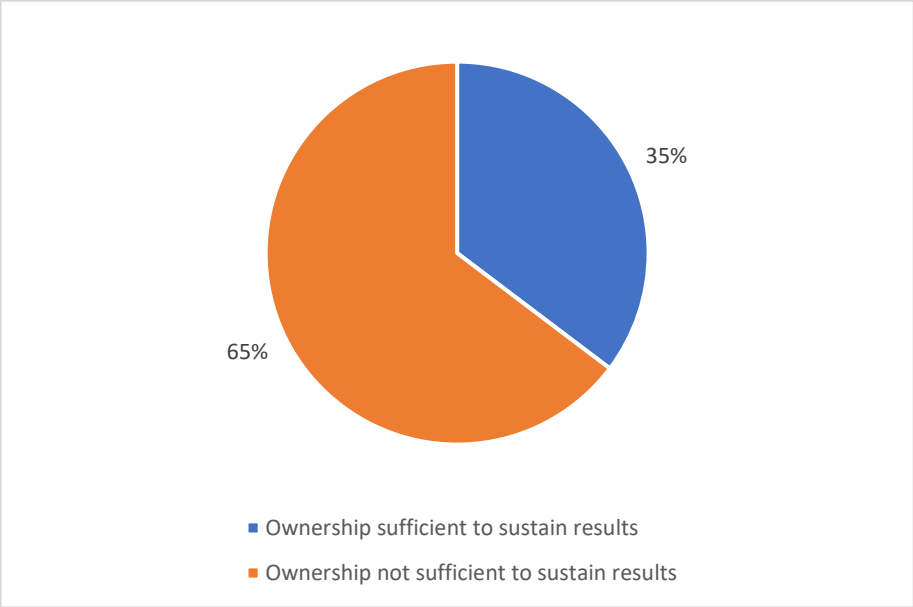


Figure 8: Is the level of 'ownership' by the main stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained?

163. This view was not necessarily shared by the interviewees, most of whom pointed to some level of commitment from EMG members to the aims and objectives of the EMG. Evidence can be seen in the extent of commitment to Issue Management Groups and Nexus Dialogues over the period 2018-2021.

164. The adoption and enforcement of policies and guidance that emanate from EMG's work is not under the direct control of the EMG Secretariat. It is up to the

member agencies to implement the outcomes of EMG's work. The following quotes from survey respondents exemplify this problem:

- *I think agencies are happy to participate but the enthusiasm of EMG representatives does not necessarily translate into complete buy-in for the entire agency;*
- *It is still very much bottom-up mechanism but it's not EMG failure. At agency-level we struggle with elevating EMG profile internally*.

165. A related issue that was strongly presented in the interviews was that the EMG suffered to some extent in its inability to follow up on the outcomes of its work. This was in good part due to resourcing, but was also due to the fact that the EMG did not have a mandate to require follow-up of member agency implementation[10].

166. The rating for this criterion is therefore **MODERATELY LIKELY.**

Financial Sustainability

167. The purpose of this criterion is to assess the extent to which the sustainability of the project's outputs and outcomes is dependent on ongoing financial input. Given that the implementation of EMG's work is the responsibility of the member UN agencies, and that most of the outputs and outcomes result in suggested policy reforms rather than financially-dependent development projects, it is fair to say that the sustainability of EMG's work only has a moderate dependency on future funding.

168. As a consequence, this criterion is rated as **LIKELY**.

Institutional Sustainability

169. For a UNEP project operating within a country, the purpose of this criterion would be to assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes would be dependent on issues relating to a country's institutional frameworks and governance. For this evaluation, the Evaluator finds that this criterion should apply to an assessment of the effectiveness of EMG's institutional structure.

170. The institutional structure of the EMG was of significant interest as evidenced from the nineteen interviews, and from responses to the survey question that focused on perceived EMG weaknesses.

171. Interviewees were asked specifically if the EMG's position as a UNEP 'project' was the most effective institutional arrangement for the Group.

172. The EMG has had two institutional changes:

    a) By way of background, the EMG has always been situated within UNEP. At the time of the establishment of the EMG Secretariat, in 2003, UNEP also had a mandate to service UN-Habitat. This was apparently due to the fact that the UNEP Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General was, at the time, also Acting Head of UN-Habitat.

[10] The Evaluation Office suggests the TOC identifying the 'drivers' that increase the likelihood of uptake of EMG's work among member agencies and consider these in identifying future work of the EMG e.g. increasing efforts on the communication and outreach may be one driver that helps promote uptake among member agencies.

b) Up until 2015, the EMG had a Director, who was based with the Secretariat in Geneva. From 2015 onwards, this position was abolished, due to the fact that UNEP wished to have its New York office staffed by an Assistant Secretary-General, who was tasked with both directing the EMG, and the New York UNEP Office.

173. Some interviewees had strong views about the physical positioning of the EMG Secretariat. Some were adamant that it should stay in Geneva, to be physically close to many of its UN member agencies, while others believed that it should be relocated to New York[11], to work in a more integrated fashion with the high-level sustainable development policy-making coordination mechanisms of the UN, such as the UN Sustainable Development Group, and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

174. The EMG's line management and reporting arrangements were considered by many stakeholders to be complex. The management and administrative responsibilities and reporting lines have not been well-communicated and some senior UNEP staff are unsure of the current arrangements and the rationale for them.

175. Given the perceptions associated with the EMG's institutional arrangements, this criterion is rated **MODERATELY LIKELY**.

Rating for Sustainability: MODERATELY LIKELY

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness

176. The efficiency of the mobilization stage of the project, meaning the time between project approval and first disbursement, is assessed under preparation and readiness. As has been explained the EMG is an unusual 'project', in that there has always been an intention provided performance is proven that the Group's operations would take place on a continuing basis. In other words, unlike most other funded UN projects, the work of the EMG is not a discreet 'time-bound' exercise. As a consequence, the 2018-2021 phase of EMG was developed while the previous phase was being implemented. A costed workplan for the EMG project phase 2018-2021 was made clear in the ProDoc. A comprehensive stakeholder analysis was undertaken, staffing was already in place, and governance arrangements were established.

177. As a consequence, this criterion is rated as **HIGHLY SATISFACTORY.**

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

178. This criterion usually extends to the quality of management and supervision with regard to: (i) UNEP and its implementing partners; and, (ii) The partner/executing agency. Given the unique nature of the EMG's establishment as a project, this criterion is defined in this evaluation to relate to the Quality of UNEP's management of the EMG using the ProDoc as a frame of reference.

[11] UNEP senior managers also observe that a large number of UN agencies are based in New York.

179. Monitoring records, the minutes of Senior Officials Meetings, and feedback from the interviews and survey indicate that UNEP effectively manages the administration of the EMG. Meetings appear to be well planned and organised. The ProDoc and Project Revision document indicate that the EMG is integrated into UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and its Programmes of Work. There is also evidence of regular informal communication between the EMG Secretariat and UNEP staff. However, some concerns were raised during interviews that UNEP sometimes places ad hoc pressure on the EMG to respond to issues that are not necessarily contained within the EMG's yearly plans as determined by the Group's member agencies.

180. Consultants responsible for assisting with specific Issue Management Groups and Nexus Dialogues expressed satisfaction with how their workstreams were managed by the Secretariat. EMG members responsible for organising IMGs and Dialogues appeared to be impressed with how the Secretariat managed to handle politically-charged inter-agency processes. However, numerous comments were made about how the EMG's strength in mobilizing multiple expertise is often hampered by limited resources.

181. The overall ranking for the Quality of Project Management and Supervision criterion is **HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**.

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

182. The EMG's main stakeholders are its 51 UN member agencies. As a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral convener, the EMG serves a central platform for the creation of partnerships and strategic exchange in the UN system. Essentially, the EMG would not be able to function if it did not pay serious attention to its involvement with stakeholders.

183. The Project Document, section 4.2 presented a detailed analysis of stakeholders, explaining the power they hold over project results; their level of probable interest; whether or not they participated in project design; their potential roles and responsibilities in project implementation; and, changes in behaviour expected through implementation of the project.

184. Communication with stakeholder groups is facilitated through their participation in IMGs, Nexus Dialogues, and other EMG activities, and through the member agencies' participation in the Senior Officials Meetings. The EMG has actively supported collaboration and collective action between stakeholder groups. As indicated 78% of respondents in Figure 8: How well has collaboration functions? believed that collaboration has functioned either "very efficiently", or "efficiently".

185. As a consequence, this criterion is rated as **HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

186. The Project Document, Annex G consisted of the Gender Marker Self-Assessment. As an interagency level project that focuses on the coordination of environmental activities between UN agencies, the project generally has no direct gender-specific impacts. A gender analysis undertaken as part of the development of the ProDoc revealed that the project does not have direct

interactions with and/or impacts on people, therefore, gender is considered Not Applicable, and this was the code applied in the Self-Assessment.

187. The ProDoc, however, made it clear that whenever system-wide strategies or guidelines are developed and indirect impacts are possible, the EMG Secretariat aimed to mainstream socio-economic aspects in the execution of the project in accordance with UN standards and recommendations. The Secretariat also aims for gender parity in speakers when organizing events.

188. The establishment of the Issue Management Groups on Environment in Humanitarian Action and Human Rights and Environment were established during this phase of the EMG project. The purpose of these IMGs was to (i) identify concrete means for a new way of working in which environmental, humanitarian, human rights, development and security goals go hand in hand; and, (ii) support a more coherent, consistent and rights-based approach by the UN system to human rights and the environment.

