

Management Response to Evaluation Synthesis Report  
Oral Statement by Ebrahim Gora

There have been positive performance trend over the last few years .

In 2022 and 2023, 74% of projects attained a rating of Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory for their overall performance, as compared to an average of 56% across the four previous biennia.

In 2023 and 2023, 87% of projects attained a rating of Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory on Financial Management, compared to the sample for the previous biennium 46% in 2020-21.

However - the Report highlights some areas for improvement including:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Preparation and readiness
- Monitoring and reporting
- Sustainability of Project Outcomes
- Responsiveness to gender and human rights

I am pleased to have the opportunity to present key actions that have already been taken within these five areas .

Let me begin with the quality of project management and supervision. The synthesis report highlights the importance of the institutionalization of project documentation. Notable progress includes the successful transition to the UMOJA Integrated Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting System (IPMR) which currently contains approximately 800 active projects (including GEF and GCF projects) and their relevant project documents.

On project preparation and readiness – intended causality

UNEP continues to improve the quality of project design and inception, as reflected in our enhanced project preparation and readiness for implementation.

1. **Updated Resources:** We have launched two new interrelated products: the updated Programme and Project Management Manual and a new Project Management Certification Course. These resources are designed to strengthen our project management capabilities.
2. **Mandatory Training:** The Project Management Certification Course is mandatory for all project managers and is now part of the induction package for new project managers. This ensures that every project manager is well-equipped to manage projects effectively.
3. **Increased Capacity:** Through these initiatives, UNEP has significantly increased its capacity to manage projects and programmes throughout their entire life cycle, from inception to completion.

To date, more than 500 staff members have been certified through the Project Management Certification Course, demonstrating our commitment to maintaining high standards in project management.

**On Monitoring and Reporting** The evaluation highlights a lack of distinction between reporting on project implementation and monitoring implementation against expected results.

UNEP is committed to enhancing its monitoring and reporting processes to ensure clarity and effectiveness. We have implemented several measures to address this issue:

1. **Results-Based Management:** UNEP has intensified its focus on Results-Based Management. Project teams now clearly link expected results to allocated resources

within project documents and the Integrated Planning and Management Reporting (IPMR) system.

2. **Monthly Progress Reporting:** Progress is reported in the IPMR system on a monthly basis. This ensures consistent and up-to-date tracking of both output- and outcome-level results.
3. **Training and Guidance:** Extensive training and the provision of guidance tools and templates have been provided to project teams. This has significantly improved day-to-day project management and reporting accuracy.
4. **Organizational Oversight:** with QBR, there is comprehensive organizational oversight to ensure that all results align with UNEP's overall objectives. We continue to incrementally improve this.

On promoting project sustainability The evaluation report notes an improvement in promoting project sustainability from the previous biennium but emphasizes the need for better exit strategies and conditions to sustain direct outcomes in project design and implementation. In response to this, UNEP will:

1. **Exit Strategies:** UNEP will intensify efforts to design and implement robust exit strategies for all projects. This includes planning for the transition of responsibilities and resources to local stakeholders to ensure continued impact after project completion.
2. **Creating Sustainable Conditions:** During project design and implementation, UNEP will focus on creating conditions that help sustain direct outcomes. This involves integrating sustainability considerations into every stage of the project lifecycle.

3. **Enhancing Country Ownership:** We will prioritize, strategies to enhance country ownership. This includes, strengthened efforts on integrating the environmental component of sustainable development into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF). By aligning our work with these frameworks, we aim to increase the relevance and uptake of our projects.
4. **Leveraging UN Reform:** UNEP will leverage the UN Reform and our Delivery Model, which emphasizes enhanced regional office engagement and UN country team participation. This ensures that our efforts align with and directly meet country demands.
5. **Integration into UNSD Cooperation Frameworks:** We will work towards integrating the environmental component of sustainable development into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF). These frameworks are negotiated documents between the UN and national governments, designed to address national priorities.

Finally on Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality, The evaluation report acknowledges that UNEP has improved in responsiveness to human rights and gender equality over the past three biennia, with 2022-2023 achieving the highest record of projects with Satisfactory or Highly Satisfactory ratings at 46%. Projects evaluated in 2022-2023 were developed over five years ago, when attention to designing gender-sensitive or gender-responsive projects was less rigorous. Current projects, from 2020-2021 onward, are subject to stricter criteria under the Gender Marker system, ensuring the presence of a gender action plan before approval. Nonetheless, we are striving to strengthen this important area:

1. **Monitoring and Feedback:** A selection of project progress reports is being monitored for the implementation of gender action plans, with feedback provided

to enhance these efforts. This review and monitoring process is being systematized through an online tool to increase efficiency.

2. New Gender Policy and Strategy: UNEP will soon approve a new Gender Policy and Strategy to replace the 2014 version. This new policy will bring renewed focus on gender equality, emphasizing intersectionality (e.g., gender intersecting with poverty level, age, geographical location, religion/ethnicity). This aligns with the Leave No One Behind principle, central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

With the enhanced guidance and systematic monitoring in place, future evaluations are expected to show further progress in the integration of gender in project results.

Additionally, the revised Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) emphasizes a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach, along with accountability aspects like LNOB, compliance and grievance redress, stakeholder engagement, and project information disclosure. This form serves as a reminder to project managers throughout the project management cycle.