189. The evaluation ranking for this criterion is considered to be **SATISFACTORY**.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

190. Environmental and social safeguard issues were screened in the Project Document Annex D (the Environmental, Social, and Economic Review Note). Because the project has no infrastructure component, and is focused entirely on stakeholder collaboration, no safeguards were triggered during the screening exercise.

191. Because safeguard issues were treated seriously in the ProDoc, this criterion is rated as **HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

192. This is a standard criterion for UNEP evaluations. However, the ToR for this evaluation stated that it will not be rated for the evaluation of this project. This is because the project's outputs and outcomes are all directed towards implementation by the EMG's member agencies, and not by countries. It is up to the member agencies to decide if/when outputs and outcomes from EMG's work are taken up, and how they are implemented within countries.

Communication and Public Awareness

193. The survey asked respondents to indicate whether the EMG's efforts at communicating its outputs should be considered to be effective. As can be seen from Figure 9, 11 respondents (61%) indicated in the affirmative. This appears to be in good part because the EMG website is well regarded, as are the formats for reports, and the organisation of meetings. One respondent indicated that "*…EMG's outbound comms are good considering its tiny size*".

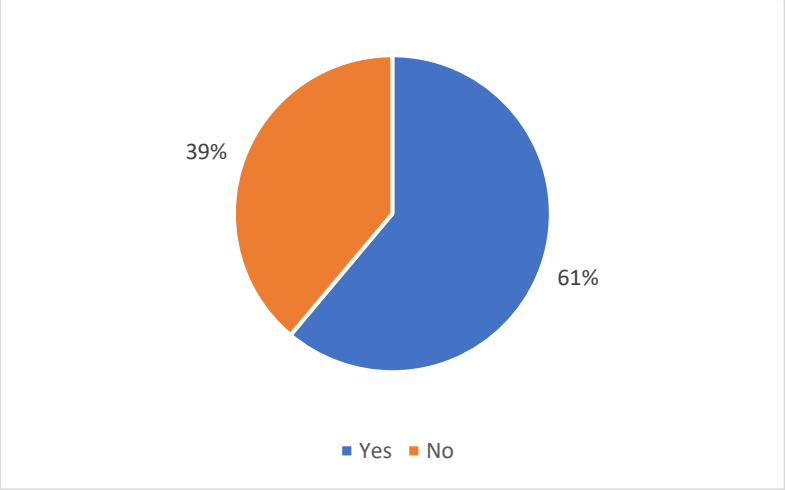


Figure 9: Are the EMG's Efforts at Communicating its Outputs Effective?

194. Other findings in this evaluation on effectiveness indicated that many interviewees and survey respondents had concerns about the lack of visibility of the EMG's work. This was considered to be, in good part, due to the fact that the EMG does not have dedicated communications staff. It was suggested that all of the major EMG member agencies have communications functions which should be amplifying the EMG's outputs, and that the EMG should apply some effort to increasing its visibility among donors, including through the OECD Environet, which has a significant reach.

195. Due to concerns raised about lack of visibility, this criterion is rated as **MODERATELY SATISFACTORY**.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

196. Overall, this evaluation has shown that the latest phase of the EMG has been very effective. Almost all targets for outputs were achieved, all targets for outcomes have been achieved, and overall impact is rated as being "likely".

197. The Terms of Reference for this terminal evaluation posed three 'key strategic questions' as follows:

(i) Should the EMG be a project, considering that it provides a fundamental corporate service to UNEP? Are there alternative arrangements that would still provide results focus and substantive accountability?

(ii) EMG governance within UNEP – are the project and Secretariat correctly placed in within the PoW and UNEP organigram from the point of view of maximizing the project's potential and resource mobilization?

(iii) What possible functions should/could the EMG shoulder with a view to the next phase?

(a) To what extent has the full potential of the EMG been utilized?

(b) To what extent has UNEP's coordination mandate been effective and influential through the soft EMG mechanism that focuses on ad-hoc information and knowledge exchange, and coordination meetings and dialogues?

198. Question (i) and Question (ii) are intertwined. The higher-level question is whether the EMG should be housed within UNEP. There are divergent views on this issue. Some interviewees and survey respondents are basically happy with the EMG's current administrative architecture. Others, however, perceive the institutional positioning of the EMG to be confusing. Concerns were also raised about whether there is a conflict of interest in UNEP both chairing the EMG and being a participating member.

199. There is no question that the EMG is placed in a challenging institutional position. It is beholden to UNEP for its budget and should not usurp/duplicate UNEP activities. In addition, its remit is to operate across its membership, and be seen to represent their interests and not be perceived as an arm of UNEP; this requires considerable diplomacy. Its status as a UNEP "project" adds further requirements, as it must fit within UNEP's MTS and PoW, which constrains its flexibility and requires significant effort when new phases need to be programmed. The current institutional arrangement for the EMG requires its staff to report to the ASG in New York whereas mandatory reporting on project delivery is to Nairobi in the context of Environmental Governance Sub-programme to which it is anchored.

200. Question (iii) addresses the EMG's effectiveness, and asks about how its activities might be structured for the next phase (2022 – 2025). The EMG's convening/coordinating mandate is highly regarded, and it has achieved an extraordinary amount on very limited resources. To this extent, on the whole, stakeholders believe that the EMG has fulfilled its potential. However, low levels of resourcing were consistently identified as a problem during interviews, and in the questionnaire responses. In addition, the way in which EMG's budget is

derived and allocated is probably not sustainable. Too many important activities are supported by ad hoc donor grants.

201. Assessing the final impact of the EMG's work was difficult. It has produced some significant pieces of work, but it does not have the resources to assess whether or not its work is having an impact.

202. In addition, the EMG is perceived by stakeholders to be very "busy" and undertakes new initiatives on a regular basis. In some respects, these initiatives appear to be put forward on an ad hoc basis by EMG members. A number of interview and survey respondents suggested that the EMG should focus on fewer activities.

203. As listed in paragraph 60, EMG activities have been undertaken through Issue Management Groups, Nexus Dialogues, Agency Peer Reviews, Consultative Processes, and Task Teams. The most problematic appears to be Agency Peer Reviews, where the combination of the pandemic, financial constraints, and the need for a more engaging and streamlined format appear to have hampered attempts to reach the programmed target.

204. Analyzing the interviews and survey responses, along with a review of SOM meeting records, there appears to be a consensus around four main areas where the EMG could have a long-term impact:

i) Assisting the UN system to respond to the implementation of the environmental aspects of the sustainable development goals (SDGs);

ii) Continue interacting with the UN Sustainable Development Group to create a dialogue aimed at assisting countries to meet the environmental aspects of the SDGs;

iii) Assisting the UN to establish and meet internal sustainability goals. This would extend the work already undertaken by the EMG and its Secretariat on a UN Environmental Management System, and build on Phase 2 of the UN Sustainability Strategy; and,

iv) iv) Linking the EMG's work with coordination mechanisms such as the UNSDG, the High-Level Committee on Programmes, the High-Level Committee on Management, and UN programmes such as UN Energy, UN Water, and UN Oceans.

B. Summary of project findings and ratings

205. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of **HIGHLY SATISFACTORY**.

Table 10: Summary of Project Findings and Ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		**S**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	The project is in full alignment (i.e. consistency) with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities, as represented in the Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work under which the project was approved	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
2. Alignment to UNEP/Donor strategic priorities	While the project's implementation strategies and delivered contributions show full alignment with the priorities of donors, it was not possible to verify that anticipated identifiable contributions were included in donor reported results indicators	S
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	The project is primarily a global initiative, and activities and outputs are aimed at producing outcomes that will result in better consistency and collaboration between UN agencies. As such, the influence of EMG activities on regional sub-regional, and national policy is less of a priority.	MS
4. Complementarity with existing interventions / Coherence	The project showed full complementarity and no duplication with other interventions by UNEP or other organisations.	HS
Quality of Project Design	The quality of the project design is based on the completed assessment undertaken as part of the inception report. No major project design weaknesses are evident.	**HS**
Nature of External Context	The project could not have predicted the onset of the SARS-COV-2 induced pandemic. Fortunately for the EMG, its work is not field-based, however, disruption caused by government-mandated lockdowns and travel bans did affect the organisation and delivery of meetings.	**MU**
Effectiveness		**HS**
1. Availability of outputs	Output 1 targets were either achieved or exceeded. Of the Output 2 targets, the first was achieved, but the second (*Number of agencies that are peer reviewed for their corporate environmental management*) was not achieved due to a combination of the pandemic, financial constraints, and the need for a more engaging and streamlined format.	S
2. Achievement of project outcomes	All Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 indicator targets were either achieved or exceeded	HS
3. Likelihood of impact	Given that assumptions hold, drivers to support transition from outputs to outcomes are in place, and that all outcomes have been met, it considered that the project is likely to achieve its projected impacts.	L
Financial Management		**HS**
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The financial reports and the budget revisions were clear and detailed. As far as can be ascertained, there has been regular analysis of actual expenditure against budget and workplan, timely submission of regular expenditure reports, and budget revisions made when relevant. In addition, expenditure has been within the approved annual budget	HS
2. Completeness of project financial information	Based on the information provided, financial management appears to be sound and well-documented.	HS
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Evidence gathered from interviews with EMG Secretariat staff and the UNEP FMO suggest that the Secretariat staff have a strong awareness of the current financial status of the project at any given time, and that the FMO has strong awareness of overall project progress when financial disbursements are made.	HS
Efficiency	It is clear from reports to the SoM, and from other presented documents, that the project was implemented within the originally intended (first approval) timeframe, and against an appropriately revised results framework specified by a formal revision. Survey responses indicated that there were perhaps too many EMG activities, and that consideration might be applied to a focus on fewer activities.	**HS**
Monitoring and Reporting		**S**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	A comprehensive monitoring plan was presented in the ProDoc. It was designed around output and outcome indicators, and allowed for the collection of data as presented in Table 4 and Table 7. As such, it covered all indicators for both outputs and outcomes, and outlined data collection frequency, data collection methods, budget, and responsibility	S
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Monitoring data and information was collected regularly in accordance with the monitoring plan presented in the ProDoc, and presented to the Senior Officials Meetings. The monitoring information collected during the course of the project was used to adapt the project, as evidenced by Project Revision 1.	HS
3. Project reporting	In the Project Revision 1 document evidence was provided that EMG entered information into the PIMS. However, this was the only evidence provided to the evaluator.	HS
Sustainability		**ML**
1. Socio-political sustainability	EMG activities and outputs are focused on influencing UN agency policies, programmes, procedures and projects, and so are not directly actionable by governments. EMG suffers to some extent in its inability to follow up on the outcomes of its work. This is in good part due to resourcing, but is also due to the fact that the EMG does not have a mandate to require follow-up of member agency implementation.	ML
2. Financial sustainability	Given that the implementation of EMG's work is the responsibility of the member UN agencies, and that most of the outputs and outcomes result in suggested policy reforms rather than financially-dependent development projects, it is fair to say that the sustainability of EMG's work only has a moderate dependency on future funding.	L
3. Institutional sustainability	The EMG's line management and reporting arrangements were considered by many stakeholders to be complex, and strong views were expressed as to the correct institutional positioning of the EMG. The EMG's perceived neutrality was considered by interviewees to be a prime determinant of its ability to fulfil its coordinating mandate.	ML
Factors Affecting Performance		**HS**
1. Preparation and readiness	The EMG is an unusual 'project', in that there has always been an intention … provided performance is proven … that the Group's operations would take place on a continuing basis. Unlike most other funded UN projects, the EMG is not necessarily 'time-bound'. As a consequence, the second phase of the project was developed while the first phase was being implemented.	HS
2. Quality of project management and supervision	UNEP effectively manages the administration of the EMG. EMG members responsible for organising IMGs and Dialogues appeared to be impressed with how the Secretariat managed to handle politically-charged inter-agency processes. However, numerous comments were made about how the EMG's strength in mobilizing multiple expertise is often hampered by limited resources.	HS
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	As a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral convener, the EMG serves a central platform for the creation of partnerships and strategic exchange in the UN system. Essentially, the EMG would not be able to function if it did not pay serious attention to its involvement with stakeholders.	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	As an interagency level project that focuses on the coordination of environmental activities between UN agencies, the project generally has no direct gender-specific impacts. A gender analysis undertaken as part of the development of the ProDoc revealed that the project does not have direct interactions with and/or impacts on people, therefore, gender is considered Not Applicable, and this was the code applied in the Self Assessment	S
5. Environmental and social economic safeguards	Because the project has no infrastructure component, and is focused entirely on stakeholder collaboration, no safeguards were triggered during the screening exercise.	HS
6. Communication and public awareness	Concerns were raised about the lack of visibility of the EMG's work. This was considered to be, in good part, due to the fact that the EMG does not have dedicated communications staff.	MS
Overall Project Performance Rating		**HS**

C. Lessons learned

206. The following 'lessons learned' from the evaluation are presented as having the potential for wider application in similar contexts.

Lesson Learned #1:	**There is a definite and growing need for an interagency body with a convening/coordinating mandate to promote the integration of environmental issues within UN agencies**
Context/comment:	During the implementation period of the evaluated project (2018 – 2022) there has been a significant expansion of interest from UN agencies in how to support the SDGs, and meet the requirements of the Paris Agenda. UN agencies need a separate forum where they can discuss these issues.

Lesson Learned #2:	**Convening bodies such as the EMG have an important informal role to play. This aspect was lost during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, which prevented in-person interactions.**
Context/comment:	In 2020 and 2021, the Senior Officials Meetings and all Nexus Dialogues and Issue Management Group meetings were held via video conferencing. While interviewees considered this approach to be reasonably effective, there was a concern that the informal, interpersonal aspects of EMG meetings had been lost, and that this was a significant handicap.

Lesson Learned #3:	**Convening bodies such as the EMG need to have appropriate communications expertise and budget to establish the visibility of their work.**
Context/comment:	The contemporary policy climate is awash with information. Establishing the visibility of a convening body such as the EMG requires a commitment to effective communication.

	This should not be an afterthought, but built into the design of a convening agency's terms of reference.

D. Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	The Terms of Reference for the EMG and the EMG Secretariat should be reviewed with a view to ensure that their objectives, modus operandi and rules of procedure are up to date. The review could consider alternative mechanisms, arrangements and activities that could enhance the work of the EMG and the Secretariat in view of developments over the past twenty years since the EMG was created. The findings of the review should be presented to the EMG membership for reflection.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The initial ToR for EMG was developed in 2000, and then reviewed and updated in 2017. Since then, the EMG and environmental governance issues have further matured. Phase II of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020 – 2030, points to important gaps, some of which can be addressed by the EMG and its Secretariat. Links could be strengthened with similar coordination mechanisms such as the UNSDG, the High-Level Committee on Programmes, the High-Level Committee on Management, and subsidiary mechnansims such as UN Energy, UN Water, and UN Oceans.
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management, EMG Secretariat
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Reporting to the SOM 2023.

Recommendation #2:	The functionality of the EMG Secretariat with regards to the UNEP organigram and mechanisms should be enhanced to ensure organisational effectiveness, clear reporting lines, synergies with MEAs, and adequately equipping the Secretariat in terms of resources and expertise.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The location of the EMG Secretariat in Geneva is advantageous as it is physically close to many of its UN member agencies and is in line with the assessments made in the past on maximizing the effectiveness of the EMG's work. In that regard, the EMG's function can be further enhanced by improving its working relationship with UNEP Headquarters, regional offices and liaison offices, especially

	the New York Office, which can support the alignment and integration of the EMG's work with the high-level sustainable development policy-making coordination mechanisms of the UN, such as the UN Sustainable Development Group, and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Reporting to the SOM 2023

Recommendation #3:	A resource mobilization plan should be developed that is tied to the work plan and targeting both bilateral donors and EMG member agencies, including UNEP, providing opportunities for engagement, visibility, donor funding and demonstrating impact – the resource mobilisation plan should accommodate raising funds for ad hoc activities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The way in which EMG's budget for activities is derived is not sustainable for continuing activities and longer-term plans. Important activities are supported by ad hoc donor grants and the work associated with searching for grants to undertake agreed activities reduces the limited staff time of the EMG Secretariat to implement activities. The EMG Secretariat does not have the resources to follow-up and assess the effect of work undertaken and to demonstrate impact. Such information is critical to ensure the engagement of EMG members and generate donor interest.
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Prior to SOM 2023

Recommendation #4:	Engagement with EMG members should aim to increase effectiveness, build stronger ownership, unlock win-wins and secure buy-in from agencies. This would include leveraging of expertise (e.g. secondment of staff to EMG

	Secretariat) and sharing of communication and outreach with other UN agencies, and use of rotational co-chairs.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The success of the EMG and the work of the EMG Secretariat is significantly reliant on strong outreach and communication. The EMG is often perceived as an afterthought and delegated to lower-level technical staff of EMG member agencies. EMG members struggle with elevating the EMG's profile internally. This is in part due to the lack of visibility of the EMG's work and limited resources that makes it difficult to mobilize expertise and affects the interest of EMG members to chair different types of activities.
Priority Level:	Important
Responsibility:	UNEP Management, EMG Secretariat
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Prior to SOM 2023

Recommendation #5:	The modus operandi of EMG should be reviewed to identify criteria for prioritization of work and stronger focus on fewer activities, including agenda setting in EMG meetings, and then be discussed with the EMG members. The Peer Review activity should cease. This would follow the review of the EMG ToR and possible amendments made to the ToR.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	With so many EMG activities, it is difficult for EMG members to take ownership stake in all of them as effective engagement and representation take a considerable amount of time. Issue Management Groups, the Nexus Dialogues, and Task Teams are considered to be effective by stakeholders. The combination of the pandemic, financial constraints, and the need for a more engaging and streamlined format appear to lessen the effectiveness of Peer Review. The peer reviews do not go into enough depth, and the information produced is already known and could be folded into the work programme of the UN Sustainability Strategy. There is, however, need for follow-up after the peer reviews, but the IMG on Environmental Sustainability Management neither has the mandate nor resources to do it.
Priority Level:	Critical
Responsibility:	UNEP Management, EMG Secretariat

Proposed implementation time-frame:	Reporting to SOM 2023

Recommendation #6:	A monitoring framework should be developed for the EMG's work plan that enhances measurement and data collection from EMG members and donors on change (at outcome level) and impact. This would include indicators that assess inclusion of gender and human rights considerations. This recommendation is linked with Recommendation 1 and proposed review and possible adjustment of the ToR. Given the difficulty of attributing final impacts (as presented in the Theory of Change) to EMG outputs and outcomes, it is also recommended that the ToC impact statements be re-visited and causal pathways made more explicit.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The implementation of EMG's work is the responsibility of the member UN agencies, and most of the outputs and outcomes result in suggested policy reforms, but the current outcome indicators do not adequately measure success of policy reform integration, nor do they include gender and human rights considerations. Further, the EMG (and the EMG Secretariat) does not have the resources to assess whether or not its work is having an impact.
Priority Level:	Important
Responsibility:	EMG Secretariat
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Prior to SOM 2023

ANNEX I. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Agency	Name	Comment
EMG Focal Points		
UNDP	Tim Scott	Senior Policy Advisor
UNEP	Tim Kasten	Director of the Policy and Programme Division
UN-Habitat	Raf Tuts	Director, Global Solutions Division
OHCHR	Ben Schachter	Human Rights Officer
OCHA	Sheilagh Henry	Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer
Secretariat		
EMG/UNEP	Hossein Fadaei	Head, EMG Secretariat
EMG/UNEP	Jannica Pitkanen	Programme Management Officer
EMG/UNEP	Anna Kaplina	Programme Management Officer
EMG/UNEP	Ingrid Ngigi	Staff Assistant
Technical Experts		
UNDP	Holly Mergler	Environmental and social sustainability
UNOPS	Nives Costa	Environmental and social sustainability
UNEP	Rowan Palmer	Sustainable infrastructure
Donors		
Norway	Ingeborg Mork-Knutsen	Senior Adviser
Switzerland	Sebastian Koenig	Senior Policy Advisor
Finland	Marjaana Kokkonen	Ministerial Adviser
Consultants		
	Nina Arden	Nexus Dialogues
	Gita Parihar	Human Rights and Environment Process
	Mr George Bouma	Ex EMG member
Partners		
SUN	Isabella Marras	Coordinator
Geneva Environment Network	Diana Rizzolio	Coordinator
CEB	Federica Pietracci	Senior Programme Management Officer
Specific contacts (global):		
UNEP	Ms. Ligia Noronha	Assistant Secretary-General, EMG Secretary
CITES	Ms. Irene Ngigi	Former staff assistant, EMG Secretariat
UNEP	Cristina Zucca	Head, Environment, Pollution and Health unit
UNEP	Tita Korvenoja	Chief of the Environmental Governance and Conventions Branch, Law Division

ANNEX II. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, Project Revision documents, the logical framework and its budget;
- 2004 “Study of the Environment Management Group”;
- EMG budget documents;
- Previous phase Project Document;
- UNGA resolution 53/242
- EMG Terms of Reference
- Report – Maximizing the Effectiveness of the EMG (2015)
- Minutes of EMG Mid-Term Technical Segment of Senior Officials’ Meetings
- EMG Senior Officials Meeting minutes
- EMG website
- Issue Management Group reports
- Nexus Dialogue Summary Reports
- Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming
- Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System (Phase II draft)
- Strategy for the UN Coalition on Sand and Dust Storms
- Site peer reviews
- Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.

ANNEX III. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID:	02004		
Implementing Partners	**N/A**		
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	Mainly SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals Target 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development		
Sub-programme:	(4) Environmental Governance Executive Direction and Management	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	A A
UNEP approval date:	Programme of Work Output(s):		
	Advisory services on system-wide coherence on the environment and secretariat services to interagency mechanisms on environment and sustainable development issues. Information and knowledge management products on the coherent and synergistic implementation of MEAs, the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and on legal and institutional responses to emerging environmental issues of international concern		
***Expected* start date:**	01 January 2018	**Actual start date:**	20 April 2018
***Planned* completion date:**	31 December 2021	**Actual operational completion date:**	19 April 2022
***Planned* project budget at approval:**	USD 3,516,772 (includes RB post)	**Actual total expenditures reported as of 31 December 2020:**	USD 1,632,413
***Planned* Environment Fund allocation:**	USD 1,518,696	**Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of 31 December 2020:**	USD 1,050,895
***Planned* Extra-Budgetary Financing:**	USD 968,276	**Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:**	USD 383,220 USD
		Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing expenditures reported as of 31 December 2020:	USD 220,524
Date of first project expenditure:	TBC	**Planned date of financial closure:**	19 April 2022
No. of formal project revisions:	1	**Date of last approved project revision:**	(TBC) 2021
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	0	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	Last: - Next: -
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	-	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	-

Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	2nd quarter of 2021	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	1 October 2021
Coverage - Country(ies):	N/A	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Global
Dates of previous project phases:	2014-2017	**Status of future project phases:**	New project document to be developed for 2022-2025

2. Project Rationale

1. The Environment Management Group (EMG) project promotes the recognition, integration and operationalization of environmental issues within the UN system by promoting policy dialogue, strategic and integrated thinking, information exchange and joint action among the UN agencies. It also helps place core and emerging environmental issues at the center of the UN's action. The project facilitates exchange of lessons learned among UN entities on effective approaches to integrate the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including in UN entities' own activities, with the ultimate aim to support the efficient and timely implementation of the environmental Goals and targets and to make the UN system more effective in its support to Member States.

3. Project Objectives and Components

2. The EMG is an inter-agency coordination mechanism established in 2001 by the UN General Assembly to enhance environmental coordination and cooperation across the UN system. Hosted by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the EMG activities have been managed as a UNEP project since 2013. As a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral convener, the EMG serves a central platform for the creation of partnerships and strategic exchange in the UN system, resulting in pooling of expertise and secured buy-in for the environment as an essential pillar of sustainable development. The EMG adds value by serving as a neutral **broker** in inter-agency processes on the environment. Its areas of activity are twofold:

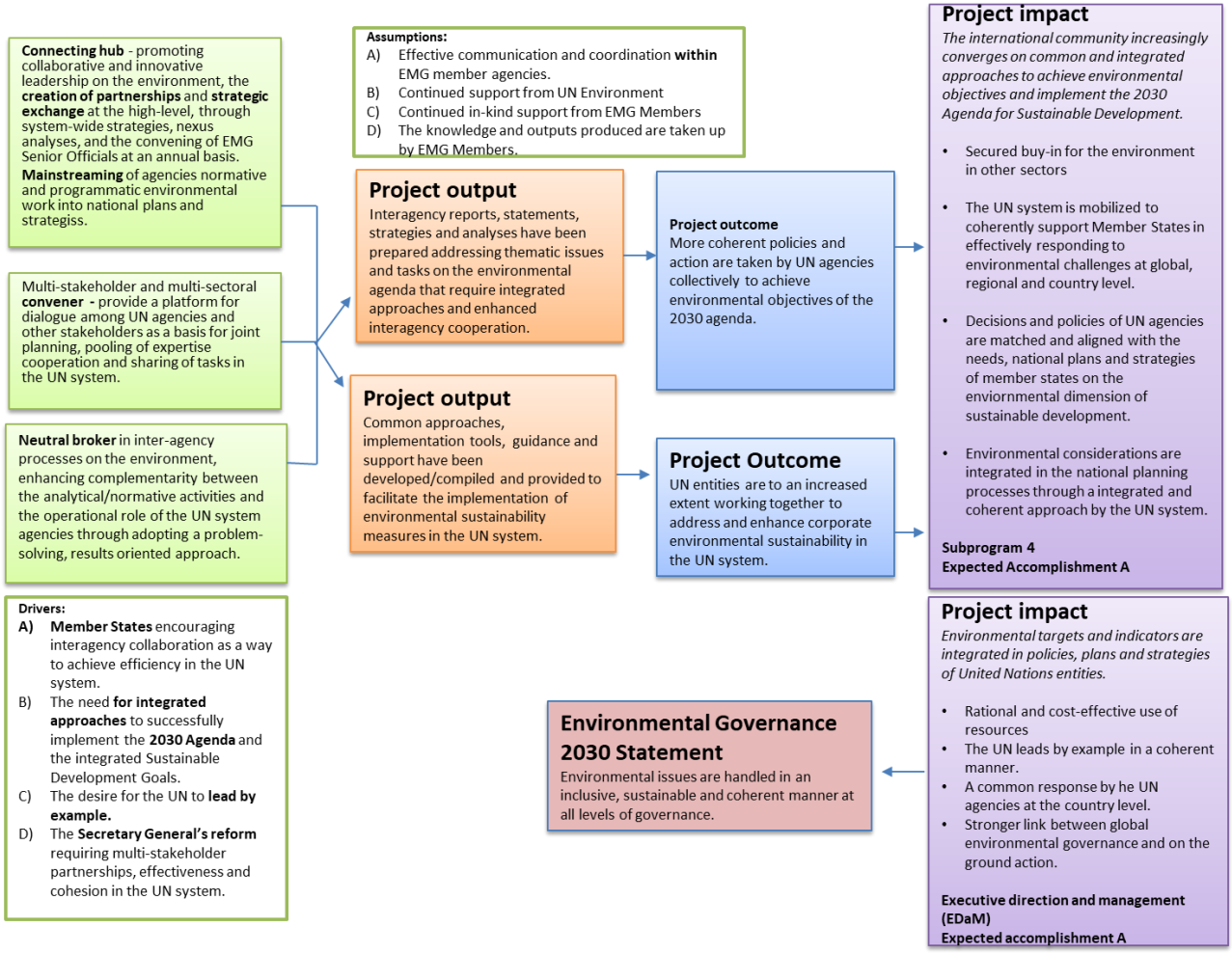
- Substantive: The EMG provides a neutral forum for a structured and timely exchange of relevant knowledge and information on current and emerging issues in the field of environment and promotes system-wide policy coherence, synergy and collaborative and flexible approaches to environmental issues in the United Nations system, supporting in this way the integration and implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Operational: The EMG promotes coordination and information exchange among UN System entities with regard to advancing the internal environmental and social sustainability of UN operations, facilities, programs, projects and policies.

3. Concretely, the project results in efficiency enhancing, guidance, system-wide analyses and UN system-wide strategies for a more efficient implementation of the environmental agenda, that benefit a wide range of stakeholders, from policy makers and governments to internal UN managers and staff. Figure 1 presents a theory of change.

4. The ultimate expected impact of the project is enhanced environmental sustainability at the global, regional and national levels and more efficient delivery of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda at national level.

Figure 1. Theory of Change



5. The theory of change translates into the results framework for the project over the period 2018 to 2022 presented in Table 2. Overview of outcomes and outputs. The project results framework will be confirmed during the inception phase of the evaluation due to the on-going revision of the project document to revise: a) budget (received extrabudgetary funding from additional sources not anticipated at the start, and less than total anticipated allocations), b) milestones and one output target.

Table 2. Overview of outcomes and outputs

Outcomes	Indicators	Outputs	Indicators
Outcome 1: More coherent policies and action are taken by UN agencies collectively to achieve environmental objectives of the 2030 agenda.	**SP4** Number of environmental nexus areas addressed for which recommendations are made for more coherent and effective policies Baseline 3, Target 9 **SP4** Number of environmental issues for which UN Agencies/ EMG Members agree to take more coherent action or spearhead more coherent policies Baseline: 17, Target: 25 **SP4** Number of inter-agency partnerships/ coalitions agreed Baseline: 0 Target: 2	Interagency reports, statements, strategies and analyses have been prepared addressing thematic issues and tasks on the environmental agenda that require integrated approaches and enhanced interagency cooperation.	**SP4** Number of reports documenting a system-wide analysis, statements, framework and/or strategy. (Baseline: 34, Target: 54) **SP4** Number of inputs provided to the interagency synthesis report of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment. Baseline: 31, Target: 38
Outcome 2: UN entities are to an increased extent working together to address and enhance corporate environmental sustainability in the UN system.	**EDaM** Number of corporate environmental sustainability aspects/themes addressed jointly by EMG members (Baseline: 0, Target: 3) **EDaM** Number of occasions/meetings where UN entities have come together to share good practices in environmental sustainability management. (Baseline: 0, Target: 8)	Common approaches, implementation tools, guidance and support have been developed/compiled and provided to facilitate the implementation of environmental sustainability measures in the UN system.	**EDaM** Number of tools and/or common approaches developed in support of the implementation of the Sustainability Framework (Baseline: 0, Target: 4) **EDaM** Number of agencies that are peer reviewed for their corporate environmental management (Baseline: 11, Target: 20)

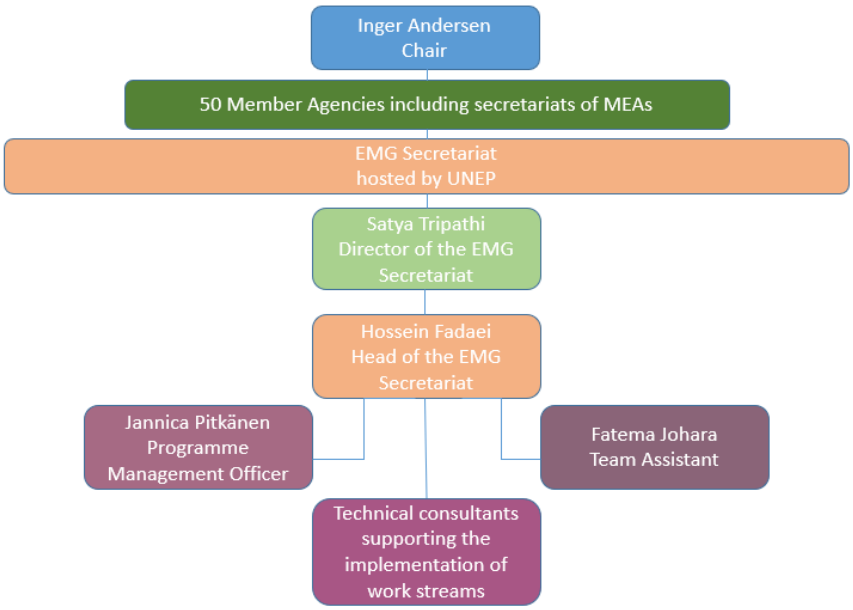
Source: EMG ProDoc (Final_Revised_Approved)

4. Executing Arrangements

6. The project is managed by the EMG Secretariat, which is based in Geneva, and serviced by three staff members in addition to the EMG Director who is based in New York acting also as Director of the UNEP New York Office. The EMG agenda is set annually by its governing body, the EMG Senior Officials, consisting of heads of 51 UN entities. The group is chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP. Figure 2 shows the organizational structure.

7. External expertise (consultants) and expertise from within the UN system (in-kind support by UN entities) are often called upon to address specific issues on the EMG agenda.

Figure 2. EMG Organisational Structure



Note: Satya Tripathi, was replaced by Ligia Noronha in June 2021

5. Project Cost and Financing

8. The total budget of the approved EMG project was USD3,516,772, which comprised of USD 1,439,636 in cash and USD2,077,136 in in-kind with funding from the UNEP Environment Fund and from the Government of Switzerland, Government of Norway, Government of Sweden and Government of Finland. The actual cost of the project was USD1,632,413, as of 31 December 2020. Table 3 provides a financial overview of the project.

Table 3. Financial overview

Legend: Black = planned; Orange = allocated; Green = spent by 31 December 2020

XB Consumable vs Actual Expenditure (by year)								
XB	**Year 2018**		**Year 2019**		**Year 2020**		**Year 2021**	
	Allocation /Consumable	**Actual Expenditure**	**Allocation /Consumable**	**Actual Expenditure**	**Allocation /Consumable**	**Actual Expenditure**	**Allocation /Consumable**	**Actual Expenditure**
Expenditure	$ 93,405	$ 33,304	$ 201,227	$ 33,116	$ 95,217	$ 124,101		
PSC	$ 20,331	$ 7,118	$ 20,885	$ 8,341	$ 14,228	$ 14,544		
Total		$ 40,422		$ 41,456		$ 138,645		
TYPE OF FUNDING	**SOURCE OF FUNDING**	**Details**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**Total**	
CASH	**Environment Fund (EF) activity budget - Secured**		109,940	132,940	113,740	114,740	**471,360**	
			113,670	88,598	179,770		382,038	includes operational costs
	Regular Budget (RB) activity budget		52,728	73,406	57,606		183,740	
			0	0	0	0	**0**	
	Extra Budgetary Funding (XB) + Programme Support Cost (PSC)	Government of Switzerland	146,250	146,250	146,250	146,250	**585,000**	
			75,354	0	55,000		130,354	
		Government of Norway	0	0	0	0	**0**	
			0	113,314	0		113,314	
		Government of Sweden	78,113	77,813	77,813	77,813	**311,552**	
			165,000	0	0		165,000	
		Government of Finland	0	0	0	0	**0**	
			0	0	32,422		32,422	
		Programme Support Cost on Secured funds	17,949	17,925	17,925	17,925	**71,724**	
			20,331	20,885	14,228		55,444	
		XB Sub-total Secured	**242,312**	**241,988**	**241,988**	**241,988**	**968,276**	

XB Consumable vs Actual Expenditure (by year)								
XB	**Year 2018**		**Year 2019**		**Year 2020**		**Year 2021**	
	Allocation /Consumable	**Actual Expenditure**	**Allocation /Consumable**	**Actual Expenditure**	**Allocation /Consumable**	**Actual Expenditure**	**Allocation /Consumable**	**Actual Expenditure**
			260,685	20,885	101,650		383,220	
		Unsecured XB funding	0	0	0	0	**0**	
		Programme Suppost Costs on Unsecured XB funding	0	0	0	0	**0**	
		XB Sub-total Unsecured	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
		XB Sub-total	**242,312** 260,685	**241,988** 20,885	**241,988** 101,650	**241,988**	**968,276** 383,220	
	SUB- TOTAL	(EF+XB Non post allocation/consumable)	**352,252** 374,355	**374,928** 109,483	**355,728** 281,420	**356,728**	**1,439,636** 765,258	
IN-KIND								
In Kind EF & RB Posts	**Environment Fund post costs**	(EF post's Expenditure)	**261,258** 271,848	**261,626** 296,902	**262,026** 298,405	**262,426**	**1,047,336** 867,155	
	Regular Budget post costs	(RB post's Expenditure)?	**257,000**	**257,400**	**257,600**	**257,800**	**1,029,800**	
	SUB- TOTAL	(EF+RB post's expenditure)	**518,258** 271,848	**519,026** 296,902	**519,626** 298,405	**520,226** 0	**2,077,136** 867,155	
TOTAL PROJECT PLANNED BUDGET (with EF & RB posts' costs) Total actual (EF+XB non post)+(EF+RB post)			**870,510** 646,203	**893,954** 406,385	**875,354** 579,824	**876,954** 0	**3,516,772** 1,632,413	
TOTAL PROJECT PLANNED BUDGET			**870,510**	**893,954**	**875,354**	**876,954**	**3,516,772**	
	Funding secured	(EF+XB Non post allocation/consumable)	**352,252** 374,355	**374,928** 109,483	**355,728** 281,420	**356,728**	**3,516,772** 765,258	
	EMG		**870,510**	**893,954**	**875,354**	**876,954**	**3,516,772**	

XB Consumable vs Actual Expenditure (by year)								
XB	Year 2018		Year 2019		Year 2020		Year 2021	
	Allocation /Consumable	Actual Expenditure	Allocation /Consumable	Actual Expenditure	Allocation /Consumable	Actual Expenditure	Allocation /Consumable	Actual Expenditure
		Total actual EMG (EF+XB non post)+(EF+RB post)	646,203	406,385	579,824	0	1,632,413	

6. Implementation Issues

9. The EMG agenda is set by its governing body, the EMG Senior Officials, on an annual basis. This means that activities and priorities over the four-year term may in reality deviate to some extent from expected outputs at the outset of the project.

10. The project has experienced delays of certain outputs and changes in timelines/order of priority compared to the planned outline at project initiation. The EMG Secretariat is requested to respond to urgent and unexpected requests (such as mandates from the SG/member states) and may imply delays in less urgent but planned activities. The EMG has reorganized some of its activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in some delays, in particular, in the organization of EMG nexus dialogues. The added value of one process (the Peer Reviews) was re-evaluated during the project, resulting in not achieving the expected target. Finally, the project has experienced challenges in terms of access to funding throughout, with less or no access to resources for its activities from the Environment Fund or donors such as Sweden and Norway, on which the project depended.

11. The theory of change may have been disrupted due to a generally dysfunctional inter-phase between global policy making and local implementation. What was created and agreed at the global EMG level, was not always brought to the local level for implementation/use. Similarly, lack of intra-agency coordination within the UN entities which was beyond EMG influence, may have negatively influenced the quality and use of EMG outputs to some extent.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

12. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[12] and the UNEP Programme Manual[13], a Terminal Evaluation is normally undertaken at completion of the project or project phase to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. Since the EMG is an ongoing inter-agency mechanism to enhance environmental coordination and cooperation across the UN system, it is a corporate commitment packaged as project rather than a timebound intervention. The evaluation will have both summative and formative aspects. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and other UN entities. The evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future implementation.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

13. Evaluation findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

14. The "Why?" Question. As this is a terminal evaluation and a follow-up project is planned, particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "*Why?*" question should be at the front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of "*what*" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "*why*" the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

[12] *https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies*
[13] *https://wecollaborate.unep.org*

15. Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

16. Communicating evaluation results. A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main evaluation report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant(s) will plan with the Evaluation Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an evaluation brief or interactive presentation.

9. Key Strategic Questions

17. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

1) Should the EMG be a project, considering that it provides a fundamental corporate service to UNEP? Are there alternative arrangements that would still provide a results focus and substantive accountability?
2) EMG governance within UNEP – are the project and Secretariat correctly placed in within the PoW and UNEP organigram from the point of view of maximizing the project's potential and resource mobilization?
3) What possible functions should/could the EMG shoulder with a view to the next phase?
    a. To what extent has the full potential of the EMG been utilized?
    b. To what extent has UNEP's coordination mandate been effective and influential through the soft EMG mechanism that focuses on ad-hoc information and knowledge exchange, and coordination meetings and dialogues?

10. Evaluation Criteria

18. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria and a link to a table for recording the ratings is provided in Annex 1. A weightings table will be provided in excel format (link provided in Annex 1) to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the provision of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The evaluation consultants can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

A. Strategic Relevance

19. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The evaluation will include an

assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy[14] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

20. The evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW[15].

ii. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

21. Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

iii. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

22. The evaluation will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions will be considered. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no one behind.

iv. Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence[16]

23. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[17], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UN Development Assistance Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

<u>*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*</u>

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Country ownership and driven-ness

B. Quality of Project Design

24. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established (www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/templates-and-tools). This overall Project Design Quality rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item B. In the Main Evaluation Report a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage is included, while the complete Project Design Quality template is annexed in the Inception Report.

<u>*Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):*</u>

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

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[14] UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents

[15] The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building and South-South Cooperation are not relevant for this project.

[16] This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

[17] A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

C. Nature of External Context

25. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval[18]). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs[19]

26. The evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any *formal* modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the TOC. In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision[20]

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes[21]

27. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[22] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary. The evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Communication and public awareness

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[18] Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

[19] Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

[20] 'Project management and supervision' refers to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments.

[21] Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

[22] All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

28. Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC *(i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact),* the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-term impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available on the Evaluation Office website, https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation, and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

29. The evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionally affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards.[23]

30. The evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic[24] role or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change and as factors that are likely to contribute to longer term impact.

31. Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-term or broad-based changes. However, the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Country ownership and driven-ness
- Communication and public awareness

E. Financial Management

32. Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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[23] Further information on Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards (ESES) can be found at http://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/8718

[24] A catalytic effect is one in which desired changes take place beyond the initial scope of a project (i.e. the take up of change is faster than initially expected or change is taken up in areas/sectors or by groups, outside the project's initial design). Scaling up refers to an initiative, or one of its components, being adopted on a much larger scale, but in a very similar context (e.g a small scale, localized, pilot being adopted at a larger, perhaps national, scale). Replication refers more to approaches being repeated or lessons being explicitly applied in new/different contexts e.g. other geographic areas, different target groups etc. Effective replication typically requires some form of revision or adaptation to the new context. It is possible to replicate at either the same or a different scale.

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

33. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Focussing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The evaluation will also identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

34. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[25] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency. The evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

35. The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)
- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

G. Monitoring and Reporting

36. The evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

37. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[26] results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for mid-term and terminal evaluation/review should be discussed if applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

38. The evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

[25] *Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.*

[26] *SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.*

iii. Project Reporting

39. UNEP has a centralised Project Information Management System (PIMS) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. disaggregated indicators and data)

H. Sustainability

40. Sustainability[27] is understood as the probability of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

41. The evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the evaluation will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

ii. Financial Sustainability

42. Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new resource management approach. The evaluation will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where a project's outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

iii. Institutional Sustainability

43. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the evaluation will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)
- Communication and public awareness
- Country ownership and driven-ness

[27] *As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)*

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. Where the issues have not been addressed under other evaluation criteria, the consultant(s) will provide summary sections under the following headings)

i. Preparation and Readiness

44. This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular, the evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. *(Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).*

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

45. In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP.

46. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

47. Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

48. The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project 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 intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[28].

49. In particular the evaluation will consider to what extent project implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

50. UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and

[28] *The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time.* https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements[29] were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and r*eport* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

51. The evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

52. The evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project.[30] While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The evaluation will consider the engagement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices. This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

53. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

54. The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) will provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

55. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A desk review of:

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia;
- UNGA resolution 53/242

[29] *For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project design since 2011.*

[30] *This is a standard criterion; however, it will not be rated for the evaluation the EMG project but include a record of why it was not relevant and was not assessed.*

- EMG Terms of Reference
- Report – Maximizing the Effectiveness of the EMG (2015)
- Progress report on the implementation of "EMG Effectiveness report" pursuant to UNEA Resolutions 1/11 and 2/5 (available in EMG archive)
- Minutes of EMG Mid-Term Technical Segment of Senior Officials' Meetings
- EMG Senior Officials Meeting minutes
- EMG website
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence, newsletters, agreements, etc.;
- Project outputs (non-comprehensive list):
- Nexus Dialogue Summary Reports
- Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming
- Comprehensive overview of references, guidance materials and tools related to the implementation of the Model Approach and the application of standards in UN Programming
- Practical guidance to help identify and manage potential environmental and social risks and impacts in existing and new programmes and projects in the context of COVID-19
- Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System (Phase II draft)
- Report: A New Circular Vision for Electronics, Time for a Global Reboot
- Outcome Statement: Sustainable Food Systems: ensuring food security for future generations
- Overview of UN System Inputs to the Development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
- Inputs by 15 entities to the zero draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
- Supporting the Global Biodiversity Agenda, A United Nations Commitment for Action to Assist Member States delivering on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework
- Strategy for the UN Coalition on Sand and Dust Storms
- Addressing Marine Litter – UN System support to Member States (draft report)
- Terms of Reference for the UN E-waste Coalition
- EMG Peer Review Process – an evaluation
- Site peer reviews
- Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.

(b) Interviews (individual or in group) with:

- EMG evaluation focal point;
- EMG Secretariat and EMG Director;
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
- Project partners, including:
    - Sustainable UN, Isabella Marras
    - UNDP, Tim Scott
    - CBD Secretariat, Neil Pratt
    - FAO, Lev Neretin
    - UNEP, Tita Korvenoja
    - UNESCAP, Stefanos Fotiou
    - UNESCO, Meriem Bouamrane
    - (UNICEF, Cristina Colon)
    - (UN Department of management, Joanna Harvey)
    - Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
    - Relevant resource persons;

(c) Surveys, as deemed appropriate;

(d) Other data collection tools, as deemed appropriate.

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

56. The evaluation team will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for list of templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings:** typically in the form of a Power Point presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** (see links in Annex 1) containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

57. An **Evaluation Brief** (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and evaluation findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

58. Review of the draft evaluation report. The consultant will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Project Manager/Implementing Partner, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward the revised draft report (corrected by the evaluation consultant(s) where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the evaluation consultant(s) for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

59. Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultants and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

60. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a **quality assessment** of the first draft of the main evaluation report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

61. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Project Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis.

12. The Evaluation Consultant

62. For this evaluation, the Evaluation Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager (Susanne Bech), in consultation with the EMG evaluation focal point (Anna Kaplina), EMG Head of Secretariat (Hossein Fadaei), Fund Management Officer (James Ndale) and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Environmental Governance Sub-programme (Yassin Ahmed). The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The EMG evaluation focal point and EMG Secretariat will, where possible,

provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

63. The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of seven months from 1 October 2021 to 30 April 2022 and should have the following: a university degree in international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 10 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of inter-agency collaboration is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based.

64. In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- 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. Ensure independence of the evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews;
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluand and the key evaluation findings and lessons)

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

13. Schedule of the Evaluation

65. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 4. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates

Evaluation Initiation Meeting	October 2021
Inception Report	October 2021
Telephone interviews, surveys etc.	October-December 2021
Powerpoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	December 2021
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	January 2022
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	January 2022
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	February 2022
Final Report	March 2022
Final Report shared with all respondents	April 2022

14. Contractual Arrangements

66. The Evaluation consultant will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant 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.

67. Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (as per annex document 9)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (as per annex document 16)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	40%

68. Fees only contracts: Note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic travel remains unlikely and therefore purchase of air tickets and Daily Subsistence Allowance for authorized travel mission are not applied.

69. The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP's Programme Information Management System (PIMS) and if such access is granted, the consultant agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in the evaluation report.

70. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and 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 consultant has improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

71. If the consultant fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e., before the end date of the contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultant's fee by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

ANNEX IV. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary: The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report: Concise Executive Summary with project background, the evaluation, key findings, including summarized response to the strategic questions, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations	5
I. Introduction A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.) Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?	Final report: Introduction outlines EMG from establishment in 2001 and into the phase (2018-2022) being evaluated outlines the programmatic and institutional set-up.	5
II. Evaluation Methods A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.). Efforts to include the voices of different groups, e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) should be described. Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section. The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described. It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome. Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected, and strategies used to	Final report: Concise section with description of evaluation model, evaluation process, key strategic questions, evaluation criteria and related questions, data collection methods, primary and secondary data sources, and data limitations.	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. *'Throughout the evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.*		
III. The Project This section should include: • *Context:* Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). • *Results framework*: Summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • *Stakeholders:* Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • *Project implementation structure and partners:* A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • *Changes in design during implementation:* Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • *Project financing:* Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing	Final report: All elements addressed well. Includes detailed description of results framework, stakeholder analysis, types of activities carried out by EMG and budget.	5
IV. Theory of Change The *TOC at Evaluation* should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors. This section should include a description of how the *TOC at Evaluation*[31] was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow UNEP's definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the *TOC at Evaluation*. *The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.* This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.	Final report: Good analysis of original TOC and presentation of reconstructed TOC with identification of key institutional mechanisms influencing outcomes and impacts.	5.5

[31] During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
V. Key Findings **A. Strategic relevance:** This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[32]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed: i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities iii. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities iv. Complementarity with Existing Interventions	Final report: Section covers elements as required	5
B. Quality of Project Design To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively summarized?	Final report: Well-summarized analysis of key strengths and weaknesses, including TOC.	5
C. Nature of the External Context For projects where this is appropriate, key external features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[33]), and how they affected performance, should be described.	Final report: Concise description addressing external context.	5
D. Effectiveness **(i) Outputs and Project Outcomes:** How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention? The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.	Final report: Well-structured presentation of delivery. Good review presentation of outputs and outcomes in detailed tables and integrated with survey perceptions. Good use of figures.	5.5
(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact? How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed? Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.	Final report: Detailed discussion of assumptions and drivers based on reconstructed TOC.	5
E. Financial Management This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table.	Final report: Analysis covering elements of financial management as	5

[32] A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

[33] Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *Adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • *communication* between financial and project management staff	required. Financial documentation provided deemed adequate.	
F. Efficiency To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including: • Implications of delays and no cost extensions • Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report: Section addressed as required and includes survey response perceptions.	5
G. Monitoring and Reporting How well does the report assess: • Monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)* • Monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • Project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor reports)*	Final report: Short section on monitoring and reporting confirming monitoring compliance.	5
H. Sustainability How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including: • Socio-political Sustainability • Financial Sustainability • Institutional Sustainability	Final report: Concise section on sustainability. Analysis integrates survey response perceptions.	5
I. Factors Affecting Performance These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are **integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate**. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes: • Preparation and readiness • Quality of project management and supervision[34] • Stakeholder participation and co-operation • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • Environmental and social safeguards • Country ownership and driven-ness • Communication and public awareness	Final report: Good and concise analysis of factors. Addresses gender and human rights. Good use of data from survey.	5
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations	Final report:	5.5

[34] In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
i) Quality of the conclusions: The key strategic questions should be **clearly** and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal. It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.	Well-structured conclusions with responses to strategic questions and presents suggestions for future main areas of work based on main findings, as well as summary ratings table.	
ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.	Final report: Useful lessons presented that align with recommendations without duplicating them	5.5
iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations: To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when. At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given. Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	Final report: Useful recommendations based on findings of the report and resonating with stakeholders during review.	5.5
VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality		
i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report: Well-structured and concise report in-line with guidelines.	5.5
ii) **Quality of writing and formatting:** Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?	Final report: Easy readable report in a concise language style with good use of table and figures.	5.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5.2**

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Independence:		
1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office?	x	
2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	x	
3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office?	x	
4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office?	x	
5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate?	x	
6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		x
7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?	x	
Financial Management:		
8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation?	x	
9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office?	x	
10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process?	x	
Timeliness:		
11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?	x	
12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed?	x	
13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	x	
Project's engagement and support:		
14. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference?	x	
15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	x	
16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	x	
17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	x	
18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation?	x	
19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established?	x	
20. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders provide comments on the draft evaluation report?	x	
Quality assurance:		
21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions, peer-reviewed?	x	
22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed?	x	
23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments?	x	
24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft and final reports?	x	
Transparency:		
25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	x	
26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the cleared draft report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments?	x	
27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments?	x	

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
28. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	x	
29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	x	
30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	x	

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

Process Criterion Number	Evaluation Office Comments

ANNEX V. FINANCIAL TABLE

Legend: **Black = planned**; **Orange = allocated**; **Green = spent** by 31 December 2021

TYPE OF FUNDING	SOURCE OF FUNDING	Details	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
CASH	Environment Fund (EF) activity budget - Secured		109,940 113,670 52,728	132,940 88,598 73,406	113,740 179,770 57,606	114,740 101,888 28,188	**471,360** 483,926 211,928
	Regular Budget (RB) activity budget		0	0	0	0	**0**
	Extra Budgetary Funding (XB) + Programme Support Cost (PSC)	Government of Switzerland	146,250 75,354	146,250 0	146,250 55,000	146,250	**585,000** 130,354
		Government of Norway	0 0	0 113,314	0 0	0 100,000	**0** 213,314
		Government of Sweden	78,113 165,000	77,813 0	77,813 0	77,813	**311,552** 165,000
		Government of Finland	0 0	0 0	0 32,422	0 0	**0** 32,422
		Programme Support Cost on Secured funds	17,949 20,331	17,925 20,885	17,925 14,228	17,925 17,114	**71,724** 72,558
		XB Sub-total Secured	**242,312** 260,685	**241,988** 20,885	**241,988** 101,650	**241,988** 117,114	**968,276** 500,334
		Unsecured XB funding	0	0	0	0	**0**
		Programme Suppost Costs on Unsecured XB funding	0	0	0	0	**0**
		XB Sub-total Unsecured	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
		XB Sub-total	**242,312** 260,685	**241,988** 20,885	**241,988** 101,650	**241,988** 117,114	**968,276** 500,334
	SUB-TOTAL	**(EF+XB Non post allocation/consumable)**	**352,252** 374,355	**374,928** 109,483	**355,728** 281,420	**356,728** 219,002	**1,439,636** 765,258
IN-KIND							
In Kind EF & RB Posts	Environment Fund post costs	(EF post's Expenditure)	**261,258** 271,848	**261,626** 296,902	**262,026** 298,405	**262,426** 474,573	**1,047,336** 1,341,728
	Regular Budget post costs	(RB post's Expenditure)	**257,000** 237,800	**257,400** 237,800	**257,600** 237,800	**257,800** 237,800	**1,029,800** 951,200
			518,258	**519,026**	**519,626**	**520,226**	**2,077,136**

TYPE OF FUNDING	SOURCE OF FUNDING	Details	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
	SUB-TOTAL	(EF+RB post's expenditure)	271,848	296,902	298,405	712,373	1,579,528
TOTAL PROJECT PLANNED BUDGET (with EF & RB posts' costs)			870,510	893,954	875,354	876,954	3,516,772
Total actual (EF+XB non post)+(EF+RB post)			646,203	406,385	579,824	931,375	2,563,787
TOTAL PROJECT PLANNED BUDGET			870,510	893,954	875,354	876,954	3,516,772
	Funding secured		352,252	374,928	355,728	356,728	3,516,772
		(EF+XB Non post allocation/consumable)	374,355	109,483	281,420	219,002	984,260
	EMG		870,510	893,954	875,354	876,954	3,516,772
		Total actual EMG (EF+XB non post) + (EF+RB post)	646,203	406,385	579,824	931,375	2,563,787

ANNEX VI. EMG MEMBER AGENCIES

BRS	Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
CBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species and Wild Animals
DFS	UN Department of Field Support
DM	Department of Management
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFRC	International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat (UN/ISDR)
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Ramsar	Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCCD	Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA/DSD	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNU	United Nations University
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
UPU	Universal Postal Union

WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
The World Bank	The World Bank Group
WTO	World Trade Organisation

ANNEX VII. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY TEMPLATE

Questionnaire Survey Draft 1

Introduction

UNEP's Evaluation Office is undertaking a formal evaluation of the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) project. You have been contacted due to your engagement with one or more of the EMG's activities in recent years. It would be most appreciated if you could answer the six evaluation questions contained within this survey form. We estimate that it will only take between 10 and 20 minutes of your time. Your responses will directly assist in determining the future direction of the EMG project in the next phase (2022 – 2026). We would be most grateful if you could complete the survey as soon as you can and preferably by February 10th.

Q1. Engagement with EMG

1.1 Please explain the nature of your engagement with EMG.

☐ EMG Focal point

☐ Technical expert

☐ Donor

☐ Consultant

☐ Partner

☐ Other

Please briefly tell us how long you have been involved with the EMG, and the kinds of activities that you have been involved with.

Q.2 Relevance

2.1 What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the EMG?

Strengths (you may check more than one box)

☐ coordination mandate and demonstrated positive outcomes of coordination

☐ ability to manage potentially politically charged inter-agency processes

☐ access to heads of agencies

☐ producing important outputs with meagre resources

☐ only inter-agency mechanism with a purely environmental focus

☐ low visibility

☐ other (please specify)

Weaknesses (you may check more than one box)

☐ low levels of resourcing

☐ unclear institutional reporting requirements

☐ voluntary nature of member agency involvement in EMG activities

☐ low visibility

☐ inability to follow up on the outcomes of EMG activities

☐ Other (please specify)

Q.3 Effectiveness

3.1 To what extend has the full potential of the EMG been utilized?

☐ Fully

☐ Partially

☐ Not at all

Please explain further

3.2 What do you believe have been the most effective of EMGs activities? (If possible, please rank the list)

☐ Issue Management Groups

☐ Task Teams

☐ Consultative processes

☐ Technical groups

☐ Agency peer reviews

☐ Nexus dialogues

☐ Publications

☐ Inter-agency strategies

☐ Other

3.3 In the next 4-year phase of EMG's work, are there current functions/activities that should be dropped, or new ones that should be added?

Please elaborate

Q.4 Efficiency
4.1 How well has collaboration functioned?

☐ Very well

☐ Fairly well

☐ Not very well

Please elaborate if you feel the need

Q. 5 Sustainability
5.1 Is the level of 'ownership' by the main stakeholders (more so, the end users) sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please elaborate further if you feel the need

Q. 6 Communication
6.1 Are the EMG's efforts at communicating its outputs effective?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please elaborate further if you feel the need

ANNEX VIII. EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE SUPPORTING SOURCES

Legend

Candidate for primary sources	Possible, supporting source

Evaluation Criteria/Questions	Desk Review	EMG Sec	EMG Focal Points	Technical Experts	Donors	Consultants	Partners
Strategic Relevance							
How does this project align with UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities?							
How does EMG align with UNEP's strategic priorities?							
Is the project relevant to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities?							
Has there been adequate communication with relevant stakeholders (regional offices/national governments)?							
Has the project made an effort to be complementary to other relevant interventions?							
Should the EMG be a project, considering that it provides a fundamental corporate service to UNEP? Are there alternative arrangements that would still provide results focus and substantive accountability?							
Quality of Project Design							
Has the logic of EMG from planned outputs to desired impact been clearly presented?							
What are the particular strengths and weaknesses in the design of the project?							
Did the main stakeholders participate in the design stages of the project, and did their involvement influence the project design?							
EMG governance within UNEP – are the project and Secretariat correctly placed in within the PoW and UNEP organigram from the point of view of maximizing the project's potential and resource mobilization?							
Nature of External Context							
Are there any social or political factors that may influence the progress towards impact?							
Effectiveness							
Were the necessary outputs for the EMG process readily available?							
Has project outcome 1 been achieved? Has project outcome 2 been achieved? If so, how have project outcomes been achieved? What obstacles were/were not overcome to achieve project outcomes?							
What is the likelihood of EMG's impact? Has progress been made towards such?							

What possible functions should/could the EMG shoulder with a view to the next phase?							
To what extent has the full potential of the EMG been utilized?							
To what extent has UNEP's coordination mandate been effective and influential through the soft EMG mechanism that focuses on ad-hoc information and knowledge exchange, and coordination meetings and dialogues?							
Financial Management							
Were EMG's finances sufficient to satisfy outcomes? To adhere to UNEP's policies and procedures?							
Was EMG's financial information completed and provided?							
What was the nature of the communication between finance and project management staff?							
F. Efficiency							
To what extent has the EMG built on pre-existing institutions, agreements, data sources, and complementarities with other initiatives?							
How well has collaborations between, and collaboration within different advisory bodies and working groups?							
G. Monitoring and Reporting							
To what extent is the logical framework clearly presented and to what extent is it used to monitor progress?							
H. Sustainability							
Did the project come up against/need to address any/all of the following: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability issues?							
Is the level of 'ownership' by the main stakeholders (more so, the end users) sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained?							
I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues							
Has the project made use of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders?							
How well have communication/dissemination strategies worked to date?							
How well has collaboration functioned between UN Environment branches/offices?							
Are there some stakeholder groups/interests that are more important than others?							
Have important interests been properly taken account of throughout the EMG process?							

ANNEX IX. ANNEX IX. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Exec Sum, This evaluation, Para. 9	"The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation lists three 'key strategic questions' to be addressed in the evaluation." Comment: Would like to place on record that the TORs of this evaluation were not discussed with me as the Secretary of the EMG since 1 April 2021.		The TOR was prepared at a time before Ligia Noronha was assigned as Secretary of the EMG. It was an oversight on the Evaluation Office not to have shared the TOR with her earlier in the evaluation process.
Para. 14 and A. Conclusions para. 204 iii	I disagree. First of all, the assistance and coordination on internal sustainability is already carried out by UNEP via the SUN team that works closely with the EMG and chairs the IMG on environmental sustainability management. SUN is a separate project but it is closely connected to the EMG as an implementation 'arm' of the EMG and CEB sustainability strategy phase I. The work to establish and reach targets is already underway in that context. Phase II does not have targets. Second the EMG has a neutral role and the implementation of the sustainbility strategy needs issue specific experts and a strong leadership that is issue devoted. Third. EMG is a secretariat and the role of assistance, guidance etc is not a secretariat role. So this recommendation would need a lot of changes to turn the EMG into a more implementation oriented secretariat that is in contradiction with its own mandate.	This critique is accepted, but it is unclear how it should be addressed. The word "targets" has been amended to "goals".	These are four suggestions presented by the Evaluator for consideration, and not recommendations, based on primary data collection (interviews and survey) for the evaluation. Revision accepted.
IV. Theory of Change at Evaluation, para. 74	"The logical framework, and by extension the ToC, did not explicitly include certain key results areas. The logical framework and ToC presented project outcomes, outcome milestones, outputs, output milestones, indicators and output 'drivers'. " Comment: After reviewing the entire draft evaluation, I was brought back to the ToC. It appears that:if rated as highly satisfactory; targets and indicators are being achieved; yet uptake is not occurring at the agency level; and it is not the responsibility of the EMG to ensure uptake; THEN there is something wrong with the ToC and this must be addressed.	The evaluation makes it clear that tracing a direct link between EMG outputs and outcomes (which have been substantially achieved), through to impacts is extremely difficult, given that EMG does not have control over the implementation of its recommendations/reports/research by member agencies. This does perhaps suggest that the impact statements in the ToC should be re-assessed. See amended text to Recommendation 6.	Also added to Recommendation 6: "be re-visited and causal pathways made more explicit."

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	Otherwise the EMG remains (as below) "busy" doing things, but not having a real impact (despite achieving its targets).		
V. Evaluation Findings, D. Effectiveness, Availability of Outputs	Header "Availability of outputs", Comment: Seems like a very week criterion to evaluate "Effectiveness".	Effectiveness is indeed rated on three parameters: Availability of outputs, Achievement of project outcomes and Achievement of Likelihood of Impact.	This sub-criterion receives a much lower 'weight' than the criteria 'achievement of outcomes' and 'likelihood of impact'.
V. Evaluation Findings, D. Effectiveness, Availability of Outputs, para. 110	"However, concerns were raised about whether recommendations were being acted upon." Comment: This is the point raised above. Effectiveness cannot be measured by availability of high-quality outputs.	I'm not sure that I agree with this statement. I think measuring outputs is indeed one element or parameter of measuring effectiveness.	The commentator should refer to the evaluation Tors and the tools describing evaluation criteria available from the Evaluation Office
V. Evaluation Findings, H. Sustainability, Socio-Political Sustainability, para. 164	"The adoption and enforcement of policies and guidance that emanate from EMG's work is not under the direct control of the EMG Secretariat. It is up to the member agencies to implement the outcomes of EMG's work." Comment: While this is a true statement, if member agencies do not follow-up and implement the outcomes of the EMG, it is still a failure of the EMG as an establishment or the way in which it executes its work, as the member agencies do not value enough the work to implement it. Something here needs to change.	I don't agree with this statement. There are any number of political reasons why a member agency may not wish to implement the outcomes of EMG's work.	Added footnote to para 164 "The Evaluation Office suggests the TOC identifying the 'drivers' that increase the likelihood of uptake of EMG's work among member agencies and consider these in identifying future work of the EMG e.g., increasing efforts on the communication and outreach may be one driver that helps promote uptake among member agencies.
General Comment	It is a bit of a miss that the good collaboration with the CEB secretariat in developing the sustainability strategy phase I and two and the common approach on biodiversity is not mentioned. Also the evaluation could have spent more on the impact of the EMG is areas such as environmental sustainability management and the common approach n biodiversity. These approaches are developed by the EMG endorsed by the CEB and will be implemented by UNEP always in the framework of the EMG. It is a good model.	This view is accepted. However, it was not raised specifically by any of the interviewees, or in the survey. As a consequence, it does not seem methodologically appropriate to add it now. However, it should be mentioned that EMG work on Phase I of the sustainability strategy is referred to in Table 7 and Table 10.	Evaluation of EMG impact was difficult for reasons detailed in the report. The UNEP model could be thought into how the EMG Secretariat measures and monitors impact going forward.